The Epistle of Paul to the COLOSSIANS

Salutation

1 [1]Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and brother Timothy,[1] [2]to the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Sovereign Jesus Christ.[2]

Building rapport[3]

[3]We always give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you [4](having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus[4] and your love toward all the saints), [5]because of the hope[5] that is being reserved for you in the heavens, of which you have already heard through the Word of the Truth[6] [6](the Gospel that has come to you just as also in all the world, where it is producing fruit and growing[7] just as also among you, from the day in which you heard about and truly understood God's grace), [7]even as you learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow slave,[8] who is a faithful servant of Christ on your[9] behalf, [8]who also reported to us your love in spirit.[10]

Christ preeminent

Walk worthily of the Lord

[9]For this very reason, since the day we heard of it, we have not stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the real knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, [10]in order for you to walk worthily of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way,[11]

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[1] Literally, "Timothy the brother"—Paul gives recognition to his junior associate.

[2] Perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts omit "and Sovereign Jesus Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[3] Paul had never been in Colosse, so he needed to build rapport with strangers.

[4] The going back and forth between "Jesus Christ" and "Christ Jesus" appears to be merely a matter of style.

[5] 'Hope' in the Bible contains an element of certainty; it is not mere wishful thinking.

[6] Yes, 'the' Truth—the Text has the definite article. The Lord Jesus repeatedly referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of 'the Truth', so Paul is affirming that the Gospel they heard was God's Word.

[7] Although half the Greek manuscripts, followed by the *Textus Receptus*, and hence AV and NKJV, do not have "and growing", the other half, including the best line of transmission, do. (The omission could be an easy case of 'similar ending'.)

[8] The Greek word here means precisely 'slave'; Paul repeatedly referred to himself as Christ's slave, as did others.

[9] Instead of "your", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'our' (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

[10] The Text has no article with 'spirit', so the reference may not be to the Holy Spirit, which is why I render "love in spirit". If this love was directed toward Paul, it could not be emotional, since they had never met him. This whole paragraph is a single sentence—if you feel that the syntax is a little convoluted, you are right.

[11] This reminds me of John 5:19 and 12:49-50; the Lord Jesus was filled with this knowledge and understanding (and evidently we are supposed to be as well).

being fruitful in every good work and growing into the real knowledge of God;[1] **11**being enabled with all capability according to the strength that resides in His glory,[2] for all endurance and steadfastness.[3]

12*Nor have we stopped* giving thanks joyfully to the Father who has qualified us[4] for the share in the inheritance of the saints in the Light;[5] **13**who delivered us out of the dominion of the darkness[6] and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, **14**in whom we have the redemption through His blood,[7] the forgiveness of our sins.

The supremacy of Christ described

15He is the visible representation of the invisible God,[8] 'Firstborn' over all creation,[9] **16**because by Him all things were created[10]—those in the heavens and those on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities[11]—all things have been created through Him and for Him.[12] **17**Yes, He is before all, and in Him all things subsist.[13] **18**Also, He is the Head of the body, the Church.

He is Beginning,[14] the firstborn from among the dead,[15] so that He may be preeminent in everything, **19**because <u>in</u> Him all the Fullness was

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[1] Getting to know God is a process.

[2] His glory reflects who He is, and He is all powerful; that power can "enable" us "with all capability".

[3] This is a great prayer to pray for anybody. Note, however, that the emphasis is on enduring and being steadfast—sounds like tough times.

[4] The Father declares us to be qualified, based on the Son's work. Instead of "us", perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts have 'you' (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.).

[5] Yes, 'the' Light—the Text has the definite article. John 1:7 refers to Jesus as 'the Light', and in John 8:12 Jesus calls Himself 'the Light' of the world. What sort of person will enjoy basking in the Light?

[6] "The darkness" refers to Satan's kingdom, and since there are only the two spiritual kingdoms in this world, everyone is in either one or the other (Luke 11:23).

[7] "Through His blood" is omitted in some 40% of the Greek manuscripts, but the 60% include the best line of transmission. Without the shed blood of God's Lamb, we would have neither redemption nor forgiveness. Praise God for the Blood!

[8] Remember Jesus' answer to Phillip in John 14:8-9.

[9] In that culture the 'firstborn' had the preeminence.

[10] Although the Trinity was presumably involved in the Creation, this verse plainly states that the Son was the principal agent (see also Hebrews 1:10 and John 1:10).

