

- a. Something to read. It is generally agreed that since several manuscripts (among them the Sinaitic and Vatican) do not include "in Ephesus" in the Ephesian epistle, that this is the one referred to as being at Laodicea. Letters were to be exchanged with other churches.
- b. Something to heed. Archippus is mentioned as one who needs to be alerted. He has a ministry (word for deacon) to perform; let him do it! Apparently he was lax. He is thought to have been the son of Philemon and Apphia (Philem 2).
- c. Something to keep. Paul still languished in a Roman prison. The church at Colossae is not to forget this. He was there for the sake of the Gospel.

### Conclusion

With his own hand, Paul wrote the last phrase in this letter. He meant every word he had penned. Oh, that the church at Colossae might be verile and strong for the purity of the Gospel, both in doctrine and practice. May the same be our earnest concern until Christ comes for ourselves and the church which we attend. Amen.

## BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

### "Personal Greetings" Colossians 4:7-18

### Introduction

1. What Paul thinks of his friends is really interesting reading! They are pictures into the intimate life of one so mightily used of God.

2. How wonderful it is to have friends like Paul had. His associations were entirely with those who knew and served the Lord. What can other sorts add to our desire for holy living!

3. Examine then the portraits which Paul gives of 10 different persons who crossed his path in connection with Colossae and the church there. They can best be studied under the following three divisions:

### 1. COMMENDATIONS vv. 7-9.

- a. Tychicus. This brother is mentioned 5 times in the NT (Acts 20:4,5; Eph. 6:21; Titus 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:12, and here).

Three precious words are recorded about him:

- 1) Beloved brother--what a note of sweet affection!
- 2) Faithful minister--word for deacon is used here. He was not a platform man, but he was a helper to Paul.
- 3) Fellow-servant--He proved to be a bondsman with Paul of the Lord. It does not take a preacher to be this. If one is truly performing God's will, he is a slave of Christ.

Two ministries were performed by this beloved man:

- 1) Exchanged information about Paul and his friends.
- 2) Provided comfort for the Colossians. The word "comfort" is the same as used of the Holy Spirit--Paraclete!

- b. Onesimus. The wonderful thought here is that Paul puts the runaway slave into such a high position. He calls him faithful and beloved! The use of the

definite article notes that he is marked and observed as such! The epistle of Philemon expands on this marvelous treatment of a Roman slave.

## 2. SALUTATIONS vv. 10-15.

- a. Aristarchus. He is called a "fellow prisoner" and the word which is employed means there is a Gospel war! Same word is used elsewhere (Rom. 16:7; Philem. 23). Since Epaphras is also referred to in connection with Paul by this term, it is supposed that both were volunteer prisoners with Paul. Much has been seen of this in our day.
  - b. Marcus. This is the John Mark of the Paul and Barnabas issue of Acts 15. Mark's relationship with Barnabas undoubtedly provides the reason for the problems of Acts. One can never forget Paul's closing words about him (2 Tim. 4:11).
  - c. Jesus. The blessed humanity of our Lord is noted by the fact that the name given Him was commonly used, as it is noted here. But those who loved Him changed their names so as to give Him full respect. Justus means a righteous follower of the law.
- NOTE The above three are mentioned as Jews who trusted our Lord as Messiah and Redeemer. They shared with Paul in two special matters:
- 1) promotion of the kingdom of God, and
  - 2) comfort unto Paul. The word "comfort" is the one from which we receive our English term "paregoric" which is an anodyne. Hence, these brethren provided greatly needed support for Paul.
- d. Epaphras. What a splendid character this man is! He was apparently led to Christ during Paul's stay at Ephesus (Acts 20:31). He is called a bondsman of Christ. But further, he is a man who agonized in prayer (so the Greek) and one who has given himself to painstaking (so the

Greek) in behalf of the Colossians, those at Laodicea, and Hierapolis. The mention of these three towns suggests that Epaphras was the evangelist in charge of these three areas.

Three matters were the concern of Epaphras' prayers:

- 1) Steadfastness. This is passive in the Greek so means to "be made to stand." How this counts even today!
- 2) Maturity. The word perfect does not mean sinlessness, but growth and complete.
- 3) Assurance. The verb used here is found elsewhere for assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22), assurance of understanding (Col. 2:2).

What a prayer! What worthwhile pains!

- e. Luke. It is probable that Luke is the personal physician of Paul. His first mention (Acts 16:10) is in agreement with Paul's concern for his physical needs (Gal. 4:13, 14). Luke stayed with him right up to the end (2 Tim. 4:11). No wonder he was to Paul a "beloved physician."
- f. Demas. Only one other time this man is mentioned in the Word. There (2 Tim. 4:10) it is recorded that he left the apostle Paul for the lure of the world system! Judas betrayed Christ for the sake of the devil's reward. Many today find Judas and Demas their bedpals. Christian association is no warrant for laxness.
- g. Nymphas. Some take this name to be in the feminine and report this as a woman. Better to take the masculine. Along with the general group of believers at Laodicea, Paul suggests greetings to those in this man's home. Other homes had churches in them too (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philem. 2).

## 3. EXHORTATIONS vv. 16-18.