Colossians

Salutation

1:1 From Paul,1 an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 1:2 to the saints, the faithful2 brothers and sisters3 in Christ, at Colossae. Grace and peace to you4 from God our Father!5

Paul’s Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Church

1:3 We always6 give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 1:4 since7 we heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints. 1:5 Your faith and love have arisen8 from the hope laid up9 for you in heaven, which you have heard about in the message of truth, the gospel10 v 6 that has come to you. Just as in the entire world this gospel11 is bearing fruit and growing, so it has also been bearing fruit and growing12 among you from the first day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth. 1:7 You learned the gospel13 from Epaphras, our dear fellow slave14 —215 faithful minister of Christ on our16 behalf — 1:8 who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

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1 tn Grk “Paul.” The word “from” is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied to indicate the sender of the letter.
2 tn Grk “and faithful.” The construction in Greek (as well as Paul’s style) suggests that the saints are identical to the faithful; hence, the koi (kai) is best left untranslated (cf. Eph 1:1).
3 tn Grk “brothers,” but the Greek word may be used for “brothers and sisters” or “fellow Christians” as here (cf. BDAG 18 s.v. ἀδελφος 1, where considerable nonbiblical evidence for the plural ἀδελφοί [adelphoi] meaning “brothers and sisters” is cited).
4 tn Or “Grace to you and peace.”
5 tn Most witnesses, including some important ones (A C F G I [P] 075 33 81 1175 1505 1739 1881) lack this phrase. Since the omission is inexplicable as arising from the longer reading (otherwise, these MSS would surely have deleted the phrase in the rest of the corpus Paulinum), it is surely authentic.
6 tn The adverb πάντως (pantōs) is understood to modify the indicative εὐχαριστοῦμεν (eucharistoumen) because it precedes περὶ ὑμῶν (peri humōn) which probably modifies the indicative and not the participle προσευχόμενοι (proseuchomenoi). But see 1:9 where the same expression occurs and περὶ ὑμῶν modifies the participle “praying” (proseuchomenoi).
7 tn The adverbial participle ἀκούσαντες (akouasantes) is understood to be temporal and translated with “since.” A causal idea may also be in the apostle’s mind, but the context emphasizes temporal ideas, e.g., “from the day” (v. 6).
8 tn Col 1:3-8 form one long sentence in the Greek text and have been divided at the end of v. 4 and v. 6 and within v. 6 for clarity, in keeping with the tendency in contemporary English toward shorter sentences. Thus the phrase “Your faith and love have arisen from the hope” is literally “because of the hope.” The perfect tense “have arisen” was chosen in the English to reflect the fact that the recipients of the letter had acquired this hope at conversion in the past, but that it still remains and motivates them to trust in Christ and to love one another.
9 tn BDAG 113 s.v. ἀποκείμενοι 2 renders ἀποκειμένην (apokemenen) with the expression “reserved” in this verse.
10 tn The term “the gospel” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, tou evangeliou) is in apposition to “the word of truth” (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας) as indicated in the translation.
11 tn Grk “just as in the entire world it is bearing fruit.” The antecedent (“the gospel”) of the implied subject (“it”) of ἐστιν (estin) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
12 tn Though the participles are periphrastic with the present tense verb ἐστιν (estin), the presence of the temporal indicator “from the day” in the next clause indicates that this is a present tense that reaches into the past and should be translated as “has been bearing fruit and growing.” For a discussion of this use of the present tense, see ExSyn 519:20.
13 tn Or “learned.” The Greek text simply has “you learned” without the reference to “the gospel,” but “the gospel” is supplied to clarify the sense of the clause. Direct objects were frequently omitted in Greek when clear from the context.
14 tn The Greek word translated “fellow slave” is συνδουλος (sundoulos); the συν- prefix here denotes association. Though δουλος is normally translated “servant,” the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. BDAG notes that “servant” for ‘slave’ is largely confined to Biblical transl. and early American times...in normal usage at the present time the two words are carefully distinguished” (BDAG 260 s.v.). The most accurate translation is “bondservant” (sometimes found in the ASV for δουλος), in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. But as this is archaic, few today understand its force.
15 tn The Greek text has “who (ος, hos) is a faithful minister.” The above translation conveys the antecedent of the relative pronoun quite well and avoids the redundancy with the following substantial particle of v. 8, namely, “who told” (ὁ δηλώσας, ho dhlwsas).
16 cf † Judging by the superior witnesses for the first person pronoun ημων (hēmōn, “us”); †24 N* A B D F G 326+ 1505 αι vs. the second person pronoun ημαι (humain, ‘you’); found in N* C D F G I 375 1533 1789 1881.1 lat sy co), ημαι should be regarded as original. Although it is possible that ημαι was an early alteration of ημων (either unintentionally, as dittography, since it comes seventeen letters after the previous προς; or intentionally, to conform to the surrounding first person pronouns), this supposition is difficult to maintain in light of the varied and valuable witnesses for this reading. Further, the second person is both embedded in the verb ἐμφύλισε (emphilete) and is explicit in V (emhe). Hence, the motivation to change to the first person pronoun is counter-balanced by such evidence. The second person pronoun may have been introduced unintentionally via homoiarcton with the ὑπερ (huper) that immediately precedes it. As well, the second person reading is somewhat harder for it seems to address Epaphras’ role only in relation to Paul and his colleagues, rather than in relation to the Colossians. Nevertheless, the decision must be based ultimately on external evidence (because the internal evidence can be variously interpreted), and this strongly supports ημαι.
Paul’s Prayer for the Growth of the Church