[11] "Those in the heavens" would include angelic beings, including high ranking ones—they owe their existence to the Son.

[12] Most inhabitants of planet Earth do not understand that God created them for Himself, so they live out their existence here without knowing why they are here. That is why Sovereign Jesus commanded that His Gospel should be proclaimed to everyone.

[13] "Subsist" could also be rendered 'hold together'—maybe that is why molecules, with their contrary magnetic charges, do not fly apart.

[14] There is no article with "beginning", so I consider that it functions like a proper name.

[15] This is an interesting (even if unpleasant) figure of speech; death is viewed as a huge womb, pregnant with all the deceased, and Jesus was literally the first one out, the first one to be 'born', the first one to resurrect with a glorified body. He was the first, but only the first! Because He conquered death we can also escape that 'womb'.

pleased to dwell[1] **20**and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself,[2] having made peace through the blood of His cross[3]—through **Him**, whether things on the earth or things on[4] the heavens.

The truth applied

21So now He has reconciled you as well (you who once were alienated and hostile in your mind because of your wicked works),[5] **22**by His physical body[6] through His death, so as to present you before Him holy and blameless and above reproach[7]—**23**if, that is, you continue in the Faith established and firm, not drifting away[8] from the hope of the Gospel, that you heard and that was proclaimed in all the creation under the heaven,[9] of which I, Paul, became a servant.

What Paul does and why he does it

Present everyone perfect in Christ

24Now I rejoice in my sufferings[10] on your behalf and supplement in my flesh[11] the things lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church, **25**of which I became a servant according to the stewardship from God that was given to me towards you, to

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1 I take the point to be that while Jehovah the Son was confined to a human body the Father and the Holy Spirit were with Him to such an extent that it could be said that the Godhead was dwelling in Him.

2 It is difficult to know whether the pronoun refers to "the Fullness" (the Godhead) or to Christ—either makes sense.

3 This is reminiscent of Isaiah 53:5, "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him". But the cost was terrible: the shed blood of God's Lamb.

4 That is what the Text says, "on". Beings and things that are an inherent part of Heaven do not need 'reconciling', so Paul uses this means to indicate the non-inherent ones that do need it (but do not ask me for a list).

5 Are wicked works the cause of the alienation, or its result? I suspect that they keep 'feeding' each other, so it is both.

6 Note that Jesus' physical body receives emphasis; you can't have blood without a body.

7 What a marvelous purpose, what a marvelous prospect, but we have to "continue in the Faith" (verse 23).

8 God has done His part, but we must do our part, which includes 'continuing' and not drifting.

9 How should we understand this statement? Based on the accounts, at that moment a small percentage of the total population had heard the Gospel, whether by human preachers, or angelic ones. To my mind, the best explanation is to understand the statement from God's point of view. To an eternal Being, time is irrelevant, since He already knows everything. As it says in Acts 15:18, "All His works are known to God from eternity". 1 Peter 1:18-20 affirms that God's Lamb, with His blood shed, was so known before the creation of the world. And Ephesians 1:4 affirms that the Father chose us in the Son before the foundation of the world. Well then, how about the proclamation of the Gospel? Revelation 14:6 refers to an angel who will proclaim the Gospel to all who live on the earth—to every ethnic nation, tribe, language and people. From God's point of view, that already happened.

10 I confess that I have not yet arrived at this spiritual level, to rejoice in suffering.

11 Evidently the ongoing well-being of the Church requires suffering on our part (we cannot add to the saving work of Christ), the enduring of affliction—Satan and his minions are very active in this world.

complete the Word of God,[1] **26**the secret[2] that has been hidden from past ages and generations, but now has been revealed to His saints; **27**to whom God resolved to make known who is the wealth of the glory of this secret among the nations,[3] namely Christ in you, the hope of glory;[4] **28**whom we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ.[5] **29**It is to this end that I labor, striving according to His working that works through me with power.[6]

A wealth of confident understanding

2 **1**I want you to know how great is my concern for you and those in Laodicea, even all who have not met me personally,[7] **2**that their hearts may be encouraged, being united in love and into a great wealth of confident understanding,[8] into a real knowledge of the mystery of the God and Father and of the Christ,[9] **3**in whom all the treasures of the wisdom and the knowledge are hidden.[10]

4Now I say this so that no one may deceive you with specious arguments. **5**For although in fact I am physically absent, yet my spirit is with you, rejoicing as I observe[11] your orderliness and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

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[1] I take it that Paul was aware that he was writing new Scripture, expounding Truth that had been withheld from Old Testament saints (verse 26).

