

EXEGETICAL
GUIDE TO
THE GREEK
NEW TESTAMENT

COLOSSIANS
AND
PHILEMON

Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament

Edited by Murray J. Harris

This ambitious new series seeks to bring together classroom, study, and pulpit by providing the student or pastor with the information needed to understand and expound the Greek text of the New Testament. The *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* closes the gap between grammatical analysis and exegesis, leading the reader into an in-depth understanding of the New Testament Greek text by guiding him or her through the process of thorough exegesis flowing into sermon construction.

Each of the twenty projected *EGGNT* volumes will provide the following for the biblical book or books on which they are written: a brief introduction on authorship, date, occasion, and purpose, an analytical outline of the book, a list of recommended commentaries, extensive exegetical notes, a translation and an expanded paraphrase of the whole book, a comprehensive exegetical outline, and a glossary of grammatical and rhetorical terms.

The rich exegetical notes make up the heart and bulk of the guide. Covering the text paragraph by paragraph, they provide the following: (1) a **structural analysis** of the Greek text; (2) a comprehensive discussion of each Greek phrase in turn, treating significant **textual variants** and **vocabulary**, giving detailed **grammatical analysis** (including parsing), exploring the options in **disputed points of exegesis**, and providing, in effect, an **index to the standard reference works**—the BDAG lexicon, grammars, and study books; (3) a list (for most paragraphs) of **exegetical and biblical-theological topics** arising in the text and suggested for further study, with detailed bibliography given for each topic; and (4) **homiletical suggestions**, designed to help the preacher move from the Greek text to preaching that reflects careful exegesis of the text. Each volume ends with a **translation** and an **expanded paraphrase**, both incorporating the results of the exegetical discussion.

This resource is so complete that any given person will likely use only selected parts according to his or her needs. Indeed, the *EGGNT* will prove helpful for a wide readership: students tackling New Testament studies, teachers seeking an aid for their students in reading the Greek New Testament, and preachers who wish to use the Greek text in their sermon preparation but whose knowledge of Greek has receded. No other available work in New Testament literature provides a comparable combination of serious exegetical work and homiletical guidance.

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PHILEMON

Murray J. Harris



ACADEMIC
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To

Graham D. Smith,

*stalwart friend and
constant inspiration*

for sixty years





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General Introduction

For Whom Is the Exegetical Guide Intended?

In recent years many helps have been produced to ease the task of the person seeking to learn New Testament Greek. But even after the student has painstakingly worked his or her way through an introductory grammar with its isolated examples drawn at random from the Greek New Testament, there remains the formidable task of grappling with the Greek text itself, where difficult verbal forms, new vocabulary, and grammatical irregularities jostle for the student's attention and threaten to overwhelm. To help at this stage there have arisen further helps, such as intermediate grammars, which contain more numerous examples of each construction, and grammatical analyses, which focus on vocabulary and parsing. But the grammars, for all their value, still leave the student stranded at a distance from the Greek text itself, and the analyses, though welcome, are often hampered by their necessary brevity and cannot bridge the gulf between analysis on the one side and translation and exegesis on the other.

The *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (EGGNT)* aims to close that gap between stranded student (or former student) and daunting text and to bridge that gulf between morphological analysis and exegesis. Each volume of the *Guide* seeks to provide in a single volume all the necessary information for basic understanding of the Greek text and to afford suggestions for more detailed study. The individual volumes are not full-scale commentaries. But they should prove helpful to those who need some aid in understanding the Greek New Testament and in particular to several groups of persons: students preparing for examinations in New Testament studies, ministers and pastors who are hard-pressed for time yet eager to maintain the momentum in the study of Greek that they gained in their theological training and who wish to use the Greek text as the basis for their sermon preparation, and teachers seeking to help students gain confidence in reading the Greek New Testament.

A wide variety of people, then, should find useful material in the *Guide*—even those who struggled with an introductory Greek course or whose knowledge of Greek has receded into the forgotten past. But in deciding what to include in the *Guide*, several assumptions had to be made. The *Guide* assumes that the reader:

1. has completed an introductory New Testament Greek course (such as J. Duff, *Elements of New Testament Greek* [3rd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005]);
2. has learned the meanings of words occurring in the New Testament more frequently than 25 times (see B. M. Metzger, *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* [Princeton: the author, 1970²], 7–23, or R. E. Van Voorst, *Building Your New Testament Greek Vocabulary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 15–60, 78–82);
3. has been introduced to the textual criticism of the New Testament (see, e.g., J. H. Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995, rev. ed.]); and
4. possesses a copy of *The Greek New Testament*, fourth rev. ed., ed. B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini and B. M. Metzger (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; New York: United Bible Societies, 1993).

What Does the Exegetical Guide Do for the Reader?

Each *EGGNT* volume begins with a brief introduction to the particular New Testament book (including matters such as authorship, date, occasion, and purpose), an outline of its contents, and a list of recommended commentaries. At the end of each volume is a translation and an expanded paraphrase of the whole biblical book, a comprehensive exegetical outline of the book, and a glossary of grammatical and rhetorical terms.¹

The major part of each volume is given over to paragraph-by-paragraph exegetical treatment of the text of the New Testament book. The treatment of each paragraph includes:

1. the printing of the Greek text of the passage, phrase by phrase, from the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* (UBS);
2. a structural analysis of the passage;
3. a discussion of each phrase of the passage in turn, with discussion of vocabulary and significant textual variants and detailed grammatical analysis, including parsing;
4. various translations of crucial words or phrases;
5. a list of suggested topics for further study with bibliography for each topic; and
6. a series of homiletical suggestions designed to help the preacher or teacher move from the Greek text to a sermon outline that reflects careful exegesis of the text.

More needs to be said about each of these parts of the exegetical discussion.

¹ To keep the Glossary relatively brief, references to the grammars are not listed for the term in question; their own indexes should be adequate to discover their treatment of the issue. However, if an example of the usage occurs or is thought by some to occur in the particular New Testament book under discussion, or if references to the grammars are given in the discussion of a particular passage, then the relevant passage is cited in the Glossary.

1. The Greek text of the UBS revised fourth edition is virtually the same as that of the twenty-seventh revised edition (1993) of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft). The UBS edition is preferred over the Nestle-Aland edition because of its superior Greek script and more attractive format, its inclusion of punctuation variants (in UBS¹⁻³) and Discourse Segmentation Apparatus (in UBS⁴), its more extensive textual apparatus (although on fewer variants), and the availability of a *Textual Commentary* related to the UBS edition (see below).

In the few places where the *Guide* follows an alternative reading rather than that of the UBS text, reasons for the preference are given.

Single square brackets ([]) in the UBS text “indicate that the enclosed word, words, or parts of words may be regarded as part of the text, but that in the present state of New Testament textual scholarship this cannot be taken as completely certain” (UBS⁴2*; cf. 48*). These brackets are not reproduced in the *Guide*.

2. The *Guide*’s structural analysis of each passage is not “sentence diagramming” since it does not focus exclusively on the syntactical relationships of words and phrases. Rather, it is a simple exercise in literary physiology—showing how the grammatical and conceptual parts of a paragraph are arranged and related. The analysis seeks to isolate emphases and delineate recurring patterns so that the reader can better appreciate the biblical writer’s train of thought and principal message. Quite naturally, therefore, the first “homiletical suggestion” (or sermon outline: see 6. below) is closely related to this structural analysis.

3. In the phrase-by-phrase discussion, when more than one solution is given for a particular exegetical problem, the author’s own preference, reflected in the translation and expanded paraphrase, is indicated by an asterisk (*). (When no preference is expressed, the options are judged to be evenly balanced, or it is assumed that there is intentional ambiguity in the text [e.g., ἐν ὑμῖν (Col 3:16).] In this way, readers who do not wish to examine all of the possible options may at least readily discover the view of this particular writer. A diagonal line (/) is sometimes used to indicate options in exegesis or grammar.

When a particular verbal form may be parsed in two ways, only the parsing appropriate in the specific context is given (e.g., Col 3:19), but where there is difference of opinion among grammarians or commentators, both possibilities are given and the matter is discussed (e.g., Col 3:24). If the verbal form appearing in the text is the basic lexical form (e.g., ἐλπίζω, Phlm 22), it is generally not parsed.

Where it is helpful to make clear that a particular part of a verse (in Greek, not English) is being referred to, the appropriate letter, a, b, c, or d, is added to the verse number. For example, Col 1:12b refers to the second half (roughly based on length) of Col 1:12, namely, εἰς τὴν μερίδα κτλ. Or, exceptionally, if four sections of a long verse, such as Col 1:16, are referred to, 1:16c would denote the third quarter of the verse, viz., εἴτε θρόνοι . . . ἐξουσίαι. These rough divisions of a verse are usually clear from the punctuation (periods, semicolons, and commas). But nothing crucial ever hangs on the division itself, which is arbitrary.

4. A diagonal line (/) indicates alternative renderings in translation. Square brackets ([]) are occasionally used to enclose material in proposed translations that has been supplied to ensure good sense.

5. An asterisk (*) in one of the “For Further Study” bibliographies draws attention to a discussion of the particular topic that is recommended as a useful introduction to the issues involved.

6. The “homiletical suggestions” are outlines representing the three basic kinds of preaching of the Bible:

a. An *expository sermon* is a verse-by-verse or consecutive exposition of an extended portion of Scripture. Colossians 1:9–14, for instance, deals with “Paul’s Intercession for the Colossians.” An expository sermon based on this passage might be entitled “How to Pray for Other Christians.” Colossians 3:12–17, “‘Putting On’ Virtues,” suggests the sermon title “Smarten Up!”

b. A *textual sermon* is detailed exposition of a single verse or a small number of consecutive verses. For example, “The Sinner’s IOU to God” could be a textual sermon that examines closely each phrase in Col 2:14. “The Normal Christian Life” would be a suitable title for a detailed study of the four participles in Col 1:10–12a or the four participles in Col 2:7.

c. A *topical sermon* is based on a theme mentioned in a particular text but also aims to give an overview of biblical teaching on that topic. Thus a topical sermon drawing on Col 1:4–5 might bear the title “A Harmonious Trio: Faith, Hope, and Love,” or “A Perfect Business Partnership,” but would also deal with other New Testament passages where these three virtues are mentioned together or at least with the three such passages in Paul’s letters (1 Cor 13:13; Col 1:4–5; 1 Thess 1:3).

The first homiletical suggestion given for any particular paragraph of the text is always an outline of the whole paragraph and is, in fact, more exegetical than homiletical. These detailed outlines of each paragraph

build on the general outline proposed for the whole book and if placed side by side make up a comprehensive exegetical outline of the book (see pp. 199–204, 249–50).

All the outlines, whatever their nature, are merely “suggestions” intended to provide some of the raw materials for sermon preparation. None of them should be used without modification and specific application to the lives of the hearers. True biblical and expository preaching is aimed at more than informing the mind. It also seeks, through the Spirit of God, to sway the emotions, to direct the will, and to produce in the hearer spiritual change in keeping with Scripture. Everyone not only needs to hear systematic biblical exposition, verse by verse and paragraph by paragraph but also needs to have biblical truth forcefully applied by expository preachers to every aspect of our daily lives.

Few readers will find everything in any volume of the *Guide* equally suited to their particular needs. Those reading their first Greek text may be content with the assistance with vocabulary, parsing, and translation. Readers with some experience in Greek may well skip these sections and focus attention on the discussions of grammar. More advanced students may choose to pursue the topics and references to technical works under “For Further Study,” while ministers or pastors may be more interested in the movement from grammatical analysis to sermon outline. Finally, teachers may appreciate having an aid for their students that frees them to concentrate their instruction on exegetical details and matters of background, criticism, or biblical theology.

References to Other Literature

While the *Guide* contains all that is needed for a basic understanding of the Greek text, standard reference works are constantly cited to indicate the source of a statement made or view expressed, to point to an authoritative treatment of the general issue being discussed, or to encourage further independent study. These references are restricted to a selected number of works in English that are in widespread use and that are regarded as generally reliable.²

The authors hope that the *Guide* will prompt many readers to consult (and in some cases buy) these larger specialist works, in particular the recommended commentaries on each biblical book. After readers have patiently analyzed the Greek text with the help of the *Guide*, they are encouraged to engage in their own study of the text, using a concordance, and then to consult the commentaries for help with difficulties or for more detailed exegetical study.

The following are the basic research tools to which reference is made:

Textual Criticism:

Metzger B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994. This is a companion volume to the *UBS Greek New Testament*, fourth rev. ed.

² The abbreviation “cf.” is used to direct the reader to a similar or relevant biblical passage or to (1) support for an immediately preceding suggested translation that is not directly mentioned in the work referred to, (2) a view similar to *but not identical with* the view just expressed, or (3) a general treatment of the point under consideration in one or more of the grammars, commentaries, or dictionaries. In any reference to secondary literature lacking “cf.,” what has just been said is an exact quotation from the work cited or a summary of the view expressed there.

UBS Rating Chart for Textual Variants

Rating	UBS ¹⁻³	UBS ⁴
{A}	virtually certain	“certain”
{B}	some doubt	“almost certain”
{C}	considerable doubt	“not completely certain”/uncertain
{D}	very high degree of doubt	very uncertain

*Vocabulary:***BDAG**

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Revised and edited by F. W. Danker (Chicago/London: University of Chicago, 2000). Based on W. Bauer’s *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch* (sixth ed.) and on previous English eds. by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker.

