

# Colossians 4: 15-18

Paul's Parting Greetings to his friends

# Where are we at in the Ministry of Paul as he is writing to the Colossians?

- Currently it's about 61 AD
- Paul is in his 1<sup>st</sup> imprisonment in Rome, under house arrest. He is treated well and given some liberties.
- Several partners are there with him: Luke, Epaphras, Onesimus, Timothy, Aristarchus, and Demas
- Paul was shipwrecked in going to Rome with his Centurion escort to get a trial before Caesar: also along was Luke and Aristarchus in 59 AD
- Fellow prisoners: Aristarchus and Epaphras, could have shared co-imprisonment duties in successive terms to minister to Paul
- How could someone be 'voluntarily' imprisoned? . . .

# Some Political Considerations

- Before his imprisonment in Rome & writing to the Colossians: Paul argued his case in front of Felix, governor of Judea (52—57 AD)
- He did this in Caesarea by the Sea. Then he appealed to Nero, Caesar in Rome because he was left languishing in Caesarea for 2 years
- The Jews wanted him kept locked up there
- Felix didn't have a good, firm hold on Judea and the Jews were starting to act up. He was also corrupt, and was open to bribery
- Jump forward to about 3 years after Letter to Colossians: In 64 AD, Rome burned. NERO (who probably was the source of the fire) used the occasion to blame Christians. He tortured and executed hundreds of Christians.
- Paul was not there in 64 AD, he had been released, but his ministry as a prisoner 59-61 approx. would have contributed to the large Christian population there, in my estimation
- Is it clear why when Paul was re-arrested and held in Rome 64-68 AD that he did not escape this 2<sup>nd</sup> imprisonment?

# Colossians 4:15

**15:** *'Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and also Nympha, and the church that is in her house'....*

1. By way of review:



# Colossians 4:15

15: *'Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and also Nympha, and the church that is in her house'....*

- Laodicea: currently we are in 61 AD
- We Know: that in 30+ years , apprx. 90—100 AD this church has gone lukewarm spiritually, resting on her economic prowess:

REV 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 So **because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold**, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and **you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked**, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

- Could the angel(messenger) at Laodicea be Epaphras?
- What happened to them?
- Here is my best guess:

# Colossians 4:15

**15: ‘Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and also Nympha, and the church that is in her house’....**

My THEORY is exactly what is found on the August 30<sup>th</sup> entry of M.J. Stanford’s Hungry Heart anthology:

## **8-29. Rise Up, My Love**

**“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2).**

It is sad to have to say that the present-day Church is so earthy that it is of little earthly good. “Sir, we wish to see Jesus”! (John 12:21).

“The great failure of the Church was in giving up Paul. ‘All. . . in Asia’ did not give up evangelical truth but they gave up Paul; anything popular you may have, but not Paul. Why? Because Paul is heavenly.” -J.B.S.

“It is essential that a believer have a clear understanding of his position before the Father—his place in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. This alone will give true peace of mind, joy and comfort of heart, strength for conflict and power for service. We will never be able to properly understand or fill our place for God on earth if we do not realize our God-given standing before Him in heaven.

- My theory: the Laodiceans had the heavenly ministry of Paul, re: the co-baptism of the H.S. into Christ’s death, burial & resurrection, their placement into the Body of Christ, the MYSTERY that Paul explained to them in depth. BUT: they lost their attachment to their HEAD, Christ Jesus. Over the next decades, they did not seek the things above [COL 3:1]

# Colossians 4:15

**15: 'Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and also Nympha, and the church that is in her house'....**

- Nympha: is she a man or woman? It is unclear in the greek
- Nymphas= means 'Bridegroom', or "spouse"
- The gender depends on the place where the accent is placed by the various greek texts on **Νύμφα**
- Could be according to some: a sub-set of Colossae believers living in Laodicea and meeting in the house of Nymphas.
- Some texts have: "meeting in *their* house"

"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." The house of Nymphas, therefore, must have possessed a large room or saloon sufficiently commodious to allow the meeting of a numerous company. Nymphas would be a person both of Christian character and of generous feeling, and of some amount of wealth. Nothing more is known regarding **him**, as this is the only passage in which **he** is named.

