


ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

COLOSSIANS

BIBLE COMMENTARY NO. 51

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PREFACE

This epistle like its counterpart the letter to Philippi was written by Paul during his house arrest at Rome. Philippians of course was written to Greeks and Colossians to Asia – though in that province also there was a large dispersion of Greek peoples at the time.

I have sought to emphasise themes on which Paul determined to give guidance and in the current layout these themes are highlighted. The apostle does not duck issues but provides teaching in the form of strong meat to counter current secular and philosophical thought often of a fairly sophisticated nature.

CHAPTER 1

The chapter that affirms God creates “saints” on earth

INTRODUCTION

The letter was written from Rome. Like Ephesians and Philemon it is letter from prison. The church was located 100 miles east of Ephesus. I have driven from Konya to the location rediscovered by Buchardt and confirmed by the confluence of three streams to this day. Little more than a lowly farmstead remains – walled by the marble of an erstwhile city. The New Testament church owed it life and vigour to Paul and Epaphroditus who was imprisoned when visiting Paul (Philemon 23) The church was shaken by oriental teaching that dubbed the body impure and introduced a theory of mediators like Sayoshants who are comparable to Zoroastrian “champions”, making up for Ahuri Muzda – who has no relationship with man. In 1963 at the IVF Swanwick conference I bought the New Bible Commentary and was fascinated to read for the first time of Gnostic theory which held that only by a series of angels could God in His holiness deal with man in his sin. How different Christ’s “reconciliation” Col.1.23 which describes how God incarnate in his fullness by the sacrifice of the cross is the reconciliation [*καταλλαγή*] which is content with nothing less than “a new man” and “a new heavens & new earth” (Revelation 21)

FAITHFUL BROTHERS AND SAINTS 1-2

Paul & Timothy pray that the blessing of our Melchizadek will be the experience of the Phrygian Christians of Colossae – who are counted *saints*. The immediate link between all Christian believers and Jesus is prayer. No intermediary is needed.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY 3-8

The Colossians believed in Jesus. Paul emphasised the “Fatherhood of God” and His involvement alongside His Son. He rejoiced in their love toward all **the saints** – and their grasp of the hope stored up in heaven of actually being close to Jesus.

The word of truth presented divine grace which was preached by Epaphras and entailed the work of the Holy Spirit in the fruits of holiness cf vv 6 & 8.

SOVEREIGNTY & CALLING 9-14

Paul prays that they may be filled with a knowledge of God’s will so they could teach it and comprehend it so that their lives please God and are fruitful, growing toward deeper acquaintance with God *according to* the sovereign purpose of God to display His glory in us so that we should be conformed to the Lord in patience and longsuffering and thanksgiving. Our emphatic thanks and theirs should spring from “having a part with the saints in the light” so that we are rescued from darkness and from sin through forgiveness and ransoming [*απολυτρωσις*] by the blood of Christ.

CHRISTOLOGY VERSUS ANGELOLATRY 15-20

ALL CREATION TO BE RECONCILED TO THE CROSS (six epithets)

Epithet 1 Christ is the image of the invisible God.

Epithet 2 Christ is the firstborn [*πρωτοτοκος*] of all creation i.e. the “lamb slain” – without his decision to become man the statement “Let us make man” could not have been fulfilled.

Epithet 3 Christ is the source of all creation – thrones, rulers, authorities and powers. He is before all. Christ is the immediate mediator. False teachers had trucked a heresy to Colossai which cited a series or tiers of angels and subordinate powers that reached between a holy God and carnal man. Paul rejected this false notion out of hand and true Christians have since the apostles always taught that there is but “one mediator between God and men – the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2.5)

Halley remarks: “This and Ephesians 6.12 intimate that there are in the unseen world numerous varieties of persons and governments of which our world is a counterpart, and that Christ’s death not only made possible man’s redemption but became the means of restoring the broken harmony of the whole vast universe”.

COMMENT

Angels and archangels as the Christmas story – the resurrection and the apocalypse demonstrate are dedicated to the gospel and it runs with Paul’s argument here that the incarnation is **central to the universe of bliss**. However, as *Sir Robert Anderson* in his book *The gospel and its ministry* states usefully, “Mankind alone can intelligently hear it...yet God was pleased in His Son to reconcile the universe” and in an additional footnote adds, “*It is certain that millennial blessedness and glory will be a direct result and proof of the preciousness of the cross of Christ to God, but no less certainly that an eternity of glory & blessedness, still to follow, will depend upon that cross as really.*” He further asks “*Why a new heavens if sin and the cross concern only the earth?*”

Epithet 4 Christ is the one who has held the creation together till now [*συνεστηκε*] v17.