*Grammars:***BDF**

F. Blass and A. Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated and revised by R. W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961.

R

A. T. Robertson. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. 4th ed. Nashville: Broadman, 1934.

T

N. Turner. *Syntax*. Vol. 3 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Edited by J. H. Moulton. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963.

Z

M. Zerwick. *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples*. Translated by J. Smith. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963.

*Bible Dictionaries:***ABD**

The Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

DJG

Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Edited by J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 1992.

DLNT

Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments. Edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 1997.

DNTB

Dictionary of New Testament Background. Edited by C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.

- DPL** *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 1993.
- ISBE** *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Edited by G. W. Bromiley et al. Rev ed. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–88.

Theological/Exegetical Dictionaries:

- EDNT** *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93.
- NIDNTT** *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Edited by C. Brown. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–78.
- Spicq** C. Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Translated and edited by J. D. Ernest. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
- TDNT** *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–74.

Commentaries on the Greek Text:

Three or four recommendations are listed in the introduction to each New Testament book in each volume of the *Guide*.

Abbreviations

- * indicates the reading of the original hand of a manuscript as opposed to subsequent correctors of the manuscript, *or* indicates the writer's own preference when more than one solution is given for a particular exegetical problem, *or* in the "For Further Study" bibliographies, indicates a discussion of the particular topic that is recommended as a useful introduction to the issues involved
- † in the following list of abbreviations, indicates that the word or expression is discussed in the Glossary of Grammatical and Rhetorical Terms
- §, §§ paragraph, paragraphs

Books of the Old Testament

Gen	Genesis	Song	Song of Songs (Canticles)
Exod	Exodus	Isa	Isaiah
Lev	Leviticus	Jer	Jeremiah
Num	Numbers	Lam	Lamentations
Deut	Deuteronomy	Ezek	Ezekiel
Josh	Joshua	Dan	Daniel
Judg	Judges	Hos	Hosea
Ruth	Ruth	Joel	Joel
1–2 Sam	1– Samuel	Amos	Amos
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings	Obad	Obadiah
1–2 Chr	1–2 Chronicles	Jonah	Jonah
Ezra	Ezra	Mic	Micah
Neh	Nehemiah	Nah	Nahum
Esth	Esther	Hab	Habakkuk
Job	Job	Zeph	Zephaniah
Ps(s)	Psalms(s)	Hag	Haggai
Prov	Proverbs	Zech	Zechariah
Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal	Malachi

Books of the New Testament

Matt	Matthew	1–2 Thess	1–2 Thessalonians
Mark	Mark	1–2 Tim	1–2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rom	Romans	Jas	James
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Pet	1–2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1–3 John	1–3 John
Eph	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil	Philippians	Rev	Revelation
Col	Colossians		

- ABD *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
- † abs. absolute(ly)
- † acc. accusative
- † act. active (voice)
- † adj. adjective, adjectival(ly)
- † adv. adverbial(ly)
- † anar. anarthrous
- † aor. aorist
- † apod. apodosis
- † appos. apposition, appositive, appositional
- Aram. Aramaic, Aramaism
- Arnold C. E. Arnold. *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996
- † art. (definite) article, articular
- † attrib. attributive
- † aug. augment
- Barclay W. Barclay. *The New Testament: A New Translation*. London: Collins, 1968–1969
- Barclay, Col. J. M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon*. New Testament Study Guides. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997
- Barth-Blanke M. Barth and H. Blanke, *Colossians*. New York: Doubleday, 1994; *The Letter to Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. Unless otherwise indicated, the abbreviation Barth-Blanke within the commentary on Colossians refers to the 1994 volume, and within the commentary on Philemon, Barth-Blanke refers to the 2000 volume.
- BDAG *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Revised and edited by F. W. Danker

	Chicago/London: University of Chicago, 2000. Based on W. Bauer's <i>Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch</i> (sixth ed.) and on previous English eds. by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. References to BDAG are by page number and quadrant on the page, <i>a</i> indicating the upper half and <i>b</i> the lower half of the left-hand column, and <i>c</i> and <i>d</i> the upper and lower halves of the right-hand column. With the use of dark type, biblical references are now clearly visible within each subsection.
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Translated and revised by R. W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961
BGk.	Biblical Greek (i.e., LXX and NT Greek)
Brown	R. E. Brown. <i>An Introduction to the New Testament</i> . New York: Doubleday, 1997
<i>BT</i>	<i>Bible Translator</i>
Burton	E. de W. Burton. <i>Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek</i> . 3rd ed. Edinburgh: Clark, 1898
c.	<i>circa</i> (Lat.), about
Cannon	G. E. Cannon. <i>The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians</i> . Macon: Mercer University, 1983
Cassirer	H. W. Cassirer. <i>God's New Covenant. A New Testament Translation</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CEV	Contemporary English Version (1995)
cf.	<i>confer</i> (Lat.), compare
† CGk.	Classical Greek
ch(s).	chapter(s)
colloq.	colloquial(ism)
† comp.	comparative, comparison
† cond.	condition(al)
<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Conflict at Colossae</i> . Edited by F. O. Francis and W. A. Meeks. 2nd ed. Missoula: Scholars, 1975
† conj.	conjunctive, conjunction
† consec.	consecutive
† cstr.	construction, construe(d)
† dat.	dative
decl.	declension, decline
def.	definite
† delib.	deliberative
† dep.	deponent

DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> . Edited by J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 1992
DLNT	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments</i> . Edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 1997
DNTB	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> , ed. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> . Edited by G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid. Leicester/Downers Grove: IVP, 1993
dimin.	diminutive
† dir.	direct
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
Dunn	J. D. G. Dunn, <i>The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996
ed(s).	edited, edition(s), editor(s)
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (Lat.), for example
EGT	<i>The Expositor's Greek Testament</i> . Edited by W. R. Nicholl. 5 vols. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1897–1910. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970
† encl.	enclitic
Eng.	English
† epex.	epexegetic
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
esp.	especially
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)
ET	English translation
et al.	<i>et alii</i> (Lat.), and others
etym.	etymology, etymologically
EVV	English versions of the Bible
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
f(f).	and the following (verse[s]) or page[s])
fem.	feminine
fig.	figurative(ly)
Fitzmyer	J. A. Fitzmyer. <i>The Letter to Philemon</i> . New York: Doubleday, 2000
† fut.	future
† gen.	genitive
Gk.	Greek
GNB	Good News Bible (1976)

Goodspeed	E. J. Goodspeed. <i>The New Testament: An American Translation</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago, 1923
Harris	M. J. Harris. "Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament." NIDNTT 3:1171–1215
Harris, <i>Slave</i>	M. J. Harris. <i>Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ</i> . Leicester: Apollos, 1999; Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2001
Harris, <i>2 Cor.</i>	M. J. Harris, <i>The Second Epistle to the Corinthians</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible (1999)
Heb	Hebrew, Hebraism
† HGk.	Hellenistic Greek
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (Lat.), in the same place
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (Lat.), that is
† impers.	impersonal
† impf.	imperfect (tense)
† impv.	imperative (mood), imperatival(ly)
incl.	including, inclusive
† indecl.	indeclinable
† indef.	indefinite
† indic.	indicative (mood)
† indir.	indirect
inf.	infinitive
† instr.	instrument, instrumental(ly)
† interr.	interrogative
† intrans.	intransitive
ISBE	<i>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> . Edited by G. W. Bromiley et al. Rev. ed. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–1988
† iter.	iterative
JB	Jerusalem Bible (1976)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
KJV	King James Version (= "Authorised Version") (1611)
καὶ ἄ.	καὶ τὰ λοιπά, and the rest
Lat.	Latin
Lightfoot	J. B. Lightfoot. <i>Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon</i> . 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1879
lit.	literal(ly)
LN	J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds. <i>Introduction and Domains</i> . Vol. 1 of <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</i> . New York: United Bible Societies, 1988
† locat.	locative, locatival(ly)

Lohse	E. Lohse, <i>Colossians and Philemon</i> . Translated by W. R. Poehlmann and R. J. Karris. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Revised and augmented by H. S. Jones et al. 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1940; <i>Supplement</i> . Edited by E. A. Barber et al. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968
LXX	Septuagint (= Greek Old Testament)
masc.	masculine
Metzger	B. M. Metzger. <i>A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament</i> . Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994. The original edition of 1971 is based on the third edition of UBS
mg.	margin
† MGk.	Modern Greek
MH	J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard. <i>Accidence and Word-Formation</i> . Vol. 2 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> . Edited by J. H. Moulton. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1939
† mid.	middle
MM	J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan. <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930. Reprint, 1972.
Moffatt	J. Moffatt, <i>The Moffatt Translation of the Bible</i> . 2nd ed. London: Hodder, 1935
Moo	D. J. Moo, <i>The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008
Moule	C. F. D. Moule. <i>An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek</i> . 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960
Moule, <i>Col.</i>	C. F. D. Moule. <i>The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957
Moulton	J. H. Moulton. <i>Prolegomena</i> . Vol. 1 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> . 3rd ed. Edited by J. H. Moulton. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908
mng.	meaning
ms(s).	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
n	note
NAB ¹	New American Bible (1970)
NAB ²	New American Bible: Revised New Testament (1988)
NASB ¹	New American Standard Bible (1960)
NASB ²	New American Standard Bible (1999)
n.d.	no date
NEB	New English Bible (1970)

neg.	negative, negation
NET	New English Translation Bible (2005)
neut.	neuter
<i>NewDocs</i>	<i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity</i> . Edited by G. H. R. Horsley and S. Llewelyn. North Ryde, N.S.W., Australia: Macquarie University, 1981–. These will be cited by volume.
NIDNTT	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . Edited by C. Brown. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1978
NIV	New International Version (1983)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NLT	New Living Translation (1996)
† nom.	nominative
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1990)
n.s.	new series
NT	New Testament
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
† obj.	object(ive)
† obl.	oblique
O'Brien	P. T. O'Brien. <i>Colossians, Philemon</i> . Waco: Word, 1982
† opt.	optative
orig.	origin, original(ly)
OT	Old Testament
p(p).	page(s)
<i>pace</i>	(from Lat., peace); (in stating a contrary opinion) with all due respect to (the person named)
† pass.	passive
pc	<i>pauci</i> (Lat.), a few
† periph.	periphrastic
pers.	person(al)
† pf.	perfect
pl.	plural
† plpf.	pluperfect
† poss.	possessive, possession
† pred.	predicate, predicative
pref.	prefix
† prep.	preposition(al)
† pres.	present
† pron.	pronoun, pronominal
† prot.	protasis
ptc.	participle, participial(ly)

R	A. T. Robertson. <i>A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research</i> . 4th ed. Nashville: Broadman, 1934
rdg(s).	(textual) reading(s)
REB	Revised English Bible (1990)
ref.	reference
† refl.	reflexive
† rel.	relative
rev.	revised, reviser, revision
Robertson, <i>Pictures</i>	A. T. Robertson. <i>Word Pictures in the New Testament</i> . 6 vols. Nashville: Broadman, 1930–1933
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)
RV	Revised Version (NT, 1881)
sc.	<i>scilicet</i> (Lat.), one is to understand
† Sem.	Semitic, Semitism
sg.	singular
sim.	similar(ly)
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
Spicq	C. Spicq. <i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament</i> . Translated and edited by J. D. Ernest. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994
subj.	subject(ive)
† subjunc.	subjunctive
† subord.	subordinate, subordination
† subst.	substantive
suf.	suffix
† superl.	superlative
s.v.	<i>sub voce</i> (Lat.), under the word
T	N. Turner. <i>Syntax</i> . Vol. 3 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> . Edited by J. H. Moulton. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963
TCNT	Twentieth Century New Testament (1904)
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1974
† temp.	temporal(ly)
Thrall	M. E. Thrall, <i>Greek Particles in the New Testament</i> . Leiden: Brill, 1962
TNIV	Today's New International Version (2001)
TR	<i>Textus Receptus</i> (Lat.), Received Text
tr.	translate(d), translator, translation(s)
† trans.	transitive
Turner, <i>Insights</i>	N. Turner. <i>Grammatical Insights into the New Testament</i> . Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1965

Turner, <i>Style</i>	N. Turner. <i>Style</i> . Vol. 4 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> . Edited by J. H. Moulton. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976
Turner, <i>Words</i>	N. Turner. <i>Christian Words</i> . Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980
UBS/UBS4	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> . Edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger. Fourth rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; New York: United Bible Societies, 1993. 1st ed. 1966 (= UBS1); 2nd ed. 1968 (= UBS2); 3rd ed. 1975 (=UBS3)
v(v).	verse(s)
var.	variant (form or reading)
vb.	verb
Vincent	M. R. Vincent. <i>Word Studies in the New Testament</i> . McLean, Va.: MacDonald, 1888. Reprint, MacDill AFB, Fla.: MacDonald, 1970
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> (Lat.), namely
† voc.	vocative
vol(s).	volume(s)
vs.	versus
Vulg.	Vulgate (= Bible in Latin)
Wallace	D. B. Wallace. <i>Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament</i> . Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996
Weymouth	R. F. Weymouth. <i>The New Testament in Modern Speech</i> . 3rd ed. London: Clarke, 1909
WH	B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort. <i>The New Testament in the Original Greek</i> . 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1881
Wilson	R. McL. Wilson, <i>Colossians and Philemon</i> (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005
Z	M. Zerwick, <i>Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples</i> . Translated by J. Smith. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963
Zerwick, <i>Analysis</i>	M. Zerwick. <i>Analysis Philologia Novi Testamenti Graeci</i> . 3rd ed. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966. Although translated [see following entry], this original contains material not appearing in the English translation and sometimes differing from it
ZG	M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor. <i>A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament</i> . Fifth rev. ed. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996



Preface to the First Edition

It was during a lecture visit to West Germany in 1985, when I had more time than usual to reflect on various possible writing projects, that the idea of launching the *Exegetical Guide* came to mind. Since then I have benefited greatly from conversations with many students and teachers of New Testament Greek, who have generously encouraged me in this present endeavor, assuring me that so far from duplicating anything currently available, the series would meet a need felt by many.