[2] I consider that 'secret' is a better rendering than 'mystery'. The truth about the Church is not all that mysterious, it just had not been explained before.

[3] Although God's saving interest has always included the whole world ("all the families of the earth"—Genesis 12:3), throughout the O.T. God worked mainly through His specially chosen people, Israel. Now the Bride of Christ includes Jews and non-Jews on an equal footing.

[4] Christ is 'the wealth of the glory', but He must be in us for us to have any hope of sharing in that glory; and we must proclaim Him to the nations for them to have any hope.

[5] In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) Christ commanded His followers to 'make disciples' (which involves a whole lot more than just 'winning souls'), and Paul declares that to be his objective. Instead of "Christ", perhaps 60% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Christ Jesus' (as in AV and NKJV). I follow the best line of transmission.

[6] If we want to see God manifesting His power through us, we must subordinate ourselves to His working.

[7] Paul plainly states that he has yet to visit Colosse and Laodicea.

[8] To have a confident understanding of God's Truth is indeed a great treasure (but it is not for the lazy).

[9] Some 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "and Father and of the" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Just how the Trinity works is indeed difficult for us to understand.

[10] As the primary agent in the creation of our world, the Son is the Source of all true wisdom and knowledge relative to life on this planet.

[11] The basic meaning of the verb rendered 'observe' is to observe with the physical eye, which implies being within range and with no obstacles. But Paul obviously was not there as he wrote, in fact had never been there. He affirms that it is his spirit that is doing the seeing and rejoicing. The Protestant Reformation was a result, in part, of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on reason, so Protestants in general have had trouble understanding the spirit world. So the tendency of commentators has been to 'spirit-

Christian responsibility

6So then, just as you received the Christ Jesus, the Sovereign, keep on walking in Him, **7**having been rooted and being built up in Him[1] and being established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Christ VS 'the world'

8Be careful that no one captures you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the basic principles of the world and not according to Christ.[2] **9**Because all the Fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him in bodily form, **10**and you are complete in Him who is the head over all rule and authority.[3] **11**In Him you were also 'circumcised' by the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, not with a circumcision done by hands but with the circumcision of the Christ, **12**having been buried with Him by the baptism.[4] With Him you were also raised together through your faith in the productive power of the God who raised Him from among the dead.[5]

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ualize' Paul's statement, rather than take it literally. Of course they have done the same with 2 Kings 5:26 (where Elisha says his spirit went with Gehazi) and 6:12 (where Elisha listens in on the king of Syria), not to mention John 1:48 (where the Lord Himself saw Nathanael when not physically present). Here in Brazil we have many former Spiritists and Satanists who have been converted and they affirm that they used to project their spirits outside their bodies and go all over the place—several of my former students, now genuinely converted, have told me they used to do it—but they could do so only with the assistance of a fallen angel (demon). Satan's 'thing' is to be like the Most-High, so he is always trying to imitate Him; perhaps God's servants used to know how to do this, only without such assistance [I have heard of a few in our day who still do].

1 "Having been rooted" refers to what has already happened; "being built up" refers to the ongoing process.

2 The "basic principles of the world", including the academic community (and the media, and commerce, etc.), are controlled by Satan, and are contrary to the values of Christ's Kingdom. Unfortunately, very few churches give adequate teaching on this subject.

3 Wow! There is a human body (glorified) seated at the Father's right, and anyone who is in Christ is there too (Ephesians 2:6).

4 I find it curious that Paul, writing to non-Jews, uses a very Jewish figure, which the non-Jews probably would not understand without instruction on the subject (although there would be converted Jews in the congregation). In Paul's day (at least) there were those who thought that the physical rite of circumcision was a passport to heaven. We have already seen in Romans 2:25-29 that Paul rejects that notion—God looks on the heart. In our day there are those who think that the physical rite of water baptism is a similar passport, but we probably all know individuals who had their 'bath' and are now living for Satan—God looks on the heart. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 explains that it is the Holy Spirit who baptizes us into Christ: "…so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." If we become part of Christ's body, then whatever happens to that body happens to us. If that body died, we did. If it was buried, so were we. If it was raised from the dead, we will be too. Correction—we already have new life in Christ, and are to live on that basis.

5 Without the resurrection there is no Gospel of Christ, and hence no hope for us. It is the resurrection that guarantees our future.

