

THE MEANING OF *ΧΕΙΡΟΓΡΑΦΟΝ* IN COLOSSIANS 2:14: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY

Jemmy C. Najoan

Abstract

Terdapat perdebatan di antara para sarjana Alkitab sehubungan dengan kata *χειρογραφον* dalam Kolose 2:14. Diantara berbagai interpretasi dari para sarjana Alkitab, ada tiga yang paling utama yang merujuk pada arti dari kata ini.: (a) hukum Musa yang dihapuskan di salib; (b) catatan dosa atau surat hutang yang Yesus pakukan di salib; dan (c) sebuah tindakan pengampunan. Penelitian sebelumnya lebih mengarah pada aspek teologi dari kata ini. Fokus utama dari paper ini adalah untuk mempelajari kata *χειρογραφον* dalam Kolose 2:14. Pada akhir dari pembahasan akan dilihat apakah kata ini memiliki hubungan dengan Kolose 2:16, 17. Berkaitan dengan metodologi, penelitian ini bersifat eksegesis dengan menggunakan aspek-aspek *historical grammatical method*. Setelah menganalisa dilakukan, penelitian ini mengambil kesimpulan bahwa arti literal dari kata *χειρογραφον* adalah “sebuah surat hutang.” Dan dalam konteks dari bagian dimana ayat ini ditemukan, kata ini merujuk pada “hutang dosa dari seluruh manusia.” Artikel ini juga menyarankan bahwa kata *χειρογραφον* tidak memiliki hubungan secara tematik dengan Kolose 2:16, 17, dimana kata ini tidaklah merujuk pada hukum Musa.

Key Words: *Χειρογραφον, Surat Hutang Dosa, Hukum Musa*

Introduction

There has been a long standing debate concerning the word *χειρογραφον* in Colossians 2:14.¹ Scholars have defined the word *χειρογραφον* in varying interpretations. There are three prominent interpretations regarding its usage in the context. The first view refers the word *χειρογραφον* as Mosaic law which Jesus abolished at the cross.² The second view is a record of our sin or certificate of indebtedness that Jesus nailed at the cross.³ This is similar to the third view that considers the word *χειρογραφον* as an act of forgiving.⁴

¹Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, Santa Pagina (SP) 17 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical, 2000), 102. John Eadie denotes similar sense that the verse where Paul renders the word *χειρογραφον* is “so curt and compact, that its analysis is not without difficulty.” John Eadie, *Commentary on the Book of Epistle of Paul to the Colossians* (Minneapolis, MN: James and Klock Christian, 1977), 162.

²“Handwriting” [Col 2:14], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC), rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980), 7:205. Murray J. Harris also has a similar interpretation that the word *χειρογραφον* refers to Mosaic law. However, he adds that while for the Jewish obligation to keep the Mosaic Law and the Gentile obligation to keep the moral law. It means to say that all are sinners, both Jews and Gentiles. Murray J. Harris, *Colossians & Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 108.

³Jerome Murphy-O’connor, “Colossians” *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Pauline Epistle*” (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2001), 211. See also

These various interpretations lead the interpreters to interpret Col 2:16-17 in various ways. For example, the first proponent argues that since Jesus has abolished the Mosaic law then this interpretation is in harmony with the succeeding context which discusses about the Jewish ceremonial law as the shadow that which to come (Col 2:16-17).⁵ A contrary view by the second and the third perspective argue that when Jesus dies, he abolishes the *χειρογραφον* with the law (τοῖς δόγμασιν).⁶ This view has led many scholars to consider Col 2:16-17 as an indication that Christians are free from law.⁷

The dispute among scholars to interpret the expression *χειρογραφον* distracts from the real issue and could turn to confusion. It is important to understand the main purpose of Paul when he renders this word to the reader of book Colossians and to the readers today. Moreover, Scholars have put little effort to see the connection between Col 2:14 and Col 2:16-17. For this reason, this paper aims to answer the following questions: (1) is *χειρογραφον* in Col 2:14 referred to Mosaic Law or to the record of human's sin? And (2) what is the relation, if any, with the passage in Col 2:16-17? This paper explores the meaning of the word *χειρογραφον* in Col 2:14 and to identify Paul's teaching regarding the gospel and the law by doing an exegetical study.

This study will employ the historical-grammatical method for its comprehensive consideration of both the historical and logical contexts which are essential key for biblical interpretation. However, not all the aspect of exegesis will be applied. Historical background and literary analysis will be the main task of this study and at the end of the analysis will render the theological implications.

Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 108 and Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*. World Biblical Commentary (WBC) v. 44 (Waco, TX: Word Book, 1982), 124.

⁴Handley C. G. Moule, *Studies in Colossians & Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1977), 106.

⁵SDABC points out in the commentary of Col. 2:16-17 that the expression of food, drinks sabbath, newmoon and feast are referring to the Jews Ceremonial laws and Sabbath in this verse cannot be referred to the weekly Sabbath. SDABC, 7:205.

⁶For example, Lenski's laboration of the function of the law in Col 2:13-14 indicates that the law was nailed to the cross. See Richard. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1937), 114-117.

⁷In its relation with Col 2: 16-17, Moule argues *Sabbath* in Col 2:16 has been adopted as "a symbolic institution of the Mosaic law" which refers to the relation between God and Israel. In that respect, he argues that New Israel (Christian) is not under obligation to observe the the weekly sabbath because it "was abrogated" Moule, *Studies in*, 109-110. Another scholar, Lenski, argues that law died together with Christ on the cross. More over he insists that "vv. 16 -17 has been of the greatest value to the church." because Christ has abolish all the rites and observances, including the sabbath which was substituted by the Christian Sunday. Lenski, *The Interpretation*, 116-117, 127.

