

Colossians 1:24-29
“The Nature of Christian Ministry According to Paul”

Introduction:

In this passage Paul provided a brief sketch of his ministry for Christ. He included this instruction here, because he was about to expose some of the errors that were threatening the believers at Colossae. In light of this, he felt it was appropriate to stress again his credentials that qualified him to give this corrective instruction. It was considered important in that time and culture for a person seeking to have influence over others to demonstrate by past history that he was both qualified to give such input, and that he was a person who had the best interest of the group at heart.

Paul shared with the believers at Colossae and those in the rest of the Lycus Valley that they were part of a much larger work that God was accomplishing among the Gentiles, one that was spreading rapidly throughout the Mediterranean world. The one true and living God had revealed His Gospel, and through Paul God was accomplishing the reconciliation of people who had previously been alienated from Him. He explained that this redemptive work was a fulfillment of OT promises that did not include all the details of what would transpire, but those things, anticipated by, though not completely understood by Old Testament saints, were now being made known through the Gospel.

This passage seems to have been structured according to the following chiastic structure:

A Paul's active suffering in his ministry to the Colossian Church (vs.24)

B Paul's ministry competence among the Gentiles (vs.25)

C Paul's Goal-the reception of the Gospel mystery (vs.26)

C Paul's Goal restated-the reception of the Gospel mystery (vs.27)

B Paul's global ministry among the Gentiles (vs.28)

A Paul's active suffering characterized his ministry (vs.29)

I. It Involves Suffering: (vs.24)

Paul opened this passage by writing, *“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you”*. The first question raised in this passage is how to understand the sense in which Paul used the adverb *“now”* in this verse? Some suggest that this was a reference to the eschatological *“now”*, meaning that he was referring to his sufferings in the context of the messianic era of the Gospel in contrast to the time prior to Christ's coming. However, a more natural explanation is that Paul was referring to the suffering he was experiencing due to his imprisonment in Rome. Paul saw himself as a representative of the Gospel on behalf of churches like the one in Colossae. At that time, he was awaiting an audience before the Caesar himself because of false charges that were brought against him by Jewish religious leaders who were antagonistic to his ministry. These leaders had falsely accused Paul of upsetting the peace in various places by teaching divisive things. Their real concern was not

about the public peace (that was simply a ruse to attempt to enlist the Romans to stop Paul from preaching the Gospel). The actual cause of their antagonism against Paul was his preaching a Gospel of salvation by faith to uncircumcised Gentiles in the name of the Jewish Messiah Jesus. Therefore, Paul suffered for being faithful to the truth, for resisting both Jewish legalism and Gentile paganism. He was therefore suffering at that time for the very Gospel to which he was urging the Colossians to remain faithful.

Though the original Greek text it does not specify that the suffering spoken of were Paul's (there is no possessive pronoun in the Greek text), the context makes it clear that he was the intended subject of the verbal noun.

Paul wrote that he accepted his suffering as happening on behalf of others (*for you*). Therefore, the idea was that he did not seek out these sufferings in any sort of masochistic spirit, rather they were accepted, even welcomed, as the unavoidable consequence of the all-important objective of preaching the Gospel in order that people might be saved from everlasting destruction.

There is a sense of irony here, for though Paul wrote about his sufferings, he expressed that he rejoiced in them (using the present tense which would include the experiences related to his imprisonment in Rome). This is the only time he refers to this specifically in this letter. But this ironic view of rejoicing in suffering is a common theme in Paul's letters. This is because it is an inherent part of the Christian life, a part he wanted his readers to more fully embrace.

Next, Paul wrote, "*and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ*" (vs.24b). The Greek conjunction translated as "*and*" in this verse served an exegetical purpose. That means that this conjunction introduces an elaboration on what was said prior to the conjunction. Specifically, he was elaborating on the nature of the suffering he was enduring on behalf of the Colossian saints.

The next question that needs to be answered is, in what way did Paul fill up in his flesh what was "*lacking in the afflictions of Christ*"? The traditional interpretation by the Roman Catholic Church is that Paul, along with subsequent saints and martyrs, earned a treasury of merit through their sufferings that can be drawn upon by believers. They argue that the language of this verse represents a financial metaphor that speaks of both the accumulation and distribution of the assets accrued by Christ's afflictions as well as those of the saints. Others argue that Paul saw Christ's suffering as insufficient to accomplish the full reconciliation of believers. He therefore was called to labor toward presenting every person mature in Christ to bring to completion what was left incomplete by Christ.

