

Colossians 4:7-18

- Paul typically ended his letters greeting people and referring to those who were with him or would be traveling with the letter.
- Here Paul even greets those in nearby towns in the Lycus Valley
- These are not mere idle greetings, but seem to be strategic comments meant to send a message and provide some routine relationship maintenance.
- The closing of Colossians brings 12 people out of their historic past for us to view as contemporaries of this letter and situation its information was addressed to.
 1. Tychicus
 2. Onesimus
 3. Aristarchus
 4. Mark
 5. Barnabas
 6. Jesus (Justus)
 7. Epaphras
 8. Luke
 9. Demas
 10. Nympha
 11. Archippus
 12. Paul

- PLUS -

 13. Church of Laodicea
 14. Church of Hierapolis
 15. Church of Colossae
- Paul considered these people co-workers along with him.
- Archippus was the pastor left in charge of the church in Colossae (Col. 1:7) when Epaphras left to visit Paul and ask for some assistance concerning the issues in the church in Colossae addressed in this letter.
- Tradition hands down to us that Philemon, Apphia (his wife), Archippus (pastor, possibly the brother of Apphia or son of Apphia/Philemon) and their slave Onesimus were stoned to death during Nero's persecution in 68 AD.

4:7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

- Tychicus and Onesimus are the two people carrying the letter to the church of Colossae that met in Philemon's (and his wife Apphia) house where Epaphras had been serving as the pastor until he left for Rome to meet with Paul.
- Archippus was serving as the pastor in Colossae during Epaphras' absence.
- Tychicus and Onesimus are to:
 - Carry and deliver (read) the letter
 - Report all about Paul's activities (4:7)
 - Deliver an oral report concerning Paul and his team in Rome (4:8) which included: Paul, Timothy, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus (Justus)
 - To encourage the hearts of the Colossians (4:8)
 - Report everything that has taken place in Rome (4:9)
- See the similar Ephesians 6:21-22, "*So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.*"
- Tychicus was a native of the province of Asia. Tychicus is a common name found on inscriptions from this time period in Asia.
 - Acts 20:4, Tychicus was with Paul in Greece. In Acts 20:1 Paul leaves Ephesus for Macedonia where he meets Titus on his way back from Corinth.
 - Paul was visited in Ephesus by a Corinthian delegation and responded by writing 1 Corinthians probably during Acts 19:21-22 when he sent Timothy and Erastus (a Corinthian) to Corinth in Achaia with the letter of First Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:10).

- The conflict in Corinth continued so Paul visited Corinth from Ephesus (likely crossing over by sea) 2 Cor. 2:1
- Paul followed that visit with a very harsh letter called “the painful letter” (2 Cor. 2:1-4) that he at first regretted having written and sent, but since it produced results he was ultimately pleased that he wrote and sent it (2 Cor. 7:8-9)
- Timothy returns to Ephesus apparently defeated by the Corinthians so Paul send Titus with a third letter to Corinth (2 Cor. 7:
- Paul leaves Ephesus for Macedonia intending to visit Corinth (Acts 20:1). There Paul meets Titus who gives a good report concerning the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:6; 8:16-24)
- Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Macedonian before he goes to Corinth in Acts 20:2.
- Paul then returned to Macedonia for 3 months but fled because of a Jewish assassination plot. (Acts 20:3)
- Tychicus and a group of six other men traveled with Paul and went ahead of him to Troas as Paul avoided the Jewish assassination trap. (Acts 20:4-6)
- Tychicus may have continued on with Paul to Jerusalem or he may have stopped in Asia on the way through.
- 2 Timothy 4:12, Paul sends Tychicus to Ephesus during his second and fatal imprisonment in
- Titus 3:12, Paul sent Tychicus or Artemas to relieve Titus in Crete in order that Titus could meet Paul in Nicopolis.
- Tychicus is describe in three ways by Paul:
 - A beloved brother – indicating spiritual family and affection
 - Faithful minister – indicating his quality of functioning in the body. The office or gift is not identified
 - Fellow servant (doulos, slave) – indicating service for Christ the Master.

4:8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,

4:9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

- Onesimus is assumed to be the run away slave of Philemon for several reason including context and historical tradition.
- Onesimus was a very common name for slaves since in meant “useful.”
- Onesimus is described in three ways:
 - Faithful –
 - Beloved brother – indicating he was a believer
 - One of you – indication he was a native of Colossae (doubtful since he was a slave and probably some kind of a foreigner) or was now one of the members of the house of believers

