**The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians**

**Colossians Chapter 1**

OPENING GREETING (1:1-14)  
Salutation

1Paul, an apostle of Christ[[1]](#footnote-20218) Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, 2to the holy and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Prayer of Thanks

3We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4since we heard of your trust in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the holy ones 5because of the hope that is being stored up for you in heaven, which you have already heard about in the message of truth—the good news 6that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it is also *doing that* among you from the day you heard *it* and understood the grace of God for what it truly is.[[2]](#footnote-30083) 7You learned *it* from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8who also told us about your love in *connection with* the spirit.

Prayer for Growth

9Because of this, from the day we heard *about you*, we have not stopped praying for you and asking for you to be filled with the knowledge of his will *along* with all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10so that you walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *to him*: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, 11being empowered with all power by means of his glorious might, so that you will have all endurance and patience, 12*and* giving thanks with joy to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in the *kingdom of* light. 13He rescued us from the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of *our* sins.

THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (1:15-23)  
Christ is Above All

15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, 16because in *connection with* him all things were created in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible—whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him, 17and he is above[[3]](#footnote-31663) all things, and in *connection with* him all things are held together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, so that he would come to have first place in everything. 19For in him all the fullness *of God* was pleased to dwell, 20and through him *God was pleased* to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his[[4]](#footnote-17584) blood *that was* shed on the cross.

Reconciled Through Christ

21And you were once alienated *from God* and hostile in your attitude,[[5]](#footnote-23904) *as shown* by *your* evil works. 22But now He[[6]](#footnote-10039) has reconciled *you* by his[[7]](#footnote-26033) physical body[[8]](#footnote-27951) through *his* death to present you holy and without blemish and blameless in His[[9]](#footnote-24954) presence— 23if indeed you continue in the faith,[[10]](#footnote-18219) established and steadfast and not moving away from the hope of the good news that you heard, which was preached to all creation under heaven, *and* of which I, Paul, became a minister.

PAUL’S MINISTRY (1:24-2:5)  
Striving and Suffering

24Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I am taking my turn to fill up what is lacking in regard to the afflictions of Christ for the sake of his body, which is the church, 25of which I became a minister in accordance with the administration of God that was given to me for you, in order to make fully known[[11]](#footnote-28334) the word of God— 26the sacred secret—that has been hidden for ages and generations, but now has been revealed to his holy ones. 27God wanted to make known among the Gentiles what are the riches of the glory of this sacred secret, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28We proclaim him, admonishing[[12]](#footnote-30425) everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we can present everyone mature in Christ. 29And I am laboring for that *goal*, striving with His[[13]](#footnote-17302) strength, which works powerfully in me.

**Colossians Chapter 2**

Goal for the Colossians

1Indeed, I want you to know how much I am striving *for that goal* on your behalf, and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not seen my face in the flesh, 2so that their hearts will be encouraged, being knit together in love, and so that *they will have* all the riches of full assurance that comes from understanding, *and* so that *they will have* the knowledge of the sacred secret of God—Christ[[14]](#footnote-11204)— 3in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. 4I say this so that no one deceives you with arguments that sound reasonable. 5For although I am absent in the flesh, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your orderly conduct and the steadfastness of your trust in Christ.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST (2:6-23)  
Buried and Raised with Christ

6Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in *connection with* him, 7since you have been firmly rooted and *now* are being built up in him and established in the faith[[15]](#footnote-23554) just as you were taught, *and are* overflowing with thankfulness.

8See to it that no one takes you captive through empty, deceitful philosophy *that is* according to human tradition *and* according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ, 9because embodied in him resides all the divine fullness, 10and you have been filled *with that fullness* in *union with* him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. 11In *union with* him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by the removal of the body of flesh, *that is*, by the circumcision from *our union with* Christ, 12having been buried together with him in baptism, in which[[16]](#footnote-31718) you were also raised together with him through *your* trust in the power of God, who raised him from among the dead. 13And when you were dead due to *your* transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He[[17]](#footnote-23116) made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all *our* transgressions. 14He has wiped clean the record of debt (caused by the regulations) that was against us *and* hostile to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. 15He stripped the rulers and the authorities, *and* He[[18]](#footnote-21760) made a public spectacle of them, leading them *as captives* in a triumphal procession in *connection with* him.[[19]](#footnote-31358)

Christ is the Reality

16Therefore, let no one judge you in regard to food and drink, or in regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. 17These are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ.

18Let no one disqualify you from the prize *who is* delighting in *false* humility and the worshiping of angels, going into detail about[[20]](#footnote-13098) *visions* he has seen, being puffed up with pointless notions by his fleshly mind, 19and *who is* not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, which is supported and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

20Since you died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as though you were still living in the world, do you submit to regulations—*such as,* 21“Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” 22(which all *refer to things that* perish when consumed)—based on human commandments and doctrines? 23Although *regulations of* this kind have a reputation for wisdom due to their self-imposed rituals, and *false* humility, and harsh treatment of the body, *they are* of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

**Colossians Chapter 3**

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST (3:1-4:6)  
Live According to the New Self

1Since, then, you were raised with Christ,[[21]](#footnote-24376) seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Think about the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth, 3for you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in *the presence of* God, 4*but* when Christ—your life—appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Therefore, put to death the parts of you that are earthly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed (which is idolatry). 6Because of these *sins*, the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient.[[22]](#footnote-12240) 7In these things you too once walked, when you were living in them, 8but now you too must put away all these things: anger, rage, malice, slander, obscene language out of your mouth. 9Do not lie to one another, since you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10and have put on the new *self* that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. 11In[[23]](#footnote-26690) *the new self* there is not Greek or Jew, Circumcised or Uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *or* free—but Christ is all *that matters* and is in *union with* all.