However, the testimony of the rest of the New Testament, including significant portions of Paul's writings make it clear that any deficiency or lack in the afflictions of Christ that Paul was completing had no reference to the inadequacy of His atoning sacrifice, or to anything else that left the redemptive purposes of God incomplete. Instead, he was referring to completing the mission of the Servant of Yahweh, taking the Gospel, which was made possible by Christ's redemptive death, to the nations. In doing this, he was enduring the afflictions that came with that service. Therefore, Paul's sufferings were not for the purpose of reducing the

amount of suffering that the Colossian believers would endure, nor was his suffering intended to shorten the time of the messianic woes. The Church as a whole had been given the task of taking the Gospel to the world, but the apostle had a special commission to take the Gospel to the Gentiles and thus to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, that the mission of the Servant of Yahweh would bring light to the Gentiles (Isa.42:1-7). The idea was that Paul understood himself to be participating in the afflictions of the Suffering Servant pictured in the prophecy of Isaiah (52:13-53:12), as he continued the work of Christ by being a light to the Gentiles by taking the Gospel to them. This statement needs to be understood from the standpoint of the Hebrew concept of corporate personality (illustrated by Jesus Himself when He told Saul of Tarsus that in persecuting the saints he was persecuting Jesus Himself-Acts 9:4). What Paul was referring to here is part of the idea of dying with Christ and sharing in His sufferings in anticipation of sharing in His glorification at the consummation of our salvation (Rom.8:17-18). Paul was enduring these hardships in the place of Christ, as Christ's representative, continuing the ministry that was begun by Him while Christ was on earth. It is not as if Paul was doing this all on his own, but was contributing his share, as other believers contributed theirs.

In regard to the phrase "*in my flesh*", the absence of a definite article before this prepositional phrase indicates that it is best to take it in an adverbial sense modifying the verb translated as "*is lacking*" (which is what most contemporary versions do). Additionally, the placement of this phrase is probably dictated by the next phrase in the Greek text (*for the sake of His body*), as the two phrases together aim at evoking the earlier reference to Christ's body of flesh. The Greek word translated as "*fill up*" is an intensified form of a verb that means "*to fill*" and therefore it means to completely fill something up or bring something to an absolute fulfillment. The Greek word translated as "*lacking*" refers to some sort of deficiency or shortcoming in regard to property, resources, or experiences. Here it indicates that Christ's own suffering did not bring the sufferings on behalf of God's redemptive purposes to an end, there was still more that would be endured by those who served Him in that redemptive work. Again, it is important to understand that Paul was not suggesting that the redemptive suffering of Christ required any supplementation. Rather, Paul was referring to the sufferings of believers like himself that were and are associated with making Christ known in this world. Because making Christ known is opposed by the powers of darkness that are at work in this world. As Christ had told Paul at his conversion, such opposition or persecution is ultimately directed toward Jesus Christ but falls upon anyone who stands with and serves Christ. Those enemies (both human and demonic) cannot attack Christ directly any longer, so they attack His followers instead.

The words "*in my flesh*" was a way of expressing the actual physical and painful effects of the opposition he was experiencing as he proclaimed the Gospel.

Next, Paul wrote "*for the sake of His body, which is the church*" (vs.24c). Since Paul was speaking about his ministry in a general sense at this point, he was referring to doing what he did for the benefit of the Church in general (the

Universal Church) and was not referring here just to the churches in the Lycus Valley. A single Greek preposition (*huper*) is translated as “*for the sake of*” here in this clause. The very same preposition was translated earlier as “*for*” in one of the previous clauses in this verse. The longer translation captures the true sense of the meaning of the preposition, something done for the benefit of, or in place of another.

