

COLOSSIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE

PREFACE

Address

Rm 1:1+
Ac 9:13+ **1** From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our 1
brother Timothy •to the saints in Colossae, our faithful brothers in Christ: 2
Grace and peace to you from God our Father.^a

Thanksgiving and prayer

||Ep 1:15-16
||Phm 4-5 We have never failed to remember you in our prayers and to give thanks for 3
you to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, •ever since we heard about 4
1 Co 13:13+ your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you show towards all the saints
1 P 1:3 because of the hope which is stored up for you in heaven. It is only recently that 5
||Ep 1:13 you heard of this, when it was announced in the message of the truth. The Good
Ac 14:3;
20:24,32 News •which has reached you is spreading all over the world and producing the 6
2 Co 6:1 same results as it has among you ever since the day when you heard about God's
grace and understood what this really is. •Epaphras, who taught you, is one of 7
our closest fellow workers and a faithful deputy for us as Christ's servant,^b •and 8
1 Co 13:1+ it was he who told us all about your love in the Spirit.

||Ep 1:15 That will explain why, ever since the day he told us, we have never failed to 9
Ep 5:17 pray for you, and what we ask God is that through perfect wisdom and spiritual
Ph 1:9 understanding you should reach the fullest knowledge of his will. •So you will 10
3:10+ be able to lead the kind of life which the Lord expects of you, a life acceptable
Ph 1:27 to him in all its aspects; showing the results in all the good actions you do and
increasing your knowledge of God. •You will have in you the strength, based on 11
Ws 5:5+ his own glorious power, never to give in, but to bear anything joyfully, •thanking 12
Ep 1:11-13; the Father who has made it possible for you to join the saints and with them
5:8
1 P 1:4; 2:9 to inherit the light.^c

Ac 26:18
Jn 8:12+ Because that is what he has done: he has taken us out of the power of darkness 13
Ep 1:6-7 and created a place for us in the kingdom of the Son that he loves, •and in him, 14
Rm 3:24+ we gain our freedom,^d the forgiveness of our sins.
Heb 1:3+

I. FORMAL INSTRUCTION

Christ is the head of all creation^e

1:18+	He is the image of the unseen God	15
Gn 1:1-2	and the first-born of all creation,	
Ps 89:27	for in him were created	16
Ws 7:26	all things in heaven and on earth:	
Zc 12:10	everything visible and everything invisible,	
Jn 1:3,18	Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers—	
Rm 8:29	all things were created through him and for him.	
Heb 1:3,6		
Ep 1:10,21+		
Rm 11:36		
1 Co 8:6		

- 17 Before anything was created, he existed,
and he holds all things in unity.
- 18 Now the Church is his body,
he is its head.^f 1:15,24
Ep 1:22-23;
5:23f
- As he is the Beginning,
he was first to be born from the dead,
so that he should be first in every way;
because God wanted all perfection
to be found in him^g 1 Co 15:20
Rv 1:5
Rm 8:29
- 19 and all things to be reconciled through him and for him,^h
everything in heaven and everything on earth,ⁱ
when he made peace
by his death on the cross. 2:9+
Ep 1:23
- 20 2:10;
2:14,16

The Colossians have their share in salvation

- 21 Not long ago, you were foreigners and enemies,^j in the way that you used to
22 think and the evil things that you did; •but now he has reconciled you, by his
death and in that mortal body.^k Now you are able to appear before him holy,
23 pure and blameless—•as long as you persevere and stand firm on the solid base
of the faith, never letting yourselves drift away from the hope promised by the
Good News, which you have heard, which has been preached to the whole human
race,^l and of which I, Paul, have become the servant. Ep 2:1f; 4:
18-19
2:13
Ep 2:14-16
1 Co 1:8+
Ep 5:27+
1:5f
Mk 16:15
Ac 2:5
2 Co 3:6
Ep 3:17
Ep 3:7

Paul's labours in the service of the pagans

- 24 It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own
body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for
25 the sake of his body, the Church.^m •I became the servant of the Church when God 2:1
Mt 5:11
1:18+
2 Co 1:5
Rm 15:19
2 Co 3:6

