

PRECEPT
UPON
PRECEPT®

*Colossians
and
Philemon*

GAINING A
TRUE KNOWLEDGE
OF CHRIST
SO NO ONE
DELUDES YOU!

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT®
COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
GAINING A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST
SO NO ONE DELUDES YOU!

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HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY; ARTHUR, DAVID; DE LACY, PETE

How to Study Your Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994/2010

The New Inductive Study Bible—New American Standard Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2000

Greek Word Study Tools

Commentaries on Colossians and Philemon

(See commentary list below.)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

KENT, JR., HOMER A.; VAUGHAN, CURTIS; AND RUPPRECHT, ARTHUR A.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

WALVOORD, JOHN F.; ZUCK, ROY B., eds.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament

Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983-c1985

MELICK, JR., RICHARD R.

The New American Commentary, Vol. 32, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 1991

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Logos Bible Software

Powerful search engines and up to 4,000 electronic Bible study resources (commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries etc.) make it fast and easy to do simple and complex searches of multiple sources, then pull materials together for orderly presentation—excellent for word and topical studies based on English or original Hebrew and Greek. Available at www.logos.com.

LESSON ONE

Overview of Colossians

THIS LESSON INCORPORATES The following located in the Appendix:
Observation Worksheets of Colossians
“Sequence of Events in Paul’s Life after His Conversion”
“The Lord Jesus Christ as Portrayed in Colossians”

Colossians is filled with rich and abundant treasures of truth—treasures that will keep us from error if we give ourselves to diligent and careful study.

As you begin this course, stop and count the cost. If you don’t do it now, you will not be prepared for Satan’s subtle allurements, devices, distractions, deceptions, and discouragements which will slip in to keep you from completing this study.

The message of Colossians exposes what is going on in Christianity today and causes you to focus on the source of all life; therefore, the enemy of your soul wants to keep you ignorant of the wonderful mystery revealed in this book.

DAY ONE

1. Always begin with prayer, asking God to guide you into His truth (John 16:13). Ask God to open the eyes of your understanding that you might behold wondrous things out of His Word.
2. If you have never done a Precept Upon Precept course before, it’s helpful to read the chapters entitled “The Rule of Context—Context Rules!” and “Getting the Big Picture” in *How to Study Your Bible*.

The purpose of this first lesson is to discover the context of the book of Colossians. Since context rules interpretation and since Scripture must be interpreted in light of its context, the first step in your study of a letter is the **Overview**, a view of the entire book, to discover the context.

3. Like most letters, the place to begin your study is with the **author** because he is usually the first person mentioned.

Read Colossians and mark with a specific color or colored symbol each mention of the author's name and the pronouns that refer specifically to him, such as *I, me, my*. At the beginning of this letter and also in chapter 4 you will notice that the author uses plural pronouns, such as *we* and *us*, so it will be important to mark these also. However, Colossians 1:23 and 4:18 show you from the text exactly who wrote or dictated this epistle (letter).

Use the Observation Worksheets, located in the Appendix, for every assignment. These are what the title implies: worksheets for you to do your work on. They are the text of Colossians printed double-spaced from the New American Standard Bible. We encourage you to do your work on them, and at a later date you might want to transfer some of your study notes to your Bible.¹

4. Read all four chapters of Colossians again, using your marked Observation Worksheets. Look at each place you marked the author. List what you learn about him on the page at the end of this lesson titled "Author." Do not include instructions he gives or facts that are true of all believers (such as, God is his Father); include facts that uniquely describe the author. Your list will give you the **5 Ws and an H** about the author: who, what, when, where, why, how.
5. In the space provided for the historical setting on the "Colossians at a Glance" chart, located at the end of this lesson, note what you observed regarding the times in which this letter was written.

As you complete your study this week, you will fill in information on this chart. Then, whenever you need to see the book of Colossians at a glance, you will have this chart for a reference. If you have *The New Inductive Study Bible*, you will probably want to complete the "Colossians at a Glance" chart at the end of Colossians.

6. Now let's look at "where" and "when."
 - a. Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?

¹ *The New Inductive Study Bible* is ideal for this. It is the best study Bible on the market because it doesn't tell you what the text means. Rather, it gives you instructions for studying each book of the Bible in addition to many other valuable study aids.

- b. Look at the chart, “Sequence of Events in Paul’s Life after His Conversion” in the Appendix and find Colossians under the “Event” column.
 - 1) When did Paul write Colossians? Record this on “Colossians at a Glance” under “Date.”
 - 2) What city was he in? Locate this city on the map at the end of this lesson.

