

Day 343

Christian Conduct in Consequence – concluding Romans.

Romans 12.1 – 16.27

Having explored the theology and implications of grace, Paul now turns to look at the practical outworking of this way of living. This is a familiar pattern in a number of Paul's communications to the church – the first part expounding a principle, the second part looking at the practical implications, a good principle for any teacher to follow in his wake!

Roms.12.1-2 In light of the new source of life from which the believer now lives, Paul says that there is really only one logical response, that is to surrender our bodies as living sacrifices, no longer trying to live them from the poisoned inner engines of sinful soul-power. The world around us will try and draw us into doing so, but by continuing to live from the Spirit, thinking with our renewed mind His thoughts, we will find that this new life-source brings freedom and peace.

Roms.12.3-8 The body of Christ, the assembly of his people, has been put together to move together. There is no place for self-promoting individualism in this new humanity, rather, we move according to the differing gifts being in operation among us, listening to the prophets as they communicate God's voice, allowing those who practically serve to enable the body by their service, and to be led by intentional leadership (Greek προῖστάμενος *proistámenos*, one placed standing before another, presiding).

Roms. 12.9-13 The common motive power must be selfless love (Greek ἀγάπη *aghápee*), with evil expelled, and both brotherly love and affection expressed (Greek φιλαδελφία *philadelphía*, brother-friendship and φιλοστοργή *philostórghee*, friendly affection). The body of Christ is characterised by honour, zeal, joy, hope and prayer. There is also a generous and hospitable spirit around. (hospitality = Greek φιλοξενία *philoxenía*, love towards strangers.)

Roms.12.14-21 Paul relays many of the basic principles of the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching in the sermon on the mount; loving enemies, living in peace with one another, loving the poor, not taking revenge on those harming us – Paul backs up this counsel with a Scripture from Proverbs 25.21,22 encouraging the helping of an enemy, showing how in keeping with Torah is the teaching of Jesus.

Roms.13.1-7 Paul also continues the theme of Jesus in his exhortation to submit to authorities. After all, Jesus paid his taxes and rendered to Caesar what was his; he also submitted even to the injustice of a twisted judgement upon Him, by that shaming the authorities in their corruption. For any who promote insurrection, Paul infers that this is to deny what God has permitted to be in place for the order of society, thus the authorities need to be obeyed not only out of fear of bad consequences, but in good conscience, since they uphold social order and to have no order is to have anarchy, which is ungodly. This includes the payment of taxes and duty.

Roms.13.8-10 Paul advises against debt, other than a debt of love – the whole law is summed up in the one motive, the self-giving impulse of love.

Roms.13.11-14 Paul reminds the readers and hearers that Jesus is coming back – each passing moment brings his return nearer. He urges abstaining from darkness and putting on the armour of light, a theme which he develops more fully later in Ephesians 6. We are to be ‘coated in Christ’ (Greek ἐνδύσασθε *be clothed, dressed*) refusing to work by the old power any more.

Roms.14.1-4 Paul takes up here a theme which he earlier addressed in 1 Corinthians 10, that of eating meat offered to idols. If there are those whose faith is not strong enough to believe that eating meat offered to idols will not harm them spiritually, they should not be encouraged to go against their consciences; neither should the vegetarian impose his conscience on the omnivore, since God has accepted both as they are, and it is He who will be the judge of the individual conscience, a judgement which will still leave both standing.

Roms.14.5-9 Paul then turns to the practice of Sabbath, and encourages the observance of Sabbath or not to similarly be a matter of personal conscience; whether eating meat or hallowing certain days, all is done to please the Lord, not to please nor honour men. All we do, in life and death, is for Him, Lord of the dead and the living.

Roms. 14.10-12 Therefore, to judge another man or woman is to put ourselves in God’s place, who one day will give perfect and honouring analysis of each life as He knows it intimately, rendering our judgement shallow and partial.

Rom.14.13-21 Paul, continuing on the theme of judging one another’s conscience, commends action that, instead of imposing our judgements on one another will actually put itself out to act to honour the conscience of another if we are offending them. Therefore, if my eating meat offered to idols is unhelpful for my brother, out of love, I will refrain. If my drinking alcohol at a function puts my brother under pressure to follow suit when he had better not, I will lay down my right to drink, rather than harm him. This is real self-giving love. It is better, says Paul, not to do what will offend rather than hurt a brother.

Roms.15.1-6 Our aim is to please one another, not ourselves at others’ expense. Jesus Himself took such action, bearing the insults of others so as to bring them life. It will take perseverance and encouragement of one another, but it is possible with God to come to unity.

Roms. 15.7-13 In the same way Christ has taken us on, just as we are, so we are to take on one another, as we are. Jesus Himself has become the servant of God’s covenant people, the Jews, to confirm the promises made to Abraham, and to make those same promises also available to the Nations, the *ethnoi*, as the Scriptures promise.

Paul’s prayer is that they will be filled with the outrageous hope which brings such joy and peace, so that in turn hope will be produced by the Holy Spirit’s empowering of their lives.

Roms.15.14-16 As Paul looks towards his closing remarks to the Romans, in case he should appear to be harsh with them, he commends them for their maturity and competence, putting his enthusiasm to teach them down to his calling as an emissary to the Nations.

Rom. 15.17 -21 Paul is spurred on by the fruitfulness of his service to the Nations, as he has declared the good news all around the eastern Mediterranean, going to places not already reached by others so as not to duplicate what others have already done.

Rom.15,22-29 This is why he has not so far made it to Rome, having so many opportunities to break new ground in the east. But now he is planning to go to Spain, and therefore to come via Rome to visit them. This will be after he has travelled to Jerusalem to deliver the aid collected in the Greek churches, which he wants to accompany as a testimony to the love of the churches of the Nations (ethnoi) for the Jewish brothers and sisters. Sadly, he will not go to Rome as a free man, but as a prisoner, after this visit back to the holy city.

Roms.15.30-33 It seems that Paul is aware of the danger he faces in going back to Judea, given the disquiet caused by his defection to Christ. He therefore asks for their prayers and for the Jewish believers to be welcoming, so that he will not be hindered from his plans to travel on to the west.

Roms.16.1-2 It seems that Phoebe is travelling to Rome, probably carrying this letter and Paul asks that she be warmly received there. She is called a servant, but this is in the masculine form of the word. It is clear that she has held some responsibility in Cenchrea, and now is serving by travelling with Paul's message to them.

Roms.16.3-16 Paul's love for the church is seen in the care he takes to personally greet so many of the brothers and sisters there. Top of the list are Aquila and Priscilla, who have been able to return to their home in Rome whence they were expelled under Claudius.

Also mentioned are Epenetus, the first believer in the Asian province, Andronicus and Junias, relatives of Paul's who were believers before him, and many others he knows there. Much has been made of Junia's name as being 'outstanding among the apostles.' The suggestion is that this is a woman apostle, although it is extremely tenuous, given that there is no other mention of the name in the rest of the Scriptures. This is not to say women might not be emissaries of Jesus – Phoebe obviously is acting as Paul's emissary, but to eisegete (read into) Junia the existence of a first century woman apostle is something of an anachronism, and at best, tenuous.

What is clear is that Paul is greeting both men and women in Rome on equal terms, which is a great sign of the growth of one new humanity, male and female in the church of Jesus Christ, jettisoning the old separatism of former times.

Roms.16.17-20 Indeed, Paul is anxious that they avoid the adversarial and divisive agents of trouble, and keep to the good path.

Roms.16.21-23 Here are found some practical insights into the letter to the Romans. A number of Paul's friends send their greetings, including Tertius, the amanuensis or scribe who executed the actual writing of the manuscript. There is also a public servant in Corinth, one Erastus, who is mentioned, a Christian in the service of the state.

Roms.16.25-27 Paul closes with a blessing of God who is able to hold them fast in the good news Paul has shared with them, which is backed up by the Scriptures and given to all Nations, commending them to Jesus Christ and His glory.

Day 344

En Route for Jerusalem

Acts 20.3b – 21.16

Acts 20.3b – 6 Paul's plans to travel to Jerusalem with the offering, referred to in Romans 16, are thwarted by news of a Jewish plot to harm him. Instead of sailing directly east, therefore, he heads north from Corinth, and goes back through Macedonia, with a group of friends, perhaps for protection. Note here the language also in Acts 20, in that since Acts 16.16, Luke has begun to use the term 'we' in his narrative, showing that he is personally now travelling with Paul.

The friends go ahead of him, perhaps to check the coast is clear, before Paul himself with Luke leaves Macedonia at Philippi to head back to Asia, the western edge of modern Turkey, and the port of Alexandria Troas, where the group meets up and spends a week together. Troas is only 15 miles south of ancient Troy.

Acts 20.7-12 In Troas, Paul joins in the meeting of the believers on the first day of the week for a meal. In view of his departure next day, Paul was making the most of the time he had, and kept talking until midnight. However, a young man named Eutychus (Greek Εὐτυχός *Évtychos*, well-fated, fortunate, lucky) falls to his death from an upstairs window, having been overcome by oil-lamp fumes in the meeting room. Paul simply goes down, embraces him, and prays for him, raising him from dead. Then the meeting resumes and Paul speaks until morning!

