

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,² to the set apart and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

1. The epistle to the Colossians was written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome (61 AD).
2. Timothy, a frequent traveling companion and co-worker of Paul, is mentioned in the initial greeting (See also Rom.16:21, 1 Cor. 4:17, Philip. 1:1).
3. In addition to Timothy, Paul is also in the company of Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark (the cousin of Barnabas), Justus, Epaphras, Luke and Demas (Col. 4:7-14)
4. Paul affirms that he is “an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”
5. This is a familiar phrase found in other Pauline epistles (2 Cor. 1:1, Eph. 1:1, 2 Tim.1:1 cp.1 Tim.1:1).
6. Although familiar or common, certain elements of this phrase must be examined.
 - a. The basic definition of the noun “apostle” (apōstolōj – APOSTOLOS) is a messenger. The noun was derived from the verb to send or to dispatch someone for the achievement of some objective (apostellō - APOSTELLO). “Apostle” may be used in a non-technical or technical manner.
 - i. The non-technical use is a messenger or envoy sent on a mission. Philippians 2:25 “But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your **messenger** and minister to my need;” 2 Corinthians 8:23 “As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* **messengers** of the churches, a glory to Christ.”
 - ii. The technical use refers to the twelve men who had the temporary gift/office of Apostle. These men were appointed by Christ Himself (Matt 10:2ff where the noun and verb are present).
 - iii. Paul was one of the twelve Apostles appointed by Christ, and since he refers to himself as an Apostle of Christ, the use of apōstolōj – APOSTOLOS, in our context is technical (Acts 26:16, 1 Cor. 9:1).
 - b. Observe that Paul became an Apostle “by the will of God.” This is an example of Divine agency and a simple declaration of God’s directive will (1 Cor 12:4-11 cp Acts 26:16, Gal. 1:1).
 - i. God’s directive will is one of three components of His attribute of Sovereignty (Divine Volition). It encompasses all that God directs us to think, say, do, and location of our niche (Rom. 12:1-3, James 5:9, 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; cp. Gen. 12:1).
 - ii. The other two components of Sovereignty include: **permissive will** – The thinking, saying, or doing of “things” (e.g. bitterness, complaining, adultery) that are contrary to God’s directive will

which He permits or allows for a period of time (Gen. 18:20) and **overruling will** – God’s judgment when His directive will has been rejected (1 Cor. 10:5-10).

- c. The purpose of the gift/office of Apostle was to set up and establish the church during the first century of the Church Age.
 - d. As in the case of Paul, it is God’s directive will for all believers to function under their spiritual gift or gifts (1 Tim.4:14, 1 Pet. 4:10).
 - e. Spiritual gifts are to function for the benefit of the local church. It is of mutual benefit. The one properly exercising his gift will reap eternal reward and the members of the body may be encouraged to exercise their gift on an individual basis (1 Cor. 12:7).
7. It is clear that Paul had apostolic authority in this canon as he would not “build upon another man’s foundation.” Romans 15:20”And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation;”
 8. The epistle was specifically written to believers in the city of Colossae.
 9. Paul commends the Colossians by referring to them “set apart (or dedicated) and faithful brothers.”
 10. Certainly he gave far less commendation in his greetings to other groups (2 Cor. 1:1-2, Gal.1:1-6).
 11. In fact, we will see that Paul and his companions were encouraged by the overall level of application of sound doctrine among this group. Colossians 1:6 “...which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth.”, Colossians 2:5 “For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.”
 12. “Set apart” is the adjective ἀγιος (HAGIOS) which commonly occurs throughout the N.T. It is defined as “set apart, dedicated or consecrated to the service of God.” Synonymous with being “set apart” is to be sanctified.
 13. In other words, Paul indicates that the Colossians are “set apart” to the service of God. Why is this important? Consider the following elements involved with being “set apart” or sanctified:
 - a. The agents involved in believers being “set apart”:
 - i. God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16, 2 Thess. 2:13).
 - ii. Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:10, 14)
 - iii. The Word of Truth, sound doctrine (John 17:17, Eph. 5:26)
 - b. At the point of faith in Christ (ph.1), the Colossians were positionally set apart to God. By believing in Christ all believers are set apart to God and are considered saints. This is an eternal, unalterable state (1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Col. 1:12-14 cp. Eph 1:13).
 - c. Experientially (ph. 2), believers are to be set apart to God. This is an ongoing process not a position or state.

- i. As in every aspect of our Phase 2, believers are commanded to maintain the filling of God the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18 cp. Gal. 5:22-23)
 - ii. Consistent daily intake of sound doctrine in a local church is absolutely critical (Deut. 11:18-19, Heb. 10:25 cp. Psa. 138:2).
 - iii. Obedience to Divine imperatives results in being “set apart” experientially. Service is commanded, good works are required. Colossians 3:12-14 “And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴ And beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” Also, Rom. 6:17-19, 1 Peter 1:15-16.
 - d. All believers will enjoy being “set apart” to God completely and eternally during our phase 3. Otherwise known as ultimate sanctification, the believer is in his resurrection body without an OSN (Philip. 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2 cp. 1 Thess. 4:16-17)
- 14. Our word translated as “faithful” is the adjective *pistoj* (PISTOS) and is the quality of being faithful, trustworthy, or dependable and has a nuance of something or someone being true.
- 15. The believers in Colossae exhibited this quality.
- 16. Consider some of the fundamental elements of being “faithful”:
 - a. God Himself is faithful. Due to His attribute of immutability (and veracity, justice and righteousness), it is impossible for him to be anything less. This should give the believer great comfort as our entire Ph1, 2, and 3 depend on His faithfulness (Num 23:19-20, Lam. 3:22-23, Mal. 3:6, 2 Tim. 2:13, 1 John 1:9)
 - b. God’s Word is faithful as such it is the objective criterion against which we can evaluate all thinking, actions, etc. (Isa. 40:8, Titus 1:9)
 - c. The Lord Jesus Christ was faithful to carry out the will of God the Father...perfectly. It is important to remember that Jesus, in His humanity, was “tempted in all things as we are.” Indeed, this is how He is our sympathetic High Priest (Heb 2:17- 3:6, cp. John 5:30, Heb. 4:15)
 - d. Believers are commanded to imitate Christ. Therefore, we must increase our knowledge of sound doctrine (i.e. the will of God) and make the required applications in fellowship. This should not be viewed as a casual enterprise. Rather, it is essential for being a “faithful” believer (1 Thess. 1:6, 1 Peter 2:21 cp. Deut. 6:6-9, John 14:15, 21; 1 Tim. 6:18, 2 Peter 3:18)
 - e. Examples of faithful believers:
 - i. David is a prime example of a faithful believer. Psalm 119:30 I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Thine ordinances *before me*. ³¹ I cleave to Thy testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame! ³² I shall run the way of Thy commandments, For

Thou wilt enlarge my heart. ³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes, And I shall observe it to the end. ³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law, And keep it with all my heart. ³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, For I delight in it. ³⁶ Incline my heart to Thy testimonies, And not to *dishonest* gain. ³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Thy ways.”

ii. Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1ff, cp. Luke 11:32)

f. Examples of being unfaithful (2 Chron. 26:3-21, Rev. 3:14-19)

17. Grace and peace to you from God...” is a common greeting in Paul’s epistles or letters (Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:13, 2 Cor 1:2, Gal 1:3, Philemon 1:3).

18. The source or supplier of this grace and peace is God the Father.

a. Our word translated as “grace” is *carij* (CHARIS) and indicates favor and goodwill. It refers to the policy of God and the title of His plan.

Furthermore, the plan is comprised of everything God has done to bring fallen and sinful man into a just, perfect, and eternal relationship with Himself (Psa. 84:11; Prov 3:34; John 1:14-17; Eph. 1:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:9).

b. “Peace” is *eirēnē* (EIRENE) and is defined as a state of well being and harmony.

i. There is a phase 1 peace with God which is also known as reconciliation. This peace is secured through faith in Christ (Col. 2:13-14 cp. Rom.5:1)

ii. In addition, there is a phase 2 peace which is a result of the filling of God the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of sound doctrine (Gal 5:22, 1 Pet. 1:2)

iii. Believers who follow the standard of sound doctrine through application will have peace (Gal. 6:16, Philip.4:6-7).

iv. We are to pursue peace both among ourselves and toward those on the outside (Rom.14:19, 1 Thess. 5:13, Heb 12:14, 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:3-5 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel”

- “We give thanks”= the present active indicative verb, *eucharistew* – EUCHARISTEO indicates a continuous or progressive action.
- “always”= the adverb *pantote*- PANTOTE and should be related to the verb for thanksgiving, *eucharistew* – EUCHARISTEO.
- “since we heard”= the aorist active participle, *akouw* – AKOUO. The aorist tense indicates that this happened some time in the past. In addition, this participle denotes the cause of thanksgiving in vs. 3.
- “you have”= the present active indicative verb, *ecw* -ECHO also indicates a continuous or progressive action.
- “the hope laid up”= a combination of the articular noun, “the hope,” *o elpiz* – HO ELPIS and the articular present passive participle, “laid up,” *o apokeimai*- HO APOKEIMAI. The present tense denotes continuous or progressive action while the passive voice indicates that an outside agent is performing the action. Literally, the participle *o apokeimai*- HO APOKEIMAI is defined as “to put away for safekeeping.” Also, it is that which is “to be reserved as a reward or recompense.” Rather than “laid up” the preferred translation is “continually being reserved.”

Corrected translation:

1:3-5 *We are continually giving thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always concerning you while praying ⁴ since (or because) we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you continue to have for all the saints. ⁵ because of the hope continually being reserved for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel”

Colossians 1:3-5 “We are continually giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always concerning you while praying, ⁴ since (or because) we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you continue to have for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope continually being reserved for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel”

1. In verse 3, Paul and co. express thanksgiving for the Colossians.
2. It is a common feature in Pauline epistles for the author to give thanks for the addressees after the initial greeting (Rom 1:8, 1 Cor.1:4, 1 Thess. 1:2, Philemon 1:4).
3. As noted in the exegesis, the present tense of the verb *eucharistew* – EUCHARISTEO- “to give thanks” indicates an ongoing or progressive action.
4. During their prayers, the thanksgiving is ongoing and not just a one time event.
5. The adverb *pantote*- PANTOTE- “always” further emphasizes this fact.
6. Paul demonstrates that thanksgiving is an essential element of a believer’s prayer life.
7. Thanksgiving is a specific classification of prayer. It is included under the acronym C.T.I.P.:
 - a. Confession of sin (Matt 6:12, Luke 11:4, 1 John 1:9).
 - b. Thanksgiving (including praise, Psalm 69:30, 95:2, John 6:11, Col. 1:3).
 - c. Intercession for others (Num. 14:11-19, Philip. 1:9).
 - d. Petition for self (Psa. 4:1, 7:1-11).
8. It should be noted that the thanksgiving was directed specifically to God the Father and not to God the Son or God the Holy Spirit.
9. Thanksgiving is an imperative in the Word of God (Psa. 30:4, 97:12, 106:1, Col. 3:15-17, 1 Thess. 5:18).
10. Some specific examples of thanksgiving: The person of God (Psa. 54:6), The Word of God (Psa. 19:7-11), Salvation (Col. 1:12-13). Also, rebound, Divine good, prayer, etc.
11. Inappropriate thanksgiving is prevalent today. For example, in any given sporting event one may hear the following, “I would like to thank my Lord Jesus Christ for helping me win today...with a little bit of luck **I** knew if **I** stuck to my game plan, **I** would beat him...” (See also Luke 18:10-14).
12. In fact, for all prayer, of which thanksgiving is a part, there is a proper procedure to be followed:
 - a. The believer is to direct all his prayers to God the Father (Matt 6:6, 9; Luke 11:1-2, Eph 3:14, 5:20).
 - b. The believer is to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13, 15:16)
 - c. The believer is to pray in the power of God the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:18, Jude 1:20).
 - d. Each member of the Godhead plays a pivotal role in proper prayer.

13. Our context provides an excellent example of proper prayer content and procedure.
14. We should follow Paul's approach to living the Christian life. He was frequently in perilous, difficult circumstances but manifested a proper mental attitude towards his niche (Acts 27:35, 2 Cor 11:23-29 cp. 2 Cor 4:6-18, also Philip. 3:17, 2 Thess 3:7-9).
15. In verse 4, Paul uses the aorist active participle of ἀκούω – AKOUO, "since we heard," to indicate the reasons for their thanksgiving. (Remember, Paul had never been to Colossae but he continued to hear first hand accounts of their progress while he was in prison.)
 - a. They heard of the Colossian's faith in Christ Jesus. This refers to a point of time in the past when the Colossians exercised saving faith in Christ.
 - b. The "love" (ἀγάπη – AGAPE) which the Colossians continued to have for all the saints. Our word "saints" is the plural of ἅγιος –HAGIOS and is a synonym for those who believe in Jesus Christ.
16. In the context of the N.T., "love" (ἀγάπη – AGAPE) is produced under the filling of God the Holy Spirit and is demonstrated by making the appropriate doctrinal application in any given circumstance (Gal. 5:22, Eph. 4:2, 5:2, cp. 1 Cor. 13:1-3).
17. We may conclude that the Colossian church manifested love by the consistent filling of God the Holy Spirit and through the consistent doctrinal application towards saints or believers.
18. Verse 4 indicates that they followed the optimal course from the beginning: first, they exercised saving faith in Christ and second, they began to grow and apply sound doctrine.
19. This may also be seen in the use of the present active indicative verb, ἐχώ – ECHO. The present tense indicates that the Colossians continued to have or manifest "love" (ἀγάπη – AGAPE).
20. At the very least, in our verse, "all the saints," would include believers in Colossae, Laodicea (10 mi.), and Hierapolis (13 mi.).
21. How can we exhibit love (ἀγάπη – AGAPE) for other believers?
 - a. First and foremost, maintain the filling of God the Holy Spirit through 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. Various applications: patience with one another (Eph. 4:2), forgive each other offenses – intentional or unintentional, real or imagined (Eph. 4:32), apply towards the local church (Gal. 5:13), receive back the believer who makes a reversion recovery (2 Cor. 2:4-8), show hospitality (Heb. 13:1-2).
 - c. The application of love (ἀγάπη – AGAPE) is absolutely essential to a local church.
22. After giving his reasons for thanksgiving in verse 4, Paul explains the reason for the Colossian's "faith" and "love" in verse 5.

23. Verse 5 begins with the prepositional phrase: “because of the hope continually being reserved...”
- a. “Because of” is the preposition *di a*, - DIA. In our context, it is used to indicate the cause or reason why something is done.
 - b. As noted in the exegesis, “the hope continually being reserved” is the combination of a noun and participle (*o' el pij* – HO ELPIS and *o' apokeimai*- HO APOKEIMAI). The participle serves to specially define the noun, “the hope” and to give it a distinct identity.
 - i. This hope is distinctive because it is continually being reserved in heaven.
 - ii. In addition, the Colossians had already heard about this hope when they heard the Gospel.
24. “The hope” is composed of the blessings that are guaranteed at the point of saving faith in Jesus Christ (phase 1) and the eternal reward for producing Divine good after salvation (phase 2).
25. Since “the hope” (or blessing) is reserved in heaven, the Colossians understood that their reward would not be fully realized until their eternal life niche, phase 3.
- a. Phase 1 blessings: Eternal life (John 3:16, 6:40), Resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:51-58, 1 Thess. 5:9-10, 1 John 3:2), No Old Sin Nature (2 Cor. 5:8, Philip. 3:20-21), No more death, mourning, etc. (Rev. 21:4).
 - b. Eternal reward for application of sound doctrine (i.e. good works- Matt. 10:42, 1 Cor. 3:11-15, 2 Cor. 5:10)
 - c. Special blessings: a wreath for the mature believer (1 Cor. 9:24-27, 2 Tim. 4:7-8, James 1:12).
 - d. What is true for the Colossians is true for us. We have the same incredible future.
 - e. A believer’s eternal reward is being guarded in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4).
 - f. The actual rewards will be beyond our comprehension (1 Cor. 2:9)
26. The Colossians exercised saving faith and continued to manifest love towards other believers **because of** this “hope.”
27. We share the same future and we should have the same motivation.
28. Do you want eternal reward? If so, be zealous for good works and make the most of every opportunity (Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 2:14).
29. Moses is an example of a believer who turned down the throne of Egypt because he was motivated by the prospect of eternal reward (Heb. 11:24-26).

