

CHAPTER 7

COLOSSIANS—PERSONAL NOTES

Personal Notes (4:7-17)

In this section Paul speaks of the messengers who will be bringing this epistle to the Colossians, then sends greetings from those with him, and finally sends particular messages to people in the church.

1. *Paul's messengers (4:7-9)*

Two men were to bring the epistle to the church, Tychicus and Onesimus. Their positions were quite different, yet they worked together for the church.

v. 7, All things with me shall Tychicus make known, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord.

“All things relating to me,” cf. Phil 1:12.

Tychicus, a native of Asia province, accompanied Paul on his journey to Jerusalem (along with Trophimus, Acts 20:4); was a later messenger of Paul (Titus 3:12; 2 Tim 4:12).

Also the bearer of Ephesians (Eph 6:21-22), described there as capable of ministering to the church as well as reporting about Paul; if Ephesians = epistle from Laodicea, then he would make the circuit.

Three descriptions of Tychicus:

- “Beloved brother,” loved by Paul and by the church
- “Faithful minister (*diakonos*),” to Paul and the church
- “Fellow slave in the Lord,” esp. with Paul, as was Epaphras (1:7)

v. 8, Whom I have sent to you for this same thing, that you should know the things concerning us and that he might encourage your hearts.

“I have sent,” epistolary aorist, cf. Gal 6:11.

Repetition of reason for sending Tychicus from v. 7.

Textual variant, “the things concerning you,” UBS {B}, some strong textual evidence (as p⁴⁶); would imply that Tychicus would return to Paul with news of the Colossians; external evidence and context seem to favor “concerning us.”

“That he might encourage,” second purpose in sending him; news about Paul in prison will encourage them, also his exhortations accompanying the epistle (and the epistle itself).

v. 9, With Onesimus the faithful and beloved brother, who is (one) of you; all things here they will make known to you.

Onesimus, the escaped slave who is the subject of the epistle to Philemon. Here Paul makes no reference to his fleeing or other wrongdoings. Rather, he is a beloved brother. This reception reminds us of Paul’s own reception after his conversion (Acts 9:17, “brother Saul”).

“Faithful,” his new character as a Christian (Phlm 11).

“Who is of you,” from Colossae, belonging to Philemon, a patron of the church, father of Archippus, their supply pastor (Col 4:17; Phlm 2).

2. Greetings from Paul’s companions (4:10-14)

Having introduced the messengers to the church, Paul now sends the customary greetings from his companions. These greetings give us an insight into Paul’s day-to-day work and life in the church.

a. Jewish companions (4:10-11)

v. 10, Greets you Aristarchus my fellow prisoner,

Aristarchus mentioned by Paul only here and Phlm 24; “fellow prisoner,” *sunaiçmalotos*, “prisoner of war” (used for Epaphras in Phlm 23); probably means companion visiting Paul in prison.

Aristarchus a native of Thessalonica, went with Paul to Ephesus, where he was involved in the riot (Acts 19:29); went with Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4) and then at least part way to Rome (Acts 27:2); now with Paul in Rome.

And Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received commandment, if he comes to you, receive him),

John Mark, deserted first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 15:37-39), had gone with Barnabas on mission to Cyprus; now recognized by Paul as useful again; ministered with Peter in “Babylon” (probably Rome; 1 Pet 5:13); even more recognized by Paul in 2 Tim 4:11.

“Cousin of Barnabas,” *anepsios*, not “sister’s son” as in KJV.

“If he comes to you, receive him,” probably Mark, not Barnabas; third class condition, possible-probable.

v. 11, And Jesus, who is called Justus,

This Jesus (Heb. Joshua) not mentioned elsewhere in the NT, not even in Phlm.

These being the only ones of the circumcision who are fellow workers for the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort to me.

Of all the companions mentioned, these are the only Jewish ones: Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus; cf. Phil 2:20.

Emphasis on “kingdom of God,” cf. 1:13.

“Comfort” (*hapax*); a ministry of friendship.

b. Gentile companions (4:12-14)

v. 12, Epaphras greets you, who is (one) of you, a slave of Christ [Jesus], always struggling in your behalf in the prayers, that you might stand complete and fully convinced in all the will of God.

Epaphras, their pastor, coming to be with Paul, and staying with him (1:7).

Evangelized the Colossians, Phlm 23.

For “of you,” cf. Acts 4:6; 21:8; Rom. 16:10-11; 1 Cor 12:16; Phil 4:22.

Not same person as Epaphroditus in Phil 2:25.

“Slave of Christ Jesus,” Paul used phrase only for Paul, Timothy, and Epaphras.

“Always struggling,” *agonizomai*, wrestling; Rom 15:30; cf. Luke 22:44.

“That you might stand,” content of prayer.

“Fully persuaded,” Rom 4:21; 14:3.

“Will of God,” subjective genitive.

Prayer of Epaphras same as Paul’s: not special human wisdom, but full perfection in wisdom of Christ.

v. 13, For I bear him witness that he has much toil in behalf of you and the ones in Laodicea and the ones in Hierapolis.

Paul’s witness to Epaphras, seeing his prayers and concern.

Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, the three cities of the Lycus Valley (see introduction), evidence of churches in each city.

v. 14, Greet you Luke the beloved doctor and Demas.

The two other Gentile companions.

Luke, here called a doctor (only place in NT); “beloved,” loved by Paul and the churches; helpful to Paul.

Demas, mentioned here and in Phlm; then in 2 Tim 4:10, forsook Paul, departed to Thessalonica, because he “loved this world.”

3. Messages for various friends (4:15-17)

Now that Paul has sent the greetings from his companions to the Colossians, he now sends particular greetings and instructions to the people he knows there in the church.

v. 15, Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and Nympha and the church at her house.

Church in Laodicea, not mentioned particularly outside of Colossians.

Laodicea ca. 10 miles NW of Colossae, on southern bank of same river, Lycus.

“Nympha . . . her house”:

Textual variants, masculine accent + “his house,” or “their house”; feminine forms fairly well attested (UBS {C}); likely feminine forms changed rather than opposite change.

Example of early house church.

v. 16, And when the epistle with you is read, cause also that also in the Laodicean church it should be read, and that you yourselves read the one from Laodicea.

Colossians to be read to the church in Laodicea.

Normal practice of public reading (cf. Rev 1:3).

“The one from Laodicea,” either a lost epistle, or the epistle of Ephesians.

It could be Ephesians, since “in Ephesus” not in some early MSS, and it appears to be a circular letter. In that case, it would have been delivered to all the main churches of Asia, perhaps ending with Laodicea, as Revelation did. The same man, Tychicus, was to deliver both Ephesians and Colossians, which would fit with Ephesians being a circular letter. The contents of Ephesians is more general than Colossians, but would certainly be appropriate for the church.

v. 17, And say to Archippus, See the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it.

“And say,” 2nd plural, the congregation.

“The ministry,” probably in Colossae, as substitute pastor as Epaphras was in Rome; perhaps in Laodicea.

Colossae seems more likely, as he is addressed in Philemon in the context of Philemon’s family.

“Received,” solemn and official reception.

Congregation to encourage the pastor; not necessarily embarrassing to Archippus (cf. B. 186).

Final greeting and benediction (4:18)

v. 18, The greeting with my own hand: Of Paul.

The signed greeting, customary with Paul’s epistles (2 Thess 3:17; Gal 6:11).

Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

“Remember,” in prayer; cf. 4:3-4.

Final “Amen” in many MSS, added from liturgical use of the book (UBS omits with {A} rating).