Acts 20.13-16 Luke and the party now depart by ship from Troas without Paul, who is going to walk across country, south-east, to catch them up at Assos, a south-facing port about 31 miles from Troas. From Assos, they continue to Mitylene, the chief port of the Island of Lesbos, sailing southward round the coast of modern Turkey, towards the Mediterranean. After a short stop there, they continue south, following the coast, and drop anchor for a night off the island of Chios. Next day, they island hop further south to Samos, and from there land on the mainland again at Miletus, near the modern Turkish town of Balat. On this occasion, Paul decides not to go to Ephesus, which they have passed by, because he is anxious now to get to Jerusalem.

Acts 20.17-35 However, Paul is aware that his life is in danger, and he longs to see the leaders of the Ephesus church, so he asks them to come the fifty miles or so south to Miletus to meet him there.

On their arrival, Paul gathers them and reminds them of the example he has set them, and the good news he has preached. He then tells them of his obedience to the Holy Spirit in going to Jerusalem, even though it may cost his life. In an emotional farewell, he exhorts them to watch over themselves and the church of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers, to be their shepherds and to guard them against interlopers wanting to harm the good news of Christ. Paul expects there to be deception, but it will not be for want of being warned on his part.

Acts 20.36-38 Paul now kneels in prayer with the group of leaders; there are tears shed and warm embracings and kisses, as they realise if Paul's words are true, they will not see him again.

Acts 21.1-6 It must have been a difficult departure, for Luke, still accompanying Paul, describes it being a 'dragging away from' the Ephesians, (Greek ἀποσπάω *apospáo*, to drag or draw away with force.) Luke charts for his reader their course back to Syria, sailing by way of the isles of Kos, Rhodes, thence to the mainland port of Patara, near to the modern Turkish town of Gelemiş. At Patara, they trans-ship and head for what Luke calls *Phoenicia*, the coastal region north of Palestine. They pass to the south of Cyprus, and then across to Syria, landing at the ancient port of Tyre (modern Sour, in Lebanon) on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Here the ship unloads its cargo, and during this stopover, the party meets with the believers in the city. The church speaks by the Holy Spirit of the trial awaiting Paul in Jerusalem, and pleads with him not to go, but Paul, like Jesus before him, has his face set for the holy city.

It is a touching scene that Luke paints of all the believers and their families coming down to the beach to kneel and pray, before Paul and company board the ship and sail on down the coast.

Acts 21.7-14 The ship comes to port at Antiochia Ptolemais, modern day Acre or Acco, about eight miles north of Haifa. Here the believers meet them, hosting them overnight. They travel, presumably continuing down the coast by ship, to land next day at Caesarea Maritima, scene of the Holy Spirit's coming to Cornelius. Here, they stay with Philip the Good-news man (Greek εὐαγγελιστής *evangelistées*), not Philip one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, but Philip one of the seven stewards chosen in Acts 6.5 to administrate the distribution of food. It is worth noting that he has progressed to sharing the good news from this place of service to the community. He has four prophetic daughters, all unmarried.

While at Caesarea, a prophet named Agabus arrives from Judea, and taking Paul's belt, ties the missionary's hands with it and says this is how the Jews will treat him when gets to Jerusalem. Everyone appeals to Paul not to continue to Jerusalem, where his life will be in jeopardy, but Paul confesses he is ready to be imprisoned and even to die for Jesus if required. Luke seems to have been included in this appeal to Paul to stay away from Jerusalem, for he says that 'when we could see it was of no use, we gave up and left it to the Lord.'

Acts 21.15-16 It is now around AD58, and Paul and Luke along with others from Caesarea travel inland after their long sea-voyage, to Jerusalem. They are to be

accommodated in the house of a Cypriot believer, one who had been walking with the Lord for a good while, one of the first disciples, and presumably a Jew, named Mnason.

Day 345

Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem

Acts 21.17 – 23.35

Acts 21.17 – 26 In a meeting with the leaders of the Jerusalem church, predominantly Jewish in nature, there is joy over Paul's work among the Nations, but also worry that those Jews who have believed in Messiah and still observe the *Torah* are under the impression that Paul is preaching against the law.

The leadership therefore suggest to Paul that to demonstrate his support for the Jewish tradition, he go to support some vow-makers and pay for their heads to be shaved, a Jewish rite connected with oaths. Paul does this, and complies with the official requirements, at the Temple.

Acts 21.27-30 However, a week later when the rites of the tradition are almost finished, Paul is seen by some Asian Jews who probably recognise him from his work in Ephesus, and they raise a riot, accusing Paul of defiling the Temple by bringing in his Gentile friend Trophimus. Paul is dragged out of the Temple and the worst seems to be upon him; the crowd begin to beat him up, intent on finishing him off.

Acts 21.31-36 The Roman militia, hearing of the riot, quickly despatch troops to the scene of the uproar. The beating of Paul ceases, and Paul is arrested as being at the centre of the rabble. Questions are then asked, but the place is in chaos. Paul is removed to the Antonia, the fortress headquarters of the Romans in Jerusalem for questioning. However, the crowd are so vehement, that Paul needs to be physically carried by the soldiers to stop him being lynched.

Acts 21.37-39 Just as they are about to go into the fortress, Paul speaks to the commander, Claudius Lysias, who is surprised to be addressed in Greek. Paul is apparently being mistaken as a riotous Egyptian terrorist. Paul explains who he is and his origins in the noble city of Tarsus, and requests permission to address the crowds.

Acts 21.40 – 22.21 Having obtained Claudius's permission, Paul recounts his story to the crowd, who seem to be listening. He tells of his training under Gamaliel, a leading Rabbi, of his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, and of Ananias' message to him that he would become an emissary of Christ to the Nations. He also gives a piece of information hitherto unknown about his story, that on return to Jerusalem, while at the Temple, he fell into a trance and was told by the Lord to leave Jerusalem, for they would not receive his word. Paul reminds the Lord of how he has been a persecutor of the church, but the Lord still insists he is to go to proclaim Jesus to the Gentiles.

Acts 22.22-29 At this point, when Paul mentions his inclusion of the non-Jews in the good news, the crowd again spills over into anger, calling for his death.

As the crowd is getting ready to stone him, the militia take him into the Antonia, and get him ready for a whipping. As they are about to begin the scourging, to be laid on him for inducing this riot, Paul questions the legality of flogging a Roman citizen without trial. Suddenly the atmosphere is transformed. This Jewish rabble-rouser is a Roman citizen! Claudius Lysias can't believe it, having had to pay good money to be a citizen, while Paul asserts he was born a citizen. This causes the commander to worry, as acting harshly against a Roman citizen could bring repercussions best not thought about on him.

Acts 22.30 – 23.5 Next day, the commander, needing to get to the bottom of why his fellow Jews are wanting Paul dead, calls the leading priests and the council (the Sanhedrin) together. Paul defends himself to them, but Ananias, who has already had a part in the death of Jesus, orders Paul to be punched in the face. Paul reacts angrily, using a description Jesus used of the Pharisees, calling him a whitewashed wall. In commanding Paul to be struck without establishing what *Torah* regulation Paul has broken, Ananias has broken *Torah* himself! Paul knows this well, as a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

The council are incensed that Paul has dared to address the High Priest in this way, but Paul backs down, admitting that he had been unaware that Ananias was the High Priest. It is possible, however, that Paul was answering sarcastically, since he does not rate Ananias as behaving in a high priestly way.

Acts 23.6-11 Paul now takes advantage of the divisions among his audience at this kangaroo court to get them arguing among themselves. He knows there are Sadducees there who reject the resurrection of the dead. He turns to defending himself as a Pharisee, who is being judged because he believes in the resurrection, a consummate piece of political wisdom on Paul's part, since this immediately get on Paul's side the Pharisees who believe with him in resurrection! The riot that ensues makes the commander take Paul back into the fortress for safety.

Paul now has an encouraging vision of the Lord, who comes and promises that he will give testimony to Jesus in Rome. Jerusalem is not to be the end of the road for Paul's ministry.

Acts 23.12-15 Meanwhile, in the city outside, forty Jews take an oath to go on hunger strike until they have killed Paul. They suggest a conspiracy to the leaders, who are to get Paul brought out on the pretext of giving further evidence, and they will then finish him off.

Acts 23.16-22 We now find that in Jerusalem is Paul's unnamed nephew – and that Paul has a sister. Presumably they have been visiting Paul under arrest. The nephew goes to Paul to tell him what is happening, and Paul gets a centurion to take the young man to Claudius Lysias to spill the beans on the Jewish plot for Paul's murder. The commander sends the nephew away, with orders to keep his counsel.

Acts 23.23-30 There is a welcome justice in Claudius; perhaps he is aware of the travesty of the death of Jesus, and the terrible scenes presented to Pontius Pilate in that situation, which led him to crucify an innocent man which has given rise to all this trouble. Whatever his inner process, the commander orders two centurions to undertake an

immediate transfer of Paul accompanied by their two hundred soldiers plus a further seventy horse and two hundred spearmen – a small army! – to Caesarea Maritima, the Roman base in Palestine. He even provides a horse for Paul to get him to the procurator, Felix, safely.

Luke records the content of Claudius Lysias' letter to the procurator, Felix, explaining why he has taken such extraordinary measures for Paul's protection, and why he is referring the case to the governor. Lysias does not regard Paul as deserving of death under Roman law.

Acts 23.31-35 The soldiers obey their commander, and bring Paul as far as Antipatris (ancient Aphek, not far from the sea on the Via Maris). Here the soldiers return to Jerusalem, and entrust Paul to the cavalry for the rest of the journey north. Once in Caesarea, Paul is delivered over to the procurator, who asks about his provenance. Paul is a citizen of the province of Cilicia, in which Tarsus is located. Felix agrees he will hear the case when the Jews arrive. For the moment, Paul is safe and, perhaps ironically enough, is held in the palace of Herod in the Roman city.

