

COLOSSIANS: OVERCOMING SYNCRETISM THRU CHRIST

Part IX: Christ's Sufficiency And Supremacy In Paul's Closing

(Colossians 4:7-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Recent research indicates that the average American adopts beliefs and practices from approximately nine distinct worldviews, what produces a jumble of often contradictory philosophies known as syncretism.
- B. The epistle to the Colossians handled a mixture of Jewish legalism, Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1690, "The Colossian Heresy"), so it applies to the syncretism that we face.
- C. Colossians 4:7-18 provides evidence of Christ's sufficiency and supremacy that counters syncretism by means of even the closing of His servant Paul's epistle to the Colossians. We view the passage for our application:

II. Christ's Sufficiency And Supremacy In Paul's Closing, Colossians 4:7-18.

- A. Paul wrote that he was sending Tychicus to his readers since Tychicus was a proven leader, a dear spiritual brother and a faithful fellow servant in the ministry so that Tychicus would clarify to the Colossian believers Paul's welfare in prison, Colossians 4:7-8. Christ thus teaches us by Paul's example of sending spiritually proven Tychicus the character quality of men we should rely on to convey God's messages to His people.
- B. In Colossians 4:9, Paul mentioned that along with Tychicus, Onesimus was going back to his master Philemon as a newly converted runaway slave, and Onesimus was carrying Paul's epistle to Philemon that told him to accept Onesimus as a brother in Christ and not to punish him, Phm. 1-21. Thus, God does not want Church ministries even to try to destroy evil social institutions, but for believers to live godly lives in such institutions.
- C. Paul also sent greetings from his fellow prisoner Aristarchus, Colossians 4:10a. He "was a Thessalonian who accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2)." (B. K. C., N. T., p. 685) We thus know that even unjustly imprisoned believers like Paul and Aristarchus are still to be spiritually productive.
- D. (John) Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, had abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13) so Paul had refused to let Mark join them on their second missionary journey against Barnabas' wishes to the extent that Paul and Barnabas decided to minister apart from each other, Acts 15:36-40! In Colossians 4:10b, Mark was on the spiritual rebound, so Paul gave the Colossian believers instructions on Mark's rebound, what bore fruit as evidenced in 2 Timothy 4:11 where Paul later asked Timothy to send John Mark to him as he had become spiritually profitable to Paul! We thus learn that we should not give up on believers who initially fail the Lord but keep working diligently with them if they show a desire to rebound for Christ.
- E. In Colossians 4:11, Paul sent greetings to his readers from "Jesus," a common Hebrew name at the time, a man who was also called Justus as a fellow worker and a comfort to Paul. The word "comfort" translates the unusual word *paregoria*, meaning "relief, consolation" as this believer ministered to relieve Paul of anxious concerns, *Ibid.* We learn from this report that consoling fellow burdened believers is a valuable ministry.
- F. Paul sent greetings from Epaphras, a man who labored in prayer for the maturity not only of the Colossian believers, but for other churches in the Lycus Valley, Col. 4:12-13; *Ibid.* We learn from this information that Christ honors the ministry of intercessory prayer and that we should practice it for all believers!
- G. In Colossians, 4:14, Paul sent greetings from Luke, the beloved physician who stayed by Paul's side in this imprisonment as well as in his last one in 2 Timothy 4:11a. Paul also sent greetings from Demas though he would later abandon Paul in his love for the world, 2 Timothy 4:10a. By application, we should learn from the contrasting destinies of Luke and Demas that we believers must remain vigilant in our spiritual walk, for we will either keep growing in faithfulness to Christ like Luke did or end up in spiritual defeat like Demas!
- H. Paul expressed concern for the welfare of believers in the churches at Laodicea and Nympha's house, and he told his readers to have his epistle to them also read in the Church of Laodicea, and for the epistle to the Laodiceans to be read in turn by the Colossians, Colossians 4:15-16. This directive teaches us to apply the teachings of Paul's epistles for other believers to our lives in our church, for they are God's Word even to us!
- I. In Colossians 4:17, Paul directed that Archippus fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord. We learn from this order that if God leads us into a ministry, He does not want us to quit our work in it, but to fulfill it.
- J. Finally, Paul gave his closing salutation in Colossians 4:18, urging his readers to remember his bonds, an appeal for intercessory prayer in his behalf. This teaches us of our need to pray for our spiritual leaders today.

Lesson: *Christ's sufficiency and supremacy is seen in how His servant Paul's closing remarks direct us even today.*

Application: *May we apply Paul's closing remarks of his epistle to the Colossians to our spiritual walk today.*