
Επιστολή του Παύλου προς Κολοσσαείς † PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul's *Letter to the Colossians* addresses the issue of some ascetic practices (2:21–23) and rituals that may have come from Jewish tradition, along with 'philosophy and empty deceit' (2:8). Gnostic, Epicurean and other theological speculations were also, seemingly, threatening the unity of the Colossian church. The letter proclaims that Christ is supreme over all that has been created: All things were created through him and for him, and the universe is sustained by him. God had chosen that his complete being should dwell in Christ. Christ is the master of all angelic forces and the head of the church; Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity, the unique agent of cosmic reconciliation.

Colossae was a town in Phrygia (in Asia Minor) not far from Ephesus; its church had been founded not by Paul but (probably) by Epaphras. It was in the same region as the 'seven churches' of the Book of Revelation.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

If it is accepted that the author of the *Letter to the Colossians* was Paul (as tradition has long held), then it was almost certainly written during his imprisonment in Rome (61–63 CE, see 4:3) and at about the same time as his *Letter to Philemon*, with which it has common themes. However, from around the 1850s, some scholars have contested Paul's authorship, arguing that both the style and the content are very different from those of his other letters. Parts of the letter have great affinity with that to the [Ephesians](#), which has prompted similar debates about the authorship of that letter. There is also a 'hybrid' view, which postulates that the letter was dictated by Paul but then some additions and/or alterations were made by the recorder, who may have been Timothy (cf. 1:1, 4:18).

Προς Κολοσσαείς Ι

¹ Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος Θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός ² τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἀγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.

³ Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ Θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι, ⁴ ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους ⁵ διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἣν προηκούσατε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ⁶ τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς, καθὼς καὶ ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ· ⁷ καθὼς ἐμάθετε ἀπὸ Ἐπαφροῦ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συνδούλου ἡμῶν, ὅς ἐστιν πιστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ⁸ ὁ καὶ δηλώσας ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἀγάπην ἐν πνεύματι.

COLOSSIANS 1

¹ From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and from our brother Timothy ² to the saints in Colossae, our faithful brothers in Christ. Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³ We are continually giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in our prayers for you, ⁴ ever since we heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you show towards all the saints ⁵ because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven. News of this hope reached you through the message of truth, the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you in the same way as it is bearing fruit and growing throughout the world. It has had the same effect among you, ever since you heard about the grace of God and truly comprehended it. ⁷ This you learned from Epaphras, our very dear fellow worker and a trustworthy deputy on our behalf as Christ's servant, ⁸ and it was he who also told us all about your love in the Spirit.

COLOSSIANS 1

¹ The Greek text does not include the opening 'From', here following the NJB & NETB.

² The NJB has 'God's holy people' in place of 'the saints'. Some MSS add 'and the Lord Jesus Christ' at the end of the verse.

³ In place of 'continually', the NRSV has 'always'.

⁴ The NRSV has 'for' in place of 'ever since' and NETB has just 'since'.

⁵ The NJB has 'stored up' in place of 'laid up'.

⁶ In place of 'truly comprehended it', the NJB has 'and recognised it for what it truly is'.

⁷ A more literal translation for 'servant' is 'slave'. The WEBBE has 'on your behalf' in place of 'on our behalf'.

⁸ The NRSV has 'made known' in place of 'told'.

⁹ Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, ¹⁰ περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ, ¹¹ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν, μετὰ χαρᾶς ¹² εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί· ¹³ ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, ¹⁴ ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν·

¹⁵ ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου,

πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,

¹⁶ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα
ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα,

⁹ That is why, since the day he told us, we have not ceased praying for you and ask that, through wisdom and spiritual understanding, you should reach the fullest knowledge of his will ¹⁰ and so be able to lead a life worthy of the Lord, a life acceptable to him in all its aspects, bearing fruit in every kind of good work and growing in knowledge of God, ¹¹ fortified according to his glorious strength, always ready to persevere and endure, ¹² giving thanks with joy to the Father who has enabled you to share the lot of the saints and, with them, to inherit the light. ¹³ Because that is what he has done. It is he who has rescued us from the ruling force of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son that he loves; ¹⁴ and, in him, we enjoy our freedom, the forgiveness of sin.