13Yes you, though being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh—He has made you alive together with Him; having forgiven us all our trespasses;[1] **14**having wiped out the written record about us that was against us (based on the ordinances),[2] indeed He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross; **15**having stripped the principalities and the authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, having triumphed over them by it [the cross].[3]

Don't be disqualified!

16So do not let anyone judge you about food or drink, or with respect to a feast day or a new moon or Sabbaths, **17**which things are but a shadow of those to come, while the body is Christ's. **18**Nor let anyone disqualify you,[4] taking pleasure in a subservience and devotion to the angels, 'taking possession' of things that he has not[5] seen, being puffed up by his carnal mind to no useful purpose, **19**and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, supported and held together by its joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

20Now then, since you died with Christ away from the basic principles of the world, why, as though still living in it, are you subjecting yourselves[6] to regulations—**21**Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!—**22**(all of which result in corruption through overuse)[7] according to the commands and teachings of men? **23**Such things do indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and subservience and asceticism, but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.[8]

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[1] This paragraph is made up of a series of participial phrases wherein Paul switches from the 2nd person, in the independent clause, to the 1st person, making inclusive statements.

[2] The "written record" has generally been understood to refer to the Law in some way, but I believe it makes better sense to take it as the record of what each of us has done (remember 'the books' in Revelation 20:12), which of course is negative. Having been forgiven, the record is nailed to the cross, and that is very good news.

[3] This verse gives an important aspect of Christ's victory by the cross and resurrection. Jehovah the Son took on human form in order to destroy Satan (Hebrews 2:14), and He succeeded. A victorious Roman general would bring back a certain number of the conquered soldiers and parade them, naked and in chains, before the Roman populace—total humiliation. Colossians 2:15 says that Christ did something similar to Satan and the high ranking angels that fell with him.

[4] If you release your hold on "the Head" to get involved in the sorts of things mentioned, you will be disqualified. An athlete who is disqualified does not win. Have you ever heard teaching on the subject of 'taking possession'? Be careful!

[5] Some 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "not" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] They are doing this voluntarily, but they shouldn't.

[7] Actually, there <u>are</u> things that it is better not to taste or handle, but the overuse of such restrictions will give negative results.

[8] "The flesh" is used to refer to our 'old man' or sin nature, not the meat on our bones. Asceticism and legalism tend to make people feel self-righteous, which the 'old man' loves.

Things above VS things below

3 [1]Furthermore, since you were raised together with Christ, seek the
things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right; [2]set your
mind on the things above, not on those upon the earth, [3]because you died
and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.[1] [4]Whenever Christ,
our[2] life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.[3]

[5]Therefore put to death your members that are on the earth:[4] fornication, filthiness, passion, evil desire, and greediness, that is idolatry.[5] [6]Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of the disobedience,[6] [7]in which things you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. [8]But now you must also rid yourselves of all these—anger, rage, malice, slander, obscene speech—out of your mouth. [9]Do not lie to one another, since you have taken off the old man with his practices [10]and have put on the new one, who is being renewed into real knowledge according to the image of his Creator, [11]where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all.[7]

Relationships among believers

[12]Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, put on hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience; [13]bearing with one another and forgiving each other, if anyone should have a complaint against another—just as the Christ[8] forgave you, so you also must do. [14]And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.[9]

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[1] What does it mean to have one's life "hidden" in God? I imagine it has to do with protection and security.

[2] Instead of "our", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'your' (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.).

[3] I suppose that this refers to Christ's second coming to set up His Messianic (Millennial) Kingdom.

[4] A curious turn of phrase, 'members on the earth'; perhaps the point is that the things listed belong to this earth and cannot leave it. There will be nothing of the sort in Heaven.

[5] That is what the Text says, "greediness, that is idolatry". Well, if you are greedy for something, it is like a god to you; you are attaching too much importance to it.

[6] "The sons of the disobedience" is a Pauline phrase that he also uses in Ephesians 2:2 and 5:6. The reference is to people who are characterized by disobedience to God; they have deliberately chosen the side of evil, and therefore are worthy candidates for God's wrath. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "upon the sons of the disobedience" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.).

[7] 'Nationalism' has no legitimate place in the Church. There will be no 'Americans', 'Brazilians', 'Russians', 'Chinese', etc. in Heaven—there will only be true subjects of Sovereign Jesus.

[8] Instead of "Christ", perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Lord' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[9] *Agape* love is unselfish, genuinely concerned for the other's wellbeing.

