



The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and Philemon

Opening Remarks and Epaphras' Report

Colossians 1:1-8

- I. THE OPENING REMARKS (Colossians 1:1-2)
 - A. The Senders of the Epistle (Colossians 1:1)
 1. Paul
 - a. His apostleship
 - (1) By the will of God (1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1)
 - (2) Not of men (Galatians 1:1)
 - (3) By the commandment of God (1 Timothy 1:1)
 - (4) According to the faith of God's elect (Titus 1:1)
 - b. His fellowship—and Timotheus
 2. Timotheus
 - B. The Recipients of the Epistle (Colossians 1:2)
 1. Their address
 - a. Saints
 - (1) Etymology and definition of the word
 - a) Circa 1125, from Old French *seinte*, altering Old English *sanct*, both from Latin *sanctus* "holy, consecrated" (<http://www.etymonline.com>)
 - b) "A person sanctified; a holy or godly person; one eminent for piety and virtue. It is particularly applied to the apostles and other holy persons mentioned in Scripture." (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)
 - (2) Biblical usage of the word
 - a) The word *saint(s)* is found 101 times in ninety-eight verses. Thirty-nine of those are found in the Old Testament and sixty-two are found in the New Testament.
 - b) In a basic sense, the saints are those that are contrasted from the wicked (1 Samuel 2:9; Psalm 97:10).
 - c) In any age, saints are those that belong to the Lord (Psalm 30:4; Psalm 31:23; Psalm 34:9).
 - d) True to the spirit of the word, saints in this age are those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:2).
 - e) Contrary to some false perceptions, saints in this age are not designated saints by others, but by acceptance of the finished work of Christ (Romans 1:7; Philippians 1:1).
 - b. Faithful brethren



2. Their position
 - a. Spiritual position—in Christ
 - (1) Sitting in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6)
 - (2) Conversation in heaven (Philippians 3:20-21)
 - b. Physical location or position—at Colosse (see Colossians 3:5)
3. Their blessing
 - a. Grace
 - b. Peace
4. Their source of blessing
 - a. God our Father
 - b. The Lord Jesus Christ

II. THE REPORT OF EPAPHRAS (Colossians 1:3-8)

A. The Result of the Report (Colossians 1:3)

1. Thanks
 - a. The giver of the thanks—“we”
 - (1) Paul
 - (2) Timotheus
 - b. The recipient of the thanks
 - (1) God
 - (2) The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
2. Prayer
 - a. The frequency of the prayer—“always”
 - b. The beneficiary of the prayer—“for you”

B. The Nature of the Report (Colossians 1:4)

1. The reception of the report—“we heard”
2. The details of the report
 - a. Their faith in Christ Jesus
 - b. The love which they had to all the saints
3. The dispensational nature of the praise
 - a. Colossians was written from a prison in Rome. By this time, the church age was well under way.
 - b. The praise here echoes the highlighted virtues of a mature church age (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).
 - (1) Childhood
 - a) Tongues
 - b) Healing
 - c) Word of knowledge
 - (2) Maturity
 - a) Faith
 - b) Hope
 - c) Charity



C. The Cause of the Report (Colossians 1:5-6)

1. The visible—"hope" (Colossians 1:5)
 - a. The springboard of hope
 - (1) It brought about their faith in Christ Jesus.
 - (2) It brought about their love to all the saints.
 - b. The realization of hope
 - (1) The personal—"which is laid up for you"
 - (2) The place—"in heaven"
 - c. The nature of hope
 - (1) No God equals no hope (Ephesians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13).
 - (2) It has present and future aspects.
 - a) Present (1 Corinthians 9:10)
 - b) Future (1 Corinthians 15:19; Titus 2:13)
 - (3) It maketh not ashamed (Romans 5:5).
 - (4) It is for the unseen (Romans 8:24-25).
 - (5) It is a product of experience (Romans 5:4; Romans 15:4).
 - (6) It purifies the believer (1 John 3:3).
2. The source—"the gospel" (Colossians 1:5-6)
 - a. The local benefit of the gospel (Colossians 1:5-6)
 - (1) The reception of the gospel—"ye heard" (Colossians 1:5)
 - a) The gospel was not just lived before them.
 - b) It was also preached among them.
 - (2) The resource of the gospel—"the grace of God in truth" (Colossians 1:6)
 - (3) The result of the gospel—"bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you" (Colossians 1:6)
 - b. The global benefit of the gospel (Colossians 1:6)
 - (1) The result of the gospel—"bringeth forth fruit"
 - (2) The reach of the gospel—"Which is come unto you, **as it is in all the world**"
 - (3) Note: This is an oft-neglected truth the should be considered more in-depth. In fact, this very truth is one of the greatest proofs of differentiations of the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God.
 - a) The gospel of the kingdom
 - i) Was to go to *all nations* (Matthew 28:19)
 - ii) Was to go to *all the world* (Mark 16:15)
 - iii) Was to go to *every creature* (Mark 16:15)
 - b) The gospel of the grace of God
 - i) Made known to *all nations* (Romans 16:25-26)
 - ii) Was come to *all the world* (Colossians 1:5)
 - iii) Was preached to *every creature* (Colossians 1:23)
 - c) The postponement of the gospel of the kingdom
 - i) The end has not yet come (Matthew 24:14).
 - ii) This gospel will be preached again in Daniel's seventieth week.



D. The Source of the Report (Colossians 1:7-8)

1. The ministry of Epaphras to the Colossians (Colossians 1:7)
 - a. The character of his ministry—"a faithful minister of Christ"
 - b. The work of his ministry—"ye also learned of Epaphras"
2. The ministry of Epaphras to Paul (Colossians 1:7-8)
 - a. The character of his ministry—"dear fellowservant" (Colossians 1:7)
 - b. The work of his ministry—"declared unto us" (Colossians 1:8)
3. The testimony of the Colossians—"love in the Spirit" (Colossians 1:8)
4. The testimony of Epaphras
 - a. His salvation
 - (1) His home—Paul said to the Colossians that Epaphras "is one of you" (Colossians 4:12).
 - (2) His name
 - a) Epaphras is a shortened form of Epaphroditus; however, he is not to be confused with the minister in Philippi.
 - b) The lengthened form of his name contains Aphroditus connecting him or likely his family to pagan religion and wickedness. Aphrodite was an ancient Greek goddess associated with love, beauty, pleasure, and procreation. She was identified with the planet Venus, which was named after the Roman goddess Venus, with whom Aphrodite was extensively syncretized.
 - c) Epaphras' life changed gloriously, but his name served as a reminder to "look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isaiah 51:1).
 - b. His servitude
 - (1) He was "a servant of Christ" (Colossians 4:12).
 - (2) He was Paul's "dear fellowservant" (Colossians 1:7).
 - c. His steadfastness—He was "a **faithful** minister of Christ" (Colossians 1:7).
 - d. His spiritual focus (Colossians 1:8)
 - (1) His observation—Epaphras was perceptive as it pertained to the spiritual condition of those to whom he ministered.
 - (2) His report—He reported the good of the Colossians.
 - e. His supplication (Colossians 4:12)
 - (1) Faithful—"always"
 - (2) Forceful—"labouring"
 - (3) Fervent—"fervently"
 - (4) Focused—"for you...that ye may"
 - f. His zeal (Colossians 4:13)
 - (1) Its prominence—"I bear him record"
 - (2) Its power—"great"
 - (3) Its purpose—"for you, and...in Laodicea, and...in Hierapolis"
 - g. His suffering (Philemon 1:23)
 - (1) His company—"my [Paul's] fellowprisoner"
 - (2) His concern—"salute thee"