

Colossians Chapter Two

The Struggle for Spiritual Excellence (vv. 1-5)

VERSE 1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and

for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my

face (Θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ἥλικον ἀγῶνα ἔχω ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί [*pres.act.ind.1s. thelo wish + conj gar + pro.acc.m.p. su + pf.act.infin. oika know + adj.acc.m.s. helipos how great, how small; 2x; Jm. 3:5 + noun acc.m.s. agon struggle, fight, opposition, concern, race + pres.act.ind.1s. echo have + prep huper + pro.gen.p. su + conj + d.a.abl.m.p. ho “those” + prep en + noun loc.f.s. Laodicea + conj + pro.nom.m.p. hosos as much as, as many as + neg ouk + perf.act.ind.3p. horao see + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. prosopon face + pro.gen.s. ego + prep en + noun loc.f.s. sarx flesh*]),

VERSE 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love

(ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν, συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ [*conj hina that + aor.pass.subj.3p. parakaleo encourage + d.a.w/noun nom.f.p. kardia heart + pro.gen.m.p. autos + aor.pass.part.nom.m.p. sumbibazo unite, bring together; “having been knit together” + prep en + noun loc.f.s. agape love*], **and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding** [καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως [*conj + prep eis to + adj.acc.nt.s. pas all + noun acc.nt.s. ploutos wealth + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. plerophoria full assurance/conviction + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. sunesis understanding, comprehension*]],

resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself [εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ [*prep eis sometimes denotes purpose or result + noun acc.f.s. epignosis + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. misterios mystery + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + noun gen.m.s. Christos*]),

VERSE 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι [*prep en + pro.loc.m.s. hos + adj.nom.m.p. pas + d.a.w/noun nom.m.p. thesauros treasure + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. sophia wisdom + conj + non gen.f.s. gnosis + adj.nom.m.p. apokrophos stored away; secret; "hidden"; Mk. 4:22; Lk. 8:17*]).

VERSE 4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument (Τοῦτο λέγω ἵνα μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται ἐν πιθανολογίᾳ [*pro.acc.nt.s houtos this + pres.act.ind.ls lego + conj hina + pro.nom.m.s. medeis no one + pro.acc.m.p. su + pres.dep.subj.3s. paralogizomai deceive + prep en + noun instr.f.s. pithanologia specious argument; 1x*]).

VERSE 5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit (εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι, ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἶμι [*part ei though + conj gar + conj kai even + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. sarx flesh; "body" + pres.act.ind.ls. apeimi absent + conj alla nevertheless + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.s. pneuma spirit +prep sun + pro.instr.p. su + pres.act.ind.ls. eimi*]),

rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ

[χαίρων καὶ βλέπων ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν καὶ τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν
 [pres.act.part.nom.m.s. *chairo* rejoice + prep *kata* + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. *blepo* see +
 pro.genp. *su* + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. *taxis* order, good order; “good discipline” + conj +
 d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. *stereoma* firmness, steadfastness; “stability” + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. *pistis*
 faith + prep *eis* + noun acc.m.s. *Christ* + pro.gen.m.p. *su*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-5

1. In the previous section (vv. 24-29) Paul speaks in general terms of his sufferings as a servant of the gospel within the context of the mystery dispensation.
2. Here he relates his “great struggle/conflict” to believers residing in Colossae and Laodicea (v. 1).
3. For Paul it was critical that these believers in these two local churches “know” of his “great struggle” on their behalf.
4. “How great a struggle I have for you” highlights the pressures and sufferings he was enduring for these believers.
5. “Struggle/conflict” (*agon*) relates back to the participle “striving” in v. 29.
6. Paul does not give any specifics here but in light of 4:3 where he is “bound” in chains because of his proclamation of “they mystery of Christ” the struggle includes his imprisonment for communicating God’s plan to the Gentiles.
7. The adjective “how great” (*helikos* how great, large or small) indicates that he was under much duress while carrying out his efforts on behalf of those he was responsible for, and that included those he had never been with face to face.
8. The saints in the churches of Colossae and Laodicea were by no means neglected in this fight to meet the needs of positive volition.
9. While in his first Roman imprisonment Paul also wrote letters to Ephesus and Philippi where he personally established local churches.
10. Laodicea was located just eleven miles northwest of Colossae.
11. Along with Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colossae were cities in the Lycus Valley in Asia Minor and all three are mentioned in 4:13.
12. The seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 & 3 were all located in the same region.
13. Paul wrote a letter to the church in Laodicea, one that was to be read in the church at Colossae (4:16).
14. The final clause in v. 1 “and for all those who have not seen my face in the flesh” likely points to all who resided in the cities in the Lycus Valley.
15. In v. 2 Paul states the purpose (conj. *hina*) behind his sufferings for these churches in the Lycus Valley.
16. Paul wants “their hearts” or inner self where the volition, intellect, and emotions resides to “be encouraged.”