II. It is a Stewardship: (vs.25a)

Next, Paul wrote, “*of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you*” (vs.25a). The relative pronoun translated as “*which*” refers to the “*church*” mentioned in the previous clause. The Greek word translated as “*minister*” has a different sense here than it does in modern English. The term in Paul’s time did not refer to a Pastor, rather it was a general term that referred to a servant, specifically to one who had the lowly position of serving tables. This is a term that Paul has already used a number of times in this letter. It was adopted to convey the idea of the humility that should characterize one who serves Christ. Paul wrote that his ministry was one that was “*according to the stewardship from God*”. The Greek preposition translated as “*according to*” expressed a standard that characterized a given thing, so here he was saying that his service to Christ was characterized as a stewardship. The Greek word translated as “*stewardship*” referred to a plan that involved a set of arrangements (as in God’s plan for bringing salvation to mankind within the course of history); and therefore, could be translated as a purpose, scheme, plan, or arrangement. Another meaning (which fits the context here) is that the term refers to a task involving management and organization; and thus, could be translated as a commission to fulfill a set of responsibilities. The most relevant background to this terminology can be found in the context of private commercial administration. This would include supervising such things as a rural estate, a factory, an urban shop, a mine, a granary, and an array of many other businesses. The administration of a stewardship in that culture would have involved distinctive rules, objectives, and priorities that were established by the one who owned what was entrusted to the steward to manage (in the case of Paul’s stewardship, he was serving God), and Paul identifies the sphere of the stewardship with his role as a preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Therefore, it is a reference to his calling to apostolic ministry. Paul was saying that he saw his apostolic role as a high privilege and a sacred trust given to him by God. It was Paul’s responsibility in his unique calling to bring to the Gentiles the good news of God’s unfathomable wealth, and the Colossians were among the beneficiaries of Paul’s apostolic commission, even though he had never visited them in person (it should be understood that Paul’s calling was that he was sent especially to the Gentiles, but not exclusively so, for he did preach the Gospel to Jews as well).

III. It Involves the Proclamation of the Gospel: (vs.25b-27)

Next, Paul wrote, “*to fulfill the word of God*” (vs.25b). These words complete Paul’s reference to his stewardship, indicating what God’s purpose was in it.

The Greek word translated as “*fulfill*”, as with its English counterpart, means to fill in the sense of putting one thing into another to take up an empty space. This term can be used either in a literal or a figurative sense. Therefore, it can be used to describe pouring liquid into a vessel until it can hold no more, or to saturate the atmosphere with either a pleasant aroma or a foul odor, or to saturating a person’s mind or heart with an idea or a feeling, or to bringing a period of time to completion, or finally to finishing or fulfilling a task or promise. Regarding passages like this one that speak of fulfilling the Scriptures, the basic idea being conveyed is bringing to realization what it pictured, foretold, or commanded. Paul was conveying that his preaching of the Gospel was contributing to the ultimate consummation of God’s purpose as revealed in His Word. Paul used the terminology of fulfillment because he saw his ministry as an expansion of what had come before, the Gospel was first declared by John the Baptist, then by Jesus, then by Jesus’ original apostles, and finally brought to completion by him in his special role preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles. This phrase “*seeking to fulfill the Word of God*” parallels what he had written earlier about filling up the afflictions of Christ. This is because there was a correlation between Paul’s calling to “*fill up*” what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ, and his commitment to “*fulfill*” the Word of God that he wanted his readers to understand. The suffering he was enduring was an inherent part of the proclamation of the Word of God. This suffering for the Gospel was after all part of Paul’s calling as first expressed to him by Ananias (Acts 9:15-16). These two things were inseparable elements of his apostolic calling.

Next, Paul identified more specifically the aspect of God’s word that he was fulfilling. He wrote, “...*the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints*” (vs.26). In the New Testament, the Greek word translated as “*mystery*” has neither a cultic nor a purely secular meaning. In order to understand the term properly, as Paul used it, the full range of meanings that developed up to the time of the NT must be taken into account. Within Greek culture, the original concept of the word conveyed a strictly esoteric sense of an experience that was inaccessible to human reason. Later, in Jewish usage of the word, the term developed a less stringently esoteric sense, and instead referred to something transcendent. Rather than simply conveying something unknowable to human beings, it gained the added idea that the mystery was something known by God which He had, at least for the present, not disclosed to humanity. In the New Testament in particular, the term is used to refer to undisclosed Divine information related to God’s redemptive purposes in history. Things set in motion by God himself related to both salvation and judgment in all spheres of time (past, present, and future). The emphasis is upon the acts of God that are accomplished in Christ which were not fully revealed until His advent. A helpful background to Paul’s use of the concept of mystery can be found in God’s revelation in the Aramaic portion of the Book of Daniel. There, the Divine purpose is communicated in two stages; first as a mystery (as illustrated in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream), and then through its interpretation (as illustrated in

