

To the Colossians

Translated by Joshua Kerr

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[1:1] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy the brother, [2] to the holy and faithful brothers at Colossae: grace and peace to you in Christ from God our father.

[3] We give thanks to God and the father of our lord, Jesus Christ, offering prayers at all times on your behalf, [4] having heard of your fidelity in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the holy ones [5] because of the hope laid away for you in the heavens, which you heard beforehand in the account of the truth of the gospel [6] present to you, just as in the whole cosmos it is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has in you from the day you heard and fully knew the grace of God in truth, [7] and just as you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-slave, who is a faithful deacon of Christ on your behalf, [8] having made manifest to us your love in spirit. [9] On account of this we also, since the day we heard, do not cease offering prayers and imploring on your behalf, that you may be filled in the full knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual union, [10] to walk around in a manner worthy of the lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the full knowledge of God, [11] being empowered in all power according to the might of his glory unto all endurance and forbearance, joyfully [12] giving thanks to the father, who has qualified us for our share in the clergy from among the holy ones in the light, [13] who delivered us from the power of the darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the son of his love, [14] and in whom we have ransoming, the quittance from faults.

[15] who is a likeness of the unseen God, firstborn among all creation, [16] wherefore in him was created the all. In the heavens and upon the earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities: the all through him and for him has been created. [17] And he himself is before all, and the all stands

together in him. [18] And he himself is the head of the body, the assembly.

who is an origin, firstborn from among those dead, in order that he may become first in all, [19] wherefore all the full and perfect nature may be pleased to inhabit him [20] and through him to reconcile again for him the all—having made peace through the bloodshed of his cross—whether things on the earth or things in the heavens.

[21] And although you were once estranged and hostile intellectually in your wicked works, [22] yet now he has reconciled you again in the body of his flesh through death, in order to present you holy, unblemished, and blameless in his presence, [23] provided you abide in his fidelity with firmly laid foundations, steadfast and not shifting away from the hope of the gospel to which you hearkened, which has been proclaimed in every created thing under the heavens, and of which I, Paul, became a deacon. [24] Now I delight in my sufferings on your behalf, and I balance out the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh on behalf of his body, which is the assembly, [25] of which I became a deacon according to God's administration, granted to me for you, to consecrate the word of God, [26] the sacrament remaining concealed after epochs and generations but now revealed to his holy ones, [27] to whom God willed to make known what is the wealth of the glory of this sacrament among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of the glory, [28] which we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom so we may present every man [as] perfect in Christ, [29] and for which I also toil, contending according to his energy energizing in me in power. [2:1] For I want you to know the extraordinary struggle I have on the behalf of you, the ones in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my countenance in person, [2] in order that their hearts may be cheered, having been joined together in love even unto all the wealth of the full assurance which comes from union and unto full knowledge of the sacrament of God, and of the father, and of Christ, [3] wherein all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed. [4] This I say in order that no one may delude you with sophistical arguments. [5] For even if I am away bodily, yet spiritually I am with you, rejoicing and beholding your good order and the solidity of your fidelity to Christ. [6] Therefore as you took to yourself Christ Jesus the lord, so walk around in him, [7] being rooted and built up in him and being confirmed in your fidelity just as you were taught, and abounding in gratitude. [8] Beware lest someone may lead you captive through philosophy and empty trickery according to the tradition of men, according to the elemental spirits of the cosmos, and not according to Christ, [9] because the whole fullness of the divine nature inhabits

him bodily, [10] and in him you are fulfilled, who is the head of all rule and authority, [11] in whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision wrought not by hands but by means of stripping off the body, the flesh, by means of the circumcision of Christ. [12] You were buried together with him in baptism, in which also you rose together through the fidelity which belongs to the activity of God, who roused him from among the dead ones [13] and roused you, when you were dead in your missteps and the uncircumcision of your flesh. God made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our missteps, [14] having cancelled the receipt against us with its legal ordinances, which was opposed to us, and he lifted it away, having nailed it to the cross. [15] Having despoiled the archons and the authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, parading them triumphantly in it.