*See the Doc of Thanksgiving

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:6 “...which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth;”

1. “which has come”: the present active participle, ὁ παρεῖμι – HO PAREIMI which is defined as “to be present.” This participle modifies ὁ εὐαγγέλιον- HO EUANGELION, “the Gospel (lit: the Good News) at the end of vs. 5. The translation should be “which is present.”
2. “it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing”: a combination of a verb and two participles.
 - a. “it is”: the present active indicative verb, εἰμι- EIMI- which is “to be.” (The subject, “it”, refers to the Gospel and is understood to be the subject of both participles.)
 - b. “constantly bearing fruit”: the present middle participle, καρποφορεῖν- KARPOPHOREO- which is “to bear fruit.” The present tense indicates that this is a continuous action. In this case, Paul uses the middle voice to emphasize the distinctive role of the subject, “the Gospel,” in producing the action, “constantly bearing fruit.” It may be translated, “**itself** constantly bearing fruit ...”
 - c. “increasing”: the present passive participle, αὐξανῶν- AUXANO which is “to increase or grow.” Again, the present tense indicates that this is a continuous action. In contrast to the active and middle voice, the passive voice signifies that the subject, “the Gospel,” is NOT producing the action but, rather, receiving it. Instead of “increasing” the translation should be “being increased.”
 - d. In our context, the combination of the present active indicative verb, εἰμι- EIMI “to be” with a present tense participle (in our context, 2 participles) is intended to emphatically point out two progressive aspects of the Gospel, “constantly bearing fruit and being increased.”
3. The italicized portions, “*it has been doing*” and “*of it*” do not occur in the original Koine but are appropriate for the context.
4. “understood”: the compound aorist active indicative verb, ἐπίγνωσκω- EPIGINOSKO (epi+ ginwskw) “to know or understand thoroughly, accurately, completely or exactly.” The preposition ἐπι – EPI is used to intensify the verb. This is not a basic knowledge or acquaintance with details like some other Greek verbs (i.e. γινώσκω-GINOSKO or οἶδα- OIDA).

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:6 “...which is present to you, just as in all the world also it is itself constantly bearing fruit and being increased, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and completely understood the grace of God in truth;”

Colossians 1:6 "...which is present to you, just as in all the world also it is itself constantly bearing fruit and being increased, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and completely understood the grace of God in truth;"

- 1) In verse 6, Paul continues his discussion of the Gospel that began in the previous verse.
- 2) The Gospel IS the Good News, the message of salvation (Rom. 1:16, Eph. 1:13).
 - a) The message:
 - i) Christ died for our sins (1 Cor 15:3).
 - ii) Those who believe in Him possess forgiveness and eternal life (Acts 10:43, Eph. 1:7, 2 Tim. 1:10).
 - iii) Christ was raised from the dead which ensures the believer's victory over the grave through resurrection (Col 2:12, 1 Thess. 4:14).
 - b) Man's part in his salvation is to simply believe that God the Father sent God the Son to be the Savior **John 6:29** "Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."
 - i) The mechanics of salvation is to believe in God the Son. **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" Also, **Acts 16:30-31** "... 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' ³¹ And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved....'"
 - ii) Faith alone is required NOT works. **Ephesians 2:8-9** "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast."
 - iii) Abraham is the pattern for all believers (Rom.4:4, 11-12)
 - c) Who can be saved?
 - i) Christ, the Savior of all men, died for all men so that all can be saved (Jn.3:17; 4:42; Rom.10:13; 1Tim.4:10)
 - ii) It is God's desire that all be saved (1Tim.2:4).
 - d) The gospel is the message of salvation and is the same in every dispensation.
 - i) For Adam and Eve, they simply had to believe the revelation they had concerning the coming seed of the woman (Gen 3:15).
 - ii) Abraham, David, and all other Old Testament greats procured the salvation of their souls by faith in Messiah, who had not yet appeared on the historical scene (Rom. 4:1-8).
 - iii) Since the First Advent, we now place our faith in Christ, who has completed His mission of removing the barrier between God and mankind (Eph. 2:15-17).
- 3) In our verse, Paul indicates that the Gospel arrived (unspecified time) and is present with the Colossians.
- 4) In our verse, "just as" and "as" (both are kaqwj-KATHOS-"just as, as") introduce a comparison between "all the world" and the Colossians.
- 5) "All the world" refers to all mankind or humanity.
- 6) In this comparison, Paul figuratively depicts the Gospel as a fruit bearing plant.

- 7) Due to the particular construction as noted in the exegesis, our verse emphatically points out significant characteristics of the Gospel.
- a) The Gospel itself is “constantly bearing fruit”(καρποφορεῖν- KARPOPHOREO). It may be seen as a self-propagating plant that constantly bears its own fruit (e.g. loganberries).
 - i) In this sense, it is constantly producing fruit which is faith in Christ.
 - ii) This is supported by the immediate context, vs. 4 and the end of vs.6, where the Colossian’s saving faith is in view (cp. Matt 13:23, Luke 8:15, especially Col. 1:10 where divine good production/reward is the issue).
 - b) In addition, the Gospel is constantly “being increased” (αὐξανῶ- AUXANO).
 - i) “Being increased” indicates that it is continually growing.
 - ii) Based on the context, this refers to the outward expansion of the Gospel as opposed to spiritual growth after saving faith (Col 1:10, 2 Peter 3:18 cp. Acts 6:7, 12:24, 19:20).
 - iii) However, the passive voice indicates that an outside source or agent is causing the growth or increase.
 - iv) Various communicators (i.e. sources) have contributed to increase the range of the Gospel: evangelists (a temporary gift not extant today, Acts 8:4-40), Apostles (also a temporary gift that has ceased- Gal. 2:7, 1 Thess 2:2), the P/T (2 Tim. 4:5), All believers- witness of the life (Eph. 6:15, 1 Peter 2:11-3:2, 15)
 - v) Paul’s comparison indicates that the continual fruit bearing and growth is occurring without pause on a worldwide (“all the world”) and local level (“in you”- Colossae).
 - vi) This process continues unabated through today. However, this does not legitimize mass evangelism as is practiced today (e.g. Billy Graham).
- 8) Individual positive volition and the convicting ministry of God the Holy Spirit are essential for the continual process of bearing fruit and growth (John 9:13-38, 16:8-11 cp Acts 7:51).
- 9) Paul points out that continual fruit bearing and growth was a characteristic of the Colossian church since the day they heard and completely understood the grace of God in truth.
- a) In sequence, the initial hearing preceded the complete understanding.
 - b) “Completely understood” (ἐπίγνωσκω- EPIGINOSKO) indicates that the Colossian’s possessed a categorical and complete knowledge (1 Tim. 4:3, 2 Peter 2:21 cp. 1 Cor 13:12).
 - c) “The grace of God in truth” refers to content of the Gospel, the grace provision of salvation. The Gospel is in fact the Gospel of Grace and is absolutely true (Acts 20:24 cp. Eph 2:8, Titus 2:11).
 - d) The believers at Colossae completely understood the grace of God as it relates to salvation.

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:7-8 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,⁸ and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

- 1) “learned it”: the aorist active indicative verb, μαθησαμην- MANTHANO “to learn or to acquire information as the result of instruction. The verb is a culminative aorist which emphasizes the end of an action or its existing results (Philip. 4:11). “It” is supplied and refers to the Gospel.
- 2) “from Epaphras”: the preposition, απο- APO “from” with the proper noun, Ἐπαφράς- “EPAPHRAS” in the ablative case which indicates the source of learning. In other words, the Colossians “learned from Epaphras.”(Matt. 11:29)
- 3) “beloved”: the adjective, ἀγαπητός- AGAPETOS “dearly loved or esteemed” (Matt. 3:17).
- 4) “fellow bond-servant”: the noun, συνδούλος- SUNDOULOS (σύν “with, together with + δούλος “slave”) “a fellow slave or servant, one who serves the same master as another” (Col 4:7). Translate “fellow slave.”
- 5) “faithful servant”: the adjective, πιστός- PISTOS “trustworthy, dependable, faithful” and the noun, διάκονος- DIAKONOS “a servant, one who executes commands of another”(Col 4:7). In some contexts διάκονος- DIAKONOS refers to one who occupies the office of deacon (1 Tim. 3:8)
- 6) “on our behalf”: the preposition, υπέρ- HUPER “for the sake of, on behalf of” with the 2nd person plural pronoun, ὑμεῖς- HUMON “you.” This is translated as a 1st person plural, ἡμεῖς- HEMON “our” which is not present in the text. Overall evidence from the N.T. manuscripts support ὑμεῖς- HUMON “you” as the correct reading. Translate “your.”
- 7) “informed”: the substantive aorist active participle of ὀφείλω- HO DELOOH “to make clear, to make some matter known that was unknown or not previously communicated” (1 Cor. 3:13).
- 8) “love”: the noun, ἀγάπη- AGAPE “affection, good will, love;” technical use in our context (cp vs 4).
- 9) “Spirit”: the noun, πνεῦμα- PNEUMA “spirit, Holy Spirit.” In this verse, πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit.

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:7-8 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful servant of Christ on your behalf,⁸ and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Colossians 1:7-8 “just as you learned *it* from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful servant of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.”

Summary:

- 1) In verse 7, Paul points out that the Colossians “learned” from Epaphras.
- 2) The content of instruction was the grace of God as it related to salvation.
- 3) This indicates that Epaphras was the initial evangelist of the Colossians.
- 4) In addition to being their evangelist, Epaphras was also from Colossae (Col. 4:12).
- 5) At the time of writing of this epistle, he was a fellow prisoner with Paul in Rome (Philemon 1:23- sunaicma|wtoj- SUNAICHMALOTOS).
- 6) Paul refers to Epaphras as “our beloved fellow slave.”
 - a) The use of the adjective “beloved” (agaptoj- AGAPETOS) reveals the affection and high esteem Paul and co. had for Epaphras (cp. other uses by Paul- Philipp. 4:1, Col. 4:14).
 - i) In 59 of its 61 occurrences, the adjective is applied to believers (Heb. 6:9, James 1:9, 1 Peter 2:11).
 - ii) God the Father used the same term when referring to His Son (Luke 3:22).
 - iii) This is not surprising as the adjective is derived from the verb, agapaw- AGAPAO “to love” which is primarily used of God’s love (John 3:35).
 - b) “Fellow slave (sundoul oj- SUNDOULOS) indicates that both Epaphras and Paul served the same master. However, this raises the question...To whom or what did they serve as slaves?
 - i) God the Father (Acts 16:17, Titus 1:1 cp other slaves: James 1:1).
 - ii) Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1, Philip. 1:1 cp. other slaves: 2 Peter 1:1, Jude 1:1).
 - c) Elect angels are “fellow slaves” (Rev.19:10, 22:9).
 - d) In the master / slave relationship, obedience to the will of the master is of primary importance.
 - e) We are also fellow slaves with Paul and Epaphras. As slaves, we are to serve God through obedience to His commands. We are to focus on God’s directive will not our own (1 Peter 2:11-16 cp. Rom.6:16-18, Also Eccles. 12:13).
 - f) It is paramount to remember that a slave is not above his master (Matt 10:24 cp. Luke 17:7-10).
 - g) Since we are slaves to God and His perfect plan, we are not to be enslaved by other “masters” (Matt. 6:24, Rom. 16:18, Titus 2:3, 2 Peter 2:18-22).
- 7) Paul further elaborates on the master/slave motif or theme.
- 8) In our verse, Epaphras is identified as a “faithful servant of Christ.”
 - a) Paul has already used the same adjective, “faithful” (pistoj- PISTOS) in vs. 2 to label the believers in Colossae.
 - b) As a “servant” (diakonoj- DIAKONOS), Epaphras was reliable and trustworthy in carrying out commands and fulfilling his duties to his master.
 - c) “Of Christ” indicates that Christ is his master.
 - d) Comparable to a slave, a “servant” executes the commands of his master (cp. Job 1:8, Psalm 11:: 17-23, John 12:26, 1 Peter 2:18).

- e) Although it is not applicable in our verse, in other contexts, “servant” (diakonoj-DIAKONOS) is used in a technical sense to refer to the office of deacon. In this sense, the man who occupies this office is to serve the local church (Philip.1:1, 1 Tim. 3:8, 12).
- 9) Epaphras was a “faithful servant” on behalf of the Colossians.
- a) This may be seen in the use of the prepositional phrase, “on your behalf”(upez umwh-HUPER HUMON).
 - b) Figuratively, this phrase depicts the notion of standing or bending **over** (upez-HUPER) someone in order to protect or defend. Derived from this meaning is an act or event which is in another’s interest, benefit, or to their advantage (Col. 1:24, 2:1, 1 Peter 2:21).
 - c) In other words, as a “faithful servant,” Epaphras sought the spiritual benefit and advantage of the believers in Colossae. This was accomplished in at least a couple of ways:
 - i) Vs. 7 indicates that they learned the Gospel from him.
 - ii) He labored earnestly on their behalf through prayer (Col. 4:12).
 - (1) The verb, “labored earnestly” (agwnizomai-AGONIZOMAI) denotes an intense struggle or fight against an adversary.
 - (2) His weapon of choice in this fight is prayer.
 - (3) The heretics in Colossae are one of the primary adversaries in our immediate context.
 - (4) Epaphras struggled in prayer for the Colossians in order that they might become spiritually mature.
- 10) Previously in vs. 4, Paul and co. had heard of the Colossian’s “love (agaph- AGAPE) for all the saints.”
- 11) In vs. 8, Paul points out that Epaphras was the one who made this fact clear to them.
- a) As in verse 4, “love” (agaph – AGAPE) is used in a technical manner
 - b) In our verse this is made apparent by the use of the phrase, “in the Spirit.”
 - c) Specifically it refers to love produced under the filling of God the Holy Spirit and is demonstrated by making the appropriate doctrinal application (Gal. 5:22, Eph. 4:2, 5:2, cp. 1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:9 “For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,”

- 1) “For this reason”: the preposition, *dia*, -DIA with the accusative demonstrative pronoun, *touto* – TOUTO which indicates a cause or the reason why something happens (Matt. 6:25).
- 2) “Not ceased”: present middle indicative verb, *pauw*- PAUO “to cease doing something, to stop oneself (middle voice). The verb is preceded by the negative particle, *ou* OU which negates the action of the verb. In this case then, the subject (Paul & co.) have **not** ceased or stopped doing something. The present tense indicates ongoing action and the middle voice places emphasis upon the subject producing the action.
- 3) “Pray”: the present middle participle, *proseucomai*-PROSEUCHOMAI “to pray.”
- 4) “To ask”: the present middle participle, *aitew*- AITEO “to ask, ask for with urgency; with a nuance of demanding” (Luke 1:63).
- 5) “That”: the conjunction, *iha*- HINA “that.” In our verse, this conjunction is used to introduce an objective clause. The object is everything that follows this conjunction in vs. 9 (cp Philip.1:9).
- 6) “May be filled”: the aorist passive subjunctive verb, *plhrow* – PLEROO “to make full, to be filled with.” The passive voice indicates that the subject is receiving the action. In addition, the subjunctive mood indicates an element of contingency. Hence the use of “may” or “might.” Translate “might be filled” (Eph. 3:19).
- 7) “The knowledge”: the noun with the definite article, *o epignwsij*- HO EPIGNOSIS “knowledge, correct or precise knowledge.” The article draws attention to this “knowledge” (cp. vs.10).
- 8) “Spiritual wisdom and understanding”:
 - a) “Spiritual”: the adjective, *pneumatikoj*- PNEUMATIKOS “spiritual, pertaining to being derived from or being about the Spirit.” In the Greek, this adjective is the last word in the sentence and should be understood to modify the noun “understanding.”
 - b) “Wisdom”: the noun, *sophia*- SOPHIA “wisdom, the capacity to understand and, as a result, to act wisely, the ability to use knowledge for correct behavior” (Col. 4:5).
 - c) “Understanding”: the noun, *sunesij*- SUNESIS “intelligence, understanding.” In classical use, “a running together, a flowing together of two rivers.” In our verse, this noun is modified by the adjective, “spiritual”
 - d) Translate phrase, “wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:9 “For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

