

Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

Colossians 4:12-15. NKJ

As Paul closed his letter to the saints in Colossae he addressed specific people and places. There are 'gems' within these quick details. Paul does not elaborate on many because those at Colosae knew the people and places he included.

Epaphras: Colossians 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23. Epaphras had preached the gospel in Colossae and was the one who brought hope to them through the gospel. He was one of them and a minister of Christ on their behalf (Colossians 1:7-8). Epaphras had a great love for the Colossians and those in Laodicea. He was a 'fellow prisoner' with Paul as Paul was in his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28). Epaphras greeted the church at Colossae and Philemon in those two letters and was praying for the Colossian Christians.

Luke: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11. Luke was a physician and was often a companion of Paul. He was the inspired writer who penned the gospel which bears his name and the book of Acts.

Although his name is not included in either, the evidence points to his authorship of these two documents. In the book of Acts the pronouns change from 'they' to 'we' and the 'we' sections indicate the times Luke was traveling with Paul. Although his name only appears twice in the New Testament he was a powerful influence for good through his work with Paul.

Demas: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:10; Philemon 24. When Paul penned the letters to the Colossian congregation and to Philemon he noted that Demas was a fellow laborer. Sadly, Paul later told Timothy that Demas had forsaken him because of Demas' love of the world (2 Timothy 4:10). Paul's comments about Demas reminds us that if we are not careful for the things of the Lord that we too could have a terrible end, an end of unfaithfulness. Compare 2 Peter 2:21-22.

Nymphas: Colossians 4:15. Nymphas is only mentioned here in the New Testament. He was greeted by Paul in this letter and was obviously hosting the assembly of the church in his house. Just these few words brings a positive view of this brother.

Paul referenced, in this letter, brethren in Colossae and in Laodicea. The references to geographical locations help us know more about the church and its spread through the first century. The accuracy of these locations reminds us that these events were in places we can document as true from other sources as well. The veracity of the New Testament is upheld in many ways!

The church assembled in the house of Nymphas. There is no evidence that the church ever owned its own facility in the first century, the apostolic age. The simple requirement is for a place to assemble as the Lord instructs (1 Corinthians 11, 14; Hebrews 10:24-25). While having our own property can be beneficial, we need to guard against going too far and using the Lord's money for our comforts and desires. Perhaps a reflection on the growth of the first-century church without their own facilities can help us wisely proceed in our time and with the properties we have secured, or will secure. The gospel is the power to save, not the architecture or comforts we employ.