Daniel's explanation of the imagery of the dream). The specific aspect of the Divine "*mystery*" that Paul had in mind here was how the Messiah Himself was the means by which the Gentiles would be brought into the redemptive work of God, and what was also not disclosed prior the advent of the Messiah was that the messianic king would be crucified on a cross and die as a prelude to His eschatological reign. Therefore, in using the word "*mystery*" Paul was referring to things that were once concealed but had since been revealed. This contrasted with how the Colossian heretics would have used this word. They would have used it to express the notion of some secret esoteric teaching that could only be known by an exclusive group of initiated individuals, things that would remain unknown to everyone else.

When Paul referred to the mystery as something having been hidden "*from ages and from generations*", He meant that God had withheld these things from people living in earlier times, because the time had not come to disclose them. More specifically, the terms "*ages*" and "*generations*" refers to historical periods of time in which God's people were anticipating the unveiling of the mystery of the Gospel. The adverb "*now*" points to the present dispensation of the Church with special application to the apostolic period when the New Testament writings came into being (Eph.3:3-5).

The phrase "*to His saints*" indicates that God's disclosure of what had previously been unknown was limited or restricted to certain ones, rather than being something that had become known to all. The idea here is that it is received by those capable of appreciating it, while purposely being withheld from those inclined to reject it (see Christ's treatment of this in Matthew ch.13). For the revelation could not be grasped by those who continue in a state of hostility to God.

What was being taught here by Paul implies that there is a movement in world history that is both linear and progressive, which has been directed by a secret purpose determined from the beginning by the one true God.

Therefore, the words stewardship and mystery were not used synonymously, as some claim, rather the word "*stewardship*" referred to Paul's ministry, whereas the word "*mystery*" referred to the content of the message he was called to proclaim.

Next, Paul wrote, "*To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (vs.27). The Greek verb translated as "*willed*" indicates what God chose to do in regard to the fulfillment of His eternal purposes. This reference seems to consciously point back to the very first verse of the chapter, where the cognate nominal form occurs in the description of the foundation of Paul's apostolic mission. This emphasis on God's active will again highlights the significance of God's plan throughout history. Here Paul stressed that the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's elect ones was not a historical accident; instead, it was a part of God's predetermined purposeful plan. The pronoun "*them*" refers to His saints that were mentioned in the previous verse. God's intention to provide salvation to mankind (including the Gentiles) was clearly revealed in the OT prophets. However, the manner in which that purpose would come to fruition (by the incorporation of the Gentiles and Jewish believers alike in the common life of the body of the Messiah

through the death of the Messiah) was not made known. It was the manner of God's redemptive plan that was kept secret. The words "*make known*" parallels the expression "*has been revealed*" in verse twenty-six. This link helps the reader to recognize that Paul is continuing to elaborate on the same basic idea in this verse as he was in the previous verse.

In writing about the mystery Paul here added to the description by referring to the riches and glory of the mystery. These words highlighted the idea of the grandeur and profundity of the content of the Gospel, glorious truths that had only recently been revealed after centuries of saints lived in expectation of their arrival and never experienced the privilege of receiving this revelation. Paul wanted his readers to recognize that they were privileged to live in a time where these things had been disclosed by God.