Day 346

Paul's Hearings Before the Authorities

Acts 24.1 – 26.32

Paul is now caught up in the political maelstrom which is Roman Palestine. He becomes a pawn in the game, caught between the Jewish authorities and the Imperial procurator. He will end up being in prison for two years, in an attempt to please the Jewish leaders, but will find an exit point by appealing to Caesar.

Acts 24.1-9 Five days after Paul's arrival in Caesarea, Ananias the high priest comes with some of the other Jewish leaders to the Roman headquarters. Playing things the Roman way, they have engaged an advocate (Greek *ῥήτωρ* *rhétor*, literally, an orator or speaker, but connected with legal cases.) His name is Tertullus, and he will present the Jewish case against Paul.

Tertullus begins with praise of the procurator, Marcus Antonius Felix. Felix is the delegated ruler of Judea and Samaria, but is unpopular because of his harsh treatment of rioters in Caesarea and his putting down of Jewish freedom movements. His niece Agrippina Minor was to marry the emperor Claudius through his representations at court. Accounts of his governorship are found in the writings of the Jewish historian, Josephus. Tertullus' praise may be more of an expected flattery to keep the procurator onside with his case.

The advocate then presents the charges, weighted to stir up Felix's interest and anger. Paul is described as a troublemaker, perhaps like the Egyptian prophet Paul was earlier mistaken for who was giving the Romans a hard time in Judea. According to Tertullus, Paul is ringleader (Greek *πρωτοστάτης* *protostátees*, one who stands first among) of the Nazarene sect. (Greek *ἡ αίρεσις τῶν Ναζαραίων* *ee áiresis ton Nazaráion*, literally, the heresy of the Nazarenes.) He has tried to profane the Temple, and now has been delivered

to Felix for judgement. Of course, the one thing Tertullus has failed to mention is that Paul was delivered to Felix by Claudius Lysias of Jerusalem for his protection against the Jewish mob!

Acts 24.10-21 Defending himself, Paul acknowledges Felix's role as judge in this matter, and then states that he is an orderly Temple worshipper, to which fact he can find witnesses, and not a stirrer of trouble. He admits that he is a follower of what he calls The Way (Greek ἡ Ὁδός *ee Odhós*), which seems to be the name the believers were calling themselves by. This word can mean road, or way or journey, and is a title Jesus gave Himself in John 14.6

Paul says he believes the same basic things as the Jews who are accusing him, including belief in the resurrection of the dead. Paul describes his return to Jerusalem as part of a charity mission, and asserts that he is holy and clean for Temple worship, and not part of a gang of troublemakers. He then homes in on the issue which arose in Jerusalem, and calls as witnesses the Asian Jews who attacked him there, or the council members who are now before Felix, who were present when the dispute arose over the resurrection. In this defence, Paul shows his wisdom and resourcefulness in close argument.

Acts 24.24-27 Felix now adjourns the hearing. Luke mentions that Felix 'knows better' (Greek ἀκριβέστερον εἰδώς *akribhésteron eidhós* = better informed) about the Way than to believe the Jewish case – perhaps he has heard from the Roman perspective all that went on with Jesus. Felix decides to wait until Claudius Lysias, the governor of Jerusalem, comes to give his version of the story. He keeps Paul under arrest, but makes this humane enough for Paul to be cared for as a defendant rather than as a convict.

Acts 24.24-27 When Felix comes again to Caesarea, he is with his wife, Drusilla. Drusilla is the daughter of the late King Herod Agrippa I, who came to such a quick end in Acts 12.19-23, and the sister of Herod Agrippa II, before whom Paul will later give testimony. She became the second wife of Felix after he fell in love with her and convinced her to break off her marriage with the King of Emesa, who had been circumcised in order to please her father before marrying her! She is therefore seen by the Jews as a renegade, and not held in high esteem. She is reported by Josephus to have died in the aftermath of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79ad, along with her son by Felix, Marcus Antonius Agrippa.

Felix wants her opinion, it seems, on Paul, for they hear him together. Paul shares his story, which includes well-crafted references for Felix and Drusilla's benefit on morality, self-control and the final judgement. Felix becomes afraid, and stops the proceedings. Luke comments that, true to form, Felix has been hoping to get a bribe from Paul. When this is not forthcoming, Felix leaves Paul in prison for two years, to try and curry favour with the Jews who do not take at all kindly to the procurator's tyrannical stance.

Felix is succeeded around 58AD in the procuratorship by Porcius Festus, who inherits the Jewish unrest, and oversees the province in the run-up to the final meltdown of the war of 66AD and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

Acts 25.1-5 On a tour of his province shortly after taking office, Festus is lobbied by the Jews who want Paul dead. They ask for Paul to be transferred for trial in Jerusalem, but are planning to ambush him and kill him en route to the trial. However, perhaps Festus

knows their wives, and invites them to Caesarea for a further review hearing of Paul's case.

Acts 25.6-8 A couple of weeks later, Festus calls Paul before him, who is once more accused of sedition and profanity against the Temple. Paul repeats his defence, and maintains his innocence of the charges.

Acts 25.9-12 Festus is hoping to get off on a good footing with his subjects, the Jews, so he moves to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem for trial. However, Paul now avails himself of every Roman citizen's right to appeal to Caesar, on the grounds that a Roman court has no right to hand him over to a Jewish religious court. Festus can take no other action, Paul must be taken to Caesar in Rome.

Acts 25.13-22 Not long after, King Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice arrive to pay a diplomatic visit to the new procurator. Agrippa is the son of the already mentioned Agrippa I, and brother to Felix's wife, Drusilla. Bernice has been the wife of King Herod of Chalcis, but has left him, and now lives with her brother in a manner which provokes accusations of incest. Agrippa is used to Roman ways, having been brought up at the court of Claudius. Festus seeks his advice about what to do with Paul, since he knows full well that the Jews have no case against him, rather they have religious issues with him over 'a dead man named Jesus whom Paul claims is alive.' Agrippa then asks to see Paul; after all, it was to his grandfather, Herod Antipas that this man Jesus was brought, during his trial before Pilate.

Acts 25.23-27 Thus Paul appears before King Agrippa and Princess Bernice. He must have been very aware of their standing, of their descent from their great-grandfather, Herod the Great, who sought to kill the infant Jesus, and their grandfather Herod Antipas whose return to Pilate of Jesus during his last days sealed a friendship between Jewish ruler and Roman governor.

Festus declares before the assembly that the Jews are pursuing a case against Paul, who appears to have done nothing wrong under Roman law. However, because he has appealed to Caesar before a Roman court, his rights must be respected. However, Festus has not yet drafted the charge sheet for Caesar, and is puzzled as to what he should say Paul is accused of. Agrippa is therefore being asked to offer his opinion on the matter.

Acts 26.1-23 Paul is called to give his testimony to Agrippa and Bernice, and acknowledges the King's understanding of the Jewish tradition. He paints his story, as a Jew and a Pharisee from early days. He maintains that he is being persecuted for preaching the resurrection of the dead, but this is nothing heretical for Jews to believe.

Paul also speaks of his persecution of the church, the Damascus road encounter with Jesus, with a fuller account of what Jesus said to him than we have earlier in Acts 9. In this account, Jesus calls Paul to be the carrier of His word to the Nations. To this call, he has been obedient, and for this reason he has been attacked by the Jewish establishment. He moves on to state that Jesus, in accordance with the Scriptures, has suffered, and risen from the dead, good news for Jews and the Nations alike.

Acts 26.24-29 Festus objects to Paul's claims, and accuses him of being a 'mad professor'. Paul responds that he is not mad, and that his words are spoken in truth and sanity (Greek ἀληθεία καὶ σωφροσύνη *aletheía kai sophrosýnee*). Paul sees his case as completely reasonable and in accordance with his faith. Paul appeals to Agrippa, as a Jew, one who must be aware of the background to these events, and now asks if he recognises the authority of the Scriptures in the prophets.

Agrippa is taken aback by Paul's direct appeal, and his challenge to support him in his understanding of Scripture. Agrippa asks whether Paul is assuming he can be so quickly won over to his teaching – although in the question is a hint of the power of the Holy Spirit in Paul to unnerve and challenge rulers, as he has already done to Felix and Drusilla! Agrippa, interestingly, refers to the followers of Jesus here as 'Christians' (Greek Χριστιανός *Christianós*, 'little Christ'), a nickname they first received in Antioch (Acts 11.26) rather than by the title the Jewish authorities are using – Nazarenes.

Paul expresses his desire that Agrippa and everyone there should become like him, except for the prisoner's chains!

Acts 26.30-32 After the hearing, Herod, Bernice and Festus talk together, and agree that Paul has no case to answer and could have been acquitted, but for the fact that he has appealed to Caesar, and must appear before him.

Day 347

Paul Sails for Rome

Acts 27.1-8 It is around AD60, Paul has been a prisoner for more than two years in Caesarea Maritima, the Roman city in Palestine. It is now time for Paul to be shipped to Rome, along with a number of other prisoners, under the command of an Imperial Regiment centurion named Julius. Luke is still reporting in the first person plural, indicating that he is staying with Paul even in his imprisonment.