1 a. Add. (Vulg.) 'and the Lord Jesus Christ'.

b. Lit. 'A faithful servant of Christ on behalf of us'; var. (Vulg.) 'on behalf of you'.

c. Lit. 'Thanking the Father (for) having made you (var. 'us') fit for the part of the lot of the saints in the light'; var. 'for having called you (var. 'us') to...'. The 'lot of the saints' is what all holy people are to inherit, i.e. the 'salvation' that had been thought of as a bequest made exclusively to Israel. Now, non-Jews are called to share it, cf. Ep 1:11-13. The word 'saints' (lit. 'holy ones') here can mean either Christians, i.e. people called to live the 'life of light' while still living on earth, Rm 1:7f, cf. Jn 8:12f, or it can mean the angels who live with God in the eschatological 'light', cf. Ac 9:13+.

d. Lit. 'In whom we have the redemption'. Add. (Vulg.) 'by blood', cf. Ep 1:7.

e. In this poem Paul introduces two ways in which Christ can claim to be the 'head' of everything that exists: 1. he is the head of creation, of all that exists naturally, vv. 15-17; 2. he is head of the new creation and of all that exists supernaturally through having been saved, vv. 18-20. The subject of the poem is the pre-existent Christ, but considered only in so far as he was manifest in the unique historic person that is the son of God made man, cf. Ph 2:5+. It is as the incarnate God that Jesus is the 'Image of God', i.e. his human nature was the visible manifestation of God who is invisible, cf. Rm 8:29+, and it is as such, in this concrete human nature, and as part of creation, that Jesus is called the 'first-born of creation'—not in the temporal sense of having been born first, but in the sense of having been given the first place of honour.

f. On the Church as Christ's body, cf. 1 Co 12:12f; he is called the 'head' of his own body both in a temporal sense (v. 18, i.e. he was the first to rise from the dead) and in a spiritual sense (v. 20, i.e. he is the leader of all the saved).

g. Lit. 'because (God) wanted the *pleroma* to dwell in him'. The exact meaning of the word *pleroma* (i.e. the thing that fills up a gap or hole, like a patch, cf. Mt 9:16) is not certain here. Some writers have

thought it must mean the same as in 2:9 (the fullness of divinity that filled Jesus), but since vv. 15-18 have already dealt with the divinity of Jesus, it seems likely that the reference here is to the biblical concept of the entire cosmos as filled with the creative presence of God, cf. Is 6:3; Jr 23:24; Ps 24:1; 50:12; 72:19; Ws 1:7; Si 43:27 etc. This concept was also widespread in the Graeco-Roman world. Paul teaches that the incarnation and resurrection make Christ head not only of the entire human race, but of the entire created cosmos, so that everything that was involved in the fall is equally involved in the salvation, cf. Rm 8:19-22; 1 Co 3:22f; 15:20-28; Ep 1:10; 4:10; Ph 2:10f; 3:21; Heb 2:5-8. Cf. 2:9+.

h. I.e. through and for Christ, cf. the parallel 'through him and for him' of v. 16. Alternatively, it could read 'God wanted everything... to be reconciled to himself, through him who made peace...', cf. Rm 5:10; 2 Co 5:18f.

i. This reconciliation of the whole universe (including angels as well as human beings) means, not that every single individual will be saved, but that all who are saved will be saved by their collective return to the right order and peace of perfect submission to God. Any individuals who do not join this new creation through grace will be forced to join it, cf. 2:15; 1 Co 15:24-25 (the heavenly spirits) and 2 Th 1:8-9; 1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:21; Rm 2:8; Ep 5:5 (men).

j. The context suggests that there is a closer parallel with Ep 4:18f (foreigners to God and therefore God's enemies) than with Ep 2:12 (foreigners in Israel).