15 Let the peace of God[1] rule in your hearts, into which also you were
called in one body; and be thankful.
16 Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and ad-
monish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing with grace in your
heart to the Lord,[2] with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.[3]
17 Whatever you may do in word or deed, do all in the name of the
Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.[4]

Household relationships

18 Wives, subordinate yourselves to your own husbands,[5] as is fitting
in the Lord.
19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against
them.[6]
20 Children, obey your parents in everything, because this is well
pleasing in the Lord.[7]
21 Fathers, do not provoke your children so that they lose heart.[8]
22 Slaves, obey your masters (according to the flesh) in all things,
not just when they are looking, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart,
fearing God.[9] 23 And whatever you do, give it all you've got,[10] as to the
Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that it is from the Lord that you will
receive the inheritance as a reward; because you serve the Lord Christ.
25 (But he who does wrong will be repaid for this wrong, and there is no
favoritism.)[11]
4 1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is just and fair, knowing
that you also have a Master in the heavens.[12]

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[1] Instead of "God", some 5% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Christ' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).
[2] Instead of "the Lord", perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have 'God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).
[3] Our singing is supposed to reflect "the Word of Christ". Indeed, all of our teaching and admonishing should be based on that Word.
[4] We thank God for the privilege.
[5] In these verses we have a series of verbs in the imperative mood; they are commands. A woman who subordinates herself to her husband will be doing herself a favor (it makes it easier for him to love her).
[6] Right on! That is just how men tend to react, being frustrated by women's wiles and quite different way of thinking. But a man who has the good sense to give value to that different way of thinking will come out ahead.
[7] So of course such commands must not be contrary to God's moral code.
[8] Unreasonable demands, harsh treatment, lack of clear guidelines—there are various ways to frustrate children and cause them to lose heart, and even give up. In today's world they will probably cop out by going to drugs, or the internet (both of which leave them wide open to demonic influence).
[9] Notice that slavery is not condemned; a slave who converted to Christ could not expect to go free; rather he was expected to be a better slave! Instead of "God", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'the Lord' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).
[10] If a human owner is to be served in this way, how much more a divine Owner!
[11] Being saved does not mean we get a free ride.
[12] This is a good thing for all of us to remember.

Redeem the time

2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving, 3 at the same time praying for us, that God may open to us a door for the Word, to speak the mystery of Christ (for which I am also in chains), 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5 Behave wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your word always be with grace, seasoned with salt,[1] to know how you ought to answer each one.

Concluding remarks

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and encourage your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you; they will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him),[2] 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the Kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have been a comfort to me.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ,[3] greets you; he is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.[4] 13 I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and for those in Laodicea and those in Hierapolis.

14 Luke the beloved physician[5] greets you, also Demas. 15 Greet the brothers who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the congregation at his[6] house.

16 Now when this letter has been read among you, see that it is also read in the Laodicean congregation,[7] and that you in turn read the letter to Laodicea.[8]

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1 I wonder what "seasoned with salt" means. Well, according to Romans 12:1, we should present our bodies to God as a 'living sacrifice'; body is a metonym for the person, presumably. In Matthew 5:13 the Lord Jesus said that His followers are the 'salt of the earth'. For something to become salty, it needs to be salted. That is what Jesus does to us when we present our lives to Him as a living sacrifice.

2 Evidently Barnabas succeeded in 'recovering' Mark, which Paul here recognizes.

3 Instead of "Christ", perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Christ Jesus' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

4 We need more people like Epaphras, and that is a great way to pray.

5 Presumably this is where we get that title for Luke. Based on verse 11 above, we may understand that Luke was not a Jew.

6 Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'her' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

7 Paul expected his letters to have a wide circulation.

8 We have no copy of this letter, so presumably it was not inspired, and therefore not preserved. It is possible, even probable, that Paul wrote other letters that were not preserved.

17And say to Archippus, “See to it that you complete the work that you received in the Lord.”[1]

Sign-off

18This greeting is in my own hand: Paul.[2] Remember my chains. The Grace be with you. Amen.

[1] This personal word is unusual in a letter to the church. Since Paul had never been to Colosse, he must have known Archippus from somewhere else, but happened to know that he was in Colosse at that time. However, that exhortation is good for all of us. The older I get, the larger that exhortation looms in my mind.

[2] The letter was dictated to a scribe or secretary, but Paul wrote the last line himself; this was his signature, authenticating the letter.