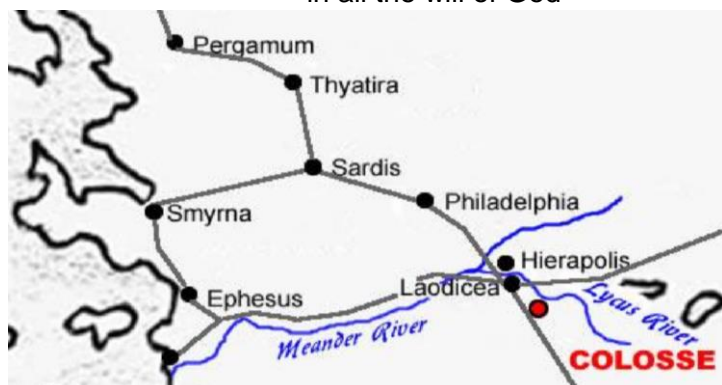
4:10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

- Six men greet the Colossae church
 - Three are Jews identified as “men of the circumcision” – Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus (Justus)
 - Three are Gentiles (listed below) – Epaphras, Luke, Demas
- 5 of these 6 are also included in the greeting in the book of Philemon verses 23-24 – **“Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.”** The only one not mentioned is Jesus (Justus) the Jew.
- These three Jewish men are referred to as:
 - “the only men of the circumcision” – indicating they are the only three Jews who have picked up Paul’s vision to reach the Gentiles.
 - “fellow workers of the kingdom of God” – they are not mere Jewish believers, but the labor with Paul in his ministry
 - “been a comfort to me” – the word here from “comfort” is a medical term for a tonic taken from opium and was a drug called paregoric which was a medication extracted as a solution from opium to be used as a cough suppressant, a pain killer and to treat diarrhea
- Aristarchus –

- A Jew
- A Macedonian from Thessalonica
- Likely came to the faith during Paul's turbulent visit to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)
- Aristarchus may have been one of the original recipients of the letters of First and Second Thessalonians.
- Aristarchus was in the middle of the Ephesus riot in Acts 19:29
- Aristarchus traveled with Paul to Jerusalem in Acts 20:4
- Aristarchus was still with Paul when he left Cesarea as a prisoner for Rome and he accompanied Paul on the ship to Rome (Acts 27:2)
- Aristarchus is called a "fellow prisoner" which is not referring to a legal prisoner, but a "prisoner of war" (also used in Romans 16:7 of Andronicus and Junia). → It is reasonable to assume the Aristarchus has stuck with Paul from the Jewish uprising that chased Paul out of Thessalonica through the years in Ephesus that resulted in the riot through the Corinthian church rebellion to Paul's arrest on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem to imprisonment in Caesarea and onto this Roman imprisonment that included the Mediterranean shipwreck!!
- Mark –
 - A Jew
 - John Mark of Acts that abandoned Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 13:5 and Acts 15:38)
 - From a wealthy family in Jerusalem
 - Mother was Mary of Jerusalem that owned the house where the early Jerusalem church met and the Last Supper was hosted and the outpouring of the Spirit occurred. (Acts 12:12)
 - Mark 14:51-52 may be John Mark escaping from Jesus' arrest
- Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark from Rome and had access to both Peter and Paul, plus first hand experience with Jesus and the events in Jerusalem.
- Paul may be giving written approval of John Mark after their falling out earlier.
- Jesus (Justice) –
 - A Jew
 - All we know of Jesus (Justice) is here
 - Jesus was a common name. A Hellenized form of Joshua used by the Jews until the second century when the use of the name complete stops.
 - Like Paul had both a Greek (Paul) and a Jewish (Saul) name, so did Jesus (Justice) with Jesus being the Jewish name (a form of Joshua) and Justice being the Greek name.

4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

- Ephaphras –
 - "one of you" – is the same as said of Onesimus...likely a believer from Colossae
 - "a slave of Christ Jesus"
 - "struggling" for the Colossians "in prayer" – the Greek word "struggling" is from the Greek word "agon_____" and has already been used in Col. 1:29 and 2:1.
 - A related word is used of Jesus' praying in the Garden. In Luke 22:44.
 - Same word is used for prayer in Acts 12:5 and Romans 15:30
 - It would appear that Ephaphras was praying along with Paul for the Colossians maturity and God's will in their life as in Colossians 1:9-11 and 1:28-2:3. Here Paul says Ephaphras is praying for:
 - "you may stand mature"
 - "fully assured"
 - "in all the will of God"



4:13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

- Ephaphras has "worked hard" for the people in the churches of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis.

4:14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

- Luke –
- Demas – deserted Paul in 2 Tim. 4:10 because he loved this world

NOTE: Timothy sends no greeting?

4:15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

- It is possible in the wording here in the Greek that there were two churches in Laodicea:
 - The Church of the Brothers at Laodicea
 - The Church that meets in the House of Nympha

4:16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

- Much speculation is included in the discussion about this letter that had been sent to the Laodiceans
- It is possible that Tychicus is carrying this letter as well.

4:17 And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

- Archippus knows what his “ministry” is
- We assume it is the leadership of the church of Colossae, but this is speculative.

4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

- A scribe, possibly Mark, has been writing Paul’s dictation
- Now Paul takes the pen in his chained hands and signs his name.