¹⁵ He is the image of the unseen God,
the first-born of all creation;

¹⁶ for, in him were created all things
in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible,

⁹ In place of ‘not ceased praying for you’, the NJB has ‘never failed to remember you in our prayers’.

¹⁰ A more literal translation of ‘lead a life’ is ‘walk in a way’.

¹¹ The NJB has ‘with all power’ in place of ‘ready’.

¹² The NJB has ‘God’s holy people’ in place of ‘the saints’. For ‘enabled you’, other MSS read ‘called us’.

¹³ Here, αὐτοῦ has been translated as a subjective genitive, ‘he loves’.

¹⁴ At the end of the verse, some MSS (including the *Textus Receptus*) add ‘through his blood’.

¹⁵ Vv. 15–20 are here formatted as poetry, following the NJB & NETB; Nestle-Aland and the NRSV present the text as prose.

¹⁶ Another reading for ‘in him’ is ‘by him’.

εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι·
τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται,

¹⁷ καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων
καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν.

¹⁸ καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος,
τῆς ἐκκλησίας·
ὃς ἐστιν ἀρχή,
πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν,
ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων,

¹⁹ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι

²⁰ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν,
εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ,
δι' αὐτοῦ εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς·

²¹ καὶ ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ
διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς, ²² νυνὶ δὲ
ἀποκατηλλάγητε ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ
θανάτου, παραστήσασθε ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ
ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, ²³ εἴ γε ἐπιμένετε τῇ
πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι

thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers –
all things were created through him and for him.

¹⁷ He exists before all things
and, in him, all things hold together.

¹⁸ And he is the Head of the Body,
that is, the Church.

He is the beginning,
the first-born from the dead,
so that he should be supreme in every way;

¹⁹ for, in him, the fulness of God was pleased to dwell;

²⁰ and, through him, to reconcile all things to him,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
by making peace through his death on the cross.

²¹ And, you who were once estranged and of hostile intent
through your evil behaviour, ²² he has now reconciled,
through his death and in that mortal body, to bring you before
himself holy, faultless, and irreproachable – ²³ as long as you
persevere and stand firm on the solid base of the faith, never
letting yourselves drift away from the hope promised by the

¹⁷ Another reading for 'in him' is 'by him'.

¹⁸ The NRSV & NETB do not capitalize 'Head' & 'Body'.

¹⁹ For this verse, the NJB reads, "because God wanted all fullness to be found in him."

²⁰ The words, δι' αὐτοῦ, are enclosed in brackets by Nestle-Aland.

²¹ The NJB lacks the opening conjunction. In the Nestle-Aland text, this verse continues the preceding paragraph (see #15).

²² Some MSS open with 'you have now been reconciled'.

²³ The NRSV opens with, "provided that you continue securely established."

ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὗ ἠκούσατε, τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, οὗ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος.

²⁴ Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία, ²⁵ ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ²⁶ τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν – νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ, ²⁷ οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ Θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης. ²⁸ ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ. ²⁹ εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει.

gospel, which you have heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become the servant.

²⁴ I am now rejoicing in my suffering for your sake and, in my own body, to make up all the hardships that still have to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, which is the Church. ²⁵ I became a servant of the church according to the stewardship from God – given to me on your behalf – in order that I should complete the word of God, ²⁶ the message that was a mystery hidden throughout the generations and centuries and has now been revealed to his saints. ²⁷ It was God's purpose to reveal to them how rich is the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ among you, your hope of glory: ²⁸ this is the One we are proclaiming, admonishing everyone and instructing everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. ²⁹ And it is for this reason that I labour, struggling with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

²⁴ The NJB opens with, "It makes me happy to be suffering."

²⁵ For this verse, the NJB reads, "of which I was made a servant with the responsibility towards you that God gave to me, that of completing God's message."

²⁶ The NJB has 'holy people' in place of 'saints'.

²⁷ The NJB (consistently) does not capitalize 'Gentiles'.

