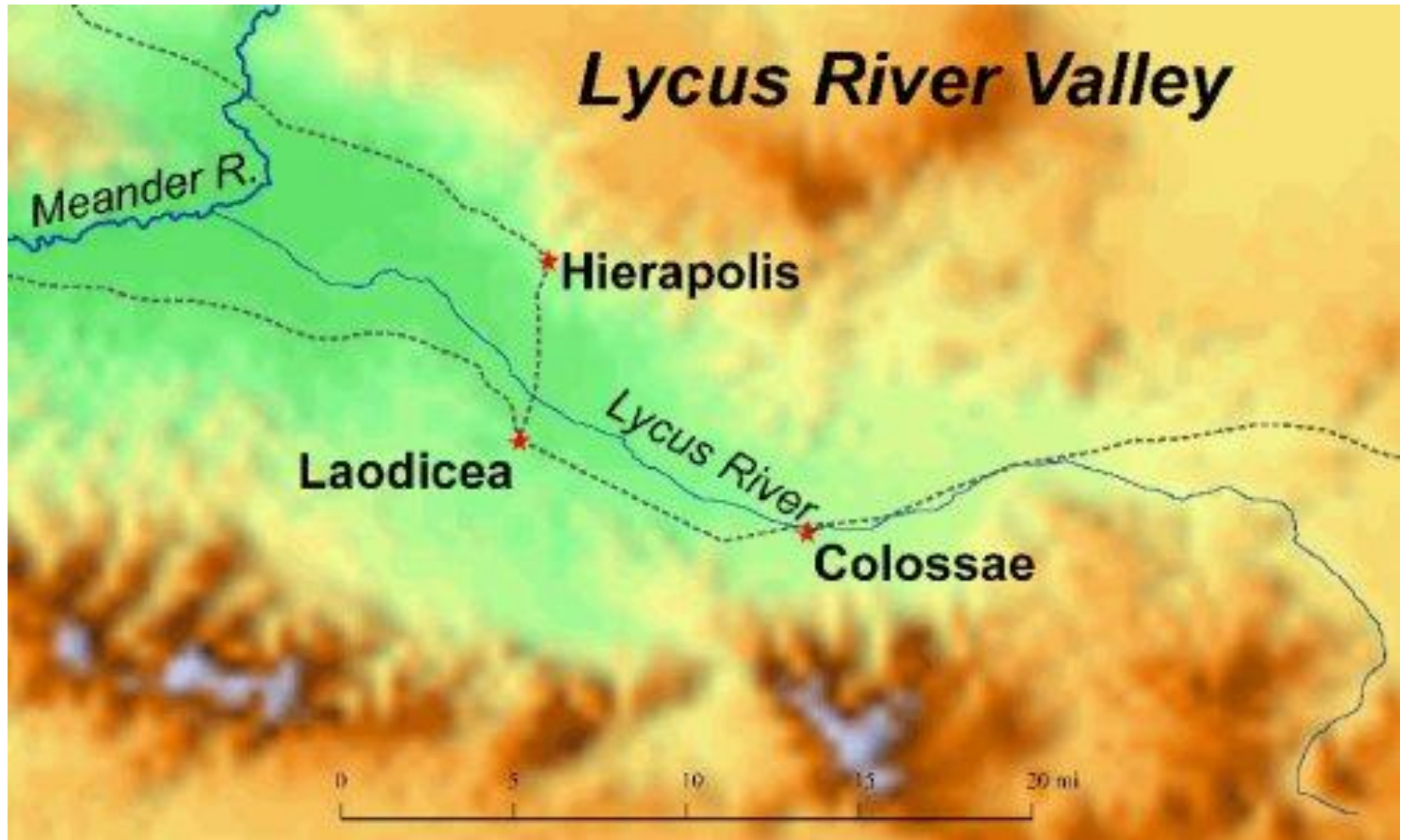