- b) It is important to note that “**might** be filled up” is a potential not a certainty. If an individual desires to gain the knowledge of God’s will, only then will this process become a certainty. The volition of an individual is always a factor.
 - c) “Knowledge of His will” refers to the correct knowledge (ὁ ἐπίγνωσις- HO EPIGNOSIS) of God’s will. Paul wanted the Colossians to know precisely what God required them to think, say, do. Also how and why to do it (Eph.6:6, 1 Thess. 4:3, 5:18).
 - d) Paul is emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge, sound doctrine (cp. "good works" in vs.10).
- 11) The correct knowledge of God’s will is composed of two vital parts:
- a) “All wisdom”(σοφία- SOPHIA) refers to the realm of Divine wisdom. In our verse, it is the capacity to understand and act wisely according to the standards of sound doctrine.
 - i) God is the source of this wisdom and it is revealed through the Holy Spirit (James 1:5 cp. 1 Cor. 2:6-13).
 - ii) It is characterized by proper conduct (Luke 2:52, Col 4:5, James 3:13. Also cp. vs. 10).
 - iii) It does **not** refer to the earthly, worldly wisdom as in other contexts (1 Cor. 1:20-24, 2:5; James 3:15).
 - iv) Of course, this Divine wisdom was in direct conflict with the wisdom of the heretics in Colossae (Col. 2:23).
 - b) “Spiritual understanding” (συνεσις πνευματικῶν- SUNESIS PNEUMATIKOS) refers to the insight into or comprehension of Divine viewpoint.
 - i) It is “understanding” provided by the Holy Spirit (cp. John 16.13).
 - ii) Christ and Paul possessed it (Luke 2:47, Eph. 3:4).
 - iii) Other observations on spiritual understanding: it enables an individual to be discerning (Prov. 28:11), fools (-V) don’t care for it (Prov.18:2)
 - c) In other passages wisdom and understanding are closely linked (Prov.2:2; 4:5; 7:4; 8:1, 14; 17:24; 23:23).
- 12) This process of being filled up with “knowledge of God’s will” is accomplished through the following:
- a) The habitual filling of God the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18 cp. Gal. 5:16).
 - b) The believer must have an unwavering belief in the importance of sound doctrine (i.e. Divine wisdom- Psa. 138:2, Prov. 3:13-21).
 - c) The consistent face to face teaching under right pastor with the proper mental attitude (Heb 10:25, James 1:19-21).
- 13) In our verse, Paul emphatically points out that this knowledge (ὁ ἐπίγνωσις- HO EPIGNOSIS) is absolutely complete with out any deficiencies or error.
- 14) In effect, any deficiencies that the Colossians might have regarding their faith would be filled up with complete knowledge of God’s will, the realm of Divine viewpoint.

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:10 “so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”

- 1) “So that you may walk”: the aorist active infinitive, περιπατεω- PERIPATEO “to walk (lit); to conduct one’s life, behave (fig).” In our verse, this infinitive is used to indicate purpose. Translate: “with the purpose that you may walk.” (Rom. 13:13, Col. 4:5)
- 2) “Worthy”: the adverb, αξιω- AXIOS “worthily, in a manner worthy of, suitably.” (Eph. 4:1)
- 3) “Please”: the noun, αρεσκεια- ARESKEIA “the desire to please, the desire to do something that produces satisfaction.” In our verse used in a positive sense.
- 4) “Bearing fruit”: the present active participle, καρποφορω- KARPOPHOREO- which is “to bear fruit.” Paul used the same participle in vs.6. The present tense indicates that this is a continuous action. Based on the context, this participle is instrumental and indicates how one is please the Lord. Translate: “by constantly bearing fruit”
- 5) “Good work”: the noun, εργον- ERGON “deed, action or work” with the adjective, αγαθο- AGATHOS “meeting a high standard of worth, merit or quality.”
- 6) “Increasing”: the present passive participle, αυξανω- AUXANO “to increase or grow.” Paul also used this participle in vs.6. and the present tense indicates that this is a continuous action. This participle is also instrumental. Translate: “by continually being increased.”
- 7) “Knowledge”: the noun with the definite article, ο επιγνωσις- HO EPIGNOSIS “knowledge, correct or precise knowledge.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:10 “so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, by constantly bearing fruit in every good work and by continually being increased in the knowledge of God”

Colossians 1:10 “so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, by constantly bearing fruit in every good work and by continually being increased in the knowledge of God”

Summary:

- 1) In verse 10, Paul uses the infinitive of *peripateō*- PERIPATEO to indicate the purpose of his intercessory prayer in the previous verse.
- 2) The goal or purpose of being “filled with the knowledge of His will” is that the Colossians might “walk” according to the principles of sound doctrine.
- 3) “Walk” (*peripateō*- PERIPATEO) is used in a figurative sense to signify conduct, behavior or how one lives their life.
- 4) In our verse, this “walk” or conduct is characterized by two important elements:
 - a) It is to be “worthy of the Lord.” The Colossians were to conduct themselves as the Lord conducted Himself during 1st Advent.
 - i) His “walk” was characterized by obedience to His Father’s will. In fact, He was perfectly obedient even in the face of perilous and arduous circumstances (John 5:30, 6:38, cp. Matt. 16:21)
 - ii) Our “walk” should be characterized by obedience to sound doctrine, God’s will. Regardless of how demanding or strenuous our niche, we should be imitators of Christ. Consider what Christ endured and be encouraged. He endured so we have the ability to endure (1 Thess 1:6, Heb. 12:1-3, 1 John 2:6 cp. 2 Cor.1:3-5, Eph 4:1-3; 5:1, 2 Tim. 3:11).
 - b) Secondly, a goal of this “walk” is “to please Him in all respects.” The Colossians were to have a desire to please the Lord in every area of their life.
 - i) Believers are pleasing to God through compliance with His directive will. We are to strive to be pleasing to God in everything (Psa. 147:11, John 8:29, 2 Cor 5:9).
 - ii) Note we are to desire to please God not men (1 Thess. 2:4).
 - iii) What motivates you in your life? A desire to please God or men? Seeking to please men or self because of fear, approbation, greed, etc will ultimately lead to unhappiness (Isa. 39:2, Prov. 23:4-5, Philipp. 3:18-19).
- 5) As in vs.6, Paul uses two participles, *karpophoreō*- KARPOPHOREO “to bear fruit” and *auxanō*- AUXANO “to increase or grow” to build on the fruit bearing plant/tree motif.
- 6) However, in our verse, the believers in Colossae are the subject (not the Gospel).
- 7) Paul uses these participles to indicate how they were to “walk” in a worthy and pleasing manner.
 - a) The Colossians were to be “constantly bearing fruit in every good work.” They were to have an ongoing commitment and dedication to Divine good production during their ph. 2.
 - i) “Every good work” refers to the application of sound doctrine by the believer who is filled by God the Holy Spirit (e.g. exercise of patience, giving encouragement, attendance in Bible class, etc. 1 Thess, 5:14).

- ii) Paul has already commended the Colossians for their love of other believers in vs. 4.
 - iii) As a fruit tree is expected to be productive so the Colossians were expected to produce an abundance of good works.
 - iv) All believers are commanded to have a continual commitment and dedication to the production of good works (1 Tim 6:18, Titus 2:14, 3:14 cp. Eph 2:10, 1 Pet. 2:12).
- b) In addition, the believers in Colossae were to be continually “increased in the knowledge of God.”
- i) In comparison to the growth of a fruit tree, “the knowledge of God” (i.e. the realm of sound doctrine) enriched, nourished and caused the Colossians to grow. It is no different for us.
 - ii) This process refers to the consistent intake of Bible doctrine which is essential to attain spiritual maturity. In our dispensation, this occurs at the local church (Heb.10:25).
 - iii) Of course, the believer must also be filled with God the Holy Spirit in order to absorb and be nourished by “the knowledge of God” (John 4:24, 1 Cor 2:6-12).
- 8) Paul points out that in order for the Christian “walk” to be worthy of the Lord and pleasing, the believer must engage in the consistent intake and application of Bible doctrine.
- 9) This must be our MPR during our ph. 2.

*See Doctrine of Divine Good Production

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:11 “strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; [joyously]”

- 1) “Strengthened”: the present passive participle, *dunamow-* DUNAMOO, “to cause someone to be able to do something, to empower, to make strong or strengthen.” The present tense indicates ongoing action. Translate: “continually being strengthened.”
- 2) “Power”: the noun, *dunamij-* DUNAMIS, “the ability to perform a particular activity or to undergo some experience, capacity, power.”
- 3) “Glorious”: the noun with the definite article, *ō doxa-* HO DOXA, “glory.” Depending on the context, various distinctions in meaning are possible:
 - a) “Brightness, splendor”: Acts 22:11.
 - b) “Excellent reputation, honor, praise”: John 12:43.
 - c) “Exalted state”: 1 Cor 15:43
 - d) “That which belongs to God, majesty, magnificence.”
- 4) “Might”: the noun with definite article, *ō kratoj –* HO KRATOS, “the power to rule or control, might.” In our verse it refers to Divine power (cp. Luke 1:51).
- 5) “Steadfastness”: the noun, *upomonh –* HUPOMONE, “the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, endurance under difficult circumstances, perseverance.”
- 6) “Patience”: the noun, *makroqumiā-* MAKROTHUMIA “being able to bear up under provocation, patience toward others.” This noun is a compound of *makroj-* MAKROS “long, far distant” + *qumoj-* THUMOS “anger, wrath.”
- 7) “Joyously”: include with vs. 12 (cp. Philipp. 1:4)

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:11 “continually being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience;”

Colossians 1:11 “continually being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience;”

Summary:

- 1) In vs. 11 Paul indicates that an outcome of the consistent intake and application (vs. 10) is that the Colossians will be “continually strengthened with all power.”
- 2) This doesn’t refer to self-empowerment which is inadequate and deficient to deal with the perils and pressures of the Angelic conflict (cp. Prov.1:24-33, 2 Cor. 1:8-9).
- 3) Rather, it is Divine empowerment which gives the believer the capacity to perform any application that is required.
 - a) The “power” we have as believers is derived from God’s “glorious might” (cp. Eph. 1:19, 3:16, 6:10, 2 Pet. 1:3)
 - b) We have unlimited capacity to excel in every area of our niche (Philipp. 4:13).
 - c) However, as in all areas of our ph.2 the believer must ask himself....Do you want to excel in sound doctrine and walk in manner that is pleasing to God?
 - d) We should be encouraged that we can stand firm in the face of any and all opposition during our ph.2.
- 4) Paul possessed this “power” (dunamij- DUNAMIS) during his ph.2 (Col. 1:29).
- 5) The goal of being strengthened is to attain “all steadfastness and patience.”
 - a) “Steadfastness” (upomonh – HUPOMONE) or the capacity to persevere under difficult circumstances is an essential quality of the adjusted believer (Luke 8:15, 1 Tim. 6:11, Heb. 12:1, James 5:11)
 - b) “Patience” (makroqumiā- MAKROTHUMIA) refers to patience toward others (Eph. 4:2, Col. 3:12).
 - i) It is a product of the filling of God the Holy Spirit and, therefore, absolutely necessary to live in a manner (i.e. “walk”) that is pleasing to God (Gal. 5:22).
 - ii) In addition, it is a quality that is possessed by God, Himself (Rom. 2:4, 9:22, 1 Peter 3:20).
- 6) As maturing believers we must continually strive to exhibit “steadfastness” and “patience” (cp. Philipp. 4:5).

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:12 [joyously] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

- 1) “Joyously”: the preposition, meta.– META “with” + the genitive noun cara- CHARA “joy.” This prepositional phrase is literally translated, “with joy” and is associated with “giving thanks.” Translate, “continually giving thanks.”
- 2) “Giving thanks”: the 1st person plural present active participle, eucaristew – EUCHARISTEO, “to give thanks.”
- 3) “Who has qualified”: the articular aorist active participle, o ikanow- HO IKANOO, “to cause to be adequate, to make fit, to qualify.” Translate: “Who qualified.”
- 4) “Us”: the 2nd person plural pronoun, umaj- HUMAS, “you.” Translate, “you” not “us.”
- 5) “Share”: the noun with the def. art., o merij- HO MERIS, “an assigned part, a portion, share.”
- 6) “Inheritance”: the noun with the def. art., o klhroj- HO KLEROS “what is obtained by lot, allotted portion, an allotment, a share or part.” Translate: “the share.”
- 7) “The saints”: the adjective with the def. art., o ajioj- HO HAGIOS, “dedicated to God, holy, set apart.” In our verse, the adjective functions as a noun so translate, “the saints.”
- 8) “Light”: the noun with the def. art., o fwj- HO PHOS, Literally, “the light.” The figurative uses will be discussed in the analysis. Translate, “the light.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:12 “continually giving thanks with joy to the Father, who qualified you to the share in the portion of the saints in the light.”

Colossians 1:12 “continually giving thanks with joy to the Father, who qualified you to the share in the portion of the saints in the light.”

Analysis of vs. 12:

- 1) Paul resumes the subject of thanksgiving (*eucaristew* – EUCHARISTEO) which was introduced in vs.3.
- 2) There are some parallel elements of thanksgiving between our verse and vs.3:
 - a) As in vs.3, the thanksgiving is properly directed toward God the Father. Once again this affirms that all prayer should be directed towards Him. **Luke 11:1-2** “And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." ² And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.'" **Ephesians 5:20** “always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;”
 - b) In both vss., Paul uses the present tense of the verb *eucaristew* – EUCHARISTEO- “to give thanks” which indicates a continuous action. Thanksgiving should be persistent and not occasional or sporadic. In fact, it is commanded and, therefore, must be an essential element of every believer’s prayer life. **Colossians 3:15** “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.” **Colossians 3:17** “And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”
- 3) In context, “continually giving thanks” is linked to vs. 10 and is another way by which the Colossians could “walk” in a worthy and pleasing manner.
- 4) Thanksgiving is accompanied “with joy.”
- 5) We live in an era filled with incredible violence, brutality, and every sort of evil. A believer may ask himself, “How is it possible to have joy?” Consider the following:
 - a) “Joy” (*cara- CHARA*) is a fruit of the filling of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the believer who gives thanks “with joy” is in fellowship. **Galatians 5:22-23** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (cp. Phil. 1:4)
 - b) In addition, “joy” is synonymous with happiness (+H) and is based on a believer’s relationship with God through belief in Jesus Christ not on various circumstances in the world (cp. Luke 2:10-11).
 - c) “Joy” may or may not be expressed overtly.
 - d) However, this “joy” or happiness is not characterized by manic or hysterical behavior as is common today (e.g. “holy laughter” movement).
 - e) God possesses perfect joy (1 Chron. 16:27, Psa. 16:11).
 - f) “Joy”/happiness is commanded during a believer’s ph. 2 (Matt.5:12, 2 Cor.13:11; Phil.3:1; 4:4, 1 Thess.5:16).
 - g) It is a result of the intake and application of sound doctrine (Psa.106:3; 112:1; 119:1-2; 128:1-4; Joh.13:17; 15:11).