Paul continued this thought when he wrote, "*which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*". The relative pronoun "*which*" could grammatically refer back to either "*riches*" or "*mystery*". However, in light of Paul's use of the phrase "*mystery of God*" later on in 2:2, it is best to take the noun "*mystery*" as the antecedent of this pronoun. Therefore, in this phrase Paul expresses that the content of the mystery is "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*". There is a question regarding the first of these two clauses. Some scholars argue that the Greek preposition "*en*" should not be translated as "*in*", but as "*among*". They suggest that this phrase is parallel to the words of the preceding phrase, "*among the Gentiles*". According to this interpretation, the idea Paul was expressing was that the mystery consisted of the Gospel being preached among the Gentiles. However, this interpretation seems forced, as it is contrary to how Paul used this common prepositional phrase everywhere else in his epistles. The far more natural interpretation, and the one that is in harmony with how Paul used this expression elsewhere is that Paul was referring to the indwelling of the individual Christian by Christ. Additionally, the translation "*among you*" would weaken the overall train of thought and would add virtually nothing to the previous statement that Christ was preached among the Gentiles. The idea of Christ dwelling within individual believers is a consistent theme in Paul's articulation of the believer's relationship to God. In expressing this idea Paul equates the indwelling Christ with the indwelling Spirit (whose presence Paul elsewhere teaches is the guarantee that the individual believer will gain entrance into glory). The phrase "*the hope of glory*" stands in apposition to the noun "*Christ*", identifying Him as the basis of the believer's eschatological hope, a hope that is fixed on the appearing of Christ at the end of the age (Tit.2:13). Therefore, the glory that the saints in ages past anticipated, has now been revealed to be something that is realized in Christ. It is also possible that the phrase was meant to convey the idea that Christ gave evidence of the existence of that future glory in Himself, in His perfections. This present and dynamic connection between Christ and believers is central to Paul's understanding of the Christian life. Also, the term "*glory*" refers to that which will belong to the Christian in heaven (Rom.5:2). In anticipation of the realization of this hope, believers are to focus on their transformation into the Divine image that is perfectly present in Christ

Himself, which is a lifetime process that begins when a person first puts faith in Christ.

IV. It is Focused on Fulfilling God's Redemptive Purpose: (vs.28-29)

Next Paul wrote, "*Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom*" (vs.28a). In this verse Paul described the manner and direction of his Gospel ministry among the Gentiles. Some scholars argue that the pronoun "*we*" refers simply to Paul and his immediate co-workers. Others argue that the pronoun is used as an editorial "*we*", referring simply to Paul. The best conclusion is that Paul used the pronoun as a reference to all who participate in the proclamation in the Gospel. The use of the universal terminology in this verse supports this conclusion (that he is making a universal statement here).

The Greek participles translated as "*warning*" and "*teaching*" modify the governing verb "*we preach*", clarifying what was meant by this verb. This reveals that Paul understood that the proclamation of the word included not only a presentation of the Gospel to persuade people to put their faith in Christ for their personal salvation, but also to the ongoing ministry of the Word that enables individuals to grow in their faith and character. The two adverbial participles express an instrumental idea, the manner of Paul's preaching. The combining of these terms is consistent with what is recorded of Paul's teaching, for in his teaching there is no evidence of abstract doctrine, rather the theological instruction he gave always included moral instruction. The phrase "*in all wisdom*" further elaborated on the content of his preaching (recalling the same phrase that was used in verse 9), reiterating the indispensability of Divinely given wisdom for daily Christian living.

Next Paul wrote, "*that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*" (vs.28b). The Greek word translated as "*present*" meant to set or place someone or something before someone else. The underlying theme of contexts like this one is the idea of the presentation of an offering in a sacrificial sense. With this in mind, the ordinary usage in the NT is to place something at God's disposal, or to furnish God with something. The idea is the presentation of individuals before God at the final judgment. This conclusion fits well with what we find elsewhere in Paul's epistles. For example, Paul told the Thessalonian believers that they would be the joy, hope, and crown of their fathers in the faith "*in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming*" (I Thess.2:19), and he offered a prayer that they might be entirely sanctified "*at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (I Thess.5:23).

Regarding the expression "*every man*", there are a number of different views regarding how it should be interpreted. One view is that these words should be understood to connect to Paul's earlier reference to "*all things*" (vs.20). The problem with this view is that it approaches universalism and does not take into account that the reconciliation referred to earlier involved a pacification of those who rebel against God. Another view is that the word "*all*" simply refers to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the salvation provided by God. Still another view is that the word simply refers to the universality of the Gospel. However, the best way to interpret

this is to recognize that it refers to every person who responds in faith to the Gospel and becomes a member of the Christian community. The triple use of the expression “*every man*” in this verse indicated that no believer, regardless of sex, race, or social standing was excluded from Paul’s teaching ministry. This was contrary to the many heretics who practiced an intellectual exclusivism. It is likely that this stress indicates that the heretics in Colossae were doing the same thing, setting themselves up as an elite clique.