I am pleased to express my warm gratitude to two of my teachers: the late Professor E. M. Blaiklock of the University of Auckland, who, in his inimitable fashion, opened up to me the world of Classics, and the late Professor F. F. Bruce, under whose inspiring guidance I undertook biblical research at the University of Manchester. To each I am indebted for his encouragement and friendship and his example of meticulous scholarship.

Thanks are also due to various friends who read the General Introduction to the series or who used this first volume and made many useful suggestions for improvement; to the many students in Auckland, New Zealand, in Cambridge, England, and in Deerfield, Illinois, whom I have had the privilege of guiding in the study of the Greek New Testament during the last twenty years, and who have contributed so distinctively to my understanding of the text by their penetrating questions; to Ruth Otway, Ruth Jones, Mary Morris, and Carl J. Davis for their efficient help in typing a difficult manuscript; and finally, and above all, to my wife, Jennifer, and our children, Oliver and Jane, for their support and inspiration, each in a distinctive way.

In spite of care exercised, errors are bound to remain in a technical work of this nature. The author would be grateful to have these brought to his attention, along with any suggestions for improvement in subsequent volumes in the series.

It is the author's keen desire that those who use the *Guide* will not only gain proficiency in handling the Greek New Testament but also find their thought and life shaped by the treasures contained in it.

January, 1991



Preface to the Second Edition

This revised edition of *Colossians & Philemon* is the first volume of the revived *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (EGGNT) series, now to be published under the B&H Academic imprint of the Broadman & Holman Publishing Group of Nashville, Tennessee. I am grateful to Dr. E. Ray Clendenen, Senior Academic Acquisitions Editor at B&H, for his enthusiastic acceptance of my proposal for this ongoing series, and to Dr. Terry L. Wilder, Academic Acquisitions Editor and in-house editor for the series, for carefully guiding this first volume through publication. It is hoped that the remaining volumes in this series (to number 20 in all), written by a variety of international scholars, will appear at regular intervals.

The writing of the first edition of *Colossians & Philemon* was completed in 1988. Since then a wide range of material relevant to this volume (and to the EGGNT series as a whole) has appeared. Accordingly there are many changes to the basic research tools referred to:

- (1) References are now made to the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek text as well as to the first, second and third editions.
- (2) The principal commentaries on Colossians and Philemon now used are those by O'Brien (as before), Barth-Blanke (separate volumes on each book), Fitzmyer (Philemon only), Dunn, and Wilson, along with occasional references to Lightfoot, Moo, Moule, and Lohse.
- (3) The basic general dictionaries are now the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* as well as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (second edition), together with the four-volume IVP Dictionary set (*Jesus and the Gospels*, *Paul and His Letters*, *Later New Testament and Its Developments*, and *New Testament Background*). For theological/exegetical dictionaries, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* remain, with the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* and Spicq's *Theological Lexicon* as the additions.
- (4) There is no change to the four grammars used (Blass-Debrunner-Funk, Robertson, Turner, and Zerwick) or to the recommended reference work on applied textual criticism (Metzger's *Textual Commentary*), now in a second

- edition as a companion volume to the fourth revised edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (1993).
- (5) Page references to the third edition (2000, now known as BDAG) of Bauer's *Wörterbuch* replace those to the second edition (1979, known as BAGD); sometimes this 2000 edition adds biblical references to an entry.
 - (6) The bibliographies under "For Further Study" have been updated and sometimes the recommendation (marked by an *) has been changed.
 - (7) Since the mid-1980s, 11 major English translations (or revisions) of the New Testament have appeared: NAB² (1988), Cassirer (1989), NRSV (1990), REB (1990), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NASB² (1999), HCSB (1999), ESV (2001), TNIV (2001), NET (2005). These are now included in the references to English translations. One of these translations is not well known. Heinz W. Cassirer was a Jewish Christian classicist and philosopher who was a distinguished commentator on Immanuel Kant and who did not read the Bible until he was forty-nine. His unique background and linguistic acumen make his translation innovative, vibrant, and insightful, even where some would consider it to be paraphrastic.

Apart from these multitudes of changes to the references and to the bibliographies, alterations to the text of the first edition are not extensive. Particular reference is made to the innovative work on "the Colossian heresy" by C. E. Arnold.

I acknowledge with gratitude the kind provision of *Bible Works 8* for use in preparing this volume. Most subsequent contributors to this series will doubtless be using this splendid resource in their research and writing.

It is a delight to dedicate this volume to Graham D. Smith, whose warm and generous friendship for sixty years has been both a pleasure and an inspiration.

May, 2009

COLOSSIANS



Introduction

AUTHORSHIP

Along with 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), Colossians is sometimes taken to be “deutero-Pauline.” That is, it is argued on the basis of certain allegedly non-Pauline features of vocabulary, style, and theology in these letters that they were written not by Paul himself but by a disciple of Paul such as Timothy while Paul was still alive (Dunn 38–39, 105, 117, 169, 171, 192, and esp. 269–70) or by a member of a Pauline “school” who was well versed in the apostle’s theology and was now applying it afresh after Paul’s death to particular pressing issues of a theological or pastoral nature that confronted an infant church in the early 70s of the first century AD (see, e.g., Wilson, 9–35, 59, 62, 74, 167–68, 311, 365). Still others regard the letter as an instance of pseudepigraphy (see M. Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* [Sheffield: JSOT, 1986]).

The objections to the Pauline authorship of Colossians have been adequately answered by various scholars (see Barth-Blanke 114–26; Moo 28–41; O’Brien xli–xlix). The most compelling argument in favor of the authenticity of the letter is its close connection with Philemon, an epistle whose genuineness is scarcely open to challenge. Colossians and Philemon have the following features in common:

1. The author is imprisoned (Col 4:3,10,18; Phlm 9–10,13).
2. Among the writer’s companions who send greetings are Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (Col 4:10–14; Phlm 23–24; see Dunn 347–348).
3. In the opening greetings the name of Timothy is associated with Paul and he is described as ὁ ἀδελφός (Col 1:1; Phlm 1).
4. In Phlm 2 Archippus is named as an addressee and in Col 4:17 the author directs the Colossian church to charge Archippus to fulfill his ministry.
5. Philemon 12 mentions the return of Onesimus to Philemon (at Colossae), while Col 4:9 refers to his going to Colossae in the company of Tychicus.

If Paul authored Philemon, it seems a priori likely that he also wrote Colossians, given these remarkable similarities of circumstance.

DATE

If, then, Colossians is Pauline, it is one of four so-called captivity epistles (sometimes also called prison or imprisonment epistles), the others being Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians. Of these four, the first three belong together to the same time and situation. We have already cited the evidence (under Authorship above) for linking Colossians and Philemon. There are striking verbal similarities—some 32 identical words in Gk.—between Colossians and Ephesians in those verses in which Paul indicates that Tychicus is being sent as the bearer of the letters (Col 4:7–8; Eph 6:21–22). On the relation between Colossians and Ephesians, see esp. Barth-Blanke 72–114, who conclude that “at about the same time, but in addressing different congregations in different situations, one and the same author [viz., Paul; see p. 125] wrote both letters” (114); see also Wilson 23–27.

Though Philippians also was written from prison (1:7,13–14,17), it has no personal references, apart from mention of Timothy (1:1; 2:19–23), that would link it with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. They, in turn, do not reflect the sense of uncertainty about his future that Paul felt when he wrote Philippians (see, e.g., 1:19–26; 2:17,24).

But where was Paul imprisoned or detained under “house-arrest” when he wrote these four letters? There are three possibilities (see Barth-Blanke 126–27n199):

1. *Ephesus*, during the 3 to 3½ years spent there (Acts 19:10,22; 20:31), c. Fall of AD 52 to Spring 56.
2. *Caesarea-on-the-Sea*, where he spent two years in enforced confinement (Acts 24:23,27), c. May AD 57 to September 59.
3. *Rome*, where he was under “house-arrest” for “two whole years” (Acts 28:30–31), c. February AD 60 to late 61 or early 62.

There have been vigorous defenses of an Ephesian or Caesarean provenance for all or some of the captivity epistles, but the traditional view, which dates all four epistles during Paul’s (first) Roman imprisonment mentioned in Acts 28:30–31, remains the most plausible alternative (see the discussion in Moo 41–46). Philippians is probably to be dated toward the end of this imprisonment, viz., late in AD 61, and the other three epistles at an earlier period of the confinement, viz., AD 60–61.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Colossae was probably evangelized during Paul’s residence in Ephesus, when “all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10). Evidently Epaphras had been Paul’s personal representative in the evangelization of the Lycus Valley region, which included Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col 1:7–8; 4:12–13). When he wrote the letter, Paul had not visited the church (Col 1:4,8; 2:1), although he was hoping to do so (Phlm 22), but he may have passed through Colossae on his third “missionary journey” (Acts 18:23; 19:1). On the church of Colossae, see Barth-Blanke 17–21; O’Brien xxvii–xxx; Wilson 6–8. On the subscription to the letter, see Metzger 560. Arnold (4) rightly observes that “Colossae was not an important cultural center

such as Alexandria, Athens, or Rome. In fact, Colossae was a rather insignificant city in Roman times, eclipsed by its neighbor Laodicea. Most of the people of Colossae would have made their living by raising sheep, by farming crops, or by wool-dyeing.”

While Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he was visited by Epaphras (Phlm 23), who informed him of the spiritual state of the Colossian church (Col 1:3–8; 2:5) and of a twofold danger confronting the Colossians: relapse into pagan ways of thinking and acting (3:5–11; the church was predominantly Gentile, 1:27; 2:13) and acceptance of unorthodox teaching (1:23; 2:1–23). Paul’s aim in writing, therefore, was to provide the Christian antidote to error in doctrine and practice. He commissioned Tychicus, accompanied by Onesimus, to carry the letter to Colossae (4:7–9) because Epaphras had chosen to remain with Paul (4:12–13; Phlm 23).

For a succinct summary of the theology of Colossians, see Moo 60–71.

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (1:1–14)
 - A. Introductory Greeting (1:1–2)
 - B. Paul’s Thanksgiving for the Colossians (1:3–8)
 - C. Paul’s Intercession for the Colossians (1:9–14)
- II. Christ’s Work and Paul’s Mission (1:15–2:3)
 - A. The Supremacy of Christ in Creation and Redemption (1:15–20)
 - B. Reconciliation and the Colossians (1:21–23)
 - C. Paul’s Stewardship of God’s Mystery (1:24–29)
 - D. Paul’s Spiritual Struggle (2:1–3)
- III. Error and Its Remedy (2:4–3:4)
 - A. Warning against Specious Philosophy (2:4–8)
 - B. Christ, the Remedy against Error (2:9–15)
 - C. Warning against Mystical Legalism (2:16–19)
 - D. Consequences of Death with Christ (2:20–23)
 - E. Consequences of Resurrection with Christ (3:1–4)
- IV. Exhortation to Holiness (3:5–4:6)
 - A. “Putting Off” Vices (3:5–11)
 - B. “Putting On” Virtues (3:12–17)
 - C. Household Relationships (3:18–4:1)
 - D. Prayer and Witness (4:2–6)
- V. Personal Notes (4:7–18)
 - A. Paul’s Two Representatives (4:7–9)
 - B. Greetings and Final Instructions (4:10–18)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

Throughout this volume of the *Guide*, references are made to four commentaries on Colossians and five on Philemon, written in English or translated into English and based directly on the Greek text of Colossians and Philemon. They are:

M. Barth and H. Blanke. *Colossians*. New York: Doubleday, 1994; *The Letter to Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Unless otherwise indicated, the abbreviation Barth-Blanke within the commentary on Colossians refers to the 1994 volume, and within the commentary on Philemon, Barth-Blanke refers to the 2000 volume.

J. D. G. Dunn. *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996.

J. A. Fitzmyer. *The Letter to Philemon*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

P. T. O'Brien. *Colossians, Philemon*. Waco: Word, 1982.

R. McL. Wilson. *Colossians and Philemon*. London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005.

Other recent commentaries on Colossians and Philemon are listed in Dunn 3–4, and there is a list of commentators on these two letters, ancient and modern, in Wilson xviii–xx. For recent bibliographies of general literature (in several languages) relating to the background and exegesis of both letters, see Dunn 4–18; Barth-Blanke, *Colossians* 494–513 (see also the useful map of “Colossae and Its Surrounding Regions,” xx–xxi); *Philemon* 504–18. O’Brien conveniently provides a relevant bibliography (up to about 1982) at the head of each section of his commentary.

