

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and [from] our brother Timothy,** 2) [and is being sent] **to the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and faithful brothers in [fellowship with] Christ [who live] at Colosse. May you have unearned favor and peace from God our Father.**

3) **Whenever we pray for you, we always thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** 4) **for we have heard about [the evidence of] your faith in [the service of] Christ Jesus, and about the love you have [shown] for all the saints.** 5) [You have these qualities] **because of the hope stored up for you in heaven, which [hope] you previously heard about through the message of truth when the Gospel 6) came to you. This Gospel is [now] also producing fruit all over the world [i.e., throughout the Roman Empire] and growing [in its influence], just as it is doing among you people also, since the day you [first] heard and understood God's unearned favor in [all its] truth.** 7) **You learned [this truth] from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow-slave, who is a faithful minister of Christ [to you] on our behalf.** 8) **He also told us about your love, [which is produced] by the Holy Spirit.**

9) **So, this is why, since the day we heard about these things, we do not stop praying for you and requesting that you people be filled [by God] with the knowledge of what He wants [for your lives], and with spiritual wisdom and understanding.** 10) [We pray for you] **to live a life deserving of the Lord, pleasing to Him in every way, producing fruit in every good deed and growing in the knowledge of God.** 11) [We also pray that you will be] **strengthened with great power, according to God's glorious might, so that you will have great endurance and patience [coupled] with joy.** 12) [May you] **give thanks to the Father who has enabled you to share [i.e., eventually] in the inheritance of the saints [i.e., God's holy people] in [the kingdom of] light.** 13) **He rescued us from the domain of [spiritual] darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son whom He loves,** 14) **through whom we receive redemption [i.e., are bought back from Satan], which is the forgiveness of [our] sins.** 15)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn One [i.e., who takes preeminence] **over all that is created. 16) For all things were created by Him; things in heaven and on earth; things visible and invisible, whether they are thrones** [i.e., reigning beings], **or lords, or rulers or authorities.** [Note: **Authorities** here may refer to angelic beings]. **All things were created by Him and for Him. 17) And He existed before all things and all things are held together by Him. 18) And He is the head of the** [spiritual] **body, the church. He is** [its] **source, the firstborn One from the dead** [i.e., the first one to return to life, never to die again], **so that He could rank first** [in importance] **over all things. 19) For God was very pleased to have all of** [His] **fullness dwell in Christ** [See 2:9], **20) and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven. He made peace** [with mankind] **through the** [sacrificial] **blood of Christ's** [death on the] **cross.**

21) And though you were once estranged [from God] **and were enemies** [of His] **in your mind because of your evil deeds, 22) yet now God has reconciled** [you] **to Himself through the death of Christ's physical body in order to present you holy, without fault and free from just blame before Him** [on judgment day]. **23) [This will happen] if you continue in the faith** [Note: This means either **continue to observe God's teaching** or **continue to believe**], **firmly grounded and established, and not moved away from the hope offered by the Gospel message, which you have heard and which was preached to people throughout the entire created world under heaven. I, Paul, was made a minister of this Gospel.**

24) Now I rejoice in [spite of] **my sufferings for your sake, and I am filling up** [i.e., completing] **in my physical body what was lacking in the afflictions Christ endured for His body's sake, the church. 25) I was made a minister of the church according to the task given to me by God to fully present His message to you. 26) [This message is] the secret which has been kept hidden throughout the ages and generations, but has now been revealed to God's saints** [i.e., His holy people]. **27) He was pleased to make known to these people the wealth of His splendor among the Gentiles; this hidden secret, which is Christ among you, [is] the hope of being honored** [i.e., in heaven]. **28) We proclaim Him, warning and teaching every person with all wisdom, so that we may present every person** [to God] **complete in** [their fellowship with] **Christ. 29) This is the reason that I work hard and struggle also, using God's mighty power**

which is at work in me.