Literary Analysis

Text and Translation

ἐξάλειψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρογραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν,
καὶ αὐτὸ ἤρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ·

“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Col 2:14, *NAS*)

Historical Context

Modern scholars dispute regarding the authorship of the book of Colossians.⁸ On one hand, some scholars argue Colossians as *deutero-Pauline*, on the other hand, many scholars suggest that a follower of Paul writes the letter, rather than Paul the apostle.⁹ However, the evidence from the book itself proves that Paul is the author of the book (1:1; 1:3; 4:8)¹⁰ when he is in prison.¹¹ John Muddiman and John Barthon assert that although some recent scholars argue against authenticity of Colossians, but their evidence is insufficient.¹² O’Brien insists that “the tradition that Colossians is a genuine Pauline epistle stands on good ground.”¹³

⁸Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo state that until the nineteenth century almost all scholars agree Paul is the author of the book of Colossians. However, the dispute arises among modern scholars which confining into three main areas: language, theology, and the relation to Ephesians. D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 517. John MacArthur affirms that the christianity accepts the autorship of Paul from the the Fathers to until the rise of higher criticism era John MacArthur, *Colossians and Philemon*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 3.

⁹Carson and Moo, *Introduction to*, 517.

¹⁰Carson and Moo, *Introduction to*, 517.

¹¹John McRay, “Colossians,” *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*. ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 1049.

¹²The recent scholars such as Schenk and Furnish argue the authenticity of Paul in terms of style, conception of Paul’s role, Christology, eschatology and literary dependence. Jerome Murphy O’connor, “Colossians” *The Pauline Epistles: The Oxford Bible Commentary*. Ed. John Muddiman and John Barton (New York, NY: 2001), 205.

¹³Peter T. O’Brien, “Colossians, Philemon” WBC, xli.

Regarding the date and place, Ernest Martin denotes that scholars do not reach a consensus regarding the place and the time of writing.¹⁴ MacArthur conveys that the date of Paul's imprisonment will give a hint to determine the place where Paul writes this letter because the issues of the epistle's date and its place of writing relate each other.¹⁵ However, as MacArthur insists, "there is no convincing reason for rejecting the traditional view that Paul wrote the prison epistles from Rome"¹⁶ in about 62 AD.¹⁷

Most scholars agree that the main purpose of Paul to write this letter is to address a certain *heresy* which occurs in the church.¹⁸ MacArthur denotes two heresy elements in Colossians; Gnosticism and Judaism legalism and ceremonial.¹⁹ The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary argues that Paul addresses not only Judaism legalism but also rebutted a certain pagan elements."²⁰ Some scholars denote that "the Colossians opponents probably were not Christian," which means that Paul addressed the false teaching that comes from outside of the church,²¹ while others interpreters propose that the false teaching comes from those who are "Christian as Colossians teacher."²²

However, the book indicates Paul's purpose to write this letter to Colossians as follow: Affirmation for the faith of Colossian (1:4); warning the church regarding the false teaching (2:4,8,16); invitation to the Colossians to be in Christ and grow in

¹⁴Ernest D. Martin, *Colossians, Philemon Believer Church Bible Commentary* (Waterloo, Ont: Herald Press, 993), 25. See also "Historical Setting," (*SDABC*), 7:184.

¹⁵Most scholars agree that Ephesus, Caesarea, and Roma are the place where the authority had arrested Paul. MacArthur, *Colossians and Philemon*, 4.

¹⁶*Ibid*, 5.

¹⁷Curtis Vaughan agrees with most scholars that Paul wrote this letter when he was a prison in Rome. Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians" *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 11. Ed. Frank Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 166.

¹⁸*Ibid*, 1697. O'brien argues that Paul does not gives a formal exposition of the heresy, however, several crucial passages indicates that there are false teachings endangering the church. (2:9; 2:18; 2:21; 2:23), O'brien, *Colossians*, xxxi-xxxii. 1:8,

¹⁹MacArthur, 6.

²⁰*SDABC*, 184.

²¹For example, see Markus Barth and Hermut Blake, *Colossians*. The Anchor Bible (AB). v. 34B (New York, NY: The Anchor Bible, 1994), 43.

²²For example see Maxie D. Dunnam, *Galatias, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. The Communicator Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 325.

Him (2:3; 3:1-5); exalting of Christ 's Divinity and His salvation work (1:13b-23; 2:2-3; 2:5-7; 2:9-15; 3:1-4; 3:17; 3:23-25).

Genre

The passage under study is a part of an epistle. According to Bloomberg and Jennifer, the most important general observation to the epistles is that they are *occasional* literatures which are written to respond to specific questions, setting, and life situation.²³ In the letter of Colossians, Paul not only warns them to be alert with the false teaching but also encourages the spiritual life of the church. Moreover, as an epistle, Colossians also has a character of Greco-Romans letter which has a five-part structure: opening greetings, thanksgiving prayer, information the author wishes to convey, exhortations or instructions, and closing greetings.²⁴

The Outline and Theme

The text under investigation is in a large part of Colossians two. This section will deal with the outline of the book of Colossians in order to get a better understanding of the passage under investigation. The discussion will narrow to the discussion of the Colossians 2.

Outline of Colossians:

Introduction and Greetings (1:1-2)

Part One

Thanksgiving (3)

Reason for thanksgiving (4-8)

Praying (1:9a)

The content for praying (1:9a-11)

Order to give thanks (1:12a)

Reason for giving thanks (1:12-13a)

Preeminence of Christ revealed (pointing out to Christ) (1:13b-23)

Affirmation of Paul's ministry (1:24-2:1)

The content of the ministry (1:25b)

Affirmation of Paul's agony in ministry (1:29-2:1-3)

Reason for agony (pointing out to Christ) (2:2-3)

(Reason for rejecting false teaching (springboard))

²³Craig L Blomberg and Jennifer Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 104.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 104.

Part Two

Warning about false teaching (2:4)

Reason for the warning (pointing out to Christ) (2:5-7)

Warning about false teaching (2:8)

Reason for the rejecting the false teaching (pointing out to Christ) (2:9-15)²⁵

Reaffirmation and the content of the false teaching (2:16-23)

Reason for rejecting the false teaching (pointing out to Christ)/ (3:1-4)

Reason for putting to death the earthly living (springboard)

Appeal for putting to death the earthly living (3:5a)

The content of earthly living (3:5b-9)

Appeal for putting on the New self (3:10)

The content of new self (Part I) (3:11-16)

Reason for the living in new self (pointing out to Christ) (3:17)

The content of new self (Part II) (3:18-22)

Reason for the living in new self (pointing out to Christ) (3:23-25)

The content of new self (part III) (4:1-6)

Part Three

Remarks to a special person with special duties (4:7-11)

Bearing news about Paul (4:7-9)

Greeting to the church (10-11)

Paul's personal last appeal to Colossians (4:15-17)

End Greetings (4:18).²⁶

As indicate in the outline above, the book Colossians consists three main sections apart from introduction and final greetings. Section one conveys a statement of giving thanks and affirmation for the spiritual growth of Colossians and ends with the affirmation of Paul's ministry. Section two is the body of the letter which contains warning against false teaching and calling to live a new life in Christ by putting to death the old life and putting on the new life in Christ. Section three addresses special remarks to certain persons and Paul's personal appeal to the Colossians.

