

# CHAPTER 4

## INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 4

This chapter begins with an exhortation to masters to behave towards their servants in a just and equitable manner, from the consideration of their having a master in heaven, which should have concluded the preceding one; and in it the apostle gives some general exhortations, and some particular instructions about reading this, and another epistle, and stirring up their minister to his duty; and great part of it is taken up in expressing his love to the Colossians, and in the salutations of others, and of himself. The general exhortations are to prayer, with watchfulness and thankfulness, not only for themselves, but especially for the ministers of the Gospel, (<sup><S1042></sup>Colossians 4:2-4) and next to a wise behaviour towards them that were of the world, (<sup><S1045></sup>Colossians 4:5) and also to a prudent conversation, particularly in language, with everyone, (<sup><S1046></sup>Colossians 4:6). And then the apostle proceeds to declare his great affection for them, and care of them, which he showed by sending two proper persons to them from him, partly to make known his affairs to them, and partly to know the state and condition they were in, and comfort them, (<sup><S1047></sup>Colossians 4:7-9) and next follow the salutations of various persons to them, who are mentioned by name, and whose characters are given, (<sup><S1048></sup>Colossians 4:10-15). And then he orders them to read this epistle in the church of Laodicea, and also that which came from that place, (<sup><S1049></sup>Colossians 4:16) and to admonish Archippus to take heed to, and fulfil his ministry, since it was what he had received in the Lord, (<sup><S1047></sup>Colossians 4:17). And then closes the epistle with his own salutation and benediction, entreating a remembrance of him and his bonds, (<sup><S1048></sup>Colossians 4:18).

**Ver. 1.** *Masters, give unto your servants*, etc.] This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter, with which it should have been concluded. It is indeed strange, that those who made the division of chapters and verses should separate this from the former chapter, to which it so manifestly belongs, and begin a new one with it, when it has no connection with what follows; for the apostle having observed the duty of servants to their

masters, proceeds to direct masters to the discharge of their duty to their servants, by giving them

*that which is just and equal*: proper food and raiment, which is sufficient and fitting for them; the wages due unto them by law or contract; using them with gentleness and humanity, taking care of them when under affliction, and in sickness; encouraging the diligent and laborious by an addition to their salaries; correcting the disobedient within just bounds, not with too much rigour and severity; and carrying it with an even hand to all, not preferring or indulging one before another, without any reason:

*knowing that ye also have a master in heaven*: (see Gill on “~~AND~~ Ephesians 6:9”).

**Ver. 2.** *Continue in prayer*, etc.] This is not said particularly to masters, as in the foregoing verse, but to all the members of the church in general; for the apostle having taken notice of some special duties relating to persons in different stations of life, returns to such as were common to them all; as this of prayer to God is, for such prayer is intended; for though the object is not expressed here, he is in the following verse, and the Mediator Christ is supposed, and also the Holy Spirit, whose assistance is necessary to it. The things exhorted to, and required in prayer, are, first, as in this clause, continuance in it, which does not mean that men should be always formally praying to God; nor can it be thought that saints are always in praying frames of soul, though such are always desirable; but it intends frequency and constancy in prayer, in opposition to an entire restraint and omission of it, and to a performance of it but now and then, or very rarely; for though Christians are not, as the Jews were, bound to certain stated hours of prayer, so many times in a day, yet a day should not pass without prayer to God; for their daily cases call for it; their lives, their health, their daily bread, and all their temporal enjoyments, which depend on his daily goodness, providence, and power; their spiritual affairs, the renewing of the inward man day by day, fresh supplies of grace for new service; their daily trials and afflictions, their continued enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, all fully show the necessity of daily prayer: besides, God does not always immediately answer the prayers of his people, he will be sought unto time after time, even for a blessing he intends to give; and therefore the saints should not be discouraged, but continue in prayer till they receive the mercy, and their importunity is a means of enjoying it, as in the case of the poor widow; and which is an encouraging reason why men should pray

always, and not faint. Add to this, that constant prayer is a means of keeping up a spiritual acquaintance, intercourse, and familiarity with God, and of the soul alive in the vigorous exercise of the graces of the Spirit, and of preserving the saints from temptations and sin; for, generally speaking, restraining prayer before God, and casting off his fear, go together. The next things requisite in prayer are watchfulness and thankfulness:

*and watch in the same with thanksgiving.* There is not only a watchfulness unto it, previous to a man's entrance on it, as in (<sup><4068></sup>Ephesians 6:18 <sup><4047></sup>1 Peter 4:7) but a watchfulness in it, which is opposed both to sleepiness of body, and to coldness and indifference of mind, to all careless airs and negligent manner of performing it; and designs an intenseness of mind, an application of thought, and fervency of devotion, and affection in it. It lies in a concern, that the heart be lift up, with the hands to God; in a care, that what is asked is according to the will of God, and that the whole be performed in sincerity, faith, and fear. This is what the Jews call **h l p t** **^wy** [ , “the attention of prayer” <sup>f55</sup> , and **bl h t nwk** , “the intention of the heart”; and which, they say <sup>f56</sup> , is the root of prayer, the main and principal thing in it; and that every prayer which is not with intention, is no prayer <sup>f57</sup> ; and which, they observe, lies in this, that a man turns his heart from all (other) thoughts, and seems to himself as if he stood before the divine Majesty. To this

