



# “Paul and His Companions” Part 2

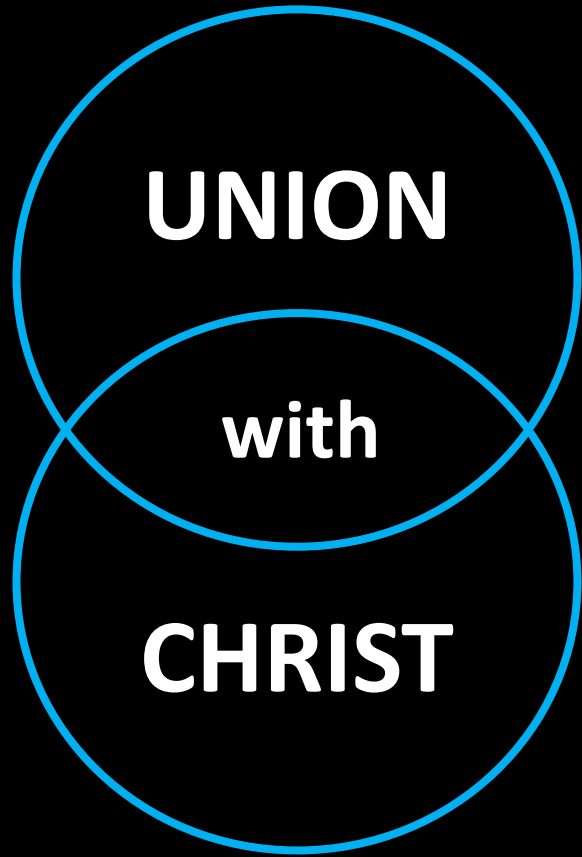
---

**Colossians 4:7–18**

*Christ over All: Paul's Letter to the Colossians*

# REVIEW

- The closing section of Colossians is made up of four components:
  - (1) a personal update (vv. 7–9);
  - (2) an expression of greetings (vv. 10–15);
  - (3) some closing instructions (vv. 16–17) ; and
  - (4) a personal note and benediction (v. 18).
- Paul “believed and knew from personal experience that the saving work of Christ found its richest and fullest expression not in isolation but in the Christian community held together by mutual love, grounded in a common love for Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord” (D. Edmond Hiebert, *Personalities around Paul*, 17).



- The doctrines of *Christ's headship over the church* and *the believer's union with Christ*—major themes in Colossians—lead to very practical consequences for believers' relationships with each other.
- Thomas Brooks: “Ah, were their souls fully assured that God had loved them freely, and received them graciously, and justified them perfectly, and pardoned them absolutely, and would glorify them everlastingly, they could not but *love where God loves, and own where God owns, and embrace where God embraces, and be one with every one that is one with Jesus.*”

# I. Paul's Reliable Representatives (4:7–9)

---

## A. Tychicus (vv. 7–8)

“As to all my affairs, **Tychicus**, *our* beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. *For* I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts . . .”

## B. Onesimus (v. 9)

“and with him **Onesimus**, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of *your number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.”