However, the structure reveals that Christ is one of the main focuses of this letter to Colossians specifically in Col 2.²⁷ In every exhortation Paul addresses to the church; whether giving an order, a warning, or a calling, he always points out to Christ. As appears in the structure, seven parts of this letter assert that Jesus is the main theme of this letter.

Paul begins the letter with a custom of his epistle to an individual or churches. In v. 3 he addresses the information he has received from Epaphras (v. 7) about *faith in Christ Jesus* and *the love for all the saints* the church members of

²⁵ Ernest Daniel Martin names this part in a similar ways. Martin, Ernest D., *Colossians, Philemon believer church Bible Commentary* (Waterloo, Ont: Herald Press, 1993), 106

²⁶The structure is mine.

²⁷Martin denotes similar thought as he states that "...Christological concerns lie behind the teaching in Colossians 2..." Martin, *Colossians Philemon*, 125.

Colossians have attained (v. 4). Having addressed their spiritual condition, Paul renders his hope for them in prayer that they may receive the “knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (v.9), “be strengthened with power” (v.10). In v. 11, Paul calls for the Colossians to give thanks to God who has qualified them to share the eternal inheritance.

It is interesting that in the following verses, Paul states about *redemption* and *forgiveness* through Christ two times. First, he mentions in a general expression by using first personal pronoun plural *us* (vv. 13, 14). This passage leads the reader to the next passage discussing about the preeminence of Christ (15-20). Second, he addresses the Colossians similar fact about how Christ reconciled them from their evil past experience; here he uses second personal pronoun *you* (vv. 21, 22). See the table below:

Figure 1: Chiastic structure in Col 1:13-22

Colossians 1:13	Colossians 1:15-20	Colossians 1:21-22
A	B	A'
Paul expresses the experience of salvation before and after God delivered them through Christ. Paul identifies himself with all believer by using personal pronoun <i>us</i> (v. 13)	Preeminence of Christ	Paul expresses the experience of salvation of Colossians before and after God reconciled them through Christ (vv 21-22)

This table indicates a chiastic structure where Christ is the center of the experience of Salvation, both Paul and the Colossians. Both of Paul and Gentiles have engaged in evil experience in their past life. However, God has reconciled them through Christ. For this reason, Paul exalts the preeminence of Christ in v 15-20.

The following passages assert the ministry Paul does and the agony he experiences in his ministry. Although he meets many challenges, Paul states that he *rejoices* his suffering for gospel (24). He states that God has chosen him to be a ministry to make gentiles know Christ as the *hidden mystery* and *the hope of Glory* (26-27). For this reason, he is struggling to *present everyone mature in Christ* include the Laodicea and *those who have not personally seen his face* (1:28- 2:1).

Paul denotes one of his purposes to write to Colossians is to express his joy because of the good order and the firmness of their faith in Christ (v. 5). This affirmation leads to several exhortations to the church in chapter two.²⁸ First, He urges them to live in Christ because they have received Him as their Lord (v.6). Second, as the repetition of the warning in v. 4, he insists them “that no one captivate

²⁸Melick denotes that Colossians 2 is the core of apostolic message regarding Christ, the gospel, and right living. Melick, Colossians, TNAC, 124.

you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ” (Col 2:8 NAB).

Again, Paul draws their attention to Christ after addressing them the warning against human philosophy and traditions. The following texts (vv. 9-15), including the text under investigation, are the passages that seems like Paul intends to reemphasize the role of Christ in term of salvation experience. Richard Lucas identifies a parallelism in this passage: vv 9-10 is about *fullness in Christ*; vv 11-12 is about *fellowship with Christ*; and vv 13-15 is about *freedom through Christ*.²⁹ Sumney conveys that verse 13 “takes some of the metaphors from vv. 11-12, but gives them different shades of meaning.”³⁰ In fact, this short passage (9-12) provides eight of *third personal pronoun* and one proper noun which refer to Christ. Paul points out in vv. 13-15 that Christ is the climax of the work of Salvation.³¹

To be more specific, the repetition of salvific motif, as the table indicates, appears again in the 2:13-14. Paul identifies himself as Colossians, sinner that needs salvation from Christ. The alternation of the second pronoun plural *you* (v. 13) to the first pronouns plural *us* (v. 14) indicates that Paul generalizes the fact that all human being, both Jews and Gentiles have *a written bond* but Christ has nailed it to the cross.

To sum up, the outline above provides the immediate context which proves several important facts. First, one of the main purposes of the letter to Colossians is to exalt Christ as the foundation of their salvation before and after they have received Him. This is clear as the Paul uses a repetition personal pronoun and proper noun that refer to Chris. Second, in this letter Paul affirms Colossians faith and invites them to grow in Christ, in the same time he exhorts them to be aware of false teaching that might come. Third, in the last part of the letter, Paul asserts the Colossians to practice a good live as an evidence of living in Christ.³²

Words Studies

The following section tackles the words that have wide range of meaning and provides plausible meaning based on the context. Though there may be several key words and phrases within the passage, this study will specifically examine the

²⁹Richard C. Lucas, *The Message of Colossians & Philemon*. The Bible Speak Today (Downer Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1980), 99.

³⁰Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library (Louisville, LD: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 141.

³¹Martin indicates that the subject of of the passages in vv 13-15 is God. However, God accomplishes the victory through Christ. Marthin, *Colossians Philemon*, 116. MacArthur support this argument by stating “those who were hopelessly dead in sin received new life through that union.” “The union” is referring to the phrase “in Him” (2:10, 11); “with Him” (2:12). MacArthur, *Colossians and Philemon*, 110.