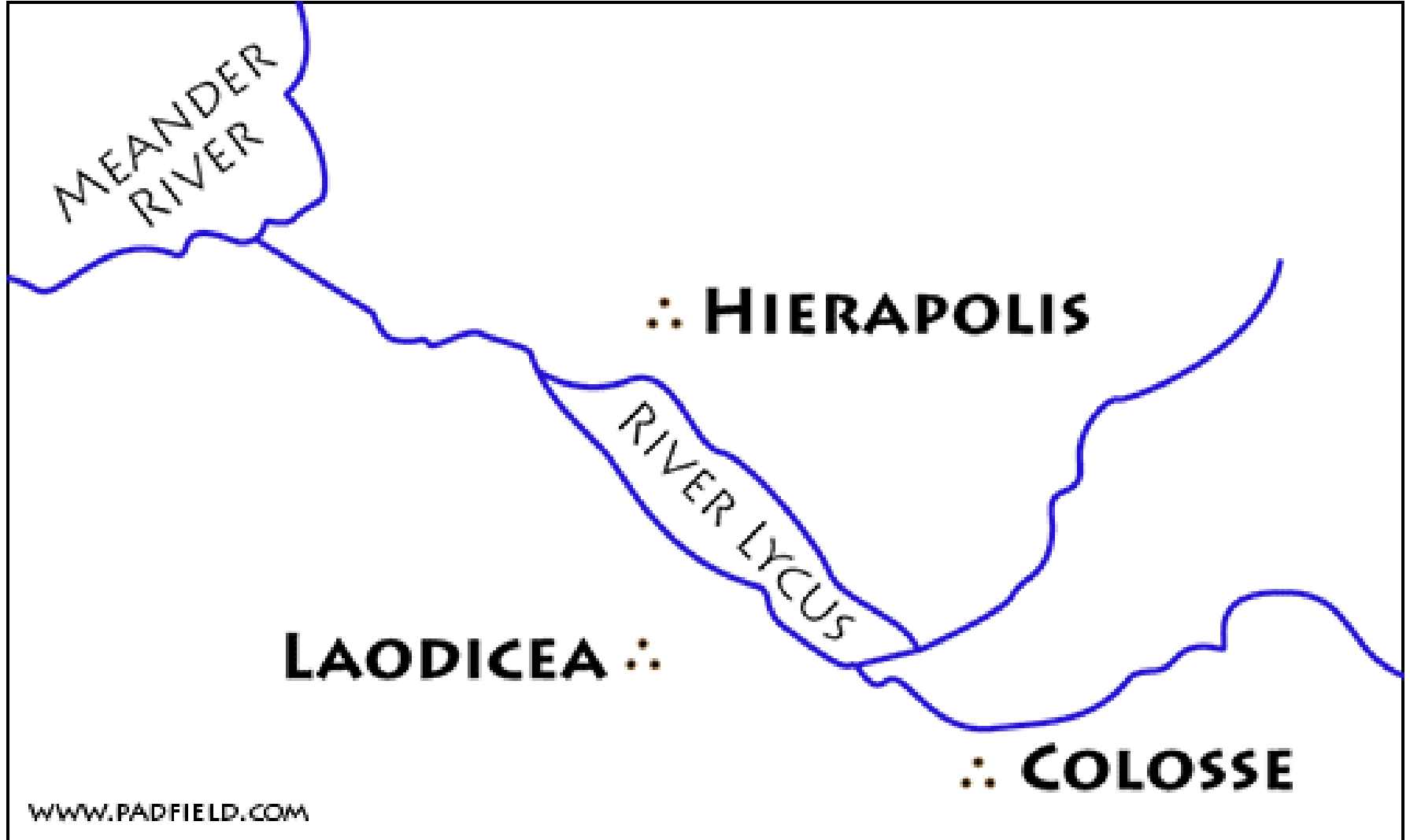