## II. Paul's Comforting Kinsmen (4:10–11)

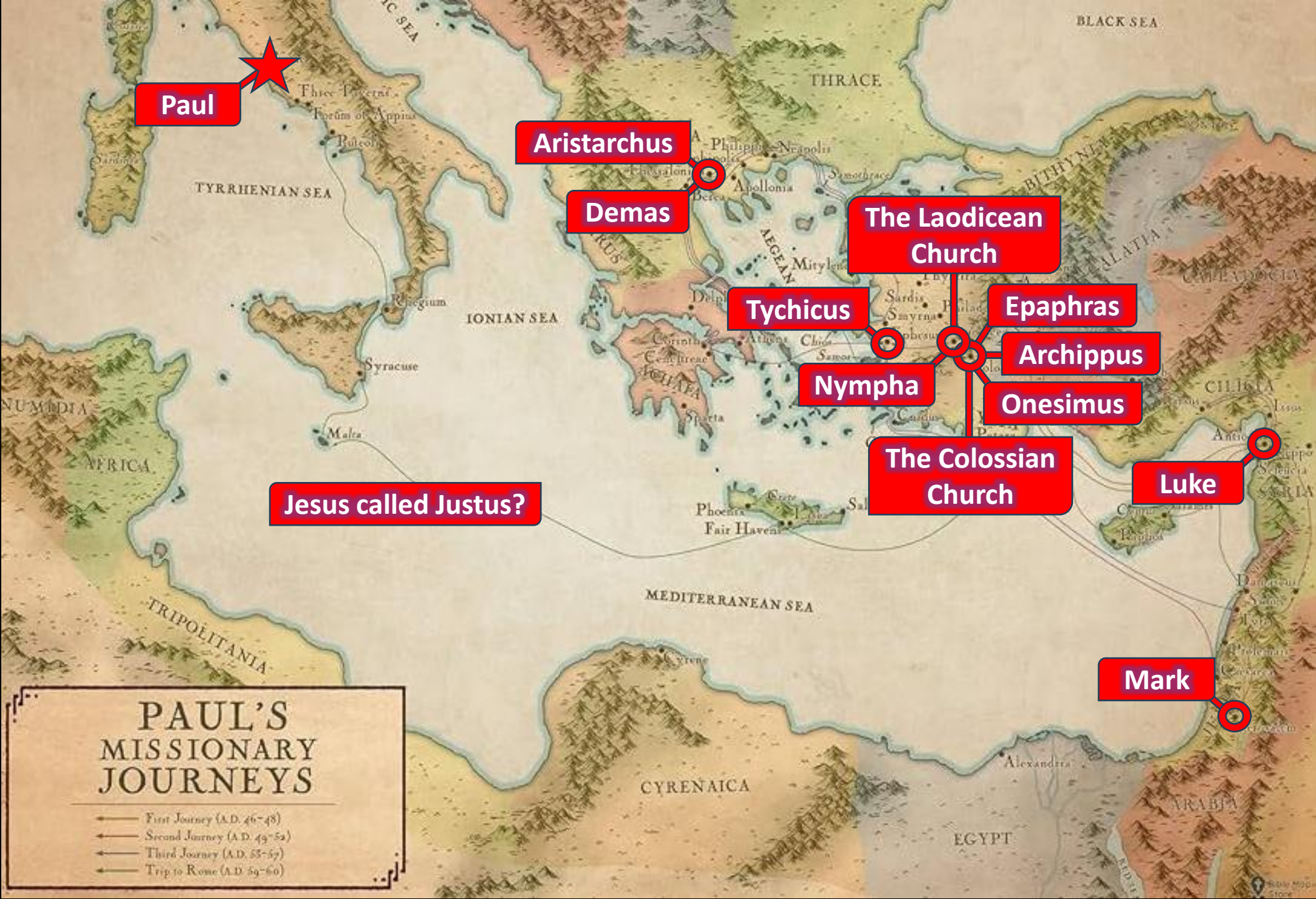
---

A. Aristarchus (v. 10)

B. Mark (v. 10)

C. Jesus called Justus (v. 11)

**‘Aristarchus**, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and *also* Barnabas’s cousin **Mark** (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); and *also* **Jesus** who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.”



**Paul**

**Aristarchus**

**Demas**

**The Laodicean Church**

**Tychicus**

**Epaphras**

**Archippus**

**Nympha**

**Onesimus**

**The Colossian Church**

**Luke**

**Jesus called Justus?**

**Mark**

**PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS**

- ← First Journey (A.D. 46-48)
- ← Second Journey (A.D. 49-52)
- ← Third Journey (A.D. 53-57)
- ← Trip to Rome (A.D. 59-60)

## COLOSSIANS 4:12–18

“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and *also* Demas. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house. When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea. Say to Archippus, ‘Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.’ Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.”

### III. Paul's Gentile Gospelers (4:12–14)

---

#### A. Epaphras (vv. 12–13)

**“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.”**

- **“Epaphras”** – a Gentile name, a shortened form of “Epaphroditus,” but not to be confused with Epaphroditus from Philippi (Phil 2:25–30; 4:18).
- **“One of your number”** – a Colossian; the one who brought the gospel back to Colossae (Col 1:7–8).

**‘a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.’**

- **“A bondslave of Jesus Christ”** – describes Epaphras’ dependency upon and loyalty to the One he acknowledged as Lord: Jesus Christ.
- **“Always laboring earnestly . . .”** – describes Epaphras’ strenuous, costly, continuous effort to intercede for the Colossians in prayer (see 1:28–29).
- **“That you may stand . . .”** – describes Epaphras’ priority for the Colossians—their steadfast maturity and confidence before God.
- **“He has a deep concern”** – describes Epaphras’ profound love for the Colossians, as well as for believers in neighboring Laodicea and Hierapolis.



- The cities of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were sister cities, forming a triangle in the Lycus River valley.
- Colossae was 12 miles from Laodicea and 15 miles from Hierapolis.
- Epaphras most likely evangelized all three cities, and continued to have a pastoral concern for those who were saved.

