



I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you a spirit of wisdom in revelation, as you come to know him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know the hope to which he has called you, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in his holy ones, and the unmeasured vastness of his power open to us who trust in him. This is measured by his strength - the might which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and enthroned him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all government and authority, all power and dominion, and any title of sovereignty that can be

named, not only in this age but in the age to come. He also has put all things under his feet; as supreme head to his body, the church; the fulness of him who fills all in all.

The letters by Paul are to be found in every early Christian letter-collections. II Peter 3:15-16 refers to "all" Paul's letters, perhaps including the Pastorals. Ignatius of Antioch tells the Ephesians that Paul mentions them in every letter. Polycarp of Smyrna, collector of the letters of Ignatius, refers to those of Paul. Somewhat earlier, Clement of Rome certainly knows I Corinthians, and he probably knows other letters - Hebrews. We may assume that soon after Paul's death his letters were collected. Since Paul letters were apostolic, it is perfectly possible that the recipients preserved copies at the points of origin.

The order in which, the letters stand in most of our manuscripts is not chronological but based on the length of the documents, from longest to shortest - first to communities, second to individuals. Another sequence was provided by Maricon (c. 140), who arranged the letter in this order:

- Galatians,
- I-II Corinthians,
- Romans,
- I-II Thessalonians,
- Colossians,
- Philemon, Philippians,
- "Laodiceans" (Ephesians).

Four of the letters in the Pauline collection were written when Paul was in prison; these are Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians.

- (1) According to Philippians 1:13, "it has come to be recognized by the whole Praetorian Guard . . . "The expression "by the whole Praetorian Guard" is literally "in the whole praetorium"; the New English Bible gives as alternatives "to all at headquarters here" or "to all at the Residency". There were *praetoria* in places other than Rome - for example, at Jerusalem (Mark 15:16 and parallels) and at Caesarea (Acts 23:35). Some ancient commentators suggested that Paul was referring to Nero's palace on the Palatine hill. By itself, the expression does not show whether Paul was in Rome or in some provincial

capital. Again, in Philippians 4:22 Paul speaks of the greetings sent by Christians who belonged to "Caesar's household". This phrase is used of "persons by rulers of the Emperor" the mention of the praetorium, this reference does not absolutely prove that Paul was in Rome. Imperial employees were found throughout the Empire. From these two passages it can be concluded that Paul was a prisoner either at Rome or at Caesarea (proof that he was ever a prisoner at Ephesus has not been provided). To be sure, Paul says that he hopes to come to see the Philippians after his release (2:24), whereas according to Romans 15:24, 28, he expected to go from Jerusalem through Rome to Spain. But his hopes expressed in Romans should not be treated as expressions of the decrees of fate or providence. We should hold (with Beare) that there is no reason to reject the second-century tradition (he calls it "hypothesis") that Philippians was written at Rome.

- (2) (2) Colossians too was clearly written from prison (4:3, 10, 18), as was the little letter to Philemon (1, 9, 10, 13, 23). Where was this prison? Nothing in either letter clearly indicates its location; therefore, we must rely upon inferences from what we can find in the letters. First it should be said that the letters are clearly addressed to the same location at the same time; in other words, Philemon was a Colossian Christian. Second, the situation in which Paul writes is the same; in both letters we find mention of Paul's companions Timothy, Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas - though in Colossians only Aristarchus, and in Philemon only Epaphras, is called a "fellow-captive" with Paul. The circumstances that caused Paul to write to Philemon may shed some light on the situation. Onesimus was a slave belonging to Philemon; he had run away to Paul in prison, and Paul sent him back to his master after converting him to Christianity (cf. Col.4.9). It has been argued that Paul was more likely to have encountered Onesimus at Ephesus, roughly a hundred miles from Colossae, than at Rome, perhaps ten times as far away. But this kind of argument, based on what may be called "geophysical probability". The fact that in Colossians Paul also refers to correspondence with Laodicea, another town in the Lycos valley of Asia Minor, does fit that these letters were once together.

The letter to the Ephesians: the letter contains 2,425 words, 529 of them new to the NT. God blessed Christians "in the heavenly realms" by choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world and by making known the mystery of his will to them. The mystery (a mystery to be revealed to all) was

"a plan for the fullness of time,
to unite (or sum up) all things in him (Christ),
things in heaven and things on earth" (1:10).

God has now made Christ
"the head over all things for the Church, which is his body,
the fullness of him who fills all in all" (1:22-3).

Christians now dwell
"in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (2:6),
for by grace you have been saved through faith." (2:8)

The gentiles, once "far off" (Is. 57:19), had been made "near" and have become fellow-citizens with the saints, part of the temple of God. Through Christ even the principalities and powers in the heavenly places now know the manifold wisdom of God.