A ship coming from Adramyttium (a seaport on the coast of Asia, at the north-eastern end of the gulf cutting inland from the island of Lesbos, near the modern Turkish town of Edremit) is on its way home with cargo, calling at ports along the Mediterranean and Aegean coast. This will take them some of the way to Rome.

At Sidon, (modern Saida in Lebanon, a port city south of Beirut) the humane Julius allows Paul to meet with his friends and receive their help and support. They then strike out to sea, and the ship takes shelter from contrary winds by sailing to the north of the island of Cyprus, keeping close to the coast, instead of sailing to its south, which would have been more direct from Sidon. The Adramyttian ship carries them as far as Myra in Lycia (near modern Turkish Demre – St Nicholas, otherwise known as Santa Claus was a few centuries later bishop of this town.) At Myra, they tranship and catch a vessel from Alexandria in Egypt heading towards Italy.

It seems that winter is coming on, and with it heavy winds and storms. The ship struggles to make headway, and eventually comes to Cnidus, only a hundred miles or so further

west along the coast. They cannot sail straight across the Aegean, and so they make their way south and then west down the coast of Rhodes and Crete, keeping to inshore waters, to avoid the growing storms. This would not have been pleasant travel at all.

They follow the southern coast of Crete, stopping off about halfway along its length at Fair Havens, still called today in Greek Καλοὶ Λιμένες *Kalí Liménes*, on the southern tip of the island.

Luke now places the timing of this part of the voyage as ‘after the fast’, that is, after the one day of obligatory fasting in the Jewish calendar, linked to *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. This means it is October, and getting more difficult to travel. Paul speaks up, knowing this sea well from all his travels, and warns that they will face catastrophe if they sail further. However, Centurion Julius listens to the pilot and the ship’s owner, who are anxious to get to Italy. They were going therefore to head to Phoenix, just east of modern Souda in southern Crete, as it was more suitable to rest in, by majority decision.

Acts 27.13-20 A south wind blows up, and it seems that they can set sail safely for Italy, keeping to the Cretan shoreline. However, they become caught by a north-easterly wind, known by the ancients as Euroklýdon (Greek Εὐροκλύδων *Evroklýdhon*, from *evrós* meaning easterly and *klydon* meaning surge.) This is probably the modern *Gregale* which blows in the western and central Mediterranean in winter, and is caused by low pressure around the area of Malta. They are powerless before the storm, and are driven west by the force of the wind. They try and sail close to a small island called Cauda, about 23 miles south of Crete (modern Greek Γάυδος *Gávdhos*) but are only just able to manage to tether the lifeboat in the fierce storm, pulling it aboard the ship. Then they rope the ship up, like a gigantic parcel, to stop it breaking up.

A great fear comes on them of being driven towards the treacherous sandbanks of the Syrtis Major, one of two great gulfs in the north African coast, in modern Libya. To try and slow the ship’s progress, they let down the sea anchor, a large sack or block of stone, which would drag behind the ship, then let it drift before the wind. The next day, the ship being in such danger, the cargo is thrown over, and the next day, some of the ships’ equipment. Still heaving through the clouded days and nights, even Luke says they gave up hope.

Acts 27.21-26 All this time, the last thing people have wanted to do is eat. Paul now stands before the weakened crew and admonishes them for their not listening to him. But he has good news – an angel has told him that they will all be spared, although the ship will be lost, for they are accompanying Paul, who must come to Rome under the Lord’s intention for him. They will, however, run aground on an island.

Acts 27.27-32 After two weeks at sea, the sailors discern they are nearing land. They take soundings, and find the seabed coming nearer the hull. They seem to be about to founder, and so the anchors are put down to try and hold them. In a ploy to escape, some of the sailors make a bid to escape in the lifeboat, but Paul appeals to the centurion and the soldiers that all must stay on the ship if God is to save anyone. In an act of great trust in Paul, they cut loose the lifeboat.

Acts 27.33-38 Paul urges those on board to eat something, having gone without proper food for two weeks. He takes bread, gives thanks and breaking it, shares it among them. Once they have eaten, they throw the rest of the grain into the sea as well.

Acts 27.39-44 At first light, they see land ahead, a sandy bay, and cutting the anchors and rudders loose, they raise the sail, intending to beach the ship. However, before they reach the shore, the ship hits a sandbar, and the pounding waves start to break up the stern.

Given that Roman soldiers would forfeit their lives for any escaped prisoners, the troops prepare to massacre the prisoners. But Centurion Julius has come this far with Paul, and intends to see him get to Rome for his trial, thus he commands his men to desist from their bloody plan. They all make it to shore somehow, no life is lost, as the Lord has promised Paul.

Acts 28.1-6 They discover that they have landed on Malta (Greek *Μελίτη Melítee*), the small island in the central Mediterranean to the south of the Italian peninsula. The locals are kind and welcoming, and they work together to make a fire to get them all dried off. As Paul is helping build up the fire, a snake escapes the flames, and lashes out at Paul, biting him on the hand. Seeing this happen, the natives assume Paul is a felon, a murderer, and this is judgement on him. They expect him to succumb any moment. But having shaken the beast from his hand, with no ill effect, Paul is hailed as divine.

Acts 28.7-10 The governor of the island is a man named Publius, who welcomes the group to his house and treats them kindly. His father-in-law, sick with fever and dysentery, is healed by God's power through Paul, leading to a series of healing meetings when the news is heard throughout Malta. When they are ready to sail again, the Maltese provide them with supplies and bid them farewell.

Acts 28.11-15 After three months on the island, they set out to complete the journey in another Alexandrian ship under the sign of the twin gods, Castor and Pollux, (Greek *Διόσκουροι Dhióskouri*, the Spartan heroes, brothers of Helen of Troy.) Nearing Italy, they call in at Syracuse, (modern Siracusa in Sicily), then on to Rhegium (modern Reggio di Calabria) on the mainland before sailing up the west coast of Italy, to land at Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli, six or seven miles west of Naples). Here they spend a week with some believers, before finally reaching Rome, by road along the Appian Way. Forty miles south of the city, at the Appian Forum, they are joined by brothers from Rome, and at the Three Taverns, seven miles or so further towards Rome, where the first relay station was situated, thirty three miles south of the capitol. At last, Paul with Luke his narrator, arrive at the centre of the Empire.

Acts 28.16 – 22 Paul lives under benign house arrest, under guard by one soldier. After being in Rome for three days, Paul, true to his mission and calling, and despite the fact that the Jerusalem establishment is after him, calls together the Roman Jewish leaders and tells them his story. However, they have not had any report from the east about Paul, and are willing to hear his teaching, given that they have heard many people speaking about this 'sect' (Greek *αἵρεσις aíresis* – giving rise to the English word *heresy*.)

Acts 28.23-28 As Luke's account draws to a close, Paul is found once again doing what he is made for and called for – sharing the good news about the risen Jesus Christ. The Jews come to his home, and he shares with them the proclamation of the direct rule of God and the Messiah Jesus from the Scriptures. There is the usual division among the hearers, some receiving the word, others walking out, but not before they have heard this emissary of Jesus remind them of the prophecy of Isaiah in Isa.6.9-10, that they would miss the revelation when it comes and their rejection would become the opportunity for God to break out into the Nations.

Acts 28.30-31 Luke's closing statement sees Paul continuing his ministry from his house arrest for two years, boldly proclaiming God's kingship and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Day 348

Paul's Letters to the Colossians and Philemon

Colossians 1.1 – 4.18, Philemon 1 - 25

The notes on the letter to the Colossians are drawn from lectures first given at King's Bible College in the 1990's.

Colossians is written, like most of Paul's letters, to a specific situation. It is a close relative to the letter to the Ephesians, and to Philemon, which were probably written about the same time, and carried by the same person to their addressees.

The main aims of the letter to the Colossians are to establish the supremacy of Christ over all other claims to their affection and allegiance, and to counter the threat of GNOSTICISM which appears to have infiltrated the Colossian church.

Colossae, (also rendered as Colossae in some early manuscripts) was situated some 100 miles inland from the Western Turkish port of Ephesus, on the banks of the River Lycus, a tributary of the River Meander (modern name, Menderes). Its near neighbours were Laodicea and Hierapolis, which would have dominated it in terms of size and significance, as religious and trade centres. It was overshadowed physically by Mount Cadmus (7,000'), and stood at the head of the Lycus Valley, at the top of a deep gorge. A trade route into Anatolia and Cilicia climbed from here.

Colossae's economy depended on the production of a purple dye, known as 'Colossinus', and sheep farming, particularly of a glossy, black sheep whose wool was highly prized throughout the empire. All along the Lycus Valley, an area subject to earthquake activity, were mineral deposits which formed strange grottos and glistening rock-formations. Hot springs at Hierapolis were a centre of spa and bathing pursuits.

It is unlikely that Paul ever visited Colossae, as it is not mentioned on his missionary routes. It seems most likely that the gospel was brought to them by EPAPHRAS, who is mentioned occasionally in the letter, who had possibly met Paul in Ephesus, along with

Archippus, also a native of the area. Through relationship with them, Paul had input into the churches of the Lycus Valley, which comprised Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Most commentators agree that the letter was written from Rome, during Paul's captivity there around 61ad - 63ad, before the great Neronian persecution during which Paul was traditionally martyred. It was certainly written at the time of the writing of the letter to Philemon, as Onesimus, the runaway slave who was the subject of that letter is mentioned in 4:9.

