

Introduction to Colossians

Authorship

Many scholars accept Paul as the author of Colossians. Those who reject Pauline authorship generally do so on literary grounds (different style, different vocabulary than the uncontested letters), but, as with Ephesians, an assumption that Paul used an amanuensis resolves these issues. A more pressing issue is the apparent presence of Gnosticism among the Colossians, which the author of the letter contests. But this is a proto-Gnosticism, not the fully flowered form that would emerge in the second century. Accordingly, there is no compelling reason to reject Pauline authorship of the epistle.

Manuscript History

The earliest manuscripts date to the third century. Only one manuscript dates before the time of Constantine, which is:

P46, or P. Chester Beatty II+University of Michigan inventory 6238 is housed in two collections in Dublin, Ireland and Ann Arbor, Michigan. The papyrus contains portions of many New Testament books. The portions of Colossians that it contains are Colossians 1:1-2; 1:5-13; 1:16-24; 1:27-2:19; 2:23-3:11; 3:13-24; 4:3-12; 4:16-18, and thus is largely complete. This manuscript has been dated paleographically to the early third century AD.

Many other manuscripts have survived, but all date after the time of Constantine.

Canon

The letter is alluded to by Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas and Justin Martyr, and quoted by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, all of whom attribute the letter to Paul. It is listed both in the Muratorian Canon and Marcion's canon list, and is found in p⁴⁶, the earliest manuscript of any of Paul's letters (dated to about AD 200).

Setting

Like Ephesians and Philemon, Colossians was written while Paul was in prison in Rome, about AD 59-61. The purpose of the letter was to combat a heresy that had arisen in the church at Colossae. We only know the outlines of this heresy by virtue of Paul's response to it. It seems to have been some sort of Jewish asceticism wedded to Greek philosophy, denying both the humanity and full divinity of Jesus Christ. The theme of the letter is the sufficiency of Christ.

Outline

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. The Sufficiency of Christ Explained (1:3-2:7)
- III. The Colossian Rejection of the Sufficiency of Christ (2:8-3:4)
- IV. Experiencing the Sufficiency of Christ (3:5-4:6)
- V. Final Greetings (4:7-18)

Further Readings

Non-LDS Sources

Barth, Markus and Helmut Blanke. *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

LDS Sources

Anderson, Richard Lloyd. *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983.

Brandt, Edward J. and J. Lewis Taylor. "New Testament Backgrounds: Galatians through Colossians." *Ensign* 6 (Mar. 1976): 37-39.

Sperry, Sidney B. *Paul's Life and Letters*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians

Chapter 1

Salutation

¹ PAUL,¹ an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus² our brother,² To the saints and faithful brethren³ in Christ which are at Colosse:⁴ Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵

Paul Thanks God for the Colossians

³ We give thanks to God and⁶ the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always⁷ for you,⁴ Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints,⁵ For the hope which is laid up⁸ for you in heaven,⁹ whereof¹⁰ ye heard before in the word of the truth of¹¹ the gospel;⁶ Which¹² is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world;¹³ and bringeth forth fruit,¹⁴ as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:⁷ As ye also learned¹⁵ of Epaphras¹⁶ our dear

¹ IE from Paul.

² IE Timothy.

³ Gender neutral: "brothers and sisters."

⁴ One of three cities at the foot of Mount Cadmus, 120 miles east of Ephesus in Phrygia of Asia Minor, and home to Philemon.

⁵ Many early mss. omit "and the Lord Jesus Christ."

⁶ The conjunction is intensive: *even*. Many early mss. omit the conjunction, in which case the text would read "God the Father."

⁷ The adverb "always" probably modifies the verb "give thanks" rather than the participle "praying."

⁸ ἀποκειμένην *apokeimenēn* reserved, stored.

⁹ οὐρανοῖς *ouranois* lit. heavens (IE plural, as is usually the case in Jewish-Hellenistic literature).

¹⁰ Referring back to "hope."

¹¹ This is an exegetical genitive; the gospel *is* the word of truth.

¹² The antecedent is the gospel.

¹³ Meaning every quarter of the Roman Empire.

¹⁴ καρποφορούμενον *karpophoroumenon*, from roots meaning fruit (*karp-*) and to bear (*pher-*). The KJV does not reflect the next two words in the GR text, which may be translated "and grows."

