

Colossians

Personal Messages [4:7-17]

The Couriers [4:7-9]

- As to all my affairs, Tychicus, *our* beloved brother *in Christ* and faithful servant
Τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ πάντα ... Τύχικος ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος
 - The phrase “As to all my affairs” is literally “All things corresponding to me”.
 - This is a reference to Paul’s current situation, plans and needs.
 - Tychicus is one of the men who traveled with Paul on his third missionary journey [Acts 20:4].
 - Paul’s description of him here and in Ephesians [Eph 6:21-22] shows that he was highly respected.
 - Paul’s first description of Tychicus is “beloved brother”.
 - He is not Paul’s earthly brother, so this is a reference to him being a brother in Christ.
 - Paul’s second description of Tychicus is “faithful servant”.
 - This speaks to his humility and how Paul found him to be a reliable, trustworthy fellow-worker.
- and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.
γνωρίσει ὑμῖν ... καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ,
 - Paul’s third description of Tychicus is “fellow bond-servant in the Lord”.
 - This is high praise from Paul because in his view Tychicus is just as devoted to the Lord as he is.
 - The phrase “will bring you information” is literally “will make known to you”.
 - This is the first indication that Tychicus is one of the men Paul selected to be a courier for this letter.
- *For* I have dispatched him to you for this very purpose,
ὄν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο,
 - The word “sent” is from πέμπω (pempō) which means “dispatch someone for the purpose of communication”.
 - This confirms that Tychicus is to be a courier for this letter.
 - The phrase “this very purpose” is literally “this thing, itself” or “this very thing”.
 - Given the context, it is clear that Paul about his reason or purpose for sending Tychicus.
- that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;
ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέσῃ τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν,
 - One purpose for sending Tychicus is that the Colossian believers would be made aware of the circumstances facing Paul and Timothy.
 - Another purpose for sending Tychicus is that he might bring them encouragement.
 - The word “encourage” is from παρακαλέω (parakaleō) which means “call alongside”.
- and with him Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother,
σὺν Ὀνησίμῳ τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ,
 - Onesimus is the second courier who Paul sent to carry this letter.
 - Onesimus is the runaway slave of Philemon who Paul led to Christ while in prison [Phil 10].
 - Paul describes Onesimus as a faithful and beloved brother as well [Phil 16].
 - He is not Paul’s earthly brother either, so this is a reference to him being a brother in Christ.

- who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.
ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν· πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσουσιν τὰ ὧδε.
 - The phrase “who is one of your number” is literally “who is from you”.
 - Onesimus had been a slave in Colossae before fleeing from Philemon.
 - He had left a slave, but Paul describes him as one of the flock now that he is born-again.
 - Beyond carrying the letter, Tychicus and Onesimus were charged with bringing the Colossian believers up to date on everything about Paul’s situation.
 - The details were not included in this letter.

The Others [4:10-14]

- Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings;
Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου
 - Aristarchus was a Thessalonian who went with Paul on his 3rd missionary journey [Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2].
 - He was incarcerated with Paul, most likely for being his fellow worker in the gospel [Philem 24].
 - The phrase “sends ... his greetings” is from ἀσπάζομαι (aspazomai) which means “greet” or “welcome”.
 - This is the hospitable recognition of others as an expression of love.
- and *also* Barnabas’s cousin Mark (about whom you received orders; if he comes to you, welcome him);
καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεπιὸς Βαρναβᾶ (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολάς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δέξασθε αὐτόν)
 - This is the Barnabas we are familiar with who was a fellow-worker with Paul [Acts 13:42-52] and an apostle of the Church [Acts 14:14].
 - The word “cousin” is ἀνεπιός (anepsios) which means “cousin”, but can also refer to a second cousin, third cousin, etc.
 - This is the Mark we are familiar with who wrote one of the gospels, was also called John and went with Paul on his 1st missionary trip [Acts 12:25].
 - That Mark is identified as Barnabas’ cousin tells us that the Colossian believers knew Barnabas by name, though they likely had never met him.
 - The word “instructions” is from ἐντολή (entolē) which means “command” or “order”.
 - The word “welcome” is from δέχομαι (dechomai) which means “receive” in a welcoming or accepting way [Matt 10:40-41; Luke 10:8-11].
- and *also* Jesus who is called Justus;
καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουστος,
 - The third man mentioned here is named Jesus, a fairly common Jewish name meaning “Jehovah is salvation” (Joshua [Lk 3:29; Acts 7:45; Heb 4:8]).
 - He is also known as Justus, another relatively common Jewish name meaning “righteous” or “just” [Acts 1:23].