³²The discussion of the law and Mosaic law do not appear in the whole passage, however, Paul alerts them regarding the influence of false teaching probably come from Jews’ tradition as indicated in Col 2:16-23.

meaning of the accusative noun *χειρογραφον*, the dative word *δόγμασιν*, and the participle word *ἐξαλείψας*. At the end of every definition there will be interpretations of each word under investigation.

χειρογραφον. The key Greek word *χειρογραφον* (noun accusative neuter singular from *χειρογραφον*) is a hapax legomenon elsewhere in the Bible both in the OT and NT. The primary meaning of this word is “a handwritten document, specifically a certificate of indebtedness, account, record of debts,” and in the context of Col 2:14, BDAG proposes a meaning “the account that stood against us.”³³ Moreover, *χειρογραφον* refers to a “note of indebtedness’ written in one’s own hand as a proof of obligation”.³⁴ In extra biblical literature, *χειρογραφον* occurs in several books and the literal meaning of this word is, “a written bond,”³⁵ for example Tobit 5:3.

Figure 2: Greek and English translation of Tobit 5:1-3.

Tobits 5:1-3	Translation
<p>ἀποκριθεὶς Τωβίας εἶπεν Τωβιθ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ πάντα ὅσα ἐντέταλσαί μοι ποιήσω πάτερ</p> <p>² πῶς δὲ δυνήσομαι αὐτὸ λαβεῖν παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς οὐ γινώσκει με καὶ ἐγὼ οὐ γινώσκω αὐτόν τί σημεῖον δῶ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπιγνῶ με καὶ πιστεύσῃ μοι καὶ δῶ μοι τὸ ἀργύριον καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς τὰς εἰς Μηδίαν οὐ γινώσκω τοῦ πορευθῆναι ἐκεῖ</p> <p>³ τότε ἀποκριθεὶς Τωβιθ εἶπεν Τωβία τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ <u>χειρογραφον</u> αὐτοῦ ἔδωκέν μοι καὶ <i>χειρογραφον</i> ἔδωκα αὐτῷ καὶ διεῖλον εἰς δύο καὶ ἐλάβομεν ἑκάτερος ἓν καὶ ἔθηκα μετὰ τοῦ ἀργυρίου καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ἔτη εἴκοσι ἀφ’ οὗ παρεθέμην τὸ ἀργύριον τοῦτο ἐγὼ καὶ νῦν παιδίον ζήτησον σεαυτῷ ἄνθρωπον πιστόν ὃς</p>	<p>Then Tobiah replied to his father Tobit: “Everything that you have commanded me, father, I shall do. 2But how will I be able to get that money from him, since he does not know me, and I do not know him? What sign can I give him so that he will recognize and trust me, and give me the money? I do not even know the roads to Media, in order to go there.” 3Tobit answered his son Tobiah: “He gave me his <i>bond</i>, and I gave him mine; I divided his into two parts, and each of us took one part; I put one part with the money. It is twenty years since I deposited that money! So, son, find yourself a trustworthy person who will make the</p>

³³ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), 2 trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed., rev. and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (1979), s.v. “χειρογραφον”

³⁴ O’Brien, states an interesting thought that in Judaism’s thought, God keeps the account of man’s debt, and angels will call the debt and impose the a just judgment based on the records kept in the ledger. O’Brien, *Colossians*, 124.

³⁵ see also Tobit 9:5. Eadie denotes that the word *χειρόγραφον* appears also in the work of Josephus xvii. 14, 2; Polybius *Excerpta Legat*, 98. Eadie, *Colossians*, 163.

πορεύεται μετὰ σοῦ καὶ δώσομεν αὐτῷ μισθόν ἕως ὅτου ἔλθῃς καὶ λαβὲ παρ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀργύριον τοῦτο (Tbs 5:1-3 BGT)	journey with you, and we will give him wages when you return; but bring back that money from Gabael while I am still alive.” (NAB).
--	--

Philemon 19 gives an allusion of this word although Paul does not use the word *χειρογραφον* in this book. In his letter to Philemon, Paul appeals to Philemon regarding the Onesimus who is his fruit during the time of his imprisonment (v.10). Probably Paul uses a customary action of paying the indebtedness as he indicates in his statement to Philemon: “But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account; I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (lest I should mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well)” (vv. 18-19 NAS)³⁶

MacDonald denotes that the interpretations of *χειρογραφον* ranges from Tertulian and Origen who consider that it refers to a deal between devil and humanity, to a heavenly book that record human Sin before God, or even to the body of Christ as indicated in Mark 15:26 and 2 Cor 5:21.³⁷ Barnes assumes that this word is “probably the writings of the Mosaic law, or the law appointing many ordinances or observances in religion,” or “the Jewish Ceremonial law.”³⁸ O’Brien denotes that there is no *sure reference* to the interpretation of *χειρογραφον* as, “indebtedness between Adam and the devil” though some Church Fathers and modern Christianity claim it as parts of their doctrine.³⁹ However, in a simple meaning that the interpretation of *χειρογραφον*, as O’Brien states, should be the signed acknowledgment of human being’s indebtedness before God; for Jews, it relates to their contract to obey the law and the penalty of breaking the law while for the Gentiles it relates to the sin they have committed through their consciences.⁴⁰

³⁶See also Ernest D. Marthin, *Colossians Philemon*. Believers Church Bible Commentary. Ed. Willard M. Swartley (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1924), 115.

³⁷MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 102.

³⁸Albert Barnes, *Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians*. Notes on the New Testament: Explanatory and Practical. Ed. Rbert Frew (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1979), 265.

³⁹O’Brien, *Colossians and Philemon*, WBC, 124. See also Richard R. Melich, Jr, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. The New American Commentary (TNAC): An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991), 263.