# Colossians





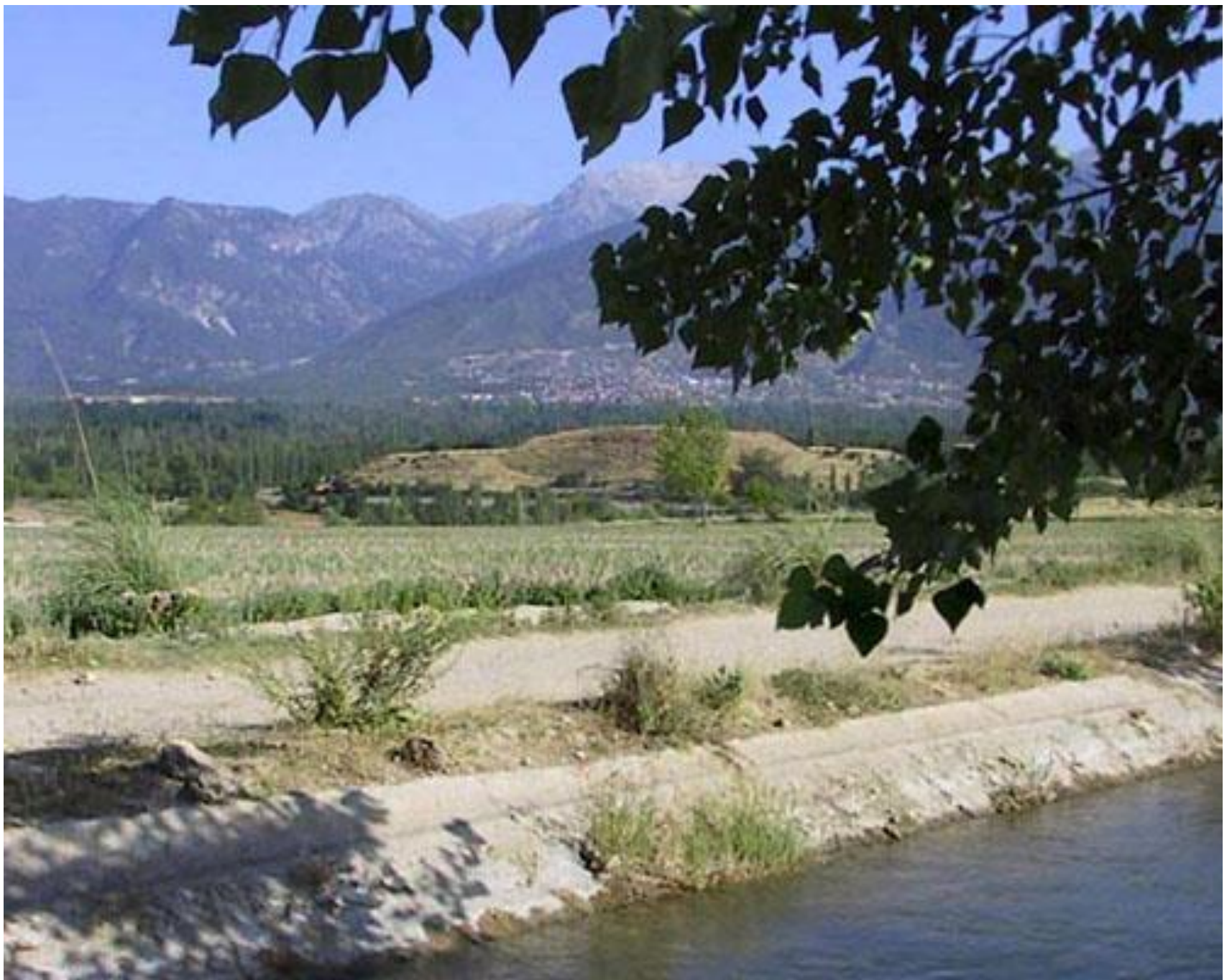
For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. (Col. 4:13)







- *Above*, another view of the Colossae **theater** with less vegetation revealing the scant, another view of the Colossae **theater** with less vegetation revealing the scant remains of the seats.





## My take:

- Colossae was destroyed in 60-61 by earthquake.
- Paul died 64.
- 70 Jerusalem was destroyed, Essenes and Jerusalem Jews join Synagogues in the diaspora, some may have visited the Christian community to bring back the group that broke away.
- The Church leader at Laodicea sees this as a threat. Need help
- Paul is dead, other eyewitnesses are gone, the church is growing and drawing more ideas.
- Epaphras most likely letter writer, Paul confirms his authenticity in the letter.
- The church leader has Paul's two captivity letters. These letters do not adequately address situation.
- So he uses the letters to write a letter Paul supposed to have written to the Colossians while he was still alive. He uses the same names as Philemon who lived in Colossae. Yet addresses the situation in Laodicea.

