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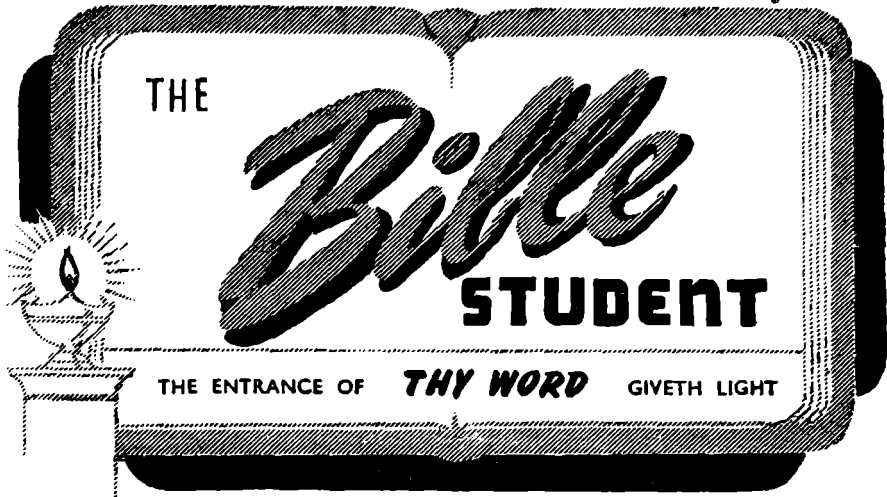
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*Editor:* A. McDONALD REDWOOD

# EXEGETICAL STUDY OF COLOSSIANS

## Chapter 4: 7-18

### Conclusion

This forms the concluding section of the epistle, consisting mainly of salutations and personal references to ten fellow-believers, whose relation with the apostle was intimate and affectionate. The student will do well to consult some larger work for the biographical details of each person named; we shall only be able to deal very briefly with them here. They all reveal the apostle's tender concern and interest in all those who shared with him in the cause of the Gospel and in service for the Lord.

\**Verse 7.*—All my affairs shall Tychicus declare unto you, the beloved brother, and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.

Tychicus was a native of proconsular Asia (Acts 20:4), and was, in company with Onesimus, the bearer of this letter. He is seen here with the apostle in his first imprisonment. He was also one of those who met the apostle at Troas on his last journey to Jerusalem (cf. Acts 21:29). Lightfoot thinks he was the brother referred to in 2 Cor. 8:18, 'whose praise in the Gospel is spread through all the churches.' He is mentioned again in Tit. 3:12, and 2 Tim. 4:12. Note the threefold statement concerning him—'the beloved brother'; 'faithful minister'; 'fellow-servant': In other words, the threefold bonds of affection, approbation, and association in the service of Christ, springing from the prior fact that it was 'in the Lord', the only true spiritual foundation. It is well to remark that 'deacon' is not used here in the technical sense as in Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8. Tychicus was a servant of God and of the church in the much broader sense: a missionary, and a helper of Paul in particular.

*Verse 8.*—Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye may know our estate, and comfort your hearts.

The verb *epemsa* is the epistolary aorist, 'I sent', implying that the letter was being sent in the care of Tychicus;—a common idiom with Paul as in Gal. 6:11; \*Eph. 6:22; Philemon 12. Also

\* The Greek text has been omitted in this study to conserve space.

note the change in the R.V. to 'ye' (not 'he'). Lightfoot urges this for two reasons: (1) the preponderance of ancient authority, although the other rendering is also given some support. (2) Tychicus' mission seems obviously more one of information, and not inquiry. The main object of sending the letter was to warn the church against the Gnostics and their erroneous teaching; and secondly, to encourage them to stand fast against the evil teachers. Hence the meaning of *parakalesē* here is the same as in ch. 2:2. We quote from our note there: 'It would be far more in keeping with the circumstances of the church—which did not apparently meet any actual persecution on the part of the Gnostics—to read, "may be strengthened." It was not so much consolation that was required as *confirmation* in the truth.' The Latin *confortatio* is 'to make strong', and the English word retained this meaning for long. Radford remarks: 'In the N.T. "comfort" is not an anodyne but a tonic, not relief but reinforcement (cf. its coupling with "stablish" in 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 2:17).'

*Verse 9.*—With Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

Note particularly the tenderness with which the apostle refers to the erstwhile runaway slave: he is now a brother in the Lord, faithful, and beloved; to be welcomed into the family of believers and by Philemon himself. He is 'one of you', he belongs to you—spiritually to the whole church; legally and lovingly, to Philemon.

*Verse 10 (a).*—Aristarcus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you. . . .

Aristarcus was a Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 19:29; 20:4), who had started with the apostle on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:2). He is seen here as Paul's fellow-prisoner—more lit. 'my fellow-prisoner-of-war'. It may mean that he was now in close attendance on the apostle and so practically a prisoner, or that at some other time he had been imprisoned with Paul in the course of his 'missionary warfare' (Camb. Bible). Similar descriptions occur in the case of Epaphras (Philem. 23), and of Adronicus and Junias in Rom. 16:7. Ellicott suggests that both Aristarcus and Epaphras voluntarily became prisoners with Paul and exchanged places, or that an actual trial had subsequently set one of them free.

