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Open English Translation of the Bible

Paulos's letter to the believers in

Kolossai

Introduction

This letter of Paulos was written to the believers in Kolossai, a town in Asia Minor (also called Anatolia, now part of modern Turkey) that's almost 500km overland east of Efesos. Paulos had not yet visited Kolossai, but he was very concerned for them and he had sent helpers from Efesos.
Paulos had heard that there were false teachers influencing the believers there in Kolossai. They taught that if a person wants to be saved and wants to deepen their faith in God, it's not sufficient to have faith in the messiah because they said that it's necessary to obey other restrictions and customs as well as worshipping angels.
So Paulos wrote to the believers there in Kolossai and explained the truth concerning Yeshua the messiah. He told them that it's Yeshua who made everything around us, therefore he's greater than the angels and other unseen powers. He also saw the godliness of his father, and there's no other source of life for believers other than him. So then it's necessary that the believers don't follow human customs and traditions, but rather, it's necessary that they simply follow the messiah.
It should be noted here that this letter, like most of the scriptures, was dictated to a scribe (See 2 Thess 3:17), so it was an oral letter, quite different from our modern letters which we edit with word-processing software, adding a word back in a previous sentence, combining two short sentences, or breaking an over-long sentence. Oral letters tend to contain a lot of *run-on sentences* where the thoughts keep flowing without a break, thus 1:3-8 and 1:9-16 are considered by most Greek experts to be long sentences (like this one is 😀), however for us as readers, sentences with around a hundred words in them are very difficult for us to absorb, hence this *Readers' Version* breaks those long Greek sentences into a number of smaller sentences, in fact, this kind of adjustment is regularly done throughout the Bible by all major English translations in order to make them easier for us to read, but the disadvantage is that we can sometimes lose whatever the connection was between the consecutive thoughts. The *OET* tries to be more transparent about such adjustments by placing the *Literal Version* right beside this text so that the serious student can compare the two.

Main components of Paulos's letter

Introduction *1:1-14*
The work of the messiah *1:15–2:19*
The new life in the messiah *2:20–4:6*
Concluding remarks *4:7-18*

Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Readers' Version

1:1 This letter is from Paulos, a missionary **of Messiah Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) by **God's** will, and from our brother Timotheos.

2 To the people there in Kolossai (Colossae) who are godly and faithful brothers and sisters in **Messiah**.

Grace and peace to you all from **God** our father and the **master Yeshua Messiah**.

Paulos's thanks and prayers

3 We thank **God**, the father of our **master Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) Messiah** as we continually pray for you all, **4** after having heard about your faith in **Messiah Yeshua** and the love that you have for all godly people **5** which arose because of your hope in a heavenly reward. You all previously heard about that in the message of the truth—the good message **6** that's in you and that's bearing fruit in the world and growing, just like it did among all of you from the day that you heard it and knew **about** the grace **of God** in truth. **7** You all learnt that from Epafras (Epaphras),[1] our dearly loved fellow slave who's our faithful servant of the **messiah**, **8** and he's the one who made your love in **the spirit** evident to us.

9 It's because of that that we haven't stopped praying from the time that we heard it, and requesting that you all would be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual insight, **10** to live worthily of the **master**—pleasing him in every kind of good and productive work. We pray that you all will grow in the knowledge **of God** **11** and be strengthened with all power, according to his great power, leading to endurance and patience with contentment. **12** Then you'll all be thanking the father, the one who qualified you all for a part of the inheritance of godly people who live in the light. **13** The father rescued us from the power of darkness and redirected us into the kingdom of his dear son— **14** the one who buys us out of slavery and forgives our sins.[2]

Yeshua is both the first and the highest

15 The son is the visible image of the invisible **God**, the firstborn of all creation **16** because it was him who created everything in the heavens and on the earth, both visible and invisible, including all authorities such as kingdoms and governments. Yes, everything was created by him and for him.[3] **17** He came before everything and everything still only exists because of him. **18** He is the head of the body which is the assembly.[4] He is the beginning, the first of the dead to come back to life, so that he would be the first in everything, **19** because God was pleased to live in him in all totality **20** and to reconcile everything to himself through him—both things on earth and things in the heavens. God made peace through him by means of the blood at the execution post.[5]

21 Once all of you were alienated from God—your thinking was that of an enemy and your actions were evil, **22** but now you all have been reconciled by means of the death of Yeshua's (Jesus'; Grk. Yesus') physical body. He's able to present you as pure and blameless in front of God—unable to be charged for any infraction **23** if indeed you continue on in your established and firm faith. Don't let anyone drive away the hope that comes from the good message that you all heard and which has been proclaimed throughout the whole world—it's that good message that I've become a servant of.