k. 'he', i.e. the Father. The human, mortal body is that of his Son (lit. 'flesh body'); this provides the locus where the reconciliation takes place. Into this body the entire human race is effectively gathered, cf. Ep 2:14-16, because Christ has assumed its sin, 2 Co 5:21. The 'flesh' body is the body as affected by sin, 2 Co 5:21; cf. Rm 8:3; 7:5+; Heb 4:15.

l. Lit. 'to all creation under the sky'.

m. Lit. 'all that is lacking from the sufferings of Christ... Church'. Jesus suffered in order to establish the

made me responsible for delivering God's message to you, •the message which
 Rm 16:25+ was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries and has now been revealed to
 his saints. •It was God's purpose to reveal it to them and to show all the rich glory
 3:4 of this mystery to pagans. The mystery is Christ among you, your hope of glory:^a
 Ep 2:12 1 Th 4:13 this is the Christ we proclaim, this is the wisdom in which we thoroughly train
 1 Co 2:6 everyone and instruct everyone, to make them all perfect in Christ. •It is for
 Ep 4:13+ this I struggle wearily on, helped only by his power driving me irresistibly.
 Ph 4:13 2 Th 1:11

Paul's concern for the Colossians' faith

1:24 2 Yes, I want you to know that I do have to struggle hard for you, and for 1
 1 Th 2:17 those in Laodicea, and for so many others who have never seen me face to
 face. •It is all to bind you together in love and to stir your minds, so that your 2
 Ep 3:18-19 understanding may come to full development, until you really know God's
 Pr 2:4-5 secret^a •in which^b all the jewels of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. 3
 Is 45:3 I say this to make sure that no one deceives you with specious arguments.^c 4
 Ep 4:14; 5:6 I may be absent in body, but in spirit I am there among you, delighted to find you 5
 1 Co 5:3-4 1 Th 2:17 all in harmony and to see how firm your faith in Christ is.

II. A WARNING AGAINST SOME ERRORS

Live according to the true faith in Christ, not according to false teaching

Ep 4:21 You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received— 6
 Heb 2:9 Jesus the Lord; •you must be rooted in him and built on him and held firm by the 7
 Ac 2:22+ Ep 3:17 faith you have been taught, and full of thanksgiving.
 1 Th 2:13+ Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom^d by some 8
 Mt 15:2 secondhand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world
 Ga 4:3+ instead of on Christ.
 Ep 4:14; 5:6

Christ alone is the true head of men and angels

1:19+ In his body lives the fullness of divinity,^e and in him you too find your own 9
 Jn 1:16 fulfilment, •in the one who is the head of every Sovereignty and Power.^f 10
 Ep 1:13; 3: 13 In him you have been circumcised, with a circumcision not performed by 11
 Jr 4:4+ human hand, but by the complete stripping of your body of flesh.^g This is cir-
 Rm 2:25-29 cumcision according to Christ.^h •You have been buried with him, when you 12
 Ph 3:3 Rm 6:3-4+ were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through
 Rm 1:4+; 8:11+ your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. •You were dead, 13
 Ep 1:19f; 2:6+ because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: heⁱ has brought you^j
 1:22 to life with him, he has forgiven us^k all our sins.
 ||Ep 2:1,5f He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we 14
 Ep 2:15 had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross;^l •and so he got 15
 Is 53:12 1 P 3:22 rid of the Sovereignities and the Powers, and paraded them in public, behind him
 2 Co 2:14 in his triumphal procession.^m

Against the false asceticism based on 'the principles of this world'

Rm 14:3-4 From now onwards, never let anyone else decide what you should eat or drink, 16
 Ga 4:3+ or whether you are to observe annual festivals, New Moons or sabbaths. •These 17
 1 Tm 4:3 Heb 9:10 were only pale reflections of what was coming: the reality is Christ.ⁿ •Do not be 18
 Heb 10:1 taken in by people who like grovelling^o to angels and worshipping them;^p people
 Ga 6:12 like that are always going on about some vision they have had,^q inflating them-
 selves to a false importance with their worldly outlook. •A man of this sort 19
 ||Ep 4:15-16 is not united to the head,^r and it is the head that adds strength and holds the
 whole body together, with all its joints and sinews—and this is the only way in
 which it can reach its full growth in God.
 Ga 4:3+ If you have really died with Christ to the principles of this world, why do you 20
 still let rules dictate to you, as though you were still living in the world? •It is 21