## Goals of the letter

- Address Epaphras' authenticity
- Establish Christ as central for worship
- Knowledge of Christ is key for a growing community and security against opposition
- Life in the community does not conflict with life in the Greco-Roman world.

# Sub-Apostolic Era

When my ashes scatter, says John, "there is left on earth  
No one alive who knew  
Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands  
That which was form he first, the Word of life.  
How will it be when none more saith, "I saw?"

*Robert Browning*

When did the last Apostle die. 67 (need for inspiration, thus the saints, heroes)

The last third of the last century is the Sub-Apostolic Fluid period for the church (No more eye-witnesses)

2<sup>nd</sup> century they start using their own names again. (Ignatius of Antioch, 1 Clement, Apostolic fathers)

# Different strains of Pauline Communities

- Apostolic Era: East, Jerusalem and Antioch
- Sub Apostolic Era: West, Rome and Ephesus
- Luke-Acts doesn't know of letters
- Col-Eph depend heavily on them
- Pastorals
- Col-Eph relationship between Jew n Gentile seems to have been resolved. Wall of hostility broken. Not so with Acts.
- Pastorals are also troubled with Judaizers

# Disputed Letters

- Lack particular references to situations and individuals. Say little or nothing about historical situations. Paul, always “earths” his theology.
- Churches seem to be securely established.
- Not living in fear of persecution.
- Seem to assume a separation between church and synagogue.
- No seeming worry about non-Christian Jews.
- Crisis of Jewish rejection of Rom 7-11 does not exist.
- Yet bitterness seems to exist in Gospels. Acts and John
- Imply that the majority of the members were pagan.
- Lacks visible OT references. Esp. in Pastorals.
- Paul’s authority is widely accepted.
- Move in the direction of confirming the full divinity of Jesus
- Holy Spirit does not take a predominant role.
- The verb faith is never used in Col. 2x in Eph. Adj. is used 4x in Col. 2x in Eph.
- Lacks personal touch, Col never uses the term brotherhood
- Lacks long extended argumentation. Paul never directly comes out and tells anyone what to do as in Colossians and Ephesians. Paul doesn’t tell, he explains with long argumentation.

# Structure

- **Salutation 1:1-2**
- Thanksgiving 1:3-14
- Theological section 1:15-2:5
- Ethical exhortations 2:6-4:6
- Conclusion 6:21-24

# Col 1:1

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus (it seems in this letter that the only apostle is Paul, auth. Paul always others as apostles Gal 1:19; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 1:1; 12:11; Phil 2:25) by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
- 2 To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae:
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

# Structure

## Part One (1-3)

- Salutation 1:1-2
- **Thanksgiving 1:3-14**
- Theological section 1:15-2:5
- Ethical exhortations 2:6-4:6
- Conclusion 6:21-24

# Thanksgiving

- 3 In our **prayers (A)** for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the **love (B)** that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the **truth (C)**, the gospel 6 that has come to you. Just as it is **bearing fruit and growing (D)** in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and **truly (C)** comprehended the grace of God. 7 This you learned from Epaphras, (means he founded the community, Paul's cell mate, and possible author of the letter, slave of Christ 4:12 a slave to a member of the upper class meant better status, later we will see obligations of a slave, "obey in everything") our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 and he has made known to us your **love (B)** in the Spirit.
- 9 For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased **praying (A)** for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you **bear fruit** in every good work and as **you grow** in the knowledge of God (Seminary in Rome, religious store). 11 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (unlimited guarantee, reel)

# Col 1:7 and 4:12 “book ends”

- **Col 4:12** 12 **Eraphras**, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills.
- **12** ἀσπάζεται υἱμᾶς **Ἐπαφρᾶς** (Eraphras) ὁ ἐξ υἱμῶν, δοῦλος (remember the instructions of the code) Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ], πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ υἱμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς (recalls the beginning of the letter all the references to prayer).