Epithet 5 Christ is the head of the body of the church.

Epithet 6 Christ is the firstborn from the dead – that he might gain the victory. Forgiveness and the new creation are the results.

God was pleased that “all fullness” of deity dwelt in his body and to reconcile all things towards him. I.e. The basis of reconciliation is the blood of the cross. The NT scholar Ralph Martin urges that **reconciliation** is not primarily to be thought of as a cosmic miracle outside of man but with the restoration of relationships – based on the participle [*ειρηνοποιησας*] v20.

ALIENATED MANKIND RESTORED 21-23

Colossians – once aliens [*απηλλοτριωμενους*] literally “alienated property” – in their minds by evil deeds are reconciled through the body of Christ – through His death. They are to be presented as **saints** without spot [*αμωμος*] literally “without brand mark” and without accusation [*ανεγκλητους* literally “without libel or indictment”] – in His very presence – subject to being settled on the fundamental hope of the gospel – which has been heralded to the whole creation or “every creature”, Paul being a deacon committed to carry it to the uttermost parts. The simplest meaning is that in 32 years the main cities and centres of the whole *known world* had heard the message.

MYSTERY OF SUFFERING 24-29

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL ENCOMPASSES AND ILLUMINES SUFFERING

In the **mystery** of suffering one part of the church shields and supplements another by suffering v24. The flesh is precious when in suffering the Christian “fills up the remainder of the sufferings of Christ”.

Paul’s commission, second, was to present the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit – through which the fabulous riches of the **mystery** became known to the Gentiles [*γνωριζω*].

Gentile **saints** grasped the hope of Glory through gospel preaching under the anointing of the Spirit of God.

Paul proclaimed the victorious Christ [*καταγγελλομεν*] literally “from the battle” of Calvary. Individual counsel [*νουθετουντες*] and teaching [*διδασκοντες*] was given by Paul and his associates so that each might be presented “complete” Paul **agonises** more like Jesus than an athlete. Every piece of Christian work was to be “thorough” – every life a masterpiece of grace.

CHAPTER 2

O.T. references in this chapter Proverbs 2 3-4 & Isaiah 45.3 (3); Isaiah 53.12 (15); Isaiah 29.13 (22)

(1) THE TRIUNE GOD 1-8 (CF 1.8)

THE MYSTERY OF GOD & CHRIST

For the *Colossian* and *Laodicean* churches Paul had growing **agony** partly because they had never seen him – though, on one view, he may have been ministering at the time of writing in Ephesus (AD 52-55) and partly because of issues of thought swirling around them and their need to grasp the doctrine of God. These locations are to be found today SE and NW of Denizli within a 5 mile radius of that city, which is about 250 miles from Ephesus, 200 from Iconium and 100 from Psidian Antioch. Moreover a range of mountains ascending from the 3000 foot tableland reached from 6000 -12,000 feet between these locations. Having motored to Colossae from Denizli I can understand the reasons why Paul did not visit this remote land-locked region – his schedule and guidance apart.

Paul’s “wrestling” or struggle had three ends in view: –

(a) That their *hearts* so easily panic-stricken should be comforted by the Paraclete –W.E.Vine says that is “kindled to spiritual activity.

(b) That they should be reconciled or brought together [*συμβιβάζω*] “knitted” or “drawn heavenwards” or “lifted up” *in love*.

Chrysostom called Genesis 28.13 the “sign of signs” – Chrysostom saw the need for Christ on earth – the virgin birth – the dreadful cross, the resurrection – in the “land given to the seed” (Christ) and the Messiah as Lord of the church in the “anointed pillar”

(c) Moving towards the full **wealth of the full armour** or full message or an understanding and grasp such as teachers have of their subject *of the mystery of God the Father & of Christ*, in whom are hidden all the **treasures of wisdom & knowledge**.

Paul is saying plainly that Jesus was in a sense God in concealment.

Here the apostle reminds us that when we “cry to God for wisdom” as in **Proverbs 2.3-4** we are shown that at the **heart of covenant** is Jesus. We find true “understanding” [*Hebrew hnb*] involves a man of understanding or the mediator, namely, Jesus.