If one needs to choose which commentary to purchase, O’Brien would be the best choice. In spite of their commendable attention to background material and the history of the interpretation of the two letters, the commentaries of Barth-Blanke exhibit not a few idiosyncratic interpretations and translations while their discussion of exegetical points is somewhat labored and sometimes unclear. Dunn is strong on contemporary parallels to the theology of Colossians, and Wilson is enlightening on the letter’s relation to later Gnostic thought, but with their view that Colossians is the work of one of Paul’s disciples, space is naturally given to highlighting similarities to Paul’s thought as found in the generally acknowledged Pauline letters and seeming divergences from his terminology and theology. But in general Dunn’s commentary is more creative and captivating than Wilson’s.

I. Introduction (1:1–14)

A. INTRODUCTORY GREETING (1:1–2)

STRUCTURE

1	Παῦλος	ἀπόστολος	Χριστοῦ . . .	διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ
	καὶ Τιμόθεος	ὁ ἀδελφός		
2		τοῖς . . . ἁγίοις		
	καὶ	πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς	ἐν Χριστῷ	
	χάρις	ὑμῖν		
	καὶ εἰρήνη			ἀπὸ θεοῦ

VERSE 1

Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ

In epistolary salutations proper names (here Παῦλος and Τιμόθεος) are regularly anar. (cf. R 759). On the name Παῦλος, see Wilson 65–66; Harris, 2 *Cor.* 128. Ἀπόστολος is in appos. to Παῦλος and is therefore in the same case (nom.; cf. T 206; but see also Z §§13–14). It is anar. (“an apostle”) since Paul did not claim to be “the (one and only) apostle” of Christ Jesus. “Apostle” is used in three senses in the NT: (1) in a general, nontechnical sense, of a messenger or emissary commissioned by people for a specific, temporary task (Phil 2:25, Epaphroditus; 2 Cor 8:23, Titus’s two companions); (2) in a semitechnical sense, of a Christian with a particular, permanent commission from Christ or the local church (Rom 16:7, Andronicus and Junia[s]; 1 Cor 15:7 and Gal 1:19, James the brother of Jesus; 1 Cor 9:5–6, Barnabas by implication [cf. Acts 14:4,14]); (3) in a technical sense, of the Twelve (Matt 10:2; 1 Cor 15:5,7) and Paul (1 Cor 9:1; 15:9), as commissioned directly by Christ for permanent and distinctive leadership in the universal church. See below, For Further Study 1, “Apostleship in the NT (1:1).”

The gens. Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ are dependent on ἀπόστολος, and express a relationship (cf. BDF §162)—poss. (“belonging to,” poss. gen.) and possibly also one of agency (“sent by,” subj. gen.; cf. Gal 1:1). In the NT names of persons are sometimes art., sometimes anar. (BDF §260; R 791; T 165–69) but the NT epistles usually omit the

art. with Χριστός when (as here, with Ἰησοῦς) it is a proper name (cf. BDF §260[1]; R 760; T 167). On the name “Christ Jesus” (also found in 1:4; 2:6; 4:12; Phlm 1,9,23), see W. Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God* (London: SCM, 1966), 203–206. But Barth-Blanke regularly translate Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς by “the Messiah Jesus” (1:1,4; 2:6; 4:12), and Χριστός usually by “Messiah” (1:2,7,27; 2:2,5,8,11,17; 3:1 *bis*,3–4,11,15–16,24; 4:3) but sometimes by “Christ” (1:24,28; 2:20) (see Barth-Blanke 137).

The διὰ phrase qualifies ἀπόστολος, “an apostle . . . by the will of God (θεοῦ, poss. gen.)” God’s will was the means by which (διὰ + gen.; BDAG 224d, “efficient cause”) Paul was chosen and commissioned to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. The art. is often omitted in common, stereotyped prep. phrases (cf. BDF §255).

καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός

The art. here (cf. anar. ἀπόστολος after Παῦλος above) indicates that Timothy was well known: either “our brother” (most EVV) or possibly “your brother” (Cassirer) or “my brother [in Christ]” (cf. Heb 13:23). Timothy (Τιμόθεος, -ου, ὁ) was an ἀδελφός—both a fellow Christian (see BDAG 18d; MM 8–9; Turner, *Words* 56) and a coworker (“our colleague,” REB; see references to E. E. Ellis’s articles in O’Brien 3)—but not a fellow apostle. On Christian brotherhood, see Barth-Blanke, *Philemon* 423–46. In Colossians and in three other epistles where Timothy’s name is also linked with Paul’s in an opening greeting (viz., Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians), he may have served as the apostle’s amanuensis—see For Further Study 2, “The Ancient Letter (1:1–2)”; F. F. Bruce, *The Letters of Paul: An Expanded Paraphrase* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 10; Barth-Blanke 137, 142–44.

VERSE 2

τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις

The addressees (indicated by the dat.) are οἱ ἅγιοι, rendered variously by EVV: “the saints” (RV, JB, NRSV, NASB², HCSB, ESV), “the holy ones” (NAB²), “God’s people” (GNB, REB, CEV), “God’s holy people” (NJB, NLT, TNIV), “those who are consecrated to God” (Cassirer), “Christ’s People” (TCNT). Here οἱ ἅγιοι stands where we find ἡ ἐκκλησία in 1 Thess 1:1 and 2 Thess 1:1 and the pl. αἱ ἐκκλησίαι in Gal 1:2 (cf. Rom 1:7; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1). In 1 Cor 1:2 κλητοῖς ἁγίοις (“called to be saints”) is in appos. to τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ κτλ. On this verbless epistolary introduction (“x to y”), see For Further Study 2, “The Ancient Letter (1:1–2)”; but cf. Acts 15:23; 23:26; Jas 1:1, where χαίρειν (“greetings!”) is added.

Κολοσσαί, -ῶν, αἱ, Colossae. For this idiomatic pl. in nouns, see R 408. On the geography and history of Colossae, see Barth-Blanke 7–10; O’Brien xxvi–xxviii; Wilson 3–6; on the history and archaeology of the Lycus Valley region, see S. E. Johnson, “Laodicea and its Neighbours,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 13 (1950): 1–18; C. J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in their Local Setting* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986), 178–82.

καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς

If πιστοῖς (dat. pl. masc. of πιστός, -ή, -όν, agreeing with τοῖς . . . ἀδελφοῖς) meant simply “believing” (so BDAG 821b; cf. NEB, “brothers in the faith”), it would be tautologous with ἁγίοις and ἀδελφοῖς. Here it means “trustworthy,” “true,” or “faithful,” so it is unlikely that ἐν Χριστῷ is dependent on πιστοῖς (“[the consecrated brothers] who believe in Christ”), a sense that would seem to demand τοῖς . . . ἁγίοις ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ (see further Moule, 81n1, 108).

If ἁγίοις is a noun and the single art. τοῖς qualifies both ἁγίοις and ἀδελφοῖς, the meaning will be “the saints and [the] faithful brothers” (cf. T 181). In this case the ἁγίοι and the ἀδελφοί are the same persons (see Z §184), and exep. καί introduces a description: “(the people of God at Colossae), who are faithful brothers” (sim. TNIV). Alternatively, ἁγίοις may be an adj. and, along with πιστοῖς, may qualify τοῖς . . . ἀδελφοῖς: “the holy and faithful brothers” (NIV). The former view is preferable since whenever ἁγίοι is used in an epistolary greeting elsewhere in the NT, it clearly is a noun.

The plural ἀδελφοί may legitimately be rendered “brothers and sisters” (NRSV, NLT, TNIV, NET), i.e., siblings in God’s family (see Luke 21:16; BDAG 18c; J. Beutler, EDNT 1.29–30) for the term is not gender specific; “women . . . would have understood that the term included them” (Dunn 43n4, who argues, however, that “in a historic text . . . it is better to retain the original usage”). See further R. Aasgaard, “*My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*” *Christian Siblingship in Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004).

ἐν Χριστῷ

This phrase relates either to the whole expression τοῖς . . . ἀδελφοῖς, or *simply to ἀδελφοῖς (as though Paul had written τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ). On the range of meaning of this Pauline formula, see Harris 1192. Here, as generally in Paul, the ἐν is more likely to express incorporation (“incorporate in [the Body of] Christ”; sim. NEB) or union (“in union with [the risen] Christ”; sim. GNB) than agency (“through [the power of] Christ”). The ambiguous Eng. paraphrase “in the fellowship of Christ” perhaps catches these two predominant meanings. See For Further Study 3, “The ‘In Christ’ Formula (1:2).”

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη

A vb. such as εἶη (“may it be,” 3 sg. opt. of εἶμι) or πληθυνθεῖη (“may it be multiplied,” 3 sg. aor. pass. opt. of πληθύνω, multiply) may be understood (cf. 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2; Jude 2, where three coordinate subjects are followed by a sg. vb.; see T 313–14). This distinctively Christian formula is related to the traditional Gk. greeting (χαῖρε or χαίρειν, “greetings!”) and the customary Jewish greeting (*šālôm*, “peace!”; see Dunn 50–51. Both nouns are anar. because this expression was stereotyped. See For Further Study 4, “NT Benedictions (1:2).” The apparently unusual position of ὑμῖν is normal in Pauline greetings.

ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν

Some mss. (ⲛ A C G I Byz Lect al) add καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ after ἡμῶν. This addition is clearly a secondary variant since: (1) it conforms to normal Pauline usage (e.g., Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2); and (2) it would be difficult to account for its intentional or accidental omission if this longer rdg. were original. Cf. the textual variants in 2 Thess 1:1. See Metzger 552, 567.

If a pers. pron. (here ἡμῶν) follows the noun on which it is dependent (here πατρός), that noun generally is art., but here this stylized formula, “from God our Father,” common in Pauline salutations, accounts for anar. θεοῦ and the anar. phrase (πατρός ἡμῶν) that follows in appos. (BDF §268[2]; T 206). Unless the context makes it impossible (as in, e.g., Jn 1:1; 20:28; Phil 3:19), (ὁ) θεός everywhere in the NT denotes the Father (see M. J. Harris, *Jesus as God. The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 40–47, 270–71, 282–83). Paul here views “God, who is our Father,” as the source or origin (ἀπό + gen.) of Christian grace and peace. Cf. NAB¹, NLT, “May God our Father give you grace and peace”; Cassirer, “May grace and peace be yours, sent out to you by God who is our Father.” See For Further Study 5, “The Fatherhood of God (1:2).”

FOR FURTHER STUDY

I. Apostleship in the NT (1:1)

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5. *The Fatherhood of God (1:2)*

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HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONS

Introductory Greeting (1:1–2)

1. The writers: Paul (and Timothy) (v. 1)
2. The addressees: the Colossians (v. 2a)
3. The greeting: grace and peace (v. 2b)

The People of God (οἱ ἄγιοι, 1:1–2)

1. Our foundation: apostles of Christ commissioned by God (ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, v. 1a; cf. Eph 2:19–20)
2. Our constitution: a brotherhood (ἀδελφὸς . . . ἀδελφοί, vv. 1b, 2a)
3. Our calling: loyalty to God (πιστοί, v. 2a)
4. Our resources: grace and peace (χάρις . . . καὶ εἰρήνη, v. 2b)

B. PAUL'S THANKSGIVING FOR THE COLOSSIANS (1:3-8)

STRUCTURE

These verses, which express Paul's thanksgiving for the Colossians, form a single sentence in Gk., although most eds. of the Gk. text print a semicolon after v. 6. The basic structure of the sentence may be shown as follows. The italicized words indicate the main emphases and transition points in the sentence. Similar but not identical analyses are found in Lohse 13–14 and Cannon 143–44.

We give thanks (3a)

when we pray (3b)

because we have heard . . . faith . . . love (4)

on account of the *hope* (5a)

about which you have heard previously (5b)

through . . . the *gospel* that has come to you (5b,6a)

just as worldwide (6a)

just as among you (6b)

just as . . . from *Ephras* (7a)

who informed us (8a)

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν (3a)

προσευχόμενοι (3b)

ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν . . . τὴν ἀγάπην (4)

διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα (5a)

ἣν προηκούσατε (5b)

τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς (5b, 6a)

καθὼς καὶ ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ (6a)

καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν (6b)

καθὼς . . . ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ (7a)

ὃ . . . δηλώσας ἡμῖν (8a)

VERSE 3

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν 1 pl. pres. act. ind. εὐχαριστέω, give thanks; followed by dat. (τῷ θεῷ). The subj. is either Paul and Timothy (cf. 1:1) or Paul himself (cf. 1:23–25). In spite of vigorous assertions to the contrary (e.g., W. F. Lofthouse, *ExpT* 58 [1946–47]: 179–82; 64 [1952–53]: 241–45), it is safe to assume that Paul sometimes used the formal “epistolary pl.” (sometimes called the literary or sociative or authorial pl. or the “pl. of modesty”; not to be confused with the “pl. of majesty”; BDF §280; R 406–7; T 28; Wallace 394–96; Z §8; and Barth-Blanke 166–68; Harris, 2 *Cor.* 139–41). On Pauline thanksgivings see O’Brien 7–9 and For Further Study 6, “Pauline Thanksgivings (1:3).”

