

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS
“Kind Regards: For People with a Church”
Colossians 4:15, 16

Think it Over

1. Scripture is totally reliable and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16). There is purpose for such a contention (2 Tim. 3:17).
2. It is wrong to suggest that there is a difference between “essential doctrine” and “secondary doctrine.” All doctrine in Scripture is “essential.” There are no “fringe issues” relating to Bible doctrine.
3. With this in mind the closing inspired verses of Colossians 4 must be accepted as important and relevant. Study the statements recorded:

1. ABOUT THE BOOK v. 16

The key verb in the text is “read.” It is used three times. It’s root meaning is “to know certainly, know again.” The idea to read includes “read aloud” (Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:2). The reading is:-

a. Intended

The passive form of the verb suggests someone is to read the letter. The temporal participle “when” indicates irregularity, but nonetheless with due expectation. The preposition “among” notes public worship or group participation. All of this in reference to Colosse.

b. Commanded

The aorist active imperative demonstrates a command that expects action. This same letter to Colosse is to be read (purpose clause) to the church in Laodicea (cf. 2:1). Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were three cities in the Lycus Valley which Paul considered part of his parish.

c. Exchanged

The imperative verb “do” also covers the third “read” in the text. It orders the letter “from Laodicea” to be read at Colosse.

Note: The “letter to the Laodiceans” is not in the Canon of Scripture. The Holy Spirit did not inspire it for this purpose, although Paul apparently wrote something. In the 4th century someone composed a letter to meet the description (“epistle from Laodicea”). It was nothing but a cento (patchwork) from Paul’s letter to the Philippians. The Second Council of Nicea (787 A.D.) warned people against this fallacious (deceptive) document.

2. ABOUT THE BRETHREN v. 15

a. Compared

Several words are used in the N.T. to identify God’s own. Consider these:

1) Sons (huios) = Authoritative relationship cf. Gal. 3:26.

2) Children (teknon) = Authoritative birth cf. 1 John 3:1, 2

3) Brethren (adelphoi) = Authoritative grouping cf. here

b. Concerned

“Brethren” may be variously used in reference to: 1) Physical (Mt. 4:18). 2) Spiritual (Mt. 12:47-49). 3) National (Acts 2:29). 4) Local (Acts 15:23, 32, 33). Obviously the reference here is to believers who are in the church at Laodicea. They were a difficult lot and the Lord warned them (Rev. 3:16), but the “hot” among them were true “brethren.”

3. ABOUT THE BUILDING v. 15

a. Specifically

The “brethren” is a reference to the general congregation at Laodicea. By the use of the connective “and” Paul particularizes Nymphas who belonged to Laodicea, but was apparently a person of considerable importance. He has been considered the Philemon of Laodicea.

b. Distributively

“The church at his (some “their”) house” is a prepositional phrase used distributively. This is a common use of the preposition “kata.” That “Church” met in some believer’s house was not uncommon (cf. Ro. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philemon 2). This seems to militate against the idea that the house of Nymphas was the one meeting place at Laodicea. Rather, it was one of many places of worship at Laodicea (cf. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

c. Spiritually

The word “church” (ekklesia) as used in this text surely is not a reference to a building because the church is in a “house.” This should forever silence those who “go to church.” Because “the church goes to a building.” Hence, the term “church” is a reference to a spiritual entity. This is clearly extrapolated in several passages (cf. Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23-25, 27, 32).

Worth Pondering

These few verses affirm the Bible as we have it to be the Canon of Scripture. The “brethren” who are greeted are believers washed in the blood of the Lamb. God has been pleased to call out His own as a “church” which is the “Body” of our Lord. Therefore something living and vital. Do you understand these wonderful truths?