# Structure

- Salutation 1:1-2
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- **Theological section 1:15-2:5**
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- Conclusion 6:21-24

# Theological section

- **Hymn**
- Application of the hymn
- Paul's Role as mediator

# Purpose of the thanksgiving

- Baptism hymn recalls the energy and surreal awe for those coming into the church. As the novelty wears, as the smallness of the group and the obstacles mount, the author brings back the glory.
- Establishes the themes of the letter.
- Growth, strength, bearing fruit
- Knowledge of the truth.
- False teachers will be defeated by these qualities

# A few notes before reading the hymn

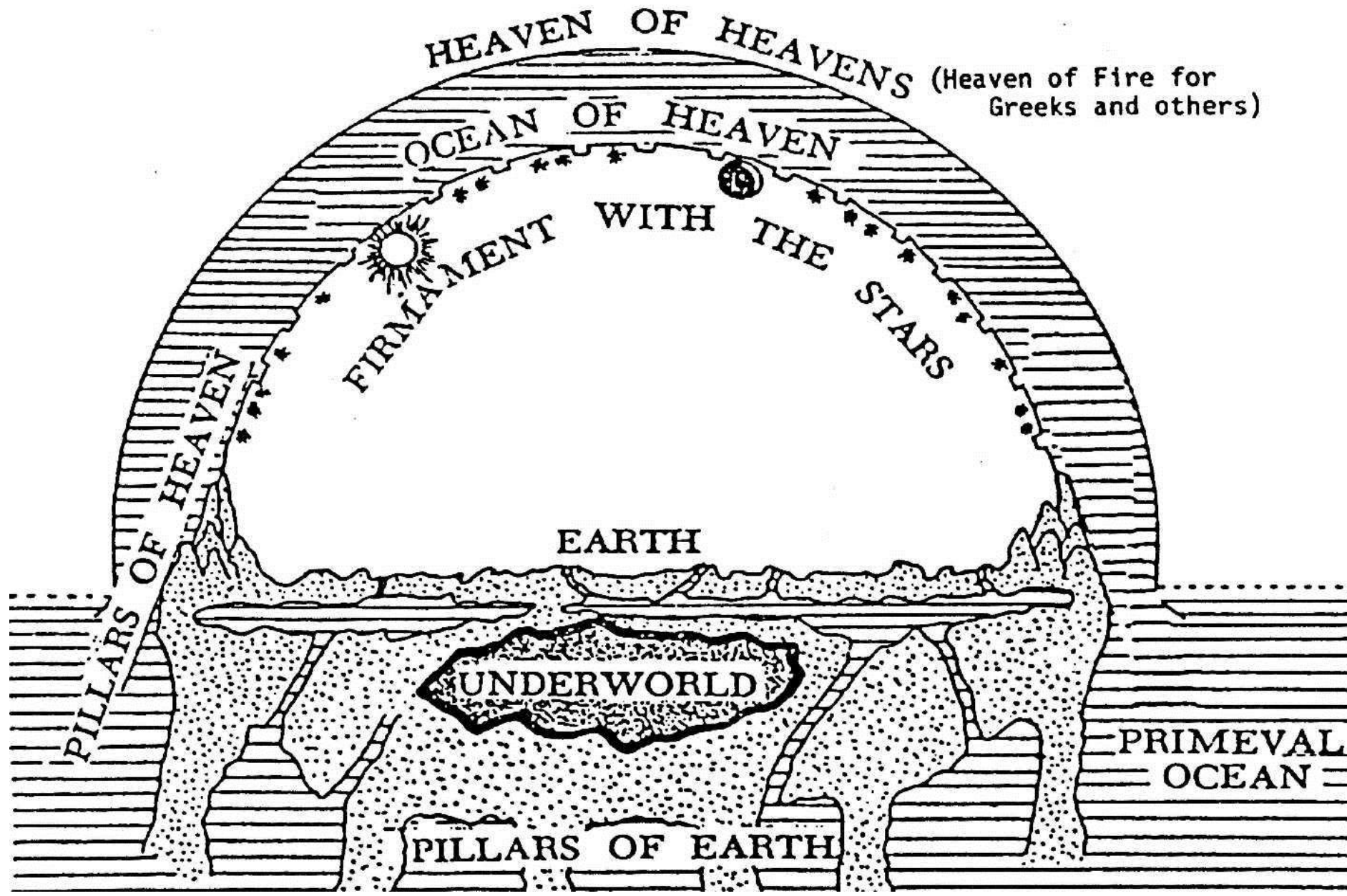
- The church did not think Jesus was powerful enough to overcome the evil in the world. Other powers were needed and necessary to invoke. The church was small and insignificant in society, let alone in the universe. The tangible thrill at baptism seemed to be erased with the effects of familiarity. Something needed to be addressed.

