

COLOSSIANS, RIGHTLY DIVIDED, VERSE-BY-VERSE

SESSION 13 | COLOSSIANS 4:12-18

COLOSSIANS 4:7-18 | REPORTS, GREETINGS, AND CONCLUSION

Verses 7-11 – see session 12

VERSE 12 – BLACK

As noted in Colossians 1:7, it is possible that Epaphras is the Pastor of the church. If so, then this verse gives a beautiful example of a Pastor:

- one of you - A home-grown pastor or one who is closely tied to the congregation is ideal.
- a servant of Christ - this is the chief role of the Pastor.
- laboring fervently for you in prayers for the specific reason that the church would stand perfect and complete in the will of God.

...continued in verse 13

VERSE 13.- BLACK

- **a great zeal for you** - The Greek word ζήλος [zeilos] is the origin of both *zealous* and *jealous*. A pastor should have a zealous jealousy for his people.

Epaphras also had this zeal for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. The three cities (including Colossae) formed a tri-city area in which Epaphras must have ministered, either as a “circuit rider” or simply a faithful believer who expressed his faith regularly.

Laodicea is best known for its condemnation in the book of Revelation. Hierapolis is only mentioned here, but was a strong Roman city at the time.

VERSE 14 – BLACK

This is the only place in Scripture from which we learn that Luke was a **beloved physician**. In first century Rome, a physician was held in high regard, and medicine was far more advanced than one may presume. The *De Materia Medica* was a five-volume resource on plants/herbs that had medicinal properties, and how to use them. This resource, written in the first century, was used for 1500 years.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_materia_medica

Because first century medicine was strongly associated with philosophy, it is likely that Luke was well-trained in anatomy and physiology as well as logic, ethics, and all-things spiritual.

Luke was certainly a companion of Paul (see Philem 24 and 2 Tim 4:11). It is widely assumed that he was Gentile, but the Scripture makes no such claim. Here are three good reasons to consider Luke a Jew:

- Romans 3:1-2 says that **the oracles of God** belong to Jews. Certainly this would include Luke and Acts, a large portion of the New Testament.
- When Paul was arrested in the Temple for supposedly bringing a Gentile into the Temple (Acts 21:29-30), Trophimus was the Gentile. But Acts 21:17 makes it clear that Luke was also present,

and presumably an eyewitness of the events. Why would Trophimus be the scapegoat alone, not including Luke?

- Luke has a strong and personal knowledge of the Temple (Luke 1:8-20, for example). Gentiles, not being allowed in the Temple, would not be so informed.

In addition to Luke, Paul mentions **Demas**. Sadly, it wouldn't be long until Demas deserted Paul (2 Tim. 4:10).

VERSE 15 – BLACK

Clearly, as hinted in verses 13 and 16, there was a close connection between the believers at Colossae and **the brethren which are in Laodicea**.

Nothing is known of **Nymphas** except that there was a **church...in his house**. Some manuscripts have this in the masculine (Nymphas) and others in the feminine (Nympha). As always, I prefer the received and majority text over the scholar-devised and continually-revised text.

At least three times we are told of churches meeting in houses. In addition to this verse, see Romans 16:5 and Philemon 2

VERSE 16 – BLACK

It was customary to deliver Paul's writings to the various churches. Since Paul was an Apostle, these letters were considered "God's Word" even at the time of his writings (see 2 Peter 3:16).

Paul's letter to the Laodicean's has not been preserved. However, God has preserved all that is needed so that we are **thoroughly furnished unto all good works** (2 Tim 3:17).

VERSE 17 – BLACK

It is possible that **Archippus** was the son of Philemon, who himself may have been from Colossae. The **take heed** instruction given to him can be taken negatively (as if he may abandon his service) or positively (as an encouragement to him in his service).

As in Colossians 2:6, the verb **received** is in the active tense. The word itself can be translated *take* or *receive*. The verb can be in the passive tense (see Mt. 24:40, 41). Therefore, one should not build a "spiritual call to ministry" doctrine out of this passage. This verse could just as easily be understood to tell Archippus, "you took this job, now finish it!"

VERSE 18 – BLACK

It is possible that Paul signed his letters with his own hand to prove they were not forgeries (compare 2 Thes. 2:2 and 3:17). It is equally possible that it was customary to have an amanuensis (hired hand-writer) write the document, with closing comments by the author.

Paul closes with a single request: **Remember my bonds**. He then adds his final wish for the Colossians: **Grace be with you. Amen**.