Well, that is our first day of study. Don’t try to do all five days of your homework in one day unless that is the only way you can get it done. Give yourself time to meditate on what you have taken in. Think on and pray over what you are studying. It will make a big difference. And remember to stay in communication with the Father, asking God to open the eyes of your understanding that you might see the truths in Colossians.

DAY TWO

Today our focus will be on the **recipients** of this letter that Paul wrote. As you look at their description, you might see a description of yourself and/or of people who are close to you. Therefore, as you begin, ask God to show you the relevance of Colossians to believers today.

1. Using your Observation Worksheets, read all of Colossians and mark each mention of the recipients with a different color or colored symbol from the one you used for the author. Also be sure to mark pronouns that refer specifically to them, such as *you*, *your*, *who*, and mark any synonyms for them, like *brethren*.
2. Read Colossians again.

This time, look at each place you marked references to the recipients. On the page titled “Recipients” at the end of this lesson, list what you learn about the recipients—facts that uniquely describe them. Remember to use words directly from the text, be brief, and record the verse from which you took your information. Do not include instructions to them or facts that are true of all believers.

3. Evaluate what you learned about the author and recipients.
 - a. Did you see anything about the Colossians that gives you more insight into the historical setting, the times in which this letter was written? Record it under “Historical Setting” on your “Colossians at a Glance” chart.
 - b. What important words are repeated in Colossians?
 - c. Why was there a need for Paul to write to the believers in Colossae? In other words, what was his **purpose** in writing?
4. According to Colossians 1:6-8 and 4:12-13, who did the Colossians hear the gospel from?
5. Read Colossians 1:2 and 4:13-16.
 - a. Where else was this letter to be read?
 - b. Locate on the map the places named in these verses.

DAY THREE

As you read the book of Colossians and observed the facts about the author and recipients, you probably were awed at the truths about Christ that fill this book. Did it ignite a longing to understand more about Him? Well, today you are going to take a closer look at these wonderful truths about our Lord Jesus Christ. As you do your study, turn it into an act of worship to the Father for the Son.

1. *Christ* is used throughout the book. He holds a place of prominence in understanding this book; therefore, *Christ* is a **key word**.

Key words unlock the meaning of the text. A key word might be a noun, a descriptive word, or an action word. As you observe key words and phrases, they help you identify the author's repeated emphasis, the theme of the book, and how he will accomplish his purpose in conveying his message.

It will be helpful to make a **Key Word Bookmark** for Colossians. There's a card on the back of your Precept book with suggestions how to mark frequently used words such as *Christ*. Write *Christ* on the blank side and mark it the way you want to mark it on your Observation Worksheets. You'll add other key words as you continue your study.

Now read the entire book of Colossians.

- a. Mark on your Observation Worksheets the key word *Christ* and other synonyms (names) and pronouns which refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. In the Appendix you will find two pages titled, "The Lord Jesus Christ as Portrayed in Colossians." Record everything you learn about Jesus Christ. It's helpful to include the chapter and verse number for each truth you list.
2. Record the key word *Christ* on your "Colossians at a Glance" chart.

DAY FOUR

Today you are going to see even more exciting truths in Colossians. You've observed that the saints at Colossae were described as growing and grounded, but they were warned about certain things. As you study today, think about these warnings and how we might apply them in our own times. God's Word is always relevant to today.

1. Using your Observation Worksheets, read Colossians.
 - a. Mark in a distinct way the warnings.
 - b. Then evaluate each warning in light of the truths you have already discovered about Christ.

2. List the warnings in the following space.

3. Record additional insights or information on your “Colossians at a Glance” chart.
4. Finally, we need to know a little about the city of Colossae and those living there. It will help us appreciate Paul’s letter even more.

Read commentaries, Bible dictionaries, or other study helps which will give more background information on Colossae. Record on a separate sheet of paper what you learn about the city, the people, and the setting of this book. Don’t read anything that has to do with the interpretation of any part of Colossians. You’ll have opportunity to do this later after you’ve thoroughly studied the text for yourself.

DAY
FIVE

1. Our first task today is to identify the **main theme** of the book of Colossians.
 - a. To do this, answer these questions: What is the emphasis of the book? Does it emphasize who Christ is, what we have/are in Him, the warnings, or something else?

- b. Using words from the text, record the theme at the top of your “Colossians at a Glance” chart as the book theme. You may want to do this in pencil so you can adjust it later if you’d like.
2. The next step is to identify the theme of each chapter.

Remember to ask: What is the emphasis of the chapter? Does it emphasize who Christ is, what we have/are in Him, the warnings, or something else?

