

Colossians 4:12-18 – Closing Greetings

Although the Colossians, in general, had not seen Paul face to face, the Colossians and Paul did know some of the same people. Two of those people were Epaphras and Onesimus. Epaphras and Onesimus were from Colossae but were with Paul around the time of the letter writing. There were others whom they had never met but may have been familiar with, like Luke.

Read Colossians 4:12-14.

In verse 12, Paul mentioned Epaphras whom Paul talked about in the beginning of the letter. Epaphras sent his greetings. How did Paul describe Epaphras in this verse? (4:12)

Even though Epaphras was away from Colossae, what did he do for the Colossians? How can prayer be a struggle or a fight in the sense it was used in verse 12? (4:12-13)

Epaphras' ministry was not confined to Colossae. Where else did Epaphras minister? Where were Laodicea and Hierapolis located? From Revelation 3:14-22, what was Laodicea known for? (4:13)

In verse 14, Paul said that Luke and Demas greeted the Colossians. Who was Luke? See Acts 16 and the chapters that followed. In Acts 16:10 Luke wrote "we sought to go on". (4:14)

Demas was a companion to Paul, but what happened to him later in life? See 2 Timothy 4:10.

Read Colossians 4:15-18.

In verse 15, Paul told the Colossians to greet the brothers in the neighboring city of Laodicea. In 4:16, Paul referred to the church of the Laodiceans. Is there any significance to Paul referring to the "brothers" in verse 15 versus "the church"? (4:15)

Paul also said to greet Nympha and the church in her house. Where was this home church located? According to Paul's letters, who else had a church in their house? See Romans 16:3-5, 23, 1 Corinthians 16:19 and Philemon 1:1-2. Based on Philemon 1:1-2, it is likely that a church met in Philemon's home. Since Philemon, by association with Onesimus, was believed to live in Colossae, the Colossian church could have met at the house of Philemon. In Colossians 1:18, 24 Paul used the word "church" in the universal sense. Christ is the head of the church. The church is the body of Christ. In verses 4:15-16, Paul used the word "church" to refer to local gatherings of believers. (4:15-16)

What were the Colossians told to do once the letter was read to them? What other letter was referenced? What were Paul's directions about that letter? Some, like Calvin, believe(d) that this letter was written by the Laodiceans to Paul. Others believe it was a letter written by Paul which is included in the NT but known by a different name like Ephesians or Galatians. Some do not wish to entertain the idea that Paul could have written a letter that was not included in the Bible. Others believe it was a letter written by Paul to the Laodiceans which was not included in the Bible either because it was lost or because it was largely similar to another book of the Bible. (4:16)

What do we know about Archippus? See also Philemon 1:2. What were Paul's instructions concerning Archippus? We do not know for sure what his God-given ministry involved. Some think that because Epaphras was no longer in Colossae that Archippus was the interim pastor. Does it seem wise to you for Paul to tell the congregation to exhort their pastor to "do your job"? Why didn't Paul directly charge Archippus? (4:17)

What was the significance of Paul writing the final greeting of the letter with his own hand? What did Paul want them to remember? (4:18)

Paul ended the letter with "Grace be with you". "You" is plural. What did Paul leave out of his normal "grace" ending? (4:18)

What did you learn from Colossians? What truths were you reminded of? What impact did Colossians have on you?