Furthermore in quoting **Isaiah 45** Paul shows that **Cyrus** found treasures of darkness through serving God – so we find treasure to which we were blinded in service. **Cyrus was shown God’s counsel stored up for long years and God’s buried secrets once veiled from his eyes.** As Daniel struggled in those times to be a faithful witness so did Paul in the N.T.

Those who reason in *fallacies* and those who argue by *probability* alluding to natural likelihood are in mind. We would call them the rationalists and the scientific materialists. [*παραλογιζω/πιθανολογεω*]

In his absence Paul is “with them in the Spirit rejoicing and watching their order and steadfastness as “**soldiers with complete confidence in Christ**”.

Christ is Lord – so “as you have received Him, walk or teach, rooting yourselves, building yourselves up in Him, becoming certain – guaranteed and secure in the faith as taught, overflowing or outflanking your enemy in **living thankful lives** [*ευχαριστια*] and worshipping Christ as Lord for His blood shed for you.

DEITY OF CHRIST VERSUS ASTROLOGY & RUDIMENTARY SCIENCE 9-15

(2) FULLNESS OF GODHEAD

THE FULL DEITY OF CHRIST—TESTIFIED IN BAPTISM

Let no man “carry you off as plunder “ or “despoil your house” through philosophy & empty stratagem propagated in line with man’s, in line with the *world’s principles (as first causes of creation or rude scientific approach)* but not in line with Christ. Philosophy and science will oppose the clear teaching of Christ and the syllogisms of the faith that Paul often derives from Jesus’ own teaching.

(1) “**In Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells in a body** (*who ruled from the first but literally colonised flesh. There is a choice of two Greek words for such an act. The first means “to settle or restore to one’s country”. The second means “to come down to be at home”.*

[κατοιχιζω & κατοικεω] – the latter word is used here). You are made complete as He indwells your bodies who is head of all rule and authority” – the **PLEROMA** here is “everything that is deity” or “the full complement” –*it would reflect the SHEKINAH or “glory of God” in Jewish teaching*

In whom you were circumcised in putting away of the body of the sins of the flesh – i.e. the “whole” **completion** involving the body of sin being put away by the circumcision of Christ (sanctification);

(2) **Burial in baptism**; rising through faith belonging to the inward work of God – resurrection energy

You who were once dead in trespasses and in the uncleanness of flesh He made alive – **being gracious for His own sake** to all your transgressions.

(3) **Wiping away the handwriting** in dogmas that was against you – taking it from the centre, having nailed it to the cross. Stripping powers and authorities *of their right and might* He shamed them openly triumphing over them **in Himself**. So Pilate would not vary his charge – but the law with its charge **Jesus wiped out** – meeting its terms fully – what a contrast!

He is totally God in glorious fullness, He is energetically God in resurrection power, and He is graciously God in forgiving.

(3) THE REALITY OF CHRIST 16-23 HEAD OF THE CHURCH – TESTIFIED IN MEMBERSHIP

LEGALISM 16-19

(i) **The first implication of the cross** [*Therefore ovv No.1*]

Let no-one bring you to trial on food or drink or for your part in Passover or new moon or Sabbath. They are shadows. Christ is the body. Let no-one who is inclined to the circle of lowliness of mind and service/worship of angels cheat you of the prize – i.e. of a higher calling and access – won at Calvary. Coming into possession of things he has not seen, he is inflated in all likelihood by the mind of the flesh and does not hold connection to **the head**, from which the whole body comes and growing & strengthened by ligaments & sinews continually maintaining it and forming it into a cohesive unit increasing in the growth and perfection of God.

ASTROLOGY & RUDIMENTARY SCIENCE 20-23

(ii) **The second implication of the cross** [*Therefore ovv No.2*]

If you died with Christ from the elements of the world (either subscribing supposed formal causes of all – earth, water, fire, and air or the rule of planets or spheres or life ruled by zodiacal signs). Why as living in the world? Do you submit yourselves to dogmatic teaching such as “Do not touch taste or handle” (*all of which things are corruption/seduction to desire or misuse*) according to the commands and teaching of men?

Which things have an outward form or a pretence in worship of the will (*of whoever*) and in false humility and in being careless of the body not in any honourable way for the satisfying of the needs of the flesh. This critique of Pharisaical and stoical recipes for holiness shows that no benefit follows for the body and no real spirituality results from obedience to apparently

spiritual people. It is living in the wrong scene among the wrong crowd and with the wrong set of principles – there is no substitute for the cross and the teaching of Christ.