1:9 For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you, 4 have not ceased praying for you and asking God 5 to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 1:10 so that you may live 6 worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects 8 — bearing fruit in everything good, growing in the knowledge of God, 1:11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully 1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share 9 in the saints’ inheritance in the light. 1:13 He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, 9 1:14 in whom we have redemption, 10 the forgiveness of sins.

1 tn Or “heard about it”; Grk “heard.” There is no direct object stated in the Greek (direct objects were frequently omitted in Greek when clear from the context). A direct object is expected by an English reader, however, so most translations supply one. Here, however, it is not entirely clear what the author “heard”: a number of translations supply “it” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV, NAB “this”), but this could refer back either to (1) “your love in the Spirit” at the end of v. 7 or (2) “your love in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints” (v. 4). In light of this uncertainty, other translations supply “about you” (TEV, NIV, CEV, NLT). This is preferred by the present translation since, while it does not resolve the ambiguity entirely, it does make it less easy for the English reader to limit the reference only to “your love in the Spirit” at the end of v. 8.

2 tn The term “God” does not appear in the Greek text, but the following reference to “the knowledge of his will” makes it clear that “God” is in view as the object of the “praying and asking,” and should therefore be included in the English translation for clarity.

3 tn The ἵνα (hina) clause has been translated as substantival, indicating the content of the prayer and asking. The idea of purpose may also be present in this clause.

4 tn The infinitive περιποιέομαι (peripoiēomai, “to walk, to live, to live one’s life”) is best taken as an infinitive of purpose related to “praying” (προσευχόμενοι, prosuechomenoi) and “asking” (ἀιτούμενοι, aitoumenoi) in v. 9 and is thus translated as “that you may live.”

5 tn BDAG 129 s.v. ἐρωτεύομαι states that ἐρωτεύομαι (erōteuō) refers to a desire to please εἰς πάσαν ἀλλ. λογίαν ὑμῖν (to please the Lord) in all respects Col 1:10.

6 tn The expression “for the display of” is an attempt to convey in English the force of the Greek preposition εἰς (eis) in this context.

7 tn BDAG 473 s.v. ἵκον states, “τίνα εἰς τις υἱόν γεννηθεῖς γεννηθήσεσθαι, someone for someTHEM, Col 1:12.” The point of the text is that God has qualified the saints for a “share” or “portion” in the inheritance of the saints.

8 tn Grk “the inheritance of the saints.” The genitive noun τῶν ἀγίων ( tôn agien) is a possessive genitive: “the saints’ inheritance.”

9 tn Here αὐτῶς (autōs) has been translated as a subjective genitive ("he loves").

10 εἰς δὲ τὸν σεμίτη υἱόν τοῦ σαρκών (eis de ton semitē autōtou) ("through his blood") is read at this juncture by several minuscule codices 631 630 1506 2464 (all) as well as a few, mostly secondary, versional and patristic witnesses. But the reading was prompted by the parallel in Eph 1:7 where the wording is solid. If these words had been in the original of Colossians, why would scribes omit them here but not in Eph 1:7? Further, the testimony on behalf of the shorter reading is quite overwhelming: [N A B C D F G V 075 0150 6 22 1739 1881] 31 (latt co as well as several other versions and fathers), the conviction that “through his blood” is not authentic in Col 1:14 is as strong as the conviction that these words are authentic in Eph 1:7.