Generally a noun in appos. (here πατρί) is art. (T 206). Therefore the shorter rdg. τῷ θεῷ πατρί (cf. the textual variants in 1:12; 2:2; 3:17), which has Alexandrian support (B C* 1739), is to be preferred over the rdgs. that insert τῷ or καί before πατρί. See Metzger 552; O'Brien 7n.; Wilson 81–82. Both τοῦ κυρίου . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and ἡμῶν are poss. gens., the former denoting a filial relationship.

πάντοτε

This adv. is probably to be cstr. with εὐχαριστοῦμεν (“we always give thanks,” GNB, NAB², NET; sim. Wilson 76, 83–84) rather than with περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι (“always praying for you,” Dunn 54, 56) or with both vbs. (Barth-Blanke 152) for three reasons: (1) this corresponds to the customary Pauline epistolary formulae (e.g., 1 Thess 1:2; Phil 1:3; Eph 1:16); (2) in NT Gk. an adv. generally follows the vb. it modifies (T 227–28); and (3) προσευχόμενοι restricts the mng. of πάντοτε: “always . . . when we pray” (RSV, NET) = “whenever we pray” (TCNT).

περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the pl. subj. in εὐχαριστοῦμεν) of pres. mid. ptc. of dep. προσεύχομαι, pray. Adv. ptc. of time (“when we pray”), denoting action simultaneous with the main vb. (εὐχαριστοῦμεν). On every occasion (cf. πάντοτε) that Paul prayed for the Colossians, he gave thanks for them. Περὶ ὑμῶν could be taken with the main vb. (“we give thanks for you,” NJB), especially given its position (cf. Rom 1:8), but it probably belongs with προσευχόμενοι (“we always give thanks . . . when we pray for you,” NAB², NET; “In our prayers for you we always thank God,” NRSV). Περί (“for”) here and in 4:3 and in Phlm 10 means “on behalf of” rather than “concerning”; the preps. περί and ὑπέρ are often interchangeable (BDF §229 [1]; T 270; Z §96; see Eph 1:16; 6:18–19).

VERSE 4

ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the pl. subj. in εὐχαριστοῦμεν) of aor. act. ptc. ἀκούω, hear. Adv. ptc. expressing cause, “because we have heard” (RSV, REB; Burton §439; R 1128). Aor. ptcs. that express antecedent action generally precede the main vb. but sometimes follow it, as here (Burton §§134, 136; R 860). Paul sometimes uses a ὅτι clause to express the reason for his thanksgiving (Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; 2 Thess 1:3).

ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

After πίστις this phrase could denote the obj. of faith (“your faith, which rests in Christ Jesus”; sim. NLT; R. Bultmann, TDNT 6:204 and n. 229; Dunn 57 and n. 9), but Paul, who seems to be immune from the HGk. tendency to confuse ἐν and εἰς (Z §§99, 106–10; T 254–57), expresses this idea in 2:5 by (τὸ στερέωμα) τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν, and in Phlm 5 by τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἔχετε πρὸς τὸν κύριον (cf. 1 Thess 1:8). Rather, this phrase indicates the sphere or realm in which their faith operated or was

evident (Moule 81; T 263n2; cf. Harris 1212): “your faith as those who are in Christ Jesus.” Less probably, πίστις could mean “faithfulness” (so Barth-Blanke 1, 152–53) or “loyalty.” On πίστις and πιστεύω in the NT, see Harris 1211–14; E. de W. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921), 475–85; and for an opposing view on Paul, W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1917), who argues that “the three Pauline expressions, πίστις, πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ, and πίστις εἰς Χριστόν, are substantially identical in meaning” (46).

καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους

Acc. sg. fem. of rel. pron. ὅς, ἥ, ὅ, referring to τὴν ἀγάπην. Tr.: “which you show (toward . . .),” a stronger expression than the ὑμῶν with τὴν πίστιν (4a). “To all God’s people (without exception),” whereas τοὺς πάντας ἁγίους would convey the sense “all God’s people (regarded as a whole),” the entire Christian brotherhood. The attrib. ὁ πᾶς or οἱ πάντες focuses attention on the sum total rather than the constituent parts. In the pred. position with an art. noun (as here), πᾶς means “all (without exception).” See BDF §275; T 199–201; Z §§188–91. For Paul, ἀγάπη is to be shown first to other believers, then to all people (1 Thess 3:12; Gal 6:10).

VERSE 5

διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα

This phrase, which specifies ground or cause (διὰ + acc., “on account of”), may be related to (1) τὴν πίστιν . . . καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην (v. 4; REB, TNIV; Dunn 58; Wilson 79, 87–88); or (2) τὴν ἀγάπην (v. 4; NJB). Alternative (2) seems arbitrarily to restrict the διὰ clause to its nearest antecedent. Option (1) is preferable because the preceding object of ἀκούσαντες is twofold and parallel: “both [viz., faith and love] spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven” (NEB; sim. GNB, NET).

Unlike πίστις and ἀγάπη, ἐλπίς is here obj., not subj., in sense: in this verse hope is not an inward disposition but rather denotes, by metonymy, the obj. of hope (CEV; Barth-Blanke 170–72) (almost = inheritance, cf. 1 Pet 1:4; or = “eternal life,” cf. Titus 1:2 and H. Traub, TDNT 5:532n294); “the ‘hope’ is the totality of blessing that awaits the Christian in the life to come” (BDAG 113a). An objective fact produces subjective attitudes. The inheritance of Christians has the effect of stimulating in them stronger faith and deeper love. Paul is not suggesting that hope initially produces faith or love, for only the person with Christian faith can have Christian love (Gal 5:6) or “hope.” See For Further Study 7, “The Triad of Faith—Love—Hope (1:4–5).” For this use of ἐλπίς denoting what is hoped for (BDAG 320c, 739b; Barth-Blanke 154), see also Gal 5:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 6:18; and Rom 8:24, where both the subj. and obj. senses of ἐλπίς occur (see further Turner, *Words* 213–15). Cf. GNB, “So your faith and love are based on what you hope for.”

τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

Acc. sg. fem. (agreeing with τὴν ἐλπίδα) pres. (mid./pass.) ptc. of ἀποκεῖμαι, be stored up; with dat. (here ὑμῖν), be reserved for (cf. 2 Tim 4:8). On this “present perfect” vb., see T 81–82; R 316. This art. ptc. is restrictive in mng. (cf. Burton §§295, 422 and see the Glossary under “Articular Participle”). It qualifies a noun (τὴν ἐλπίδα) and is equivalent to a rel. clause (cf. BDF §412; R 764, 1106–8; T 152), viz., ἣ ἀπόκειται, “which is stored up,” as is shown by the following ἦν προηκούσατε. Ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, “in heaven” (most EVV), not “in the heavens” (RV; Dunn 59–60), although there were multiple heavens in OT and Jewish thought. The pl. οὐρανοί is often used in the LXX to translate the Heb pl. form *šamayim*, “heaven(s),” “sky” (H. Bietenhard, NIDNTT 2:191; H. Traub, TDNT 5:509–11, 513; T 25; cf. R 408; Turner, *Words* 202–5).

ἦν προηκούσατε

2 pl. aor. act. indic. of προακούω, hear beforehand. Acc. sg. fem. of rel. pron. ἥ, ἡ, ὅ, referring to τὴν ἐλπίδα (fem. sg.). Like “hear” in Eng., ἀκούω can mean “receive news of” or “be informed about” as well as referring to the physical sensation of hearing (cf. BDAG 38b). The προ- may refer to a time: (1) before the time of writing (“already,” NAB², TNIV); (2) “before” the Colossians heard the false teaching; (3) “before” the fulfillment of the hope; or (most probably) (4) when they first heard the gospel (v. 7) (“previously,” NASB²). But Wilson (89) believes “the reference is surely just to some earlier date, unspecified”; so also Dunn (60), “earlier.”

ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

As a general rule, dependent nouns (here ἀληθείας and εὐαγγελίου) are art. if the governing noun has the art. and are anar. if the governing noun lacks the art. (e.g., διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, v. 1; and note ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας in 2 Cor 6:7). This is the so-called canon of Apollonius Dyscolus (see the Glossary).

Ἐν may be locat. (“in”), temp. (“when”), or instr. (“by means of, through”). Λόγος may mean “word, message” or “proclamation, preaching.” Gen. τῆς ἀληθείας may be epex./appos. (“the message, which is truth”; for this use, see BDF §167; R 498–99; T 214–15; Z §§45–46), or obj. (“the proclamation of the truth”; for this use, see BDF §163; R 499–501; T 210–12; Z §36), but is more probably qualitative (= attrib., Heb, Sem.; “the message of truth” = the message characterized by truth, “the true message”; or “the true preaching”; for this use, see BDF §165; R 496–97; T 212–14; Z §§40–41). Finally, gen. τοῦ εὐαγγελίου could be poss. (“the proclamation of the truthfulness that belongs to the gospel,” i.e., the true gospel; for this use, see BDF §162; R 495–96; T 207–8), or epex., so that either ἀλήθεια = εὐαγγέλιον or λόγος ἀληθείας = εὐαγγέλιον, i.e., either “the proclamation of the truth, which is contained in the gospel,” i.e., gospel truth, or (as in Eph 1:13) “the message of truth, the gospel,” “the true message, that is, the gospel.”

Several possible translations emerge (apart from the literalistic rendering “in the word of the truth of the gospel” [Wilson 76], which demands clarification) that are here listed in descending order of probability:

1. “through/in the message/word of truth, the gospel” (sim. most EVV and commentators) (or, “through/in the true message which is the gospel”),
2. “when the true gospel was proclaimed” (cf. T 252; sim. REB),
3. “through/in the preaching of the truth, which is contained in the gospel,” or
4. “through the message heralding the truth of the gospel” (Cassirer).

Paul’s emphasis rests on (a) the Christian’s hope as a crucial ingredient in the preaching of the good news (cf. vv. 23,27); and (b) the truth of the message proclaimed to the Colossians by Epaphras (cf. ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, v. 6b), as opposed to the spurious gospel preached by certain Colossian teachers (cf. 2:8,16–23). See For Further Study 8, “The Colossian Heresy (1:5),” and 9, “The Gospel (1:5).”

VERSE 6

τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς

Gen. sg. neut. (agreeing with τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) of pres. act. ptc. of πάρεμι, be present, have come. An art. ptc. is equivalent to a rel. clause (see on τὴν ἀποκειμένην, 1:5). Here the ptc. is nonrestrictive or explanatory, describing something (viz., the gospel) already known (cf. Burton §§295, 426). The phrase is usually taken to mean “that has come to you” (BDAG 773d; TNIV), but it could possibly also mean “that is present among you” (Lohse 19nn 53, 54), although Paul is not prone to use εἰς in the sense of ἐν (see Z §§106–10, but note also Zerwick’s earlier suggestion that, following CGk. usage, where εἰς is sometimes used with vbs. of rest [Z §9], εἰς here bears a “pregnant” sense, implying a preceding arrival of the gospel [*Analysis* 447]; cf. E. Stauffer, TDNT 2:433).

καθὼς καὶ ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ

Καθὼς καί, “just as also,” “in the same way, too” (two occurrences in this verse). In Paul comparative clauses generally follow the principal clause (T 345). On art. πᾶς, see 1:4. “In the entire world” (NET), “the whole world over” (REB) is clearly a hyperbole emphasizing the widespread dissemination of the gospel (cf. 1:23b), esp. via the cities of the empire, in a type of “representative universalism” (cf. Acts 2:5; Rom 10:18). See O’Brien 13; Barth-Blanke 158 and n. 26. “Heresies are at best ethnic: truth is essentially catholic” (Lightfoot 133).

ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον

Periph. pres. (R 881; Robertson, *Pictures* 474; T 88): 3 sg. pres. indic. of εἰμί + nom. sg. neut. (agreeing with an implied τὸ εὐαγγέλιον [from v. 5b], the subj. of ἐστίν) of the pres. mid. ptc. of καρποφορέω, bear fruit. If this periph. pres. differs in emphasis from a regular pres., it does so by pointing to the continuous nature of the gospel’s productivity, its ongoing action: it “continues to bear fruit” or “is constantly bearing fruit” (NASB²; sim. Barth-Blanke 1, 157–58) or “has been bearing fruit” (note the following ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας). In v. 10 the pres. act. ptc. of the same vb. is found (καρποφοροῦντες). Some find no distinction in meaning (e.g., T 55), but the mid. ptc.

may imply the intrinsic potency of the gospel in producing its own fruit (cf. Rom 1:16): “bearing fruit of itself” (sim. BDAG 510c; Lightfoot 133; Zerwick, *Analysis* 447).

It is not impossible to read ἔστιν, καρποφορούμενον (i.e., with a break after ἔστιν) and translate v. 6a thus: “(the gospel) that is present among you just as it is also in the whole world, where it is constantly producing fruit.” On this view (cf. Zerwick, *Analysis* 447), the ptc. and the following pres. ptc. αὐξανόμενον are in apposition to the implied τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and are not the ptc. elements of a periph. cstr.