*thanksgiving* must be added; (see <sup><5046></sup>Philippians 4:6) for this is well pleasing to God; and the contrary, an ungrateful spirit, is highly resented by him. Besides, a believer has always mercies to bless God for, as well as favours to ask at his hands; nor is he ever in such a situation, either in temporals or spirituals, but he has something to bless God for. Moreover, how should it be expected that a person should succeed in a present request, who is not thankful for a former kindness?

**Ver. 3.** *Withal, praying also for us,* etc.] The persons to be prayed for are next directed to; and these are not only themselves, though their concern is very near and great, but others also, all the saints and people of God, yea, all men, and in particular the ministers of the Gospel. The apostle desires they would pray for him, and his fellow ministers, and which he says not in dissimulation, under a guise of humility, but in true humility and lowliness of mind; being sensible of the greatness of the ministerial work, which this shows, and of his own imperfection and weakness, and of what advantage the prayers, even of the meanest in the church, might be unto him: and this

shows, that it is the duty of churches, and of particular believers, to pray for their ministers, and, among the rest, as follows,

*that God would open to us a door of utterance*; or “of the word”; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic; and Ethiopic versions; meaning, either the word of the Gospel, that the door of that might be opened, that it might have a free course, and be glorified; for though he was bound, that was not; nor does he desire that the door of the prison might be opened, but the door of the word; that there might be an opportunity of preaching it; in which sense this phrase is used, (~~410~~1 Corinthians 16:9 ~~412~~2 Corinthians 2:12) that whereas he could not go abroad to preach it, the hearts of men might be inclined to come to him, and hear it from his mouth; and that the door of their hearts might be opened, that they might attend unto it; that it might have an entrance into them, and a place in them: or else the door of his own speech and words is intended, and the sense be, that God would not only set before him an open door for the preaching of the Gospel, and make it effectual for the conversion of many souls; but that, as he would furnish him with all abilities, and every gift for that service, so that with enlargement of heart, and liberty of mind, he would give him elocution, a mouth and wisdom to speak, utterance and freedom of speech; that the door of the Gospel being opened, or an opportunity given to preach it, and the door of men's hearts opened to receive it, the door, of his lips might be also opened to show forth the praise of the grace of God. The Alexandrian copy adds, “with boldness”, or “boldly”, as in (~~409~~Ephesians 6:19)

*to speak the mystery of Christ*; the Gospel, of which Christ is the author, preacher, sum, and substance; the whole of which is a mystery; the wisdom of God in a mystery; all the doctrines of it are mysteries; and particularly those, and which are here more especially designed, which regard the person, offices, and grace of Christ, as the mystery of his divine and eternal sonship, of his incarnation, of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person, of redemption by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and satisfaction by his sacrifice, things dear to the apostle, and which his soul was full of, and he wanted to speak out; and therefore desires prayer, to be made for him, that a door might be opened, and way made for his speaking of these things with freedom:

*for which*, says he,

*I am also in bonds*; this he adds, partly to show how dear the Gospel was to him, that he was willing to suffer, and did suffer cheerfully for the sake

of it; and what an honour he esteemed it to lie in chains for it, of which, nor of that, was he in the least ashamed; and partly to stir them up the more to prayer for him, for his liberty in every respect.

**Ver. 4.** *That I may make it manifest*, etc.] It being a mystery, a secret, which was hid in God from everlasting, and, during the legal dispensation, was wrapped up in types, and shadows, and sacrifices, and is still hidden unto the natural man. Wherefore the apostle was desirous of making it manifest in a ministerial way; for God only, by his Spirit, makes it manifest in a spiritual, experimental, and saving way.

*As*, says he,

*I ought to speak*. The Arabic version adds, “concerning it”, the Gospel, the mystery of Christ. The apostle's meaning is, that he might deliver it with that clearness and evidence, and use that plainness of speech which became the Gospel, and him as a minister of it, and not ambiguous expressions, equivocal phrases, words of double meanings, on purpose to hide things from men, but by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. As also to speak it faithfully, declaring the whole counsel of God, keeping back nothing that might be profitable to the churches; and with all constancy and certainty, with all boldness and intrepidity of soul, and freedom of mind; not seeking to please men, aiming at vain glory, and popular applause, or being afraid of their faces, menaces, and reproaches.

**Ver. 5.** *Walk in wisdom*, etc.] Or wisely, circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise men; (see Gill on “<sup>4015</sup>Ephesians 5:15”).