But what was Paul envisioning when he wrote that his goal in ministry was to present every man “*perfect*” in Christ Jesus? The Greek word translated as “*perfect*” meant to attain a purpose or objective and therefore bring it to its intended end so that the task was complete. It can refer to the completion of the maturation process, or to having completely measured up to a given standard. The term denotes the quality of being so whole-hearted in one’s devotion to the Lord that one can be said to be blameless in conduct (indicating that the meaning is stronger than simply being mature, but weaker than the idea of absolute perfection). Elsewhere this goal is described in terms of the believer becoming like Christ. What Paul wrote here parallels what he wrote in verse twenty-two. In that earlier verse, he wrote that the purpose of Christ’s redemptive work was to present believers before God as holy, blameless and above reproach. This parallel, wherein Paul equates his ministry purpose with the ultimate redemptive purpose of Christ’s death clarified what is meant here by the word “*perfect*” here (that the goal is that they be holy, blameless and above reproach). It is possible that here there may be another reminder to the Colossian saints. That they were to resist the temptation to look elsewhere for something to supplement what they were lacking with only Christ. It was a reminder that in Him alone they would find their ultimate eschatological completion.

Then Paul wrote, “*To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily*” (vs.29). The relative pronoun translated as “*this*” refers to the full extent of the Gospel ministry as Paul had just described it in the previous verse. The Greek word that Paul employed that is translated as “*labor*” means to work to the point of exhaustion. The Greek word translated as “*striving*” was used to refer to the effort put forth to compete for victory in the public games. In more general terms it meant to fight, struggle, or wrestle in either a literal or figurative sense. It expressed straining with all of one’s energy to accomplish some goal that was not easily achieved. The use of this participle, that shares the same semantic range as the Greek verb that it modifies (translated as “*labor*”), indicates that Paul was not introducing a new action here, rather he was attempting to explain the power that lay behind his toiling. With this word Paul was stressing the idea that even though it was the power of the indwelling Christ that was at work within him, his ministry still required focused effort on his part as well. The phrase “*in all wisdom*” further elaborates on the content of Paul’s preaching (recalling the same phrase that was used in verse 9), reiterating the indispensability of Divinely given wisdom for daily Christian living.

Paul then added that his strenuous labor was done “*according to His working*”. Again, the Greek preposition translated as “*according to*” expressed a standard that characterized a given thing, so here Paul was saying that he labored in a way that was characterized by “*His working*”. The Greek word translated as “*works*” is the source of the English word “*energy*”. The word referred to that which made something operative, or to put forth power, or to produce an effect. The pronoun “*His*” of course refers to God. So, Paul was saying that he labored strenuously as God enabled him to do so. The ultimate aim in this statement was to balance the ideas of genuine human effort on the one hand with the enabling grace of God in Christ on the other. Anything that one would attempt to do for God would have little effect if not for the power of Christ working through the individual. The statement shows that through faith in Christ we can link our life with a source of strength that enables us to rise above our natural limitations. Therefore, Paul was able to accomplish all that he did because it was God who was accomplishing these things by His own power through Paul’s obedient service.

In these verses Paul was affirming his own personal commitment to and involvement in the realization of Christ’s eschatological presentation of the saints to God the Father. He was asserting that he did not originate the work of the ministry and then only ask God to revive him when he grew weary. From beginning to end, his ministry was a Divine-human endeavor. Paul surrendered his availability to God ability. In so doing, he paradoxically grew stronger as he grew weaker (II Cor.4:16; 12:10).

Conclusion:

In this passage Paul demonstrated that God in Christ showed himself continually sufficient to accomplish the spread of the Gospel throughout the Mediterranean world. Just as Christ was sufficient to enable Paul to succeed in his life and ministry, so He was sufficient for the saints at Colossae.