In order to highlight the parallelism between “to/among you” and “throughout/in the whole world,” a few mss. and the TR read καί before ἔστιν καρποφορούμενον κτλ. But this removal of a somewhat awkward comparison (viz., between the arrival or presence of the gospel in Colossae and its productivity and spread throughout the world) is clearly secondary. See Metzger 552.

καὶ αὐξανόμενον καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν

Periph. pres.: [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] ἔστιν . . . αὐξανόμενον. Nom. sg. neut. of pres. pass. ptc. of αὐξάνω, cause to grow; (pass.) grow. “The Gospel is not like those plants which exhaust themselves in bearing fruit and wither away. The external growth keeps pace with the reproductive energy” (Lightfoot 133). On καθὼς καί, see on v. 6a. Ἐν ὑμῖν here does not mean “within you” but “(It has had the same effect) among you” (NJB), “in your midst” (NAB¹), and refers to both the past and the present (“as it does among you and has done,” REB), given the following phrase.

ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας

This is an idiomatic form of ἀφ’ ἡμέρας ἧ, “from the day on which” = “ever since” (Cassirer). The dat. sg. fem. rel. pron. ἧ is attracted into the case of its antecedent (ἡμέρας, gen.), which then is transferred to the rel. clause (cf. Zerwick, *Analysis* 447; Z §§17–18; R 717). The phrase is virtually a conj. (“since”; T 17; R 978).

ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε

2 pl. aor. act. indic. ἀκούω, hear; learn of, be informed about. Ἐπέγνωτε, 2 pl. 2 aor. act. indic. of ἐπιγινώσκω, know, learn, perceive. Ingressive aor., “you came to know” (sim. Moffatt, Goodspeed). Some give the prep. pref. ἐπι- its full weight and render it by “completely,” “fully,” “truly” (cf. BDAG 369a; “truly comprehended,” NRSV; Lightfoot 134, 135–36), but a comparison of v. 6 with 2 Cor 8:9 (γινώσκετε . . . τὴν χάριν κτλ.) shows that there is no necessary difference in meaning between ἐπιγινώσκειν and γινώσκειν (R. Bultmann, TDNT 1:703–4; cf. MM 236–37). Moreover, HGk. was marked by a tendency to prefer the more explicit expression and the fuller and phonetically stronger form, so that compound vbs. became more frequent and yet often meant no more than the corresponding simple vbs. had meant in CGk. (Z §§481–84; cf. Zerwick, *Analysis* 447).

τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ

Acc. τὴν χάριν is probably the obj. of both preceding vbs. (Barth-Blanke 1; Dunn 54), but it is possible to supply τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (from v. 5b) as the obj. of ἠκούσατε (so

HCSB, NET). The gen. may be poss. (“God’s grace”) or subj. (“the grace that God has shown”); cf. Acts 20:24; 2 Cor 6:1. On either view, “the grace of God” is here virtually a synonym for “the gospel”; but NEB has “graciousness,” NAB¹ “gracious intention,” TCNT “loving-kindness,” Cassirer “gracious favour,” and CEV “wonderful kindness.” See For Further Study 10, “Grace (1:6).”

ἐν ἀληθείᾳ

In meaning probably adv. (“in reality,” “for what it really is”; cf. BDAG 42d, 43a) rather than adj. with χάριν (“the true grace of God”) or subst. (“in the truth” [HCSB], i.e., in the gospel; cf. v. 5). The contrast with the travesty of God’s grace in the false teaching propounded at Colossae is implicit but nonetheless unmistakable.

VERSE 7

καθὼς ἐμάθετε

2 pl. 2 aor. act. indic. of μαθηθῆναι, learn (through instruction; BDAG 615b). This is a summary/complexive/constative aor. (BDF §332; Burton §§38–40, “historical aor.”; R 831–34; T 72; Z §§253–55, “global aor.”) that conceives of the initial learning of the gospel by the Colossians (= hearing about and coming to know God’s grace, v. 6) as a single whole, although prolonged instruction by Epaphras was undoubtedly involved. Tr.: “(This was) just as you learned it,” “You were taught this” (NEB), i.e., the Colossians had learned about the grace of God, the gospel, “in untravestied form” (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, v. 6). Since the temp. meaning (“when”) of καθὼς is rare in the NT (only in Acts 7:17), the word here, as in v. 6, bears its usual sense of “just as,” introducing a comp., but without any accompanying οὕτως, “so” (cf. 3:13; BDAG 493c,d).

ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ

Ἄπό + gen. stands for παρά + gen. after μαθηθῆναι (T 258–59). Gk. names ending in -ᾱς, such as Ἐπαφρᾶς, have -ᾱ in the gen. (MH 119; R 254–55). Although Ἐπαφρᾶς is a shortened form of Ἐπαφρόδιτος (MH 314; MM 230; BDF §125[1]; R 172), this Epaphras, a native or inhabitant of Colossae who founded the Colossian church (1:7; 4:12; Phlm 23), is not to be identified with the Epaphroditus of Phil 2:25; 4:18, who was probably a native of Philippi (cf. Lightfoot 29–36).

τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συνδούλου ἡμῶν

Gen., in appos. to Ἐπαφρᾶ. On an art. subst. in appos. to an anar. proper noun (here Ἐπαφρᾶ), see 4:9. Epaphras, like Paul (συν-), was a slave (δοῦλος) of Christ (σύνδουλος, -ου, ὁ, fellow slave; so NAB², HCSB, NET; Dunn 64; not simply “fellow-servant” [Wilson 76] or “co-worker” [NLT]). Cf. Phlm 23, where Epaphras is described as a prisoner, along with Paul (συναιχμάλωτος), “in the service of Christ Jesus” (cf. G. Kittel, TDNT 1:196–97). On ἀγαπητός (“dear,” “dearly loved”), see Turner, *Words* 266–68.

ὅς ἐστιν πιστός ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ

As in 1:2 and 4:7, πιστός here means “trustworthy, faithful” rather than “believing.” Τοῦ Χριστοῦ is either a poss. gen. (“Christ’s faithful servant”) or, more probably, an obj. gen. (“a faithful servant/agent [BDAG 230c,d] of Christ,” i.e., one “who is faithfully serving Christ”). Because διάκονος is anar. and Χριστοῦ is art., Robertson proposes (on the basis of the “canon of Apollonius”—see on v. 5 above) the translation “a (faithful) minister of the Christ” (R 781; sim. TCNT). But the use of the art. with proper names is notoriously irregular.

The first and second eds. of the UBS text favored the reading ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, with a “C” rating, but the third ed. favors ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν with a “C” rating, as also the fourth ed. with a “B” rating (“almost certain”); so also NAB², NRSV, NLT (“he is helping us in your place”), ESV; see Metzger 552–53. If only transcriptional probability were considered, ὑμῶν might appear the more probable rdg., since the preceding ἡμῶν and the following ἡμῖν could have prompted a change from ὑμῶν to ἡμῶν (but, on the contrary, note the possible influence of ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν [4:12], also in ref. to Epaphras, for the opposite change). However, the variant ἡμῶν seems preferable (so also Dunn 54 and n. 6; O’Brien 15–16; Lightfoot 134, 248–49; Wilson 76, 95–96; TNIV, NET) on the basis of both (1) external evidence and (2) intrinsic probability:

- (1) The witnesses supporting ὑμῶν are admittedly geographically diversified (including strong support from the versions and the Gk. and the Lat. Fathers). But the proto-Alexandrian (P⁴⁶ s* A B) and Western (D^{sr*} G it^s Ambrosiaster^{comm}) witnesses for ἡμῶν make a formidable combination.
- (2) In the context Paul is confirming the authenticity of the message and the messenger known by the Colossians. Epaphras had worked in Colossae and elsewhere in the Lycus Valley (4:12–13), as now in Rome, as Paul’s representative (cf. Acts 19:10), acting on Paul’s behalf (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) or perhaps in his place (where ὑπὲρ = ἀντί; cf. Z §91; Harris 1196–97). Scribes often confused the plurals of first and second pers. prons.; in MGk. η and υ are pronounced alike (“ee,” as in feet; see MH 73, 79).

VERSE 8

ὁ καὶ δηλώσας ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἀγάπην

Nom. sg. masc. (agreeing with ὅς, which refers to Epaphras) of the aor. act. ptc. of δηλώω, give information to someone (dat., here ἡμῖν) about something (acc., here τὴν . . . ἀγάπην; BDAG 222c). The art. ptc. ὁ . . . δηλώσας (lit. “the one who informed”), here emphasized by καί (“indeed”; although καί may mean “also” here, as NASB², TNIV; Wilson 76), is equivalent to a rel. clause, ὃς ἐδήλωσεν, “who informed” (cf. ὅς ἐστιν in v. 7b; and Burton §142; R 764, 859). Tr.: “He is the one who informed us of your love” (sim. NAB¹). A poss. pron. such as ὑμῶν may stand before, between (as here), or after the art. and the noun that it qualifies (R 779). Since the obj. of the Colossians’ love is not specified, it might be “all God’s people” (v. 4), all people (cf.

1 Thess 3:12), Paul (esp. if ὑμῶν is read in v. 7b), Epaphras, Christ, or God—or all six.

It was the recent news about the Colossian church that Epaphras had brought to Paul in prison in Rome—news of their faith and love (vv. 4, 8) as well as of the danger confronting them in the false teaching—that prompted the apostle to write the present letter. But it was Tychicus, not Epaphras, who delivered the letter to Colossae (4:7–9); Epaphras remained with Paul (4:12; Phlm 23).

ἐν πνεύματι

In Paul's letters there is often uncertainty whether πνεῦμα refers to the human spirit, to God's Spirit, or to the human spirit renewed by God's Spirit. Here, however, the sense is not "(your love) in your spirit(s)" (locat. ἐν), i.e., "your spiritual love," but "(your love) inspired by the Spirit" (instr. ἐν; sim. TCNT; BDAG 835b), or "(the love) the Spirit has awakened in you" (REB), or "(your love,) which is a gift of the Spirit" (Barth-Blanke 1). In Rom 15:30 the same idea is expressed, after ἡ ἀγάπη, by τοῦ πνεύματος, a subj. gen., "love engendered by the Spirit" (cf. Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22).

FOR FURTHER STUDY

6. *Pauline Thanksgivings (1:3)*

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HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONS

Paul’s Thanksgiving for the Colossians (1:3–8)

1. The reason for thanksgiving (εὐχαριστοῦμεν . . . ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν . . . τὴν ἀγάπην, vv. 3–4)
2. The stimulus afforded by hope (διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα, v. 5a)
3. The content and potency of the gospel (τὴν ἐλπίδα . . . ἣν προηκούσατε . . . τῆς ἀληθείας . . . καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον . . . τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, vv. 5b–6)
4. The ministry of Ephraim (ἐμάθετε ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ . . . συνδούλου . . . πιστοῦς . . . διακόνος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ . . . δηλώσας, vv. 7–8)

A Christian Partnership (1:4–5a)

1. Love: the senior partner (1 Cor 13:13)
Love is superior to faith and hope (cf. Col 3:14)
2. Hope: the creative partner (Col 1:4–5a)
Hope confirms and strengthens faith and love (cf. 1 Pet 1:3–9)
3. Faith: the energetic partner (1 Thess 1:3a)
Faith is expressed in work (cf. Gal 5:6b)

The Gospel (1:5b–7a)

1. Its content: hope (v. 5b), truth (v. 5b), and grace (v. 6b)
2. Its operation: fruit-bearing and growth (v. 6a)
3. Its reception: hearing (vv. 5b, 6b), apprehending (v. 6b), and learning (v. 7a)

Epaphras the Colossian (1:5b–8; 4:12–13)

1. The true exponent of the gospel (1:5b, 7a)
2. The faithful slave of Christ (1:7; 4:12a)
3. The effective representative of Paul (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 1:7b)
4. The constant warrior in prayer (4:12)
5. The tireless pastor of the Lycus Valley Christians (4:12b–13; cf. 1:28)

C. PAUL'S INTERCESSION FOR THE COLOSSIANS (1:9–14)

STRUCTURE

Like vv. 3–8, these six verses form one sentence in Gk., although most eds. of the Gk. text print a semicolon after v. 12 (as also after v. 6). Paul's prayer for the Colossians involved thanksgiving (vv. 3–8) and intercession (vv. 9–14). The close connection between these two aspects of prayer is indicated by (1) the repetition of words or phrases in the two sections ("giving thanks to the Father," vv. 3,12; "we heard," vv. 4,9; "God's people," vv. 4,12; "producing fruit and growing," vv. 6,10; "ever since," vv. 6,9); (2) the repetition of ideas in the two sections ("we always give thanks . . . when we pray for you"—"we have not ceased praying for you," vv. 3,9; "you came to know"—"knowledge," vv. 6,9–10; "hope" denoting the obj. of hope, Christian inheritance—"the inheritance of God's people," vv. 5,12; and note the repeated use of *πᾶς*, "all, every (form of)," in vv. 4,6,9,10 twice,11).