¹⁵ IE the gospel. Direct objects are often omitted after GR verbs when the sense is otherwise clear.

fellow servant,¹⁷ who is for you¹⁸ a faithful minister of Christ; ⁸ Who also declared unto¹⁹ us your love in the Spirit.

The Person and Work of Christ

⁹ For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*,²⁰ do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his²¹ will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ That ye might walk²² worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,²³ being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering²⁴ with joyfulness; ¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet²⁵ to be partakers of the inheritance²⁶ of the saints in light: ¹³ Who²⁷ hath delivered us from the power of darkness,²⁸ and hath translated²⁹ *us* into the kingdom of his dear³⁰ Son: ¹⁴ In whom³¹ we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

¹⁵ Who³² is the image of the invisible³³ God,
the firstborn³⁴ of every creature.³⁵

¹⁶ For by him were all things created,
that are in heaven, and that are in earth,

¹⁶ Epaphras proclaimed the gospel to the Colossians. This name is probably a short form of Epaphroditus, although not necessarily to be equated with the Epaphroditus of Philippians.

¹⁷ συνδούλου *sundoulou* fellow slave.

¹⁸ Some mss. read "us," but the KJV probably reflects the original reading.

¹⁹ OR told us of, showed.

²⁰ The GR does not explicitly supply an object (note that "it" is in italics); some translations supply "you" rather than "it."

²¹ IE God's.

²² Metaphoric for how one lives one's life.

²³ IE please him in all respects.

²⁴ OR steadfastness.

²⁵ OR qualified.

²⁶ OR apportioned lot.

²⁷ IE the Father.

²⁸ IE rescued us from Satan's power [where "darkness" is a symbol of Satan].

²⁹ Not in a technical sense; rather, "carried us across, transferred us."

³⁰ OR beloved.

³¹ IE the Son.

³² IE the Son.

³³ ἀοράτος *aoratos* unseen (in a pragmatic sense; not that he is inherently invisible, but that we do not [normally] see him).

³⁴ πρωτότοκος *prōtotokos* first born, originally referring to the chronological order of birth. The word can also refer to primacy of rank (from the primacy accorded the first born son).

³⁵ OR over all creation.

visible and invisible,
 whether *they be* thrones, or dominions,
 or principalities, or powers.³⁶
 all things were created by him, and for him:
¹⁷ And he is before all things,
 and by him all things consist.³⁷
¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church:
 who³⁸ is the beginning,
 the firstborn³⁹ from the dead;
 that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.
¹⁹ For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness⁴⁰ dwell;
²⁰ And, having made peace through the blood of his cross,⁴¹
 by him to reconcile all things unto himself;
 by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

²¹ And you, that were sometime⁴² alienated⁴³ and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works,⁴⁴ yet now hath he reconciled ²² In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable⁴⁵ and unreprouvable⁴⁶ in his sight: ²³ If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled,⁴⁷ and *be* not moved away⁴⁸ from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;⁴⁹

Paul's Ministry in the Church

²⁴ Who⁵⁰ now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind⁵¹ of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: ²⁵

³⁶ These words refer to classes of angelic or demonic spiritual powers in the heavens.

³⁷ IE continue, endure, are held together.

³⁸ IE the Son.

³⁹ Here the term πρωτότοκος *prōtotokos* "firstborn" appears to refer to chronological priority.

⁴⁰ The GR term πλήρωμα *plērōma* "fulness" became a technical term in later Gnosticism, and is often simply transliterated in Gnostic literature as Pleroma.

⁴¹ Alluding to the sacrificial death of Jesus.

⁴² OR at one time.

⁴³ OR estranged; IE made strangers.

⁴⁴ IE resulting in your evil deeds.

⁴⁵ IE without blemish.

⁴⁶ OR blameless.

⁴⁷ OR firm, steadfast.

⁴⁸ OR shifting.

⁴⁹ διάκονος *diakonos* servant.

⁵⁰ The antecedent is Paul.

⁵¹ OR lacking.

Whereof⁵² I am made a minister, according to the dispensation⁵³ of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; ²⁶ *Even* the mystery⁵⁴ which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest⁵⁵ to his saints: ²⁷ To whom⁵⁶ God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: ²⁸ Whom⁵⁷ we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect⁵⁸ in Christ Jesus: ²⁹ Whereunto⁵⁹ I also labour, striving according to his working,⁶⁰ which worketh in me mightily.