11 sn This passage has been typeset as poetry because many scholars regard this passage as poetic or hymnic. These terms are used broadly to refer to the genre of writing, not to the content. There are two broad criteria for determining if a passage is poetic or hymnic: (a) stylistic: a certain rhetorical lift when the passages are read aloud, the presence of paraphrasmus membrorum (i.e., an arrangement into couplets), the semblance of some metre, and the presence of rhetorical devices such as alliteration, chiasmus, and antithesis; and (b) linguistic: an unusual vocabulary, particularly the presence of theological terms, which is different from the surrounding context” (P. T. O’Brien, Philippians [NIGTC], 188-89). Classifying a passage as hymnic or poetic is important because understanding this genre can provide keys to interpretation. However, not all scholars agree that the above criteria are present in this passage, so the decision to typeset it as poetry should be viewed as a tentative decision about its genre.

12 tn The Greek term πρωτότοκος (prōtotokos) could refer either to first in order of time, such as a first born child, or it could refer to one who is preeminent in rank. M. J. Harris, Colossians and Philemon (EGNT), 43, expresses the meaning of the word: “The ‘firstborn’ was either the eldest child in a family or a person of preeminent rank. The use of this term to describe the Davidic king in Ps 88:28 LXX (=[Ps 89:27 EVV], ‘I will also appoint him my firstborn (πρωτότοκον), the most exalted of the kings of the earth,’ indicates that it can denote supremacy in rank as well as priority in time. But whether the πρωτότοκος element in the word denotes time, rank, or both, the significance of the πρωτότοκος element as indicating birth or origin (from τοκος, give birth to) has been virtually lost except in ref. to lit. birth.” In Col 1:15 the emphasis is on the priority of Jesus’ rank as over and above creation (cf. 1:16 and the “for” clause referring to Jesus as Creator).

13 tn The genitive construction ποίης κτίσεως (poiēs ktiseos), the most rendered “builders of the ruling powers, dominions” here.

14 tn BDAG 579 s.v. κυρίτητος, 3 suggests “bearers of the ruling powers, dominions” here.

15 tn BDAG 973 s.v. συνίστημι, B.3 suggests “continue, endure, exist, hold together” here.

16 tn See the note on the term “firstborn” in 1:15. Here the reference to Jesus as the “firstborn from among the dead” seems to be argued for a chronological priority, i.e., Jesus was the first to rise from the dead.

17 tn Grk “in order that he may become in all things, himself, first.”
1:19 For God² was pleased to have all his⁴ fullness dwell³ in the Son⁶
1:20 and through him to reconcile all things to himself⁴ by making peace through the blood of his cross — through him,⁤ whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Paul’s Goal in Ministry

1:21 And you were at one time strangers and enemies in your⁶ minds⁷ as expressed through⁸ your evil deeds, 1:22 but now he has reconciled you⁴ by his physical body through death to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him — 1:23 if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm,¹⁰ without shifting¹¹ from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant.

1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my physical body — for the sake of his body, the church — what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. 1:25 I became a servant of the church according to the stewardship²² from God given to me for you — in order to complete the word of God, 1:26 that is, the mystery that has been kept hidden from ages and generations, but has now been revealed to his saints. 1:27 God wanted to make known to them the glorious¹⁴ riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 1:28 We proclaim him by instructing¹⁵ and

² tn The noun “God” does not appear in the Greek text, but since God is the one who reconciles the world to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:19), he is clearly the subject of ὑιοθεμένης (eudokēsen).

³ tn The Greek article τό (to), insofar as it relates to God, may be translated as a possessive pronoun, i.e., “his.” BDAG 404 s.v. ὑιοθεμένη 1 translates the phrase as “all the fullness willed to dwell in him” thus leaving the referent as impersonal. Insofar as Paul is alluding to the so-called emanations from God this is acceptable. But the fact that “the fullness” dwells in a person (i.e., “in him”) seems to argue for the translation “his fullness” where “his” refers to God. As the phrase κατοικήσατε could be taken as an ascriptive, in which case it refers to the incarnation and may be translated as “begin to dwell, to take up residence.” It is perhaps better, though, to take it as a substantive aorist and simply a reference to the fact that the fullness of God dwells in Jesus Christ. This is a permanent dwelling, though, not a temporary one, as the present tense in 2:9 makes clear.