*Verse 10.*—And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments): if he come unto you, receive him.

This is the first reference to Mark since his break with Paul at Perga (Acts 15:39), some twenty years before. By now Mark had recovered his place in the apostle's esteem; so much so that in his final imprisonment he asks that Mark might come with Timothy from Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:11). The word *anepsios* means *cousin* (R.V.) in the Sept., and contemporary Greek. 'Etymologically, it is remotely akin to our "*nephew*"; but that word also has varied its reference' (Moule). This relationship may explain Barnabas' more lenient view of Mark's action at Perga. The apostle's request to 'receive him' in this verse may perhaps imply some lingering prejudice against Mark, and this he is anxious to remove. The word for 'receive' is (as Abbot remarks) 'the regular term for hospitable reception' as in Matt. 10:14; Luke 9:48, etc. What the 'commandments' were which the apostle refers to is obscure; Moule hints that they 'had announced Marcus' full restoration to Paul's confidence; now they were to be acted upon.'

*Verse 11 (a).*—And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision.

The name is very common in Hebrew families. Justus is a common Latin surname meaning 'the Just', or Righteous. There is no other mention of the name in the N.T. In the epistle to Philemon all the names found here are mentioned except this one. The 'who' includes Aristarcus and the rest as converts from Judaism.

*Verse 11.*—These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, men who have been a comfort to me.

'*These only*', that is, of those of the circumcision at Rome, the majority of whom were apparently against the apostle, as he mentions in Phil. 1:15, 16. Whether the reference is to the more serious cleavage mentioned in Acts 28:24-29 is not clear, for the latter would seem to be those who refused Paul's teaching altogether, whereas the former were professing Christians at least. Alford inclines to take the words as meaning 'of the men of the circumcision these alone are, etc.' What would seem the simplest reading is that, he was not referring to the general body of converts, but to the *leaders* in the church in Rome. Of these very *few* were converts from Judaism, the majority being Gentiles (See Phil. 2:20; 2 Tim. 4:16):

extended to was essentially 'in the Lord', and not regulated by officialism of any sort: it was 'received' and 'fulfilled' by the direction of the Holy Spirit acting on behalf of the true (and only) Head of the church, Christ Himself. It was therefore to be 'filled to the full', so that 'his works should be found filled before God' (Rev. 3:2). 'No duty of his ministry was to be ignored, he was to 'take heed to *himself*, his *doctrine*, and his flock' (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 4:16)—Moule.

*Verse 18.*—The salutation with mine own hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

The apostle wrote through an amanuensis, but signed with his own hand to give a guarantee of its genuineness. This was true probably of all his letters (2 Thess. 3:17). His writing would appear to have been large and laboured (Gal. 6:11, R.V.). In Romans the name of the amanuensis is mentioned (Rom. 16:22). What profound significance lies in his mention of 'my chains'! 'When we read of his 'chains' we should not forget that they moved over the paper as he wrote. His hand was chained to the soldier that kept him' (Alford). Not weakness, nor regret, nor even complaint—but surely, a ringing challenge from a brave, strong soul, comes to us in those closing words! His very body was marked, as it were branded, for the sake of Christ and in proof of Christ's ownership of his body, soul and spirit (Gal. 6:17).

[So ends our study of this wonderful epistle: a study which began actually before the last world war, and was interrupted for some long time, commencing again in 1948 when the present new series of the magazine began. We trust it has been a blessing to all who have taken the time to make use of the notes as they have appeared. Whatever may be deficient in the notes, the epistle itself is full of instruction and will richly repay all the study given to it without fail.—A. McD. R.]

(8) Avoid copying the peculiarities of other speakers, otherwise you will find yourself in an unnatural element. God desires to use your own personality for the accomplishment of His purposes, and the exaltation of His Son.

(9) Avoid carelessness in reading the Scriptures, both in private and in public. Take pains to 'give the sense' (Neh. 8:8). Accustom yourself to the passage you decide to read by reading it repeatedly to yourself before hand. Careless reading of the Word of God is dishonouring to its Author.

(10) Do not expect to become an accomplished speaker all at once. This can be gained by perseverance and practice, although, of course, there may be exceptions to this general rule.

(11) Remember that private intercession is one of the most important adjuncts in Christian service. Therefore pray much over your subject, your delivery, and every other item pertaining to your ministry.

(12) Do not attempt to continue when you have completed your 'discourse. When you say, 'In conclusion,' be sure you conclude, otherwise you will be in danger of spoiling every thing you have previously said.

(13) Be sure your life corresponds with your preaching. Remember the Apostle's words to Timothy, 'Take heed unto *thyself*, and unto the doctrine' (1 Tim. 4:16). *The life you live is far more important than your preaching.*—THE WITNESS

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Another year has passed and we would give thanks to the Lord for His gracious help and provision in all the work of producing the Magazine. We have good reason for believing that blessing has come to readers, and certainly to the work of editing each issue. Before next issue is out the Editor will have gone to England for a time of furlough. *The Magazine will continue as usual*, and all correspondence should be sent to the Office address, where Mr W. J. Redwood will still be in charge.

'I derive great spiritual benefit from the reading of the many valuable articles in the "B.S."'—*Brisbane Reader*.