Chapter 2

¹ FOR I would that ye knew⁶¹ what great conflict I have⁶² for you, and *for* them at Laodicea,⁶³ and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;⁶⁴ ² That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together⁶⁵ in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and⁶⁶ of the Father, and of Christ;⁶⁷ ³ In whom⁶⁸ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ And this I say, lest any man should beguile⁶⁹ you with enticing words.⁷⁰ ⁵ For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order,⁷¹ and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. ⁶ As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the

⁵² IE the church.

⁵³ οἰκονομίαν *oikonomian* divine office. This GR word is the source for ENG "economy."

⁵⁴ μυστήριον *mustērion* divine secret, which is communicated to man only through revelation. This GR word is the source for ENG "mystery."

⁵⁵ OR revealed.

⁵⁶ IE the saints.

⁵⁷ IE Christ.

⁵⁸ IE spiritually mature.

⁵⁹ OR toward this goal.

⁶⁰ OR power.

⁶¹ OR for I want you to know.

⁶² IE how hard I am working. The GR word underlying KJV "conflict" is ἀγῶνα *agōna*, which refers to a contest in the arena, and thus to any great struggle. This GR word is the source of ENG "agony."

⁶³ Like Colossae, also located in Phrygia, about 11 miles away.

⁶⁴ Paul was personally unknown to those at Colossae and Laodicia.

⁶⁵ IE united.

⁶⁶ OR even (the conjunction is intensive).

⁶⁷ It appears that the original reading was "of God, Christ," and a host of variants (including the one reflected in the KJV) arose in the mss. attempting to explain what those words meant.

⁶⁸ IE Christ.

⁶⁹ OR deceive.

⁷⁰ IE specious arguments.

⁷¹ IE discipline, morale.

Lord, so walk ye⁷² in him: ⁷ Rooted⁷³ and built up in him, and stablished⁷⁴ in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding⁷⁵ therein with thanksgiving.

Fulness of Life in Christ

⁸ Beware lest any man spoil⁷⁶ you through philosophy⁷⁷ and vain⁷⁸ deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments⁷⁹ of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹ For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead⁸⁰ bodily. ¹⁰ And ye are complete in him, ⁸¹ which is the head of all principality and power.⁸² ¹¹ In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, ⁸³ in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹² Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened⁸⁴ together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; ¹⁴ Blotting out⁸⁵ the handwriting of ordinances⁸⁶ that was against us, which was contrary to⁸⁷ us, and took it out of the way, ⁸⁸ nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵ *And* having spoiled⁸⁹ principalities and powers, ⁹⁰ he made a shew of them openly, ⁹¹ triumphing over them in it.⁹²

¹⁶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:⁹³ ¹⁷ Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body⁹⁴ *is* of Christ. ¹⁸ Let no man beguile⁹⁵ you of your reward in a voluntary

⁷² IE live (walk is metaphorical for the way one lives one's life).

⁷³ IE having been rooted.

⁷⁴ The metaphors in this v. are rooted (as a plant), built up (as a building), and established (as a law).

⁷⁵ OR overflowing.

⁷⁶ The imagery is that of being taken captive.

⁷⁷ Not any philosophy, but empty, deceitful philosophy (by hendiadys).

⁷⁸ OR empty.

⁷⁹ IE elemental spirits.

⁸⁰ OR deity.

⁸¹ IE Christ.

⁸² Words for spiritual powers (whether angelic or demonic).

⁸³ IE not a human circumcision. The concept of circumcision here is used symbolically.

⁸⁴ Archaic for "made alive."

⁸⁵ OR destroying.

⁸⁶ OR the certificate of indebtedness.

⁸⁷ IE against.

⁸⁸ OR away.

⁸⁹ OR disarmed (the imagery is that of taking off a garment).

⁹⁰ IE demonic spiritual beings.

⁹¹ IE he publicly disgraced them.

⁹² IE the cross.

⁹³ A list of Jewish ritual observances. The Colossian error involved excessive ritualism.

⁹⁴ IE reality.

