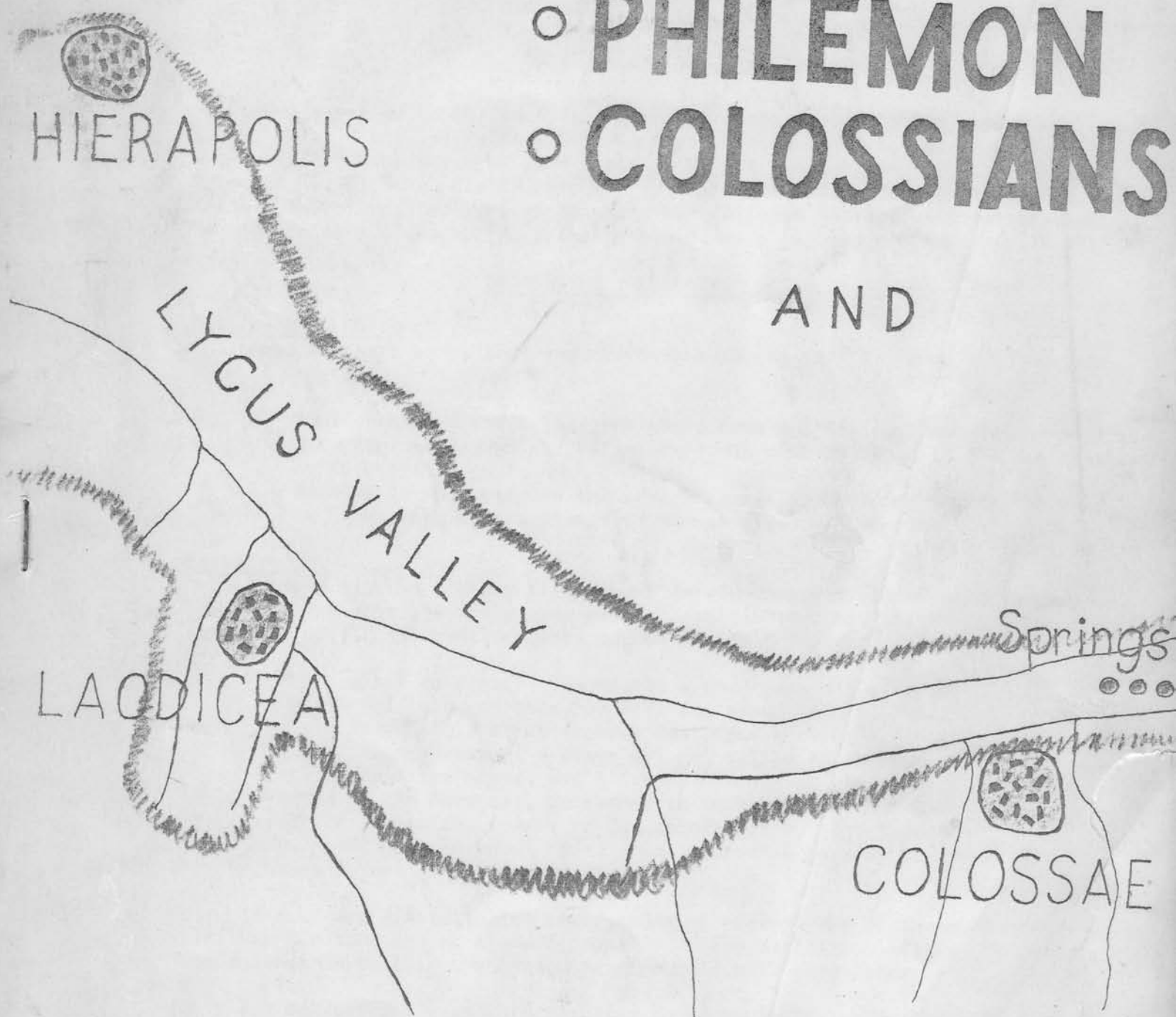


PAUL'S EPISTLES TO
◦ PHILEMON
◦ COLOSSIANS

AND



CHRIST'S WORDS TO
◦ LAODICEA

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

Paul's letter to Philemon is the only private one of Paul's we have today. Within the letter we find an example of the wonderful way Paul dealt with people. Onesimus, Philemon's slave who had run away and probably robbed Philemon (v.18), thru divine help met Paul in Rome and was converted to the Truth. Therefore, Paul writes to encourage Philemon to receive Onesimus back "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother". (v.16 RSV)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Residence of Philemon

Most scholars agree that the evidence supports that Philemon and Onesimus live in Colossae.

1. Paul speaks to the Colossians about Onesimus saying, "who is one of you" (Col. 4:9), which implies Philemon also belonged to the ecclesia at Colossae.
2. Archippus, who attended the same ecclesia as Philemon (Phile. 2), had to "take heed to the ministry" he was given at Colossae (Col. 4:17).

Slavery

At this time in history slavery was very common and brutal under Roman Law. Barclay mentions there were approximately 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman world. (1) Vincent comments on how the majority were treated:

"The slave has no right. The master's power was unlimited. He might mutilate, torture, or kill the slave at his pleasure. The old Roman legislation imposed death for killing a plough-ox; but the murderer of a slave was not called to account. Tracking fugitive slaves was a trade. Recovered slaves were branded on the forehead, condemned to double labor, and sometimes thrown to the beasts in the amphitheatre. The slave population was enormous. Some proprietors had as many as twenty thousand." (4)

If Paul would have forced the freedom of slaves, the Truth would have been banished for sure and he himself probably killed earlier. Instead, he gives the impression that in the Lord, slaves should work even harder:

1. Believing slaves were required to serve believing masters. (1 Tim. 6:1,2; 1 Cor. 7:20-24)
2. Believing slaves were required to serve even unbelieving masters. (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22,23; Titus 2:9-10)

Reasons Paul supports slavery:

1. So the Truth wouldn't be destroyed by the Romans.

2. So the believing slaves would "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (Titus 2:9-10) to their masters.
3. True slavery based on the love of Christ can be beneficial to both master and slave.

PHILEMON AND COLOSSIANS WERE WRITTEN AND SENT TOGETHER

1. Both talk about Onesimus. (Phile. 10; Col. 4:9)
2. Both send greetings from Timothy, Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Luke and Demas. (Phile. 1,23,24; Col. 1:1; 4:10,12,14)
3. In both Paul is a prisoner. (Phile. 1:1; Col. 4:10)

Paul sent Onesimus back to Colossae with Tychicus, who bore the letter to the Colossians (Col. 4:7-9) and the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21-22). We cannot be sure who carried the letter to Philemon, but it is reasonable to assume that Tychicus bore this letter also.

DATE OF WRITING

3 Imprisonments of Paul

1. Caesarea (2 yrs.) Acts 23:23,24,33-35; 24:27
2. Rome - 1st imprisonment (2 yrs.) Acts 28:14-31
3. Rome - 2nd imprisonment 2 Tim. 4:6-18

Paul Definitely Wrote Philemon and Colossians While in Prison

1. "A prisoner for Christ Jesus" (Phile. 1:1,9 RSV)
2. "In my bonds" (Phile. 10)
3. "Aristarchus, my fellowprisoner" (Col. 4:10)
4. "Epaphras, my fellowprisoner" (Phile. 23)
5. "Remember my bonds" (Col. 4:18)

Philemon and Colossians Written During 1st Imprisonment in Rome approx. 62-64 A.D.

1. Paul expected immediate release, (Phile. 22; Phil. 1:19-20; 2:23-24) yet there is no feeling of this at Caesarea or during 2nd imprisonment at Rome. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)
2. Paul expected to visit Philemon (v.22) but not so in Caesarea. (Acts 19:21; 21:11-14)
3. Timothy with Paul now (Phile. 1) yet there is no evidence he was with him in Caesarea.

OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

- | | | |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|
| Vs. | 1-3 | Salutation |
| | 4-7 | Philemon's love and faith |
| | 8-14 | Paul's appeal in love for Onesimus |
| | 15-16 | The benefit of Onesimus's service |
| | 17-20 | Paul seeks some benefit from Philemon |
| | 21-22 | Paul's confidence in Philemon |
| | 23-24 | Salutations from various brethren |
| | 25 | Final salutation of Paul |

CHAPTER ONE

SALUTATION - Vs. 1-3

V. 1

Paul, A Prisoner - Paul changes from his usual greeting of "Paul, an apostle" because this letter is written to a personal friend.

Prisoner - "desmios", an actual prisoner (Matt. 27:15,16). Five times it's used of "prisoner for the Lord" (RSV).

Of Jesus Christ - "for Christ Jesus" (RSV). Paul is a prisoner on behalf of Christ.

Philemon - Means "loving, affectionate".

Fellow Labourer - Compare list of others in Col. 4:7-12.

V. 2

Our Beloved Apphia - Should read, "Apphia our sister" (RSV). According to Chrysostom she was the wife of Philemon.

Archippus - Possibly the son of Philemon and Apphia. He seems to have held some high office (Col. 4:17).

Fellowsoldier - Also used of Epaphroditus - Phil. 2:25. See Paul's exhortation to Timothy to "endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ", for a true soldier's aim is to "please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

The Church - "ekklēsia" - "an assembly" - Refers to the members rather than the building.

In Thy House - Lightfoot claims there is no clear example of a separate building for worship until the 3rd century so the early Christians must have met in their homes.⁽⁴⁾ See other examples: of Aquilla and Priscilla (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19), of Nympha (Col. 4:15), and also possibly in Rom. 16:14-15.

V. 3

Same greeting as Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:2.

PHILEMON'S LOVE AND FAITH - Vs. 4-7

V. 4

I Thank My God - Paul is always very thankful that there are other brethren and sisters striving with him for the Truth. He was sensitive of their needs

and problems, so he prayed for them. We should realize that this is still needful and powerful today, so we should often thank God for the brethren and sisters of our Lord throughout the world and pray that he will be with them to help. Compare Rom. 1:8-9; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:15-16; Phil. 1:3-4; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Col. 1:3.

V. 5

Hearing - Paul is now a prisoner at Rome, but he had heard (probably from Tychicus) a good report of Philemon's devotion to the Truth.

Thy Love And Faith - Here "love" and "faith" are so placed as to distinguish "intellectual and moral conviction" (i.e. faith) from "fervent and practical application" (i.e. love).

Toward The Lord Jesus - Describes the depth and character of his conviction.

Toward All Saints - To know that Philemon remained sound in the faith and concerned about the welfare of others, in a spirit of true loyalty and comradeship, not only in meetings but in everyday relationships, gave Paul good reason to rejoice and be thankful. He is also preparing Philemon to receive Onesimus back because Onesimus is now one of the "saints" to whom Philemon should show his love.