- forbidden to pick up this, it is forbidden to taste that, it is forbidden to touch something else'; all these prohibitions are only concerned with things that perish by their very use—an example of *human doctrines and regulations*!
- 23 It may be argued that true wisdom is to be found in these, with their self-imposed devotions, their self-abasement, and their severe treatment of the body; but once the flesh starts to protest, they are no use at all.^a

1 Co 6:13;
8:8
Is 29:13
Mt 15:9

2 Tm 3:5

Life-giving union with the glorified Christ

- 1 **3** Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand.
- 2 Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth,
- 3 because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God.
- 4 But when Christ is revealed—and he is your^a life—you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.^b

Ep 2:6+
Ph 3:20
Ac 2:33+

2:12
Ph 1:21
1:27
1 P 5:1
1 Jn 3:2
Rm 8:19

reign of God, and anyone who continues his work must share this suffering. Paul is not saying that he thinks his own sufferings increase the value of the redemption (since that value cannot be increased) but that he shares by his sufferings as a missionary in those that Jesus had undergone in his own mission, cf. 2 Co 1:5; Ph 1:20+. These are the sufferings predicted for the messianic era, Mt 24:8+; Ac 14:22+; 1 Tm 4:1+, and are all part of the way in which God had always intended the Church to develop; Paul feels that being the messenger Christ has chosen to send to the pagans, he has been specially called on to experience these sufferings.

n. Previously, when it had seemed (to the Jews) that pagans could never be saved, as salvation was restricted to 'Israel', pagans had seemed to be without a Messiah and consequently to be deprived of all hope, Ep 2:12. The 'mystery' or secret of God that had now been revealed was that the pagans too were, and had been, all called to be saved through union with Christ, and so to reach eternal glory, cf. Ep 2:13-22; 3:3-6.

2 a. Var. 'the mystery of Christ', cf. 4:3; Ep 3:4; or 'God's mystery of Christ', or 'the mystery of God the father, of Christ', or 'the mystery of God the Father, and of Christ', etc.

b. 'in which' i.e. in the 'mystery' that revealed what till then had been 'hidden', namely the 'infinite wisdom' of God, cf. Rm 16:25+; 1 Tm 3:16+. That it is Christ who is revealed in the mystery, 1:27, is of course true, and he himself is also the Wisdom of God, 1 Co 1:24,30, and he is also the Mystery, 1 Co 2:7, that is hard to understand Ep 3:8,19.

c. This will be developed in v. 8f.

d. To deny Christ after he has liberated them from the tyranny of 'darkness' 1:13f, by going back to error, would be nothing but a new slavery cf. Ga 4:8f; 5:1.

e. The word *pleroma* here cf. 1:19+, is defined as the 'divinity' that is actually 'filling' Christ now in his body; in other words, the risen Christ, through his incarnation and resurrection, unites the divine and the created. The former is what he is by his pre-existence and his present glory; the latter is, as human, what he has assumed directly, and as cosmic, what he assumed indirectly through being human. In this way he himself is the *pleroma* of all possible categories of being.

f. A Christian shares this *pleroma* of Christ by being part of it, i.e. part of Christ's body cf. (text and notes) 1:19; Ep 1:23; 3:19; 4:12-13 and as a consequence of this he is raised to be higher than even the highest grade of angel. The following verses develop these two ideas: disciples of Christ share his triumph, vv. 11-13, over even the highest grade of angel, vv. 14-15.

g. Surgical circumcision removes only a piece of skin.

h. The 'circumcision' instituted by Christ, i.e. baptism.

i. God the Father.

j. 'you'; var. 'us'.

k. 'us'; var. 'you'.