⁹⁵ OR disqualify.

humility⁹⁶ and worshipping of angels,⁹⁷ intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,⁹⁸ ¹⁹ And not holding the Head,⁹⁹ from which all the body by joints and bands¹⁰⁰ having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth¹⁰¹ with the increase of¹⁰² God.

The New Life in Christ

²⁰ Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments¹⁰³ of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,¹⁰⁴ ²¹ (Touch not; taste not; handle not;¹⁰⁵ ²² Which all are to perish with the using;) ¹⁰⁶ after the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ Which things have indeed a shew¹⁰⁷ of wisdom in will¹⁰⁸ worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour¹⁰⁹ to the satisfying of the flesh.

Chapter 3

¹ IF ye then be risen¹¹⁰ with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on¹¹¹ things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For ye are dead,¹¹² and your life is hid with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, *who is our*¹¹³ life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

⁵ Mortify therefore your members¹¹⁴ which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection,¹¹⁵ evil concupiscence,¹¹⁶ and covetousness, which is

⁹⁶ OR finding pleasure in self-abasement. As a characteristic of the Colossian error, this has to be understood in a negative sense, as opposed to the positive connotations of "humility" in ENG.

⁹⁷ Evidently worshipping angels was one of the characteristics of the Colossian error.

⁹⁸ IE a mind dominated by the senses, and thus sensual.

⁹⁹ IE Christ.

¹⁰⁰ IE ligaments and sinews.

¹⁰¹ OR grows.

¹⁰² IE growth effected by.

¹⁰³ IE elemental spirits.

¹⁰⁴ OR regulations (such as those described in v. 21).

¹⁰⁵ As the JST correctly makes clear, these prohibitions are examples of human regulations (given in short form).

¹⁰⁶ IE things which are all destined for decay.

¹⁰⁷ OR an appearance.

¹⁰⁸ OR self-chosen.

¹⁰⁹ OR of any value.

¹¹⁰ IE as a new person. The allusion is not to the resurrection.

¹¹¹ OR think about, give your minds to.

¹¹² OR you have died.

¹¹³ Some mss. read "your."

¹¹⁴ IE put to death whatever in you is worldly.

¹¹⁵ OR shameful lust.

idolatry: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.¹¹⁷ ⁷ In the which¹¹⁸ ye also walked¹¹⁹ some time, when ye lived in¹²⁰ them.
⁸ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication¹²¹ out of your mouth. ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off¹²² the old man with his deeds,¹²³ ¹⁰ And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian,¹²⁴ Scythian,¹²⁵ bond¹²⁶ *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

¹² Put on¹²⁷ therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels¹²⁸ of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ Forbearing¹²⁹ one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any:¹³⁰ even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.¹³¹ ¹⁴ And above all these things *put on* charity,¹³² which is the bond of perfectness. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing¹³³ one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and¹³⁴ the Father by¹³⁵ him.

Social Duties of the New Life

¹¹⁶ OR desire.

¹¹⁷ Some mss. omit "on the children of disobedience." This is a Semitic idiom for those characterized by disobedience.

¹¹⁸ IE disobedience.

¹¹⁹ OR lived.

¹²⁰ OR among.

¹²¹ OR abusive language.

¹²² ἀπεκδυσάμενοι *apekdusamenoī* strip off (as a garment).

¹²³ IE behavior.

¹²⁴ Βάρβαρος *barbaros* non-Greek, foreigner. The GR word is onomatopoeic for the perceived sounds foreigners who did not speak GR seemed to make in their strange tongues (*bar bar bar bar*).

¹²⁵ As typifying a foreigner.

¹²⁶ OR slave.

¹²⁷ OR clothe yourselves.

¹²⁸ Metaphoric for the seat of affection, like heart.

¹²⁹ OR putting up with.

¹³⁰ IE anyone else.

¹³¹ IE forgive others.

¹³² ἀγάπην *agapēn* love.

¹³³ The participles probably stand for imperatives: teach and admonish.

¹³⁴ OR even (the conjunction is intensive).

¹³⁵ OR through.