- h) “Joy” is not contingent upon pleasant circumstances, but is available in the midst of affliction and pressures (2 Cor.7:4;8:2, 1 Thess.1:6, Heb.10:34, cp. James 1:2)
 - i) Remember what we have just learned in vs. 11....God will strengthen us and enable us to make every application necessary during our ph. 2.
 - j) We will have great joy in our ph. 3. Consider that it was important enough to be a motivating factor to Christ to fulfill His ph. 2 niche (Heb 12:2, Jude 1.24 cp. Isa. 35:1-10).
 - k) Joy is not synonymous with depression, excessive sadness, bitterness and misery. The believer who habitually possesses these traits must identify and eradicate the cause.
 - l) Furthermore, the root cause of these maladies is the refusal to think sound doctrine. If a believer refuses to think sound doctrine, “spiritual” neurosis will be the consequence. The cerebral believer will make the necessary mental adjustments but the acerebral believer will continue on their pathetic path of pathos (cp. Prov.13:16: 14:7, 16; 15:14; 16:25; 26:11).
- 6) In our verse, Paul indicates that God the Father “qualified” the Colossians “to share in the portion of the saints.”
- a) In the Greek, “who qualified” (the articular participle, θ ikanow- HO IKANOO) is set up to attribute a distinctive quality to God. The Colossians were “qualified” through His power not their own.
 - b) “Qualified” is in a past tense (aorist) which indicates that God qualified them at an unspecified point of time in the past. However, in order to be qualified, the Colossians had to exercise saving faith on an individual basis. A fact that is established by Paul’s usage of “the saints”(θ aġioj- HO HAGIOS, cp vs.2, also use of “heir”- Titus 3:5-7)
 - c) Specifically, they were qualified for “the share of the portion of the saints.”
 - d) “The portion” (θ kl hroj- HO KLEROS) is the allotment of reward a believer will possess in his ph. 3. The allotment is nearly synonymous with an inheritance.
 - i) In context, “the share” (θ mer ij- HO MERIS) of this allotment refers to the part of the reward each believer in Colossae would possess in ph.3.
 - ii) “The portion” is comparable to “the hope” in vs.5.
 - e) All believers are qualified for a “share” of reward or inheritance. Some particulars:
 - i) As believers in the Church Age, we share in Christ’s inheritance via positional truth (Rom. 8:16-17, Gal. 3:29, Eph. 1:3-14)
 - ii) The believer will inherit the earth in the millennium (Matt. 5:5, James 2:5).
 - iii) Believers will receive a resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:50-53)
 - iv) The new heaven, earth and Jerusalem (Heb.11:8-12, Rev. 21:1-2, 7)
 - v) Tribulation saints will inherit the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:31-34).
- 7) After saving faith, an individual is the object of God’s blessing in eternity. This fact should elicit great joy! Consider our future rewards! (cp. vs.5, 1 Peter 1:3-4).
- 8) “In the light” anticipates “the darkness” in vs. 13. It contrasts the position of the believer and the unbeliever. One an object of eternal blessing and the other, an object of eternal judgment.
- a) God the Father and God the Son are light (1 John 1:5 cp. John 1:9).

- b) Believers are light and as children of God, are also children of light (Eph. 5:8, cp. John 12:36, Acts 26:18, 2 Cor. 6:14).
- c) In our ph. 3, we will dwell in light (Rev. 21:23; 22:5, 1 Tim. 6:16).

Exegesis-

Colossians 1:13-14 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- 1) “For He”: the relative the relative pronoun, οἵ- HOS, “Who.” Refers to God the Father. Translate “Who.”
- 2) “Delivered”: aorist middle/deponent verb, ρυῶμαι-RHUOMAI, “to save, rescue, or deliver from danger, of bringing someone out of severe and acute danger. In other Greek literature: “to shield, guard, protect, of guardian gods, chiefs, etc., of defensive armor.”
- 3) “The domain”: the articular noun, ὁ ἐξουσία- HO EXOUSIA. “a state of control over something, the right to control or govern over, the domain or sphere over which one has authority to control or rule.”
- 4) “Darkness”: the articular noun, ὁ σκοτός- HO SKOTOS, “(lit) darkness; (fig) lack of understanding, darkness as the realm of sin and evil.” Translate “the darkness.”
- 5) “Transferred”: the aorist active indicative verb, μεῖστημι- METHISTEMI, “to move from one place to another, to remove, to transfer.”
- 6) “Kingdom”: the articular noun, ὁ βασιλεία- HO BASILEIA, “a territory ruled by a king, a dominion, a kingdom.”
- 7) “Redemption”: the articular noun, ὁ ἀπολύτρωσις- HO APOLUTROSIS, “a buying back of a slave or captive through payment of a ransom, setting free, liberation, redemption.”
- 8) “Forgiveness”: the articular noun, ὁ ἀφεσις- HO APHESIS, “release, cancellation, pardon, forgiveness.”
- 9) “Sins”: the articular noun, ὁ ἀμαρτία- HO HAMARTIA, “wrongdoing, guilt, sin.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:13 “Who delivered us from the domain of the darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Colossians 1:13-14 “Who delivered us from the domain of the darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Analysis of vss. 13-14:

- 1) In vs. 13, Paul employs the pronoun “us” to expand his focus from the Colossian’s (“you” in vs. 12) to include himself and his colleagues.
- 2) He further elaborates on what God the Father has done for them.
- 3) Upon saving faith, the Father not only qualified them for a share of eternal reward (vs.12) but He also permanently changed their position. This is true for all believers.
- 4) The verb “delivered” (ῥυῖμαι-RHUOMAI) signifies a deliverance from severe or acute danger.
 - a) In the N.T., it refers primarily to a supernatural deliverance by God (cp. Matt. 27:43, 2 Cor. 1:10).
 - b) In certain non-Biblical contexts, the verb refers to the rescue, protection or deliverance by a god or some divinity (e.g. Herodotus).
 - c) Due to the essence of our God, we can be absolutely certain of our deliverance. In contrast, pagan gods are often depicted as fickle and unreliable (1 Kings 18:17-38 cp. Judges 6:25-32).
 - d) Prior to salvation, we were children of wrath and dominated by our OSN. Hence, we were in a very dangerous position (Eph. 2:3 cp. Rom. 8:6).
 - e) Believers are delivered subsequent to saving faith.
- 5) Specifically, God delivered us from “the domain of the darkness.”
 - a) Paul uses “darkness” as a metaphor for evil. Therefore the domain is characterized by evil.
 - b) In a figurative sense, this “domain” refers to the Colossian’s (and our) pre-salvation position as unbelievers. In effect, they were citizens of this “domain” (cp.2 Cor 6:14, Eph. 5:8).
 - i) We are citizens of this realm by birth due to our spiritually dead condition (Rom. 5:12ff, cp. Ps. 51:5).
 - ii) As unbelievers are citizens of darkness, they do the deeds of darkness (Eph 4:17-19 cp. Rom 13:12-13).
 - iii) Unbelievers carry out the desires of Satan (cp. John 8:44, Acts 13:10).
 - c) The physical domain is ruled by Satan, the Evil One (Matt. 6:13, 2 Cor. 4:4, Eph 2:2, 1 John 5:19).
 - i) Jesus Christ didn’t dispute his authority (Lk 4:6ff).
 - ii) He is highly committed and organized. Even though futile, Satan actively attempts to thwart the plan of God (Lk. 8:12, 22:3; Eph. 4:27, Rev. 2:10).
 - iii) Believers must beware! Satan is cunning and merciless (1 Peter 5:8 cp. 2 Cor. 2:11, 11:14).
 - iv) Satan is aided in his evil machinations by other fallen angels (Matt. 25:41 cp. Dan. 10:11, Eph. 6:12).
 - v) At least for believers, Satan is not given full authority to carry out all of his plans (Job 1:1, 2:6; James 4:7, 1 John 2:14).

- 6) In contrast to our previously hopeless position, Paul declares that they have been “transferred” in to a new domain, “the kingdom of His Beloved Son.”
 - a) The Colossian’s are no longer positionally under the power of darkness, residing in spiritual death. They have a new life through faith! (cp.1 John 5:4)
 - b) Moreover, they are citizens of heaven (Eph 2:19, Phil. 3:20).
 - c) Sequentially, the transfer followed the deliverance from the domain of darkness at the point of saving faith.
 - d) Believers were formerly sons of disobedience but now we are sons of light. Yet another reason to be thankful and happy (Eph. 2:2 cp. Acts 26:18, 1 Thess. 5:5).
 - e) Christ Himself will establish His kingdom on earth during the Millennium. This is not figurative, but, rather, a literal kingdom (Psa. 2:8-9, Isa. 24:23, 1 Tim. 4:1).
- 7) Although believers physically reside in Satan’s domain, we have a new privileged position.
- 8) It follows that as we are expatriates of “the domain of the darkness,” we must not think and behave as we did when we lived in that realm (Rom. 12:2, Eph. 5:11, Col. 3:2, 1 Peter 1:14-16).
- 9) In vs. 14, Paul shifts the focus from God the Father to the Son.
- 10) He points out that the Colossian’s have “redemption, the forgiveness of sins” in Christ.
- 11) “Redemption” (o apolutrwsij- HO APOLUTROSIS) is the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby He purchased our freedom.
 - a) He purchased our freedom from the slave market of sin (Rom. 6:17, Gal 4:8).
 - b) The ransom or purchase price for our freedom was His work on the cross, His blood (Eph.1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19).
 - c) Our soul is redeemed at salvation (Psa. 34:22).
 - d) Only a freeman may redeem or pay a ransom to release a slave.
 - e) As the perfect God/Man, Jesus was the only qualified Redeemer (Isa. 53:9, John 19:4, 2 Cor. 5:21, Heb. 1:13).
- 12) Our verse indicates that as a result of Christ’s redemptive work, the Colossian’s have “the forgiveness of sins” (cp. Matt. 26:28).
 - a) In a similar sense as “redemption,” the noun “forgiveness” (o` afesij- HO APHESIS) depicts a setting free or a pardon.
 - b) Personal sins are the object of the pardon (cp .Eph 1:7).
 - c) Believers are pardoned from the eternal consequences/penalty of sin (cp.Joh.3:16-17; 10:9; Rom. 5:15).
 - d) “The forgiveness of sins” is an accomplished fact for all those who believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18, 1 John 2:2, Rev. 1:5).
 - e) Believers are to forgive. If we do not forgive, there is a serious repercussion (Lk. 17:3-4, Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13 cp. Matt. 6:14-15).
- 13) Vss. 13-14 further illustrate God’s plan of grace for humanity (cp. Eph. 2:4-8).
- 14) Furthermore, in the near context Paul will demonstrate the superiority of Christ.

*See the Doctrine of the Trinity

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:15 “And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.”

- 1) “And He”: the relative pronoun, οἷ- HOS, “who.” Translate “Who.”
- 2) “The image”: the anarthrous noun, εἰκὼν- EIKON, “form, portrait, or image.”
Translate “an image.”
- 3) “The invisible God”: the articular adjective, ἀοράτοις- AORATOS, “unseen, invisible”
+ the articular noun, θεοῦ- THEOS, “God.”
- 4) “First-born”: the adjective, πρωτότοκος- PROTOTOKOS, “first-born.” Literally, this
refers to birth order. However, the figurative uses will be examined in the analysis.
- 5) “Creation”: the anarthrous noun, κτίσις- KTISIS, “creation.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:15 “Who is an image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.”

Colossians 1:15 “Who is an image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.”

Analysis of vs. 15:

- 1) Paul maintains his focus on God the Son introduced in vs.13.
- 2) There is some evidence, due to the Greek syntax, that vss. 15-20 compose a hymn or poem. However, conclusive evidence is problematic.
- 3) Regardless of whether or not this section is a hymn, the theme is definitely NOT problematic.
- 4) The author emphatically declares the theme, namely, the superiority of Jesus Christ.
- 5) In fact, our verse begins a section which is one of the foremost discussions of Christology in Scripture.
- 6) Paul states that Jesus Christ is an “image of the invisible God.”
- 7) In the Greek, the fact that God the Father is “invisible” is emphasized (i.e. restrictive attributive).
 - a) God is spirit and therefore invisible (John 4:24, 1 Tim. 1:17, cp. Deut. 4:15-16).
 - b) Although Scripture indicates that God was seen by man, what was actually seen was not the full manifestation of His glory or essence. Instead it was a reflection of His glory or a theophany (a manifestation of spirit in visible form – e.g. the angel of YHWH; Gen 32:30, Num. 12:6-8; 22:31 cp. 1 Tim. 6:16).
- 8) The noun “image” (εικων-EIKON) indicates a likeness and occurs 23x.
 - a) “Image” was used to refer to the head of a ruler on a minted coin (Luke 20:24).
 - b) It may also refer to an idol as an image that represents the object of worship (Rev. 13:14).
 - c) Man was created in the “image” of God (1 Cor. 11:7, cp. Gen 1:26-27)
 - i) As God is spirit, this “image” doesn’t refer to man’s physical body (John 4:24).
 - ii) Rather, “image” refers to the soul of man which has certain attributes that are possessed by God: volition / sovereignty (Job 6:7 cp. Job 23:13), self consciousness / omniscience (Psa. 56:9 cp. 1 John 3:20), the eternal soul/ the Eternal God (Rev. 22:5 cp. Psa. 90:2).
 - d) It is significant to note that the examples cited (coin, idol, and man) resemble their original models: Caesar, The Anti-Christ, and God respectively.
 - e) For example, man is like God (i.e. the soul) but he is not the same as Him. He was created in the image of God.
- 9) However, in the case of Jesus Christ, we have a singularly unique situation. He IS the “image” of God (2 Cor. 4:4).
- 10) In His case, “image” doesn’t refer to a mere resemblance or similarity. He is the exact eternal “image” of the eternal, “invisible God.”
 - a) This does NOT mean that the Son possessed the exact physical image of the Father (height, weight, etc.). God is spirit and invisible so this would be nonsensical.
 - b) Rather, as an “image”, Jesus Christ, the God-man, is the visible representation and manifestation of the essence of God the Father (John 1:18; 14:9, cp. Heb. 1:3, also manifestation through creation, Rom. 1:20).

