

PLACE OF WRITING THE PRISON EPISTLES

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The criteria for the prison-epistles imprisonment are (1) a lengthy imprisonment with (2) an expected release (3) where Onesimus would have access to Paul.

Pro

ROME

Paul was under house arrest and could receive guests like Onesimus.

A known imprisonment

Acts shows that Luke accompanied Paul to Rome (“we” passages).

The Roman imprisonment was the only lengthy imprisonment from which Paul could have expected release (cp. Philippians 2:19-27; Philemon 22).

The Roman imprisonment was the only lengthy one (for life or death) from which no appeal could be made by a Roman citizen. (Contrast the Caesarean imprisonment when Paul appealed to Caesar.)

The saints of Caesar’s household sent greetings (Philippians 4:22).

Con

Paul requests housing to be prepared in Colossae (but Paul will soon be released from the Roman imprisonment).

Was there a Colossae after A.D. 60? According to Tacitus’ *Annals*, 14:27 an earthquake destroyed Colossae and Laodocia. The former could not rebuild as Laodocia did. (It is possible to get Paul to Rome and even released before A.D. 60.)

Praetorium (Philippians 1:13; cp. Acts 23:15) supposedly means a governor’s palace in the New Testament. There would be no governor’s palace in Rome.

CAESAREA

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In Philemon 22 Paul requests preparation for lodgings in anticipation of release.

EPHESUS

The *Marcionite Prologue* so locates the writing of Colossians.

But the Prologue locates the writing of Philippians and Philemon in Rome.

A request for Colossian housing would make sense because Paul might want to get out of Ephesus soon.

There is no Ephesian imprisonment.

Onesimus would have fled farther than Ephesus.

Many want to get the prison epistles earlier so they can get Paul dead at the end of the first Roman imprisonment, and so not able to author the pastorals.

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