### III. Paul's Gentile Gospelers (4:12–14) – cont'd

---

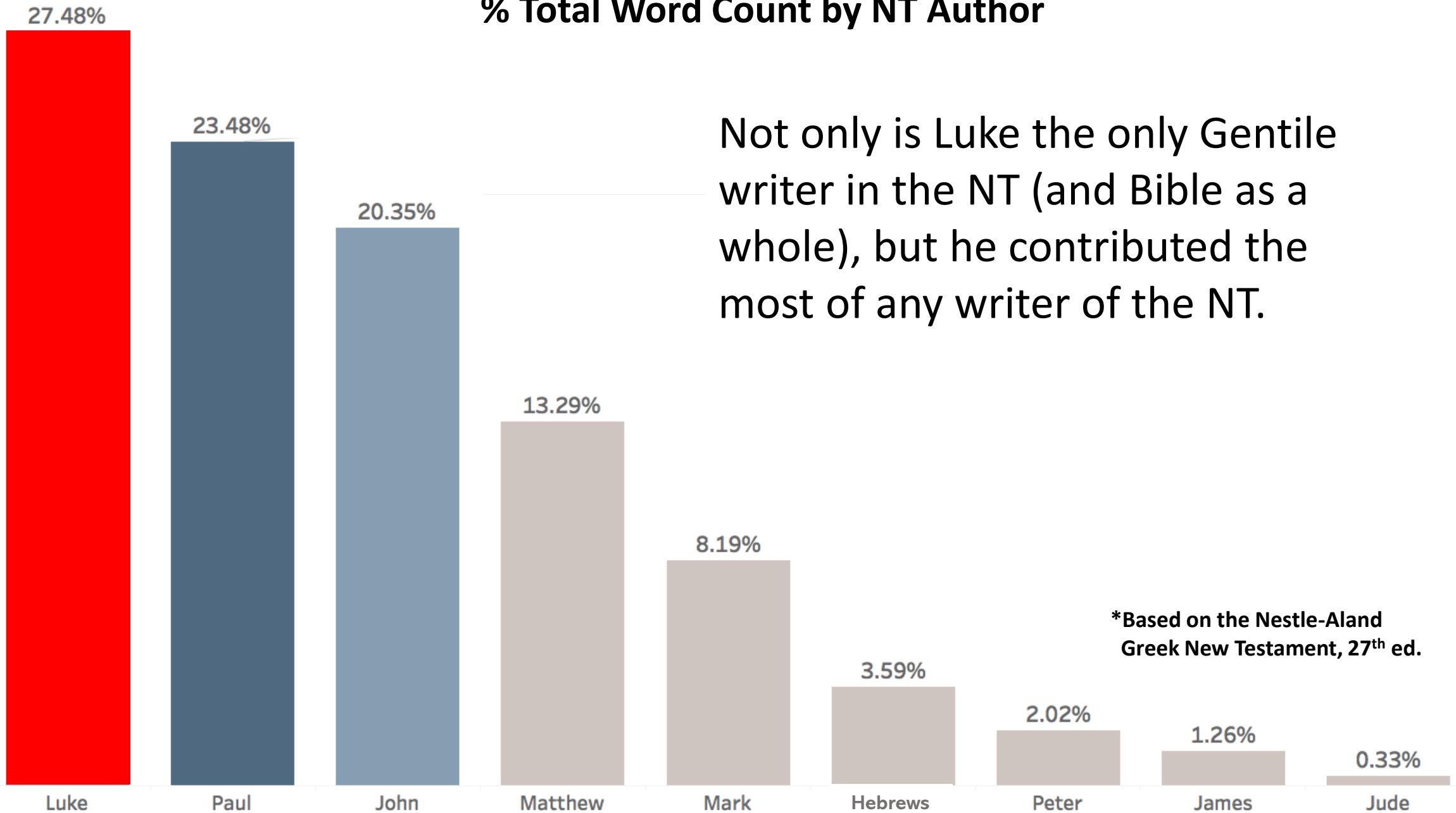
#### B. Luke (v. 14a)

**“Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings”**

- **“Luke”** – another Gentile, probably first introduced to Paul in Syrian Antioch (Acts 11:19–26); by this time (Col 4:14; AD 61), Luke had already written his Gospel and was working on the book of Acts.
- **“The beloved physician”** – not that he was Paul's personal doctor, but because he was identified by his profession; he was deeply loved.
- He was Paul's most loyal companion—a true friend who was more faithful than a brother (Prov 18:24; see 2 Timothy 4:11a).