*Towards them that are without*; so the Jews used to call the Gentiles, all that were out of their own land, that were not of their nation or religion, who were aliens from them, and strangers to their privileges; and sometimes the unbelieving. Jews bear the same character, (see <sup>4011</sup>Mark 4:11). Here it may design such who were not members of this church; so the distinction of those that are without, and such as are within, is used by the apostle in (<sup>4012</sup>1 Corinthians 5:12). A church is an house or family, and such as belong to it are called the household of faith, and those that do not are they that are, without; it is as a city, and, those that are of it are fellow citizens with the saints, but others are strangers and foreigners; it is a garden enclosed, they that are planted in it are those that are within, and such as lie in the wide open field of the world are those that are without:

but inasmuch as there are some who are not members of churches, and yet have the grace of God, this phrase may chiefly regard all unregenerate men, profane sinners, such as have not faith in Christ, nor hope in God, who are entirely destitute of the grace of God. Now it becomes saints to walk wisely towards them; all communication with them is not cut off, or correspondence and conversation with them forbidden; the saints indeed are not to have their conversation among them as in times past; they are to have no fellowship with them in immoral actions, and superstitious practices; but they may be concerned with them in things civil, with respect to trade and commerce, and the common business of life; on these accounts they may keep company with them; otherwise, as the apostle elsewhere says, they must needs go out of the world. But then it is incumbent upon them to behave wisely towards them, with the simplicity of the dove to join the wisdom of the serpent; they should walk inoffensively towards them, and do nothing to provoke them, to injure and persecute them, but take all prudent methods to gain their affections, escape their resentment and wrath, and obtain their liberty of worshipping God without disturbance; they should give to all their due, tribute, custom, fear, and honour, to whom they are due, and owe no man anything but love; they should submit to every ordinance of men and be subject to the higher powers, not only to escape wrath, but for conscience sake, and should give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; they should pray for kings, and all in authority; for the prosperity of the nation, city, and place where they are, for their carnal relations and neighbours, and even their very enemies, and do them all the good, both for soul and body, that lies in their power, and as they have opportunity; and by so doing, they will heap up coals of fire on their heads. Such a prudent walk, and wise conduct, is necessary on account of the Gospel, that the public ministration of it may be continued, that it may spread and get ground, and that it may not be reproached and blasphemed; and on the account of them that are without, that they may not have any stumblingblocks laid in their way, and they be hardened in their impiety and irreligion, and be more set against the truths of the Gospel; and also on account of believers themselves, who ought so to converse with the men of the world, that they are not partakers with them in their sins, and have their manners corrupted by them, or the vital heat of religion damped, and they become dead, lifeless, lukewarm, and indifferent to divine things, which is often the case through an indiscreet and imprudent walk with such men: the apostle adds,

*redeeming the time*; as an instance of prudent walking towards them that are without; (see Gill on “<sup>4016</sup>Ephesians 5:16”).

**Ver. 6.** *Let your speech be always with grace*, etc.] “In grace, or concerning grace”: let grace be the subject matter of your speech and conversation. When saints meet together they should converse with each other about the work of grace upon their souls, how it was begun, and how it has been carried on, and in what case it now is; they should talk of the great things and wonders of grace, which God has done for them, which would be both comfortable and edifying to them, and make for the glory of the grace of God; and also, they should confer together about the doctrines of grace, and so instruct, establish, and build up one another in them; and at least their conversation should always turn on things graceful and acceptable, such as may minister grace unto the hearer, and be useful and edifying; wherefore all obscene words, unchaste expressions, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, ought not to be used. Or this may regard the manner of the speech, and language of the saints; it should be in the exercise of grace; it should be in truth, faithfulness, and sincerity, without lying, dissimulation, and flattery; it should be in consistence with the grace of love, therefore evil should not be spoken one of another; nor should there be whisperings, backbitings, or anything said that is injurious to the character, credit, and reputation of another; for this is contrary to love, and so not with grace: and whatever is said should be spoken in the fear of God; the reason why so many evil things proceed out of the mouths of men is, because the fear of God is not before their eyes. Moreover, the speech of the saints ought to be in a graceful way, with a cheerful and pleasant countenance, in an affable and courteous manner, and not after a morose, churlish, and ill natured fashion: and this should be “always” the case; not that they should be always talking, for there is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak; but the sense is, that when they do speak, it should be both graceful things, and in a graceful manner; so that there is never any room and place for vain discourse, unprofitable talk, and idle words, which must all be accounted for in the day of judgment.

