

A The emissaries (Colossians 4:7-9)

- ❖ **TYCHICUS:** On Paul's third missionary journey, he accompanied him to deliver an offering to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He assisted Paul in Rome and delivered the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7). When Paul was released, he could have replaced Titus in Crete (Titus 3:12). During Paul's final imprisonment, he was sent as pastor to the church in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12).
- ❖ **ONESIMUS:** A slave who ran away from his master, Philemon. He was converted during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. Paul sent him back to his master, along with a heartfelt letter, urging Philemon to treat him with Christian affection (Phlm. 1:10). Together with Tychicus, he delivered the epistle to the Colossians (Col. 4:9).
- ❖ In addition to evangelizing in the most important cities of the Empire, Paul wrote letters to maintain contact with the churches, or to encourage those he did not know personally.
- ❖ These letters were sent through beloved and faithful brothers (Col. 4:7-9).

B Those of the circumcision (Colossians 4:10-11)

- ❖ **ARISTARCHUS:** He was a native of Thessalonica (Acts 27:2). He had problems during the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). He accompanied Paul to deliver the offering in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He was imprisoned with Paul in Rome, and sent greetings to the Colossians and Philemon (Col. 4:10; Phlm. 1:24).
- ❖ **MARK:** Nephew of Paul's first companion, Barnabas, he left the mission in Pamphylia, and Paul refused to take him on a second journey (Acts 15:37-38). He accompanied his uncle and became a useful evangelist for Paul (Acts 15:39; 2 Tim. 4:11). Peter treated him like a son (1 Pet. 5:13). He was the author of the Gospel of Mark.
- ❖ **JESUS:** We only know about him that he was Jewish, and that he was known by the nickname "Justus" (Col. 4:11).
- ❖ Paul strove to break down the walls that divided the Church. He surrounded himself with collaborators from all over, and from diverse backgrounds. Jews and Gentiles, Asians and Europeans worked together in harmony.
- ❖ His vision was to achieve a united church that worked towards a common goal: the preaching of the gospel.

C The instructor (Colossians 4:12-13)

- ❖ **EPAPHRAS:** He instructed the church in Colossae, widely disseminating the gospel (Col. 1:7). Paul presents him with three titles: "dear fellow servant"; "bondservant of Christ"; and "fellow prisoner" (Col. 1:7; 4:12; Phlm. 1:23)
- ❖ Epaphras helped spread the gospel in Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea, churches he deeply loved (Col. 4:13). Along with Epaphras's greeting, Paul includes his wishes for the Colossians (Col. 4:12):
 - Stand firm. You must remain unshaken, especially in the face of the enemy's schemes (Eph. 6:11).
 - May you be perfect. This perfection is achieved through selfless love (Mt. 5:44, 48), although one always grows in it (Phlp. 3:12).
 - May you be complete. May you be filled with all that we are capable of receiving from God.

D The beloved and the worldly (Colossians 4:14)

- ❖ **LUKE:** Author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, he is considered Paul's biographer (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). A physician by profession, he is called "beloved" by Paul. He remained with Paul until his death (2 Timothy 4:11).
- ❖ **DEMAS:** He was Paul's co-worker during his first imprisonment in Rome (Phlm. 1:24). However, during his last imprisonment, he abandoned Paul, "loving this world" (2 Tim. 4:10).
- ❖ If he were only mentioned in Colossians 4:14, Demas would have remained as a faithful collaborator of Paul.
- ❖ The contrast between Luke and Demas became clear over time. Luke was loved for his work, while Demas loved the world and abandoned Paul.
- ❖ Luke remained steadfast in his hope for the Second Coming and the New Earth. Demas loved the glory of this world more than the glory to come.
- ❖ He stopped loving Jesus and gave his heart to the world (1 John 2:15).

E Church leaders (Colossians 4:16-18)

- ❖ **NYMPHA:** All we know about Nympha is that she led a church in the city of Laodicea. We don't even know if she was a man or a woman, since some manuscripts say "his house," others "their house," and still others—the majority—"her house."
- ❖ **ARCHIPPUS:** Son of Philemon, a native of Colossae, was at some point a companion of Paul (Phlm. 1:1-2). Paul asks him to continue working in the ministry (as a deacon, pastor, or elder of the church in Colossae).
- ❖ Paul asks the Colossians to have his letter read to the people of Laodicea, and for them to read the letter he wrote to the Laodicean's (Col. 4:16).
- ❖ Therefore, he mentions the two main leaders of these churches: Nympha [of Laodicea] and Archippus [of Colossae] (Col. 4:15, 17).
- ❖ We do not know Paul's message to Laodicea, although we do know the message that the apostle John wrote to him 30 years later (Rev. 3:14-22).