## % Total Word Count by NT Author

Not only is Luke the only Gentile writer in the NT (and Bible as a whole), but he contributed the most of any writer of the NT.



\*Based on the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27<sup>th</sup> ed.



“Saint Luke” – a painting by  
Guido Reni (1621)

“Take all of Paul’s friends and consider all their points and characteristics—mental, spiritual, intellectual, and personal—and Luke will be found the only man in the list, and the only man of the entire New Testament, whom we can think of as anything like Paul’s peer, the only one whom we can conjecture to have been a complete companion for the varied and inexhaustible riches of Paul’s mind.”

—Dudley, *St. Paul’s Friendships*, 135



“Saint Luke” – a painting by  
Guido Reni (1621)

“It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of what Luke and Paul have done for the Christian world through their writings. Together they have written more than half of the New Testament. . . . The work of these two men in the committing of the Christian tradition to writing has put the Christian world forever in their debt.”

—Rolston, *Personalities around Paul*, 56

### III. Paul's Gentile Gospelers (4:12–14) – cont'd

---

#### C. Demas (v. 14a)

“and *also* **Demas**.”

- “Demas” – another Gentile; mentioned only two other times in the NT.
  - **Philemon 23–24** – “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.”
  - **2 Timothy 4:9–11** – “Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica . . .” (but see 4:16).
- Demas is the example of one who starts well but ends in failure.

“The failure of Demas was not that he loved the good things of this present world. He deserted his post because he loved the things of this world more than he loved the Kingdom of God.”

—Rolston, *Personalities around Paul*, 171

*Thy saints in all this glorious war  
Shall conquer, though they die;  
They see the triumph from afar,  
By faith's discerning eye.*

—Isaac Watts, “Am I a Soldier of the Cross,”  
stanza 5



## IV. Paul's Laodicean Loved Ones (4:15)

---

### A. The Believers in General (v. 15a)

“Greet **the brethren** who are in Laodicea.”

- “**The brethren**” – *literally*, “the brothers”—a term Paul used frequently (and surprisingly, by the standards of his day) to describe all Christians, because they have been united into one spiritual family (see Col 3:11).
- Paul had never visited Laodicea and only knew some of the believers there (see Col 2:1); nonetheless, they were just as much “family” as Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Luke.
- “If Christ is not ashamed to indwell them, I will not be slow to embrace them” (Sinclair Ferguson).

## IV. Paul's Laodicean Loved Ones (4:15) – cont'd

---

### B. Nympha and the Church in Her Home (v. 15b)

“Greet . . . also **Nympha** and **the church that is in her house.**”

- “**Nympha**” – a patroness of the early church in Laodicea, like Mark’s mother Mary in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:14–15, 40); Phoebe in Cenchrea (Rom 16:1–2); and “the chosen lady” in 2 John.
- “**The church in her house**” – one of perhaps several small house churches Laodicea.



## V. Paul's Colossian Co-laborers (4:16–17)

---

### A. The Believers in General (v. 16)

“When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.”

- Tychicus, the letter-carrier, was Paul's appointed emissary; he would have read the letter on behalf of Paul; the Colossians were then to send him on to Laodicea to read the letter there.
- “**My letter from Laodicea**” – probably the letter to the Ephesians, intended by Paul as a cyclical letter for multiple churches.
- Paul recognized his writings were universal and authoritative as Scripture.

## V. Paul's Colossian Co-laborers (4:16–17) – cont'd

---

### B. Archippus (v. 17)

“Say to **Archippus**, **Take heed to the ministry** which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

- **“Archippus”** – mentioned only here and in Philemon 2, where he is described as a “fellow soldier,” testifying to his respectable ministry reputation.
- **“Take heed to the ministry”** – “Pay close attention”; for some unstated reason, Archippus needed extra exhortation to be faithful; perhaps the growing threats to the Colossian church, along with Epaphras’ absence, were causing Archippus to drift in his commitment.

## A Closing Word (4:18)

---

**“I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.  
Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.”**



- **“I, Paul, write this . . .”** – an apostolic attestation (v. 18a; see also 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 3:17; Philem 19).
- **“Remember my imprisonment”** – an apostolic appeal (v. 18b), particularly for prayer (see 4:3–4).
- **“Grace be with you”** – an apostolic aspiration (v. 18c); Paul ends with the same ultimate wish with which he began (1:2).

“Believers all belong to the same Lord, and are thus one with each other. Therefore anything that denies our oneness with each other denies our oneness with Him.”

—John MacArthur