²⁸ In place of 'the One', the NJB has 'the Christ'.

²⁹ The NJB ends the verse with, "striving with his energy that works in me mightily."

Προς Κολοσσαείς 2

¹ Θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἶδέναι ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί, ² ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν, συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως, εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ, ³ ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι. ⁴ τοῦτο λέγω ἵνα μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται ἐν πιθανολογίᾳ. ⁵ εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῆ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι, ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι, χαίρων καὶ βλέπων ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν καὶ τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν.

⁶ Ὡς οὖν παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε, ⁷ ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ βεβαιούμενοι [ἐν] τῇ πίστει καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε, περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ.

COLOSSIANS 2

¹ I want you to know, then, what a struggle I am having for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not met me face to face. ² It is all to bind them together in love and to encourage their resolution until they are rich in the assurance of their complete understanding and have knowledge of the mystery of God, which is Christ ³ in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. ⁴ I say this to make sure that no one deceives you with specious arguments. ⁵ I may be absent in body but, in spirit, I am there among you, delighted to find how well-ordered you are and to see how firm your faith in Christ is.

⁶ So then, as you received Jesus as Lord and Christ, now live your lives in him, ⁷ be rooted in him and built up on him, held firm by the faith you have been taught and overflowing with thanksgiving.

COLOSSIANS 2

¹ The literal translation of 'met me face to face' is 'seen my face in the flesh'.

² Some MSS read 'the mystery of Christ' and others have 'God's mystery of Christ' or 'the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ'. The numerous variants were likely generated by the unusual wording, τοῦ Θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ ('of God, Christ'); scribes would be prone to edit this to more common Pauline expressions such as 'of God, who is in Christ', 'of God, the Father of Christ', or 'of the God and Father of Christ'. Even though the external support for τοῦ Θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ is not overwhelming, it best explains the rise of other readings and should be regarded as authentic.

³ The NJB has 'jewels' in place of 'treasures'.

⁴ A more literal translation of 'specious arguments' (as NJB) is 'plausible speeches'.

⁵ Another reading for 'how well-ordered you are' (NJB) is 'your morale' (NRSV, NETB).

⁶ The literal translation of 'live your lives' is 'walk'.

⁷ The NRSV has 'abounding' in place of 'overflowing'.

⁸ Βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν· ⁹ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς, ¹⁰ καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, ¹¹ ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ¹² συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν· ¹³ καὶ ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν, συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ, χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ παραπτώματα, ¹⁴ ἐξαλείψας τὸ κατ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν, καὶ αὐτὸ ἤρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ· ¹⁵ ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ, θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ.

⁸ See that no one captivates you with the empty lure of a 'philosophy' of the kind that human beings hand on, based on the principles of this world and not on Christ. ⁹ In him, in bodily form, lives divinity in all its fullness ¹⁰ and, in him, you come to fulfilment, in the one who is the head of every sovereignty and ruler. ¹¹ In him you have been circumcised, with a circumcision made not by a human hand but by the complete stripping of your mortal body. This is circumcision according to Christ. ¹² You have been buried with him by your baptism; by which, too, you have been raised up with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ You were dead, because you were sinners and uncircumcised in body; he has brought you to life with him; he has forgiven us every one of our sins. ¹⁴ He has erased the record of our debt to the Law, which stood against us; he has destroyed it by nailing it to the cross; ¹⁵ and he has disarmed the sovereignties and the ruling forces, and paraded them in public, behind him in his triumphal procession.

⁸ In place of 'principles of the world', the NRSV has 'elemental spirits of the universe'.

⁹ Paul's point is polemical against the gnostic idea that the fullness of God dwells elsewhere than in Christ.

¹⁰ The NJB has 'you too find your own' in place of 'you come to'.

¹¹ In place of 'mortal body', the NJB has 'natural self'.

¹² The genitive, τῆς ἐνεργείας, has been translated as an objective genitive, 'faith in the power'.

¹³ In place of 'brought you to life', some MSS have 'brought us to life'.