- these are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς, οὗτοι μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ,
 - The phrase “from the circumcision” refers to Jews and should be translated “of the circumcision”.
 - The phrase “these are the only fellow workers” is not talking about any Jewish fellow workers anywhere, but specifically Paul’s fellow workers.
 - The phrase “for the kingdom of God” means that these three men are participating with Paul in the advancement of the gospel message.
 - Paul has other fellow workers [Col 4:12ff], but these three are the only ones that are Jewish, either by birth or by proselytism.
 - It is not clear why Paul made a distinction here regarding these men being of the circumcision, but perhaps the following phrase explains this.
- and they have proved to be a help and a comfort to me. οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία.
 - The phrase “have proved to be” is from γίνομαι (ginomai) which means “be” or “become”, but as we saw in Col 3:15 this word can mean “prove to be” [Phil 2:15; Jas 1:22; 1 Pet 5:3].
 - The word “encouragement” is from παρηγορία (parēgoria) rather than παράκλησις (paraklēsis).
 - This word carries the meaning “help” or “assistance” as well as “comfort”.
- Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ],
 - As we saw in Col 1:7, Epaphras brought the message of salvation to the Colossians.
 - As with Onesimus, Epaphras is part of the flock in the Colossian church.
 - As with Tychicus, Epaphras is a fellow bond-servant of Jesus Christ [cf. Col 1:7].
 - As with the three Jewish fellow workers, Epaphras sent his greetings to the Colossians.
- always striving intently on your behalf in his prayers, πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς,
 - The verb “laboring earnestly” is from ἀγωνίζομαι (agōnizomai) which means “contend” or “strive”.
 - This word carries the meaning “make every effort to do something” (etym: agonize).
 - The phrase “for you” is ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (huper humōn) which we saw in Col 2:1 can mean “on your behalf”.
- that you may stand firm, mature and fully confident in all the will of God. ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ.
 - The verb “may stand” is from ἵστημι (histēmi) which means “stand” or “be established”.
 - This word means “stand firm” in regards to God’s grace [1 Pet 5:12] and faith [2 Cor 1:24].
 - The word “perfect” is from τέλειος (teleios) which means “perfect”, “complete” or “mature”.
 - In this context this is a reference to spiritual maturity.
 - The phrase “fully assured” is from πληροφορέω (plērophoreō) which means “fully assured”.
 - In this context this speaks to having full confidence in God and His perfect will.
 - The phrase “in all the will of God” indicates that Epaphras shared Paul’s desire for the Colossian believers to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will [Col 1:9].

- For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.
μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει.
 - The verb “testify” is from μαρτυρέω (martureō) which means “bear witness” or “testify favorably”.
 - The phrase “a deep concern” is πολὺν πόνον (polun monon) which means “great pain” or “much toil”.
 - Eraphras was toiling for all believers in the Lycus valley – in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and *also* Demas.
ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ Δημᾶς.
 - This is the Luke we are familiar with who wrote one of the gospels as well as the book of Acts.
 - The fact that he is included here indicates that Luke is a Gentile by birth.
 - This is where we learn that Luke is a physician.
 - He is also described as beloved, both by Paul and by the Lord.
 - This is the Demas who later deserted Paul because of his love of the world [2 Tim 4:10].
 - Luke and Demas also sent their greetings to the Colossians.

Reading in Laodicea [4:15-16]

- Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea as well as Nympha and the church that is in her house.
Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν.
 - Paul wanted to extend his own greeting to the believers in the Lycus valley.
 - He loved these believers as well and wanted them to know that he cared about them.
 - Paul specifically mentioned Laodicea and the church in Nympha’s house.
 - In the early Church, house churches were quite common [Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Philem 2].
 - Some infer that the church in Laodicea met at Nympha’s house, but the text of this verse does not support that.
 - This is the only mention of Nympha in Scripture.
- When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans;
ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ’ ὑμῶν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ,
 - The word “read” is from ἀναγινώσκω (anaginōskō) which means “read”.
 - This word is normally used (as it is in this verse) of reading out loud.
 - The phrase “among you” means that the letter is to be read aloud in the church.
 - The phrase “the church of the Laodiceans” here distinguishes this from Nympha’s house church.
- and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.
ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ’ ὑμῶν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ,
 - The phrase “you, for your part” is the translation of the word ὑμεῖς (humeis) which means “you”.
 - The verb implies the subject “you”, so the inclusion of ὑμεῖς (humeis) indicates an emphasis which the NASB translators tried to express.

- The phrase “my letter” is the singular feminine pronoun τὴν (tēn).
- The Greek word for “church” (ἐκκλησία, ekklēsia) is a singular feminine noun, but “letter” makes a lot more sense as the antecedent for τὴν (tēn).
- The phrase “that is coming from Laodicea” is simply “from Laodicea”.
- The NASB translators added “that is coming” to communicate the fact that Paul did not write that letter in Laodicea.

Message to Archippus [4:17]

- Say to Archippus, “Pay attention to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may see it to completion.”

καὶ εἶπατε Ἀρχίππῳ· βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς.

- Archippus is a believer ministering in Colossae in Epaphras’ absence.
- It is not certain, but Archippus is quite possibly Philemon’s son [Philem 2].
- The verb “Take heed to” is from βλέπω (blepō) which means “see” or “pay attention to”.
- We do not know what Archippus’ ministry was, but he may have been pastor of the Colossian church.
- Paul reminds Archippus that his ministry was given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The verb “fulfill” is from πληρόω (plēroō) which means “fill”, “fulfill”, “complete” or “finish”.
- In this context it refers to staying with something until it is completed.