l. The Law was able to do nothing about a sinner except condemn him to death, Rm 7:7+; this death sentence is what God had carried out on his own Son in order to suppress it for the rest of the world and it was for this very reason that God's Son was 'made sin' 2 Co 5:21, 'subject to the Law', Ga 4:4, and 'cursed' by the Law, Ga 3:13. In the person of his Son, whom he allowed to be executed, God nailed up and destroyed our death warrant, as well as all the charges it made against us.

m. The tradition is that the Law was brought down to Moses by angels, Ga 3:19+, and by honouring them as the lawgivers, cf. v. 18, people have been distracted from the true creator. Now that God has brought the régime of that Law to an end, by means of the crucifixion, these angelic powers have lost the one thing that had given them power, and so they too must acknowledge that Christ has triumphed over them.

a. Lit. 'but the body is Christ'—a pun on the word *soma* ('body') as being both that which is more real than any shadow or reflection, and the body of the risen Christ which is what gives reality to our eschatological hope, and which is the first evidence that the new creation has already begun.

o. Or 'Do not let people take the liberty of looking down on you just because they grovel...'

p. Dietary and cultic practices, v. 16, are only superstitious worries about material things and the 'spirits' that are supposed to control them, cf. Ga 4:3f

q. Var. (Vulg.) 'they have not (in fact) had'. Paul is explaining where the teachers at Colossae have gone wrong, which is either because they attach a false importance to their 'visions' or, at a more general level, because they think their own completely unspiritual ideas are what religion is about.

r. Christ, Ep 4:15.

s. Lit. these things 'are not in any honour for satisfaction of the flesh'; this may mean either that they are of no real value in subduing 'the flesh', or else 'they are of no value and only help to satisfy the flesh'.

3 a. Var. 'our'.

b. Through union with Christ in baptism, 2:12, his followers already live the identical life he lives in heaven, cf. Ep 2:6+, but this spiritual life is not manifest and glorious as it will be at the *parousia*.

III. EXHORTATION

General rules of Christian behaviour

That is why you must kill everything in you that belongs only to earthly life:^c 5
 fornication, impurity, guilty passion, evil desires and especially greed, which is 6
 the same thing as worshipping a false god; •all this is the sort of behaviour that 6
 makes God angry.^d •And it is the way in which you used to live when you were 7
 surrounded by people doing the same thing, •but now you, of all people, must 8
 give all these things up: getting angry, being bad-tempered, spitefulness, abusive 9
 language and dirty talk; •and never tell each other lies. You have stripped off 9
 your old behaviour with your old self, •and you have put on a new self which will 10
 progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its 11
 creator;^e •and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek 11
 and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised, or between barbarian 12
 and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he 13
 is in everything.^f

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed 12
 in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. •Bear 13
 with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has 14
 forgiven you; now you must do the same. •Over all these clothes, to keep them 14
 together and complete them, put on love. •And may the peace of Christ reign 15
 in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one 16
 body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ,^g in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach 16
 each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts 17
 sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God;^h •and never say or do anything 17
 except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through 18
 him.

The morals of the home and householdⁱ

Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. •Husbands, 18
 love your wives and treat them with gentleness. •Children, be obedient to your 19
 parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. •Parents, never drive 20
 your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

Slaves, be obedient to the men who are called your masters in this world; 22
 not only when you are under their eye, as if you had only to please men, but 23
 wholeheartedly, out of respect for the Master.^j •Whatever your work is, put 23
 your heart into it as if it were for the Lord and not for men, •knowing that the 24
 Lord will repay you by making you his heirs.^k It is Christ the Lord that you are 25
 serving; •anyone who does wrong will be repaid in kind and he does not favour 25
 one person more than another. 4 Masters, make sure that your slaves are given 1
 what is just and fair, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

The apostolic spirit

Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray. 2
 Pray for us especially, asking God to show us opportunities for announcing the 3
 message and proclaiming the mystery of Christ,^a for the sake of which I am in 4
 chains; •pray that I may proclaim it as clearly as I ought.

