

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE STRUCTURE AS A WHOLE.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

1. Doctrine has more place than practice in the Epistle to the Colossians. There is a marked resemblance between it and the letter to the Ephesians, a prominent element of both, as well as Philippians, being the apostle's insistence upon the reality of our union with Christ, as having died and risen again in Him, and the necessity for "holding fast the Head" (2:19).

2. SUBJECT. Colossians, like Galatians, proclaims our freedom from the "elements", or "rudiments", of the world. What those elements are, is sufficiently explained by the term "ceremonialism", the rites and ceremonies of religion as distinct from Christianity. Hence Paul's earnest admonition against a return to such, Jewish or other, inasmuch as this is to deny our completeness and perfection in Christ. Practically, it is to say that He is not sufficient, that something more is needed to be added to Him, some ordinance is wanted to make us quite complete. But, as the apostle unfolds to us, we died with Christ, and, consequently, ordinances are of no use to dead persons. In this Epistle all practical holiness is shown to spring from the holding of true doctrine, i.e. our life is the outcome of our belief. Then, our standing being complete and perfect in Christ, we cannot *grow* in this *standing*, but we may grow in the knowledge, experience, and enjoyment of it.

3. The statement in 2:1 indicates that, at the time of writing the Epistle, Paul had not yet visited Colosae, although commentators are divided on this point. Some believe that the apostle could not have missed out the city in one or other of his missionary journeys, although no mention is made in Acts. Others, referring to 1:7, hold that Epaphras had been Paul's deputy to bear the good news to his fellow-citizens, for he was a Colossian (4:12).

4. DATE. The Epistle was written towards the end of the apostle's first imprisonment in Rome, about A.D. 62 ([Ap. 180](#)).

5. The Phrygian city of Colossae was only a few miles from Laodicea, the importance of which gradually increased as the other city declined. Both so entirely disappeared that only in recent times were the sites discovered, and various ruins traced, by modern explorers.

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- 1** Paul, an apostle of *Christ Jesus* by the °will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,
- 2** To the °saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are *in* Colosse: ***Grace and favour be to*** you, and peace, from God our Father °and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3** We give thanks to God ... the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
- 4** ***Having*** heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,
- 5** For the hope which is ***stored away*** for you in ***the heavens***, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;
- 6** Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit [***and increasing***], as *it doth in you also, from* the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:
- 7** As ye ... learned of Epaphras our dear ***fellow-slave***, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;
- 8** Who ***declared also*** unto us your love in the °spirit.
- 9** ***On account of their faith and love*** we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire ***in order that*** ye might be filled with the knowledge of His ¹will in all wisdom and °spiritual °understanding;
- 10** ***To*** walk ***worthily*** of the Lord unto all pleasing, ***fruit bearing*** in every good work, and increasing °***by*** the knowledge of God;
- 11** °Strengthened with all ***power***, according to ***the might of His glory***, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;
- 12** Giving thanks ***to*** the Father, ***Which ... made us efficient for the share*** of the ***lot*** of the saints in ***the light***:
- 13** Who ... ***rescued*** us from the power of °***the darkness***, and ... ***brought us*** into the kingdom of ***the Son of His love***:
- 14** In Whom we have °redemption °<->, ***even*** the forgiveness of sins:
- 15** Who is the °image [***profile***] of the invisible God, the firstborn of ***all creation***:
- 16** ***Because*** by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether ***they be*** thrones, or °dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him:
- 17** And He °IS before all things, and by Him all things ***hold together***.
- 18** And He ¹⁷IS the head of the body, the church: ***Who is the °beginning, the firstborn °from the dead; in order that*** in all ***things*** He might ***become the pre-eminent One*** .
- 19** For it pleased ***God*** that in Him should ***all the fullness*** dwell;
- 20** And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to ***bring together again*** all things unto Himself; by Him, *I say*, whether ***they be*** things in earth, or things in heaven.
- 21** And you, that were sometime °alienated [***estranged from***] and enemies in ***your*** mind by wicked works, yet now ... ***He brought together again***.
- 22** In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and ***unimpeachable*** in His sight:
- 23** ***If at least*** ye continue in the faith ***founded*** and ***firm***, and be not moved away from the °hope of the gospel [***the return of the Lord***], which ye ... heard, ***and*** which was preached to ***all creation*** which *is* under ***the heaven***; whereof I Paul ***became ordained*** a minister;
- 24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up ***that which is lacking*** of the ***tribulations*** of [***the members of the Body of***] °Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church:
- 25** Whereof I ***became*** a minister, according to the ***administration*** of God which ***was*** given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

1. 1 will. Ap.102.2.
[desire rather than resolve].

2 saints. [sparated ones]
See Acts 9:13.

and, &c. Omit, with most of the texts.

8 spirit. I.e. the product of the new nature.
Ap.101.II.5.

PAUL'S SOLICITUDE.
1:9—2:7.

9 spiritual. See 1 Cor. 12:1.

understanding. See 1 Cor. 1:19.