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIANITY 1-4

Paul gives directions where the rubber hits the road – linked doubtless with baptism – and relating to the wider impact of Christ’s teaching on personal life, family and society.

Chapters 2-4 contain a series of *directions* – 4 of these fall within Chapter 2 and 14 in Chapter three and a further 7 in Chapter four. They help us right where the rubber hits the road in living out our faith. In the previous chapter Paul has asked why pre-Christian dogmatics comes into it. Then he issues 21 statements we might call the *Ethical dogmatics of the faith* that I have set out numerically for the reader in this and the following chapter.

(A) IMPLICATIONS OF DYING & BEING RAISED WITH CHRIST

[*Therefore ουν No.3*]

Therefore (3.1) as you leave the rules of Jew & Stoic and any counter-culture – be out and out for Jesus. Paul is saying: –

- (1) **Seek things above** – ask about them, feel the want of them, learn of them – things hidden from the world
- (2) **Have deep feelings** and centre your thinking on the risen Lord. The “appearing” of the Lord is the coming to light of our “real life” – as the “morning star” and our lives like accompanying constellations will then shine out.

ETHICS 5-11

(B) CHRIST’S RULE OVER OUR BODILY MEMBERS [*Therefore ουν No.4*]

Paul in this “4th therefore” develops yet another practical conclusion for our life in the flesh from his principles and doctrine.

- (3) **Mortify your members** on earth. In 308AD Ephraem the Syrian, a very remarkable orthodox pre-millennialist teacher of the early third century who led his nation to Christ put it in this way; he said “*You have no business with illicit sex, moral uncleanness, deep passion that demands satisfaction, evil impulse which the Rabbis said ruled as king over 248 members of the body, greed that goes beyond one’s share, which is idolatry – through which the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience with whom you were conversant when you lived in their circle.*”

PSYCHOLOGY 8

- (4) **At this very moment (of baptism?) Now [ουν] put away these** – anger that burns like fire; vicious evil action, slander, abusive language from the common mouth (*this respects the church speaking & has current relevance*).

POLITICS 9-11

- (5) **Ring out the false ring in the true**

Do not be false to one another, putting away the former man with his acts, and putting on the new man renewing (oneself) in knowledge or acquaintance according to the image of him who created it. Christ created His church – not aesthetic Greek and religious Jew, circumcised & uncircumcised, barbarian (so known from whipping soldiers into battle or Scythian (infamous for scalping enemies), slave or free – but one “whole universe” or “nation state” [*τα παντα*] in the circle of Christ.

THEOLOGY (PRACTICAL) 12-17

(C) THE ELECT – TO LIVE HOLY AND GODLY

[*Therefore ουν No.5*]

There are four sub-sections to this teaching within this chapter and further implications in the final chapter.

As the elect of God put on or be endued lovingly with: –

I GRACES

(6) A. Pity (Aeschylus used [*οικτιρισμος*] in connection with “feelings for the (potential) doom of others” and “pity that extends to compassion or inward personal sacrifice” [*σπλαγχα*]

B Kind disposition [*χρηστοτης*] not moulded with rashness or thoughtlessness – i.e. “careful and serviceable” – Plato

C Carpet-like humility that makes others comfortable and is God’s gift [*ταπεινοφρο-συνη* “*shared humility*”]

D Meekness or an acceptance of bridling or divine direction [*πραοτης*]

E A *non-choleric* attitude that is not quick to anger but perseveres. *Phlegmatics* have it – but, irrespective of whether or not it is your personality trait, cultivate it.

F Upholding one another in the battle – as Moses Aaron & Hur upheld Joshua Exodus 17.12

G Agreeableness/cheerful/obliging to each other if there is any complaint [*μομφη*] As Christ showed you grace.

H Love – [*επι+dative*] the conditions of being clothed are that love that accumulates with each of the seven previous graces and is like fasteners garments, sinews in the body, a headband that completes clothing. Here Paul speaks literally of “the finisher” in what is patently a reference to the headband in the tomb of our LORD that is key evidence of the resurrection in the Gospel of John as indeed it was a traditional artisan’s signal of work completed. Love provides the capstone of grace and character.

II PEACE

(7) *And let the peace of God be the final judge & arbiter* [*βραβευς*] in your hearts as in the resurrection church. So Paul goes back to the calling of that fresh body in the upper room from resurrection to Pentecost – with its lively head teaching them peace and bringing them often together in eucharistic mood. **We are to be winning** elegant grateful people.