Be tactful with those who are not Christians and be sure you make the best 5
 use of your time with them. •Talk to them agreeably and with a flavour of wit,^b 6
 and try to fit your answers to the needs of each one.

Personal news

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a brother I love very much, 7

- 8 and a loyal helper and companion in the service of the Lord. •I am sending him to you precisely for this purpose: to give you news about us^e and to reassure you.
- 9 With him I am sending Onesimus, that dear and faithful brother who is a fellow citizen of yours. They will tell you everything that is happening here. Phm 10f

Greetings^d and final wishes

- 10 Aristarchus, who is here in prison with me, sends his greetings, and so does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas—you were sent some instructions about him; Phm 23f
Ac 19:29
Ac 12:12+
2 Tm 4:11
- 11 if he comes to you, give him a warm welcome—and Jesus Justus adds his greetings. Of all those who have come over from the Circumcision, these are the only ones actually working with me for the kingdom of God. They have been a great comfort to me. •Epaphras, your fellow citizen, sends his greetings; this servant of Christ Jesus never stops battling for you, praying that you will never lapse but Rm 15:30
- 12 always hold perfectly and securely to the will of God. •I can testify for him that he works hard for you, as well as for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. •Greetings from my dear friend Luke, the doctor, and also from Demas. 2 Tm 4:10-11
- 13 Please give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church which meets in her house. •After this letter has been read among you, send it on to be read in the church of the Laodiceans; and get the letter^e from Rm 16:5
1 Th 5:27
- 14 Laodicea for you to read yourselves. •Give Archippus this message, 'Remember the service that the Lord wants you to do, and try to carry it out'. Phm 2
- 15 Here is a greeting in my own handwriting—PAUL. Remember the chains I wear. Grace be with you.^f 1 Co 16:21
Ga 6:11
Ep 3:1+
2 Th 3:17
Phm 19
Phm 9

c. At the mystical level of union with Christ in heaven, participation in his death and resurrection through baptism is instantaneous and total, 2:12f, 20; 3:1-4; Rm 6:4+, but at the practical level of life on earth, this union has to be grown into gradually. Already 'dead' in theory, the Christian must experience death and rebirth daily, constantly, by 'killing' the old and sinful self.

d. Add. (Vulg.) 'with those who resist him', cf. Ep 5:6.

e. The human race, that was to have been the 'image of God', Gn 1:26+, lost its way trying to locate the 'knowledge of good and evil' outside and apart from the will of God, Gn 2:17+, and became the slave of sin and sinful urges, Rm 5:12+. This is the 'old self (man)' that must die, Rm 6:6; Ep 4:22; the 'new self' is reborn in Christ, Ep 2:15+, who is the true image of God, Rm 8:29+. In this way the human race can both recover its original purity and reach true moral certitude, 1:9; Heb 5:14.

f. The new creation will not be divided into races and religions and cultures and social classes in the way the present creation has been since the Fall; the whole world will be reunited in Christ.

g. Var. 'of the Lord', or 'of God': possibly the text originally read 'the Word', cf. Ph 1:14; 2:30.

h. These 'inspired songs' could be charismatic improvisations suggested by the Spirit during liturgical assembly; cf. 1 Co 12:7f; 14:26.

i. Paul christens these simple precepts of ordinary morality by introducing his phrase 'in the Lord' which must be taken here as meaning 'according to the Christian way of life'. These Christian applications are further developed in Ep 5:22f.

j. 'your masters... the Master': Paul uses the

same word each time, i.e. Christ is the master equally of both slave and slave-owner.

k. That a master should name a slave as his heir, cf. Mt 21:35-8; Lk 15:19; Ga 4:1-2, is one of the most impressive proofs of how different the new creation 'in Christ' is, cf. Rm 8:15-17; Ga 4:3-7; Phm 16.