10 by. The texts read "by" (dative).

11 Strengthened.
Gr.*dunamoo*. Only here.
Cp. Ap.172.1.

CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE BODY. 12—22.

13 the darkness. See Luke 22:53. Eph. 6:12.

14 redemption. See Rom. 3:24.

<-> **through His blood.**
All the texts omit.

16 dominions, &c. See Eph. 1:21.

17 IS. Emphatic.

18 beginning. See Prov. 8:22-30.

from the dead. Ap.139.4.
[out from among dead bodies or corpses].

24 Christ. i.e. the tribulations of the members of the body of which He is the Head.

26 Even the ^omystery which hath been ^ohid from *the age times* and from generations, but now is made *revealed* to His saints:

27 To whom God *desired to* make known what *is* the ^oriches of the glory of this ²⁶mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ *among* you, the hope of *the glory*:

28 Whom we preach, *admonishing* every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; *in order that* we may present every man *mature* in Christ ... :

29 *Unto which I labour also, agonizing with all His strength*, which worketh in me *by might*.

2 For I *desire* that ye *fully understand* what great ^ostruggling I have *on your behalf*, and for them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 *In order that* their hearts might be comforted, being *united* in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, *unto* the acknowledgement of the ^omystery of God, and of the Father, *even Christ*;

3 In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, *in order that no one* should ^odeceive you with ^oenticing [artful] words.

5 For *even if* I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the ^ospirit [feelings and desires], joying and beholding *how orderly you are*, and the steadfastness of your faith *unto* Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received ^oChrist Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in Him:

7 ^oRooted and ^obuilt up in Him, and ^ostablished *by* the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding *in it* with thanksgiving.

8 *See to it that not any one seduces* you through ^ophilosophy and *mere fallacy*, after the tradition of men, after the *elementary rules* of the world, and not after Christ.

9 ^oBecause in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *in bodily form*.

10 And ye are complete in Him, *Who* is the head of all principality and power:

11 In Whom *ye were circumcised also* with the circumcision ^omade without hands [in the heart], in putting off the body ... of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 ^oBuried with Him in ^obaptism [His baptism unto death], *in Whom ye were raised also*, and through the faith of the operation of God, *Who* ... raised Him from the dead.

13 And you, being [at that time] dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He *made alive* together with Him *even you*, having *graciously forgiven* you all *sins*;

14 *Having blotted out the written legal contract* of ^oordinances [decrees] that was against us, which was *against and opposed* to us, and took it out of the *midst*, *having nailed* it to *the cross*;

15 And having *put off* principalities and powers, He made a shew of them *publicly*, triumphing over them *by the cross*.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in *eating and drinking*, or in *taking part* of an ^oholyday [feast], or of the ^onew moon [celebration], or of the *Sabbaths*:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

18 Let no man *defraud you of your prize in being a devotee to* ^ohumility and *religion* of angels, *investigating* those things which he hath ... seen, vainly ^opuffed up by *the mind of his flesh* [the old Adam nature],

19 And not ^oholding fast the Head, from Whom all the body by joints and *bonds* having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore if ye *died* with Christ from the *elementary rules* of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye ^osubject [such as] to ordinances,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

22 Which all are *for corruption* with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

26 *mystery*. Ap.193, and Cp. Rom. 16:25.

hid. See 1 Cor. 2:7, and Cp. Eph. 3:9.

27 *riches*. See Eph. 1:7.

29 *striving*. See Luke 13:24.

working. See Eph. 1:19.

2. 1 *struggling*. See Phil. 1:30.

2 *mystery*. Ap.193.

4 *deceive*.

Gr.*paralogizomai*. Here and Jas. 1:22.

enticing words.

Gr.*pithanologia*.

[persuasive language].

Only here.

5 *spirit*. Ap.101.II.8.

6 *Christ Jesus the Lord*.

For this full title see Rom. 6:23.


7 *Rooted*. See Eph. 3:17.

built up. See Acts 20:32, and Cp. Eph. 2:20.

stablished. See Rom. 15:8 (confirm).

8 *philosophy*.

Gr.*philosophia*. [Jewish sophistry] Only here.

9  The whole Deity thus became incarnate, and appeared in human form and flesh.

11 *made without hands*.

See 2 Cor. 5:1.

12 *Buried with*. See

Rom. 6:4.

baptism. Ap.115.II.i.1.

I.e. His baptism unto death.

14 *ordinances*. See Acts 16:4.

16 *holyday*. =feast. See Lev. 23.

new moon. See 1 Chron. 23:31.

18 *puffed up*. See 1 Cor. 4:6.

19 *holding fast*. The central theme of the Epistle is the necessity of holding fast to the Head.

20 *subject, &c*. Mid. of Gr.*dogmatizo*, which means to impose dogmas upon one.

23 Which order of things is *having* indeed a *reputation* of wisdom in *self-imposed worship*, and humility, and *not sparing* of the body; not in any *value* to the ^osatisfying of the flesh.