⁴⁰O’Brien, *Colossians and Philemon*, WBC, 125. Moule conveys similar thought, as he states: “The bond in question here is signed by men’s conscience: for a Jew, it is his acceptance of the revealed Law of God as an obligation to abide by; for the Gentile, it is a corresponding recognition of obligation to what he knows of the will of God. Charles F. D. Moule, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Phillemon: An Introduction and Commentary* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 97. David Garland conveys similar argument that the Greek word *χειρόγραφον* should be a reference to the debt both Jews and Gentiles

Likewise, early Christian Fathers interpret this in a similar way as Sumney asserts, “many early interpreters also understood *χειρογραφον* as a reference to a certificate of debt that has been expunged, hence as a wiped-clean of sins.”⁴¹

δόγμασιν. The Greek word *δόγμασιν* (noun dative neuter plural from *δόγμα*) occurs only 5 times in the NT.⁴² The inflection of the word is related to *τα δεδογμενα* which means “what seems to be right.”⁴³ In the work of Plato it means *opinion*, while the derived meaning is “philosophical opinion, principle, or doctrine.”⁴⁴ However, from the basic meaning, it means also “what is resolved,” or the “resolution,” and in its usage with religious term, this word means *official ordinance, decree, or edict*.⁴⁵ Most of the English translations render the last definition of the word *δόγμα* (*decree*), except in Eph 2:15 and Col 2:14. BDAG defines it as “a formal statement concerning rules or regulations that are to be observed.”⁴⁶ Based on the lexical analysis, the plausible meaning of the term *δόγμασιν* should be *ordinance, or decree*.

In its context, scholars render the word *δόγμα* in several interpretations. Reumann, in its relation with the word *χειρογραφον*, defines it as “*legal demands*” which could be the “ordinances” (KJV), “lending law,” or “the regulation.”⁴⁷ Melick defines it as “regulations...an organized and purposely arranged list of laws – a code” which refers to the law of Moses.⁴⁸ Nicholson points out the meaning of *δόγμα*

acknowledge before God as Paul elucidates the case in Romans 1-2. David E Garland, *Colossian and Philemon*. The NIV Application Commentary: from Biblical Text ... to Contemporary life (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 151.

⁴¹The early father that Sumney means are Chrysostom in *Homily. Col. 6 (on 2:6-7)*, and Basil, Ep. 265; Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library (Louisville, LN: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 144.

⁴²Luk 2:1; Act 16:4; Act 17:7; Eph 2:15; Col 2:14. However, the total occurrences of the noun Greek word *δόγμα* is 18 in Greek translation apart from the 5 in the NT; 1 in book of Daniel (Dan 6:13), 1 in 3Ma (3Ma 1:3), 4 in 4Ma (4Ma 4:23,24,26; 10:2), and 11 in Daniel TH (TH=Theodotion translation) (3:10,12,96; 4:6, 6:9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16; 6:27).

⁴³Gerhard Kittel, “*dogma*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1978), 2:230.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Kittel, “*dogma*,” *TDNT*, 2:230.

⁴⁶In its occurrences in Eph 2:15 and Col 2:15, BDAG defines it as “sets of rules *ordinance, decision, and command*... of the Mosaic Law. Bauer, BAGD, s.v. *δόγμα*.”

⁴⁷John H. P. Reumann, *Colossians*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1985),143.

⁴⁸Melick, *Colossians*, TNAC, 263.

as “God’s decrees, such as the ten commandments, the ceremonial law, and the law written in our moral nature.”⁴⁹

ἐξάλειψω. In relation with the preceded words, the Greek word ἐξάλειψω (verb participle aorist active nominative masculine singular from ἐξάλειψω) has a significant role in the passage. This word occurs 57 times in 54 verses elsewhere, both in the OT and NT. The primary meaning ἐξάλειψω is “to wipe away,” “to wipe out,” or “to erase.”⁵⁰ In accordance with the primary meaning, it means, “to cause to disappear.”⁵¹

In its usage, Cleon L. Rogers Jr and Cleon L. Rogers III state that this word refers “wiping out memory of an experience,” “canceling a vote,” “annulling a law,” “canceling a charge or debt” and “washing out the writing on a papyrus.”⁵² Regarding the blotting out or cancelling of the iniquity, Schweizer denotes that, “it goes back to the biblical expression of cancelling sins.”⁵³ For example, LXX renders the same expression in Psalm 51:9 “Hide your face from my sins, and *blot out* all my iniquities,” and in Isaiah 43:25 “I, I am who *blot out* your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins,” This word corresponds to the Hebrew word “מחה” which means: “blot out,” or “obliterate from the memory.”⁵⁴ However, apart from its literary meaning, “wipe out” or “wipe away,” the word Hebrew word “מחה” has its judgment motif meaning. For example when Moses mediates the Israel before God and asks God to “*blot out*” his name from the book of life (Ex 32:32), God answer him, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book (Ex 32:33 NAS).”⁵⁵

Moreover, the concept of blotting out the sin is not new in the NT. The Old Testament alludes the concept of salvation as appears in several passages. For example, Isaiah is one of the prominent books in the OT that points out the theme of

⁴⁹W.R. Nicholson, *Colossians: Onenes With Christ*. Ed. James M. Gray (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1903), 199. Lenski renders similar definition of the δόγμα. In its relation with the preceding word, he defines it as “the document contained the *divine decree*.” Lenski, *The Interpretation*, 114.

⁵⁰Often this word means “to root out, to destroy,” when it refers to people or to animals. See LXX Gen. 7:4, 23; 9:15; Ex 17:14; Judg 15:16; 21:17, and others. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 328.

⁵¹Bauer, BAGD, s.v. “*exaleipho*.”

⁵²Cleon L. Rogers Jr and Cleon L. Rogers III, “ἐξάλειψω” [Col 2:14] *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 464.

⁵³Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1976), 149.

⁵⁴Francis Brown, with S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic (BDB)* (1980), s.v. “*meha*.”

⁵⁵See also, Deu 9:14; 25:19, 29:20; Eze 9:8.

blotting out the iniquity. In the opening of this book, God invites the sinner to “reason together” with Him (Isaiah 1:18). However, in the same time He conveys the message of forgiveness. LXX employs the same Greek root word “ἐξάλειψω” (*blotting out*) in term of termination of Sin by God (Isaiah 43:25).

Grammatical and Syntactical Analysis

This section will analyze the grammatical and syntactical features of the passage under investigation in order to shed a better understanding of what Paul intends to render to the church of Colossae. Although there are several words and phrases in the passage deserve some syntactical attention, the focus of this section is to consider a limited key verses of Col 2:8-15.

