

Development of Pauline Ideas in Colossians

The Letter to the Colossians seems to expand on many ideas found in other (undisputed) letters of Paul, taking the points a step further or to another level.

- Romans says that believers have died and been buried with Christ through baptism and will someday be united with him in resurrection (6:4–6); Colossians says that believers have already “been raised with Christ” through baptism (2:12; cf. 3:1; but see also Rom. 6:11).
- Romans says that believers have died to sin (6:2); Colossians says that they have “died to the elemental spirits of the universe” (2:20).
- Romans says that no spiritual being or power will “be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ” (8:39); Colossians says that Christ disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities and “made a public example of them, triumphing over them” (2:15; cf. 1 Cor. 15:24).
- First Corinthians says that Jesus Christ is the one “through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (8:6); Colossians presents Christ as the one in whom “all things in heaven and on earth were created” (1:16) and in whom “all things hold together” (1:17).
- Second Corinthians says that Paul’s sufferings manifest the death of Jesus in Paul’s body (4:8–12); Colossians says that Paul’s sufferings serve the vicarious function of “completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (1:24).
- Philippians refers to Christ as being “in the form of God” (2:6); Colossians refers to Christ as “the image of the invisible God” (1:15) and as the one in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (2:9).

Are these points on which Paul has further developed his own thinking? Or are they instances of a pseudonymous author building on Paul’s ideas?