¹⁴ The NJB has 'wiped out' in place of 'erased'.

¹⁵ Another reading for 'disarmed' (as NRSV) is 'divested himself of'.

¹⁶ Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων, ¹⁷ ἃ ἔστιν σκιά τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. ¹⁸ μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβεύετω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἑώρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκῆ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, ¹⁹ καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἀφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὖξει τὴν αὖξιν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

²⁰ Εἰ ἀπεθάνατε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε, ²¹ Μὴ ἅψη μηδὲ γεύση μηδὲ θίγης, ²² ἃ ἔστιν πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων; ²³ ἅτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκείᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός.

¹⁶ So, do not let anyone condemn over food and drink, or of observing festivals, New Moons, or Sabbaths. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of what is to come but the body is Christ. ¹⁸ Do not be cheated of your prize by anyone who chooses to grovel to angels and worship them, dwelling in visions, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh; ¹⁹ he has no connexion to the Head, by which the whole body, given all that it needs and held together by its joints and sinews, grows with the growth given by God.

²⁰ If you died with Christ to the principles of this world, why do you live, as though you belonged to the world? ²¹ “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” ²² All refer to things that perish with use – according to the commands and doctrines of men! ²³ In these, you can indeed find what seems good sense: self-imposed piety and a humility that takes no account of the body; but they have no value against self-indulgence.

¹⁶ In place of ‘condemn’ (as NRSV), the NJB has ‘criticise’ and NETB has ‘judge’.

¹⁷ The NJB ends with, “the reality is the body of Christ.”

¹⁸ For ‘dwelling in’, the NJB has ‘pinning every hope on’; the meaning of the Greek word (ἐμβατεύων) is uncertain.

¹⁹ The NJB opens with ‘such a one’ in place of the pronoun, ‘he’.

²⁰ In place of ‘principles of the world’, the NRSV has ‘elemental spirits of the universe’.

²¹ For this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, “Do not pick up this, do not eat that, do not touch the other.”

²² In place of ‘with use’, the NJB has ‘even while they are being used’.

²³ Although Paul uses the term ταπεινοφροσύνη (‘humility’) elsewhere in a positive sense (cf. 3:12), here the sense is negative and reflects the misguided thinking of his opponents.

Προς Κολοσσαεις 3

¹ Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ καθήμενος· ² τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· ³ ἀπεθάνετε γάρ, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ· ⁴ ὅταν ὁ Χριστός φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ.

⁵ Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθος, ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία, ⁶ δι' ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας· ⁷ ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις· ⁸ νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα, ὀργὴν, θυμὸν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογία ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν· ⁹ μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν

COLOSSIANS 3

¹ So, if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. ² Set your minds on things above, not on things on earth; ³ for, you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ But, when Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you, too, will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵ Therefore, put to death whatever in you that is earthly: sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry; ⁶ for, because of these things, God's retribution comes to the children of disobedience. ⁷ These things made up your way of life when you were living among such people; ⁸ but now, you also must give up all these things: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy talk. ⁹ Do not lie to each other; you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and you

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¹ The NJB has 'you must look for' in place of 'seek'.

² The NJB adds 'that are' before 'above' and 'on earth'.

³ In place of 'your life', the NJB has 'the life you have'.

⁴ Some MSS have 'our life' in place of 'your life'.

⁵ The NJB has 'kill' in place of 'put to death'.

⁶ The words, 'to the children of disobedience' are omitted by some MSS and by some translations; Nestle-Aland includes the words in brackets.

⁷ The NRSV has 'that life' in place of 'among such people'.

⁸ The NJB adds 'human' before 'anger'.

⁹ The NJB adds 'and' at the beginning of this verse.

¹⁰ The NRSV does not capitalise 'Creator'.

ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ, ¹⁰ καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν, ¹¹ ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἑλλήν καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός.