Paulos's work for believers

24 So now I'm happy to be suffering for you all, and I'm catching up in my body to the tribulations of the **messiah** in his body, which is the assembly. **25** I became a servant **of** the assembly under **God's** supervision when he gave me the work **of** fulfilling **God's** message— **26** the mystery which had been hidden away from the generations over the ages, but which was recently revealed to his chosen people. **27** **God** wanted them to explain the riches of this incredible mystery among the pagans: **the messiah** in you all bringing the hope of reaching God. **28** Yes, Messiah who we are telling everyone about as we teach and recommend to everyone, so that we might present every person made perfect in **Messiah**. **29** That's what I'm working hard towards according to his work as well—working in me with power.

2:1 I want you all to know how much I struggle for you and for those in Laodikeia and for those who've never actually set eyes on me. **2** By knowing that, their hearts may be comforted, having been held together in love and to all the riches of the full assurance of the insight, to the knowledge of the mystery **of God**, **Messiah**. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? **3** He holds all the treasures of wisdom and secret knowledge.

4 I'm telling you all this so that none of you will be deceived by persuasive talk, **5** because even though I'm physically far way, I'm with you all in the spirit. I'm pleased to see the sensibleness and firmness of your faith in **Messiah**.

Living in Messiah

6 So in the same way that you all received the **messiah**, **Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the **master**, keep living in him. **7** You've already been rooted in him and then built up and confirmed in the faith just as all of you were taught, and been very thankful.

8 Be careful in case anyone captures your minds with fancy ideas or theories without proof that come from human traditions or from worldly thinking, and not from **Messiah**. **9** Every component of the greatness of God lives in his human body, **10** and you also have been completed and are in him. He is the head of all rule and authority.

11 It wasn't just human hands that circumcised you by cutting off part of the body, but **Messiah** circumcised you all by cutting you away from your sinful acts. **12** You all

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1 **RV 1:7 · Cross-ref.** Col 4:12; Phm 23.

2 **RV 1:14 · Cross-ref.** Eph 1:7.

3 **RV 1:16 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 1:3.

4 **RV 1:18 · Cross-ref.** Eph 1:22-23.

5 **RV 1:20 · Cross-ref.** Eph 2:16.

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were buried with him when you were immersed in water, and you came back to life with him when you came up from the water, through faith in **God's** working which gave him life after death.[6] 13 You all were dead in your disobedience and because your bodies were 'uncircumcised'. Then he made us alive together with him after he forgave us for all our disobedience.[7] 14 He erased the writing that listed the charges against us and so it was removed—nailed to the execution post.[8] 15 He had disarmed the rulers and authorities and publicly exposed them, because he had won the victory over them on the post.[9]

16 Don't let anyone judge you all about what you eat or drink, or about observing feasts or holidays or days of rest.[10] 17 They're just shadows of what's coming, but the body causing the shadow is that of the **messiah**. 18 Don't let anyone be disqualifying you all with their apparent humility and worshipping the messengers, telling you what they've seen and being arrogant and vain about their earthly minds. 19 They're not listening to the head which controls all the joints and ligaments of the body and holds it all together as **God** causes it to grow.[11]

From death to life with the messiah

20 If you've died to worldly principles, then why are you letting yourselves be indoctrinated with worldly living: 21 'Don't hold this. Don't taste that. Don't touch this.' 22 No, All those rules lead to corruption when they're used as the commands and teaching of humans. 23 They seem to be wise and make you more religious or humble as you strictly obey them, but don't honour the realities of our worldly desires.

3:1 So if you all were brought back to life along with the **messiah**, then be concerned with discovering the things from above where the **messiah** is sitting on **God's** right.[12] 2 Yes, be thinking about things from above, not earthly things 3 because you've all 'died' and your lives have been hidden in **God** with the **messiah**. 4 When he's revealed on his return, then your lives will also be revealed with him in GLORY.

The old and new lives

5 So put your earthly natures to death: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, and greediness which is idolatry, 6 because those things invoke **God's** severe anger. 7 You all used to do those things when you lived in them.

8 But now, don't let any of these things come out of your mouth: severe anger, rage, malice, slander, or profanity. 9 Don't lie to each other, because you've gotten rid of the 'old person' and their habits.[13] 10 So 'dress' in the 'new person'[14] who's renewed with the knowledge of being in the image of the creator,[15] 11 where there's no distinctions between ethnicities or religion, locals and foreigners, slaves or free, but **Messiah is** everything and in all of us.

12 So as holy people chosen and loved by **God**, 'dress' in: compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience,[16] 13 tolerating each other, and forgiving anyone who has a complaint about another person. The **master** forgave all of you, so you also should forgive others.[17] 14 Then over all of those, 'dress' in love which is the perfect connection to others. 15 Let the peace of the **messiah** rule in your hearts. That's what you were called to as parts of one body. Make sure that you're thankful 16 and that the **messiah's** message is a rich part of you with all its wisdom as you teach and give advice to each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs **to God** with thankfulness in your hearts.[18] 17 Then give thanks **to God** the father through the name **of Messiah Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) in everything—whatever you're all saying or doing.