⁴ tn Grk “him”; the referent (the Son; see v. 13) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ tn The presence or absence of the second occurrence of the phrase δι’ αὐτοῦ (di’ autou, “through him”) is a difficult textual problem to solve. External evidence is fairly evenly divided. Many ancient and excellent witnesses lack the phrase (B D* F G I 0278 81 1175 1739 1881 2464 al latt sa), but equally important witnesses have it (D Ψ Β 048 075 [0278] 33 3%). Both readings have strong Alexandrian support, which makes the problem difficult to decide on external evidence alone. Internal evidence points to the inclusion of the phrase as original. The word immediately preceding the phrase is the masculine pronoun αὐτοῦ (autou); thus the possibility of omission through homoioteleuton in various witnesses is likely. Scribes might have deleted the phrase because of perceived redundacy or awkwardness in the sense: The shorter reading is smoother and more elegant, so scribes would be prone to correct the text in that direction. As far as style is concerned, repetition of key words and phrases for emphasis is not foreign to the corpus Paulinum (see, e.g., Rom 8:23, Eph 1:13, 2 Cor 12:7). In short, it is easier to account for the shorter reading arising from the longer reading than vice versa, so the longer reading is more likely original.

⁶ tn The article τή (tē) has been translated as a possessive pronoun (ExSyn 215).

⁷ tn Although διάνοια (dianoia) is singular in Greek, the previous plural noun ἐγκοινωνία (enkoïnōnia) indicates that all those from Colossae are in view here.

⁸ tn The dative ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῦ πονηροῦ (en tois ergoioi tois poneroi) is taken as means, indicating the avenue through which hostility in the mind is revealed and made known.

¹⁰ tn Some of the better representatives of the Alexandrian and Western texts have a passive verb here instead of the active ἀποκατατάλαξα (apokatallaxen, “he has reconciled”): ἀποκατατάλαξατε (apokatallagentai) in (D F*)، ἀποκατάταλακταί (apokatallaktai) in 33, and ἀποκατατάλαγεντες (apokatallagenes) in F* G. Yet the active verb is strongly supported by A C D* Ψ 048 075 [0278] 1739 1881 33. In fact, internally, the passive creates an anacoluthon in that it looks back to the accusative ὑμᾶς (hymas, “you”) of v. 21 and leaves the following παραστίησιν (parastēsa) dangling (“you were reconciled...to present you”). The passive reading is certainly the harder reading. As such, it may well explain the rise of the other readings. At the same time, it is possible that the passive was produced by scribes who wanted some symmetry between the ποτε (pote, “at one time”) of v. 21 and the ὑμῖν δέ (nymi de, “but now”) of v. 22. Since a passive periphrastic participle is used in v. 21, there may have a temptation to produce a corresponding passive form in v. 22, handling the ὑμᾶς of v. 21 by way of constructio ad sensum. Since παραστίησις occurs ten words later, it may not have been considered in this scribal modification. Further, the Western reading (ἀποκατατάλαγεντες) hardly seems to have arisen from ἀποκατατάλαγησεν (contra TCNT SSSS). As difficult as this decision is, the preferred reading is the active form because it is superior externally and seems to explain the rise of all forms of the passive readings.

¹² tn The direct object is omitted in the Greek text, but it is clear from context that “you” (ὑμᾶς, hymas) is implied.

¹⁶ tn BDAG 276 s.v. ἔδρασις suggests “firm, steadfast.”

¹⁸ tn BDAG 639 s.v. μετακινεῖται suggests “without shifting from the hope” here.

¹⁹ tn BDAG 697 s.v. σκόπων 1b renders the term here as “divine office.”

²² tn See BDAG 828 s.v. πλῆρος 3. The idea here seems to be that the apostle wants to “complete the word of God” in that he wants to preach it to everyone in the known world (cf. Rom 15:19). See P. T. O’Brien, Colossians, Philemon (WBC), 82.

“tn The genitive noun τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς διάκονης (tēs doux didaskontes) is an attributive genitive and has therefore been translated as “glorious riches.”

¹⁵ tn Or “admonishing,” or “warning.” BDAG 679 s.v. νομοθέτωμα states, “to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonish, warn, instruct.”