CHAPTER TWO

1) I want you to know how much I am struggling for you [Note: This probably refers to the great effort Paul was exerting in prayer, preaching, etc.], **and for those at Laodicia** [Note: This was a town ten miles west of Colosse], **and for all those who have never met me in person.** **2) [I do this] so that their hearts will be encouraged** [while] **being united in** [mutual] **love,** [and] **so that they will have the wealth of a fully assured understanding, in order to fully know about God's hidden secret,** [which is] **Christ.** **3) In Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.** **4) I say this so that no one will deceive you with persuasive arguments.** **5) For even though I am absent** [from you] **in body, still I am present with you in spirit, rejoicing and observing** [i.e., with my mind's eye] **your orderly behavior and the firmness of your faith in Christ.**

6) So, since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in [fellowship with] **Him,** **7) rooted and built up in** [your relationship to] **Him, established by your faith** [or, in the faith], **just as you were taught, overflowing with thanksgiving.**

8) Pay attention so that no one takes you [spiritually] **captive through his philosophy and empty deception based on human tradition, according to the principles of the world and not according to Christ.** **9) For all of the fullness of Deity lives in His body,** **10) and you people have been made full** [i.e., spiritually complete] **in** [fellowship with] **Him, who is the** [spiritual] **head over all who rule and have authority.** **11) In** [fellowship with] **Him** **you people were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human beings, but performed by Christ, consisting of the removal of the body of** [sinful] **flesh.** **12) [This happened when you were] buried with Christ in** [the act of] **immersion, from which you were also raised up with Him through** [your] **faith in the accomplishment of God, who raised Him up from the dead.** **13) And when you were** [spiritually] **dead because of your sins and your lack of being physically circumcised** [Note: This refers to their having been unconverted Gentiles and therefore outside of a relationship with God], **God made you alive** [again] **together with Christ, having forgiven us for all of our sins.** **14) He canceled the document written in**

ordinances [Note: This obviously refers to the Mosaic Law] **that was against us and was opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. 15)** [In doing this] **Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities** [i.e., evil forces] **and made a public display of them, triumphing over them through the cross.** [Note: This could possibly be rendered **God triumphed over them through Christ**].

16) So, do not allow anyone to judge [i.e., condemn] **you for what you eat, or what you drink, or regarding** [your non-observance of] **a** [yearly] **festival, or a** [monthly] **new moon** **observance, or a** [weekly] **Sabbath day. 17) These things are** [only] **a shadow of future things, but the body** [i.e., the real substance of things] **belongs to Christ.** [Note: The idea here is that the ritual observances of the Mosaic Law were like shadows pointing to the reality of life in Christ]. **18) Do not allow anyone, who delights in acting humble** [i.e., living an ascetic life] **and who worships angels, to rob you of your reward** [in heaven]. [Note: This **angel worship** could mean holding angels in high regard because of their role as God's messengers, or the claim that God can be approached only through angelic intermediaries]. **He places great importance on what he** [claims to] **see** [i.e., visions], **being inflated with pride by his fleshly mind for no** [good] **reason. 19) He is not holding on** [firmly] **to the head** [i.e., Christ, the head of the church], **from whom the entire body, being nourished and supported by its ligaments and joints, is caused to grow in size by God.**

20) Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of the world, [then] **why, as though you** [still] **lived in** [harmony with] **the world, do you submit yourselves to** [its] **rules,** [such as]: **21) Do not handle** [this]; **do not taste** [that]; **do not touch** [those things]? **22) (All these things** [i.e., the things handled, tasted or touched] **are destined to perish with** [constant] **use).** [These rules are] **based on the commands and teachings of men. 23) They certainly have an appearance of wisdom,** [displaying] **self-prescribed worship and** [false] **humility and asceticism, but they lack any value in curbing the desires of the physical passions.**

CHAPTER THREE

1) If then you people have been raised up together with Christ [i.e., from your burial in immersion, See 2:12-13 with Rom. 6:4], **pay attention to the things that are above** [i.e., heavenly things],

where Christ is seated at the right side of God. 2) Focus your minds on the things that are above, not on earthly things. 3) For you died [with Christ, See 2:20], and your life is [now] hidden with Christ in [fellowship with] God. 4) [So], when Christ, who is your [or, Aour@ source of] life, appears [i.e., at His second coming], then you people also will appear with Him in splendor [i.e., in heaven].

5) So, put to death [i.e., stop practicing] the desires of your physical bodies [such as] sexual immorality, [moral] impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is [in reality] idolatry. 6) For the wrath of God will come [upon disobedient people] for practicing such things. 7) You people also once lived like this when you practiced these things. 8) But now you also should stop practicing them: anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy language from your mouth. 9) Do not lie to one another, since you have put away [the conduct of] your old person with its practices, 10) and have put on the new person, who is being [daily] renewed with full knowledge, according to the image of God, who [re-] created him. 11) [In this state] there cannot be [such distinctions as] Greek [i.e., Gentile] and Jew; circumcised people and non-circumcised people; barbarian and Scythian [Note: These last two words refer to foreigners whose language was unintelligible and who were uncivilized heathens], or slave and free person; but Christ is all [that is important] and [He is] in all [of His people].