It is also widely accepted that it was written around the same time as the letter to the Ephesians, as it shows many similarities of thought and theology to that letter, as we will see. It is also possible that the letter to the Ephesians was written as a 'circular' letter to several churches, including Ephesus, and possibly also Laodicea, and may be an explanation of the reference Paul makes to a letter sent to Laodicea, which could also have been carried along with the Colossian letter.

We have already mentioned the threat of Gnosticism, which we will look at in more detail in the next lecture. Paul saw this as a direct challenge to the all-sufficiency of Christ. Therefore, in a similar way to that in which Corinthians and Galatians are written, Paul is addressing a specific situation in the church, which, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has become one of the guiding documents of God's Word.

We have mentioned the threat of GNOSTICISM; this is from the Greek word, GNOSIS (γνώσις), meaning KNOWLEDGE, usually of an arcane and mysterious nature, requiring special initiation into it. Gnosticism developed after the Apostolic era into a much more developed and heretical system, but the seeds of it went back into Persian Zoroastrianism and Greek mysticism.

At COLOSSAE there seem to have been a mixture of influences perverting the Gospel; there is a clear threat from a Jewish tendency, which Paul addresses in 2:11 and 2:16 in his references to circumcision and Sabbaths. Yet, there is also a mystical element which brings in asceticism (2:23) and angelolatry (2:18), which is not native to Judaism. This is the Gnostic element.

As its name suggests, Gnosticism promotes the attaining of a SUPERIOR WISDOM. Those possessing this wisdom are the Enlightened ones. Gnostic theology started with the premise that, because God is a perfect Being, He could not have created from Himself something with evil built into it. This led them to posit a supreme DIVINE BEING, totally separate from all creation. Creation is the result of the work of an inferior EMANATION from the Divine Being, an offspring of the perfect, but imperfect in itself.

This Emanation, in the Gnostic system, could be many times removed from the Divine Being, the offspring of other emanations, known by Gnostics variously as ANGELS or AEONS,

inhabiting a spiritual atmosphere called the PLEROME (Fulness). The creative emanation came to be called the 'DEMIURGE'.

The quest of Gnostics was to attain to the Supreme Being by means of secret Gnosis, thus bypassing the emanations, attaining salvation by revealed keys of knowledge. Because Creation was inherently evil, one way of thought of the Gnostics treated all matter as evil, and thus strict asceticism was enjoined on the follower, as well as sexual abstinence. Another approach to the problem of sinful matter was to treat it as 'unreal' compared to the Spiritual 'reality'; this gave rise to a problem of immorality, because it did not matter how one behaved in the life of the flesh, and thus it had no effect on the future, as Gnosis was the key; this led to unrestrained licentiousness among some Gnostics. The seeds of this heresy, then, were at work in Colossae.

Col. 1.1,2 As with all other epistles, and in common with ancient practice, Paul starts with the sender's name and title. Timothy, his son in the Lord, is with him.

Col.1.3-8 Thanksgiving is a common theme in all Paul's letters, and echoes of it are found throughout this letter. Paul again shows, by use of the plural 'we', that he is not writing on his own initiative only, but is also reflecting the hearts of other brothers around him, whom he names at the end of the letter. Paul has heard of the faith of the Colossians, probably through their representative in Rome, Epaphras. Despite others claiming to be speaking truth, Paul points them back to their first hearing of the good news of Jesus Christ, news which is still bearing fruit, despite Gnostic claims to the contrary.

In v. 7, we find Epaphras (short, probably for Epaphroditos) called Paul's co-slave, and then the servant of Christ for the Colossians. Epaphras was possibly the evangelist who first carried the Gospel to Colossae after his conversion in Ephesus under Paul's ministry there. He is a two-way channel, bringing news of the young church to Paul in his captivity, and especially of their love for him in spirit, whom they had never yet met in the flesh.

Col.1.9-14 In the opening verse of this prayer, Paul's concern is voiced; his prayer is constant, and vigilant, and is that they may be filled, not with mere gnosis, but with *epignosis* (ἐπίγνωσις *epígnosis*) of Him, that is, with the FULL KNOWLEDGE of God's will, not an incomplete human alternative. Being filled with this wisdom and understanding enables the believer, in v.10, to walk worthily of the Lord, pleasing to Him, resulting both in an active fruit-bearing of good work and in a spiritual maturity which gives a full-orbed understanding of God's ways. This walking and growing are all taking place under the Divine Rule (Κράτος *kratos* only used of God's power), which brings a staying power, and a joy even in the midst of trial. In verse 12, Paul clearly sets the qualification for the 'Enlightened Saints', not in secret gnosis, but through the Father Himself, who, in verse 13, has rescued us out of the authority of darkness to transfer us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son. The word used here of rescue is *errýsato* (ἐρύσατο) which is a strong word of deliverance, a rescue of dramatic proportions, one not to be lightly dismissed.

Note that *Satan's domain is never called a 'kingdom' in scripture*. 'Kingdom' speaks of order and legality, of something constitutional. He is no king, but a tyrant.

But the kingdom of Christ we enjoy brings with it the apolýtrois (ἀπολύτρωσις) that is, the setting free by ransom, which comes through this same Son of love. Thus, in storming the gates of hell to rescue us, He has also seen fit to pay the sum demanded, in full satisfaction of the debt we had accumulated because of sin which now stands forgiven.

Col.1.15 – 20 N.T. Wright, in his commentary on Colossians, highlights the fact that this 'Great Christology' is highly poetic in its presentation, and may reflect a contemporary hymn about Christ, an extract of which Paul may be quoting here to back up his argument. Moule points out *'In none of the earlier extant Pauline writings is the startling statement made that Christ is, as it were, the goal or purpose towards which the created world is destined to move.'*

Christ is the eikón (εἰκὼν) of the invisible God. The eikon (*whence icon*) is derived from its prototype, either by imitation, as the head of a sovereign on a coin, or by natural causes, like the child's features bearing the genetic imprint of the Father.

Verse 16 is a powerfully expansive verse in terms of who Christ is. Christ is the agent of creation, and nothing exists without the influence of Christ being involved. Of en avtó (ἐν αὐτῷ), Moule says that this 'In Him' is a reference to the agency and sphere of creation, i.e. that creation comes about both 'by means of and 'within' Him. This includes the supernatural realm, the seen and the unseen. In **verse 17** comes a clear statement of Christ's pre-existence and his agency in creation. He is BEFORE all things, and in Him all things co-exist or cohere. He is also the start, the source, the archée (ἀρχή), and all God's fulness (pléeroma -πλήρωμα) dwells in Him.

Col.1.21 – 23 Paul now takes another swipe at the Gnostics in verse 22 by asserting that it was Christ's physical, bodily suffering which brought the reconciliation to the world. The docetic Gnostics taught that, because matter was evil, there was no way that Christ could have taken on a physical body, because of the impurity that would bring, and therefore God 'appeared' in a body, whilst not actually sulling his hands with human flesh. Paul puts paid to this by specifically stating that Christ crucified the human flesh on the cross, which leads now to our being holy and blameless before Him. The purpose of reconciliation, then, is to present us holy and blameless before God.

Col.1.24-29 Paul makes a very bold and clear statement in verse 24, that he is somehow participating in the sufferings of Christ, to the extent of filling up in his flesh what is still lacking in Christ's afflictions. Is Paul really saying that the suffering of Christ in the Cross was incomplete?

Lightfoot suggests 'I supplement' rather than 'I complement' for the word antanapleeró (ἀντανάπληρω), and that the word thlípsis (θλίψις) means distress or affliction (*from* thlipo- thlivo - to squeeze or press), while the normal word for suffering is pátheema (πάθημα).

'The passion of Christ was one full and perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. In this sense, there could be no supplementing of Christ's sufferings... But, from the latter point of view, it is a simple fact that the afflictions of every saint and martyr do supplement the afflictions of Christ. The church is built up by repeated acts of self-denial.... They continue the work which Christ began but St. Paul would be the last to say they bear their part in the atoning sacrifice of Christ'.

Paul, in **verse 26**, is deliberately using a term which the Gurus of Gnosticism would have used in admitting Neophytes to their 'inner circle'. To them, to know the 'mysteries' would be to become one of the elite, one of the special people. Yet Paul turns this idea on its head; for this mystery, far from being concealed, is now public knowledge, 'made apparent' for all to see, having been hidden for generations, to his saints, to His special people. This is all because of God's self-revelation in Christ. The mystery, then, is Christ in us; by His Spirit, actually resident and replicated in our mortal bodies; we are *in Him* and He is *in us!*

The aim, then, is to present men *téleios* (τέλειος) in Christ. Those who were fully initiated in the Gnostic cult were also *teleoi*. But, while the Gnostics allowed only a select few to attain to maturity, all saints have the potential to be so in Christ.

To this end, in **verse 29**, Paul is labouring, in the way an athlete would train, which is strenuous and brings struggle, yet the energy is not Paul's but Christ's, and is *en dhynámei* (ἐν δυνάμει), in a power which is well able to match the task.

Col.2.1-5 The aim of Paul's prayer for them is three-fold, linked with his desire for their being complete in Christ; he prays for :

- i) Their encouragement in heart
 - ii) their unity in love and
 - iii) their attaining the full riches of understanding and complete knowledge in wisdom.
- Paul doesn't want anything to be lacking from them, which is available to them in Christ.