Keep the emphasis in mind as you identify the theme of each chapter. Then, using words from the text, record these themes on the “Colossians at a Glance” chart. Again, you may want to use pencil.

3. When studying inductively, it is often helpful to see the author’s plan/structure of his message by looking for any segments in the book—groupings of chapters that deal with the same topic or use the same kind of writing. If you observe any segment divisions in Colossians at this point, record them in the segment division columns on the “Colossians at a Glance” chart. Use a horizontal line to divide segments. You might not see any segments this early in your study, but you’ll have opportunity to think about this again later.

For more information about segments, read the section “Identify Clearly Defined Segments” of “Getting the Big Picture” in *How to Study Your Bible*.

4. Fill in any other information necessary to complete the “Colossians at a Glance” chart.
5. How has God spoken to you through your study this week? Record it in the following space.

Well, you are on your way. As you study, we pray you will be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Colossians 1:9).

Colossians and Philemon

Lesson 1, Overview of Colossians

AUTHOR

RECIPIENTS

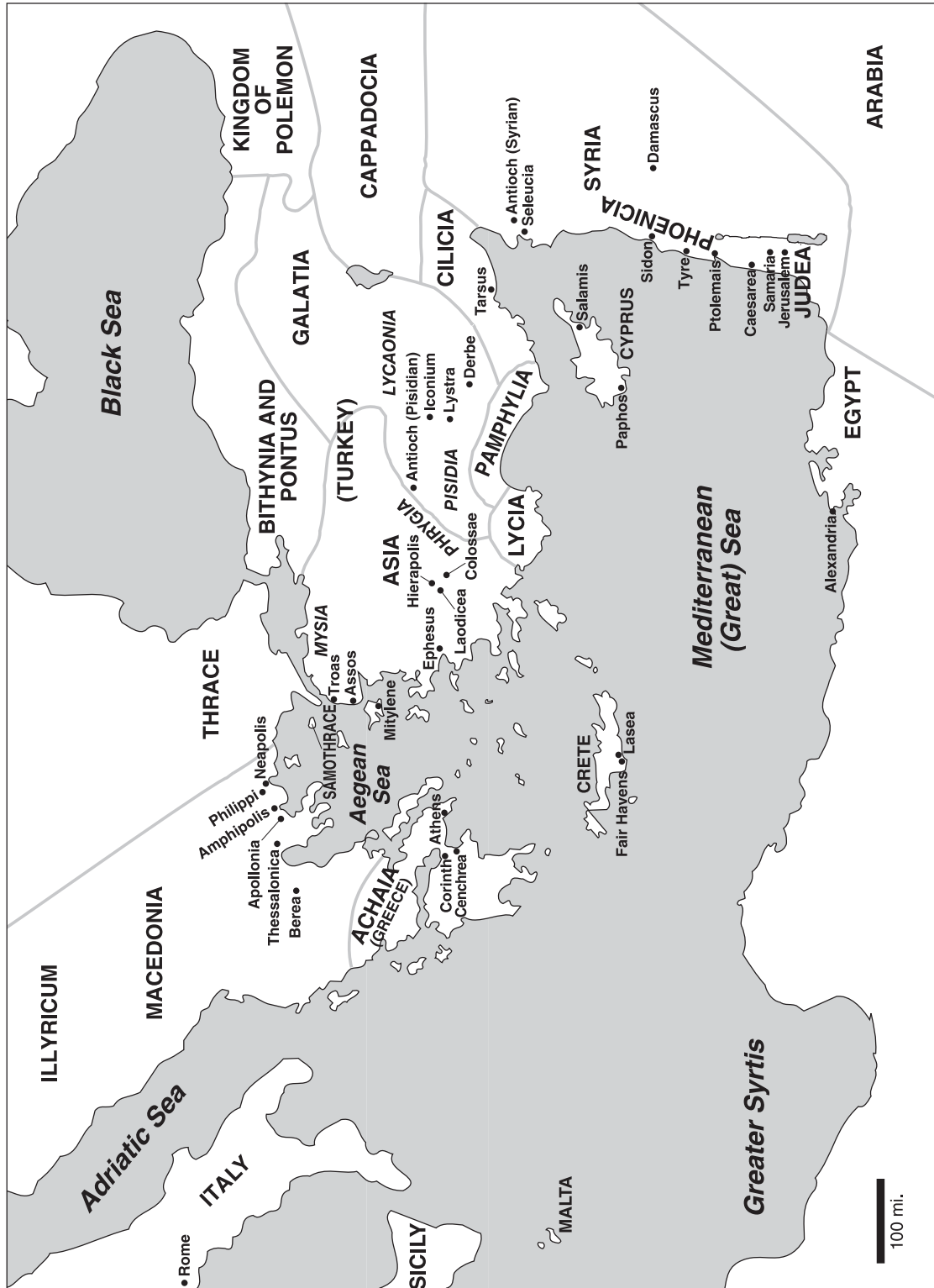
COLOSSIANS AT A GLANCE

Book Theme:

