

Colossians 1:20-29

New English Translation Bible 2019

Fifth century or earlier manuscript variants: [inserted] [~replaced] [–omitted]

Working Outline of Colossians 1:20-29

- I. Greeting
- II. My co-workers and I write to strengthen you. 1.3–4.6
 - A. We thank and pray to God for you. 1.3-12
 - B. Because Christ ranks above all created things. 1.13–3.17
 - 1. God has brought us into Christ’s kingdom. 1.13 – 2.5
 - a. God has made peace with us. 1.13-23
 - (1) He has redeemed us. 1.13-20
 - (2) He has reconciled you. 1.21-23
 - b. I now endure hardship for you. 1.24 – 2.5
 - (1) I rejoice in my sufferings. 1.24-29
 - (2) I struggle on your behalf. 2.1-5

Learning objectives

- Participants will define ‘church’ and ‘Israel’.
- Participants will meet the ‘condition’ for receiving everlasting glory.
- Participants will rejoice in afflictions suffered because of their faith in Messiah Jesus.

Background

The Colossian Christians were troubled by local Jews who taught that, in order to be saved, believers must adopt certain Jewish customs and rituals, which included worship of God through angelic mediators.

Christian evangelists had taught them that they could be saved by faith alone in Messiah Jesus, crucified to forgive sins, and raised back to life, who promised ‘glory’ upon his return when he would raise them back to life.

Thus, the Christians were troubled by the promises of Jesus, which seemed to conflict with requirements of Jews, God’s chosen people. Which should they believe?

God reconciled you!

²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and enemies in mind and in evil deeds, ²² but now He [~you are] reconciled you in the body of His flesh through [his] death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—...

Grammar: ‘although ... but ...’?!

Alternative: ‘Even you ... evil deeds. But now He ...’

Hendiadys: ‘alienated and enemies’ = enemy aliens?

Alienated: See next slide.

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Query: What leads to enmity with God? (Evil thoughts and deeds.)

Query: What reverses enmity with God? (Reconciled by Jesus' death.)

Parallel in Ephesians 2:12

¹² Remember that you were at that time without Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

What is Israel?

National: Land, boundaries, citizenship, kingdom

Ethnic: Self-identity, heritage, customs, foods

Religious: Temple, synagogue, scriptures, holy feasts

Cultural: Worldview, beliefs, values, Hebrew language

Social: Priests, class, status, laws, institutions

Spiritual: Loyalty to Yahweh, Messiah, hope of glory

How do 'Israel' and 'church' overlap? 5 views:

Catholic: The Church = Israel and maintains Israel's priesthood. Thus, there is no salvation outside of Israel, that is, the Church.

Protestant: The church = 'spiritual Israel' across both Testaments.

Dispensationist: The church and Israel remain distinct and separate, for God has a different eschatology for each of them.

Messianic: Israel = the historic people of God, whilst the church = all who believe in Israel's God.

Pauline: The church = true Israel = all those who remain faithful to Yahweh and Messiah Jesus, including Jews and Gentiles.

Free salvation's one condition

... ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, which was pro-claimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a [preacher, apostle and] minister.

'If indeed': (See below.)

Query: What hope does the gospel offer?

'all creation': inclusive of whom?

Minister: 'deacon', meeting urgent needs.

Query: What danger was threatening them?

Query: To whom does the gospel not apply?

Conditional, 'eternal security'

'If indeed': Indicative mood = presently true.

'Continue': present tense = not moved.

Query: What is it that we hope for?

Query: What is the only condition placed on our hope?

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²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and I fill up what is lacking of Christ's afflictions in my flesh, on behalf of His body, which is the church, ²⁵ of which I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God given to me for you, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, ...

Afflictions: (*thlipsis*) is not used of the cross.

Options: (1) Christ endured affliction, and those who serve Him will be afflicted. (1 Thess 1:6).

(2) Paul is experiencing the troubles that the Jesus foretold (Ac 9:16).

Church: (*hē ekklésia*) 'the assembly' 18X in Greek OT = Israel in worship.

Stewardship: 'responsibility of management' BDAG

Preaching: 'fulfill the Word of God'

²⁶ that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the riches [–of the glory] of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Saints: 'holy ones', usually = heavenly beings around God's throne. Cp Eph 3:10.

Christ in you: (*en*) 'among the Gentiles, that is, among you!'

Guideline: 'When Scripture seems obtuse or illogical, translators were doing theology.'

Verbs of revelation

- make manifest (*phaneroō*, 1:26)
- make known (*gnōrizō*, 1:27)
- proclaim (*kataggellō*, 1:28)
- teach (*didaskō*, 1:28)

Nouns of revelation

- wisdom (*sophia*, 1:28; 2:3)
- understanding (*synesis*, 2:2)
- full-knowledge (*epigōnsis*, 2:2)
- knowledge (*gnōsis*, 2:3)

²⁸ Him we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹ For this purpose I also labor, striving according to His working, which He works in me in power.

Every man: (*anthropos*) human beings, Jews and Gentiles, women and men, slave and free.

All wisdom: No other revelation required.

Complete: Loyal faith in messiah remains all that God requires for eternal 'glory'.

Power: God works through telling the gospel to save folk by faith alone.

For next time

Find in Colossians 2:1-13 all that Christ has done for human beings to be saved forever.