*Seasoned with salt.* The Syriac version adds, *Æya*, “as” and reads it, “as if it was seasoned with salt”: grace being that to speech, as salt is to meat; as salt makes meat savoury and agreeable to the palate, so grace, prudence, and holiness, which may be meant by salt, (see <sup>4016</sup>Mark 9:50), make discourse savoury, pleasant, and acceptable to a spiritual man, who savours the things that be of God, as all such things are that relate to the grace of

God, the work or doctrines of it; and as salt preserves flesh from putrefaction and corruption, so when grace goes along with speech, it makes it pure and incorrupt, sound speech which cannot be condemned: and the apostle's view is, in this exhortation, that nothing unsavoury and corrupt proceed out of the mouths of believers; (see <sup><404></sup>Ephesians 4:29),

*that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “and know ye how”, etc. and make it to be a fresh exhortation to the saints to be concerned for such a share of spiritual knowledge, that they may be able to give a proper and pertinent answer, with meekness and fear, to such as shall ask a reason of the hope that is in them; and to make suitable returns to persons according to their age, sex, capacities, and circumstances; for everyone is not to be answered alike, nor the same man under different circumstances; a fool is sometimes to be answered according to his folly, and sometimes not; and this seems to be a better reading than ours, which makes this to be the end of gracious, savoury, and incorrupt speech; whereas knowledge is not acquired by speaking, but ought to go before it; though indeed a person that uses himself to speaking with prudence, purity, and grace, is at all times ready to give an agreeable answer, in a graceful and acceptable manner, to everyone.

**Ver. 7.** *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you,* etc.] This Tychicus was an Asian by birth; (see <sup><404></sup>Acts 20:4). His name signifies “fortunate”, and is the same with “Fortunatus” in Latin, which name is mentioned in (<sup><4167></sup>1 Corinthians 16:17) whether he is the same person may be inquired. It is said that this Tychicus was one of the seventy disciples, and was afterwards bishop of Chalcedon. However, he was employed by the apostle as a messenger to Colosse, as he also was to Ephesus, (see <sup><4171></sup>Ephesians 6:21 <sup><5042></sup>2 Timothy 4:12), to inform the members of the church of his state and condition, how it was with him; as that he was in prison at Rome, for the sake of the Gospel, which he continued to abide by, and held fast the profession of, not being in the least moved and intimidated by what he suffered, being supported by the presence of Christ, and the discoveries of his love; and therefore, though his outward state was very mean and uncomfortable, yet the inward state of his soul was right and good; the inward man was renewed day by day. He might also send word by him what his thoughts were about his deliverance, or his dissolution, and what expectation he had of either of these: and that they might give the greater



credit to what Tychicus should relate from him, he gives him the following character,

*who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister*: the same character is given of him in (~~402~~Ephesians 6:21 (see Gill on "~~402~~Ephesians 6:21")) to which is here added,

*and fellow servant in the Lord*; he was a “brother” in Christ, being a partaker of the same grace, and in the same spiritual relation; and “beloved” of God, and Christ, of all the churches and saints that knew him, and especially by the apostle; and was also a “minister” of the Gospel, a preacher of Jesus Christ, and a “faithful” one to Christ, to his Gospel, and the souls of men; than which a greater character cannot well be given: and though the apostle was endued with such superior gifts, grace, and usefulness; yet he calls this ministering brother a “fellow servant in the Lord”; he having a commission to preach from the same Lord, and having the same Gospel intrusted with him, and being engaged in the same good work, and having the same ends in view, the glory of Christ, and the good of souls; though he had not equal abilities and qualifications, and was not in the same high post and office as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 8.** *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose*, etc.] That is, to relate to them his affairs both temporal and spiritual; and also,

*that he might know your estate*. The Arabic version renders it, “that I may know your estate” by him when he returned again; as whether they continued steadfast in the Gospel, and observed the order, ordinances, and discipline of it; how it prospered, and was succeeded among them, to their comfort and edification, and to the conversion of others; and what reception the false teachers had among them; and what love, concord, and harmony were among themselves; or what were their afflictions and distresses from their enemies. The Ethiopic version renders it, “that ye may know the history of me”; which agrees with a manuscript mentioned by Grotius, which reads, “that ye may know the things concerning us”, as does the Alexandrian copy; and with (~~402~~Ephesians 6:22) where it is added, as here, and “comfort your hearts”; who might be greatly cast down upon hearing of the sufferings of the apostle, and also with those they themselves endured both from within and from without, from sin, Satan, and the world; *see on Gill* “~~402~~Ephesians 6:22”.

**Ver. 9.** *With Onesimus*, etc.] Who had been Philemon's servant, ran away from him, and was met with and converted by the Apostle Paul, of whom he says many things in his epistle to his master. According to the Apostolic Constitutions, he was afterwards bishop of Beyrhoea; and some say he suffered martyrdom under Domitian; a servant of this name is mentioned by Suetonius<sup>f58</sup>, Ignatius<sup>f59</sup> speaks of one Onesimus as bishop of Ephesus, but not the same with this,

*a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you*; either one of their ministers, as Epaphras was, (<sup><50B2></sup>Colossians 3:12) or one of their city, who was originally a native of that place; and which the apostle mentions, the more to recommend him; though this is the least part of his commendation; he calls him a “brother”, being both a converted man, and in the ministry; and being faithful in his work to Christ, and greatly beloved, by the saints; and particularly highly in the esteem and affections of the apostle:

*they shall make known unto you all things which are done here*; at Rome, either to him in prison, or in the church; and being two of them, were a proper number to bear a testimony, and which ought to be received.