The participle νομοθέτωμα (nomothetymes, “instructing”) the words πάντως ἐνδυρμόντως (panta anththron, “all men”) occur in the Greek text, but since the same phrase appears again after διάδοσις (didaskontes) it was omitted in translation to avoid redundancy in English.
teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ. 1:29 Toward this goal I also labor, struggling according to his power that powerfully works in me.

2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face. 2:2 My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ. 2:3 In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 2:4 I say this so that no one will deceive you through arguments that sound reasonable. 2:5 For though I am

Warnings Against the Adoption of False Philosophies

2:6 Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him. 2:7 Rooted and built up in him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflows with thankfulness. 2:8 Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits of the universe.
of the world, and not according to Christ. 2:9 For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, 2:10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. 2:11 In him you also were circumcised – not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done by Christ. 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead. 2:13 And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. 2:14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. 2:15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross. 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days – 2:17 these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ. 2:18 Let no one who delights in humility and the worship of angels pass judgment on you. That person goes on at great lengths about what he has supposedly seen, but he is puffed up with empty notions by his fleshly mind. 2:19 He has not held fast to the head from whom the whole body, supported and knit together through its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God. 2:20 If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? 2:21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch! 2:22 Are any of you who are living in the world, and not according to Christ. 2:9 For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, 2:10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. 2:11 In him you also were circumcised – not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done by Christ. 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead. 2:13 And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. 2:14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. 2:15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross. 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days – 2:17 these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ. 2:18 Let no one who delights in humility and the worship of angels pass judgment on you. That person goes on at great lengths about what he has supposedly seen, but he is puffed up with empty notions by his fleshly mind. 2:19 He has not held fast to the head from whom the whole body, supported and knit together through its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God. 2:20 If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? 2:21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!
COLOSSIANS 2:22

2304

touch!” 2:22 These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are on human commands and teachings. 2:23 Even though they have the appearance of wisdom6 with their self-imposed worship and false humility achieved by an8 unsparing treatment of the body — a wisdom with no true value — they in reality result in fleshly indulgence.8

Exhortations to Seek the Things Above

3:1 Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 3:2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, 3:3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 3:4 When Christ (who is your life) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with him. 3:5 So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shamefulness, ungodliness, greed which is idolatry. 3:6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.10 3:7 You also lived your lives24 in this way at one time, when you used to live among them. 3:8 But now, put off all such things22 as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth. 3:9 Do not let one another since you have put off the old man with its practices 3:10 and have been clothed with the new man7 that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. 3:11 Here there is neither