¹² Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι, σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ, χρηστότητα, ταπεινοφροσύνην, πραΰτητα, μακροθυμίαν, ¹³ ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἕάν τις πρὸς τινα ἔχη μομφήν· καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἔχαρίσατο ὑμῖν οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς. ¹⁴ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅ ἐστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος. ¹⁵ καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι· καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε. ¹⁶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ Θεῷ. ¹⁷ καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἕάν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ Θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ.

have put on a new self that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its Creator, ¹¹ where there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free. There is only one Christ: he is all and he is in all.

¹² As the chosen of God, then, the holy people whom he loves, clothe yourselves in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and forgiving each other if one of you has a complaint against another. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. ¹⁴ Over all these clothes, put on love, the perfect bond. ¹⁵ And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together in one body. And always be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the Word of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other and advise each other in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs to God; ¹⁷ and whatever you do, in word or deed, let it be in the name of the Lord Jesus, in thanksgiving to God the Father through him.

¹¹ The NJB opens with 'and, in that image' in place of 'where'.

¹² The translation, 'heartfelt compassion' (as NJB), takes the genitive construct, *σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ* (literally, 'heart of mercy'), as a hendiadys.

¹³ The participles, *ἀνεχόμενοι* ('bearing') & *χαριζόμενοι* ('forgiving') express the means by which the action of the finite verb, 'clothe yourselves', (v. 12) is to be carried out.

¹⁴ The Greek text does not include the word 'clothes' (as NJB – NETB has 'virtues'), here added for clarity.

¹⁵ The NJB lacks the opening conjunction.

¹⁶ Some MSS have 'God' or 'the Lord' in place of 'Christ'.

¹⁷ In place of 'you do, in word or deed', the NJB has 'you say or do'.

¹⁸ Αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ὡς ἀνῆκεν ἐν κυρίῳ. ¹⁹ οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς.

²⁰ Τὰ τέκνα, ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν κατὰ πάντα, τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ. ²¹ οἱ πατέρες, μὴ ἐρεδίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν. ²² οἱ δοῦλοι, ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις, μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλίᾳ ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίας, φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον. ²³ ὃ ἐὰν ποιῆτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε, ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις, ²⁴ εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήμψεσθε τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας. τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε. ²⁵ ὁ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομίσεται ὃ ἠδίκησεν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν προσωποληψία.

¹⁸ Wives, be subject to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

²⁰ Children, obey your parents always; for, that will please the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not irritate your children or they will lose heart. ²² Slaves, obey in every way your earthly masters; not only when you are under their eye, as if you had only to please human beings, but wholeheartedly, out of respect for the Master. ²³ Whatever your task, put your heart into it as done for the Lord and not for human beings, ²⁴ knowing that the Lord will repay you by making you his heirs. It is Christ the Lord that you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid in kind. For, there is no partiality.

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'as is fitting' in place of 'as you should'.

¹⁹ The NJB has 'be sharp with' in place of 'be embittered against', here following NETB.

²⁰ The NJB has 'be obedient to' in place of 'obey'.

²¹ The NJB opens with 'Parents' in place of 'Fathers'.

²² The NJB has 'be obedient ... to' in place of 'obey'.

²³ In place of 'task', the NJB has 'work'.

²⁴ Another, more literal, reading for 'you are serving' is 'of whom you are slaves'.

²⁵ The NJB has 'favouritism' in place of 'partiality'.

Προς Κολοσσαεῖς 4

¹ Οἱ κύριοι, τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχεσθε, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔχετε κύριον ἐν οὐρανῷ.

² Τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε, γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ, ³ προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου, λαλήσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' ὃ καὶ δέδεμαι, ⁴ ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλήσαι.

⁵ Ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω, τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι. ⁶ ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι, ἅλατι ἠρτυμένος, εἰδέναι πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἀποκρίεσθαι.

⁷ Τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ, ⁸ ὃν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέσῃ τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, ⁹ σὺν Ὀνησίμῳ τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ, ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν· πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσουσιν τὰ ὧδε.

COLOSSIANS 4

¹ Masters, make sure that your slaves are given what is upright and fair; for, you know that you, too, have a Master in heaven.

² Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.