¹⁸ Wives, submit¹³⁶ yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit¹³⁷ in the Lord.
¹⁹ Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against¹³⁸ them.
²⁰ Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.
²¹ Fathers,¹³⁹ provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.¹⁴⁰
²² Servants,¹⁴¹ obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice,¹⁴² as menpleasers,¹⁴³ but in singleness of heart, fearing God: ²³ And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily,¹⁴⁴ as to the Lord, and not unto men; ²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of¹⁴⁵ the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.¹⁴⁶

Chapter 4

¹ MASTERS, give unto *your* servants¹⁴⁷ that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Exhortations

² Continue in prayer, and watch¹⁴⁸ in the same¹⁴⁹ with thanksgiving; ³ Withal¹⁵⁰ praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance,¹⁵¹ to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:¹⁵² ⁴ That I may make it manifest,¹⁵³ as I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward them that are without,¹⁵⁴ redeeming the time.¹⁵⁵

¹³⁶ OR subordinate.

¹³⁷ OR appropriate, proper.

¹³⁸ IE sharp with.

¹³⁹ Possibly gender neutral: "parents."

¹⁴⁰ OR resentful, embittered.

¹⁴¹ OR slaves. The case of the slave Onesimus was then engaging Paul's attention; see Philemon.

¹⁴² ὀφθαλμοδουλία *ophthalmoudoulia* service under the eye [of the master]; IE working only when they are watching.

¹⁴³ IE ones currying favor.

¹⁴⁴ Lit. from the soul; IE with enthusiasm.

¹⁴⁵ The genitive is epexegetic: the inheritance *is* the reward.

¹⁴⁶ IE partiality.

¹⁴⁷ OR slaves.

¹⁴⁸ OR stay alert.

¹⁴⁹ IE prayer.

¹⁵⁰ IE at the same time.

¹⁵¹ OR for the word (meaning his missionary message).

¹⁵² IE prison.

¹⁵³ IE apparent, known.

¹⁵⁴ IE non-Christians.

¹⁵⁵ IE making the most of your opportunities.

⁶ Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt,¹⁵⁶ that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Final Greetings

⁷ All my state¹⁵⁷ shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: ⁸ Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate,¹⁵⁸ and comfort your hearts; ⁹ With Onesimus,¹⁵⁹ a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you.¹⁶⁰ They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth¹⁶¹ you, and Marcus,¹⁶² sister's son¹⁶³ to Barnabas, (touching¹⁶⁴ whom ye received commandments:¹⁶⁵ if he come unto you, receive him;) ¹¹ And Jesus,¹⁶⁶ which is called Justus,¹⁶⁷ who are of the circumcision.¹⁶⁸ These only *are my* fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. ¹² Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth¹⁶⁹ you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal¹⁷⁰ for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. ¹⁵ Salute¹⁷¹ the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas,¹⁷² and the church which is in his house.¹⁷³ ¹⁶ And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.¹⁷⁴ ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

¹⁵⁶ An image of spiritual understanding.

¹⁵⁷ OR situation, circumstances.

¹⁵⁸ OR situation, circumstances.

¹⁵⁹ The slave Paul discusses in Philemon.

¹⁶⁰ Onesimus came from Colossae.

¹⁶¹ OR greets.

¹⁶² IE Mark.

¹⁶³ IE cousin.

¹⁶⁴ OR concerning.

¹⁶⁵ OR instructions.

¹⁶⁶ Not to be confused with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the GR derived form of a common Jewish name (Yeshua or Joshua).

¹⁶⁷ IE the Just.

¹⁶⁸ IE they have a Jewish background.

¹⁶⁹ OR greets.

¹⁷⁰ IE worked hard.

¹⁷¹ OR greet.

¹⁷² It is unclear in GR whether this is a male or female name. Accordingly, the mss. vary as to whether the following pronoun should be "his" or "her."

¹⁷³ Generally early congregations met in people's homes, called house churches.

¹⁷⁴ This is either the letter we know as Ephesians or a letter otherwise unknown to us.

¹⁸ The salutation¹⁷⁵ by the hand of me Paul.¹⁷⁶ Remember my bonds.¹⁷⁷ Grace be with you. Amen.¹⁷⁸

Written from Rome to the Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.

¹⁷⁵ OR greeting.

¹⁷⁶ IE Paul wrote the greeting with his own hand, whereas he had dictated the bulk of the letter to an amanuensis.

¹⁷⁷ IE imprisonment.

¹⁷⁸ The word "amen" was not original to the letter but was added by scribes.