**Ver. 10.** *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you*, etc.] This man was a man of Macedonia, and a Thessalonian; (<sup><44B2></sup>Acts 19:29 20:4) which hinders not but that he might be of the circumcision, or a Jew, as is suggested in the following verse; for he might be born at Thessalonica, and yet be of Jewish parents; nor is his Greek name any objection to it, for the Jews themselves say, that the greatest part of the Israelites that were out of the land, their names are as the names of strangers<sup>f60</sup>: he was a constant companion of the apostle, and one of his fellow labourers, as in (<sup><50B2></sup>Philemon 1:24) and now a prisoner with him at Rome; and who having some knowledge of the members of the church at Colosse, takes this opportunity of sending his Christian salutation to them:

*and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas*; the same with John Mark, whose mother's name was Mary, said here to be sister to Barnabas, (<sup><44B2></sup>Acts 12:12,24) concerning whom there was a difference between Paul and Barnabas, (<sup><44B7></sup>Acts 15:37,38), and is the same Mark that wrote the Gospel, and was converted by the Apostle Peter, (<sup><40B3></sup>1 Peter 5:13) and who is said to have received his Gospel from him; he is also mentioned (<sup><50B1></sup>2 Timothy 4:11) (Philemon 24). The Arabic version calls him here, the “brother's son of Barnabas”: and the Syriac version, **hdd rb**, “his uncle's son”: however,

Barnabas being so great a man as he was, and so well known, it added some credit to Mark, that he was a relation of his:

*touching whom ye received commandments*; not concerning Barnabas, but Mark, concerning whom they had had letters of commendation, either from Barnabas or from Paul, to this purpose:

*if he come unto you, receive him*; for this was either the substance of those letters, or what the apostle now adds of his own, for the further confirmation of them; and that they might more readily and honourably receive him, when he should come unto them.

**Ver. 11.** *And Jesus, which is called Justus*, etc.] The former of these names is the same with Joshua, and was very frequent with the Jews, and the later a surname that was sometimes given to men remarkable for holiness and righteousness: so Joseph, called Barsabas, is surnamed Justus, (<sup><4023></sup>Acts 1:23) and James, the brother of our Lord, was called by the Jews James the Just <sup>f61</sup>: whether this man was not the same with Justus of Corinth, whose house joined to the synagogue, and into which Paul entered, (<sup><4807></sup>Acts 18:7) is not certain, but is likely: who are of the circumcision; were Jews, were circumcised persons, though not now sticklers for circumcision, and the rest of the ceremonies, as appears by what follows: this is to be understood of all the above persons, that sent their salutations to this church; though some confine it to Marcus, Barnabas's sister's son, and to Jesus, called Justus:

*these only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God*; who assisted him in preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and in promoting the honour and interest of Christ. These were the only persons of the Jewish nation that were then at Rome under that character; from whence it appears that Peter was not there at that time: the apostle adds,

*which have been a comfort unto me*; under his afflictions and sufferings, by visiting him, conferring with him, praying for him, communicating to him, and labouring in the Gospel in his room and stead.

**Ver. 12.** *Epaphras, who is one of you*, etc.] A native of Colosse, and one of their faithful ministers; (see <sup><5007></sup>Colossians 1:7).

*A servant of Christ*; not merely in the same sense as every believer is, but as he was a preacher of the Gospel, in which he faithfully served his Lord and master, Christ:

*saluteth you*; sends his Christian respects to you, for whom he bore a sincere love and hearty affection, as appears by what follows:

*always labouring fervently for you in prayers*; in all his prayers, which were many and frequent, he never forgot his dear flock at Colosse, of which he was pastor, but strove with God for them, even to an agony, as the word signifies; he wrestled with the Lord as Jacob did, nor, as he, would he let him go without a blessing for this church; he was incessant, importunate, and fervent in prayer for them: and what he prayed in particular for them was,

*that ye may stand perfect*; in Christ Jesus their head, and in his spotless righteousness; (see <sup><50128></sup>Colossians 1:28 2:10) and continue believing in him, and looking to him for righteousness and strength, in whom all the fulness, the perfection of grace dwells; and where the saints only are, and can continue to be perfect:

*and complete in all the will of God*; or “be filled” in it, have a perfect knowledge of the revealed will of God, both as to doctrine and practice, and be enabled to act according to it.