# Hymn

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;  
16 for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.

17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.  
18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.



HEAVEN OF HEAVENS (Heaven of Fire for Greeks and others)

OCEAN OF HEAVEN

FIRMAMENT WITH THE STARS

EARTH

UNDERWORLD

PILLARS OF EARTH

PILLARS OF HEAVEN

PRIMEVAL OCEAN

# Theological section

- Hymn
- **Application of the hymn**
- Paul's Role as mediator

# Theological section

- Hymn
- Application of the hymn
- **Paul's Role as mediator**

# **Personal Statement 1:24-2:5**

- **Paul's commitment to the Gospel (Bill Proulx)**
- **Paul's commitment to the Colossians**

# Col 1:24-29

- 24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. 25 I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me. (X, brochure, 30)

Col 2:6-7 Thematic Statement of the letter  
Turning point of the letter

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him,  
7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

## Col 2-8-16 Debate with opponents

- 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; **12 when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.** (Talk about baptism here, X River and waders)13 And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, 14 erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.
- 16 Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. 17 These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

# Structure

- 2:12 buried with him... raised with him. This divides nicely into two sections.
- 2:20 If you died with Christ...
- **3:1 If you were raised with Christ**

# 3:3-17

- **3 So if you have been raised with Christ**, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.
- 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. 7 These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. 8 But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! (don't fight, replace)
- 12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

# 3:11

A Greek

B Jew,

B circumcised

A uncircumcised

---

A barbarian,

B Scythian, (popular region for attaining slaves)

B Slave

A free

- but Christ is all and in all!



# Some facts about the Household Codes

- Does not connect by way of context or textually, more abrupt.
- Aristotle: basic unit of the state, micro state DNA of the empire, clarify relationships to secure peace on a global level.
- Col code deals with the underlings
- House was the Church the *domos ecclesia*
- DNA of the church does not conflict with the DNA of the empire.
- Church is not a group of revolutionaries but a group that experiences transformation from within.

# Household Codes

- 18 **Wives**, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.  
19 **Husbands**, love your wives and never treat them harshly.
- 
- 20 **Children**, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord.
- 21 **Fathers**, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart.
- 22 **Slaves**, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. 4 1 **Masters**, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

# Slaves

- Aristotle: For where there is nothing in common between ruler and ruled, there can be no friendship between them either. It is like the relation between a craftsman and his tool. For the Master and slave have nothing in common: a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave. Therefore there can be no friendship with a slave as slave, though there can be a as human being: for there seems to be some room for justice in the relations of every human being with every other that is capable of participating in law and conduct (Nic. Ethics VIII Xi 5-Xii).

- All slaves are disposed to masters and are sexually available at all times.
- No ethical clarification in regard to having non-Christian masters. (Silent compliance of slaves as sexual objects.)
- Musonius Rufus and Seneca.
- Questions about the Colossian audience
- Phil 2:15 “So that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.”