V. 6

"And I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake". (NASB)

The Fellowship Of Your Faith - "The sharing of your faith" (RSV). This carries the idea of being generous, courteous and loving towards others. (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13; Heb. 13:26) Many times the way we live and act in every day life is the best way to encourage others to examine the Truth we have, which is able to govern our actions towards goodness.

Effective - "energēs" - "powerful". cp. Heb. 4:12.

V. 7

For We Have - Should read, "for I have" (RSV).

Great Joy And Consolation - Even in prison Paul could rejoice and be comforted because he knew Philemon was strengthening the brotherhood with his daily example. cp. 2 Cor. 7:13; 1 Cor. 16:17-18; Phile. 20.

Bowels - "splgchna" - "the inward parts", metaphorically like English "heart, the seat of feelings, affections". (2) "hearts" (RSV).

PAUL'S APPEAL IN LOVE FOR ONESIMUS - Vs. 8-14

V. 8

"Though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required" (RSV). Paul had the authority as an apostle to command Philemon to do what was right. (1 Thess. 2:6)

V. 9

Love's - "agapē" - "denotes the love which springs from admiration and veneration (reverential respect), and which chooses its object with decision of will, and devotes a self-denying and compassionate devotion to it. Love in its fullest conceivable form". (2)

I Rather Beseech Thee - In order that Philemon might act out of love, following the example of Christ, rather than by compulsion. cp. v.14.

The Aged - "presbutēs" - an old man. (Lk. 1:18; Tit. 2:2) Many translators render "an ambassador" from "presbeutēs" yet Gk. text doesn't support this. (12) cp. Eph. 6:20; 2 Cor. 5:20.

V. 10

Onesimus - Latinized form of the Greek "Onēsimos" - "useful or profitable". Paul has waited until this point in the letter to mention Onesimus so that he could first build up Philemon for the news. Actually, in the Gk. "Onesimus" appears even at the end of this verse. cp. NASB and Nestle's Text.

I Have Begotten - Paul was the agent God used to bring Onesimus to the Truth so that he could be "born again". Paul uses similar terms in writing to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 4:14-15)

In My Bonds - During Paul's imprisonment.

V. 11

Unprofitable - "achreston". Paul is using a play on words for Onesimus means "profitable". A rebellious slave is really not of much value, but Onesimus now will live up to his name.

V. 12

Sent Again - Back to Philemon.

Thou Therefore Relieve - Not in best MSS. See RSV.

Bowels - see note on V.7

V. 13

I Would Have Retained With Me - Paul continues to stress that Onesimus is now very useful.

In Thy Stead He Might Have Ministered Unto Me - Since Onesimus was Philemon's slave, if Philemon would send him back to Rome, Paul would credit the good accomplished not only to Onesimus, but also to Philemon. Similarly, the labor of ecclesial representatives is not only attributed to themselves, but also to the ecclesia they represent. (1 Cor. 16:17; Phil. 2:30.

V. 14

Without Thy Mind - We should be very careful that we don't become domineering over others when we receive a position of authority, but rather act as a good example that they might be built up and encouraged. (1 Pet. 5:2-3)

But Willingly - Paul recognized that "God loves a cheerful giver" (1 Cor. 9:7-8) because he or she renders goodness with selfless love and joy. Yet many times when we're young we need a little push in the right direction just to get started. This isn't bad, in fact it's quite expected, yet we must remember that someday no one will be there to push and God will not compell or drag us through life. He has provided the way of salvation and given us free will to choose whether or not we will follow that path.

THE BENEFIT OF ONESIMUS' SERVICE - Vs. 15-16V. 15

He Therefore Departed - Paul uses the passive voice and it should be rendered "He was parted". Paul suggests this was the divine way to bring Onesimus to the Truth.

V. 16

Servant - "doulos" - "a slave, one bound to serve, (from "deō" - to bind) one whose will and capacities are wholly at the service of another". (2)

No Longer As A Slave (RSV) - This doesn't mean that Paul thought Philemon should free Onesimus, but that now Onesimus was not just a slave, but a beloved brother in Christ, all the more reason to receive him back joyfully. Onesimus still must perform the duties of a slave and even more so now that he was in Christ. (1 Tim. 6:2; Eph. 6:5-6; Col. 3:22)

PAUL SEEKS SOME BENEFIT FROM PHILEMON - Vs. 17-20V. 17

A Partner - They are fellow workers of Christ. cp. Paul and Titus in 2 Cor. 8:23

V. 18

Wronged Thee, Or Oweth Thee Ought - Onesimus had possibly cheated and robbed Philemon.

I Paul Have Written It With Mine Own Hand - Could mean the whole letter or just Vs. 18-19.

V. 19

I Will Repay It - Paul must have had access to money for Felix thought he could pay a bribe (Acts 24:26), and he lived in his own hired house for 2 years. (Acts 28:30)

How Thou Owest Unto Me Even Thine Own Self Besides - Philemon was probably converted by Paul at Ephesus.

V. 20

Let Me Have Joy Of Thee - Paul received great joy when others in Christ acted in love towards one another.

Refresh My Bowels - See note V. 7

PAUL'S CONFIDENCE IN PHILEMON - Vs. 21-22

V. 21

Confidence In Thy Obedience - Paul showed tremendous confidence in his brethren and sisters. (2 Cor. 2:3; 7:16; Gal. 5:10; 2 Thess. 3:2)

V. 22

But Withal - "At the same time" (RSV)

Prepare Me Also A Lodging - Paul expected a quick freedom and hoped to see Philemon and those at his house once again.

Your (Prayers) - "humōn" - a plural word. (9) Refers to all those mentioned in the greeting (Vs. 1,2)

SALUTATIONS FROM VARIOUS BRETHREN - Vs. 23-24

V. 23

Epaphras - One of the Colossians who is now with Paul. cp. Col. 1:7; 4:12.

Fellowprisoner - Possibly voluntarily lived with Paul in prison along with Aristarchus (Col. 4:10), and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7).

V. 24

Marcus - "Mark" - probably the same as "Mark the cousin of Barnabas" (Col. 4:10 RSV).

Aristarchus - A Thessalonian (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2) who was Paul's companion for part of the trip to Rome.

Demas - Col. 4:14

Lucas - "Luke" - The lone companion of Paul in 2 Tim. 4:11.

Fellow Labourers - cp. note V. 1.

FINAL SALUTATION OF PAUL - V. 25

V. 25

Same as Phil. 4:23 (RSV).

Amen - Not in best MSS. (12) (RSV)

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO COLOSSAE

WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN: See introduction to Philemon.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY: Colossae was about 100 miles from Ephesus in the Lycus River Valley. It was only twelve miles from Hierapolis and Laodicea in the Roman province of Asia. All three had been important cities in times past, but their importance was diminishing. Laodicea was the most important of the three, and Colossae was the least. The region was notorious for earthquakes and volcanic activity. The Lycus River was impregnated with chalk which built amazing natural formations. The land in the valley was very fertile, and the area was famous for its woolen industry. (See introduction to the Letter to Laodicea) The chalking waters of the Lycus River were particularly well suited for dying cloth.

An interesting feature of the region is the fact that Antiochus the Great had transported 2000 Jewish families into the region to establish the area under Roman control. The Jews prospered and flourished, and the Jewish population has been estimated at about 50,000 people in Phrygia and Lydia. (16)

THE ECCLESIA AT COLOSSAE: Most^{*} feel that the ecclesia at Colossae was not founded by Paul (cp. 2:1 where Paul says they have not seen his face), but by Epaphras (1:7). Paul had preached throughout the province of Phrygia (Acts 15:40-41; 16:1-3) and had stayed over two years at Ephesus "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Epaphras probably learned the truth of the gospel from Paul then, and established the Colossian ecclesia after Paul had left.

THE PROBLEM AT COLOSSAE: Heresies seemed to flourish in the Roman province of Asia (now Turkey). In the letters to the seven churches of Asia, several classes of errorists are mentioned. In Ephesus there were those who said they were apostles and were not (Rev. 2:2). In Smyrna there were those who said they were Jews and were not (2:9). In Thyatira the woman Jezebel called herself a prophetess (2:20). In Pergamos the doctrines of Balak and of the Nicolaites were taught (2:14,15). Paul had previously warned the Ephesians of dangerous teachers that were to come (Acts 20:29,30). There were also disciples of John the baptist in the region who had not heard of Christ. We do not know what they believed, but they

* See Barnes Notes of the New Testament: Colossians, for a contrary opinion.

considered themselves still under the law. In the book of Acts, two references are made to this group in Asia: Acts 19:1-7; 18:24-26. Asia was fertile ground for strange doctrines creeping into the church, particularly of Jewish origin. Paul does not mention any immoral behavior of the church or of its members, but the context is of warning to hold fast to things they had. Paul considered them abundant in faith toward God and in love one to another (1:4), generous in hospitality and other good works (1:6) and sound in doctrine (1:23). This relatively young ecclesia needed Paul's exposition on hard to answer questions and difficult arguments. (6)

SHORT COMPARISON BETWEEN EPISTLES TO THE COLOSSIANS AND THE EPHESIANS

The letter to the Ephesians bears a strong resemblance to Colossians, about 80 of its verses containing expressions found in that epistle. In many cases the Greek verb is confined to these two epistles which have phrases and precepts peculiar to themselves. Below are listed some of the verses and expressions common to both epistles.

	<u>COLOSSIANS</u>	<u>EPHESIANS</u>
The Word of Truth	1:5	1:13
Spiritually filled	1:9; 2:10	1:25; 3:19; 5:18
The Walk of Separateness	1:10; 2:6; 4:5	2:10; 4:1; 5:2,8; 5:15
In the Light	1:12	5:8,9
Once in darkness	1:13	4:18; 5:8
Sins forgiven	1:14	1:7
Christ the Head of the Ecclesia	1:18	1:22; 4:15; 5:23
Christ's body, the Ecclesia	1:18,24	1:23; 4:12; 5:23; 5:30, etc
The Fulness	1:19; 2:9	1:23; 3:19
Reconciled thru death of Christ	1:20,21	2:13-16; 1:10
Once alienated from God	1:21	2:12; 4:18
On a foundation	1:23	3:17
Paul a minister	1:25	3:7
Ages and generations	1:26	3:21
Mystery revealed	1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3	1:9; 3:3,7,10; 4:9; 6:19
Riches	1:27; 2:2	1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8; 3:16
Rooted in Christ	2:7	3:17
Built up as a structure	2:7	2:20
Do not be deceived	2:8	4:14
Filled with Fulness	2:10	3:19
Supreme over angelic powers	2:10	1:21
Now risen with Christ	2:12; 3:1	2:6
Made alive with Christ	2:13	2:5
Once dead in sins	2:13	2:1,5
Growth, articulation of body	2:19	4:16
Similar classes of sins reprov'd	3:5-8	4:25; 5:3-5
Similar classes of sins reprov'd	3:12-14	4:2-3, 32
Wrath of God coming	3:6	5:6
The walk of sin	3:7	2:2; 4:17
The old man and the new man	3:9,10	4:22-24
The one body	3:15	4:4
Spiritual songs	3:16,17	5:19-20
Duties of home enforced	3:18; 4:1	5:21-22; 6:6-9
Prayer and intercession	4:2	6:18
Prayer for Paul's preaching	4:3	6:19
Redeeming our opportunities	4:5	5:16
Character, commission of Tychicus	4:7	6:21

The hope which is laid up for you in heaven - i.e. the hope of eternal life. cp. Christ's words "Lay up treasure in heaven" Matt. 6:20; 19:21. Christ will bring the reward when he comes, cp. 2 Tim. 4:8; Phil. 1:20-21

Word of truth - cp. Eph. 1:13

V. 6

As it is in all the world - cp. v.23; Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 24:14; Rom. 10:18. i.e. the extent of the Roman world

And bringeth forth fruit - cp. the parable of the sower in Matt. 13. The fruit is not the number of converts, but the character development of the converts, cp. Gal. 5:22-26.