**Ver. 13.** *For I bear him record*, etc.] The apostle was an eye and ear witness of his fervent prayers, his labour of love, and zealous affection for these saints and others; and therefore, as he judged he ought, he bears a testimony for him,

*that he hath a great zeal for you*; for their spiritual welfare, that the Gospel might continue with them, and they in that, against false teachers, and their attempts to subvert them; that they might grow in the grace of the Gospel, and walk worthy of it, and be at peace among themselves:

*and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis*; cities in Phrygia, which lay near to Colosse, the one being situated by the river Lycus, and the other by the Maeander; here were many believers, for whom Epaphras had a like zeal and affections as for the Colossians, and to whom very likely he had been useful, either in conversion or edification, or both. The apostle takes no notice to the Colossians of Epaphras being his fellow prisoner, as, he does in his epistle to (<sup><50123></sup>Philemon 1:23) it may be for this reason, lest they should be over much distressed and cast down with it.

**Ver. 14.** *Luke, the beloved physician*, etc.] Luke the Evangelist, though some doubt it, is here intended, who was a constant companion of the

apostle in his troubles, and went with him to Rome, as the Acts of the Apostles wrote by him show, and as from (<sup><5341></sup>2 Timothy 4:11) it appears; so Jerom<sup>f62</sup> calls the Evangelist Luke, the physician of Antioch, for from thence he was; and being converted by the Apostle Paul, as is very probable, though some make him to be one of the seventy disciples, he became of a physician of bodies, a physician of souls: some say<sup>f63</sup> he was a scholar of Galen, the famous physician, and others that he was his sister's son; who having heard of Christ's miracles, set out with his master Galen for Judea, to know the truth of them, of which they doubted; Galen died by the way, Luke came to Christ, and being taught by him, became one of the seventy disciples. The apostle calls him "beloved", not on account of his profession, in which he might be useful to many, but as he was a brother in Christ, a minister of the Gospel, and a fellow labourer of his. This is the same person as Lucas, mentioned along with Demas, and others, as here, in (<sup><5702></sup>Philemon 1:24). The name perhaps is Roman, but was, however, well known among the Jews; for they say<sup>f64</sup>, the

"witnesses that sign a divorce, and their names are as the names of strangers, what is to be done with it? there is none comes into our hands (is received) but **swqwl** "Lukus" and "Lus", and we allow it to be right:"

upon which the gloss says, because these were famous names:

*and Demas greet you*; the same who, through the love of the present world, forsook the apostle, (<sup><5440></sup>2 Timothy 4:10) which he did either after the writing of this epistle, or if before it, he was now returned again to him: his name seems to be the same with the Roman Dama, unless it should be a contraction of Demetrius, or rather of Demarchos; though the Jews make frequent mention of R. **ymyd**, "Dimi", or "Demi", in their writings<sup>f65</sup>, which perhaps is the same name with this.

**Ver. 15.** *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea*, etc.] Where there was a church mentioned in the following verse, of which *see on Gill* "<sup><6620></sup>*Revelation 2:10*".

*And Nymphas*; which some, unskilful in the Greek language, have took for a woman; whereas it is the name of a man, as the following words show; and is a contraction of Nymphios, or Nymphidios, or Nymphodoros:

*and the church which is in his house.* This man seems to have been an inhabitant of Laodicea, and that the church there met at his house to worship God, to pray unto him, sing his praise, hear his word, and attend on all ordinances: or his own family was brought up so strictly to the observance of these things, that they looked like a little church of themselves.

**Ver. 16.** *And when this epistle is read amongst you,* &c,] Which the apostle was now writing, and sent unto them; and which was to be read publicly, before the whole church; being sent not to any particular person, or persons, but to the whole body, and for their general good and instruction:

*cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans;* his will was, that after it had been read to the church at Colosse, it should be sent, or at least a copy of it, to the church of the Laodiceans, in order to be read there: his reason might be, not only because this church was near them, but because it was in much the same situation, being infested with the same sort of false teachers; and therefore what was said to the one, was pertinent to the other:

*and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea;* which was not an epistle of the apostle to the Laodiceans, as some have thought, but one that was “written from” thence, as the Syriac version renders it. Marcion, the heretic, called the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistle to the Laodiceans, but without any reason; and others have forged an epistle which bears this name, and appears to be a collection out of others, and chiefly from the epistle to the Philippians; and which being short, and may gratify the curious who cannot otherwise come at it, I shall transcribe it, and is as follows <sup>f66</sup>.

“Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ; to the brethren which are of Laodicea, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to Christ in every prayer of mine, that ye continue and persevere in good works, expecting the promise in the day of judgment: neither let the vain speeches of some that pretend to truth disturb you, so as to turn you from the truth of the Gospel which is preached by me; and now the Lord cause that those who belong to me may be serviceable for the furtherance of the truth of the Gospel, and doing kind actions, which are of salvation unto eternal life: and now my

bonds are manifest which I suffer in Christ, in which I am glad and rejoice; and this is to my perpetual salvation which is done by your prayers, the Holy Ghost supplying, whether by life or by death; for me to live is life in Christ, and to die is joy; and he will do his own mercy in you, that ye may have the same love, and be unanimous: therefore, most beloved, as ye have heard of the presence of the Lord, so think ye, and do in fear, and you shall have life for ever; for it is God that worketh in you; and whatsoever ye do, do without sin; and what is best, most beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and take heed of all filth in all gain; let your petitions be openly with God, be ye steadfast in the sense of Christ: and whatsoever things are sound and true, and chaste and just, and lovely, do; and what ye have heard and received retain in the heart, and peace shall be with you. Salute all the brethren with an holy kiss; all the saints salute you; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Cause this to be read to the Colossians, and that which is of the Colossians to you.”

Every one on reading it will easily see that it is a spurious piece, a collection out of other epistles, and very ill put together: however, the apostle here does not speak of any epistle written to the church of Laodicea, but of one that was written from thence; which some think was written by himself, and that he means his first epistle to Timothy, which is said to be written from Laodicea; and the rather, because in that the qualifications of the ministers of the Gospel are given; and also suitable instructions for the discharge of their work, and so very proper to be read in the presence of Archippus; who, from the following verse, seems to have been remiss and negligent, and needed stirring up to the performance of his office: but from (~~some~~ Colossians 2:1) it appears, that the apostle had not been at Laodices when he wrote this, and had not so much as seen any of the faces of the brethren there in the flesh; it therefore seems rather to be an epistle which was sent from Laodicea to him, or to the Colossians; which having something in it very instructive and useful, the apostle desires it might be publicly read.

**Ver. 17.** *And say to Archippus*, etc.] A name common among the Grecians. This person the apostle calls his fellow soldier, in (~~some~~ Philemon 1:2) and who was now the minister of the Gospel at Colosse, his fellow minister, or co-pastor Epaphras, being at Rome, and a prisoner there; though by some he is said to be the first bishop of the Laodiceans, but it

seems most likely that he now resided at Colosse, and was their minister: who being negligent in his office, they are called upon to say unto him,

*take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* The “ministry” he had, was not that of the office of a deacon, as some have thought, but of a preacher of the word; and this he had “received” gifts for, and was called unto it, and installed in it; and that “in”, and “by the Lord” himself, and to whom he was accountable for it: and therefore it was incumbent on him to “fulfil it”; by constantly preaching the word, and faithfully administering the ordinances; by defending truth, detecting error, reprovng vice, visiting the sick, and comforting the feeble minded; taking heed in all things to himself and doctrine, that he feed the whole flock of God with wholesome food; and, as a wise and faithful steward, give to everyone their portion of meat in due season: hence it appears, that when ministers are negligent in the discharge of their duty, the church has a power to admonish and exhort them to a diligent performance of it.

**Ver. 18.** *The salutation by the hand of me Paul,* etc.] After his amanuensis had finished the epistle, he added his usual salutation to it with his own hand, to prevent all counterfeits and impositions, and that the churches to whom he wrote might be sure of the genuineness of his epistles; but before he added it to it, he either wrote with his own hand, or ordered to be written the following words,

*remember my bonds;* this he says, partly that they might be animated to abide by the Gospel, for which, as he had told them before, (<sup>500B</sup>Colossians 4:3) that he was in bonds; and partly to encourage them, by his example, patiently to endure what afflictions and persecutions soever they should meet with, for the sake of it; as also that they might be moved hereby, to remember him in their prayers, that, if it was the will of God, he might be released, and be yet further useful in preaching the Gospel; or however, that he might be supported in his bonds, and cheerfully bear them, and remain steadfast in his faith in Christ unto the end: and then follows the salutation,

*grace be with you, Amen;* which is common to all his epistles, and well suits them; in which he so much displays the grace of God, as it is expressed in the Gospel; and which his heart was full of, and earnestly desired might be more largely manifested to, and bestowed upon the saints. This epistle is said to be



*written from Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus*; and though the subscriptions of the epistles are not always to be depended on, yet this seems to be right; that it was inscribed to the Colossians, there is no doubt; and that it was written from Rome is clear enough, since by several expressions it is plain that he was now a prisoner, and in bonds; and that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus is more than probable, from ~~(Colossians~~ Colossians 4:7-9).

# FOOTNOTES

**Ft1** -- Nat. Hist. 50:5. c. 32.

**Ft2** -- Polymnia, 50:7. c. 30.

**Ft3** -- Eusebius in Chron.

**Ft4** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 6. 3. & in Exodus fol. 32. 3. & in <sup><0144></sup>Leviticus 14:4. & 37:4. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

**Ft5** -- Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.

**Ft6** -- De Mund. Opific. p. 6. de Plant. Noe, p. 216, 217. de Coufus. Ling. p. 341. de Somniis, p. 600. de Monarch. p. 823.