Chapter 2:8-15 appears in second part the outline of the book Colossians which is in the main body of the letter. The passage under study is a part of Paul’s argument of rejecting the false teaching which “οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν” (v. 8). The appearance of the conjunction subordinating particle ὅτι in v 9 is a sign that the following sentence is the subordinate sentence of v.8.⁵⁶ Moreover, the syntactical function of the preposition ἐν with pronoun personal dative αὐτῷ makes it clear that v. 9 refers to Χριστόν. Wallace states that the preposition ἐν with dative can functions as “dative reference/respect,”⁵⁷ in this case, it refers to Χριστόν. O’Brien denotes it as an emphatic position⁵⁸ referring to Christ. Martin asserts that the repetition of the “phrase in him (and the variation with him) referring to Christ.”⁵⁹ Paul asserts the Colossians to shift their mind to think of Christ rather than following the “tradition of men” and “elementary principles of the world” (v. 8).

Dunn states that the preposition phrase is part of a sequence of metaphors ranges from v.11 to 15 which describe the effectiveness of Christ death for spiritual life of Colossians.⁶⁰ In v. 10, Paul declares, “you are complete in him” (ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι). The usage of ἐστὲ (indicative present active second person plural)

⁵⁶Dunn states: “After the initial warning (2:8) Paul proceeds to fill out the foundational importance of the faith in and by which the Colossians had first received Jesus as Christ and Lord and the principal cause for their continuing thankfulness.” Dunn, *Colossians and Philemon*, 145.

⁵⁷Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basic*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1997), 43.

⁵⁸O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 111.

⁵⁹Martin, *Colossians Philemon*, 109. Dunn has similar argument regarding the phrase “in him/whom,” however, he divides the passages into two sections: 2:9-12 (four phrase in all), and 2:13:15 on “striking sequence of participle” (five phrase in all). Dunn, *Colossians*, 146.

⁶⁰Ibid.

portrays the spiritual condition at the moment of speaking.⁶¹ In v. 11, he uses another metaphor, *ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε* in *him* you were also circumcised. While in v. 12, Paul denotes their baptism experience, *συνηγέρθητε* in *συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε* “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up *with Him* (v.12). The two aorist verbs, *περιετμήθητε*, and *συνηγέρθητε*, are pointing out the past experience of Colossians they have in Christ (vv 11-12).⁶²

The conjunction coordinating particle *καὶ* denotes a new section (v. 13). Paul uses the pronoun personal accusative plural “*ὑμᾶς*” (*you*) as an interruption to make a new statement.⁶³ However, as Patzia observes, v. 13 is a continuation of the previous section (vv. 11, 12). He states:

“Thus, by way of a contrast, there is a connection with verse 11, where Paul talked about their ‘spiritual circumcision’... The continuity with verse 13 is shown in the fact that **God made you alive with Christ**. As Christ was raised from the dead by the power of God, the believer, who is in Christ through baptism, has been raised (2:12) and brought to life (2:13).”⁶⁴

The participle present active accusative, *ὄντας* in its connection with *νεκροῦς* (v. 13) receives many translations, “when you were dead” (NIV, NAS; NAB, ‘even you were dead’), or concessive in meaning, “although you were dead” (NEB, Moffat). Goodspeed and TCNT (Twenty Century New Testament) translate the phrase as “you were dead.” Since the main verb is in aorist *συνεζωποίησεν*, the participle *ὄντας* should refer to past time.⁶⁵ Paul addresses their condition “when you were dead in *trespass* (*παραπτώμασιν*) and in *uncircumcision of your flesh* (*ἀκροβυστία τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν*). This dead (*νεκροῦς*) is a spiritual dead and different with the word *νεκρῶν* in v. 12 which refers to Christ’s body.

⁶¹Wallace categorizes this present form as “*narrow band*” presents that indicates “*the action is being in progress, or as occurring.*” Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 517.

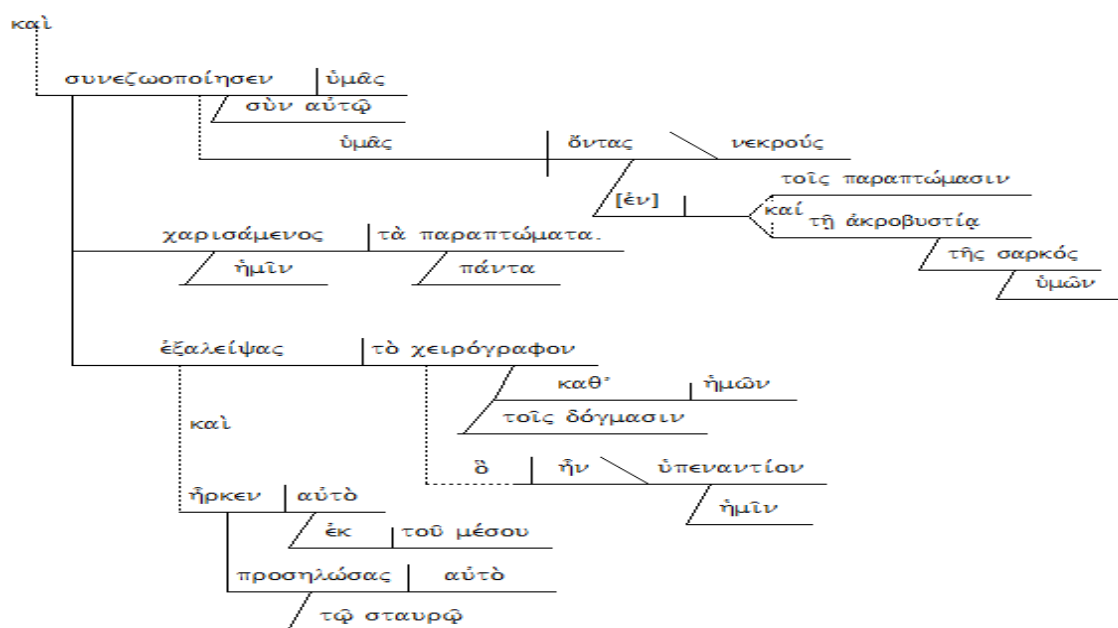
⁶²McKay indicates this tense as “*perfect tense aorist*” which express “the state or condition of the subject of the verb, mostly in present time context” which has a “strong reference to an event which is already past. Kenneth L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach*. Studies in Biblical Greek (New York, NY: Peter Lang,), 49.

⁶³H. C. G. Moule, *Studies in*, 105.