The Christian Life: Put on Love

12Therefore, as God’s holy and beloved chosen ones, put on compassionate mercy,[[24]](#footnote-16315) kindness, humility, meekness, patience, 13bearing with one another and forgiving each other if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord forgave you, so you also *must forgive*. 14And above all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond. 15And let the peace of Christ be the umpire in your hearts—*since* you were indeed called as one body to this *peace*—and *always* be thankful!

16Let the message about Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing[[25]](#footnote-22027) one another with all wisdom in psalms, hymns, *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do in word or in deed, *do* everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Living Christ-Like in the Home

18Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is proper *behavior* in *connection with* the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. 20Children, obey your parents in all things, because this is pleasing *behavior* in *connection with* the Lord. 21Fathers, do not provoke your children, so that they will not become discouraged. 22Servants, obey your earthly masters[[26]](#footnote-24193) in all things, not only to win their approval when they are watching you,[[27]](#footnote-13678) but with a sincere heart,[[28]](#footnote-26547) fearing the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work from *the depths of your* soul, as for the Lord and not for people, 24because you know that you will receive the inheritance as a reward from the Lord. *So,* serve the Lord Christ! 25For the one who does wrong will be paid back for what he did wrong, and there is no favoritism *with the Lord*.

**Colossians Chapter 4**

Living Christ-Like in the Home (cont.)

1Masters,[[29]](#footnote-26755) treat your servants rightly and fairly, because you know that you also have a master in heaven.

Continue in Prayer and Speaking with Grace

2Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3At the same time, also be praying for us, that God will open up for us a door for the word so that we can speak the sacred secret of Christ[[30]](#footnote-28709) (for which I am imprisoned). 4*Pray* that I reveal it clearly in the way that I need to.

5Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you know how you are to respond to each person.

FINAL REMARKS (4:7-18)  
Commending Tychicus and Onesimus

7Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister[[31]](#footnote-15155) and fellow servant in the Lord, will make known to you all the things *that are happening* with me. 8I am sending him to you for this very reason, so that you will know how we are doing, and so that he can encourage your hearts. 9*He is* *coming* with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all the things *that are* *happening* here.

Farewell Greetings

10Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him), 11and Jesus, who is called Justus. These are the only ones from among the Circumcised *who are my* fellow workers for the Kingdom of God, *and* they have been a comfort to me.

12Epaphras, who is one of you *and* a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always fighting *the battle* on your behalf by his prayers, *praying* that you stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13Indeed, I can testify about him that he works very hard for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those in Hierapolis.

14Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, and *so does* Demas. 15Greet the brothers and sisters who are in Laodicea, and Nympha, and the church *that is* in her house. 16And when this letter has been read among you, make sure that it is also read among the church of the Laodiceans, and *make sure* that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17And say to Archippus, “See to it that you fulfill the assignment that you have received in the Lord.”

18This greeting is *written* by my own hand—Paul. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you all.

1. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-20218)
2. Lit. “in truth” [↑](#footnote-ref-30083)
3. Or “before” [↑](#footnote-ref-31663)
4. “his” refers to Christ [↑](#footnote-ref-17584)
5. Lit. “enemies in the mind” [↑](#footnote-ref-23904)
6. “He” refers to God [↑](#footnote-ref-10039)
7. “his” refers to Christ [↑](#footnote-ref-26033)
8. Lit. “body of flesh” [↑](#footnote-ref-27951)
9. “His” refers God [↑](#footnote-ref-24954)
10. “Faith” refers to the Christian Faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-18219)
11. Lit. “to fulfill” [↑](#footnote-ref-28334)
12. Or “counseling” [↑](#footnote-ref-30425)
13. “His” refers to God [↑](#footnote-ref-17302)
14. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-11204)
15. “Faith” refers to the Christian Faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-23554)
16. Or “in union with whom” [↑](#footnote-ref-31718)
17. “He” refers to God [↑](#footnote-ref-23116)
18. “He” refers to God [↑](#footnote-ref-21760)
19. Or “through him,” where “him” refers to Christ [↑](#footnote-ref-31358)
20. Or “taking his stand on” [↑](#footnote-ref-13098)
21. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-24376)
22. Lit. “sons of disobedience” [↑](#footnote-ref-12240)
23. Lit. “where” [↑](#footnote-ref-26690)
24. Lit. “bowels of mercy” [↑](#footnote-ref-16315)
25. Or “counseling” [↑](#footnote-ref-22027)
26. Lit. “lords according to the flesh” [↑](#footnote-ref-24193)
27. Lit. “not with eye-service as men-pleasers” [↑](#footnote-ref-13678)
28. Lit. “in singleness of heart” [↑](#footnote-ref-26547)
29. Lit. “lords,” the Greek is kurios. [↑](#footnote-ref-26755)
30. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-28709)
31. Or “deacon” [↑](#footnote-ref-15155)