Col.2.6-8 Paul warns directly against those trying to captivate the church with *philosophia* (φιλοσοφία). Although the Greek word is a supposed love of wisdom, there is a difference between it and the Hebrew concept of *Chokhmáh* (חִכְמָה); the Greek idea is of a corpus of knowledge, which exists in itself, regardless of the conduct of the philosopher. The Hebrew concept is of a life-affecting outworking of knowledge, which cannot but be practically expressed.

This philosophy is according to the traditions of men, or the elemental principles of the universe (Greek τα στοιχία *ta stichéia*) These are the spiritual ABC, but they could also

refer to the planetary influences which caused days and seasons to be observed by the Colossians.

Col.2.9 – 15 With ten Greek words, in v.9 Paul states the most dynamic reality concerning the person of Christ ever written. Christ appeared fully 'corporeal', 'incarnate', and not 'like a body' as the Docetists wanted it. And this fulness dwells, now - it is not a past event, but a present reality. In the presence of the Father stands the physical, glorified body of Jesus Christ.

Of verse 10, N.T. Wright says, *'It is possible that 'every power and authority' here and in verse 15, refers primarily to the same entities as the stoichéia (στοιχεῖα) of v 8 (and perhaps the list of powers in 1:16). They are, at least, the powers and authorities which are relevant to Paul's argument at this point. All power structures, ancient or modern, whether political or economic or racial, have the potential to become rivals to Christ, beckoning His followers to submit themselves in order to find a fuller security. The invitation is as blasphemous as it is unnecessary. Christ brooks no rivals; his people need none but Him'*.

v.11 I favour an interpretation of this verse as referring to the stripping away of Christ's physical body, literally Christ's mystical circumcision on the cross, which speaks so much of the grace of God. With the fact that the verse commences *en ó (ἐν ᾧ)*, in whom we can be even more sure that the verse refers to the death of Christ, and that *in Him* we are stripped of the world. Our baptism, then, is a reflection of His baptism in blood. Verse 13 backs this up further, pointing clearly to the fact that Christ is the focus of our salvation, not any action we might achieve. We were dead, in the uncircumcision of our flesh; yet he has made us alive through the circumcision of the cross.

Verse 14 further brings us the news that Christ has cancelled the debt which we owed by His death. What Christ has erased is the cheirógraphon (χειρόγραφον) which was against us. This could be a reference to the Law of Moses in Torah, the signed undertaking of the people to follow God's ways as a nation, but the more compelling meaning seems to be that of the cheirographon as an I.O.U., a signed acknowledgement of indebtedness and an obligation to repay. Jesus has cancelled and erased this, just as a debtor's name would be erased from the books of a creditor. This undertaking threatens us because it is a debt we cannot repay.

Moule then takes the word dhómasin (δόγμασιν) = to decrees, and suggests that it is linked to cheirógraphon, being the thing to which we have signed our names. This would then render the sense of the phrase, *'He erased the subscription to the ordinances which was against us'*, rather than *'he erased by ordinances'* or *'with ordinances'* often used.

This he nailed to the cross, that is, he not only cancelled the debt, but destroyed the document altogether. This may recall the *'titulus'* which was nailed up over the crucified Jesus, being more to do with our sin than any crime of his.

Col.2.16 – 19 Verse 16 clearly highlights the irrelevance of human prohibitions, following on verse 15 as it does, with its ultimate answers. Paul again appeals in v 18 for none to be set as 'referee' over the Colossians in their lifestyles. The word 'disqualify' (Gk *katabhrabhevéto καταβραβεύετω*), comes from the word *bhrábhefs* (βράβευς) an umpire at the games. Here, then, Paul is saying, 'Don't let anyone arbitrate on you in your walk with the Lord, especially those claiming 'special revelation' to do so'.

Col.2.20-23 Why is there a desire still in men to go back to laws and rituals? The dead are in another dimension from the living, and have as much in common with them as rock has with a tree. We are dead, then, to the basic elements, the *stoichéia*; they are in another dimension, and will benefit us nothing in the life with Christ.

Col. 3.1-4 Paul is not appealing for Christians to be so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly use or out of touch with reality; in fact, he is calling believers to stop trying to be holy through earthly observances. The things of 'below' are the food and drink, the days and new moons. Paul urges us to fix our eyes on Christ, the Victor, already seated at God's right hand, already having achieved his goals.

Col.3.5-11 Of verse 5ff, Lightfoot says *'The false doctrine of the Gnostics had failed to check sensual indulgence (2:23). The true doctrine of the Apostle has power to kill the whole carnal man. the substitution of a comprehensive principle for special precepts -of the heavenly life in Christ for a code of minute ordinances - at length attains the end after which the Gnostic teachers have striven, and striven in vain'*.

In the list given in **verse 11**, there are a number of contrasts;
The Barbarian and Gentile set against the Jew and the Circumcision
The Greek set against the Barbarian (non-Greek)
and the Freeman set against the Scythian, who would normally be a slave.

In Christ there is no more competition, no more caste, but Christ is all that matters; being in Him or outside of Him is the final test of the new man. This very much echoes the list of Gal 3:28. The ancient world rated class very highly; Paul is saying there is no room for it in Christ.

Col.3.12-17 As well as putting on the new man, with Him comes the qualities of Christ; these are the winsome garments of meekness (strength under control) and are all used of the character of Christ at some point in the Scripture who is also chosen, beloved and holy.

In verse 13, Paul is living in reality; he knows all too well that frictions do arise, but the way through is not by backbiting and accusation, but by bearing with each other and forgiving each other, knowing that we are all failures taken by God and made perfect only in Him.

In verse 15, as well the love of Christ, we are to let His peace also reign. Here we are back to the language of the games, where peace is to be the *bhrábhefs* (βράβευς) the umpire in our hearts, arbitrating the petty, sinful squabbles which would otherwise break up the body.

There is a unique phrase to Paul in **verse 16**: he says 'let the *logos tou Christou* (ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ), the Word of Christ, dwell in you'. Usually, Paul uses the Word of God, or the Word of the Lord, here alone does he refer to the Word of the Christ.

Note that Paul also expects there to be sung worship among the people of God, both spontaneous and written.

Col.3.18-21 N T Wright comments on these verse,

'It is true that pagans and Jews at this period compiled household rules which are in some respects parallel to what we find here. But this does not mean that Paul is simply telling his converts to conform to the prevailing contemporary standards the differences between Paul and his pagan contemporaries are as clear as the parallels. Paul has thoroughly Christianised the code, not just by adding 'in the Lord' at certain points, but by balancing carefully the duties and responsibilities of the various family members so that the stronger parties have duties as well as rights, and those who are in a position of submission are treated as responsible human beings, with rights as well as duties. He thus sharpens up, in one area of practical life, the standards set out in 3: 5-14'.

Col.3.22-4.1 Slaves were an integral part of the Christian household, and there is no suggestion in Paul's writings to slaves that they should seek to be otherwise than who they are. Bearing in mind that Onesimos, the runaway slave, was probably accompanying this letter, it seems Paul was anxious in that case to restore to Philemon what was rightfully his, although he does ask for Onesimos to be seconded to Him in Rome as a favour.

Slaves, in verse 22, are to obey their earthly masters as an earnest of their fear of the Lord. The Christian's service is not to be a false *ophthalmoulaíai* (ὀφθαλμοδουλίαι) a word which possibly Paul coined himself to describe a service done only when eyes are watching (lit. eye-service), but is to be sincere. Moule says this is service which shuns 'superficial work - not dusting behind the ornaments, not sweeping under the wardrobe'. Rather, slaves are to be sincere in heart; this word is used in the LXX to translate the

Hebrew word meaning 'uprightness' in 1 Chron 29:17 i.e. in honesty, with no ulterior motives, which issues out of a fear of the Lord, and a desire to do His will in everything.

Col.4.2-4 Paul now proceeds to various requests as he draws to the close of his letter. They are encouragements and exhortations to prayer and good conduct.

Col.4.5-6 As we live our lives in wisdom, Paul points out in v 5 we are redeeming the time. Those outside will see the application of the life of Christ and will be drawn to Him. Paul uses the word *kairós* (καιρός) for time here, which carries the idea of a point in time, while *chrónos* (χρόνος) refers to the passage of time. Paul is speaking of 'buying up the opportunity' to demonstrate the Kingdom to others around us, while there is the possibility of doing so. This will be the appearance of true *sofía* (σοφία) = wisdom, openly seen in our conduct, not shut up in secret words and ceremonies.

Col.4.7 – 9 In verse 7, Paul refers to Tychicus as being his messenger. He is mentioned in Acts 20: 4, and Titus 3:12. He seems to have been a fairly constant feature in Paul's travels, and obviously, from this verse, highly regarded by him. The titles Paul gives him should not be construed as offices, but as descriptions of his function. In verse 8, Paul is using a past tense with a present effect; although 'he sent' Tychicus, we are to understand that this refers to the present visit; Paul has sent Tychicus, and now, he has arrived at Colossae.

In verse 9 is the reference to Onesimos, undoubtedly the same runaway slave to whom Paul had become attached, and about whom he wrote the letter to Philemon, appealing to that brother to receive him back as a fellow-believer, and even requesting that he be sent back to Rome for Paul's help and comfort in prison. Not only, then, is Onesimus a Colossian, but he is also a brother. Paul is able to refer, despite his runaway attempt, to Onesimos as the faithful brother, contrary to what may have been said of him locally.