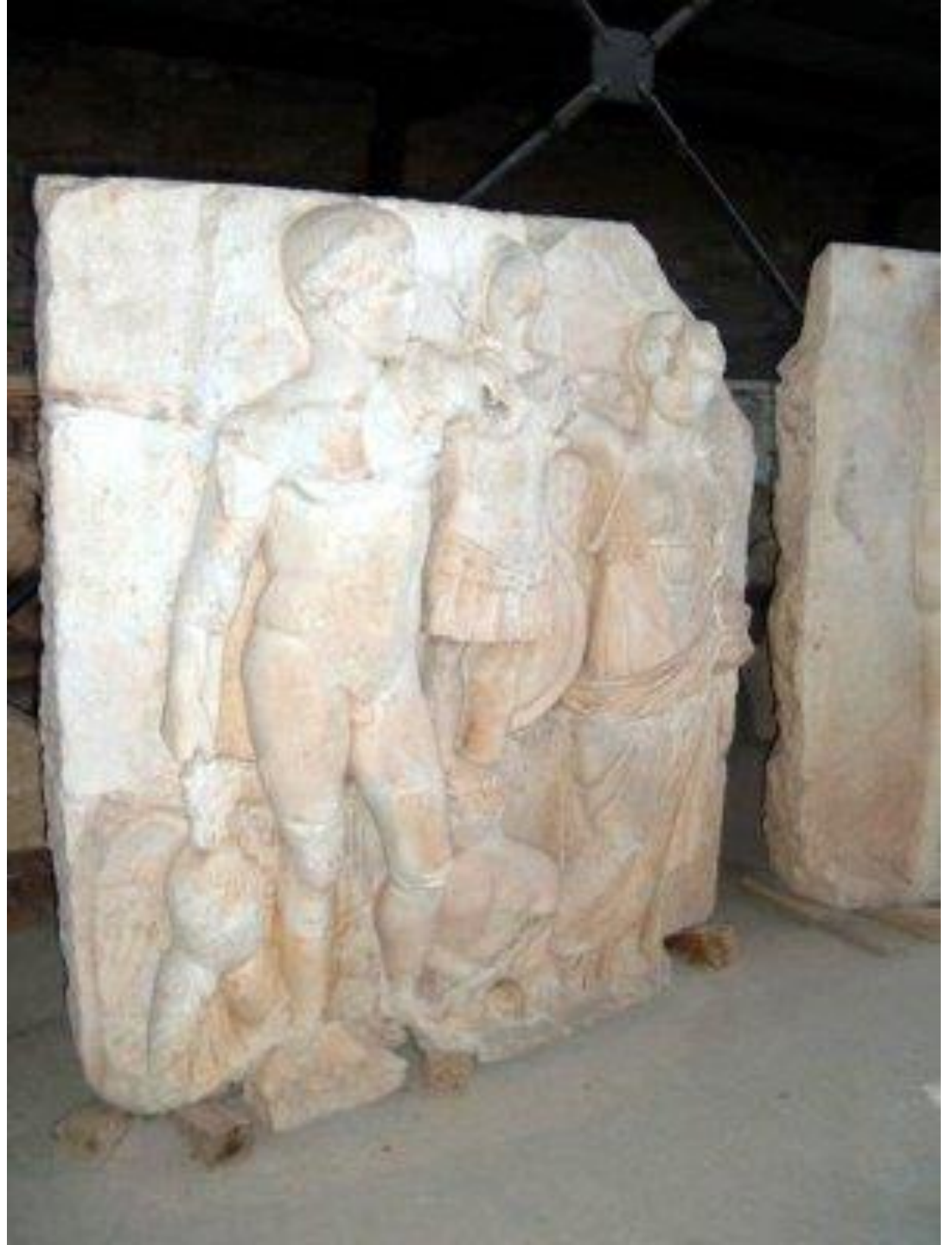


Only a 100 km from Colossae, the temple Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, displayed the divine appointment of the Julio-Claudian dynasty to pacify the peoples of the earth and bring them into a civil union mirroring divine harmony. Completed at precisely the time Colossians was composed, the sculptural program included representation of emperors and their family members depicted in the company of Olympian deities and personified and cosmic powers. Fifty statues. Nero was enthroned with Jupiter with a head radiate.