III LITERATE IN SCRIPTURE

(8) *Let the word of God dwell life-long in your circle in its riches* Let the word dwell in you in **wisdom** – i.e. the understanding of it, and the skill to apply it. Like one in carpentry singing driving and healing so a skilled teacher build up God’s people. The word is also to be *in our music and song*, guiding, inspiring and promoting sound doctrine. Paul is urging that we ought to be “teaching and advising monitoring or counselling through all the scriptures – and its versified or repeated sections in the writings [*KETHUBIM*] which include *the Psalms*, also the prophets [*NEBIIM*] noted for their *hymns* and in the law [*TORAH*] allied to its periodic *spiritual songs*. Sing in your heart as Pindar says [*αιδω*] “like the **nurse** or **mother of a hero**”. So we, the brethren of our Lord and Saviour, celebrate Him in all the scriptures. Songs like “All the way to Calvary He went for me!” and “Up from the grave He arose with a mighty triumph o’er His foes! With carols such as “Down from His glory” and “Once in royal David’s city” – nay – all truly Christian praises, serve to affirm faith and encourage believers.

IV SPIRIT LED

(9) *And everything that you would do under inspiration ---“do”* (There is a command hidden in the subjunctive – i.e. everything you would do or endeavour to do or consider you should do) *in the name of the Lord Jesus* giving God the father thanks through Him. Notice Paul makes no mention of intermediary powers or angels – the direct stress is on glorifying God through Christ the one and only Mediator!!

SOCIETY 18-25

THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD IMPLICATIONS OF CHRIST’S PRINCIPLES

(10) *Wives obey*. Wives are first spoken of because they make the home – yet as wives give of their best and their all – to supply support, they are in love to be obedient to their husbands as created to share in procreation and in equal access and devotion to God.

(11) *Husbands love your wives* in an agape bond and do not be bitter with “spear-point words” or “scorpion- sting remarks” both of which kill off relationship and lead to its death. So gentle speech & communication.

- (12) *Children listen and answer as challenged* and listen parents out/with favour
[κατα παντα] – the principle comes from the Lord who was “well-pleasing” Mk1.11 & Mt 17.6
- (13) *Fathers do not irritate* by “rubbing it in” or “arouse and increase” anger in children [επιθω] so they do not become despondent or heartless – Rob Parsons in the spirit “Twenty minute parent” speaks of the need to discipline without breaking the spirit of our children.
- (14) *Servants hear out your masters in obedience* in matters to do with the flesh or natural to man – not just to please the eye but with sincere heart – reverencing God in attitude. Paul picks up a phrase used in v17 and says “every single thing you wish to do” do not do it as to man but as to the Lord – give to it the energy of a soldier in war or a miner in the pit [εργαζω] knowing you will receive repayment from the Lord – as forever the Lord’s bondmen. Any wrongdoer, whether servant or master, will be paid for what is done wrong for God has no face-favourites.

CHAPTER 4

ECCLESIOLOGY – SEVEN DIRECTIVES FOR OUTREACH 1-6

- (1) There are **seven directives** for the apostolic church and for masters or employers who are to be submissive to God. Hugo de Sancto Caro in creating what are now the chapters of the English Bible spotted significant Christian teaching here for society and the church on this matter. “Masters exhibit and grant what is right [παρεχω] and politically fair [ισοτης] because **you have a master** in heaven.”.
- (2) “Employ yourselves diligently in prayer or vow – watching and being thoroughly awake [γρηγορευω/εγειρω]
- (3) Be watchful in the circle of prayer – the circle of thanksgiving – praying **for yourselves** and for us [αμα] – uniting our need and yours under three important requests: –
1. That God would open a door of *outreach* for His word in Colossae and Rome
 2. To speak in Rome & Colossae in a personal way [λαλεω] **about the mystery or secret of Christ**.
This is teaching as we would use in small groups – and is exemplified by the themes in 2Timothy 3.16

THE MYSTERY OF GOD IN CHRIST [ευσεβεια]

As *the mysteries* were a *series of shows* so Paul saw the hidden relationship of Father and Son as demonstrated in

- (A) INCARNATION
- (B) BAPTISM & MINISTRY
- (C) RESURRECTION,
- (D) PENTECOST
- (E) CHURCH GROWTH

(F) AND THE REIGN & RETURN OF THE LORD. If Paul were to write a book to teach at this level these would be its themes and the Father/Son/Spirit story of Christianity in its truth and yet its mysterious nature would develop around them.