The syntactical structure of vv. 9–14 may be shown as follows:

Asking	(<i>nature</i> of the prayer)
that you may be filled . . .	(<i>content</i> of the request)
by having all spiritual wisdom . . .	(<i>means</i> of being filled)
so as to lead a life . . .	(<i>purpose</i> or <i>result</i> of being filled)
bearing fruit	four <i>characteristics</i> of
growing	"a life that is worthy of
being empowered	the Lord and that seeks to
giving thanks to the Father	please him in everything"
who has qualified	
he has rescued and transferred	
αἰτούμενοι	
ἵνα πληρωθῆτε	
ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ . . . πνευματικῇ,	
περιπατήσαι	
καρποφοροῦντες	
αὐξανόμενοι	
δυναμούμενοι	
εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ	
τῷ ἰκανώσαντι	
ὃς ἐρρύσατο . . . καὶ μετέστησεν	
	Modifiers
	ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ
	τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ
	ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει
	μετὰ χαρᾶς

VERSE 9

Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς

Διὰ τοῦτο means "because of this," "this/that is why," and refers back to vv. 4–8, the encouraging news about the Colossians brought to Paul by Epaphras. Καί here means "also" (cf. Z §462) and belongs with the vb.: not only did Paul offer thanksgiving to

God for the Colossians (v. 3), but he “also” constantly interceded for them. The news prompted intercession (v. 9) as well as thanksgiving (vv. 3–4). But Moule (*Col.* 52) links καί with διὰ τοῦτο: “that is *precisely* why,” while others render καί ἡμεῖς by “we, for our part” (Cassirer; sim. Wilson 98). For the main NT uses of καί, see on 3:4.

ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν

1 pl. aor. act. indic. of ἀκούω, hear. “Ever since we heard [this].” On the construction, see on v. 6. The implied object of ἠκούσαμεν may be the Colossians’ faith and love (v. 4, note ἀκούσαντες) or their love inspired by the Spirit (v. 8). Accordingly some EVV prefer the undefined “about you” (CEV, NLT, TNIV) or “the good news about you” (Barth-Blanke 173).

οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι

Παύομεθα, 1 pl. pres. mid. indic. of παύω, (cause to) stop; (mid.) cease. Προσευχόμενοι (nom. pl. masc. of pres. mid. ptc. of dep. προσεύχομαι, pray) is a pred. ptc. (T 158–59), completing the sense of παύομεθα: “we do not cease/we have not ceased praying for you” = “we pray for you without ceasing” (cf. BDAG 790b; NAB²), “we have continued praying for you” (NLT). This refers to prayer that is regular and frequent rather than uninterrupted. See For Further Study 11, “Prayer in Paul (1:9–12).”

καὶ αἰτούμενοι

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the subj. of παύομεθα) of pres. mid. ptc. of αἰτέω, ask, ask for; a second pred. ptc. after οὐ παύομεθα. This may be a case of hendiadys: “praying for you and asking” = “asking in our prayers for you” (so also Mark 11:24, “whatever you ask in prayer”; cf. ZG 603; Z §460). Some scholars attempt to distinguish the act. and mid. senses of αἰτέω, the act. meaning “ask outright” or denoting the mere formality of prayer, and the mid. meaning “ask as a loan” or signifying a request made in the true spirit of prayer. But no such distinctions are consistently maintained in the NT, where αἰτέω and αἰτέομαι alternate almost arbitrarily (see BDF §316[2]; BDAG 30b; G. Stählin, TDNT 1:192; H. Schönweiss, NIDNTT 2:856–57; Turner, *Insights* 163–64).

ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ

2 pl. aor. pass. subjunc. of πληρώω, fill. Here God is the implied agent of the action since the request is addressed to him (cf. REB, “We ask God that you may receive from him full insight into his will”; G. Dellling, TDNT 6:291). Here the ἵνα + subjunc. clause indicates the content of the petition rather than its purpose (cf. BDAG 476b and 4:3–4, but Barth-Blanke 173 allege [improbably] that ἵνα here specifies both content and purpose). “Our request is that God may fill you” (sim. GNB, TNIV). Πληρώω is usually followed by a gen. of content (e.g., Rom 15:14, “filled with all knowledge”) but here, exceptionally, an acc. denoting content is found (see T 247; R 483). Alternatively, but less probably, τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν could be an acc. of reference or respect (cf. BDF §160; Z §74): “that you may be filled with respect to the knowledge of God’s will.”

Ἐπίγνωσις (ἐπί + γνώσις), -εως, ἡ, may mean “complete understanding,” “clear knowledge” (Weymouth), “deeper knowledge” (TCNT), or “ever-growing knowledge” (Barclay; intensive or perfective ἐπί; cf. R 600; Robertson, *Pictures* 475; sim. Lightfoot 136), but this compound noun need not signify more than γνώσις (cf. R. Bultmann, TDNT 1:704–8). Indeed, after a detailed discussion of the issue (pp. 248–54), J. A. Robinson concludes that γνώσις is the wider word, “knowledge” in the fullest sense and in the abstract, ἐπίγνωσις expressing knowledge directed toward (ἐπί) a particular object that, if expressed, is indicated by the obj. gen. (*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians* [London: Macmillan, 1928²], 254), viz., τοῦ θελήματος in v. 9 and τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 10. See also the discussion of ἐπέγωτε in 1:6 and K. Sullivan, “Epignosis in the Epistles of St. Paul,” *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus 1961* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 2.405–16. See For Further Study 12, “The Will of God (1:9).”

ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ

This prep. phrase may be taken in three ways:

- *1. with πληρωθῆτε, ἐν being instr.: “filled . . . by having” (sim. NEB, NJB, NAB²);
2. with ἐπίγνωσιν, ἐν being sociative: “knowledge . . . accompanied by” (Weymouth), “knowledge . . . such as brings with it” (Cassirer); or
3. with ἐπίγνωσιν, ἐν being epex.: “knowledge . . . which consists in” (sim. GNB).

On view (1), which is preferable, πληρωθῆτε is followed by a statement, first of content, then of means: “that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will by having spiritual wisdom and discernment (σύνεσις, -εως, ἡ) in full measure.” With an anar. noun, πᾶς means “every” or “all” in the sense of “every kind of” (BDF §275[3]; R 771–72; T 199–200; Z §§188–91) or “all” in the sense of “the highest degree of,” “total” (relative πᾶς); see B. Reicke, TDNT 5:887–88; cf. BDAG 783d; Barth-Blanke 176–177. For πᾶς with an art. noun, see on 1:4. Both adjs. πάσῃ and πνευματικῇ should be construed with both nouns σοφίᾳ and συνέσει (Wilson 102, “probably”). Πνευματικός here signifies “relating to the (human) spirit/spiritual matters” or (as BDAG 837a proposes; sim. GNB, TNIV; G. Schrenk, TDNT 3:58) “given by the Spirit,” in comparison with the specious wisdom of the false teaching (2:23) that emanated from an unspiritual mind (2:18). On σοφία, see Wilson 102–4.

VERSE 10

περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου

Aor. act. inf. of περιπατέω, walk; (in a moral sense) live, behave (BDAG 803a; H. Seesemann, TDNT 5:944; Dunn 71). This inf. is a constative aor. (see v. 7) that views the Christian’s whole life and conduct as a unit, without reference to individual or repeated acts (as is expressed by τὸ περιπατεῖν in 1 Thess 2:12), although BDF §337(1)

sees the περιπατήσαι as highlighting the newness of the Christian's life. This inf. may express purpose (after πληρωθήτε κτλ.), "in order that you may lead a life" (so O'Brien 18, 22; sim. R 1049, 1087; NASB², HCSB, ESV; Barth-Blanke 173; Wilson 98); or *result, "you will then lead a life" (Lightfoot 137; sim. TCNT, GNB, NJB, NLT). But it is unlikely to express additional content of the request, "asking that you may be filled . . . and may lead a life." Paul's prayer, then, was in essence that the Colossians would have "all spiritual wisdom and discernment," which would mean that they were "filled with the knowledge of God's will" and thus would "lead a life worthy of the Lord."

Ἀξίως (adv.), "in a manner worthy of," with gen. of the person or thing. Although God the Father is the implied agent in πληρωθήτε and αὐτοῦ in vv. 9,11 refers to him, τοῦ κυρίου here probably denotes the Lord Jesus (as also BDAG 578b), given the following explicit refs. to τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 10b) and τῷ πατρὶ (v. 12a) and Paul's customary distinction (Z §169) between ὁ Κύριος = Christ and Κύριος = Yahweh.

εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν

Lit. "to every type of pleasing." On anar. πᾶς, see 1:9. Since this phrase follows "worthy of the Lord (Jesus)" as a second qualification of περιπατήσαι, it will mean "to please him in all respects" (BDAG 129c) or "that seeks to please him in everything/to be wholly pleasing to him," with εἰς denoting purpose. But Barth-Blanke 177–78 see the object of the ἀρεσκεία as people as well as the Lord God and the Lord Jesus. In CGk. ἀρεσκεία, -ας, ἡ, generally had a pejorative sense, "obsequiousness," "cringing" (cf. MH 75).

ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες

Nom. pl. masc. the pres. act. ptc. of καρποφορέω, bear fruit, yield a harvest (see 1:6 for mid. use). This ptc. agrees with the subj. of πληρωθήτε, although we might have expected this and the following three ptc. to be in the acc. in agreement with the implied subj. of the infin. περιπατήσαι (cf. Eph 4:1–3). On anar. πᾶς, see 1:9. Both adjs., παντί and ἀγαθῷ, qualify ἔργῳ: "every kind of good deed," "right action of every sort" (Weymouth). But if ἔργῳ is a generic sg. (see BDF §139; T 22–23), the meaning will be "good deeds of every kind" (Zerwick, *Analysis* 447; cf. BDAG 784c). Καρποφοροῦντες is the first of four pres. ptc. in vv. 10–12 (the others are ἀξάνόμενοι, δυναμούμενοι, εὐχαριστοῦντες) that modify περιπατήσαι . . . ἀρεσκείαν and are circumstantial, describing four characteristics of "a life that is worthy of the Lord and that seeks to please him in every way"; TNIV appropriately places a colon after "in every way." These four traits—bearing fruit, growing, being empowered, giving thanks—are portrayed as typical of the believer, not as the only marks of the Christian. Each of the four ptc. is modified by a prep. phrase (see above on Structure). All four ptc. are in effect coordinate, although the last two lack a connective (a case of asyndeton). Barth-Blanke, however, take these four ptc. as impv. (178–85), although this is not reflected in their tr.

καὶ ἀυξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the subj. of πληρωθῆτε) of the pres. pass. ptc. of αὐξάνω, grow, cause to grow; (pass.) grow. In v. 6 this vb. denotes *extensive* growth; here, *intensive* growth (E. Schweizer, TDNT 7:1078n501). Dat. τῇ ἐπιγνώσει (on the meaning of this word see on 1:9) expresses the sphere of the growth (“growing in the knowledge,” locat. dat. or dat. of respect) rather than its means (“growing by the knowledge,” instr. dat., as Dunn 72n16). Τοῦ θεοῦ is an obj. gen., “the knowledge of God(’s person),” not a subj. gen. (“the knowledge [of his will] imparted by God”). On this view, v. 10b is an instance of chiasmus (A–B–B–A): (A) a prep. phrase in the dat. (ἐν παντί κτλ.) modifying (B) a pres. ptc. (καρποφοροῦντες); and (B) a pres. ptc. (ἀυξανόμενοι) modified by (A) a dat. phrase (τῇ ἐπιγνώσει κτλ.). But it is also possible (thus Lohse 29) to construe both modifying phrases with both ptc.s.: “bearing fruit and growing in every good deed through knowing God,” τῇ ἐπιγνώσει in that case being an instr. dat. expressing means.

VERSE 11

ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the subj. of πληρωθῆτε) of the pres. pass. ptc. of δυναμόω, strengthen, empower. This is the third of four circumstantial pres. ptc.s. in vv. 10–12 (see on v. 10). Ἐν is instr., lit. “(being empowered) with all power.” BDAG proposes “equipped with all power” (262c) or “endowed with all capability” (263d). Πάσῃ δυνάμει may signify “power of every kind” (ZG 603; cf. 1:9) or “with full power” (cf. BDAG 783d, πᾶς denoting the “highest degree”).

κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ

The prep. κατὰ may here express:

1. conformity (“in accordance with”; “according to,” RV, RSV, NASB²; Wilson 98), in which case κατὰ κτλ. points to the level of the resources available for the equipping with power;
2. basis (“based on [his own glorious power],” JB); or
- *3. cause (“as a result of,” “because of,” “that comes from” (NRSV), and thus “through”; see BDAG 513a), in which case the ἐν phrase denotes that with which the Colossians are empowered and the κατὰ phrase, that through which they are empowered: God’s glorious strength (κράτος, -ους, τό) imparts the power with which they are endued or empowers them with a full measure of power (cf. NAB¹, “By the might of his glory”; Moffatt, “May his glorious might nerve you with full power”).

Gen. τῆς δόξης may be poss., “that belongs to/is characteristic of his glory (= majesty or divinity),” “the might of his glory” (Wilson 98, 109); or qualitative, describing τὸ κράτος as “glorious might” (BDAG 565b) or “majestic power” (BDAG 257b).

εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν

Εἰς indicates the goal, “for,” “with a view to,” “so that you will have,” “for the attaining of” (NASB²), “for the display of” (NET); see, however, A. Oepke, TDNT 2:429. Ὑπομονή, -ῆς, ἡ, is resolute endurance under difficult circumstances, while μακροθυμία, -ας, ἡ, is patient endurance that does not retaliate (see Lightfoot 138; J. Horst, TDNT 4:384n82; Barth-Blanke 182). On anar. πᾶς, see 1:9. Tr.: “for endurance and patience of every kind/in every way,” or “great endurance and patience” (TNIV; cf. BDAG 783d), “always to persevere and endure” (NJB).