V. 7

Epaphras - see notes on v.4

Minister - "diakonos" - "minister or deacon" (13). The same Greek word is translated "deacon" in 1 Tim. 3:8.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS - Vs. 9-11

V. 9

Pray for you - see notes on v.3. Paul was praying that they would continue to grow and not fall to false doctrines, v.23; 2:4.

V. 10

Walk - Our life in Christ is compared to walking to the kingdom, cp. 2:6; 4:6; Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:21.

Worthy - It is not that we can be righteous before God, but that He will count us worthy, v. 12-14; 2 Thess. 1:11-12.

Being fruitful - see notes on v.6

Increasing in the knowledge of God - cp. Eph. 4:11-13. This is the purpose of the Bible, that we might know and love God, cp. Jo. 17:3.

V. 11

Strengthened... according to his glorious power - It is not what we can do, but what Christ can do thru us, Eph. 3:16; 6:10; Phil. 4:13.

Patience - "hupomone" - "endurance, continuance" (13).

Longsuffering - "makrothumia" - "longsuffering" (13). 1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22. This is a quality of God.

Joyfulness - It is impossible to show these qualities of patience and longsuffering and still remain joyful without being strengthened by God.

THE ATONEMENT

WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US - Vs. 12-13

V. 12

Giving thanks - cp. v.3

Meet - "hikanoo" - "to make sufficient" (13). Trans. "able" in 2 Cor. 3:6. "qualified" (RSV)

Inheritance - First in a series of phrases describing what God does for us thru Christ, cp. Acts 26:18; Matt. 19:29; Gal. 3:27-29. Inheritance is by law, but we inherit by grace.

Light - An extended parable in the N.T. cp. Jo. 1.

V. 13

Delivered us - Second in the series of phrases. "rhuomai" - "to rescue" (13). cp. Lu. 11:4; Rom. 7:24.

Power of darkness - Also an extended parable in the N.T. cp. Eph. 5:8; Lu. 22:53; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jo. 2:8-11.

Translated - "methistano" - "to put over, translated" (13), "to transpose, transfer, remove from one place to another" (8). Trans. "remove" in 1 Cor. 13:2. "The word is used to describe the mass deportation of people when conquered to another area." (18) This phrase might have had deep meaning for the Jews in the area. See Introduction.

THRU CHRIST - Vs. 14-22

V. 14

Redemption - "a loosing away" (13), "a) to redeem by paying the price b) to let one go free on receiving the price" (8). This phrase amplifies v.13. What Christ has done for us is now discussed in various terms. He delivered us from sin (v.13). This was done by moving us from under sin's reign (Rom. 6:12) to Christ's reign (v.13), by Christ overcoming sin and defeating it (Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:13,14). This can also be spoken of as redemption, where Christ has bought us from sin (v.14) with his blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12). How can sin receive payment? This has stymied men for centuries. An answer is found in the similar case where God redeemed Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 6:6; Deut. 7:8). Instead of receiving payment, Egypt was destroyed; likewise, sin and death did not receive payment, but were conquered thru Christ's death (Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:26) and the shedding of his blood (Heb. 9:22; 10:4,11).

Forgiveness - "aphesis" - "a sending away, a letting go" (13), "a) a release, b) a forgiveness, pardon" (8). cp. redemption notes above.

Forgiveness of sins - cp. Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:25; Acts 13:38. This is the practical benefit of being in Christ. God will not hold our sins against us at the judgement seat. This great blessing (Psa. 32:1-2) is what allows us to be unblameable in God's sight (Col. 1:22).

V. 15

Image - "eikon" - "image, likeness" (13), "a) an image, figure, likeness, b) the image of one, one in whom the likeness of anyone is seen" (8). It is never used in scripture as an exact replica or part of the original. Man is in the image of God, Gen. 1:26 (LXX); 9:6 (LXX); 1 Cor. 11:7. Christ is in the image of God, 2 Cor. 4:4. We are to try and be images of Christ, Col. 3:10. It becomes obvious that what is being referred to is not the physical likeness, but the moral characteristics, cp. Jo. 14:9-11.

Invisible God - cp. 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; Jo. 1:18. This again shows that what is meant here is moral attributes rather than physical characteristics, as how could Christ be the physical image of an invisible God.

Firstborn of every creature - Lit. "the firstborn of all creation." What does firstborn imply? Christ was God's only begotten son, but Adam was chronologically first, Lu. 3:38; 1 Cor. 15:45.

LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN

1. The firstborn of every family was consecrated to God (Ex. 13:2; 22:29) thus inheriting the right of priesthood for the family (Num. 3:12,13; 8:14-18) 2. He had a legal right - being a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17; Ez. 47:13) 3. Held next in honor to his parents (Gen. 49:3) 4. Succeeded in the control of the family or kingdom (2 Chron. 21:3) 5. Firstborn could forfeit his position thru misconduct or incompetency (1 Chron. 5:1; 26:10; Gen. 25:31; 48:5,13-14) 6. Then a younger son assumed the honored position (1 Sam. 16:12) 7. Israel was a national "firstborn" son (Ex. 4:21-23) elevated above all other nations, many of whom existed long before Israel (Gen. 10:10)

Divine principle of younger sons assuming authority over their elder brothers is seen in the cases of Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob, David and his brothers.

LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN APPLIED TO CHRIST

Adam was a son of God (Lu. 3:38). He forfeited his right thru misconduct. God promised he would send forth a younger son to assume position of firstborn (Psa. 89:24-27). Christ the second Adam, received precedence over the first and Christ is now the firstborn.

1. He was consecrated to God (Lu. 1:32,33; 2:22,23) 2. As firstborn, he receives a double portion of the Divine inheritance (Rom. 8:17,29; Heb. 1:3,4; Phil. 2:9-11) 3. Acts on behalf of the Father within the Divine family and in government of his kingdom (Rev. 3:21; Jer. 3:17) 4. He is the High Priest in the house of his Father (Heb. 4:15) (18)

Christ has now been made the firstborn. He is also the chronological firstborn of the new creation, i.e. first born from the dead, (1:18; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 1:6; 12:23; Rev. 3:14) thus, firstborn of every creation.

Creature - "ktisis" see notes on v.16

V. 16

The first thing this verse states is that Christ is the creator of all things. What does this mean? What are the all things? The churches would have us believe it is referring to the creation in Genesis. However, a careful consideration of the context and the scripture uses of the words and phrases does not support this.

By him - or "in him"

All things - It is necessary to follow this phrase thru this section, v.16 (twice); v.17 (twice); v.18 (once); v.20 (once); cp. its use in Heb. 2:8,10

15

Create - "to make habitable, to people, hence to found a city, colony, state, etc., in the Bible to create: of God creating the world, man: Mk. 13:19; to form, shape, i.e. completely to change, to transform (of moral or new creation of the soul, as it is called)" (8). As we shall soon see, this applies to the new creation. It is used in this sense in Eph. 2:10,15 (trans. "make"); 4:23-25; Col. 3:9-10. Thus we are new creatures, 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15. This usage is consistent with the O.T., cp. Ps. 51:10; Isa. 4:5; 43:1,7; 57:19; 65:17,18. It is not the verb in Gen. 1-3 in the LXX.

That are in heaven . . . in earth - Lit. "on earth". This is different from the creation in Gen. which was the creation of the heaven and the earth. cp. Acts 14:15; Ps. 96:5; Gen. 1:1 The creative work talked about in Colossians is being done to things on earth and to things in heaven.

Visible and invisible - The creation in Gen. was concerned only with visible things, cp. Heb. 11:3; Gen. 1-2.

Whether - This introduces more important qualifications of the phrase "all things". We already know they are on earth and "in" heaven. Now we are given some examples.

Thrones - Not in the sense of a physical chair, but in the sense of the power and authority that is exercised by the person seated on the throne, cp. Matt. 19:28.

Dominion - "kuriotees" - "lordship (from "kurios" - "lord")" (13). Again, the aspect of rulership and authority. The word is used of human government in Jude 8; 2 Pet. 2:10 (trans. "government")

Principality - "arche" - "beginning" (13). This word has the same general meaning as thrones and dominion, the abstract concept of the authority held by rulers, as will be seen from its use in scripture. It usually occurs with:

Power - "exousia" - "privilege, authority, power" (13). Again, this signifies the idea of power being held by an agent of government. Used with "arche" to signify human government: Tit. 3:1; Lu. 12:11 ("arche" trans. "magistrates"); Lu. 20:20 ("arche" trans. "authority").

Thrones Dominions Principalities Powers - We thus see that these words bear little connection with the creation in Gen., but are referring to a different creation. We can also see that these words mean rulerships, dominions, and authority in the abstract sense, i.e. not the person but the power. From the references it is seen that human rulers can exercise this power. Many infer from Eph. 1:18-23 and from Heb. 1,2 that angels also exercise this power. (Another important scriptural principality and power is death. Christ will reign until he has conquered all principality ("arche" trans. "authority") and power, and the last will be death. Death and sin are spoken of as rulers (Rom. 6:12,13,14). (Notice particularly v.14 where dominion is "hurieuo", which is the verb form of dominion above); Rom. 5:14.) The question now is when were rulerships and authorities changed? The context is of atonement and redemption thru Christ's death (v. 12-14, 18-22). Were rulerships and authorities created at Christ's death? cp. 2:14-16. They were triumphed over. Above we noted that create means "completely to change, transform". This was definitely done at Christ's death. The present holders of principalities and powers were destroyed and Christ

took over all rulerships and authorities. This was true of human governments (Dan. 7:21-22, 26-27; Rev. 11:15). This is not yet manifest from our point of view, which is explained in Heb. 2:5-8. It was accomplished thru the cross. Sin and death, as rulers and authorities, were changed at the cross (Heb. 2:24; Rom. 14:9). This, like the power over the nations, will not be made manifest (visible) until after the 1000 years, Heb. 2:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:24-26. The rulership and authority of the angels was changed, as Christ took from them their position, Heb. 1:4-6, 13, 14; 2:5, 7-8; 1 Pet. 3:22. Not only this, but the saints, the multitudinous Christ will replace the angels in doing Christ's work. We are now spoken of in "heavenly places" in Christ, Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; Heb. 3:1; 6:4.*

By him - "dia", or "thru" him

For him - cp. Heb. 2:10

This interpretation of v.16 is consistent with the chapter (see also v.20), and all the phrases are used as elsewhere in scripture. Any other interpretation would put new meaning to all the phrases and imply much about the Gen. creation that is not mentioned any place else in scripture.