3. That I might show He is REAL, show his RENOWN [φανερω]. It is essential for me to do it thus because
Of my calling to witness and as pressed by circumstance.
- (4) In the circle of wisdom or “skill” [σοφια] as guided ones, as sound healthy ones, as soldiering ones, as people with one aim in mind – His glory – live your lives close to outsiders. This means witness because σοφια & περιπατεω both contain that principle. So we are to purchase for ourselves opportunities of witness communicating Christ with intense eagerness [εξ-αγοριζω – εξ is the intensive prefix]. This is a quite different task from slave purchase! Witness has also style as well as enthusiasm. Our approach should be kind and charitable – “seasoned” [αρτυω]. In the sense of sparkling witty conversation with taste & tang knowing that each individual has different culinary likes – so answers must be suited in simplicity in humour or seriousness.

TYCHICUS RETURNS LIKE A LOST SON TO PARENTS TO THE THRILL OF THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE 7-9

“All my affairs Tychicus, a brother beloved, a deacon so faithful, a servant and in the circle of the Lord will make known [*γνωρίζω*] so you recognise I am still going on. I am sending him for this reason that I may know you are still going on and may you be thrilled – indeed comfort your hearts – with Onesimus the faithful and believing brother – they will tell you and you will recognise him as a lost child come home and be thrilled!” Welcome him!

THE FIVE EMBRACES OF A WARM OUTREACHING CHURCH 10-18

During a family visit to Amsterdam in 1984 we gained first-hand awareness of the outreach of the gospel of grace under the leadership of Flyodd McClung. The evangelists were effectively reaching all levels of a sick society ensconced in the town centre and had time to proclaim the Easter Message in a relevant way to the holiday public of the city too. McClung was a living legend for his “father heart” and a telling example of grace within a community.

[1] EMBRACE THOSE WITH WHOM YOU DIFFER! 10-11

Paul speaks of three Jewish workers who have been to him a veritable **balm** for the many irritations with the circumcision party. He speaks of Aristarchus – a fellow prisoner, Marcus–Barnabas’ nephew, concerning whom he says “Receive him” and Jesus who called himself Justus. These men have been big-hearted and generous spirited to overcome division.

[2] EMBRACE OTHER CHRISTIANS! 12

Epaphras the Colossian Christ’s servant – was always agonising in prayer for Colossae. He wanted to see: –

- (a) The church stand complete – as Christian soldiers
- (b) The church fulfil Gods will as Christ fulfilled scripture – in every detail and by prayer cf vv1-9

He has a great zeal for you – for those of Laodicea and also Hierapolis – where Philip the apostle died.

[3] EMBRACE THE UNWELL! 14

Luke, the beloved Physician and Demas [*whose name probably derives from the role of “public physician”*] also in all likelihood came from a medical connection or had one. He left eventually for the bright worldly prospects of Thessalonica where into the 21st century there was a fine Christian hospital facility run by Dr. Katsarkis. But there is little doubt that Luke nursed Epaphroditus the Colossian back to health Philemon 1.27.

[4] See that you at Colossae embrace Laodicea and Nymphas – the lately married EMBRACE THE LUKEWARM 15-17

- (5) When you read this letter make it possible (by copy or taking it to them) for the Laodiceans to read it.
- (6) Then you read that from Laodicea – and speak to Archippus –“See to it that you carry along the ministry you received in the circle of the Lord – that you fill it up. It can have several contexts – the very practical one of “giving” which in the case of a very rich area could help so many, also it might mean feeding the people fully, and it seems certainly to mean “going on” and not giving up a valuable role from half-heartedness or other reason
- (7) [5] **THE ONE-ARM EMBRACE OF PAUL 18...** in my own hand... Paul...Remember my bonds. *Paul could not lift both hands to make an Embrace in all probability* – one was linked to a soldier – he gave a one-handed greeting as ever. “May grace be with you” I believe in Grace. Here is a powerful final appeal for kindness in the heart of masters – for undying appreciation of what the LORD has done for us and for reciprocation in terms of warmth and appreciation of others. The LORD and His apostles sought to inculcate this covenant kindness principle – this grace of the Christian life.

The apostle is bound – he is dependent – yet he wants men above all to know grace and to show grace.

FINIS

Bob Coffey Aramaic & Greek Bible Companion
L’shuvkha Marya (To the glory of the Lord)

