

**YOU ARE  
COMPLETE  
in  
HIM.**  
COLOSSIANS 2:10, NKJV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

## Closing Greetings and Comments

An insightful phrase or a positive comment can be words which help a person turn his life around, or help him stay on track. A special card, an encouraging text, a telephone call, or a meaningful post can be the difference between a day which isn't going so well and one which seems like it has cheerful rays of sunshine all through it. For those first century Christians who often underwent severe persecution, those expressions of love and encouragement would be especially uplifting.

◆ **Epaphras** — Epaphras was a faithful brother who was also imprisoned with Paul in Rome (Philemon 1:23). This man was apparently a preacher and teacher also, and had already been alluded to as the one who had done much of the early teaching in Colossae (Colossians 1:7). "Epaphras, who is one of your number," says Paul, "a bondservant 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" (Colossians 4:12). What encouragement these comments would bring! How exciting it would be for these brethren to know that the one who taught them so much continued to labor for them in prayer! How clear it is from these comments which have been favorably recorded that God wants each saint to stand perfect before Him, and that have the full assurance that each is doing God's will. "For I bear him witness," continues the apostle, "that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis" (Colossians 4:13). Laodicea and Hierapolis were nearby towns which had congregations, and Epaphras, with true concern for the souls of the lost, had labored in them as well as Colossae, and honestly continued to desire that the saints remain faithful.

◆ **Others** — "Luke, the beloved physician," Paul also records, "sends you his greetings, and also Demas" (Colossians 4:14). It is in this epistle that modern brethren learn that the great preacher, teacher, and historian Luke was a physician. Here also Demas is noted, who later abandoned the faith even though he obviously and commendably worked alongside Paul. "Demas," Paul commented to Timothy shortly before the apostle's passing from earthly life, "having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica" (2 Timothy 4:10). How sad that is, and serves as a clear warning as to how important it is for each saint to continue to make forward progress in his faith.

◆ **Final instructions** — As the apostle closes the letter, he issues a staccato-like series of instructions. "Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea," he says, regarding their sister congregation close by (Colossians 4:15). Greet, he also requests, "also Nympha and the church that is in her house." Whether there was a group of people meeting in Nympha's home or whether it was a greeting for her Christian family, moderns do not have enough information to know for certain. "And when this letter is read among you," the apostle also directed, "have it also read among the Laodiceans; and you, for your part, read my letter that is coming from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16). The Holy Spirit chose to have the letter to the Colossians recorded in the eternal word of God, whereas the letter to the Laodiceans must have had material better included in other New Testament writings. "And say to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.'" (Colossians 4:17). It is a plausible conjecture that Archippus was the son of Philemon and his wife Apphia, and was doing much preaching and teaching in the area around Colossae.

"I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand" (Colossians 4:18). Sometimes the apostle dictated his letters; here, in prison in Rome, he sends at least his closing greeting in his own handwriting, in Greek capital letters according to the style of the day. "Remember," he pleads, "my imprisonment. Grace be with you."

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JAY WILSON