V. 17

Before - "pro" - "in front of" (13); "before: a) of Place b) of Time c) of superiority or pre-eminence" (8); thus, "in front of or before place, time or superiority" (2). Used of place: Acts 5:23; 12:6; of above: 1 Pet. 4:8; Jam. 5:12. It is interesting to note that 1 Pet. 4:8 and Jam. 5:12 are the only occurrences of the exact phrase. "Christ is set forth as superior to, being the complete and supreme manifestation of the Father. He is "before" in the sense of pre-eminence 1 Pet. 3:22; Jo. 3:31. (18)

Consist - "sunistemi" - "to set, put together" (13); "a) to place together b) to commend c) to show, prove, establish d) to put together" (8). The whole schema of redemption is based and stands together in Christ.

V. 18

Head of the body, the church - This comparison of the ecclesia as a body, with Christ as the head, is common in the N.T., particularly in Eph. and Col. cp. 2:10, 19.** "The figure used is that of a human body, (and directive power) of which is Christ, and the torso of which is the ecclesia. By implication, the ecclesia has had its natural head removed (and therefore, its thinking based on the flesh), and it is wearing a new head whence comes the mind of Christ." (17)

* Perhaps here it would complete the argument if we consider Eph. 3:10. It was the purpose of God for the church to reveal his purpose to the rulerships and authorities of the world, cp. Matt. 10:17-19; Acts 9:15. We feel assured that this was fulfilled, by reading thru the book of Acts and noticing how much of the book is devoted to recording this witnessing. The idea of rulers being in heaven is common in the O.T. and the N.T.

** Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4, 12, 15, 16; 5:23, 30; Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; 10:17; 6:15

Church - "ekklesia" - "that which is called out" (13). We use the Greek word "ecclesia" since the word "church" is usually associated with "the church," the Catholic (universal) church and her present daughters.

Beginning - The firstborn from the dead. Christ is the beginning of the church, and the beginning of the new creation, Rev. 3:14; 1:5; 1 Cor. 15:20,23. See notes on firstborn in v.15.

All things - see notes on v.16

Might have pre-eminence - or "might be first" It is very important to notice that it is thru Christ's obedience to death that he obtained this great honor and position, and it was not something that he already had, cp. Heb. 1:2-4; 2:7-9; Phil. 2:9-11; Acts 2:34-37.

V. 19

Pleased - "eudokeo" - "to think well" (13). This is the same word as in "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" Matt. 3:17.

Fulness - "pleeroma" - "fulness" (13). This and related words are frequently used in Colossians. cp. 2:9. "pleero" is used in 1:9,25 (trans. "fulfill"); 2:10 (trans. "complete"); 4:12 (trans. "complete"); 4:17. God has given Christ a high position and has given him all power, Jo. 3:35,36. Here again, the fulness is not inherent, but given to Christ by God. We are to be filled with the fulness of God thru Christ, Eph. 3:17-19; 4:13.

V. 20

Made peace - Another phrase to describe our redemption. We as Gentiles were alienated from the covenant people (Eph. 2:12) and enemies of God (Rom. 5:8,10), but are now at peace, entirely thru God's effort (Jo. 3:16).

Blood of his cross - see notes on v.14

Reconcile - "apokatollatto" - "to change thoroughly from" (13); "to reconcile completely (i.e. bring back to a former state of harmony)" (8); a) to resign oneself, adjust b) to reunite, bring together c) to harmonize, make consistent (Webster). cp. Eph. 2:16-20. Everything will be brought back into harmony in the kingdom, cp. Num. 14:21.

Himself - to God; cp. 2 Cor. 5:18-21

All things - see notes on v.16

In earth . . . in heaven - cp. notes on v. 16. All things have been changed, all enmitities have been reconciled: 1. nations vs. nations (3:11) 2. Jew vs. Gentile (Eph. 2:14-15) 3. animals vs. animals; animals vs. man (Isa. 11:6) 4. earth vs. man 5. God vs. man

V. 21

And you - i.e. the Gentiles, us

Sometime - "pote" - "once, at sometime or other" (13)

Alienated - "apallotrioo" - "to give to others" (13); "to alienate, estrange, to be shot out from one's fellowship" (8).

Alienated and enemies - An expanded exposition of this by Paul is in Eph. 2:2,3,11-13; 4:17-18. We were totally and completely estranged from God, entirely without hope.

In your mind by wicked works - Not only were we alienated from God by our actions, but also by our minds. Our whole nature is godless, cp. Tit. 1:15-16.

Yet - i.e. even though man is so wicked

Now hath he reconciled - Not only by forgiving our sins (v.14) and taking us into his kingdom (v.13), but also by cleansing our minds and consciences, cp. Eph. 2:3; Heb. 9:14; 10:22.

V. 22

In the body of his flesh through death - cp. Eph. 2:14-16. Christ conquered sin, the strongest force in our flesh, cp. Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14-18.

Present you - i.e. at the judgement seat, cp. v.28; 1 Thess. 3:13

Unblameable - "amomos" - "without blemish, faultless, unblameable"(8)

Holy, unblameable, unreprouvable - This is something that is impossible for us to do, cp. Eph. 5:27; 1:4; Jude 24-25. Not only can Christ present us before God as guiltless, but also as free from charges of guilt. It takes great faith to believe this, Heb. 11:6.

In his sight - i.e. not because we are this way, but thru God's love, grace and forgiveness He considers us righteous.

THE CONDITION - V. 23

V. 23

If - This is the condition applies to us if we want to be without sin.

Continue - At baptism we are saved (i.e. redeemed), and written in the book of life. If we don't make it, it is because we have removed ourselves from this position, cp. 1 Jo. 2:24; Eph. 1:11; 2:5-10.

Faith - What God expects from us, Heb. 11, Rom. 4

Grounded - "themelioo" - "to lay a foundation"(13); cp. Eph. 3:17

Settled - "a) sitting, sedentary b) firm, immovable, steadfast" (8); cp. 1 Cor. 15:58.

Every creature - cp. v. 6; Acts 2:5

I am made a minister - The false teachers were attacking Paul personally. They charged: 1. If he were God's messenger he would not be afflicted and imprisoned, v.24, (1 Th. 3:3-5) 2. He was preaching by his own not by divine appointment, v.25, (Gal. 1:11-16), especially in his appeal to the Gentiles that the law was ended, v.25-27. 3. His

absence indicated lack of interest, 2:1,5; (1 Th. 2:17-20) 4. His concern was from fear of losing converts and consequent financial support, 1:28-29; 2:2,5; (2 Cor. 12:17-18). Also cp. Eph. 3:7.

V. 24

Who - I (RSV)

Rejoice - cp. notes on v.11

Sufferings for you - cp. Eph. 3:13. Paul is suffering for the Gentiles and for the ecclesias of God, cp. Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:10.

Fill up - "antana-pleroo" - "to fill up instead of" (13); lit. to fill up in turn

Behind - "husterema" - "what is behind" (13); "deficiency, that which is lacking, want, destitution" (8); Lit. 'that which is lacking.' It is not that Christ's sufferings were insufficient, but that when we suffer for the gospel's sake (not all the things we suffer are for the gospel's sake, 1 Pet. 3:14-18), we are partaking of sharing Christ's afflictions, cp. 2 Cor. 1:4-7. This is why Peter tells us to rejoice when our stand for the truth (either preaching or our daily actions that make us stand out) causes us embarrassment and petty persecution, 1 Pet. 4:12-13.

In my flesh - cp. Paul's suffering, 2 Cor. 11:23-29.

V. 25

I am made a minister - "diakonos" see notes on v. 1,23

Dispensation - "oikonomia" cp. English 'economy' "law or arrangement of a house" (13); "the management of a household, spec. the management of others' property" (8). Also trans. "stewardship" in Lu. 16:2-4; cp. Eph. 3:2; Paul is the divinely appointed steward over the household of God, 2 Cor. 11:28; 1 Cor. 4:1.

To fulfill the word of God - Paul fulfills the prophecy that the gospel would be taken to the Gentiles, Rom. 15:8-12.

V. 26

Mystery - "musterion" - "what is only known to the initiated" (13), cp. v. 17; 2:2; 4:3. In this case* the mystery is Christ the hope of glory, revealed to the Gentiles. In general, the kingdom as preached by Christ (Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11), rejected by the Jews (Rom. 11:25), and taken to the Gentiles, is meant here (cp. 1 Cor. 4:1).

Hid - Rom. 16:25,26; Tit. 1:2

Ages - "aion" - "age, dispensation" (13); i.e. periods of time. The Mosaic dispensation was probable one of these ages.

* The word mystery, "musterion" occurs about 27 times in the N.T. and is always spoken about as something revealed to the believer, never as something not understood. This is a far cry from what the church teaches about mysteries. Consult a good concordance for a list of occurrences.

Generations - "generation" (13); "a) a begetting, birth, nativity b) the multitude of men living at the same time c) an age" (8); cp. Eph. 3:21

Saints - see notes on v.2

V. 27

Riches - "ploutos" - "riches" (13). Used of spiritual riches and material, "this is a favorite word of Paul to describe the quality of divine attributes and gifts" (4). cp. 2:2; 3:16; also Rev. 3:18.

Christ in you - cp. Eph. 3:17; 2 Cor. 13:5. The result should be that we are in the image of Christ, cp. Gal. 4:19.

Hope of glory - cp. Rom. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:13,14; 1 Pet. 1:4,10

V. 28

Warning - "noutheteo" - "to put in before the mind, warn" (13); cp. Acts 20:31. Constant attention must be given the scripture or our fleshly minds will take us away from the truth.

Teaching - Part of the commission of the apostles, Matt. 28:20; We must always continue to learn.

All wisdom - All the knowledge and wisdom that is necessary for salvation is able to be understood by everyone, no matter how educated or uneducated one is, cp. v. 9

Present - cp. v. 22

Perfect - "teleios" - "ended, complete" (13); "The word 'perfect' ('full-grown' in the R.V.) is from a Greek word meaning 'having reached its end, finished, mature, complete.' In Heb. 5:14, it is used of those who, as to physical development, are full-grown, or mature, and here, as opposed to the Grk. word for an infant, describes adulthood." (17); cp. also Col. 4:12

Every man* - This phrase is used three times in this verse for emphasis. Paul is stressing that it is possible to save all the called. If we are not judged worthy, it will be because we didn't want Christ and didn't listen to Paul's and others' admonitions.

