



Who wrote Colossians? Google AI says this about Colossians: “According to Bart Ehrman, the book of Colossians claims to be written by Paul the Apostle, but he argues that it is not genuinely Pauline; meaning he believes Paul did not actually write it. Ehrman, along with many other critical scholars, suggests that the letter was written by someone else, possibly a later follower of Paul, using Paul’s name.”

Let’s examine the relevant facts, to find out who wrote Colossians. Critics, such as Ehrman and others, have only their own speculative ideas from which they postulate. Compelling grounds for questioning the letter’s authenticity are lacking. Colossians contains autobiographical statements from Paul, and even opens with a salutation from Paul.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the holy ones and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae: grace to you and peace from God our Father. We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you” (Colossians 1:1-3 NAB). This opening is very typical of Paul’s language and style. In fact, the language and style of the entire letter are well within the range Paul displays elsewhere.

“Colossians follows the outline of a typical Pauline letter” (NAB Introduction to Colossians). In fact, a careful examination of the letter reveals a good number of lexical, grammatical, and theological similarities with Paul’s other letters (**Colossians 1:9,26; 2:11-14; 16,20,21; 3:1,5-17**). His slightly different vocabulary in the letter is due to his use of the language of

his opponents, in order to refute their false teachings.

“I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand” (Colossians 4:18 NIV). In this postscript, we have three more evidences of Paul’s writership: (1) Putting it in his own hand, as was his custom (Galatians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:17); (2) referring to himself as being in “chains”, a reference to his confinement (Ephesians 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:16) *“Paul wrote the letter while in prison”* (NAB Introduction to Colossians ; (3) Paul’s standard closing of wishing “grace” for his readers, which he does “in all his letters” (2 Peter 3:15,16). See Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 16:23; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:24; Philippians 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; 1 Timothy 6:21; 2 Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:25; Philemon 1:25; Hebrews 13:25.

Critics of his writership have too narrow a perspective on the versatility of an ancient writer in expressing himself differently on different occasions. Their criticisms typically have to do with the style and the theology of the letter. Paul was very well educated (**Acts 22:3**), and an extensive traveler (**2 Corinthians 11:23-29**), and could discourse with **“all people”**, including Greek **“philosophers”** (**1 Corinthians 9:19 Acts 17:18 NASB**). The letter’s setting and audience demanded a different theological response than some of his others, which focused more on the Jewish background of Christianity. Additional evidence of Paul’s writership are his relationships with **“Epaphrus”** and **“Archippus”**, which are highlighted both in Colossians and Philemon, a letter that is indisputably attributed to Paul (**Colossians 1:7; 4:12,17; Philemon 1:1,2,23,24**).

The letter’s presence among Paul’s letters in the very important Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 2 (circa 200 CE) provides strong evidence of Paul’s writership. In the early church, all who reference the writership of Colossians attribute it to the apostle Paul. *“Pauline authorship was held to by many of the early church’s prominent theologians, such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen of Alexandria and Eusebius.”* (Wikipedia).

It wasn’t until the 19th century, that some critics first began to question, and even dispute,

Paul's writership of Colossians, by claiming the heresy addressed in chapter 2 is the more developed 2nd century Gnosticism. Careful analysis reveals that the Colossian heresy (chapter 2) is noticeably less developed than the Gnosticism of its leading proponents in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. However, the seeds of the full-blown Gnosticism were already present in the 1st century, and were making inroads into various Christian Churches, such as Colossae.

Who wrote Colossians? Based on an objective examination of all the evidence, there is no need to doubt what the letter itself says — apostle Paul wrote Colossians.