4 a Var. 'of God', cf. 2:2.

b. Lit. 'seasoned with salt', a classical Greek cliché. Cf. Mk 9:50.

c. Var. (Vulg.) 'to get your news'.

d. On Aristarchus, cf. Ac 19:29. On Mark, cf. Ac 12:12+. 'Jesus Justus' is not mentioned anywhere else; his surname was quite common among Jews and Jewish converts, cf. Ac 1:23; 18:27. Epaphras, born at Colossae (and therefore not the same person as Epaphroditus who came from Philippi, Ph 2:25; 4:18) had been sent by Paul to evangelise Colossae, his own native town, Col 1:7. Luke is the evangelist and author of Ac: he had joined Paul towards the end of his third journey, Ac 20:5f, had been with him till they reached Rome, Ac 27:1f, and now, with Paul under arrest, he is still by his side, cf. Phm 24, as he will be again after Paul has been arrested a second time, 2 Tm 4:11. On Demas, cf. Phm 24; 2 Tm 4:10. Who the woman called Nympha was (or man, if the correct spelling is Nymphas) is unknown. Archippus, v. 17, is probably the son of Philemon, Phm 2; what the service was the Lord wanted him to do is not known.

e. Paul expected his letters to be read in public to the assembled brothers, 1 Th 5:27, and then passed on to neighbouring churches, cf. 2 Co 1:1. The letter that was to be brought back from Laodicea to Colossae was probably the one that Paul wrote to Ephesus.

f. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen', cf. Ph 4:23.

1 THESSALONIANS

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONIKA

Rm 1:1+
2 Th 1:1-2 **Address**

Ac 15:22+
16:1+ **1** From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in 1
God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace.^a

2 Th 1:3 **Thanksgiving and congratulations**

Ph 1:3 We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, •and 2
5:8 constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in 3
1 Co 13:13+
Rv 2:2 action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.
2 Th 2:13 We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, 4
Ac 20:18 because when we brought the Good News^b to you, it came to you not only as 5
1 Co 2:4 words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction. And you
2 Co 12:12 observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your
Ac 1:8+ instruction, •and you were led to become imitators of us, and of the Lord; and 6
Ac 17:1-9 it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the gospel, in spite of the 7
2 Th 3:7+ great opposition all round you. •This has made you the great example to all 8
3:3 believers in Macedonia and Achaia •since it was from you that the word of the 9
Rm 14:17 Lord started to spread—and not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for
Ga 5:22 the news of your faith in God has spread everywhere. We do not need to tell other
2 Th 1:4 people about it: •other people tell us how we started the work among you, how 9
Rm 1:8 you broke with idolatry when you were converted to God and became servants
Ac 3:19+ of the real, living God; •and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom 10
Ga 4:8 of the real, living God; •and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom 10
2:19-20: he raised from the dead, to come from heaven to save us from the retribution^c
4:16-17: which is coming.
5:9
Mt 3:7+
Rm 2:5f:
5:9

Paul's example in Thessalonika

2 You know yourselves, my brothers, that our visit to you has not proved 1
ineffectual.

Ac 16:19-40 We had, as you know, been given rough treatment and been grossly insulted 2
Ph 1:30 at Philippi, and it was our God who gave us the courage to proclaim his Good
Ac 13:46+
2 Co 3:12 News to you in the face of great opposition. •We have not taken to preaching 3
Ep 3:7 because we are deluded, or immoral, or trying to deceive anyone; •it was God 4
1 Tm 1:11 who decided that we were fit to be entrusted with the Good News, and when we
Jr 11:20 are speaking, we are not trying to please men but God, *who can read our inmost*
2 Co 4:2; 5:9 *thoughts*. •You know very well, and we can swear it before God, that never at 5
Ga 1:10 any time have our speeches been simply flattery, or a cover for trying to get money;
Rm 1:9 nor have we ever looked for any special honour from men, either from you or 6
Jn 5:41,44 anybody else, •when we could have imposed ourselves on you with full weight, 7
as apostles of Christ.^a

1 Co 3:2 Instead, we were unassuming. ^b Like a mother feeding and looking after her own
Ga 4:19 children, •we felt so devoted and protective towards you, and had come to love 8
Rm 9:3
Ga 2:20+