Advice by role

18 You wives should be subject to your husbands to the degree that it's fitting in **Yahweh**.[19]

19 You husbands should love your wives[20]—don't become bitter towards them.

20 You children should obey your parents in everything,[21] because that pleases **Yahweh**.

21 You fathers shouldn't be exasperating your children otherwise they may become discouraged.[22]

22 You slaves should submit to your human masters in everything, not just when they're watching like others do,

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6 RV 2:12 · Cross-ref. Rom 6:4.

7 RV 2:13 · Cross-ref. Eph 2:1-5.

8 RV 2:14 · Cross-ref. Eph 2:15.

9 RV 2:15 · Note The meaning of the Greek 'ἐν αὐτῷ' literally 'in it/him' isn't clear here and leads to two common translations: a/ 'on/in him', or as we have chosen (interpreting the 'it' to be referring back to 'σταυρῷ' 'execution post' from the previous verse), 'on the post'.

10 RV 2:16 · Cross-ref. Rom 14:1-6.

11 RV 2:19 · Cross-ref. Eph 4:16.

12 RV 3:1 · Cross-ref. Psa 110:1.

13 RV 3:9 · Cross-ref. Eph 4:22.

14 RV 3:10 · Cross-ref. Eph 4:24.

15 RV 3:10 · Cross-ref. Gen 1:26.

16 RV 3:12-13 · Cross-ref. Eph 4:2.

17 RV 3:13 · Cross-ref. Eph 4:32.

18 RV 3:16-17 · Cross-ref. Eph 5:19-20.

19 RV 3:18 · Cross-ref. Eph 5:22; 1Pe 3:1.

20 RV 3:19 · Cross-ref. Eph 5:25; 1Pe 3:7.

21 RV 3:20 · Cross-ref. Eph 6:1.

22 RV 3:21 · Cross-ref. Eph 6:4.

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but sincerely, and so honouring the **master**.[23]

23 Whatever you all might be doing, consider in your hearts that you're working for the **master** and not for people, **24** knowing that **Yahweh** will repay you with an inheritance because you've been serving the **master messiah**. **25** Anyone who's doing wrong will be repaid for that wrongness, and there won't be any favouritism.[24]

4:1 **You** masters, ensure that you're treating your slaves with goodness and equality, knowing that you all also have **a master** of your own in heaven.[25]

Further teaching for believers

2 Persevere in prayer, keeping watch and being thankful. **3** Pray together for us as well that **God** would open a door for us to share the message—to tell about the mystery of the **messiah**. That's also why I'm in chains— **4** so that I can explain the mystery whenever I have an opportunity to speak.

5 Use wisdom as you all walk towards non-believers, using the time wisely.[26] **6** Always show grace in your conversations, like a meal that's seasoned with salt, so you'll know how to answer each person in their situation.

Final greetings

7 My dear brother and faithful servant and fellow slave, Tukikos,[27] will tell you all about me. **8** I'm sending him to all of you there so you'll find out the news that concerns you all and so that he can comfort you there. **9** The faithful and dear brother, Onesimos,[28] who's from your place will also be with him.

10 My fellow prisoner, Aristarkos,[29] sends his greetings along with Barnabas' cousin, Markos.[30] You've already received instructions about that, so accept him if he arrives there. **11** Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) who's nicknamed Yustos also sends his greetings. These guys are from strict Jewish backgrounds, but they're my only fellow-workers for **God's** kingdom who became an encouragement to me.

12 Epafras (Epaphras)[31] sends his greetings. He's another **one** from your place and a slave **of messiah Yeshua** who always prays for you that you will stand mature and fully confident in all **of God's** will. **13** I can assure you that he has strong concerns for you all, as well as those in Laodikeia and in Hierapolis. **14** The dear doctor Lukas (Luke)[32] greets you all, as does Demas.[33]

15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodikeia, and to Numfa and the assembly that meets in her house, **16** and whenever my letter gets read to you all, make sure that it's also read to those from the assembly in Laodikeia, and that you all also read their letter. **17** Tell Arkippos[34] to make sure to fulfil the duties that **Yahweh** gave him to do.

18 I, Paulos, am writing this final greeting in my own handwriting. Remember me here in chains.

May God's grace be with all of you.

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23 **RV 3:22-25 · Cross-ref.** Eph 6:5-8.
24 **RV 3:25 · Cross-ref.** Deu 10:17; Eph 6:9.
25 **RV 4:1 · Cross-ref.** Eph 6:9.
26 **RV 4:5 · Cross-ref.** Eph 5:16.
27 **RV 4:7 · Cross-ref.** Acts 20:4; 2Tim 4:12.
28 **RV 4:9 · Cross-ref.** Phm 10-12.
29 **RV 4:10 · Cross-ref.** Acts 19:29; 27:2; Phm 24.
30 **RV 4:10 · Cross-ref.** Acts 12:12,25; 13:13; 15:37-39.
31 **RV 4:12 · Cross-ref.** Col 1:7; Phm 23.
32 **RV 4:14 · Cross-ref.** 2Tim 4:11; Phm 24.
33 **RV 4:14 · Cross-ref.** 2Tim 4:10; Phm 24.
34 **RV 4:17 · Cross-ref.** Phm 2.