- c) As Co-equals in the God-head, the Father and the Son have eternally possessed the same Divine essence and attributes (John 10:30, e.g. immutability: Heb 13:18 cp. 1 John 1:9).
- 11) In addition, Paul asserts that Jesus Christ is “the first-born of all creation.”
 - 12) “All creation” is the sum of all created things.
 - 13) If one were to interpret “first-born” (πρωτότοκος- PROTOTOKOS) solely in a physical and temporal sense, he would encounter contradictions.
 - 14) Some interpreters have fallen into this error and maintain the position that Christ is the first among created things.
 - 15) Consequently they deny His eternal pre-existence. Examples:
 - a) Arianism: A heretical belief founded by Arius (ca. 300 AD). Arius denied the eternity of Christ, stating that Christ had been created by God the Father. Since he had been created, He was in no way equal with God in essence or eternity.
 - b) Jehovah’s Witnesses: one of the tenants states that Christ is a created being, an angel.
 - c) Be on guard. Certain groups have taught the pre-existence of God the Son but not His eternity.
 - 16) What are the implications if Christ came into existence at His birth?
 - a) The importance of His eternal pre-existence:
 - i) Physical birth: If Christ came into existence at His birth (or became the Christ some time after His birth), then the Godhead or Trinity does NOT exist.
 - ii) Deity: If Christ was not eternally pre-existent, then He could not be God. Since God, along with other attributes, is eternal.
 - iii) Veracity: If Christ was not pre-existent, then He lied because He claimed to pre-existent. If He lied then He could not be God as absolute veracity is an attribute of God (John 8:58).
 - b) Evidence for the eternal pre-existence of Christ:
 - i) He had a heavenly origin (John 3:13, 31).
 - ii) His work as Creator (John 1:3, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:2).
 - iii) He claimed equality with God in Divine essence and attributes (John 10:30).
 - iv) Christ claimed equal glory with God before the beginning of the world (John 17:5).
 - v) O.T. prophets claimed eternity for the Messiah (Micah 5:2, Hab. 1:12, cp. 1 Cor. 10:4).
 - vi) Paul states that Christ had the same form (i.e. nature) as God (Phil. 2:6).
 - 17) The eternal pre-existence of Christ has been established. However, at His incarnation, we have a truly unique development. God the Son took upon Himself a human nature via the virgin birth, and He remains forever truly God and truly man in one Person. The two natures remain distinct, without any intermingling, but they, nevertheless, compose one Person, the God-man. This is the “hypostatic union” (Phil. 2:6-11, cp. John 1:1-14, Rom. 1:2-5, 1 Tim. 3:16, Heb. 2:14, 1 John 1:1-3).
 - a) Although Christ voluntarily limited the use of His deity during the incarnation (i.e. κενω- KENOO, Phil 2:6ff), it was undiminished.
 - b) His humanity includes a body, soul, and spirit (cp Lk. 2:52, Heb. 4:15).
 - c) In the person of Christ, deity and humanity are inseparably united. He is truly

- unique without peer (cp. John 14:6).
- 18) "First-born" relates to the tradition of primogeniture or the rights of the first born son.
 - a) The eldest son, by virtue of being born first, was given a birthright which accorded to him a double portion of inheritance. In addition, he would assume family leadership upon the death of the father (cp. Josh. 6:26, 1 Kings 16:34).
 - b) In some contexts, the temporal significance of "first-born" is eclipsed by the notion of supremacy or rank (cp. Israel, Ex. 4:22).
 - 19) Paul uses a term that is well known to the Colossians and applies it in an exclusive sense to Christ.
 - 20) In relation to Christ, His "first-born" (πρωτοτοκος- PROTOTOKOS) status is applicable in the following areas:
 - a) He is eternally pre-existent. As eternal God the Son, He has always been the "first-born" (Col. 1:15).
 - b) His humanity, via the virgin birth, became first-born in hypostasis. At birth, His humanity and deity were perfectly united (Matt. 1:25, Lk, 2:7).
 - c) As the glorified God-man, He achieved first-born status at His resurrection (Psa. 2:7, Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:18, Rev. 1:5).
 - 21) Due all the elements that comprise His unique "first-born" status as the God-man, Jesus Christ is pre-eminent over all creation. A creation, which in the future, will be in subjection to Him (1 Cor. 15:24-25 cp. Eph.1:20-22a).

*See Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union and Kenosis

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:16-17 “For by Him *all things were ¹created, [*both*] in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- *all things have been ²created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before *all things, and in Him *all things hold together.”

- 1) “All things”: the articular neuter plural adjective, ὀ παῖ- HO PAS, “every, each, all.” Literally “the all things.” The other occurrences of παῖ-PAS in our verses are marked with an asterisk (*).
- 2) “Created”: the aorist passive indicative verb, κτίζω- KTIDZO, “to bring something onto existence, to create.” The verb occurs 2x in our verse. The first occurrence is in the aorist ¹ and the second, in the perfect tense ².
- 3) “Heavens”: the articular plural noun, ὀ οὐρανοῖ- HO OURANOS, “heavens.” Portions of the universe that are distinguished from planet earth. Translate “the heavens.”
- 4) “Earth”: the articular singular noun, ὀ γῆ- HO GE, “earth.” Translate “the earth.”
- 5) “Visible”: the articular neuter plural adjective, ὀ ὀρατοῖ- HO HORATOS, “that which is capable of being seen, visible.” Translate “the visible things.”
- 6) “Invisible”: the articular neuter plural adjective, ὀ ἀϋρατοῖ- HO AORATOS, ““unseen, invisible.” Translate “the invisible things.”
- 7) “Thrones”: the plural noun θρόνοι- THRONOS, “thrones.” Figuratively used for the symbol of authority or one who exercises authority.
- 8) “Dominions”: the plural noun, κυριοτή- KURIOTES, “lordship, dominion.” A derivative of κυρίοι 'one who rules.'
- 9) “Rulers”: the plural noun, ἀρχ- ARCHE, “an authority figure who initiates activity or process, ruler, authority.”
- 10) “Authorities”: the plural noun, ἐξουσία- EXOUSIA, “a bearer of ruling authority, an authority.”
- 11) “He”: the 3rd person personal pronoun, αὐτοῖ- AUTOS, “He.” Since the subject is expressed with the verb, this pronoun is intensive and denotes emphasis. Translate, “He, Himself.”
- 12) “In”: the preposition, ἐν- EN, with the instrumental case. This construction indicates the means or how something is done. Translate “by.”
- 13) “Hold together”: the perfect active indicative verb, συνίστημι- SUNISTEMI, “to come to be in a condition of coherence, continue, endure, exist, hold together.” The verb is formed from συν- SUN, “with, together with” + ἵστημι- HISTEMI, “to cause to stand, to stand.” In certain extra-Biblical sources, in a military sense, of soldiers “to form in order of battle” or “a well-disciplined army.” Translate “have held together.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:16-17 “For by Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible things and the invisible things, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He, Himself is before all things, and by Him all things have held together.”

Colossians 1:16-17 “For by Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible things and the invisible things, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He, Himself is before all things, and by Him all things have held together.”

Analysis of vs. 16-17:

- 1) In vs. 16, Paul elaborates on the role of Jesus Christ as it relates to the created order of things.
- 2) Jesus Christ is not only the “first-born of all creation,” He is the Creator of “all things.”
 - a) In our verse, the prepositional phrase “by Him” (en autw/ EN AUTO) indicates that Christ is the agent of creation.
 - b) “Were created” (ktizw- KTIDZO) denotes the fact of His past creative work. In addition, this verb is in the passive voice means the subject is not producing the action. Therefore, the subject, “all things,” did not create itself sometime in the past.
 - c) He is the Creator of everything collectively and individually (i.e. Lit. “the all things”).
 - d) “All things” in creation were spoken into existence from non-existence. He created something out of nothing. Only deity could accomplish this work (Psa. 33:6-9; 148:4-5, cp. Gen 1:27).
 - e) This is a direct refutation of a basic tenant of the evolutionary theory of the origin of life.
 - i) Atheistic view: Namely, all life evolved from a single cell through natural processes over billions of years.
 - ii) Theistic view: A theological system that teaches that while evolution is true, God was there guiding the process as plants, animals, and the human race gradually evolved over millions or billions of years.
 - iii) Both views are repudiated by the creation account in Gen 1:1ff.
- 3) The fact that Christ is the singular Creator of “all things” would have been in stark contrast to the mainstream polytheistic beliefs that permeated Colossae and Asia Minor.
 - a) At the time Paul wrote Colossians (ca 61 AD), the region was administered by the Romans who blended the local pagan beliefs and practices with their own religion. The result was a hybrid form of paganism. This is known as syncretism.
 - b) Examples of Greek / Roman syncretism in Asia Minor: Apollo, the chief god of Hierapolis (approx. 13 mi from Colossae), was identified with the Phrygian sun god Lairbenus. Also, Leto, the mother of Apollo, has been compared to Kybele (Cybele), the Phrygian mother goddess.
- 4) After specifying the Creator, Paul defines the various components of creation.
 - a) All created things exist within “the heavens and on the earth” (cp. Gen. 1:1ff)
 - i) “All things” in the heavens would include things in the earth’s atmosphere and beyond (e.g. stars, planets, and other astronomical phenomena, Gen.1:16-18).

- ii) “All things” on the earth includes living and inanimate things (e.g. man, flora, fauna, etc., Gen. 1:11, 20-27).
- iii) Angels have the ability to travel within both spheres (cp. Job 1:6-7, 1 Peter 5:8-9).
- iv) Although angels exist within the both spheres, they existed prior to the creation of the universe (cp. Job 38:4-7, Ezek. 28:13).
- b) Paul indicates that “all things” pertains to that which is seen and unseen, “visible” and “invisible.”
 - i) “Visible things”: plants, animals, man, planets, etc.
 - ii) “Invisible” things: wind, subatomic particles (protons, neutrons, and electrons), the soul, angels, etc.
- 5) Jesus Christ, as the Creator, transcends these components of creation. He is the Creator and not part of creation.
- 6) In addition to the seen and unseen components, Paul further subdivides the creation in relation to power and authority.
- 7) “Thrones,” “dominions,” “rulers,” and “authorities” are closely related in meaning.
- 8) Although the terms are closely related in our context, variations in meaning are present.
 - a) “Thrones”(θρόνοι- THRONOS) may refer to a literal throne or in a figurative sense, a position of power or authority. In vs. 16 this term refers to a position of power as the throne is a symbol of authority. This is a case of metonymy where an attribute of something is used to stand for the things itself (e.g. laurels= glory; count heads= count people- cp. Lk. 1:32, Rev. 2:13; 16:10).
 - b) “Dominions” (κυριότητες- KURIOTES) in a like manner refers to a position of authority (cp. 2 Peter 2:10, Jude 1:8).
 - c) In the terms “Rulers” (ἄρχαι- ARCHE) and “authorities” (ἐξουσία- EXOUSIA) we begin to see a variation. In contrast to a sphere or position of power, the actual ruler or bearer of authority is in view (Lk. 12:11, Eph 3:10, 6:12, Col. 2:15, cp 2:10).
- 9) These terms comprise part of “all things.”
- 10) Many interpreters have cited this verse to support an angelic hierarchy. However, upon examination of each occurrence of the various terms, such an interpretation is not tenable.
- 11) Rather, in a general sense, Paul is referring to all positions of power (“thrones or dominions”) and to those individuals who actually wield the power (“rulers or authorities”).
- 12) In vs. 16, Paul is not explicit about whether these are angelic and/or human authorities.
- 13) However, in light of the pagan practices in Colossae, it is probable that Paul refers to angelic authorities (e.g. worship of angels, Col 2:18 cp. Eph. 3:10).
 - a) Historically, the worship of angels was common in Asia Minor.
 - b) In archeological digs in the region, amulets have been found with invocations to angels for protection. Superstition ruled the day!
 - c) Interestingly, some amulets bore the names of Michael and Gabriel. Apparently, fallen angels were not the only objects of worship (Dan. 12:1, Lk. 1:19).

- d) Unlike Satan and his fallen angels, the elect angels will not accept worship (Rev.19:10;22:8-9 cp. Lev. 17:7, Matt. 4:8-10, Rev. 9:20; 19:20).
 - e) State sponsored paganism, idolatry, and unbridled superstition in the region is evidence of demonic influence (2 Kings 21:1-7ff, Psa. 96:5, 1 Cor.10:20).
- 14) In other contexts, it is clear that angels are in positions of power. In these positions, the angels work either to further the plan of God or Satan.
- a) In the case of fallen angels, the manipulation of the leaders of nations is a primary goal. Phrased another way, angelic “rulers” seek to influence human rulers (Ezek. 28:12, Dan. 10:13, 20, Eph. 6:10-18).
 - b) Elect angels seek to thwart their goal (Dan 10:20; 11:1 cp. Rev.12:7-12).
- 15) Christ establishes human rulers and nations (Dan.4:24-25; 34-35, Acts17:26; Rom.13:1ff).
- 16) Regardless if angelic or human, all authority was created by Christ and, therefore subject to Him.
- 17) At the end of vs. 16, “all things” is repeated to emphasize the all inclusive scope of Christ’s creative work.
- 18) The second occurrence of “created”(ktizw- KTIDZO) is in the perfect tense.
- a) The perfect tense denotes an action that occurred in past and is completed (i.e. the creation of all things by Christ) but the emphasis is on the existing results in the present.
 - b) In other words, the creation of “all things” by Christ is viewed as a permanent result of a past creative act. Compare with the first occurrence which signifies the fact of creation.
- 19) “By Him and for Him” in vs. 16 indicate agency and purpose.
- a) God the Father is the primary cause of creation. However “by him”(diV autou-DI’ AUTOU) refers to Christ being the agent of creation (1 Cor.8:6, John 1:3, Heb.1:2).
 - b) “For Him” (eiV auton- EIS AUTON) indicates that Christ created all things to suit His purpose. As the Creator, it is His right.
- 20) In vs. 17, “He, Himself is before all things” emphatically declares that Christ, in spite of other false views encountered by the Colossians, is pre-existent and pre-eminent. Micah 5:2 " But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." Ephesians 1:21 "...far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.
- 21) In addition to the agency of Christ in all creation, Paul points out that He also is the cohesive agent that has held creation together.
- 22) Of course, vs. 17 is a direct refutation of deism which states that God has set the universe in motion but doesn’t interfere with how it operates.
- 23) In fact, the creation owes its continued existence or preservation to Christ (Heb. 1:3).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

- 1) “He”: the 3rd person personal pronoun, αὐτοῦ- AUTOS, “He.” Since the subject is expressed with the verb, this pronoun is intensive and denotes emphasis. Translate, “He, Himself.”
- 2) “Head”: the articular singular noun, ἡ κεφαλῆ, - HE KEPHALE, “head (lit.); a being of high status, head (fig.)” Translate “the head.”
- 3) “Body”: the articular singular noun, τὸ σῶμα- TO SOMA, “a body (lit); unified group of people, a body (fig.)”
- 4) “Church”: the articular singular noun, ἡ ἐκκλησία- HE EKKLESIA, “an assembly, gathering, a congregation or church.” This noun was commonly used throughout the Greco-Roman world and did not originate with the early Church.
- 5) “Beginning”: the singular noun, ἀρχή, - ARCHE, “a person or thing that commences an action, process or state, a beginning.” Paul has already used this noun in vs. 16 where it refers to “rulers.” In our verse, “the” is appropriately supplied based on the context.
- 6) “First-born”: the adjective, πρωτότοκος- PROTOTOKOS, “first-born.” Translate “first-born.” Also used in vs. 15.
- 7) “Dead”: the articular adjective, ὁ νεκρός – HO NEKROS, “lifeless, deceased, dead.”
- 8) “First place”: the present active participle of the verb, πρωτεύω – PROTEUO, “to be in the first position, to hold the highest rank in a group, to be first, have first place.” The verb occurs 1x.
- 9) “Everything”: the neuter plural adjective, ὅ παῖ- HO PAS, “every, each, all.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:18 He, Himself is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Colossians 1:18 He, Himself is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Analysis of vs. 18:

- 1) In vs. 16-17, the focus is on the preeminence of Christ in relation to the creation.
- 2) Now, in vs.18, Paul declares the preeminence of Christ over the church.
- 3) “He, Himself” is intensive and indicates that Christ alone is the “head.”
- 4) Paul figuratively depicts Christ as the head of the body or church.
 - a) In our context, the universal church is in view (cp local church, Col 4:16)
 - b) As the “head” (kefal h, - KEPHALE), Christ exercises control and direction over the church as the body. This demonstrates His preeminence (Acts 2:47, Eph. 1:22-23 cp. Eph. 5:23).
 - c) The implication in this analogy is that the body does not control the head.
 - d) The members of the “body” (σωμα- SOMA) are composed of individual believers.
 - e) Membership is based on saving faith and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (cp. 1 Cor.12:13, Eph. 4:4).
 - f) Each member is to hold fast to the head, Christ and advance to spiritual maturity (Eph. 4:15, Col. 2:19).
 - g) The individual members of the body will be given every opportunity to mature. Also, every logistical need will be provided in order for the believer to accomplish this goal (Matt. 6:25-33).
 - h) Another implication in Paul’s analogy is the unity of the body with the head or Christ with the church. A body without a head or vice versa is unnatural.
 - i) The unity extends to all members so no member is unimportant (Rom. 12:5, 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 12:12-27, Eph. 5:30).
 - ii) The church, as the body, will be united with Him in resurrection.
 - iii) Our unity with Him as believers, indicates that we will share in His destiny as joint heirs (Ro. 8:17, Eph. 3:6).
 - iv) Each member of His body will also share in His suffering (Col. 1:24, 2 Tim 2:8-10).
- 5) Christ is “the beginning” of a new spiritual creation, the church (cp. Matt. 16:18)
- 6) In addition, He is designated the “first-born from the dead.”
 - a) This is a direct reference to His literal, physical resurrection from the dead.
 - b) Specifically, “the dead” (ὁ νεκροῦ – HO NEKROS) refers to those who are physically dead (cp Rev. 1:18).
 - c) His resurrection is essential to our salvation (1Cor 15:12-20).
 - d) His resurrection guarantees the resurrection of the universal church (1 Cor. 12:23).
- 7) As the God-man He gained a new type of preeminence as the first person to be resurrected.
- 8) Again Paul uses “He Himself” to emphasize that Christ alone has “first place in everything.”