Col.4.10-17 Verse 10 gives an even stronger link with the letter to Philemon, since, apart from Jesus Justus, the same list of names is given in the greeting. Aristarchos, the Thessalonian, travelled with Paul and was with him in Rome. Perhaps his captivity as a 'co-prisoner' was a voluntary one, out of love for Paul and a desire to support him. John Mark appears again here, with no reference to his break in fellowship of twelve years previously, in fact, he is now commended. Lightfoot comments that the relationship of Barnabas to John Mark here mentioned of being a cousin may offer an explanation for Barnabas' taking Mark's part in the break-up earlier.

We may only wonder what the instructions concerning John Mark were, under separate cover; however, we can conclude that there was a possible visit to them in store, and that Paul was concerned that he should have space among them when he came.

It must have been painful to Paul that so few of his fellow-countrymen were with him in Rome, when we take into account his love for them reflected in Romans 10. There is no other mention of Jesus Justus in scripture, even in Philemon; however, the surname Justus, a common epithet used of Jews or proselytes to Judaism, can also be found in Acts 1:23 and Acts 18:7.

His dear friend and recorder of his journeyings, Doctor Luke, is with Paul in Rome also.

These men were a 'comfort' to Paul in his imprisonment, but that is not to say that Paul was languishing - the Greek word in v11 is *paregoría* (παρηγορία) which is a positive approach to suffering, rather than a negative one, so that these men were an encouragement to Paul, helping him to overcome the difficulties.

Epaphras, referred to in verse 12, was short for Epaphroditus, and the one through whom, as seen in the opening verses of the letter the Gospel came to Colossae in the first place. It is no surprise, then, that he 'agonising' in prayer for the Church of His vision, especially when they are in the throes of such a doctrinal upheaval through heresy. The aim of the prayer is, as with the aim of 1:28, their maturity and fulfilment for them of the will of God.

The Letter to Philemon

As has been mentioned already, Philemon (Greek Φιλῆμων *Philéemon*, meaning *friendly*) is the owner of the runaway slave Onesimos (Greek ὀνήσιμος *Onésimos*, meaning useful or bringing happiness.) Paul has met him in Rome, where the slave has become a brother in Christ. Paul is now sending him back with Tychicus, in order to restore him to his master, but also with a request to let him come to be with Paul in Rome.

Philm. 1-3 Paul greets Philemon as a beloved brother, mentioning also Apphia and Archippus, a soldier in whose home the church meets. (It is presumed this is Colossae, but it may be a nearby church such as Hierapolis.) He invokes his customary call for grace and peace to them from the Father and Christ.

Philm.4 – 7 Paul changes from the plural now to address Philemon personally, writing in the second person singular. He gives thanks and encourages him in his faith, as one who has 'refreshed the holy people'. This is a fascinating construction in the original Greek;

τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἁγίων ἀναπέπνυται διὰ σοῦ, ἀδελφέ/*ta splánchna ton ayón anapépnytai dhiá soo, adhelphé*/(literally) the innards of the holy ones have been caused to take a rest through you, brother. The word *splanchna* (guts, innards) is the same word used for *compassion* in Greek. Philemon has a gift for gut-level refreshment, it seems, to the people of God.

Philm.8-14 Because of Philemon's loving heart, Paul knows he doesn't have to demand the favour he is about to ask, but requests it lovingly. Now an old man (Greek πρεσβύτης *Presbhýtees*) and in prison, Paul has become attached to Onesimos in Rome. His name means 'useful' or 'happiness-bringer', and he has been that to Paul, and now is also the same to Philemon, since he has come to faith.

But Paul wants to do the right thing, and as Onesimos is legally Philemon's property, Paul is returning him home, but with a request for him to be seconded to Paul again if only Philemon permits it.

Philm.15-17 Paul points out that although Onesimos ran away as a slave, perhaps deserving punishment, now he should receive rather a welcome as a brother in Christ.

Philm.18-20 Paul is prepared to stand surety for the young man, and will repay any damages due Philemon. If Paul is using an amanuensis, a scribe for this letter, he now takes the pen or stylus and makes the big letters he makes in many of his letters to show it is his heart that speaks through his hands.

Rather cheekily, perhaps, Paul points out that in fact Philemon owes Paul a great debt, probably as Paul had a hand in his coming to faith. Paul is now looking for a payback on that debt, and as he has refreshed the believers around him, he might now refresh and bring rest to Paul as well in Christ's love.

Philm.21-25 Paul is confident of Philemon's good response, and also hopes to come and see him and stay awhile. He closes with personal greetings from Epaphras, Mark and Luke among others, who are also mentioned in the Colossian greetings previously. He closes with the customary call for grace to be with him.

Day 349

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians 1.1 – 6.24

It may well be that the letter to the Ephesians is written around the same time as the letters to Colossae and Philemon, around 61ad, during Paul's house arrest in Rome. There is a close similarity of thought with the Colossian letter, more developed in Ephesians. It seems probable that the occasion of Tychicus' travelling to Asia Minor gave Paul the impetus to write to more churches than just the small assembly at the head of the Lycus valley.

In some of the most ancient manuscripts, there is no mention of the church at Ephesus; it is therefore assumed that this was a letter of which there may have been several copies, for circulation to the churches of the region, with one being designated as the Ephesian copy, which has come down to us. There are no specific church situations referred to, and no personal greetings at the close, apart from the mention of Tychicus, who is carrying the letter.

Ephesus itself was a major sea-port, the provincial capital of Asia. Here Paul had established one of his most successful works, and it may well be that a number of significant disciples settled there, including John the Beloved and Mary, Mother of Jesus.

Eph.1.1-2 Paul declares himself the sender, as custom demands, at the beginning of the letter. (Compare this with letters sent by Jude, James and Peter who also follow this convention.) Paul addresses those yielded and surrendered to God's purpose, the holy ones of Christ Jesus, in this case, in Ephesus and invokes God's grace and peace upon them.

Eph.1.3-10 Paul opens with a blessing of God the Father for His magnificent plan of rescue which He has effected in Jesus Christ, to bring to Himself a family, restored to close relationship with Himself, advertising to all the depths of His *chesed*-grace to His covenant. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we have received forgiveness, wisdom and

understanding to know the ultimate purpose of God, hidden until now, but at last made open to us in Christ.

Eph.1.11-14 In choosing Christ, God has also chosen all who follow Him. This is not a statement of individual choosing, but of the election of Jesus, in whom all are chosen who come to Him. This is why the term *In Him* is so key in understanding Paul's teaching on election and calling of the individual believer. Thus, Paul says to all the saints, 'you also were included in Christ', sealed with the Holy Spirit who is the earnest, the downpayment of the glory to come.

Eph.1.15-23 Paul reminds them of his prayer for the churches, a key part of his calling, that they may receive more of the Holy Spirit, so that they may know Him more and grasp the power of the hope God has given them. This power (Greek δύναμις *dhýnamis*) is the same as that which energised Jesus to raise Him from death, and make way for Him to be the supreme Lord of all creation, to make way for the life and work of His body on earth, the church, whom Paul calls the completion, the fulfilment (Greek πλήρωμα *pléeroma*) of Jesus who Himself is the fulfilment of all things.

Eph.2.1-7 Paul reminds them of the dire condition of man without this redemptive power in Christ – spiritually dead, killed off by failure and evil, under the tyranny of the usurper satan, under the poison cloud of his spirit of disobedience.

Then there is a glorious 'But God', for God has stepped in to rescue us when He raised Jesus' body from the grave, and *in Him* seated mankind with Him in the unseen dimension as a beginning of His intention to show grace to the world through the work of Jesus.

Eph.2.8-10 This rescue from death has been effected only by God's commitment to His covenant in *chesed*, the self-sacrificial obligation to restore relationship with Himself for the children of Adam. Man's part is simply to believe and receive this promise, as Abraham did. There is no action we can take which will earn us merit with God in this plan of deliverance. We are the product solely of God's intention in Jesus Christ to restore wholeness and goodness to the earth.

Eph.2.11-18 Paul directs his words to those who are not Abraham's descendants by blood, those who are by birth *the Nations* (Greek τὰ ἔθνη *ta éthnee* – *translator's note*; ἔθνος *ethnos* is an unusual neuter noun, with irregular plural ending in *η/ee*), that is, not *the Nation*, Israel. Paul points out that the Nations were known as 'foreskins' (Greek ἡ ἀκροβυστία *akrobhystía*) by the physically (though not necessarily spiritually) circumcised Jews, which would undoubtedly have been a perjorative term. (We miss the strength of this language in the euphemistic translation of 'uncircumcision'.) He reminds these non-Jews how far they were from God, cut off from citizenship (Greek πολιτεία *poloteía*, polity, civic community) with Israel, aliens to the promises, hopeless and Godless – a terrible, broken state.

'But Now..' – because of the death of Jesus Christ, the barrier, the separating wall (Greek τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ *to mesóstichon tou phragmóu*) has been broken down, since He has become our reconciliation (Greek εἰρήνη *eiréenee*, peace, rejoining as one, like a bone healing.) He has also removed the enmity (Greek ἡ ἐχθρα *ee échthra*, the hostility,

the hatred), the name-calling between Jew and Gentile, by His body sacrificed for us all, through which the Holy Spirit of God leads us all to the same Father, regardless of our ethnicity or physical state.

How terrible it is, when one considers the subsequent history of the church regarding its institutional and catastrophic anti-Semitism, that this is such a denial of the cross-work of Jesus, who has made of Jew and non-Jew one new man, and grafted the Nations into the true olive tree of Israel by faith in Christ, the circumcised Messiah of the covenanted people.