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1 tn The expression “founded as they are” brings out the force of the Greek preposition κατα (kata).
2 tn Grk “the commands and teachings of men.”
3 tn Grk “having a word of wisdom.”
4 tn Though the apostle uses the term τάτελευταρανθούντα (tataleutaraunonta) elsewhere in a positive sense (cf. 3:12), here the sense is negative and reflects the misguided thinking of Paul’s opponents.
5 tc † The vast bulk of witnesses, including some important ones (A C D F G H Ῥ Ψ 075 2078 33 1881 τινι λατ σγ), have καί (kai) here, but the shorter reading is supported by some early and important witnesses (154 B 1739 b n Hil Ambst Spec). The καί looks to be a motivated reading in that it makes εἰς (eis, “towards”) the third in a series of datives after ἐν, rather than an instrumental dative qualifying the previous prepositional phrase” (TCGNT 556). At the same time, the omission of καί could possibly have been unintentional. A decision is difficult, but the shorter reading is slightly preferred. NA2 puts καί in brackets, indicating doubts as to its authenticity.
6 tn The translation understands this verse to contain a concessive subordinate clause within the main clause. The Greek particle μετά (men) is the second word of the embedded subordinate clause. The phrase οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι (ouk en timei tini) modifies the subordinate clause, and the main clause resumes with the preposition πρός (pros). The translation has placed the subordinate clause first in order for clarity irrespective of the original location. For a detailed discussion of this grammatical construction, see B. Hollenbach, “Col 2:23: Which Things Lead to the Fulfillment of the Flesh,” NTS 25 (1979): 254-61.
7 tn Certain miss (B 61 D Π 0278 1739 τινι λατ σα) read ἡμῖν (hemin, “our”), while others (154 C D F G H Ῥ Ψ 075 2078 33 1881 αλατ βο) read ὑμῖν (humin, “your”). Internally, it is possible that the second person pronoun arose through scribal conformity to the second person pronoun used previously in v. 3 (i.e., ἡμῖν) and following in v. 4 (ὑμῖν) (James 2:11). But in terms of external criteria, the second person pronoun has superior ms support (though there is an Alexandrian split) and ἡμῖν may have arisen through accident (error of sight) or scribal attempt to universalize the statement since all Christians have Jesus as their life. See TCGNT 557.
8 tn Grk “the members which are on the earth.” See BDAG 628 s.v. μετά, 1, “put to death whatever in you is worldly.”
9 tn Or “lust.”
10 tc The words τοις υιοῖς τῆς προφητείας (toiis uiois tis propheteias, “on the sons of disobedience”) are lacking in 154 B b sa, but are found in ACDFGHILΨ 075 2078 33 1739 1881 τινι λατ σα. The words are omitted by several English translations (NASB, NIV, ESV, TNIV). This textual problem is quite difficult to resolve. On the one hand, the parallel account in Eph 3:6 has these words, thus providing a motive for embedding them here. On the other hand, the reading without the words may be too hard: The εν ὀίς (en hois) of v. 7 seems to have no antecedent without υιοῖς already in the text, although it could possibly be construed as neuter referring to the vice list in v. 5. Further, although the witness of B is especially important, there are other places in which B and 56 share errant readings of omission. Nevertheless, the strength of the internal evidence and the fact that a longer reading is at least sufficient to cause doubt here. The decision to retain the words in the text is less certain.
11 sn The expression sons of disobedience is a Semitic idiom that means “people characterized by disobedience.” In this context it refers to “all those who are disobedient.” Cf. Eph 5:6.
12 tn Grk “you also walked.” The verb περιπάτησα (peripatesa) is commonly used in the NT to refer to behavior or conduct of one’s life (L&N 41.11).
13 tn The Greek article with τά πάντα (ta pantà) is anaphoric, referring to the previous list of vices, and has been translated here as “all such things.”
14 sn Put off all such things. The commands in v. 8-9 are based on two reasons given in v. 9-10 — reasons which are expressed in terms of a metaphor about clothing oneself. Paul says that they have put off the old man and have put on the new man. Two things need to be discussed in reference to Paul’s statement. (1) What is the meaning of the clothing imagery (i.e., “have put off” and “have been clothed”)? (2) What is the meaning of the old man and the new man? Though some commentators understand the participles have put off (v. 9) and have been clothed (v. 10) as imperatives (i.e., “put off!” and “put on!”), this use of participles is extremely rare in the NT and thus unlikely here. It is better to take them as having the semantic force of indicatives, and thus they give an explanation of what had happened to the Colossians at the time of their conversion — they had taken off the old man and put on the new when they trusted in Christ (cf. 1:14). Whether it is difficult to say for certain what the background to Paul’s “clothing” metaphor might be (whether it is primarily Jewish and comes from the OT, or primarily Gentile and comes from some facet of the Greco-Roman religious milieu), it is nonetheless clear, on the basis of Paul’s usage of the expression, that the old man refers to man as he is in Adam and dominated by sin (cf. Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22), while the new man refers to the Christian whose new nature of existence is in Christ. Though the metaphor of clothing oneself primarily reflects outward actions, there is a distinct inward aspect to it, as the rest of v. 10 indicates: being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. Paul’s point, then, is that Christians should take off their dirty clothing (inappropriate behavior) and put on clean clothing (behavior consistent with knowing Christ) because this has already been accomplished in a positional sense at the time of their conversion (cf. Gal 3:27 with Rom 13:14).
Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

Exhortation to Unity and Love

3:12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, 3:13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive others. And to all these virtues add love, which is the perfect bond. Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart (for you were in fact called as one body) to this peace, and be thankful.

3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God. 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Exhortation to Households

3:18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord. 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they will not become disheartened. 3:22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching – like those who are strictly people-pleasers – but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord. 3:23 Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people. 3:24 because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ.
3:25 For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions. 4:1 Masters, treat your slaves with justice and fairness, because you know that you also have a master in heaven.

Exhortation to Pray for the Success of Paul’s Mission

4:2 Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. 4:3 At the same time pray for us too, that God may open a door for the message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4:4 Pray that I may make it known as I should. 4:5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunities. 4:6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.

Personal Greetings and Instructions

4:7 Tychicus, a dear brother, faithful minister, and fellow slave in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 4:8 I sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are doing and that he may encourage your hearts. 4:9 I sent him with Onesimus, the faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. 4:10 They will tell you about everything here.