μετὰ χαρᾶς

This phrase (“with joy”) may stand alone, “May you be filled with joy” (NLT), “being filled with joy” (Cassirer), but probably is to be cstr. with what precedes (εἰς πᾶσαν κτλ.; so WH; ESV; Barth-Blanke 183) or with what follows (εὐχαριστοῦντες κτλ.; so UBS, with a comma before μετὰ [UBS¹⁻³], or with a full stop before μετὰ [UBS³ corrected, 4]). In favor of the latter construction (“joyfully giving thanks,” NIV, NAB², NRSV; sim. O’Brien 25; Wilson 98, 110) is the precise parallel in Phil 1:4 and the structure of the sentence (viz., four ptes., each modified by a phrase; see above on Structure). Nestle-Aland²⁷ begins a new sentence and paragraph with μετὰ χαρᾶς.

VERSE 12

εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the subj. of πληρωθῆτε) of the pres. act. ptc. of εὐχαριστέω, give thanks; followed by the dat. (τῷ πατρὶ). This ptc. is the last of four circumstantial ptes. that modify περιπατῆσαι κτλ. (see on v. 10) and refer to the Colossians. But it is also possible, although unlikely, that εὐχαριστοῦντες is to be taken with οὐ παύομεθα (v. 9) and refers to Paul and Timothy (v. 1) (“we have not ceased praying . . . asking . . . giving thanks”) or that the ptc. is impv. (so Lohse 32 and n. 1; cf. BDF §468[2]).

The unusual abs. use of ὁ πατήρ seems to have led some copyists to add the qualification τοῦ Χριστοῦ (“the Father of Christ”) and others to add (τῷ) θεῷ before (καὶ)/ (τῷ) πατρὶ (“God the Father”). See UBS and Metzger 553.

τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα

Dat. sg. masc. of the aor. act. ptc. of ἱκανόω, make fit, enable, qualify (someone for something, τινὰ εἶς τι [BDAG 473a]; here ὑμᾶς εἰς). This art. ptc. is in appos. to τῷ πατρὶ (T 206), lit. “the one who (has) qualified you. Εἰς states the goal of God’s action (“for a share,” “to obtain a share,” “to receive our share,” Weymouth), or possibly simply denotes reference (“with respect to,” so BDAG 291a). The art. with μερίς, -ίδος, ἡ (“allotted portion,” “part,” “share”) may be poss., “your share.”

As well as having strong Alexandrian support (⋈ B 1739 cop^{sa}), the rdg. ὑμᾶς is to be preferred (so also Wilson 98, 112) because it would readily have been altered to ἡμᾶς to conform with ἡμᾶς in v. 13a and because scribes naturally tended to make state-

ments that were true of all Christians (v. 12b), applicable to readers and writers alike (ἡμᾶς). Similar textual issues arise in 2:13 (ὑμᾶς . . . ἡμῖν).

τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων

Κλήρος,-ου, ὁ, means “(apportioned) lot, inheritance.” This gen., which is dependent on τὴν μερίδα, could be epex. (“the portion which consists in the lot,” Lightfoot 139) but is probably partitive (“a share in the inheritance,” BDAG 548c, 633a; “to share the inheritance”). On the partitive gen., see BDF §164, 169; Moule 42–43; R 502; T 208–10. Τῶν ἁγίων is undoubtedly poss., “the inheritance belonging to/reserved for/intended for/that awaits God’s people.” Some commentators argue that οἱ ἅγιοι here refers to angels, “the holy ones” (e.g., Wilson 112–14; also BDAG 11c), but this is improbable since (1) elsewhere in this letter οἱ ἅγιοι denotes believers (1:2,4,26; cf. 1:22; 3:12), and this meaning is certainly possible here, given the common Pauline concept of the believers’ inheritance (see For Further Study 13, “The Concept of Inheritance in Paul [1:12]”); and (2) the ideas of v. 12b are paralleled in two Lukan summaries of Pauline speeches (Acts 20:32; and esp. 26:18), where the reference is to believers, not angels. See further Barth-Blanke 185–86 (who take οἱ ἅγιοι to refer to Jews; see also 186, 194); Dunn 76–77.

ἐν τῷ φωτί

This prep. phrase could be cstr. with:

1. τῷ ἱκανώσαντι—“who has qualified you . . . by his light (= the gospel)” (instr. ἐν); or
2. τῶν ἁγίων—“God’s people who are *in* the kingdom of light,” “who live in the light” (NLT), “dwellers in a realm of light” (Cassirer) (locat. ἐν); but most naturally it belongs with
- *3. τοῦ κλήρου—“the inheritance . . . that *consists of* the kingdom of light” (epex. ἐν) or *(“that is [τοῦ] *in* the realm of light” (sim. REB), “in Light” (NASB²) (locat. ἐν); cf. v. 5.

In view of the contrast with “the dominion/realm of darkness” (v. 13a), art. φωτί probably means “the realm/kingdom of light” (cf. 3:1; Eph 1:20), which is further defined in v. 13b as “the kingdom of his [God’s] dearly loved Son” and therefore refers to a present reality (cf. ἔχομεν in v. 14). On the φῶς vs. σκότος/σκοτία contrast, see Barth-Blanke 225–26; Wilson 114–15.

VERSE 13

ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς

3 sg. aor. mid. indic. of ῥύομαι, rescue, deliver (someone from something, τινὰ ἔκ/ἀπό τινος). The rescue and transference (μετέστησεν, v. 13b) occurred either at the death of Christ (in a collective and proleptic sense) or at the individual believer’s conversion. On either view, the aors. are constative, viewing an act or successive acts as

a whole (cf. v. 7). Ἡμᾶς refers to Paul, Timothy, and the addressees as typical of all believers. The change from 2 pl. (ὕμᾶς, v. 12) to 1 pl. (ἡμᾶς, v. 13) is not uncommon in Paul (cf. 2:13–14; Rom 6:14–15). Ὅς may be causal (cf. R 960): “for He rescued us” (Barclay).

ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους

“From the dominion of darkness” (TNIV). Ἐξουσία is a key word in Pauline and biblical theology. It is derived from ἕξεισσι (“it is possible”) and has a wide range of meaning: (1) freedom of choice or of action; (2) arbitrary or delegated power exercised by a person; (3) the person thus empowered, a bearer of authority; and (4) the sphere or domain where that power or rule is exercised (cf. BDAG 352c–53d). Here it means (2) “power” or (4) “domain”; the Eng. word “dominion” reproduces the ambiguity. Rather than simply saying “from darkness” (ἐκ τοῦ σκότους, which would be parallel to ἐν τῷ φωτί, v. 12b), Paul introduces ἐξουσία as a parallel to βασιλεία (v. 13b) and to show that the darkness was not merely a state but an active authority (A. S. Peake, EGT 3.501), “the dominion where darkness reigns” (Cassirer).

After ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας the gen. τοῦ σκότους (from σκότος, -ους, τό, darkness) could be poss. (“the power possessed by darkness” [here personified]) or subj. (“the power exercised by [the prince of] darkness”) or even epex. (“the power which is Darkness”), but it is probably qualitative (“the dominion that is characterized by darkness”).

καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν

3 sg. aor. act. indic. of μεθίστημι, transfer, remove: “and transferred us [ἡμᾶς, from v. 13a] into the kingdom.” Verse 13 describes two actions of God the Father (ὁς) that are sequential (first rescue, then transference) or, better, concurrent (rescue by transference). With εἰς, the vb. μεθίστημι can mean “transplant into” or “transport to” (of population resettlement; cf. BDAG 625b,c). If the pref. μεθ- (= μετά) has special import with εἰς, the mng. will be “brought us away into” (NEB)/“safe into” (GNB)/“over into” (Barclay). This clause introduces the last of three grounds for thanksgiving to the Father (viz., vv. 12b, 13a, 13b).

τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ

An accumulation of gens. is typical of Paul. Lit. “of the Son (poss. gen.) of the love (qualitative gen.; see below) of him” (poss. gen.). It would seem that for Paul the kingdom of Christ was an alternative designation for the kingdom of God during the period between the resurrection of Christ and the arrival of the End (cf. 1 Cor 15:23–25; Eph 5:5; 2 Tim 4:1, 18; Matt 13:41). See For Further Study 14, “The Kingdom Concept in Paul (1:13).”

Some commentators take τῆς ἀγάπης as a gen. of origin or source: “begotten of (the Father’s essence =) love” (Lightfoot 140, following Augustine). TCNT renders “who is the embodiment of his love” (epex. gen.). Probably, however, this gen. should be taken as qualitative (“beloved,” “dearly loved”; see on v. 5), the whole phrase being equivalent to τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (cf. Mark 1:11) or τοῦ ἠγαπημένου υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ

(cf. Eph 1:6; so Moule 175; Zerwick, *Analysis* 448; E. Schweizer, TDNT 8:369n246) and meaning “his [God’s] beloved Son” (BDAG 6d; cf. R 496) or “the Son he loves” (HCSB, TNIV). In this Sem. idiom the pers. pron. αὐτοῦ, which denotes poss., properly belongs to τοῦ υἱοῦ but is actually attached to the dependent qualitative gen. (T 214; Turner, *Style* 91; R 497; cf. Z §41).

The imagery of vv. 12–13 suggests that believers have been rescued from the gloomy domain and tyrannical rule of Satan by being transplanted as free colonists into the kingdom and peaceable sovereignty of Christ, to become citizens in the realm of light.

VERSE 14

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν

This clause marks the transition from the recitation of three of God’s redemptive acts (vv. 12–13) to the celebration of Christ’s person and work (vv. 14–20) where three successive rel. pron.s., ἐν ᾧ (v. 14), ὅς (v. 15), and ὅς (v. 18), and eleven instances of the pers. pron. αὐτός, all refer to Christ.

Although the nearest antecedent to ἐν ᾧ is αὐτοῦ (= God the Father, as NLT), the actual antecedent is τοῦ υἱοῦ. Ἐν is almost certainly locat., “in union with whom” (on the ἐν Χριστῷ concept, see on v. 2), although Goodspeed takes it as instr., “by whom we have been ransomed from captivity” as also Cassirer, “through whom we are being set free from our bondage.” After the three aors. in vv. 12–13, the pres. ἔχομεν stresses the ongoing and permanent result of the Father’s threefold action: “we enjoy the possession of” (cf. NJB, “we enjoy our freedom”; Barth-Blanke 192, “freedom belongs to us”). While it is improper to suggest that ἀπολύτρωσις, -εως, ἡ, always denotes “release from (ἀπό) bondage through the payment of a ransom (λύτρον),” here it does seem to mean “redemption” in the sense of release from bondage to sin, given the imagery of v. 13a and the ref. to sins in v. 14b. See For Further Study 15, “Redemption in Paul (1:14).”

τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν

“Redemption” is defined here as “the forgiveness of sins, τὴν ἄφεσιν (ἄφεσις, -εως, ἡ; release, pardon, forgiveness) being acc. in epex. appos. to τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν. Τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν is an obj. gen. (cf. Eph 1:7), with the art. probably denoting poss., “our sins” (RV [“our redemption . . . our sins”], TCNT, REB [“our release . . . our sins”], GNB). On the ἁμαρτ- word group, see Turner, *Words* 412–13; on ἄφεσις, *ibid.* 371.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

11. *Prayer in Paul (1:9–12)*

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HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONS

Paul’s Intercession for the Colossians (1:9–14)

1. Its commencement and frequency (ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ παυόμεθα, v. 9a)
2. Its principal content (αἰτούμενοι ἵνα κτλ., v. 9b): a request for wisdom and discernment and thus knowledge of God’s will
3. Its intended results (vv. 10–14)—a life (περιπατήσαι) that is:
 - (a) worthy of the Lord (ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου, v. 10a)
 - (b) pleasing to the Lord (εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, v. 10a)
 - (c) marked by:
 - (i) fruitfulness of action (καρποφοροῦντες, v. 10b)
 - (ii) growth in knowledge (αὐξανόμενοι κτλ., v. 10b)
 - (iii) power for endurance (δυναμούμενοι κτλ., v. 11)
 - (iv) gratitude to God (εὐχαριστοῦντες κτλ., v. 12a)
 - for qualification (τῷ ἱκανώσαντι κτλ., v. 12b)
 - deliverance (ἐρρύσατο κτλ., v. 13a; ἀπολύτρωσιν, v. 14)
 - transference (μετέστησεν κτλ., v. 13b)

The Normal Christian Life (1:10–12a; cf. 2:6b–7)

1. Pleasing the Lord (v. 10a) by:
2. Perennial fruit-bearing (v. 10a)
3. Continuous growth (v. 10b)
4. Patience endurance (v. 11)
5. Constant thanksgiving (v. 12a)

The Father's Threefold Action (1:12b–13)

1. Granting entitlement to shared inheritance (v. 12b)
2. Carrying out a rescue from the dominion of darkness (v. 13a)
3. Effecting a transference into the kingdom of light (v. 13b; cf. v. 12b)