17. The aorist passive subjunctive *parakaleo* means that this is something that they receive contingent on volition.
18. Obviously the comfort/encouragement Paul refers to here is something that has its source in God (passive).
19. The purpose clause is followed by a participial clause “having been knit together in love” (aor.pass.part. *sumbibazo*) or “united together in love” points to unity among those he writes to.
20. This verb occurs 7x: Acts 9:22; 16:10; 19:33; 1Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:2, 19.
21. The related concepts of bringing together along with the acquired sense of “instructed” is seen in these verses.
22. Here in 2:2 “in love” refers to the love of God manifested in their relationship to one another.
23. Not “love” as the “bond” for perfect unity in 3:14.
24. “Love” like a garment is to be put on which refers to being under the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
25. “Love” is the glue that keeps believers unified.
26. The phrase about being united in love is followed by a prepositional phrase that serves to define the unity Paul speaks of.
27. It reads literally “and concerning (prep *eis*) all riches (*pan ploutos*)...”
28. The wealth here is “full assurance.”
29. “Full assurance” is the confidence in the truth that is essential to staying the course (cf. Heb. 6:11 “And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance until the end.”; 10:22 “let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”).
30. “Of understanding” (*sunesis*) is an genitive of source while “of full assurance” is a genitive of content.
31. Cf. 1:9 where “understanding” or “insight” into a subject is associated with “knowledge” and “spiritual wisdom.”
32. Cf. also Eph. 3:4 “And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.
33. Again, “wealth” is to have “full assurance” and “full assurance” comes from “understanding.”
34. A translation: “the wealth consisting of full assurance that springs from understanding.”
35. To understand a matter is to have insight into the particulars of a subject.
36. Syntactically the final phrase in v. 2 “*resulting* in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, *that is*, Christ” is introduced by the same preposition (*eis*) of the previous phrase, but here explains the content of the “understanding.”
37. Again, in v. 9 Paul in his prayer report on their behalf writes of the spiritual growth factor he desires for the Colossians.
38. Paul’s discussion of this “knowledge” is explicitly linked with “the mystery of God—a theme introduced in 1:26-27.
39. The genitive “of the mystery” is an objective genitive that functions as the object of the verbal noun “knowledge.”
40. “Of God” is a possessive genitive in light of the similar construction in 1:9.
41. “Christ” is a genitive of apposition that defines “mystery.”

42. Note the connection between “Christ” and “mystery” in 1:27.
43. “Christ” refers to both His person as well as the word of God.
44. One of His titles is “the Word” in John 1.
45. As note earlier “Christ in you” refers to the knowledge of God’s plan centered in the person of Christ.
46. The doctrine of the mystery dispensation and the body of Christ is a critical aspect of the understanding for CA believers.
47. “In whom” is v. 3 refers to Christ and is used here to demonstrate the Christ is the font of “all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
48. A treasure is that which is stored up.
49. “Wisdom and knowledge” define “the treasures.”
50. That which is “hidden” is only revealed to positive volition.
51. This “wisdom and knowledge” Paul speaks of is found in the Word of God—the Bible. (cf. Paul’s “we have the mind of Christ.”).
52. In v. 4 Paul takes the opportunity to warn the Colossians about false teachers that they had no doubt been exposed to.
53. “I say this” refers back to Paul’s statement about the “all the treasures hidden” in Christ.
54. The idea is: “My aim in telling you this is that...”
55. Paul provides a rationale and concluding observation on what he has just said.
56. The reference to “no one” anticipates Paul’s description of the kind of bogus teachings and practices that the Colossians had been exposed to (cf. vv. 8, 16, 18).
57. “No one” serves to strip these individuals of any significance that they claimed to possess.
58. The purpose of Paul’s discussion about the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge” is so that these believers can avoid deception through false doctrines.
59. The verb *paralogizomai* means to lead astray and occurs here and in Jam. 1:22 in a discussion of allowing the ISTA to entice the real you (soul) into sinning.
60. This deception he warns them about is carried out by means of “persuasive argumentation” (instr.f.s. *pithanologia*; only here in NT).
61. In Classical Greek, this term is used in reference to speculative arguments as opposed to empirical demonstration.
62. “Specious arguments” is another rendering of this rare term.
63. Paul moves on to address his absence from the Colossians in v. 5a
64. Paul’s focus in v. 5 is not on the peril that the Colossians live under by his absence, but rather his deep concern for their spiritual well-being despite the circumstances of their mutual separation due to necessity of circumstance.
65. “Absent in flesh”(body) “present in spirit” follows the customary letter-writing formula of his time.
66. The absence-presence provides the urgent necessity for this letter.
67. Paul concludes this section with a word about his frame of mind with respect to the Colossians (v. 5b).
68. The Greek reads: “rejoicing and seeing” (both participles) and is yet another affirmation of the good report (overall) that has come to him in his captivity (cf. 1:3-4).
69. “Seeing” points the good report and “rejoicing” to the effect it had on Paul.
70. “Good discipline” or “order” (d.a.w/noun *taxis*) and “stability” (d.a.w/noun *stereoma*) evoke a military setting.

71. The first term could be “your orderly formation” and points to the situation within the assembly that is the opposite of chaos and disorder.
72. The second term refers to a “firm front” of troops aligned for combat.
73. The term “stability” or “firmness” only appears here in the NT.
74. Related terms for firmness in the conflict are found in 1Pet. 5:9; cf. 2Tim. 2:19) in regards to one’s faith.
75. “Of your faith” modifies “stability” and “your” modifies “good discipline/order.”