Eph.2.19-22 Because of Jesus' action, the *goyim*(the Hebrew term for the non-Jews) are no longer *goyim* , but are co-citizens of those uniquely God's, the saints (Greek συμπολιται τῶν ἁγίων *sympolítai ton aghíon*) and part of God's household. At the foundation of the whole are the emissaries of Jesus and the prophets who foretold Him, with Jesus as the foundation stone upon which everything is built, and inhabited by God Himself.

Eph.3.1-6 It is in promotion and defence of this new order which includes all Nations that Paul has ended up under house arrest, a mission which will be well known to his readers. This hidden reality, this mystery of Christ's purpose is now revealed and made an open secret by the Holy Spirit, that by the good news of Jesus all the Nations are to be included in the new Israel created and held together by common faith in the Messiah Jesus.

Eph.3.7-13 It is this fundamentally upgraded basis for inclusion in God's storied people which Paul is serving and proclaiming, for which God has graced and empowered him. God's plan is that now, through this inter-national family, the called-out ones of God, the church, He will establish a new order, birthed out of His wisdom, to restore relationship with Himself throughout His creation, and to demonstrate an alternative to the systems and institutions of the old, broken, sinful world order and the unseen engines of evil behind them. Because of Jesus, any man, woman or child has the possibility of coming close to God with confidence. For this, Paul is willing to suffer, if it means mankind can learn of this glorious access to the Father.

Eph.3.14-19 This is why Paul regularly kneels before the Father of this whole new family which He is calling together, both seen and unseen. Paul's prayer is that their faith may grow stronger, and that they may experience Christ living in them constantly. In this way, they can be part of the movement of mankind which is exploring the inexhaustible ocean of Christ's love, and which is encountering the Lord God in all His fullness and richness.

Eph.3.20,21 And for Paul, there is only one reason for all this to happen – so that through this awesome new family under Jesus Christ, God will be more present and known in the earth, will receive more of all He planned and purposed and will be known as even more splendid than He already is.

The Togetherness of God's People

Eph.4.1- 6 In view of this astounding reality which they are now part of, believers need to live as unambiguous reflectors of this new order, in love, humility and selflessness. Their chief aim should be togetherness in the Holy Spirit, cemented by peace. There is only one Lord, so there is only one body, not fragmented any longer by old divisions.

Eph.4.7-13 To achieve this unity, the Lord has supplied the equipment and skills for the wholeness of His body. These are purchased for us by the death and resurrection of Christ, so they are valuable. Among those who are equipping believers for ministry are emissaries of Jesus, speakers of God's mind, proclaimers of the good news, soul-friends and instructors for life in Christ's rule to shape the people of God until we look exactly like Jesus in very detail and can present Him clearly through our lives to the broken world around us.

Eph.4.14-16 This will also stop the body of Christ being blown off course like frightened children in an uncontrolled boat, running after every latest idea that people come up with. Instead, the church will grow up to maturity, locked into Christ's life which supplies the whole supply, healthy and reproductive body.

Practical Guidance

Eph.4.17-19 Following the pattern of other letters, Paul now gets practical and applies the lofty things he has been saying to very down-to-earth situations. Now that they are part of *the* Nation, they are not to live like *the Nations*, like *goyim*, non-Jews. These are the people who are blinded by their Godless conduct, with consciences seared by the decadence of their lives. In other words, the believers are no longer Gentiles.

Eph.4.20-24 This is not the way Jesus people live. Instead, the rags of the old life are to be shaken off, and the new humanity is to be embraced, lived in God's life of straight living, doors closed to any other claims on allegiance.

Eph.4.25-32 The believers do not lie, do not harbor anger, but express it meekly and resolve it before it goes bitter; they do not steal, but earn a living through honest work. They don't use their mouths to mock and shock, but instead speak to encourage and affirm. Overall, believers live in constant concert with the Holy Spirit, refusing to let bitterness, hatred or malice interfere with their walk with God. Instead, they reflect Christ's life by being compassionate and releasing of others from their debts of fault and blame.

Eph.5.1-2 The family of God are to be 'mimics' of their Father God (Greek μιμηταὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ *mimētai tou Theou*); the same way Jesus has demonstrated self-sacrificial love, they are to love.

Eph.5.3-6 The believer's life should be fragrant and wholesome, with no need even to mention sin. There should be nothing base or obscene, in word or deed. Greed, ambition and flattery are incompatible with the life of Christ in the Spirit.

Eph.5.7 – 14 There should be no participation with evil, because darkness and light cannot co-exist. Darkness is a barren wasteland, which needs to be filled with light and exposed so that it can be redeemed.

Eph.5.15-20 The believer sees life as a precious, purposeful gift, not as an aimless walkabout. Time needs to be made the most of (Greek ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν *exaghorazómeni ton kairón*, that is, redeemed, bought up as from a market), for evil is always present.

Drunkness is a total waste of that time, and harmful to health, but true joy, release from inhibition and peace in the midst of stress which might be sought in alcohol are found when the Holy Spirit comes like the mighty river of God, so that we drink of Him instead of the bottle. Drunks might sing their boozy songs, but the songs of the Spirit of God are ecstatic and bring delight to the heart of the Lord to whom they are sung. (And don't result in abuse of the body.)

Relationships

Eph.5.21-23 The preface to this series of directions on how to live in households together is 'put yourself in the lower place with others, because Jesus has instructed us to do that.'

The wife is to partner and move with her husband, as a source of protection and sustenance, as she does with Christ, drawing from his strength and protection, not dominating him or belittling him. Her attitude is to be that of the bride of Christ to her bridegroom.

The husband is to love (Greek ἀγαπάτε *aghapáte*) that is, self-sacrificially, *chasically* commit to the wellbeing of his wife, in the same way that Christ loves His bride, the church, and has died for her, not holding back anything for Himself, giving Himself ultimately to win her. If a wife is loved in this way, how can she not give herself willingly to such solicitude for her good?

It is of note that Paul has more words to instruct the men than the women here. Paul goes on to liken the wife to the man's own body, which men in general take great care of to feed and nourish. Paul pulls on the ancient Jewish Scriptures, the *Torah*, to remind former Gentiles of the nature of marriage as set out by God – the leaving of parents, the cleaving to the spouse, the becoming one flesh, two halves of a whole together with her. There is also a new covenant, a new order reason for this conduct – it is a parable, a sign of the coming relationship between Christ and His people, His bride – a hidden reality, a mystery at the present time, but one to be revealed at His return.

Paul reminds the men once more to love a wife as they love themselves – which means, very much! And wives are called to *be in awe* (Greek φοβῆται *phobhétai*) of such a loving husband, for it is truly God-graced man who lives up to this call!

Eph.6.1-4 Paul again draws on the *Torah* for his formerly Gentile audience to show the Godliness of children's bending to their parents' guidance. The command to 'honour father and mother' brings rich blessings and length of life, a command which carries a promise, no less.

In this attitude of mutual submission, however, Paul warns Fathers against enraging or embittering their children (Greek *μὴ παροργίζετε* *mee parorghízete* – don't enrage.) Rather, they are to equip with them all they need to live lives fulfilled and pleasing to God.

Eph.6.5-9 Paul instructs slaves to bend to the will of their owners (Greek κύριος *kýrios*, = Lord) out of awe and honour, as they do to Christ. This is not only when they are watching, but when they are not as well. Paul uses here in v.6 the same neologism he has coined (presumably) when writing to the Colossians (Col.3.22) , telling them not to serve just with 'eyeservice' (Greek ὀφθαλμοδουλία *ophthalmodhoulía*) but from the heart.

They are, after all, first 'slaves of Christ' (Greek δούλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ *dhóuli tou Christóu*), then slaves of man, and they serve Him in what they do.

Paul is even-handed, and instructs the owners also to deal with their slaves 'in the same way', that is, out of mutual submission, since the master is also slave to Christ, as is his servant, and both will answer to Him. God does not regard men after their human status, but sees their hearts.

Eph.6.10-17 Paul, in the final section of his letter, puts the church on a war footing, urging them to arm themselves for the battle with the full Roman legionary's equipment . The fight, however, is not with physical adversaries, but unseen evil spirit-powers, bent on destroying God's work. To withstand them, the believer needs integrity around his loins, his intimate parts, purity bound over his heart, and feet ready to run with the good news wherever God calls. The full-body shield which protects the soldier is reliance in faith on Jesus Christ, which can withstand the enemy attack and the only weapon needed is the short sword or dirk of the Holy Spirit, which is the 'choice word', the right word for the moment inspired by the Spirit , the 'pronouncement' of God (Greek ῥῆμα Θεοῦ *rhéma Theóu*) . the mind, renewed by *metánoia* (repentance) is helmeted in the rescue of God, His right-thinking which leads to life.

Eph.6.18-20 And the warfare will be supplied and resourced through prayer, in the Spirit (who Paul says will aid us in prayer, in Roman 8). Paul asks for prayer for continued boldness to keep going boldly with the good news at every opportunity, for which he is an 'ambassador in chains' (Greek πρεσβεῖω ἐν ἀλύσει *presbhévo en alýsi* , literally, 'I am a senior representative in bonds') in Rome.

Eph.6.21 -24 Paul indicates that Tychicus is coming with this letter, as with the letters to Philemon and Colossae. Paul ends with a blessing of peace, love and grace to all his fellow believers.