V. 29

Labor - "kopiao" - "to labor, be wearied out" (13)

Striving - "agonizomai" - "to agonize, contend" (13). Paul uses a strong verb here to show the great effort of his work on our behalf. "Agonizomai is used of an athlete contending in the arena" (4); cp. 2:1.

Worketh in me - cp. v.11; 1 Cor. 15:10-11

* Many feel that Paul is also commenting on a heresy that was later called gnosticism. Among other things, it did not believe in Christ as unique in person and position (cp. v. 16-10), and salvation was only available to a select few that had the special knowledge and understood the special mysteries, cp. v. 21-23, 26-28.

CHAPTER 2

OUTLINE

Vs. 1-7 Paul's labour, effort and anxiety to extend the Truth to others; His concern for the Colossians and their neighbors.

Vs. 8-15 Caution against mischeivous heresies and false teachings.

Vs. 16-23 Practises advanced by the false teachers, with particular claims of Jewish observances, angel-worship and ascetic rules.

PAUL'S LABOUR FOR THE SAINTS - Vs. 1-3

V. 1

For I Want You To Know How Greatly I Strive For You (RSV) - "Strive" - "agōn" - "a struggle, a contest". (10) Our word agony is derived from this Greek word. Paul is continuing the metaphore from 1:29. But how could Paul strive for them while he was in prison? He struggled for them thru intense prayer. Paul prays:

1. "That their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love." (V. 2 RSV)
2. And that they might enjoy the riches (benefits) of a full knowledge and understanding "of God's mystery, of Christ". (V. 2 RSV)

Compare Epaphras who "laboured fervently" (agōnizomai) for them in his prayers. (4:12)

Laodicea - Capital of Phrygia.

As Many As Have Not Seen My Face In The Flesh - Although Paul had not visited Colossae or Laodicea, he encourages them in that he is striving for them because his aim is to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (1:28), whether he had seen them or not.

V. 2

Comforted - "Encouraged, confirmed" (11).

Knit Together - "To join or knit together, unite" (2).

In Love - Love is the bond of unity in Christ. cp. 3:14; Eph. 4:2,3; Phil. 2:1-5.

Understanding - A knowledge of the 1st principles and the ability to apply them to a given situation. (1) cp. 1:9.

To The Acknowledgement - "eis epignōsis" - "Resulting in the full knowledge" (11).

Mystery Of God - God's secret which is hidden in Christ. cp. 1:26

OF God, And Of The Father, And Of Christ - Should read: "God's mystery, of Christ"(RSV). "And of the Father" is not found in the best MSS.(12)

V. 3

In Whom - i.e. in Christ.

Hid - "Hidden from the common gaze"(16), so that God must reveal them and we must respond in faith before they are uncovered.

All The Treasures - The "all fulness" of 1:19; 2:9. Everything is to be found in Christ; nothing nor no one else is needed, for Jesus himself contains the true wisdom and knowledge of God. Lk. 1:52; 1 Cor. 1:24,30; Rom. 11:23/

Knowledge - "That by which a person grasps the Truth"(16).

Wisdom - The ability to apply the principles of the Truth in everyday life.

WARNING AND ENCOURAGEMENT - Vs. 4-7

V. 4

Beguile - "To reckon wrong, to deceive by false reasoning, delude."(11)

Enticing Words - Used of the persuasive power of a lawyer's speech in court when he makes evil appear as good.(16) "Persuasive speech".(11) The heretics were using persuasive arguments on the Colossian believers and leading some astray.

V. 5

In The Spirit - i.e. in thought and feeling. cp. 1 Cor. 5:3,4; 1 Thess. 2:17.

Order - "taxis" - A military word that meant "A rank or an ordered arrangement"(1). This is a good attribute of an ecclesia. 1 Cor. 14:40.

Steadfastness - "stereōma" - A solid bulwark or an immovable phalanx.(16) cp. 1 Pet. 5:9.

V. 6

Received - to become acquainted with Christ thru an understanding of the Word. 1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:12; 1 Thess. 2:13.

Walk - Paul assures them they have the Truth and that they must now live in it. cp. 1:10.

V. 7

Rooted - Literally - "Having been rooted".(12) They had received an understanding of the 1st principles. Compare metaphore in 1:6; Eph. 3:17.

Built Up - Literally - "Being built up".(12) Present participle in Greek

word here speaks of continuous action.(11) Refers to their growth in spiritual maturity.

Established - Again the present participle in Gk. implies a continuous action "constantly being established".(11) Thru maturity in Christ, they were always to know for sure that they had the Truth.

Abounding - "To be over and above, more than enough".(2)

Therein - Not in the Greek. cp. RSV (12)

With ("en" - in) Thanksgiving - not proud of having the Truth, but thankful to God for all His marvelous Blessings. cp. Col. 3:15,17; 4:2; 1:12; Eph. 5:20

WARNING OF THE FALSE TEACHINGS - Vs. 8-23

Aspects Of The Heresy

1. Claimed circumcision was necessary. V. 11
2. Condemned them for not keeping the rituals of the Law of Moses. V. 16
3. Promoted voluntary humility and worship of angels based on visions. V. 18
4. Advanced asceticism as useful and necessary. Vs. 21-23

Basis Of Heresy

Christ is not supreme over all things, for he is only one of the manifestations of God and even then probably not the highest.

Results Of The Error

1. Tended to lower the position of Christ and thereby minimized the honor and reverence due to him.
2. Led to believe in salvation by works rather than God's grace.

Paul's Reply

Jesus is supreme over all things and in him one can enjoy a true hope and blessings of God that cannot be surpassed or added on to.

V. 8

Beware - "Be constantly looking out, keep a watchful eye ever open".(11)

Spoil - "Robs".(12)

Philosophy - "Vain speculation".(4)

Vain - "Empty, devoid of truth, futile, fruitless, without effect".(11)

Tradition - "Delivery, i.e. the act of delivering over one to another".(2)
These were delivered by men only, as opposed to those traditions delivered by God thru the apostles. 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:2

Rudiments - "stoicheion" - "Elementary teachings and practises".(11) This

word applies to the elements of which the Mosaic order of things was composed - (Gal. 4:3-9; 5:21). In this case it especially means the external rituals and restrictions:

1. Of circumcision, which showed physically the need to spiritually separate from the works of the flesh.
2. Of the Law:
 - a. Unclean foods gave instruction on personal holiness.
 - b. Holy days imposed devotion and reverence.
 - c. The Sabbath was a reminder of the rest to come.
3. Of voluntary fastings which were supposed to bring self-control of the body, yet really were not helpful in checking the indulgences of the flesh.

THE FULNESS OF CHRIST - Vs. 4-10

V. 9

Fulness - "plērōma" - "A full measure".(10) For "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father), Full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1:14) When Moses asked God to show him His Glory, God said He would make all His goodness pass before Moses and He would proclaim His Name. (Ex. 33:18,19) "And the LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Ex. 34:6) Jesus is filled with these divine attributes. He is "an eradiated brightness of His (God's) glory and an exact representation of his very being". (Heb. 1:3 Rhm) Therefore Jesus could say, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father". (Jn. 14:9)

Godhead - "theotēs" - "Divinity, divine nature".(10) "deity".(RSV)

Bodily - Jesus is a physical manifestation of his Father. (Jn. 14:9)

V. 10

And Ye Are Complete In Him - "and ye are in him having been filled".(12) "complete" - "plēroō" - "to fill up, fill full".(13) In Christ, we also can be filled up with all the fulness of deity thru a knowledge and understanding of the love of Christ. (Eph. 3:19; 4:13) For Jesus has said, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they might be one, even as we are one ... And I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them". (Jn. 17:22-26) We must seek to reflect the divine attributes more and more every day by developing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives; "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control". (Gal. 5:22-23 RSV) Then, in the age to come, the "all fulness" might be pleased to dwell within us forever.

THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION - Vs. 11-12

V. 11

Circumcision Made Without Hands - Physical circumcision was meant to have a

spiritual application (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 6:10), yet many of the Jews had failed to see this. The only way to truly put away the works of the flesh is thru the circumcision of Christ, which is accomplished without hands and is far more complete; for not only the foreskin, but the whole body of flesh is put off. When we are baptised into Christ, "our old man is crucified with him" (Rom. 6:6), and thru his death we walk in newness of life, cutting off the works of our flesh. (Gal. 5:24, Phil. 3:3)

Putting Off - "stripping off, despoiling". (2)

Of The Sins - Not found in best MSS. (12) (RSV)

Body Of The Flesh - The fleshly desires that must be stripped off so that the attributes of Christ can be put on.

V. 12

Buried With Him In Baptism - Into death (Rom. 6:4). The old man is cut off in the circumcision of Christ, therefore Paul writes, "For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God". (Col. 3:3 RSV)

Wherein Also Ye Are Risen With Him - It is only when baptism into the death of Christ that God can then raise us up with him in the heavenly places. (Eph. 1:19,20; 2:5,6) We experience a spiritual death and then resurrection that can only be accomplished in Christ. (Rom. 6:3-5)

Through The Faith Of The Operation Of God - Thru our belief that God will forgive us of our sins and that he, "is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing". (Jude 24 RSV) This is "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might". (Eph. 1:19 RSV)

Operation - "energeia" - "Power in exercise". (11)

Hath Raised Him - cp. Heb. 13:20,21; 1 Pet. 1:18-21

DELIVERANCE FROM THE MOSAIC CURSE - Vs. 13-15

V. 13

Being Dead In Your Sins - They were spiritually dead because they lived in darkness.

Hath He (God) Quickened (Made Alive) Together With Him - and "made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus". (Eph. 2:1-7)

V. 14

Blotting Out - "wiping out". (12) Ancient documents were written on papyrus (a kind of paper) or vellum (substance from animal skins). The ink that was used had no acid in it so the writing could be wiped out by sponging it away. (16) cp. Acts 3:19; Rev 3:5

Handwriting - "cheirographon" - "It literally means an autograph; but its technical meaning - which everyone would understand - was a note of hand signed by a debtor acknowledging his indebtedness. It was almost exactly what we call an IOU. It was signed admission of debt and default." (16)

Ordinances - The rules and requirements of the Law of Moses. cp. Eph. 2:15

That Was Against Us - The curse of the Law was upon all those who were under the Law. (Gal. 3:10-12; Deut. 27:26; 2 Cor. 3:7-9; Jas. 2:10)

Contrary - "opposed, adverse". (2)

Took It Out Of The Way - Eph. 2:14-15; Heb. 8:13

Nailing It To His Cross - "To the cross". (12) The indictment of the Law which was against us was crucified on the cross. (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21)

V. 15

Spoiled - "to strip off, uncloth". (13)

Principalities and Powers - The rulership of sin that was destroyed in Christ's death when, "the prince of this world" was cast out. (Jn. 12:31) See note on 1:16.