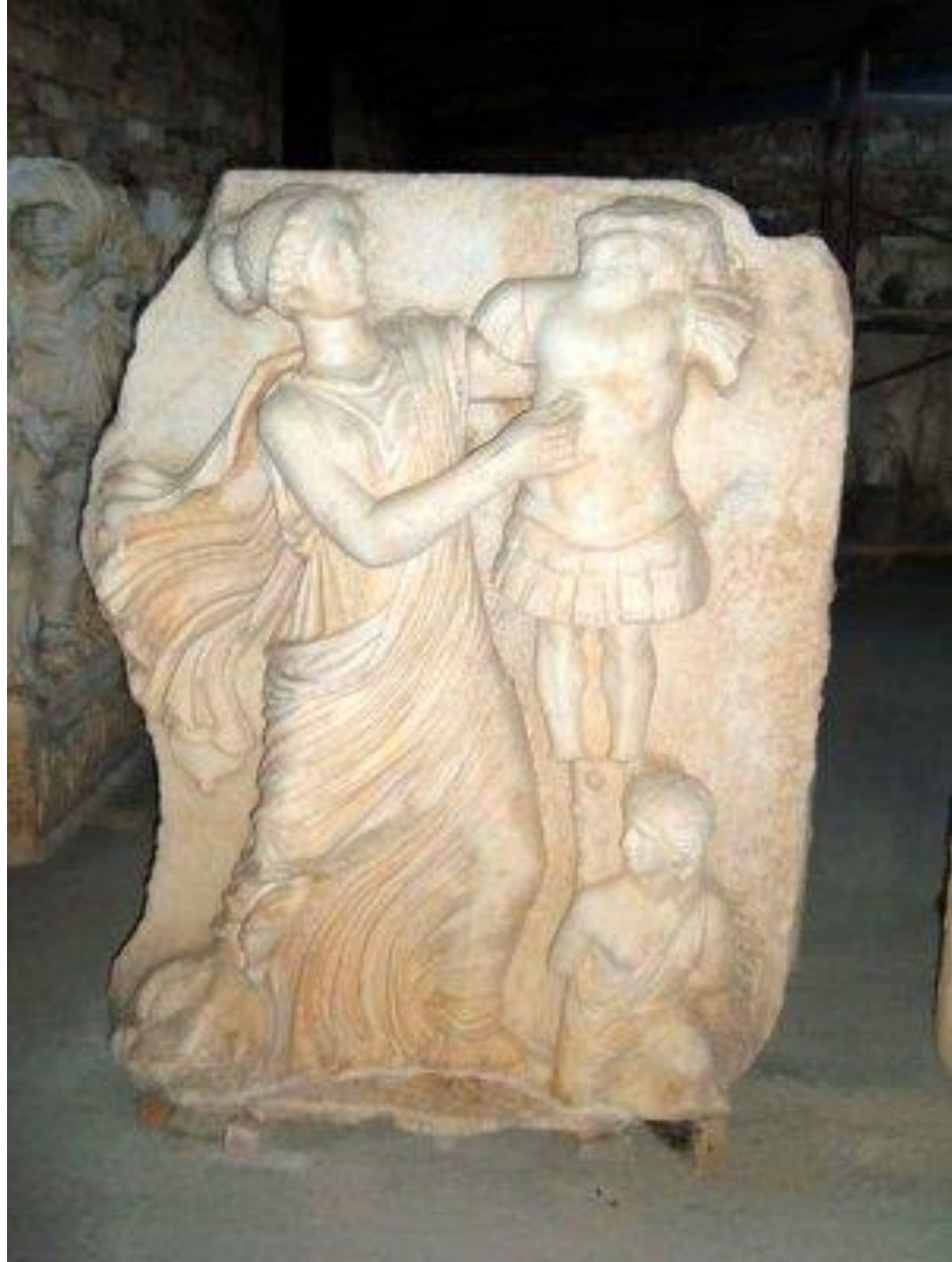


The naked emperor stands in majesty with a winged Victory (Nike). He carried a spear and has eagle, the bird of Zeus, at his feet. Victory is crowning a military trophy - a rough post with enemy armour attached to it (helmet, cuirass, greaves, shield). Beneath the trophy, a barbarian captive, his hands tied behind his back, is 'sunk' into the plinth.

(Greatness depicted in this picture, according to Colossians, is pictured in the young man with the hands tied and crushed because he is the only one in the picture that can fulfill all the requirements in the letter.)



A draped goddess strides forward to inscribe a military trophy to which is bound a kneeling female captive. The goddess is probably a personification such as Honour, Virtue, or Courage. Who is the one with the true courage and with the truth according to Col.





# Fairwell

- 7 **Tychicus** will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts; 9 he is coming with **Onesimus**, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.
- 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him. 11 And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 **Epaphras**, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. 13 For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 **Luke**, the beloved physician, and **Demas** greet you. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nymph and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the **Laodiceans**; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to **Archippus**, “See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.”
- 18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.