	Chapter Themes	Segment Divisions		
Author:	1			
Date:				
Key Words:	2			
Purpose:	3			
Historical Setting:	4			

Colossians and Philemon

Lesson 1, Map



COLOSSIANS 1
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

3 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

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;

7 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.

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,

- 10 so that you will 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;
- 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously
- 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.
- 13 For He rescued 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.
- 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
- 16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.
- 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
- 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
- 19 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.

- 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,
- 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—
- 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.
- 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 what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.
- 25 Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God,
- 26 *that is*, the mystery 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 among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.
- 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

COLOSSIANS 2
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- FOR** I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,
- 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God's mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*,
- 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- 4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.
- 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.
- 6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him,
- 7 having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude.
- 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.
- 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

-
- 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;
- 11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;
- 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.
- 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,
- 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
- 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
- 16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—
- 17 things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.
- 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

- 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.
- 20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,
- 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”
- 22 (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?
- 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

COLOSSIANS 3

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- THEREFORE** if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.
 - 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 - 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.
 - 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.
 - 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,
 - 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.
 - 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth.
 - 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,
 - 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
 - 11 *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

- 12 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 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
- 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.
- 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
- 18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
- 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.
- 20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.
- 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.
- 22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.
- 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,
- 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.
- 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

COLOSSIANS 4
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

MASTERS, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

- 2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;
- 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;
- 4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.
- 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.
- 6 Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.
- 7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, *our* beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.
- 8 *For* I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;
- 9 and with him Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

- 10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and *also* Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him);
- 11 and *also* Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.
- 12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.
- 13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- 14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and *also* Demas.
- 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.
- 16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.
- 17 Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."
- 18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

Colossians and Philemon

Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN PAUL'S LIFE AFTER HIS CONVERSION*

* There are differing opinions on these dates. For consistency this chart will be the basis for dates pertaining to Paul's life.

Scripture	Year A.D.	Event
Acts 9:1-25	33-34	Conversion, time in Damascus
	35-47	Some silent years, except we know that Paul:
Galatians 1:17		1. Spent time in Arabia and Damascus
Acts 9:26; Galatians 1:18		2. Made first visit to Jerusalem
Acts 9:30-11:26; Galatians 1:21		3. Went to Tarsus, Syria-Cilicia area
Acts 11:26		4. Was with Barnabas in Antioch
Acts 11:27-30		5. With Barnabas took relief to brethren in Judea; Paul's second visit to Jerusalem
Acts 12:23	44	Herod Agrippa I dies
Acts 12:25-13:3		6. Returned to Antioch; was sent out with Barnabas by church at Antioch
Acts 13:4-14:26	47-48	First missionary journey: <i>Galatians</i> written (?) Proconsul Sergius Paulus at Paphos
Acts 15:1-35	49	Apostolic Council at Jerusalem—Paul visits Jerusalem <i>Galatians</i> written (?)
Acts 15:36-18:22	49-51	Second missionary journey: <i>1 and 2 Thessalonians</i> written— 1½ years in Corinth, Acts 18:11
	51-52	Gallio known to be proconsul in Corinth
Acts 18:23-21:17	52-56	Third missionary journey: <i>1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans</i> written— 1 Cor. from Ephesus, 2 Cor. from Macedonia, Romans from Corinth
Acts 21:17-23:35	56	Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested; held in Caesarea
Acts 24-26	57-59	Appearance before Felix and Drusilla; before Festus—appeals to Caesar; before Agrippa
Acts 27-28:15	59-60	Paul goes from Caesarea to Rome
Acts 28:16-31	60-62	First Roman imprisonment: <i>Ephesians, Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians</i> written—2 years in prison
	62	Paul's release; possible trip to Spain
	62	Paul in Macedonia: <i>1 Timothy</i> written
	62	Paul goes to Crete <i>Titus</i> written
	63-64	Paul taken to Rome and imprisoned: <i>2 Timothy</i> written
	64	Paul is absent from the body and present with the Lord (Others put Paul's conversion about A.D. 35, his death at A.D. 68.)

14 years, Galatians 2:1

3 years

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS PORTRAYED IN COLOSSIANS