3 If ye then *were raised with* Christ, seek those ^othings which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 *Mind* things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye *died*, and your life *has been laid up in store* with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall *be manifested*, then shall ye also *be manifested* with Him in glory.

5 *Put to death* therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, *lust*, evil *desire*, and *greediness*, which is idolatry:

6 *Because of these things* the wrath of God cometh on the ^ochildren of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put *away* all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy *language* out of your mouth.

9 Lie not *to one another*, *having* put off the *old Adam nature* with his *practices*;

10 And *having* put on [*like a garment*] the ^onew [*regenerated*] *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the *pattern* of Him That created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor ^oJew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, ^oScythian [*the lowest type of barbarians*], bond nor free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, *inward affection* of ^omercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, ^omeekness, long suffering;

13 *Bearing with* one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a *grievance* against any: even as *the Lord* forgave you, *do ye also*.

14 And above all these things *put on the love*, which is *a* bond of ^operfect completeness.

15 And let the peace of *Christ be umpire* in your hearts, to the which *ye were called also* in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the *spoken and written words* of Christ ^odwell in you ^orichly in all wisdom; teaching and ^oadmonishing one another in psalms and hymns and ^ospiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to *God*.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or *in work*, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God ... the Father *through Him* .

18 Wives, ^osubmit yourselves unto your own ^ohusbands, as it is *proper* in the Lord.

19 ¹⁸Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter *toward* them.

20 Children, obey *your* parents *according to* all things: for this is well pleasing ^oto the Lord.

21 Fathers, ^oprovoke [*embitter*] not your children *to anger*, *in order that not they have their spirit broken*.

22 Servants, obey *according to* all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with ^oeyeservice, as menpleasers; but in *sincerity* of heart, fearing *the Lord*:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the *recompense* of the ^oinheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive ^o*the wrong that he wronged*: and there is no ^opartiality.

23 satisfying.

Gr. *plesmone*. Only here. Ascetic observances are of no value as remedies against the old nature.

3. 1 things...above. See Phil. 3:13, 14.

6 children. See Eph. 2:2.

Note there = Hebraism: Not disobedient children, but sons of Satan in a special manner, being those in whom he works, and on whom the wrath of God comes (Eph. 5:6).

10 new. Gr. *neos*. See Matt. 9:17.

11 Jew, &c. Cp. Gal. 3:28.

Scythian. Regarded by the ancients as the lowest type of barbarians.

12 mercies. [pity] See Rom. 12:1.

meekness. [gentleness] See Eph. 4:2.

14 perfect completeness. Gr. *teleiotes*. Only here and Heb. 6:1.

16 dwell. [inhabit] See Rom. 8:11.

richly. Gr. *plousios*. [abundantly] Only here, 1 Tim. 6:17. Tit. 3:6. 2 Pet. 1:11.

admonishing. [caution or reprove gently, warn] See 1:28, and Acts 20:31.

spiritual. See 1 Cor. 12:1 (see note there).

18 submit. See Eph. 5:22.

husband. Ap. 123.2. [an adult male person].

20 to. But the texts read "in" (Gr. *en*).

21 provoke. See 2 Cor. 9:2.

22 eyeservice. [sight labor] See Eph. 6:6.

menpleasers. [man courting, that is, fawning] Eph. 6:6.

24 inheritance. See Eph. 1:14.

25 the wrong, &c. See Gal. 6:7.

partiality. Gr. *prosopolepsia*. See Rom. 2:11.

4 Masters, give *to your* servants that which is *right* and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

2 °Continue in prayer, and watch in *it* with °thanksgiving;

3 *Withal praying for us also, in order that* God would open *to* us a door *for the spoken word*, to *declare* the °mystery of Christ, for which I *have been bound also*:

4 *In order that* I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are °without, °redeeming [*buying out*] the time.

6 Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

7 *All things according to me* shall Tychicus *make known* unto you, *the* beloved brother, and ... faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

8 Whom I ... sent *to* you for the same purpose, *in order* °that ye may know the things *concerning you*, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall °make known unto you all things ... here.

10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, *cousin* to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

11 And °Joshua, which is called °Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have *become* a comfort unto me.

12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of *Christ Jesus*, saluteth you, always *striving* for you in prayers, *in order that* ye may stand perfect and *fully persuaded* in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great *labour* for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and °Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 And when this epistle is read among you, *see to it* that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in *the* Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 The salutation by *my hand of Paul*. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you.

4. 2 Continue. See Rom. 12:12.

thanksgiving. See 2:7.

3 mystery. Ap.193.

5 without. [outside] See 1 Cor. 5:12.

redeeming. See Eph. 5:16. [Lit. to buy out].

8 that ye may know, &c.

The texts read "that ye may know our".

9 make known. Same as "declare", v. 7.

11 Joshua. Cp. Acts 7:45. [The Heb. means "Jehovah the Saviour" Cp. Heb. 4:8].

15 Nymphas. Not mentioned elsewhere.