

GEMS FROM THE ENDINGS OF THE EPISTLES
Part XIII: Gems From The Ending Of Colossians, A. D. 60-62
(Colossians 4:7-18)

I. Introduction

- A. The epistle of Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul from Rome around A. D. 60-62 during his first Roman imprisonment (Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 434, 667).
- B. A major reason for Paul's writing this epistle was to "lead believers into spiritual maturity (1:28; 2:6-7)," Ibid., p. 668. To that end, his concluding personal remarks in Colossians 4:7-18 revealed Paul's actions of leading and motivating his readers to mature in the Lord.
- C. We thus view that passage for our insight, application and edification on maturing in Christ (as follows):

II. Gems From The Ending Of Colossians, A. D. 60-62; Colossians 4:7-18.

- A. First, Paul mentioned the men who were taking his letter to the Colossian believers, noting the growth these men had experienced in their own lives as examples to his readers of maturing in Christ, Colossians 4:7-9:
 - 1. Paul wrote that Tychicus was a dear brother, a faithful minister and a fellow servant of God with Paul. Tychicus was from the province of Asia where Colossae was located (Acts 20:4) and Paul was sending him to the Colossians to explain Paul's welfare in prison and to encourage his readers about it, Col. 4:8.
 - 2. Onesimus accompanied Tychicus, and Paul called him a faithful and beloved brother who was also one of the Colossians, Col. 4:9a. He had run away from his master Philemon who was part of the Church at Colossae, and Paul had led Onesimus to Christ and directed him to return to Philemon, cf. Phmn. 10-14. Thus, Onesimus was returning to Colossae with Paul's letter to Philemon along with Tychicus who carried the epistle to the Colossians, and in the letter to Philemon Paul was directing that Philemon not punish Onesimus, but receive him back now as a brother, cf. Philemon 15-17.
 - 3. Thus, Tychicus and Onesimus with their two epistles would clarify the need for the Colossian believers to grow in an attitude of gracious forgiveness for a repentant new convert such as Onesimus.
- B. Second, Paul sent greetings from three fellow workers who were examples of mature believers, Col. 4:10-11:
 - 1. Aristarchus, a fellow prisoner with Paul who had been imprisoned for preaching the Gospel, Colossians 4:10a. Aristarchus thus was an example of courageous service to the Lord!
 - 2. Paul also sent greetings from Barnabas' nephew Mark, Col. 4:10b. "Though Mark had deserted Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 15:37-39), Paul here commended him (cf. Philemon 24), as he did later (2 Timothy 4:11)," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 685. Mark was rebounding from his desertion failure, so Paul mentioned orders the Colossians had received about Mark that they were to receive him, Col. 4:10c. Paul wanted his readers to see the need for believers to be given the opportunity to overcome past failures, and for the readers to give room for such believers to rebound back into effective service for Christ.
 - 3. "Jesus" was a common Hebrew name of the era, and Jesus was also called Justus that meant "righteous," and he sent greetings as a saved Hebrew to the Colossian believers, Col. 4:11a. Thus, Aristarchus, Mark and Justus were the only fellow workers with Paul, and they had been comforting to him, Col. 4:11b.
- C. Third, Paul sent greetings from Epaphras, a sterling example of spiritual maturity who always fervently labored for the Colossian believers in prayer that they might mature in Christ, Col. 4:12. Epaphras had a great zeal for the Colossians and for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis, towns close to Colossae, Col. 4:13.
- D. Fourth, Paul sent greetings from Luke the beloved physician along with greetings from Demas, although Demas would later abandon Paul for the love of this world, Colossians 4:14 with 2 Timothy 4:10a.
- E. Fifth, for their good, Paul asked his readers to greet the Laodicean believers and those in Nymphas' house, and to have this epistle read to them and for the Colossians to read his epistle to the Laodiceans, Col. 4:15-16.
- F. Sixth, with regard to a spiritually faltering Archippus, Paul urged that he be told to take heed to the ministry that he had received of the Lord, that he fulfill it, Colossians 4:17. This directive reveals that if God has led us to begin to serve Him in a ministry, He wants us to stick with that ministry until we have completed it.
- G. Seventh, Paul urged his readers to recall his bonds and he called for God's grace to be with them, Col. 4:18.

Lesson: *Paul exemplified, explained, urged and taught his Christian readers at Colossae to mature in the Lord.*

Application: *(1) May we move beyond just knowing Jesus Christ as our Savior and grow up in Him in all things. (2) May we then example Christian maturity, may we explain it to others, and may we urge other believers to go beyond spiritual infancy to grow up in Christ, becoming spiritually mature in Him. (Colossians 1:28b ESV, NIV)*