Made A Shew Of Them Openly - "Made a public example of them" (RSV)

Triumphing Over Them - 2 Cor. 2:14 is only other occurrence. cp. Rom. 3:25

In It - "en autō" - "in it" (i.e. the cross) or "in himself".

FREEDOM FROM THE LAW - Vs. 16-23

Judge You - "Take you to task, sit in judgement". (11) cp. Rom. 14:3-4, 10, 13; 1 Cor. 10:23-27.

Meat - "brōsis" - 1) "The act of eating". 2) As almost everywhere in Greek writings, "that which is eaten, food, aliment". (8)

Drink - "posis" - "A drinking, drink". (8)

Holyday - "A festival or Holyday". (11)

New Moon - cp. Num. 28:11

Sabbath Days - "sabbatōn" - A plural word in the Greek yet only in the sense that the sabbath was repeated once every week. When God said, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8), the word used in the Septuagint is "sabbatōn". Compare similar usages: Ex. 35:3; Num. 15:32, 33; 28:9; Deut. 5:12, 15; Jer. 17:22; Ez. 22:26; 46:1, 4, 12. Therefore, many translations read "a sabbath" rather than the plural. There is no way for Seventh Day Adventists to get around Paul's point. The sabbath day itself was only a shadow pointing towards the millennial rest to come.

A Shadow - "An image cast by an object and representing the form of that object".
(3) The Law, with all its rituals and restrictions, was only a physical copy of the spiritual reality which was to come when the Mosaic dispensation ended.

The Body Is Of Christ - "The body is Christ's"(RV) This is the substance of reality as opposed to the shadow of the Law.

CHRIST IS THE ONLY MEDIATOR - Vs. 18-18

Beguile You Of Your Reward - "katabrabeuō" -

1. To decide as an umpire against one.
2. To declare him unworthy of the prize.
3. To defraud of the prize of victory. (8)

Our prize is the crown of life. (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10) Let us take heed to the words of Jesus to "hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown." (Rev. 3:11 RSV)

Voluntary Humility - "Taking pleasure in humility".(14) An outward show of humility in order to glorify ourselves in the eyes of others.

Worshipping of Angels - Once again an outward show of humility. "Worshipping" - "The ceremonial or external service of religion, the external form of worship".(2)

Which He Hath Not Seen - "Not" - omitted by most authorities.(12) (RV) (RSV) Refers to the so-called "visions" of the false teachers.

Vainly - "without reason or cause", cp. 1 Cor. 4:6, 8:1.

Puffed Up - The knowledge of the false teachers was not mixed with love, therefore they became conceited. (1 Cor. 8:1)

Fleshly Mind - The false teachers claimed that by their asceticism they cleansed themselves from the evils of the flesh, yet the thoughts of the flesh controlled their minds and bodies. (Rom. 7:25)

"And not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together though its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God." (RSV)

Not Holding Fast To The Head - The false teachers were not acknowledging the superiority of Christ.

Nourished And Knit Together - We receive our strength from Christ, and thru him we are united as one body.

Grows With A Growth That Is From God - 1 Cor. 3:6,7; 2 Pet. 3:18

ASCETICISM DOESN'T HELP CONTROL SIN - Vs. 20-23

V. 20

If Ye Be Dead - "If you died" (RSV) (12) 2 Cor. 5:14-15. We have died to sin, (Rom. 6:2) and died to the Law. (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 2:19)

Rudiments - see note on 2:8

Ye Subject - Greek word is in the middle voice so should be, "to subject oneself", therefore RV renders "why do ye subject yourselves to ordinances". God looks for faith in us, not the perfect following of self-imposed regulations and disciplines. (Heb. 11:6)

V. 21

Touch Not ... - Restrictions which led to an outward show of righteousness and led to a belief in salvation by works.

V. 22

Which All Are To Perish With The Using - The false teachers stressed the importance of restricted use of meats and drinks, but this importance disappears when one realizes that these things perish when they are used. "Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from the outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart, but his stomach and so passes on? (Thus he declared all foods clean.)" (Mk. 7:18-19 RSV) cp. Rom. 14:20

Commandments and Doctrines Of Men - The same problem the scribes and pharisees had. (Mk. 7:6-9)

V. 23

A Shew Of Wisdom - An outward appearance of wisdom.

Will Worship - A mode of ceremonial worship chosen for one's self. (2)

Humility - Only in outward show towards others. V. 18

Neglecting Of The Body - "Hard treatment of the body". (11) "Severity of the body", (RSV) i.e. severe physical asceticism.

Not In Any Honor - "But they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh." (RSV) Restrictions such as these are not any help at all in stopping the lusts of the flesh which result in sin. cp. 3:5-9.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCERNING THINGS ABOVE VS. THINGS ON EARTH - Vs. 1-17

INTRODUCTION - Vs. 1-4

This section is concerned with the things above, the new man, and the things below. Baptism is a commitment of one's whole life for an entire lifetime. If we claim to be Christ's, the sum and direction of our life must be Godward. Failure will be forgiven (1:14) if we are seeking Christ.

V. 1

Risen - cp. 2:12,20

Seek - "seteo" - "to seek, desire, require, question (13); cp. Christ's words in Matt. 6:33; cp. Rom. 2:7.

Things . . . above - cp. 3:2,12; 1:5

Right hand - Christ's position at the Father's right hand (Matt. 22:44) is a position that is below the Father, cp. 1 Cor. 15:24-28. The idea of Christ being equal to the Father never crossed Paul's mind.

V. 2

Set your affection - "phroneo" - "to mind, think" (13); "set your mind" (RSV); This is a parallel to v.1; cp. Rom. 8:5 (trans. "mind"); Phil. 2:5 (trans. "mind"). Paul is emphasizing our attitude of life.

Things on the earth - cp. c. 5-9 where the things of the old man, the things of the flesh are listed, Phil. 3:18-20.

V. 3

For ye are dead - or "for you have died; cp. 2:11-13,20. Our life before baptism is now non-existent, and we no longer follow the things of the flesh, the things we had wanted to do.

Life - cp. v. 4; Jo. 3:16

Hidden with Christ in God - cp. Gal. 2:20; Rev. 2:17. Our life hidden in Christ will not be seen until he appears, cp. v.4.

V. 4

Who is our life - Christ is our life, as described in 1:12-23; Jo. 14:6

Then - When Christ appears, we shall be glorified. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:16,17; 1 Jo. 3:2.

In glory - A word associated with God and Christ, cp. 1:11; 27

V. 5

Mortify - "nekroo" - "to put to death, deaden" (13); Since we are dead (v.3), we must put to death our earthly desires, cp. v.2; Gal. 5:24.

Members - "melos" - "a member, limb, part of the body" (13). Our members are not to be instruments of unrighteousness (Rom. 6:13,19). If even one of our members is, we must pluck it out (Matt. 5:27-30) otherwise, we will become captured by sin (Rom. 7:21-25).

Upon the earth - cp. v.2; These are from within man, Mk. 7:21; Gal. 5:19-21

Inordinate affection - "passion" (RSV); cp. Rom. 1:26 (trans. "vile affection") and 1 Thess. 4:5 (trans. "lust"), which indicates the extremes of the lusts of the flesh.

Evil concupiscence - "evil desire" (RSV)

Covetousness - "pleonexia" - "the wish to have more" (13). It is worth noting that the apostle always ranks covetousness with these base passions (6). cp. Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 6:10. Paul says no covetous man will be in the kingdom, Eph. 5:5.

Idolatry - "eidololatreia" - "worship of idols" (13). Anything material that we spend our time on becomes an idol in our lives. We develop desires for these idols, and they replace God's rightful place in our mind and time.

Comment on v.5 - Some may say that even before they found the truth they never did any of these things. This may be true, but, because we never had the opportunity to act out a sin doesn't mean we will not be judged for it. We will be judged for our thoughts and intents (Matt. 5:28), whether or not we were able to complete them in action. This has its advantages and disadvantages. We can control our actions and deceive everyone but God, or we can direct our life to God, and even though we fail, He will accept us.

V. 6

Thing's sake - "on account of" (RSV)

The wrath of God cometh - God is going to judge this world thru Christ, cp. Rom. 2:5; 1 Thess. 1:10.

V. 7

Walked - see notes on 1:10

Sometime - see notes on 1:21

V. 8

Put off - "apotithemai" - "to put away" (13). Used of putting off clothes in Acts 7:58. This word is used of laying aside sin in Heb. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:1. We must strip away sin as completely as we strip off clothes for a shower.

Blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth - James tells us in no uncertain terms in chap. 3 of his epistle that our tongue will tell our character as fruit identifies a tree. It can defile the whole body. See Christadelphian article "Glossitis", Dec. 1972.

V. 9

Lie not - cp. Eph. 4:25; Lev. 19:11; Jer. 9:3-6. Christ tells us to let our nays be nay and our yeas be yeas (Matt. 5:37), i.e. our words should always be as true as when we have sworn to tell the truth.

Put off - "apekduomai" - "to unclothe oneself" (13). This is not the same word as in v.8. The only other occurrence of this word is in 2:15 (trans. "spoiled"). "Wholly to put off" or "strip off from one's self" (18). We are to follow Christ's example.

Old man - Our previous body, now dead, is created thru Christ into the new man (v. 10; Eph. 4:22). See Paul's expanded exposition in Rom. 6.

Deeds - We will be judged on whether we do the deeds of the old man or the deeds of the new man, cp. Matt. 16:27 (trans. "works"). Paul says we must kill the deeds of the old man, Rom. 8:13.

THINGS ABOVE - Vs. 10-15

Vs. 10

Put on - "enduo" - "to clothe, go into clothing" (13), cp. v. 8,9. i.e. put on the new man as thoroughly as we put off the old man

Renewed - "anakainoo" - "to make new again" (13); "to cause to grow up new, to make new" (8). Only other occurrence of word, 2 Cor. 4:16; cp. Psalms. 51:10.

Knowledge - "epignosis" - see notes on 1:9; cp. Eph. 4:13. A lack of understanding alienates us from God. Eph. 4:18.

Image - "eikon" - As Christ is in the image of the Father, we are to be in the image of Christ, see notes on 1:15. Notice that many of the phrases applied to Christ are applied to the saints, (fulness, 1:19, etc)

V. 11

Greek nor Jew - Jews are God's chosen people, the keepers of the oracles of God, as opposed to the Greeks, who were leaders in worldly wisdom.

Circumcision nor uncircumcision - The division of the world from a Jewish point of view, cp. 2:11, 13.