4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him). 4:11 And Jesus who is called Justus also sends greetings. In terms of Jewish converts, these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a slave of Christ, greets you. He is always struggling in prayer on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 4:13 For I can testify that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis. 4:14 Our dear friend Luke the physician and Demas greet you. 4:15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters who are in Laodicea and to

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1 tn Grk “that which he did wrong.”
2 tn It is a common theme in biblical thought that punishment for sin involves being fully given over to its consequences (cf. Rom 1), and this is also true of believers. Here Paul’s implication is that believers who sin and disobey the Lord for whom they serve will receive the consequences of their actions, which is a fitting discipline.
3 tn The Greek word used here is προσωπολήμψια (prosopolimpsia) and is usually translated “partiality.” It is used to describe unjust or unrighteous favoritism (Rom 2:11, Eph 6:9, Jas 2:1). When it comes to disciplining his children for their sins, God will treat all equally with no partiality.
4 tn Though προσευχόμενοι (proseucomenoi) is an adverbial participle related to the previous imperative, προσκαρτερεῖτε (proskarterete), it is here translated as an independent clause due to requirements of contemporary English style.
5 tn The ἵνα (hina) clause has been rendered as substantival here, indicating the content of the prayer rather than the purpose for it. These two ideas are very similar and difficult to differentiate in this passage, but the conjunction ἵνα following a verb of praying is generally regarded as giving the content of the prayer.
6 tn Grk “that God may open for us a door of the word to speak the mystery of Christ.” The construction in Greek is somewhat awkward in this clause. The translation attempts to simplify this structure somewhat and yet communicate exactly what Paul is asking for.
7 tn Or “so that we may speak.”
8 tn Or “in prison.”
9 tn The phrase begins with the ἵνα (hina) clause and is subordinate to the imperative προσκαρτερεῖτε (proskarterete) in v. 2. The reference to the idea that Paul must make it known indicates that this clause is probably best viewed as purpose and not content, like the ἵνα of v. 3. It is the second purpose stated in the context; the first is expressed through the infinitive λαλῆσαι (lalēsai) in v. 3. The term “pray” at the beginning of the sentence is intended to pick up the imperative of v. 3.
10 tn See the note on “fellow slave” in 1:7.
11 tn Grk “all things according to me.”
12 tn Grk “the things concerning us.”
13 tn The Greek sentence continues v. 9 with the phrase “with Onesimus,” but this is awkward in English, so the verb “I sent” was inserted and a new sentence started at the beginning of v. 9 in the translation.
14 tn Grk “is of you.”
15 tn Grk “will make known to you.” This has been simplified in the translation to “will tell.”
16 tn Grk “those of the circumcision.” The verse as a whole is difficult to translate because it is unclear whether Paul is saying (1) that the only people working with him are Jewish converts at the time the letter is being written or previously, or (2) that Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus were the only Jewish Christians who ever worked with him. Verses 12-14 appear to indicate that Luke and Demas, who were Gentiles, were also working currently with Paul. This is the view adopted in the translation. See M. J. Harris, Colossians and Philemon (EGGNT), 207-8.
17 tn See the note on “fellow slave” in 1:7.
18 tc † Strong Alexandrian testimony, along with some other witnesses, suggests that Ἰησοῦ (Iēsou, “Jesus”) follows Χριστοῦ (Christou, “Christ”); so N A B C D E F G Ζ Θ U V W Y 075 1724 1755 1756 1789 1928 2416 2690 3212 3628 565 629 1175 2464 2480 2484 and 2498 (א *). But the evidence for the shorter reading is diverse (17) D F G Ζ Θ U V W Y 075 1724 1755 1756 1789 1928 2416 2480 2484 and 2498 (א *). There can be little motivation for omitting the name of Jesus; hence, the shorter reading is judged to be original. NA²² has Ἰησοῦ in brackets, indicating some doubts as to its authenticity.
19 tn Or “filled.”
20 tn Grk “pain.” This word appears only three times in the NT outside of this verse (Rev 16:10, 11; 21:4) where the translation “pain” makes sense. For the present verse it has been translated “worked hard.” See BDAG 852 s.v. πόνος 1.
Nympha and the church that meets in her house.  

4:16 And after you have read this letter, have it read to the church of Laodicea. In turn, read the letter from Laodicea as well.  

4:17 And tell Archippus, “See to it that you complete the ministry you received in the Lord.”

4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting by my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.