- 9) He alone possesses a permanent position of priority and authority in all things. John 3:31 "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all."

*See the Doctrine of Resurrection.

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:19-20 “For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; [through Him, *I say*,] whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

- 1) “It was the *Father's* good pleasure”: the aorist active indicative verb, εὐδοκῶ- EUDOKEO, “to be well pleased, to delight, to consider something as good.” A compound verb, eu= EU, “well, good” + δοκῶ – DOKEO, “to be of opinion, to seem.” “*Father's*” is supplied and is not present in vs. 19. However, God the Father is the subject of this verb with θεοῦ- THEOS, “God.” in vs. 15 as the antecedent. Translate “He considered it good.”
- 2) “All the fullness”: the singular adjective, πᾶς- PAS, “all, every” + the articular singular noun, πλήρωμα- PLEROMA, “that which fills, that which is brought to fullness or completion, sum total, fullness.”
- 3) “To dwell”: the aorist active infinitive of the verb, κατοικῶ – KAOIKEO, “to live in a locality for any length of time, to live, to dwell.”
- 4) “Through Him”: the preposition, ἐν- EN, “by, through” + the locative 3rd person pronoun, αὐτοῦ- AUTOS, “Him.” The construction expresses agency.
- 5) “To reconcile”: the aorist active infinitive of the verb, ἀποκαταλλάσσω- APOKATALLASSO, “to transfer from state to a different state, to restore, to reconcile.”
- 6) “To Himself”: the preposition εἰς- EIS, “to, for” + the accusative 3rd person pronoun, αὐτοῦ- AUTOS, “Him.” This refers to God the Father. Translate “to Him.”
- 7) “Having made peace”: the aorist active participle, εἰρηνοποιῶν- EIRENOPOIEO, “to make peace. The term occurs 1x in N.T.
- 8) “Blood”: the articular singular noun, τὸ αἷμα- TO AIMA, “(lit.) blood; (fig.) blood as constituting the life of an individual, life-blood.”
- 9) “His cross”: the articular singular noun, ὁ σταυρὸς- HO STAUROS, “a pole to be placed in the ground and used for capital punishment, a cross.”
- 10) “Through Him, *I say*”: This prepositional phrase is a controversial inclusion into the Greek text. Omit in translation.
- 11) “On earth”: the articular singular noun, ἡ γῆ- HE GE, “the earth.” Translate “on the earth.”
- 12) “In heaven”: the articular plural noun, οἱ οὐρανοὶ- HO OURANOS, “heavens.” Translate “the heavens.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:19-20 “For He considered it good for all the fullness to dwell in Him,²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Him, having made peace through the blood of His cross; whether things on the earth or things in the heavens.”

Colossians 1:19-20 “For He considered it good for all the fullness to dwell in Him,²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Him, having made peace through the blood of His cross; whether things on the earth or things in the heavens.”

Analysis of vss. 19-20:

- 1) Paul has already established the preeminence of Christ over all creation and the church in vss.15-18.
- 2) Beginning in vs.19, he demonstrates the preeminence of Christ in relation to His person and work.
- 3) “All the fullness” refers to the totality of Deity or Divine essence (cp.Col. 2:9).
- 4) “Fullness” (πλήρωμα- PLEROMA) was a common term in the Koine. The term may have been borrowed and the meaning revised by the heretics in Colossae in order to suit their doctrines.
 - a) “Fullness” was used to denote the sum total of divine emanations or intermediaries through which men had contact with God.
 - b) By some, Christ was merely one of many attendant intermediaries.
 - c) Consider the improper use of the word “spiritual” by those who distort sound doctrine (e.g. “spiritual”= religious).
- 5) The essence of Deity or “fullness” is undiminished in any form. This is seen in the use of the adjective “all” (πᾶς- PAS) with the noun “fullness” (e.g. eternal life, cp. 1 John 1:1-3, Rev. 1:8)
- 6) Furthermore, this “fullness” resides in the humanity of Jesus Christ.
- 7) Paul is making a direct reference to the perfect union of Deity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.
- 8) At the incarnation this union became eternal (cp. Heb 1:3)
- 9) God the Father “considered it good” for Christ to become the unique God-man (cp. Lk. 3:22, 2 Peter 1:17).
- 10) The hypostatic union in Christ was a primary component in the Divine plan and policy of grace extended towards mankind (cp. Phil 2:6-11).
- 11) In vs. 20, Paul elaborates on another component of the Divine plan.
- 12) God also considered it good “to reconcile all things to Him” through the agency of His Son, the God-man.
- 13) At the beginning of vs. 20, “through Him” clearly demonstrates that Christ is the agent of reconciliation (Rom. 5:11).
- 14) Reconciliation (ἀποκατάστασις- APOKATALLASSO) addresses the issue of making peace between former antagonists or enemies.
- 15) The issue of reconciliation has been an issue of utmost importance for mankind.
- 16) In our context, phase 1 reconciliation is in view. Consider the following:
 - a) Reconciliation is the removal of the barrier between God and man that resulted from the fall (Eph.2:14-17).
 - b) The barrier consists of sin and mankind is viewed as an enemy of God (Rom. 3:23 cp. Rom. 5:10).
 - c) Although Christ is the person or agent of reconciliation, individuals are reconciled to God the Father (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

- 17) “Through the blood of the cross” indicates the manner through which reconciliation was accomplished (Cp. Ephesians 2:16 “...and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity...”).
- a) Reconciliation or peace with God is a potential for all mankind based on Christ’s work on the cross (Rom. 5:1, Col 1:22 cp. 1 Tim. 4:10).
 - b) Although Christ bled in connection with His crucifixion, “blood” doesn’t refer to the actual shedding of physical blood. Rather, it represents His spiritual death (i.e. 3 hours of sin bearing, Matt. 19:45-46).
 - i) In certain contexts, the shedding of blood was figuratively used to represent to death (cp 1 Kings 2:5).
 - ii) Christ did not bleed to death while being crucified. He died physically by His own volition after His spiritual death. In other words, He died twice (Lk. 23:46, John 19:30-35 cp. Isa. 53:9, the case of Adam).
 - iii) Animal blood was used under the Old Testament shadow soteriology to portray Christ's spiritual death for sins (Lev.17; cp. Jn.1:29; Heb.9:7, 12-14,18-21,25; 10:4,19,29; 12:24; 1 Peter 1:18,20).
 - iv) The blood of the sacrificial animals must be recognized as constituting a representative analogy to the spiritual death of Christ, the lesser representing the greater, the visible representing the invisible.
 - v) Christ’s spiritual death was a result of His perfect sin bearing (cp 2 Cor.5:21, 1 Peter 2:24).
- 18) Acceptance of the work of Christ on the cross (faith in Christ) secures reconciliation for the individual. It makes the potential of peace a reality. (John 3:16, 18 cp. 2 Cor. 5:19).
- 19) Paul uses “all things” and “whether things on the earth or things in the heavens” to set the parameters of reconciliation. It is universal.
- a) Reconciliation is available to all who desire it. Those who don’t want peace will be eternally estranged from God (cp. 1 Tim. 2:4).
 - b) Lower creation (plants, animals, etc.) also came under a curse at the fall and continues to groan under this curse. Eventually, due to Christ’s work this curse will be completely lifted in the eternal state (Gen 3:14-19, Rom. 8:19-22, Rev. 22:3).
 - c) Other passages make it clear that reconciliation doesn’t apply to angels (Heb. 2:16).
- 20) Based on the principles Paul has advanced since vs. 15, Christ, as the perfect God-man, was the only qualified and capable agent to reconcile the relationship between God and mankind.

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:21 “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,”

- 1) “Were”: the plural present active participle of the verb, εἰμι- EIMI, “to exist, to be.”
- 2) “Formerly”: the adverb, ποτε- POTE, “once, formerly.”
- 3) “Alienated”: the plural perfect passive participle of the verb, ἀπαλλοτριώ- APALLOTRIOO, “to be separated from, to estrange, to alienate.”
- 4) “Hostile”: the plural adjective, ἐχθροί- ECHTHROS, “hated, hating, or hostile.”
- 5) “Mind”: the singular articular noun, ἡ διάνοια- HE DIANOIA, “a mode of thinking; disposition, thought, mind.”
- 6) “engaged”: This term is not in the Greek text. Omit.
- 7) “Evil deeds”: the plural articular noun, τὰ ἔργα- TO ERGON, “deeds, action, works” + the plural articular adjective, τὰ πονηρὰ- TO PONEROS, “worthless, bad, wicked, evil.” The restrictive attributive construction denotes distinctiveness.

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:21 “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, in evil deeds,”

Colossians 1:21 “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, in evil deeds,”

Analysis of vs. 21:

- 1) Paul moves from a general to a particular discussion of reconciliation.
- 2) Previously, in vs. 20, the object of reconciliation was “all things.”
- 3) However, in our verse, the object(s) are the believers in Colossae.
- 4) In order to provide emphasis, Paul gives a synopsis of their state prior to their actual reconciliation through saving faith.
- 5) “Formerly” (pote- POTE) indicates that they existed in this condition at an unspecified time in the past but prior to the writing of this epistle.
- 6) He uses a trio of terms to provide an unflinching look at their pre-salvation state.
 - a) The Colossians had been “alienated.” Specifically they had been “alienated” or estranged from God.
 - i) The Greek verb tenses stress that their past state of alienation or estrangement from God was continual and unabated prior to saving faith.
 - ii) The pre-salvation state of the Colossians is a microcosm of all humanity. As we are all descendants of Adam via genetics, every human has an OSN which results in spiritual death (Psa. 51:5, Rom. 7:17).
 - iii) Hence, all mankind is in an estranged relationship with God from birth due to our spiritually dead condition (Rom. 5:12-21, 1 Cor. 15:22 cp. Eph. 2:1-3; 4:18).
 - iv) The singular exception was Jesus Christ who did not possess an OSN at birth due to the virgin birth. 1 John 3:5 “And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.”
 - b) Paul further states that the Colossians were “hostile in mind.”
 - i) They manifested an antagonistic mental attitude toward God and His plan.
 - ii) In fact, an unregenerate individual is incapable of properly understanding Divine viewpoint. His thinking is dominated by the desires of the OSN (1 Cor. 2:14, Titus 3:3).
 - iii) Regardless of demeanor or overt appearance, the unbeliever is hostile toward God in his thinking. It is impossible for him to be pleasing to God (Rom.8:7-8, cp Ro. 5:10, 2 Cor. 11:13-15, Gal. 5:17).
 - c) In their former “alienated” condition, the Colossians habitually practiced “evil deeds.”
 - i) Evil is anything that is not in compliance with sound doctrine, the Divine viewpoint. In our verse, Paul refers to overt behavior.
 - ii) Based on the Greek syntax (i.e. restrictive attributive), the evil nature of these deeds is given emphasis. These deeds are very evil!
 - iii) Later in the epistle, Paul points out to the Colossians that their unregenerate state was characterized by behavior that violated Divine standards (Col. 3:5-9).
 - iv) The evil behavior was the offspring of a hostile mental attitude toward God (cp. Matt. 15:19, Mark 7:21-23).

- 7) Those who do not refrain from evil deeds, comply with the policies of the Evil One, Satan (John 8:44, 1 John 5:19, cp. James 4:7).
- 8) In the case of believers, it is critical that we comply with sound doctrine in everything we think, say, and do.
- 9) Indeed, believers are commanded to refrain from every form of evil. We are to have a vehement dislike for that which is evil. Do not engage in evil...mentally or overtly (Rom. 12:9, 1 Thess. 5:22)!
- 10) In the last days, we face an onslaught of various forms of evil from every angle. Evil is proceeding from bad to worse! The adjusted believer should be comforted with knowledge that he will have Divine protection and strength to persevere under the pressure (2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:3-4, 2 Peter 3:3, cp Eph 6:13, 2 Thess. 3:3, 2 Tim. 3:13-14).
- 11) Truly, our verse indicates that the pre-salvation state of the Colossians was completely dysfunctional.
- 12) What relationship that is based on estrangement, mental hostility, and evil deeds (i.e. spiritual death) could be anything but dysfunctional?
- 13) Thankfully, this was their former and not current state.

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:22 “yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

- 1) “Yet...now”: the adverb of time, $\nu\upsilon\iota$ -NUNI, “now” + the conjunction, $\delta\epsilon$ - DE, “but.”
Translate “but now.”
- 2) “Reconciled”: the aorist active indicative verb, $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$ -
APOKATALLASSO, “to transfer from state to a different state, to restore, to
reconcile.” Translate “He reconciled.”
- 3) “Fleshly body”: the articular singular noun, $\tau\omicron\ \sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ - TO SOMA, “the body” + the
articular singular noun, $\eta\ \sigma\alpha\rho\chi$ - HE SARX, “the flesh.”
- 4) “Through death”: the preposition, $\epsilon\kappa$ - EN, “by, through” + the articular singular noun,
 $\theta\alpha\ \nu\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon$ - HO THANATOS, “(lit.) physical death, (fig.) spiritual death.”
- 5) “In order to present”: the aorist active infinitive of the verb, $\pi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$ - PARISTEMI,
“to cause to be present, to present.”
- 6) “Before”: the preposition, $\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\omega\pi\iota\omicron\upsilon$ - KATENOPION, “in the presence of, before.”
- 7) “Holy”: the plural adjective, $\alpha\gamma\iota\omicron\upsilon$ - HAGIOS, “holy, dedicated to God, set apart.”
- 8) “Blameless”: the plural adjective, $\alpha\mu\omega\mu\omicron\upsilon$ - AMOMOS, “without defect, unblemished,
blameless.”
- 9) “Beyond reproach”: the plural adjective, $\alpha\eta\gamma\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon$ - ANENGLETOS, “free from
reproach, void of offence, without accusation.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:22 “But now He reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order
to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

Colossians 1:22 “But now He reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

Analysis of vs. 22:

- 1) In vs. 21, Paul provided a synopsis of the Colossians pre-salvation condition.
- 2) However, in our verse, “but now” indicates an emphatic contrast to their former state.
- 3) Now the Colossians had been “reconciled” by Christ through saving faith.
 - a) Those who were formerly alienated and estranged are now at peace with God.
 - i) As stated in the analysis of vss. 19-20, due to sin, there was a barrier between man and God. Due to this barrier, mankind was estranged from God, in a state of enmity. Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 5:10 “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”
 - ii) Reconciliation is the removal of this barrier or enmity.
 - iii) The Gospel is the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19 cp. Eph. 6:15).
 - iv) The benefit of reconciliation, peace with God, is obtained via saving faith in Christ. Romans 5:10 “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”
 - b) Paul already used the same verb, “reconcile” (apokatallassw- APOKATALLASSO) in vs. 20 in reference to “all things.” Here, the believers in Colossae are the object.
 - c) Christ is the subject of the verb which indicates He alone accomplished the work of reconciliation. He is the reconciler.
 - d) In addition, the verb views His work from the standpoint of an existing result. His work is permanent and cannot be eradicated (cp. Heb. 9:28; 10:12).
- 4) “His fleshly body” indicates that during the crucifixion, Christ bore the sins of mankind in His actual humanity (1 Peter 2:24 cp. fig. use of “body” in Col. 1:18).
- 5) At the time of His death(s), Christ did not have a type of pseudo or super human body that was especially designed to bear sin. Rather, it was a normal human body (i.e. true humanity) which is in accordance with the correct understanding of the hypostatic union (Heb.2:14, 1 John 4:2, 2 John 1:7).
- 6) Paul states reconciliation is accomplished by means of Christ’s death.
 - a) A literal translation from the Greek is “through the death.” The definite article, “the,” draws attention to the term “death.” What death?
 - b) In our verse, Paul uses the phrase “through the death” as a parallel to “through the blood of His cross” in vs. 20.
 - c) Both phrases refer to His spiritual death. This death occurred during His crucifixion as a result of the judgment of sin in His body.
 - i) During His sin bearing, He was separated from the other members of the Godhead.
 - ii) His physical death followed after this was accomplished (Matt 27:45-46, 50, John 19:28-30, cp. 2 Cor.5:21).