- *John Rutherford*

# Colossians 4:16

*16: When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea*

## DISCUSSION TIME:

Question: is the epistle the Colossians were to get cc.'d on a letter to the Laodiceans, or one coming from the Laodiceans?

- If it's a letter addressed to the Laodiceans....it's lost now. There is evidence that there are 3 Corinthian letters. I Cor. 5:9 could suggest that there is a letter before I Corinthians.
- Does the interpretation that it is the Ephesians Letter make the most sense?.....



# Colossians 4:17

17: *'Say to Archippus, "Take heed [SEE to it; blepō] to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."*

Who was Archippus?:

- hippos (ἵππος; "horse")
- Chief of the Horses! VERN PETERMAN
- Our clue comes from the Epistle to Philemon:

*"and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house"....*

PHILEMON 2

- What do we know of the ministry Archippus was given?
  - From the stress which is laid upon it, the Diakonia (ministry) here Would seem to refer, as in the case of Timothy . . . , to some higher function than the diaconate (deacon function) properly so called." "Fulfil" is plēroō, "to discharge fully. -
- LIGHTFOOT
- Various sample commentary on Archippus: he was backsliding; a backslider / or he sidetracked with lesser things (NEGATIVE)
  - Merryman: Archippus was a young man prone to get discouraged in the ministry (less NEGATIVE)
  - Others say: like to Timothy, this is just gentle encouragement to Archippus with a warning: *'But you, (Timothy) be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.'* because Paul just finished warning Timothy that a time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, instead wanting their 'ears tickled' (POSITIVE encouragement)

# Colossians 4:18

18: *'I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.'*

## Pamphylia:

- Paul was there on 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey
- Ophthalmia was prevalent in this region (severe conjunctivitis)
- "... but you know ***that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time;*** and that which was a trial to you in ***my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe***, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, ***you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.***" GAL 4:13-15



# Colossians 4:18

**18:** *'I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.'*

Question: Why does Paul say he is writing this in his own hand?

1. The ophthalmia! Very possibly
2. To Say: THIS LETTER IS TRULY FROM ME!

The subtext here being: **SUBTEXT: II THES. 2:1-3**

*Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed** either by a spirit or a message **or a letter as if from us**, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. . .*

3. To Personalize the letter; break-into the dictation and say, "Hello"

OTHER EXAMPLES:

2Th 3:17: I, Paul, **write this greeting with my own hand**, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.

Phm 1:19: I, Paul, **am writing this with my own hand**, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well)

1Cor. 16:21: **The greeting is in my own hand—Paul.**

Gal 6:11 : **See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.** 6:12- *"Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ."* QUOTATION AND EMPHASIS: ADDED BY ANDREW MOLLOY

# Colossians 4:18

18: *'I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.'*

Question: Why does Paul remind the Colossians of his imprisonment, isn't that obvious?

1. ANSWER: Yes, of course; as they allowed Epaphras was released from his pastoral duties from Colossae, Laodicea and Heiropolis to go minister to Paul and get advice from him.

***'Remember my Bonds'*** (KJV) – has the connotation of being beyond 'remember me in your prayers' but perhaps: *'KEEP IN THE FOREFRONT OF YOUR MIND OF WHY I AM IN BONDS- FOR YOUR SAKES- TRYING TO KEEP YOU FROM THE DARK PERILS OF FALSE DOCTRINE, BUT THAT FIGHT HAS LANDED ME HERE IN CHAINS, REMEMBER THAT'*

This request has gravity to it, a sadness....

# Colossians 4:18

18: 'I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.'

Grace be with you' Grace to you:

1. The signature phrase of Paul; gave this and all his letters this mark of authenticity
2. **Χάρις**: *cháris*
3. Used 155 times in the N.T.: Paul eats up 130 of those
4. As the Greeks understood *cháris*, when God wanted to express more of His Character to the world, he chose *cháris* to describe it. C. MCCALLEY
5. Paul was **the** minister of it; he revealed this new operating system/ dispensation to the world

DEFINED:

A. *cháris* is something (e.g. a favor) conferred freely, with no expectation of return, and finds in its source in the bounty and the free-heartedness of the giver. [ARISTOTLE]

B. The undeserved, unmerited favor towards man that God is free to bestow based on the Work of Christ