⁶⁴Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*. New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 57. See also, H. C. G. Moule, *Studies in*, 105.

⁶⁵Harris, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 105.

Figure 3: Syntactical and Grammatical Diagram of Col 2:13-14.



The verb *συνεζωοποίησεν* “he made alive together” (v. 13) has a significant role because this is the main verb, both in v. 13 and v. 14, that leads the participles in this passage. As verb indicative aorist active, *συνεζωοποίησεν* functions as *constative aorist* which represents the action as a whole, as a general function of aorist⁶⁶ to indicate that Christ made them alive together *with him* (*σὺν αὐτῷ*) without referring the time of the action. The following participle *χαρισάμενος* can function as participle of means which “indicates the means by which the action of a finite is accomplished.”⁶⁷ This syntactical analysis suggests that the plausible translation is “by forgiving.”⁶⁸

The following participle that relates with the key word under study is *ἐξαλείψας* (blotting out). Although this participle should function as participle of means, it is interesting to observe that only ESV employs this feature.⁶⁹ The translation should be “by blotting out.” In its connection with *τὸ καθ’ ἡμῶν χειρογραφον* (v. 14), the translation should be “by blotting out the written bond against us.”

The syntactical function of the dative, *τοῖς δόγμασιν* (definite article dative neuter plural with a noun dative neuter plural common from *δόγμα*) is problematic.⁷⁰

⁶⁶Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 557.

⁶⁷Ibid, 628.

⁶⁸ESV, KJV, NAB, NAS, NIV, NKJ translate it “having forgiven”

⁶⁹KJV, NAB, NAS, NIV, NKJ translate it “having cancelling.”

⁷⁰C. F. D. Moule, *Colossians and Philemon*, 98. Dunn states that the problem of dative in Col 2:14 “leaves the precise relationship obscure.” Dunn, *Colossians*, 165.

Scholars consider in various ways regarding the function of *τοῖς δόγμασιν*.⁷¹ However, the dative phrase *τοῖς δόγμασιν* could not be as an object of *ἐξαλείψας*. Wallace mentions two important rules that the dative might be a direct object: First, the translation should be *to* or *in*. However, if it is applied to the passage, the translation would be “by cancelling in/to the decree,” then it would be awkward in term of linguistic rule. In fact, the passage indicates the direct object of the main verb is *χειρογραφον*. Second, the verbs that take datives as a direct object should be one of the discipleship verb group;⁷² since the verb *ἐξαλείψας* is not part of this group then this rule cannot be applied to apply the phrase *τοῖς δόγμασιν* as a direct object. Dative of cause offers a best explanation of the context⁷³

Moreover, rather it relates syntactically with the dative phrase *τοῖς δόγμασιν*, the pronoun relative nominative neuter singular *ὃ* should refer to *χειρογραφον* because it agrees in gender, case and number. This rule agrees with the following *to be* form, *ἣν* (verb indicative imperfect active 3rd person singular from *εἰμί*). Thus, the translation of the phrase, *ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῶν* should be “which was contrary to us.”⁷⁴ This proves that what Christ has canceled at the cross not the law, rather the “*χειρογραφον*” (certificate of debt).

The verb indicative perfect active 3rd person singular *ἤρκεν* is clearly refers to the past experience. Moreover, the personal pronoun *αὐτὸ* (pronoun personal accusative neuter singular from *αὐτός*) is an object pronoun which acts as substitution of *χειρογραφον* according to the context. The best translation of the whole phrase should be, “He has taken it out of midst” (v. 14b).⁷⁵ This clear indication proves that Jesus nailed the *χειρογραφον* (the consequence of human sin, namely, the written bond, metaphorically), rather than the *τοῖς δόγμασιν*. *αὐτὸ* cannot refers to *τοῖς δόγμασιν* since both of them do not agree in gender, case and number. The last participle *προσηλώσας* (*by nailing*) is a modifier of the main verb *ἤρκεν* (He

⁷¹Harris proposes some construction in reference to *τοῖς δόγμασιν*. For example, with the verb *ἐξαλείψας*, the meaning will be “the law was abrogated. With *καθ’ ἡμῶν*, means “the bond that was against us by (instrument dative) its ordinances, and with *ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῶν* “the certificate of indebtedness “which was against us because of (causal dat.) the decrees.” Harris, *Colossian & Philemon*, 108. See also, C. F. D. Moule, *Colossians and Philemon*, 98.

⁷²The group of the discipleship terms are: “*trusting* (e.g., *pisteu,w*), *obeying* (e.g., *u`pakou,w*), *serving* (e.g., *diakone,w*), *worshiping* (e.g., *latreu,w*), *thanksgiving* (e.g., *eucariste,w*), *following* (e.g., *avkolouqe,w*).” Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 172

⁷³Wallace denotes that dative of indicate *why* the action is taken. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 167.

⁷⁴O’Brien analyzes that this phrase should not be considered as “an awkward addition” of the earlier phrase *against us* (*καθ’ ἡμῶν*) O’Brien, *Colossians* (WBC), 125. Harris states a similarity argument: “The former phrase emphasizes the brute fact of indebtedness, while the latter stresses the active hostility produced by this fact.” Murray J. Harris, “kata,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (NIDNTT), ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 3:1199.

⁷⁵However, ESV’s translation is the best to describe the *metaphorical* aspect of this action. “this he set aside.”

has taken away) functions as participle of means, indicating *how* Christ set aside the *χειρογραφον*, namely, he nailed it to the cross.

Having analyzed the syntactical and grammatical features in the passage, the translation of whole passage in vv. 13-14 can be as follow: “And you, when you were dead in sin transgressions and in uncircumcision of your flesh. He made you alive with Him, by forgiving us all the transgression, by blotting out the written bond against us on the basis of the decrees, which was contrary to us. And he has taken it out of midst by nailing it to the cross.”

Relation with Colossians 2:16:17

Col 2:14 is a part of Paul’s special messages to Colossians that assures them about the effectiveness of Christ redemptive work. The structure and the theme have shown that Christ is the center of their spiritual growth. As the apostle for the Gentiles, the theme of salvation in Christ is a repetition theme Paul proclaims in his different letters.

Having asserted them the salvation in Christ they have received, Paul reminds them the classic problem in the early church, namely, Jewish tradition enforcement (Col. 2:16-17). This enforcement, or as scholars asserts, false teaching, is an attempt of those who want to force the church of Colossians to follow the tradition men.