**Ft7** -- Isidor. Pelusiot. 50:3. Ep. 31.

**Ft8** -- R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.

**Ft9** -- Targum Jon. in <sup><0025></sup>Genesis 1:26. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 1. & 3. 3. Menass. ben Israel, Conciliator in Genesis Qu. 12.

**Ft10** -- Sepher Jetzira, p. 17, Ed. Rittangel.

**Ft11** -- Tikkune Zohar in ib. p. 127, 128. & Zohar in Exodus fol. 18. 2. & in Leviticus fol. 39. 1. & 47. 2.

**Ft12** -- Abarbinel in Daniel fol. 45. 4. & 46. 4.

**Ft13** -- Cabala denudata, par. 2. p. 7. & Lex. Cabal. p. 679, 681.

**Ft14** -- Philo de Conf. ling. p. 341.

**Ft15** -- Plin. Nat. Hist. 50:5. c. 29.

**Ft16** -- Jonathan ben Uzziel in <sup><010></sup>Exodus 40:4.

**Ft17** -- Antiqu. 50:3. c. 6. sect. 4. 7.

**Ft18** -- De Congressu quaerend. Erud. p. 440. 441. de Vita Mosis, 50:3. p. 665, etc. quod deterius pot. p. 184.

**Ft19** -- De Migr. Abraham, p. 389.

**Ft20** -- De Sommiis, p. 574.

- Ft21** -- Zohar in Deuteronomy fol. 120. 8.
- Ft22** -- Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11.
- Ft23** -- Zohar in Exodus fol. 106. 1. Caphtor, fol. 52. 2.
- Ft24** -- Tzeror Hammor, fol. 87. 1, 3.
- Ft25** -- Nonnus in Joh. 19:19. Vid. Niccqueti Titulus S. Crucis, 50:1. c. 18. p. 128.
- Ft26** -- Vid. Lydium de re Militari, 50:6. c. 3.
- Ft27** -- Vid. Casaubon. Epist. ep. 24.
- Ft28** -- Misn. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 1.
- Ft29** -- Misn. Becorot, c. 9. sect. 5.
- Ft30** -- Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
- Ft31** -- T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1. Piske Tosaphot Yebamot. art. 84. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 20. sect. 14.
- Ft32** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 58. 2.
- Ft33** -- Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 10. sect. 9.
- Ft34** -- T. Bab. Betza, fol. 16. 1. Seder Tephillot, fol. 76. 1. Ed. Amtst.
- Ft35** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 56. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, p. 17. & Zuta, p. 101. Ed. Meyer.
- Ft36** -- Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in ~~Gen~~Genesis 2:3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 18.
- Ft37** -- Vid. Misn. Abot, c. 3. sect. 18. & Bartenora in ib. & Halicot Olam, par. 2. c. 1. p. 48.
- Ft38** -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 1.
- Ft39** -- Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 11. 2.
- Ft40** -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 1.
- Ft41** -- T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 36. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 1.
- Ft42** -- T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 56. 4.
- Ft43** -- Vid. Clement. Alex Stromat. 50:6. p. 635.

- Ft44** -- Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil fol. 222. 2.
- Ft45** -- Ib. fol. 335. 1.
- Ft46** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 97. 2. & in Exodus fol. 24. 3.
- Ft47** -- Maimon. Maacolot Asurot, c. 7. sect. 1. & c. 14. sect. 2. & Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 3.
- Ft48** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 2. 3.
- Ft49** -- Vid. Justin. 50:2. c. 1, 2, 3. Plin. 50:4. c. 12. & 6. 17. Herodot. 50:4. c. 46.
- Ft50** -- Laertius in Vita Anacharsis.
- Ft51** -- Tzeror Hammot, fol. 28. 2.
- Ft52** -- Shaare Ora, fol. 6. 1. & 22. 2. & 25. 3.
- Ft53** -- Sepher Jetzirah, Nethib, 17. p. 136,
- Ft54** -- T. Megilla, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. Zohar in Numbers fol. 70. 3. & 76. 2. & Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Leviticus fol. 38. 3.
- Ft55** -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2. & Sabbat, fol. 127. 1.
- Ft56** -- R. Aben Ezra in ~~19837~~ Psalm 78:37.
- Ft57** -- Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 15, 16.
- Ft58** -- In Vit. Galbae, c. 13.
- Ft59** -- Ep. ad Ephes. p. 17. & ad Antioch. ascript. p. 89.
- Ft60** -- T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2.
- Ft61** -- Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 50:2. c. 1.
- Ft62** -- Catalog. Script. Ecclesiastes p. 91. Vid. Nicephor. Hist. 50:2. c. 43.
- Ft63** -- Vid. Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 1894.
- Ft64** -- T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2.
- Ft65** -- T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 19. 2. Nazir, fol. 36. 1. Sota, fol. 43. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 43.

Ft66 -- Jachasin, fol. 87. 2. & 117. 1.