12) So, as God-s elect [i.e., His people], holy and dearly loved [by Him], clothe yourselves with a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13) Tolerate one another-s [weaknesses] and forgive each other if anyone [of you] has a complaint against someone else. You should forgive people just as the Lord forgave you. 14) And beyond all these things, clothe yourselves with love, which binds these things together in complete [unity].

15) You should let the peace given by Christ rule in your hearts, since you people were called [to be at peace] in one body [i.e., the church]; and you should be thankful. 16) You should let the message of Christ live in you abundantly [i.e., as individuals and collectively]. Use [much] wisdom in teaching and warning one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with favor [i.e., with thankfulness] in your hearts toward God. 17) And whatever you do, whether in [your] words or actions, do everything in the name [i.e., by the authority] of Christ, giving thanks to God

the Father through Him.

18) You wives should submit to your husbands, as this is proper in [the fellowship of] the Lord.

19) You husbands should love your wives and not be harsh toward them.

20) You children should obey your parents in everything, for this is very pleasing to the Lord.

21) You fathers [Note: By implication, this would include both parents] **should not stir up your children** [i.e., irritate or exasperate them], **so that they do not become discouraged.**

22) You slaves should obey your earthly masters in everything, [and] do not do it just when they are looking [at you], or to gain their favor, but do it with a sincere heart, out of reverence for the Lord. 23) In whatever you do, work wholeheartedly, as though it were for the Lord and not [just] for people, 24) knowing that you will receive from the Lord a [spiritual] inheritance as a reward, [for] you are [really] serving the Lord. 25) And the person who does what is wrong will be repaid for his wrongdoing, for there is no favoritism [with God].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) You masters should treat your slaves in a just and fair way, knowing that you also have a Master [who] is in heaven.

2) Continue to pray regularly; stay alert and be thankful. 3) At the same time, pray for us also, that God will open up a door [of opportunity] for [proclaiming] the message, so we can tell about the [previously] hidden secret of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned. 4) [Pray] that I will make it [clearly] known, as I ought to. 5) Be wise in the way you live in front of outsiders [i.e., non-Christians], making the most of every opportunity. 6) Your speech should always be favorable, seasoned with salt [i.e., interesting and appropriate], so that you may know how to properly answer each person [you talk with].

7) Tychicus will tell you all about my affairs. [Note: This man probably delivered this letter as well as the one to the Ephesians. See Eph. 6:21]. **He is our dearly loved brother and faithful minister and fellow-slave in [the service of] the Lord. 8) I have sent [i.e., am sending] him to you for this very purpose, so that you can know our**

situation and that he can encourage your hearts. 9) [He is coming], together with Onesimus our faithful and dearly loved brother, who is one of you. [Note: This could mean either Afrom your town@ or, Aa fellow-Christian@]. They will tell you about everything that is happening here.

10) Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, sends you his greetings, along with Barnabas= cousin [John] Mark. [See Acts 12:12]. (You have received instructions to welcome Mark if he comes to you). 11) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends his greetings. These men are the only Jews among my fellow-workers for God-s kingdom; they have proved to be an encouragement to me. 12) Epaphras, who is one of you [See 1:7; 4:9], a slave of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always struggles in his prayers on your behalf so that you will remain mature and be fully convinced [that you are living] by all that God wants [for your life]. 13) For I testify about Epaphras, that he has worked hard for you, and [also] for those people in Laodicia and Hierapolis. [Note: These are towns close to Colosse]. 14) Luke, my dearly loved physician, and Demas [See II Tim. 4:10] send you their greetings. 15) Greet the brothers who are at Laodicia, and Nympha, along with the church that meets in her house.

16) And when this letter has been read to you people, see that it is read in the church of the Laodicians also. And see that you read the letter [coming] from Laodicia also. [Note: This could have been a reference to the letter to the Ephesians].

17) And tell Archippus [Note: He may have been the preacher at Colosse or Laodicia. See Philemon 1:1-2]; ASee to it that you fulfill your ministry [there], which you have received in [the service of] the Lord.@

18) This greeting [is being written] by me, Paul, in my own handwriting. Remember my imprisonment. [Note: This was probably a request for them to pray for him]. May God-s favor be with you.