[16] Therefore may no one adjudge you in eating and drinking or in a matter of a festival, new moon, or Sabbaths, [17] which are a mere shadow of the things destined to be, but the body is of Christ. [18] May no one disqualify you, relishing in the angels' self-abasement and worship, which he beheld in the visions of initiation, being rashly puffed up by his fleshly mind [19] and not holding fast to the head, from whom all the body, being furnished and brought together through the joints and sinews, increases with the increase from God. [20] If you died with the help of Christ from the elemental spirits of the cosmos, why, as though living in the cosmos, have you submitted to ordinances — [21] “do not have intercourse; do not taste; do not touch” — [22] according to the injunctions and teachings of men? These refer to things which are all destined for destruction through consumption, [23] even though such ordinances have indeed a reputation for wisdom in worship from the will, self-abasement, and severe treatment of the body, and not in any esteem for the satiety of the flesh. [3:1] If therefore you have been raised together with Christ, seek the things on high, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. [2] Be intent on the things on high, not the things upon the earth. [3] For you died, and your substance is concealed in God with the help of Christ. [4] Whenever Christ, your substance, is made manifest, at that time you also will be made manifest in glory. [5] Mortify therefore your earthward members: prostitution, impurity, passion, base desire, and the greediness that is idolatry, [6] on account of which things the anger of God is coming, [7] and in which you also once walked around, when you lived in them. [8] But now you also must put away all things: anger, wrath, baseness, slander, and obscenity from your mouths. [9] Do not lie to one another, having stripped off the antiquated man with his practices [10] and having put on the new man, who is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the likeness of the one who created him, [11] whereof there is not Greek and

Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all. [12] Therefore as elect of God, holy and beloved, put on affections of pity, kindness, self-abasement, gentleness, and long-suffering, [13] patiently tolerating one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against anyone, just as also the lord forgave you, in this way also should you. [14] And in addition to all these put on love, which is a bond of completion. [15] And may the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which you were also summoned bodily. And be thankful. [16] May the speech of Christ dwell in you opulently as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, chanting in your hearts to God in grace with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. [17] And all you may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the lord, Jesus, giving thanks to God the father through him.

[18] Women, subordinate yourselves to your husbands, as befits lordship. [19] Men, love your wives and do not be embittered toward them. [20] Children, obey your fathers in all things, for this is well pleasing to the lord. [21] Fathers, do not provoke your children, in order that they may not dishearten. [22] Slaves, obey in all things your lords by the natural order, not in eye-service as people pleasers but in sincerity of heart, fearing your lord. [23] Whatever you do, labor from the soul as for your lord, and not men, [24] knowing that from a lord you will receive back the repayment of the inheritance. You are slaves to the lord, Christ. [25] For the wrongdoer will be repaid the wrong, and there is not favoritism. [4:1] Lords, provide justice and fair dealing to your slaves, knowing that you have a lord in the heavens.

[2] Persist steadfastly in the prayer, being wakeful in it in thanksgiving, [3] offering prayers at the same time also concerning us, in order that God may open for us a door of the word, so as to speak the sacrament of Christ, on account of which I am bound, [4] in order that I will reveal it. How necessary it is that I speak! [5] Walk around in wisdom toward the outsiders, redeeming for yourselves the time. [6] May your speech always be graceful, prepared with salt, so as to know how you must reply to each one. [7] All my affairs Tychicus will make known to you—my beloved brother and trustworthy deacon and fellow slave in the lord, [8] whom I sent to you for this very purpose. In order that you may know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts, [9] together with Onesimus our trustworthy and beloved brother (who is one of yours), they will make known to you all things here. [10] Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabus (concerning whom you received orders: “if he should come to you, accept him”), [11] and

Jesus called Justus. These men only, although being of circumcision, are fellow workers for the kingdom of God, who became to me a consolation. [12] Epaphrus the slave of Christ Jesus greets you, one of yours, always contending on your behalf in the prayers, in order that you may stand perfect and fully satisfied in the whole will of God. [13] For I bear witness for him that he has much distress on behalf of you, of the men in Laodicea, and of the men in Hierapolis. [14] Luke the beloved doctor greets you, and Demas. [15] Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and Nympha, and the assembly at their house. [16] And when the letter is read before you, see to it that it be read also in the Laodicean assembly and also that you read the letter from Laodicea. [17] And say to Archippus, “see to the diaconate which you inherited in the lord, that you may fulfill it.”

[18] The salutation, by my own hand, of Paul. Remember my fetters. Grace be with you.