Barbarian - "foreigner, alien" (13). i.e. one not of the Roman Empire, and by implication, uneducated and uncultured.

Scythian - A race of people who were proverbial in Paul's day as being the lowest class of savages, who were rumored to be blood thirsty cannibals (4,6).

Bond nor free - The slaves in Paul's day were not considered human beings. This was an important social distinction. Thus, in Christ, there is no national privilege, no difference in legal standing, and no difference in social status. This of course comes only when we are in Christ, Gal. 3:26-29.

V. 12

Put on - see notes on v.10

Elect - "eklektos" - "laid out, chosen, choice" (13); cp. 1 Pet. 1:2

Beloved - i.e. loved by God and chosen for salvation, 2 Thess. 2:13

Bowels - "The Jews regarded the bowels as the seat of the tender emotions" (8); cp. Phil 2:1-2

Longsuffering - see notes on 1:11

V. 13

Forbearing - "anechomai" - "to hold oneself back or up" (13); "to hold up, to hold oneself erect and firm, to bear with, endure" (8); Eph. 4:2. We must hold ourselves back from the reactions of the flesh, and forgive others when they are wrong, no matter how bad they are and how often it happens.

Quarrel - "momphe" - "blame, complaint" (13); "complaint" (RSV). If we don't forgive others when we have a complaint against them, we will not be forgiven, for God has a multitude of complaints against us, cp. Matt. 18:23-25.

V. 14

Above all - or "on top of" of "over all", alluding back to being clothed (v. 10,12). This is a top garment over all the previously named garments.

Charity - "agape" - "love" (13). This is the self sacrificing love that only is found in the believer, 1 Jo. 4:7-8. It is an attribute of God, 1 Jo. 4:8; 3:1,16. It is the greatest of all virtues, 1 Cor. 13:13.

Perfectness - "teleiotes" - "completeness" (13). We are completely dressed now, cp. 1 Jo. 2:5.

V. 15

Peace of God - This only comes thru Christ, Jo. 14:27; Phil 4:7

Rule - "brabeuo" - "to act as judge or president" (13); "a) to be an umpire b) to decide, determine c) to direct, control, rule" (8). God's peace is to make the decisions in our life, to tell us what is right and wrong.

One body - There is only one ecclesia, not many churches, cp. 1:18; Eph. 4:4.

Be ye thankful - see notes on 1:3

CONCLUSION - Vs. 16-17V. 16

Word of Christ - This is the only occurrence of this exact phrase. It means the words and sayings of Christ.

Dwell - "enoikeo" - "to be in a house" (13). Christ's commandments must live inside us and come out in our actions, 1 Jo. 2:27-29

Teaching and admonishing - Notice what the purpose of singing is. Paul must have considered this an effective means of letting the word of Christ dwell in us. Thus, it is important to read the words of hymns and sing them with grace in our minds and voices in order that we may be taught, encouraged and exhorted. cp. Eph. 5:19

V. 17

Whatsoever ye do - see notes on v. 23

In word - Note that we 'do' in word, cp. notes on v. 8

Name of the Lord Jesus - Our every action must be something Christ would not be ashamed of, cp. 2 Tim. 2:19.

Giving thanks - cp. v. 3

And the Father - RSV omits ' and '

PRACTICAL RELIGION - Vs. 18-25HUSBAND AND WIFE - Vs. 18-19

The relationship of marriage is an important fundamental truth. This principle teaches us the divine principle of our position as the bride of Christ, and God as the head of Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1-2) It is first mentioned in Gen. 2, and later by Christ in Matt. 19:5.

A parallel passage is expanded in Eph. 5:22-33.

V. 18

Submit - "hupotasso" - "to set in array under" (13); "a) to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject, put in subjection b) to subject oneself, to obey c) to obey" (8). Note how the word is used in 1 Cor. 15:27 where it is trans. "put under his feet." This is a strong verb. If it was not tempered with v. 19, v. 18 would indicate a one-sided relationship. cp. 1 Pet. 3:1-6; 1 Cor. 11:1-11

An interesting problem arises when a woman marries an unbeliever. Can he be her head in practical and spiritual matters? Can she obey him and his desires in the way Paul meant?

V. 19

Love - "agapao", cp. v. 14. This is the Christian love, the love that God shows to us (Jo. 3:16) and that Christ showed to us in dying on the cross (cp. Eph. 5). The normal Greek word for human love is not used here, because marriages in Christ are based on an entirely different relationship from marriages in the world.

Bitter - "pikraino" - "a) to make bitter b) to embitter, exasperate, to be embittered, irritated c) visit with bitterness" (8). A Godly husband will not do anything to irritate his wife, or to "be harsh with them" (RSV), as following the example of Christ and his ecclesia, the bride, Eph. 5:25-29.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN - Vs. 20-21

The principle of obedience to parents is another important scriptural truth. This relationship teaches Christ's relation to God as the son, and our relation to God and Christ. (Heb. 2:13; Mal. 1:6)

A parallel passage is expanded in Eph. 6:1-4.

V. 20

Children - This is specifically and personally addressed to the children, thus it could not be applied to young children, but to young adults who are reading the word and living at home.

Obey - "hupakouo" - "to hearken submissively, obey" (13). This scriptural principle is one of the ten commandments, Ex. 20:12. If disobeyed under the Mosaic law the punishment was death, Ex. 21:17; Mk. 7:10. It is also the first and only commandment with promise, Eph. 6:1-4.

Notice that Paul is now going to balance the relationship.

V. 21

Provoke - "erethizo" - "to rouse to a strife" (13), "to stir up, stimulate" (20) "Fathers must exercise themselves in such a way that their rule is not of that absolute type which, lacking sympathy, inspires irritation, exasperation and embitterment in their children" (17)

Discouraged - "athumeo" - "to be disheartened, loose heart" (13); "to be disheartened, dispirited, broken in spirit" (8); cp. Eph. 6:4 - "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

NOTE: We will not be judged on whether or not our parents follow the commandments of God. We will only be judged on whether or not we follow God's commandments, the scriptural principle of obeying our parents being obviously very important.

MASTERS AND SLAVES - Vs. 22-4:1

Although these words seem far removed from our 20th century activities, it is mainly because the types of jobs we now have did not exist in the Roman Empire, where the 'middle class' was very small. Many of the believers would have been servants of one type or another, bond slaves or hired hands. The scriptural principle of obedience to masters is yet another scriptural truth. This principle can be applied to some extent in our relationships at school and work. It teaches us the divine principle that we are bond slaves of God, bought with a price from serving sin, and now to obey God as our master (1 Cor. 7:22-23).

V. 22

Obey - Same word as v. 20; cp. 1 Tim. 6:1-3. Peter also comments on this in 1 Pet. 2:18-20:

"Servants you must respect your masters and do whatever they tell you - not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are tough and cruel. Praise the Lord if you are punished for doing right! ~~Of course you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong;~~ but if you do right and suffer for it, and are patient beneath the blows, God is well pleased" (Living Bible)

According to the flesh - Many take this to mean our earthly masters as opposed to Christ. Another interpretation is that our masters have control over our bodies and what we do, but they do not have any right or control over our minds, thoughts and beliefs.

Eyeservice as menpleasers - Self descriptive words describing one who uses other methods of gaining the bosses favor than hard work.

Singleness - consistent freedom from duplicity.

Fearing God - i.e. not doing things because we fear the boss, who may or may not be watching, but because we fear God who always watches.

V. 23

Heartily - Lit. "out of the soul" (13); i.e. with our whole person.

As to the Lord - cp. v. 22. Paul again (v. 17) notes that every activity of everyday life must be for God, not men.

V. 24

Of the Lord - Even if we do not get recognition from men for what we do at work, as the slaves certainly wouldn't have in Paul's day, God is watching.

Reward of the inheritance - cp. 1:12; If we do our daily activities for God, it will be Him that will reward us.

V. 25

He that doeth wrong - Our being in the truth does not give us any liberty above other employees, which is especially important to note when our boss is in the truth.

(CHAPTER 4 - NO BREAK IN THOUGHT)

v. 1

Masters - Under the Roman law it was not necessary to be just and fair since slaves were considered to be property and their lives unimportant.

Master in heaven - We expect Christ to be more than fair with us because we are at best unprofitable servants, Lu. 17:7-10.

CONCLUDING REMARKS - Vs. 2-6

V. 2

Prayer - Paul places great importance on this virtue, as do the other N.T. writers, cp. Eph. 6:8; Rom. 12:12; Jam. 5:16

Thanksgiving - cp. 1:3

V. 3

Door of utterance - cp. Eph. 6:19; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12, i.e. pray that Paul might find an opportunity to preach even though he was in prison. Our prayers can affect the results of preaching efforts.

Mystery - cp. 1:26

V. 5

Walk in wisdom - cp. 1:9,19

Redeeming the time - "exagorazo" translated "redeeming" is formed from EX, out of, and AGORAZO, to buy, and means to "buy out of the hands of a person; to redeem, set free", Gal. 3:13; "to buy up for one's self, to rescue from loss or misapplication", Col. 4:5. The AGORA was a place of public concourse, a forum or market place where goods and provisions were sold, and purchasers made the most economic use possible of available funds. The word "kairos" - time, has the general sense of "fitness, proportion, suitableness" and means "opportunity", Acts 24:25; "a limited time, a short season" Lu. 4:13, or simply "a point of time" Matt. 11:25; Lu. 13:1. Weymouth renders the phrase "Buy up your opportunities". Similarly Rotherham. Every opportunity for spiritual growth must be seized and used so that there will be developed in us the characters God will approve of for the kingdom." (17)

V. 6

Seasoned with salt - The sacrifices under the law were seasoned with salt, Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5

Answer every man - If our speech is seasoned with grace, we will never offend anyone.