³ Pray for us especially, asking God to open a door for us to announce the message and proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison; ⁴ pray that I might proclaim it as clearly as I ought.

⁵ Act wisely with outsiders, making the best of the present time. ⁶ Always talk pleasantly and with a flavour of wit but be sensitive to the kind of answer each one requires.

⁷ Tychius will tell you all the news about me. He is a beloved brother, a faithful helper and companion in the service of the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this purpose: to give you news about us and to encourage your hearts. ⁹ With him I have sent Onesimus, that dear and faithful brother who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

COLOSSIANS 4

¹ Note that the same Greek word (κύριον) is used for 'Master' and 'Lord'.

² For this verse, here following NETB, the NJB reads, "Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray."

³ Some MSS have 'of God' in place of 'of Christ'.

⁴ The word, 'pray', at the beginning of the sentence (not in the Greek text but following the NJB & NETB) picks up the imperative of v. 3.

⁵ One could also read 'opportunity' instead of 'time'.

⁶ The literal translation of 'flavour if wit' is 'seasoning of salt' – a classic Greek cliché.

⁷ The NJB has 'trustworthy' in place of 'faithful'.

⁸ In place of 'to give you news', some MSS have 'to get your news'.

⁹ The NJB has 'am sending' in place of 'have sent', as also in v. 8.

¹⁰ Ἀσπάξεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμαλώτός μου, καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ [περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολάς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δεῦξασθε αὐτόν], ¹¹ καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουῆστος, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς οὗτοι μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία. ¹² ἀσπάξεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ, πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ. ¹³ μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει. ¹⁴ ἀσπάξεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρός ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ Δημᾶς. ¹⁵ ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν. ¹⁶ καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ' ὑμῶν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε. ¹⁷ καὶ εἶπατε Ἀρχίππῳ, Βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς.

¹⁰ Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, about whom you were sent instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him. ¹¹ And Jesus Justus greets you. Of those of the circumcision, these are the only ones working with me for the Kingdom of God. They have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, greets you; this servant of Christ is always battling for you, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all that God wills. ¹³ I can testify for him that he works hard for you, as well as for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Greetings from my dear friend Luke, the doctor, and also from Demas. ¹⁵ Please give my greetings to my brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶ After this letter had been read among you, send it on to be read in the church of the Laodiceans; and get the letter from Laodicea for you to read yourselves. ¹⁷ Give Archippus this message, "Remember the service that the Lord assigned to you and try to carry it out."

¹⁰ In place of 'my fellow prisoner', the NJB has 'who is here in prison with me'.

¹¹ The NJB has 'adds his greetings' in place of 'greets you'.

¹² Strong *Alexandrian* testimony, along with some other MSS, suggests that Ἰησοῦ ('Jesus') follows Χριστοῦ ('Christ') but the evidence for the shorter reading is diverse. There can be little motivation for omitting the name of Jesus; hence, the shorter reading is judged to be original. Nestle-Aland has the word in brackets, indicating some doubts as to its authenticity.

¹³ The literal translation of 'works hard' is 'pain', which makes little sense here.

¹⁴ The NRSV & NETB have 'physician' in place of 'doctor'.

¹⁵ After 'brothers', the NRSV adds 'and sisters'.

¹⁶ The 'letter from Laodicea' is otherwise unknown but some have suggested that it is the letter known today as Ephesians.

¹⁷ 'Archippus' is not mentioned elsewhere.

¹⁸ Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου. μνημονεύετε μου τῶν δεσμῶν. ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν.

¹⁸ This greeting is in my own hand – PAUL. Remember the chains I wear. Grace be with you.

¹⁸ Many MSS, including a few important ones, have *ἀμήν* ('Amen') at the end of this letter. Such a conclusion is routinely added by scribes to NT books because a few of these books originally had such an ending (cf. Rm 16:27, Ga 6:18, Jude 25). A majority of Greek witnesses have the concluding *ἀμήν* in every NT book except Acts, James, and 3 John (and even in these books, *ἀμήν* is found in some MSS). So, on internal grounds, with sufficient support from external evidence, the preferred reading is the omission of *ἀμήν*.