- d) Vs. 20 depicts His spiritual death on the cross. Whereas our verse stresses His spiritual death in His “fleshly body.”
- 7) The primary purpose of Christ’s work of reconciliation is expressed to the Colossians. Specifically, to present them “before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”
 - a) “To present” indicates purpose. The word has two separate nuances:
 - i) It is used of the presentation or offering of a sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).
 - ii) Also, it may be used as a legal term as in bringing or standing before an authority (Acts 27:24).
 - iii) In either case, the Colossians themselves will be presented “before Him.”
 - iv) This will occur in phase 3 (cp. Col. 1:23).
 - b) “Before Him” indicates that the Colossians will be presented before God. It is probable that the Father is in view, but based on the context, it difficult to determine whether Paul is specifically referring to the Father or the Son. A case can be made for either member. However it is certain that the Colossians will eventually be presented before both the Father and the Son.
 - i) In the presence of the Father (Jude 1:24-25).
 - ii) In the presence of the Son (2 Cor. 5:10, Eph 5:27).
- 8) The trio of adjectives, “holy”, “blameless”, and “beyond reproach” provide a glaring contrast to the trio of traits that characterized the pre-salvation state of the Colossians in vs. 21(i.e. alienation, mental hostility, and evil deeds).
- 9) Based on the conditions set in vs. 23, these terms will describe the believer in phase 3 who continually perseveres in sound doctrine, “the faith,” during his phase 2 (cp.1 John 2:28).
 - a) Believers are commanded to be “holy” or set apart in their behavior. This is accomplished through the adherence to Divine viewpoint (1 Peter 1:15 cp. Eph. 5:27).
 - b) “Blameless” refers to being without fault or defect (Eph 1:4, Heb. 9:14, 1 Peter 1:9 cp. Phil. 2:15).
 - c) As a legal term, “beyond reproach” indicates being void of offence or without accusation (1 Cor. 1:8).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:23 “if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

- 1) “If indeed”: the conditional marker, ei;- EI, “if” + the particle, ge- GE, “indeed.”
- 2) “Continue”: the present active indicative verb, epimēnw- EPIMENO, “to stay or persevere, to remain.” The present tense signifies ongoing action. Translate “continually remain.”
- 3) “The faith”: the articular singular noun, h pistij- HE PISTIS, “confidence, trust, faith.” The noun may refer to a belief directed towards a person/thing or it may indicate the content of what is believed.
- 4) “Firmly established”: the perfect passive participle of the verb, qemel iow- THEMELIOO, “to lay a foundation, strengthen, establish.” In order to reflect the perfect tense and passive voice, translate “having been established.”
- 5) “Steadfast”: the plural adjective, edraibj- EDRAIOS, “sitting, firm, steadfast.”
- 6) “Not moved away”: the negative particle, mh- ME + the present passive participle of the verb, metakinew. The verb occurs 1x in the N.T. and is a compound of the preposition meta- META which denotes a change or difference + the verb kinew, KINEO, “to move” (cp. metanoew- METANOEO, “to change one’s mind.”).
- 7) “The hope”: the articular singular noun, h el pij- HE ELPIS, “expectation, confidence, hope.”
- 8) “Gospel”: the articular singular noun, to euaggeļ ion- TO EUANGELION, “good news, Gospel.”
- 9) “Heard”: the aorist active indicative verb, akouw- AKOUO, “to understand, to listen, to hear.”
- 10) “Proclaimed”: the aorist passive participle of the verb, khrussw- KERUSSO, “to announce, make known, to proclaim.”
- 11) “All creation”: the singular adjective, paj- PAS, “all, every” + the singular noun, ktisij- KTISIS, “creation.”
- 12) “Heaven”: the articular singular noun, ouranoj- OURANOS, “heaven.”
- 13) “Was made”: the aorist indicative verb, ginomai- GINOMAI, “to become.” Translate “became.”
- 14) “Minister”: the singular noun, diakonoj- DIAKONOS, “minister, helper, servant.” Translate “servant.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:23 “if indeed you continually remain in the faith having been established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a servant.”

Colossians 1:23 “if indeed you continually remain in the faith having been established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a servant.”

Analysis of vs. 23:

- 1) In order to be presented “holy and blameless and beyond reproach” in their ph. 3, the Colossians must meet the ph. 2 condition set forth in our verse.
- 2) The condition set forth by Paul is that the Colossians will have to “continually remain in the faith.”
 - a) “If indeed” sets forth a 1st class condition.
 - b) The 1st class condition points out the reality of the condition.
 - c) Paul uses the particle, ge- GE, “indeed” to intensify the importance of the condition. This particle was used to “focus the attention upon a single idea, and place it, as it were, in the limelight... in oral utterance it would be accompanied by a change in pitch of voice at certain points in the context.”
- 3) “The faith” refers to the content of what is believed, the realm of Bible doctrine (Jude 1:3 cp. with faith in the active sense, Matt.9:2, Col 1:4; 2:5).
- 4) In to our context, if the Colossians “continually remained in the faith”, they would be presented as “holy and blameless and beyond reproach” in their ph.3.
- 5) Furthermore, the condition must be fulfilled over the duration of their phase 2.
- 6) Paul indicates that their continuity in relation to “the faith” or sound doctrine is characterized by the following:
 - a) “Having been established.” The perfect tense of this participle signifies that the Colossians had been established in regard to sound doctrine in sometime in the past. However, emphasis is placed on the finished result...they continued to be established in sound doctrine at the time of the writing of the epistle.
 - b) The Colossians were to be “steadfast” or unwavering in their thinking and applications in relation to Divine viewpoint (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - c) They were not to be moved away or shaken from their hope in the Gospel (i.e. eternal salvation, future reward, cp Col. 1:5).
- 7) At the time of writing the Colossians were making spiritual progress (Col. 1:4, 6; 2:5; 4:2).
- 8) Even so, Paul still stresses adherence to the realm of Divine viewpoint beginning with the Gospel.
- 9) Their foundation in sound doctrine started by Epaphras was firm but they were not to allow themselves to get complacent in their niche. Especially since they were under pressure from the heretics in Colossae.
- 10) The Colossians were to “continually remain in the faith” through obedience to principles of sound doctrine (cp. John 14:21).
- 11) As this condition applied to the Colossians in 61 AD, it equally applicable to believers today. We must maintain a strong foundation by being unwilling to compromise sound doctrine (Rom 13:14).

- 12) Those who remain in “the faith” recognize the fundamental importance of Bible doctrine (Prov. 4:7, Heb. 10:25, cp. Josh. 22:5, Job 28, Psa. 19:7-10; 119:106, 130, Prov. 3:1-18; 16:16,).
- 13) We must dispose of any and all distractions in order to attain spiritual maturity (Mark 4:16-19, Heb 12:1).
- 14) Beware of shoddy arguments that undermine foundational principles of sound doctrine (cp. Col. 2:8).
- 15) The attacks may from those sources closest to you so “protect” yourselves at all times. Examine every position carefully as it relates to sound doctrine (Acts 20:28-30 cp. Prov. 14:7; 17:12, 1 Cor 15:33, 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15).
- 16) If a believer allows the “erosion” of the principles of Divine viewpoint that make up his doctrinal foundation, then the foundation will be compromised and may eventually collapse (i.e. reversionism- Prov. 12:15; 14:12, 27:22, Isa. 5:20).
- 17) Paul emphatically declares that Gospel, of which he became a servant, had a universal proclamation.
- 18) This is similar to his earlier discussion in the epistle (Col. 1:6).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

- 1) “Now”: the adverb of time, nuñ- NUN, “now.” The term signifies focus on the moment.
- 2) “Rejoice”: the present active indicative verb, cairw- CHAIRO, “to be glad, to rejoice.” Translate “keep on rejoicing.”
- 3) “Sufferings”: the plural noun, paqhma-PATHEMA, “that which is endured, suffering.”
- 4) “Flesh”: the articular singular noun, h sarx- HE SARX, “the flesh.”
- 5) “I do my share...in filling up”: the present active indicative verb, antanapl hrow- ANTANAPLEROO, “to supply as a substitute or balance, to make up, to fill up.” Translate “continue filling up.”
- 6) “That which is lacking”: the plural articular noun, to, usterhma- TO HUSTEREMA, “need, deficiency, lack.” Literally “the lacking things.”
- 7) “Afflictions”: the plural noun, ql i/yij- THLIPSIS, “a pressing together, pressure tribulation, affliction.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:24 Now I keep on rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and I continue filling up that which is lacking of Christ’s afflictions in my flesh on behalf of His body, which is the church.

Colossians 1:24 Now I keep on rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and I continue filling up that which is lacking of Christ's afflictions in my flesh on behalf of His body, which is the church.

Analysis of vs. 24:

- 1) In vs. 24, Paul begins by making a statement regarding his personal application towards the believers in Colossae.
- 2) "Now" focuses attention on the moment and, Paul, at the moment was imprisoned in Rome.
- 3) Although incarcerated, he was able to "continue rejoicing" in his "sufferings."
 - a) During his 1st imprisonment, Paul was essentially under guarded house arrest (Acts 28:16).
 - b) He was able to receive visitors during his 2 year imprisonment (Acts 28:30).
- 4) The "rejoicing" manifested an ongoing state of happiness or well being in spite of his sufferings.
- 5) Certainly, the apostle was not unaffected by his imprisonment. As this was the latter part of his ministry (c.a. 61 A.D.), He had already endured incredible suffering (2 Cor. 11:23-12:10 cp. Acts 27- 28:4).
- 6) However, he did not base his well being or happiness on his current niche.
- 7) Rather, he focused on sound doctrine regardless of his circumstances. His ongoing "rejoicing" demonstrates this fact (cp. Phil. 4:11-13).
- 8) Paul recognized that he was going to continue to suffer but he considered it incomparable to eternal reward (cp. Rom. 8:18).
- 9) In addition, he had confidence that God was actively working for his benefit (Rom. 8:28).
- 10) Paul suffered on behalf of the Colossian church, on behalf of believers that he had never seen (Col 2:1).
- 11) The manner in which Paul conducted himself while he endured his many sufferings, provided an example for the Colossians to follow (cp. 2 Thess. 3:9).
- 12) As Paul, the stable and adjusted believer must have a proper mental attitude in order to acclimate under suffering. The proper mental attitude consists of the following:
 - a) Inner peace ((John 16:33, Phil. 4:6-7).
 - b) Inner happiness (2 Cor. 7:4, James 1:2, 1 Peter 4:13).
 - c) Willingness to suffer (Rom 12:12, Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim 2:3, 9).
- 13) Do you manifest happiness in the midst of your suffering and testing? If not why not? We must examine every aspect of our thinking and adjust according to the Divine viewpoint (cp. Psa. 119:50, Prov.3:18).
- 14) Once again Paul returns to the body metaphor in the last half of our verse.
- 15) He discusses the afflictions in his literal body as it relates to Christ's figurative body, the church.
- 16) The apostle indicates there is an allotment of afflictions that he is continuing to fill up on behalf of the body or universal church as a whole.
 - a) As a member of the body, Paul was filling up his individual share (i.e. "that which is lacking") of the Church's allotted afflictions.

- b) “In my flesh” points out that Paul experienced afflictions in his physical body (Acts 9:16 cp. Acts 14:3-5; 16:22-24, 2 Cor. 1:8).
 - c) “Christ’s afflictions” refer to those pressures that Paul endured as a member of the His body (2 Tim. 1:8).
 - d) Paul is not indicating that Christ’s suffering and work on the cross was in any way deficient or lacking and that the Church must compensate through our corporate suffering.
- 17) It is evident from this context that each member of His body, the Church will encounter their portion of afflictions and pressure in the Angelic conflict. It is not a matter of “if” but “when” and “how much.”
 - 18) As our Savior, we will be persecuted for the truth of sound doctrine (John 15:17-20, 1 Peter 2:21, 23 cp. 2 Thess 1:6, 2 Tim 3:12).
 - 19) Undeserved suffering as in the case of Paul, finds favor with God (1 Peter 2:19-20; cp 1 Peter 4:19).
 - 20) In fact, as believers we should not be surprised or ashamed by pressures and antagonism from the world (1 Peter 4:12, 1 John 3:13).
 - 21) It is critical to persevere through our afflictions and pressures with the Divine viewpoint and not react with fear, anger, etc. (Job 1:21-22 cp. Job 2:9; Rom 8:15, Heb. 10:32-34).
 - 22) Regardless of your suffering as a believer, it is impossible for you to be separated or removed from God’s plan (Rom. 8:35-39).
 - 23) In addition, take comfort that in all our afflictions we can have comfort and encouragement from God (2 Cor. 1:3-7).
 - 24) As believers we must comfort one another in the local church and realize our sufferings are not unique. Of course our comfort must be based on sound doctrine (1 Thess. 4:18, cp Gal. 6:10, 1 Peter 5:9).
 - 25) A believer who acclimates to his suffering will gain eternal reward (2 Cor. 4:17-18).
 - 26) Do not give up the fight for any reason! Especially since we are in the “last days” (Gal 6:9, 2 Thess. 3:13 cp. 2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:25 “Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out [the *preaching of*] the word of God”

- 1) “I was made”: the aorist indicative verb, ginomai- GINOMAI, “to come about, to become” + the nominative 1st person pronoun, egw- EGO, “I” but is used as an intensive pronoun to emphasize the subject. Translate “I, myself became.”
- 2) “Minister”: the singular noun, diakonoj- DIAKONOS, “minister, helper, servant.” Translate “servant.”
- 3) “Stewardship”: the articular accusative singular noun, h' oikonomia- HE OIKONOMIA, “the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship.”
- 4) “Bestowed”: the articular aorist passive participle of the verb, didwmi- DIDOMI, “to grant, to bestow, to give” + the dative 1st person pronoun, egw- EGO, “I.” Translate “given to me.”
- 5) “For your benefit”: the preposition phrase, eij- EIS, “to, for” + the accusative 2nd person pronoun, su- SU, “you.” Translate “for you.”
- 6) “I might fully carry out”: the aorist active infinitive of the verb, pl hrow- PLEROO, “to fill up, to complete, to fulfill.” The infinitive expresses purpose. Translate “in order to fulfill.”
- 7) “*The preaching of*”: Absent in the Greek. Omit in translation.
- 8) “The word of God”: the articular singular noun, o logoj- HO LOGOS, “word” + the articular masc. singular noun, o qeoj- HO THEOS, “God.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:25 “Of *this church* I, myself became a servant according to the stewardship from God given to me for you, in order to fulfill the word of God”

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Analysis of vs. 25:

- 1) Paul begins vs. 25 by emphatically declaring himself a “servant” of the church.
- 2) In a similar manner, he had declared himself a “servant” of the Gospel in vs. 23.
- 3) In regards to being a “servant” (diakonoj- DIAKONOS) of the Gospel and the church, Paul is an excellent example of a believer who persevered to the end of his ph. 2 in spite of intense pressures.
 - a) He proclaimed the Gospel throughout a vast area (Rom. 15:24, 28, 2 Cor. 10:13-14).
 - b) He served labored as a servant of the church (Phil. 2:16, Col. 1:29).
- 4) The “stewardship” was given to Paul from God.
 - a) A “stewardship” (oikonomia -OIKONOMIA) is similar to an administrative office with its inherent responsibilities.
 - b) It was not an assumed position or derived from human origin.
- 5) In our verse, the “stewardship” was to benefit the Colossians.
- 6) As an apostle, Paul had specific responsibilities to meet within this “stewardship.”
- 7) The primary responsibility of Paul’s “stewardship” was to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:1-2, 8).
- 8) Other contexts demonstrate that a major portion of Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles which included the believers in Colossae (Acts 9:15, Rom 1:13-14, Gal 1:16, 2:7, 1 Tim 2:7).
- 9) The apostle points out that the purpose of the “stewardship” is to “fulfill the word of God.”
 - a) In other passages, “the word of God” refers to the body of truth that is received, proclaimed, taught, etc (Acts 8:14; 13:5; 18:11).
 - b) In our verse, fulfilling the word of God signifies the fulfillment of God’s directive will as it related to the Gentiles in the Church Age.
- 10) Paul’s stewardship was not completed until his execution by Nero in c.a. 68 A.D (2 Tim. 4:6, 17).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:26-27 “*that is, the mystery*¹ *which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints,*²⁷ *to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery*¹ *among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

- 1) “The mystery”: the articular accusative neuter singular noun, musthriōn- MUSTERION, “secret, mystery.”
- 2) “Which has been hidden”: the articular singular perfect passive participle of the verb, apokruptw- APOKRUPTO, “to keep secret, to hide.”
- 3) “Ages”: the articular plural noun, aion- AION, “time, age.”
- 4) “Generations”: the articular plural noun, genea- GENEAE, “race, descendant, generation.”
- 5) “Manifested”: the aorist passive indicative verb, phaneroō- PHANEROO, “to disclose, to reveal. Translate “revealed.”
- 6) “Willed”: the aorist active indicative, theloō- to wish, to will.”
- 7) “To make known”: the aorist active infinitive of the verb, gnōrizō- GNORIDZO, “to be knowledgeable, to know.”
- 8) “The riches of the glory”: the articular singular noun, ploutos- PLOUTOS, “abundance, wealth, riches” (collective singular) + the articular singular noun, doxa- DOXA, “magnificent, glory.” Translate “the glorious riches.”
- 9) “Among the Gentiles”: the preposition, en-EN, “in, among” + the articular plural noun, ethnos- ETHNOS, “nation, people, Gentile.”
- 10) “Christ in you”: the articular masculine noun, christos- CHRISTOS, “Christ” + the preposition, en-EN, “in, among” + the 2nd person plural pronoun, su- SU, “you.”
- 11) “The hope of glory”: the articular singular noun, elpis- ELPIS, “confidence, hope” + the articular singular noun, doxa- DOXA, “magnificent, glory.” Translate “the glorious hope.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:26-27 “*that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been revealed to His saints,*²⁷ *to whom God willed to make known what is the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the glorious hope.*”

Colossians 1:26-27 “*that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations; but has now been revealed to His saints,²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the glorious hope.”

Analysis of vss. 26-27:

- 1) In vs. 26, Paul begins to discuss in detail a Divine revelation that is unique.
- 2) In the Greek text, “the mystery” (musth ρ ion- MUSTERION) is in apposition to “the word of God” in vs. 25.
 - a) In apposition, a noun refers to or renames the 1st noun by a different name (e.g. Phil 3:20, Savior = Lord Jesus Christ).
 - b) In our verse, “the word of God” is renamed as “the mystery.”
 - c) Hence, “the mystery” is specific portion of God’s directive will that is fulfilled in the Church Age.
- 3) In the Greco-Roman world, the term “mystery” (musth ρ ion- MUSTERION) was commonly used in various pagan cults to refer their secret rites or doctrines. These pagan rites would only be revealed to those who were initiated in the cult.
- 4) “The earliest known mysteries, from at least as early as 1875 B.C., are those connected with the legend of the god Osiris in Egypt. The ancient Greeks had many local mystery rites such as the Eleusinian Mysteries, which included the cult of Demeter, the goddess of harvest. Dionysus (god of wine), Cybele (goddess of nature), and Orpheus (poet and musician) were also the focus of cult rituals in ancient Greece. In the 2nd century B.C., at the beginning of the Greco-Roman period, there was a revival of mystery religions, which influenced one another. Mithraism—a cult of Mithra, ancient Persian god of light and wisdom—belongs to this period.”
- 5) “The sacred rituals brought to the initiates secret religious doctrines, which in many instances were concerned with the continuance of life beyond the grave. The mysteries consisted of purifications, sacrificial offerings, processions, songs, dances, and dramatic performances. Often the birth, suffering, death, and resurrection of a god were enacted in dramatic form. The aim of the mysteries seems to have been twofold, namely, to give comfort and moral instruction for life on earth, and to inspire hope for life after death.”
- 6) Clearly, Paul uses this term without any pagan connotations. In fact, throughout the N.T. the term is commonly used for Divine revelation (Luke 8:10, 1 Cor. 2:1, 7; 4:1; 13:2, Col. 2:2; 4:3, 1 Tim. 3:19).
- 7) Furthermore, Paul describes “the mystery” as having “been hidden from the *past* ages and generations.”
 - a) The verb “hidden” (apokruptw- APOKRUPTO) occurs 4x in the N.T. It refers to the act whereby God conceals His Divine viewpoint from various segments of mankind (Luke 10:21, 1 Cor. 2:7, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:26).
 - b) “Ages” (aiwn- AION) refers to different periods of history or from the Divine viewpoint, different dispensations (cp. Mark. 10:30, Eph 1:21).
 - c) “Generations” (genea- GENEAE), in this context, specifies various peoples living at the same time within a dispensation (Phil 2:15).

- d) Hence, the “mystery” was completely concealed by God from every individual in every previous dispensation.
- 8) “Now” this mystery has been “revealed” or disclosed to all believers in the Church Age.
 - a) The time of writing of the Colossian epistle is ca 61 A.D., post-Pentecost.
 - b) “His saints” (ἁγίων σου-HAGIOIS AUTO) refers to believers.
- 9) The mystery, previously concealed from other dispensations, now embraces the Gentiles.
 - a) O.T. believers were not given prophetic revelation concerning the specific characteristics of our dispensation, the Church Age (cp 1 Peter 1:10-12).
 - b) Moses had warned Israel that God would establish another nation, if they became apostate (Deut. 32:21).
- 10) Paul simply states that “the mystery” is “Christ in you”.
- 11) In what sense is Christ a mystery and how is He “in” you?
 - a) The person and work of Christ was not a mystery to previous dispensations. Faith in Christ was the means by which salvation was secured regardless of dispensation (Psa. 22, Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 53:1ff cp. Isa. 28:16, Rom. 4:1-3, 11-12).
 - b) However, the fact that He would be the founder and head of the Church had been mystery which had been hidden from previous dispensations (cp. Matt. 16:18, Col.1:18).
 - c) In addition the Church itself and the various doctrines related to it was a mystery. The following constitute part of the “glorious riches” of this mystery:
 - i) The Church replaced Israel as God’s representative to the nations (Eph. 3:9-10 cp. Matt. 21:43).
 - ii) In effect the Church is a new “nation” that is composed of believers, both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 10:12, Gal. 3:28).
 - iii) Unlike in the past, now Gentile believers have equality with Jewish believers in Christ (Eph. 2:11-22).
 - iv) All members of the body, the Church, are baptized by Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).
 - v) All believers are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit at salvation (John 14:16-17, Rom. 8:9).
 - vi) All believers are priests and possess spiritual gifts (Rev. 1:6 cp. 1 Peter 4:10-11).
 - vii) The universal church operates through independent local churches (John 4:21-24 cp. 1 Cor. 1:2, Col. 4:16).
 - viii) The canon of Scripture was completed during the Church Age.
 - ix) The dispensation of the Church Age is an interruption of the Age of Israel. It extends from Pentecost to the Rapture (Acts 11:15, 1 Thess. 4:14ff).
 - d) “Christ in you” is not a literal indwelling of Christ. Rather it refers to sound doctrine or the mind of Christ within the believer. As our context is dealing with the mystery doctrines of the Church, “Christ in you” refers those doctrines that specifically relate to the Church (John 15:4-7, 17:23, Rom. 8:10, Gal. 2:20, cp. Rom. 13:14, Gal. 3:27; 4:19. Also, Eph. 3:16-19, cp. 1 Cor 2:16).

- 12) In summation, the mystery which has been revealed is the Church and related doctrines with Christ as the head or founder.
- 13) Paul indicates that Christ is the “glorious hope” for the believer (cp. Titus 2:13).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.

- 1) “And”: Absent in Greek text.
- 2) “We”: the 1st person plural pronoun, *egw*-EGO: Intensive use. Translate “we, ourselves.”
- 3) “Proclaim: the present active indicative verb, *kataggel*lw- KATANGELLO, “to announce, to proclaim.” Translate “continue proclaiming.”
- 4) “Admonishing”: the present active participle of the verb, *nouqetew*- NOUTHETEO, “to admonish, to warn.”
- 5) “Teaching”:the present active participle of the verb, *didaskw*-DIDASKO, “to instruct, to teach.”
- 6) “Wisdom”: the singular noun, *sofi*a- SOPHIA, “wisdom.”
- 7) “Present”: the aorist active subjunctive, *pari*sthmi- PARHISTEMI, “to cause to be present, to present.” Translate “might present.”
- 8) “Complete”: the singular noun, *tel*eioj- TELEIOS, “mature, complete.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:28 We, ourselves continue proclaiming Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we might present every man complete in Christ.

Colossians 1:28 We, ourselves continue proclaiming Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we might present every man complete in Christ.

Analysis of vs. 28:

- 1) Paul shifts from the 1st person singular back to the 1st person plural, “We.”
- 2) As noted in the exegesis, he uses the intensive form of the personal pronoun (“We, ourselves...”).
- 3) In our verse, he is emphasizing the role that he and his associates are playing in this new mystery dispensation, the Church Age.
- 4) Paul and his associates “continue proclaiming” Christ.
 - a) Our verb, “proclaim” (katagge|lw- KATANGELLO) primarily refers to a public announcement of declaration. The term implies a broad dissemination.
 - b) Paul and co. often proclaimed the Divine viewpoint in a public venue (Acts 17:3, 13; 23 cp. 1 Cor. 4:9, Phil. 1:12-13).
- 5) Christ was proclaimed through ongoing “admonishing” and “teaching.”
 - a) “Admonishing” (nouqetew- NOUTHETEO) possesses the nuance of setting or putting something in mind. It is to provide a warning about avoidance or cessation of improper behavior or viewpoint (cp. 1 Cor. 4:14).
 - i) Pastors are to admonish those in the local church (cp. 1 Thess. 5:12)
 - ii) Believers are to admonish one another (Rom.15:14, 1 Thess. 5:14, 2 Thess. 3:15).
 - b) “Teaching” (didaskw-DIDASKO), a common verb in the N.T., is to provide instruction about something.
 - i) It was a primary function of Christ as He proclaimed Himself (Luke 4:15, John 18:20).
 - ii) It is to be a primary function of the pastor-teacher (2 Tim. 2:2, cp. Acts 28:31, 1 Tim. 4:11).
 - c) The admonishing and teaching is to be done in the sphere of “all wisdom”.
 - i) “All wisdom” (sofiā- SOPHIA) is the realm of sound doctrine (Col 1:9 cp. Eph. 3:10).
 - ii) In our verse, the “wisdom” is not that of the mystery cults and/or heretics in Colossae or even the world in general (cp. 1 Cor. 1:20-24; 2:5).
 - iii) It is the capacity to understand and act wisely according to the standards of sound doctrine.
 - iv) Sound doctrine (i.e. “all wisdom”) provides the basis for “admonishing” another individual. It also provided the content of Paul’s “teaching.”
 - v) The wisdom of God is the only objective standard by which we must conduct our lives as believers (cp. Psa. 119:32, Prov. 2:1ff).
- 6) As Paul and co. were admonishing and teaching all wisdom, they didn’t exclude certain segments of society.
- 7) The wisdom was not the exclusive domain of only certain individuals (e.g. mystery cult initiates).

- 8) Rather, they admonished and taught “every man” the realm of sound doctrine regardless of position or social status. This is emphasized by the repetition of “every man.”
- 9) Paul’s overall purpose is to “present every man” as “complete.”
 - a) “Complete” (te|eioj- TELEIOS) refers to spiritual maturity (1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20, Eph. 4:13, Col. 4:12, Heb. 5:14).
 - b) The term may also denote that nothing is lacking. Hence, the person or thing in question is complete (cp. 1 Cor. 13:10, James 1:25).
 - c) “Might present” (paristhmi- PARHISTEMI) indicates a potential. Regardless of how much Paul and co. admonish and teach sound doctrine, spiritual maturity is dependant upon individual volition (cp. Col 1:22-23).
 - d) As Church Age believers, we will be presented before Christ at the Rapture to receive our rewards (2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:27 cp. 1 Thess. 4:17).
- 10) As in Paul’s case, the adjusted pastor-teacher desires that his flock reach spiritual maturity. This is the purpose of teaching sound doctrine in the local church (cp. Acts 20:27, 2 Tim. 4:13-16).
- 11) Furthermore, spiritual maturity should be the goal for every believer (cp. James 1:4).

Exegesis:

Colossians 1:29 And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

- 1) “Labor”: the present active indicative verb, *kopiaō*- KOPIAO, “to strive, to toil, to work hard.” Translate “I continue to toil.”
- 2) “Striving”: the present participle of the verb, *agonizomai*- AGONIZOMAI, “to fight, to struggle, to strive earnestly.” Translate “striving earnestly.”
- 3) “Power”: the singular noun, *dunamis*- DUNAMIS, “capability, strength, power.” See revised translation.
- 4) “Mightily”: the singular noun, *energeia*- ENERGEIA, “working, operation, energy.” See revised translation.
- 5) “Works”: the present middle participle of the verb, *energeō*- ENERGEIO, “to function, to be at work, to work.” See revised translation.
- 6) “Within me”: the preposition, *en*- EN, “in” + the emphatic 1st person singular pronoun, *egō*- EGO, “I, me.”

Revised translation:

Colossians 1:29 And for this purpose also I continue to toil, striving earnestly according to His energy which is itself working within me with power.

Colossians 1:29 And for this purpose also I continue to toil, striving earnestly according to His energy which is itself working within me with power.

Analysis of vs. 29:

- 1) “For this purpose” refers back to the purpose expressed in vs. .28. Namely that every man be presented as spiritually mature.
- 2) Paul refers to his own personal effort in trying to reach this goal.
 - a) “Continue to toil” (kopiaw- KOPIAO) indicates Paul was engaged in very hard work.
 - b) Extreme physical and mental exertion was common for Paul (Acts 20:35, 1 Cor. 4:12; 15:10).
 - c) P/T’s are to work hard on behalf of their sheep (1 Tim 4:10).
 - d) Certain believers are commended for their hard work in regard to sound doctrine (Rom. 16:6, 12).
- 3) “Striving earnestly” serves to emphasize manner of his hard work.
 - a) “Striving earnestly” indicates a struggle or fight.
 - b) Paul is an example of a believer who “fought” to the end of his phase 2. It should be noted that he fought a disciplined fight. It was not a haphazard, lackadaisical sparring session (2 Tim. 4:7 cp. 1 Cor. 9:25ff; 12:7-9).
- 4) Paul does not credit his own strength for being able to persevere through his hard work and struggles.
- 5) Rather, he states that he is able to function in his difficult niche through God’s power.
 - a) It is through Divine energy that is working within him that he is able to pursue his goal (cp. Rom. 15:19, Gal. 2:8, Eph. 3:7).
 - b) “Energy” (energeia- ENERGEIA) is primarily used to refer to Divine activities or actions (Eph. 1:9, Philippians 3:21, Col. 2:12 cp. Eph. 3:20).
- 6) The Divine power that was working in Paul is also available to believers today to persevere in our respective niches (Philippians 2:13 cp. Eph. 3:16, Col. 1:11, 2 Peter 1:3).

*See Doctrine of Maturity

**End of Colossians Chapter 1