In one hand, in Col 2:16-17 Paul discusses of Mosaic law, on the other hand, the problem he addresses is not about the content of the law itself. The main problem is what Paul alarm the, *do not let anyone judge* (v. 16). This is echoing the same problem in time of Jesus, where many Jews try to enforce Jesus to support their tradition, a product of men which they base their addition law to the law of God as Paul mentions earlier in v. 8, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col 2:8 NAS). Then he continues that all these things are “...in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? (Col 2:22 NAS).

Theological Implication

The work of salvation covers to all human being. This is one of the main themes of Paul letters to the churches at the time. To the church of Colossians, he assures that Christ has redeemed them from their old earthly life. However, Paul identifies himself as sinner that receives the result of Christ redemption work. This message appears not only in book of Colossian, but also in the book of Romans.

Although Jesus has died for human being is a demonstration of God’s love for them, His death on Calvary does not aim to abolish the law. Rather, he takes the punishment, the sin indebtedness of every human being. Man should die for his own sin because he does something against God’s law. However, Jesus has taken the punishment of human being. As Paul states in Galatians, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree (Gal 3:13 KJV). He took the curse of sin of human beings, his agony is for the purpose of salvation of men that they may avoid the eternal death of Human being (cf. Rom 6:32).

The death of Christ is sufficient for men to earn the salvation. Man should avoid adding the tradition and human philosophy as additional aspects of gaining the salvation. Employing the tradition and philosophy of man will cause the work of Christ in vain.

Summary and Conclusion

Summary

Scholars' dispute regarding the words *χειρογραφον* in Col 2:14. There is no consensus regarding the meaning of this word, regardless of many works they have done. This paper analyzes the meaning of the word *χειρογραφον*.

The analysis of the lexical meaning, the usage in the context, and syntactical, and grammatical analysis, bring several aspects of *χειρογραφον* come to the surface. The contextual meaning of the word *χειρογραφον* is "the indebtedness bond." It is a metaphorical term Paul uses to express the Christ's salvation work. The structure of the passages that *χειρογραφον* is a further explanation by means God demonstrates the work of salvation through Christ. A syntactical and grammatical analysis suggests that when He is nailed to the cross, Christ blotting out the "*χειρογραφον*," the indebtedness bond of human being,

A literal analysis of vv. 13-14 suggests that v. 14 is a continuation of v. 13. In fact, in v. 13 Paul describe to the Colossians that through Christ, God makes them alive by forgiving their sin. Verse 14 is a further clarification in which God demonstrates the act of forgiveness by nailing the indebtedness bond of human being.

Conclusion

The lexical analysis and historical studies suggest that the literal meaning *χειρογραφον* is "a written bond." However, the contextual meaning of this word is "the indebtedness bond of all human being." Paul uses this term to portray the condition of Colossians as well as himself, sinners who indebted before God. Moreover, Paul uses this word as a metaphor to describe the effectiveness of Jesus' work he has demonstrated in Calvary; he takes the punishment, "the written bond" of all human being, include Colossians.

Since the Greek word *χειρογραφον* in Col 2:14 is not a "hand writing law." Thus, it does not have a thematic connection with Col 2:16-17 in term of the discussion of Mosaic law. However, these two parts are related as an unseparated step of salvation experience. First is the basic experience when the Colossians received the salvation through Christ. Second is the advanced step to maintain and to focus themselves in Christ rather than following the things "in accordance with the commandment and teaching of men." (Col. 2:22). However, a further study of Colossians 2:16-23 might offer a better understanding of the problem Paul addresses in his letter to Colossians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnes, Albert, *Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Notes on the New Testament: Explanatory and Practical*, Ed. Rbert Frew, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1979.
- Barth, Markus dan Hermut Blake, *Colossians, The Achor Bible (AB)*, New York, NY: The Anchor Bible, 1994.
- Blomberg, Craig L., dan Jennifer Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Brown, Francis with S. R. Driver dan Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (1980).
- Carson, D. A., dan Douglas J. Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.
- Dunn James D. G., *The Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Dunnam, Maxie D., *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. The Communicator Commentary*, Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982.
- Eadie, John, *Commentary on the Book of Epistle of Paul to the Colossians*, Minneapolis, MN: James and Klock Christian, 1977.
- Garland, David E., *Colossian and Philemon, The NIV Application Commentary: from Biblical Text ... to Contemporary life*, Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 1998.
- Harris, Murray J., *Colossians & Philemon*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.
- _____, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.
- Kittel, Gerhard, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel dan Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1978.
- Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon*, Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1946.
- Lohse, Eduard, *Colossians and Philemon*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
- MacArthur, John, *Colossians and Philemon, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992.

- MacDonald, Margaret Y., *Colossians and Ephesians*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical, 2000.
- Martin, Ernest D., *Colossians, Philemon Believer Church Bible Commentary*, Waterloo, Ont: Herald Press, 1993.
- McKay, Kenneth L., *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach*, New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1994.
- McRay, John, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, Edited by Walter A. Elwell, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989.
- Melich, Richard R. Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991.
- Moule, Charles F. D., *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Moule, H. C. G., *Studies in Colossians & Philemon*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1977.
- Muraoka, T., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (2009).
- Nichol, Francis D., ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. rev. ed., Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980.
- Nicholson, W. R., *Colossians: Onenes With Christ*. Ed. James M. Gray, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1903.
- O'brien, Peter T., *Colossians, Philemon. World Biblical Commentary*, Waco, TX: Word Book, 1982.
- O'connor, Jerome Murphy, *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Pauline Epistle*, New York, NY: Oxford University, 2001.
- Patzia, Arthur G., *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon. New International Biblical Commentary*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Reumann, John H. P., *Colossians, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1985.
- Rogers Jr, Cleon L., dan Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.
- Schweizer, Eduard, *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1976.

- Sumney, Jerry L., *Colossians: A Commentary. The New Testament Library*, Louisville, LD: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- Vaughan, Curtis, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 11., Ed. Frank Gaebelein, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.
- Wallace, Daniel, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basic*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1997.
- Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed., rev. and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (1979).
- Wilson, Robert McL., *Colossians, The International Critical Commentary*, New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2005.