SALUTATIONS

V. 7

Tychicus - Sig. "Fortunate" He was a native of Roman Asia who travelled on in advance of Paul from Macedonia to Troas, Acts 20:4,5, during the third missionary journey. From there he travelled to Jerusalem and then to Rome. He was sent by Paul from Rome to take the epistles to the ecclesias at Ephesus, Eph. 6:21, and Colossae. He was sent as a messenger to Titus, in Crete, Tit. 3:12. At the time of Paul's death, he was sent to Ephesus, 2 Tim. 4:12. (18)

V. 8

(RSV) - I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,

V. 9

Onesimus - see notes on Philemon

V. 10

Aristarchus - Sig. "best ruling". A Jewish Christian of Thessalonica. Acts 20:4; 27:2. He was with Paul at Ephesus and was seized with Gaius, by the mob and dragged into the theatre, Acts 19:29. He accompanied Paul from Troas to Asia, Acts 20:4-6, and subsequently voyaged with him to Rome, Acts 27:2; Phile 24, where he was imprisoned a "fellow-captive" with Paul, Col. 2:4. (18)

Marcus - Sig. "large hammer" John Mark was a cousin to Barnabas the companion of Paul. "John" sig. "to whom Yahweh is gracious" (8), or "Yah hath been gracious". He was the son of a certain Mary in Jerusalem, Acts 12:12, whose home was a meeting place for brethren. Acts 12:12-17. John Mark was probably a convert of Peter with whom he travelled on one occasion, 1 Pet. 5:13. He went with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, Acts 12:25, and was their companion on their first missionary journey, Acts 13:5. He deserted them at Perga in Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem, Acts 13:13. Paul determined not to take him with them from Antioch the second time, Acts 15:38, so Barnabas separated from Paul and took Mark with him to Cyprus, Acts 15:37,39. Though having earned the severe disapproval of Paul, John Mark ultimately vindicated himself, establishing himself as Paul's companion and comfort. Phile 24; 2 Tim. 4:11. (18)

V. 11

Jesus - Grecized form of Jehoshua or Joshua (18)

Justus - sig. "just or righteous" Nothing further is known of him. (18)

Of the circumcision - i.e. Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus were Hebrew Christians. Did not include Luke, v.14. Many of the circumcision were not fellow-laborers with Paul, Acts 11:2; Gal. 2:12; Tit. 1:10-11. (18)

V. 12

Epaphras - see note on 1:4; and introduction

Perfect - see notes on 1:28

V. 13

Laodicea - Situated on the River Lycus, about 6 miles west of Colossae at a junction of 5 roads. An ecclesia existed, Col. 2:1 in this much larger and richer city. Rev. 1:11; 3:14. (18)

Hierapolis - About 7 miles N.W. of Colossae and situated near the Lycus, a few miles above its junction with Maeander. Epaphras laboured in the ecclesias all around the district. (18)

V. 14

Luke - "Loukas", Lucas, and sig. "illuminative". Paul's loyal companion in tribulation, 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 24. He is understood to have written the third gospel and Acts. He is not of the circumcision, but was of Gentile origin. The use of the personal pronoun in Acts shows that he was the companion of Paul on many of his journeys. Acts 16:10-17; to Philippi: Acts 20:5-15; 21:1-18. On the 3rd missionary journey Paul rejoined him at Philippi and they travelled to Troas and to Jerusalem. Luke also accompanied Paul from Caesarea to Rome, Acts 27:1; 28:10-16. From here Luke sends his greetings. (18)

Demas - apparently a contraction of "Demetrius" He was with Paul laboring on behalf of the Truth. Phile. 24. He deserted the apostle when he was imprisoned for the last time at Rome, and returned to Thessalonica, 2 Tim. 4:10. (18)

V. 15

Nymphas - The Greek is feminine gender, possibly indicating that Nymphas was a woman.

Church - "ekklesia" There was a similar ecclesia associated with Philemon in his house at Colossae, Phile 2. Aquila and Priscilla had an ecclesia meet in their house both at Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19) and later at Rome (Rom. 16:5). (18) There is no clear example of a separate building set apart for worship within the limits of the Roman Empire by the 3rd century. (11)

V. 16

Epistle from Laodicea - Some feel this is the letter to the Ephesians, but there is little evidence for it.

V. 18

By the hand of me Paul - see 2 Thess. 3:17; Phile. 19. The mark of authenticity to that dictated through an amanuensis. (18)

THE MESSAGE TO LAODICEA - Rev. 3:14-23

INTRODUCTION

As early as the end of the 1st century error was already flourishing in many ecclesias. False teachers and unbelief were taking their toll on the Christian community. About 96 A.D. Jesus left his final message to seven ecclesias in particular. Bro. Thomas mentions that the 7 Letters should not be limited in their scope so as to have only one application, but that "They are descriptive of:

1. The things existing in the seven particular ecclesias at the time of the Revelation to John.
2. The things existing in the Christian societies generally throughout the Roman habitable, at the same time.
3. The state of the pre-Constantinian Christendom in the periods related to those of the Seven Seals,"(3)

The purpose of these notes is to consider how the 1st application mentioned above applies to the ecclesia in Laodicea.

BACKGROUND TO LAODICEA

Laodicea was a city of Phrygia originally known as Diospolis and then Rhoas. Although it was a close neighbor of Colossae and Hierapolis, it was inferior to them both until rebuilt by Antiochus II Theos (c. 261 - c. 246 B.C.) and renamed after his wife Laodice. The city of Eskihisar now stands in its place.

At the time of the Revelation, Laodicea had become a great banking and financial center, and one of the wealthiest cities in the world. An earthquake had completely devastated the city in A.D. 61 and Rome had offered the citizens financial help, yet they were so proud and rich that they refused all help and rebuilt the city on their own. Unfortunately the Laodiceans were so wealthy that they felt there was no need for God.

Laodicea had also developed into a great center of clothing manufacture. The sheep in the area had soft, black, glossy wool that was in high demand. Yet once again they had become so proud, this time of their clothing, that they didn't realize that in God's eyes they were naked.

Laodicea was also a well established medical center. It contained a famous medical school known for two special products; ointment for the ears and ointment of the eyes. Yet the people were so conscious of their own medical skill in the care of the eyes that they failed to see in God's sight they were spiritually blind.

Keeping fresh water on hand had always been a problem in Laodicea because there was no permanent supply. In the ruins of the city an aqueduct was

found which ran to some hot springs more than six miles away. In all probability the water arrived to Laodicea lukewarm so the people would have been well aware that lukewarm water has a tendency to cause one to vomit. (5) (7) (15)

THE WORDS OF CHRIST TO LAODICEA - Rev. 3:14-22

V. 14

Angel - "aggelōs" A human or divine messenger.

Church - "ekklēsia" - see note on Philemon 2.

Of The Laodiceans - Should read, "in Laodicea"(12) (RSV). Laodicea means - "Justice of the People".(15)

The Amen - cp. "The God of the Amen" (Isa. 65:16). Hebrew word signifies "faithfulness". God is utterly to be relied upon; his promises are always true. Now this is also applicable to Christ. See 2 Cor. 1:20

The Faithful - "pistos" - "trustworthy, faithful".(4)

True Witness - Jesus is the true light (Jn 1:9), the true bread (Jn. 6:32), the true tabernacle (Heb. 8:2; 9:24) and the true witness (Rev. 1:5)

Beginning - "archē" - Jesus was the first one to be glorified and so he became the beginning of God's new creation (Col. 1:18). This word does not mean "author".(6)

V. 15

I Know Thy Works - Jesus is able to search down to our very motives.

Cold - Speaks of a refreshing coolness. A faithful messenger is as refreshing to his master as the cold snow at harvest time. (Prov. 25:13)

Hot - Zealous for the Truth - cp. Psalms 34:3; Jeremiah 20:9.

V. 16

Lukewarm - Where love is professed, yet it doesn't really exist. Lukewarm water tends to produce sickness at the stomach and an inclination to vomit ... hence, "I will spue thee out of my mouth". The Laodiceans were very familiar with the affects of lukewarm water for their city water supply was probably lukewarm itself.(7)

I Will - "mellō" - "I am about" or "have in mind".(4) Doesn't imply immediate action.

Spue - "emesai" - only here in N.T. cp. use in Septuagint - Lev. 18:28; 20:22.

V. 17

I Am Rich - spiritually and materially, cp. Lk. 12:16-21.

Knowest Not - The basis of Christ's rebuke.

Miserable - "eleeinos" - "pitiable" is a better rendering. cp. 1 Cor. 15:19.

Poor, Blind, Naked - all spiritually. They were poor in faith, blind to the Truth and stripped of salvation.

V. 18

To Buy - Christ asks us to put forth some effort of our own.

Gold - Represents tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7). If all one has in life is wealth, then he is really quite poor. But if he has faith which has been tried and refined thru experience, then with God's help there is nothing he cannot face, and this man is rich indeed.

White Raiment - To be clothed in righteousness. (Vs. 4,17) Although they had the best physical clothing, Jesus says they are spiritually naked. This would have been especially strong language in that day for to be stripped naked was the worst humiliation and shame. (15)

Eyesalve - So that they aren't blind anymore. (Eph. 1:18) Greek word - "kollurion" literally means, "a little roll of bread". (15) Laodicea exported famous "tephra phrygia", phrygia powder, in solid tablets which were in the form of little rolls. (15) Jesus is the true light of this world and he allows us to see. For us to see him in his righteousness and ourselves in our sin, is the 1st step to salvation.

V. 19

Love - "phileo" - implies warm and tender affections. (15)

I Rebuke And Chasten - For this is the only way our character can be perfected. cp. Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:6. In Greek of Prov. 3, "agapēō" is used yet here Christ uses "phileo". "Agapē" speaks of love yet it maybe has more of the head than the heart in it.

Rebuke - "elegcho" -

1. "To convict, refute, confute; generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted."
2. "To find fault with, correct." (8)

Chasten - "paideuō" - from "pais" - a child in relationship to parents; therefore "to educate or instruct children". (9)

Be Zealous Therefore, And Repent - Don't lose any time! God is faithful and will forgive us when we repent of the sins we commit.

V. 20

I Stand At The Door And Knock - "I stand" is in the perfect tense in the Greek which implies a present state resulting from a past act, hence Bro. Thomas renders, "I have stood at the door and I knock". (3)

Even though they had sinned, Jesus still kept the way open to the marriage feast of the lamb (Rev. 19:9; Lk. 12:35-38), yet let us not refuse him time and time again lest when we open we find he has gone away as he did with Israel. (Song of Solomon 5:2-6)

Sup - "deineō" - The evening meal, supper. The Greeks had 3 meals:

1. "Akratisma" - a small breakfast.
2. "Ariston" - a midday meal usually eaten picnic style wherever one happened to be.
3. "Deipnon" - The evening meal which was the main meal of the day. People sat and talked for their work was now over. They had time for unhurried fellowship and this is what Jesus will share with us. (15)

He With Me - Fellowship with Jesus. (Mk. 14:25; Matt. 8:11; 25:1)

V. 21

In My Throne - To sit "in" Christ's throne is to be a co-ruler with him in the kingdom. (Rev. 20:4)

V. 22

He That Hath An Ear - see Matt. 11:15, Mk. 4:23; 7:16

The Spirit - The Spirit of Christ which is the Holy Spirit which is God's Spirit. See Acts 16:6,7 (RSV).

This verse serves two purposes:

1. It individualizes the message. Too often we listen to an exhortation and think "I sure hope he got that point; it's too bad she isn't here to hear this because she sure needs it". We end up applying the exhortation to everyone except ourselves. Jesus makes it clear that if we can listen, do listen, because as this phrase really implies, "All these words are said for YOU".
2. It generalizes the message of the letters. The message is not confined to the people who lived in Laodicea at that time, but Jesus is speaking to all men in every generation.

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