

# Colossians 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

## Analysis

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**And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.** Paul instructs letter circulation. "When this epistle is read among you" (hotan anagnōsthē par' hymin hē epistolē, ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ' ὑμῖν ἡ ἐπιστολή) assumes public reading during church gathering—standard practice before widespread literacy or personal Bible ownership. "Cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans" directs sharing this letter with neighboring congregation.

"That ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (kai tēn ek Laodikeia s hina kai hymeis anagnōte, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε) mentions another letter, likely Paul's letter to Laodicea (now lost, unless it's Ephesians as some speculate). This mutual exchange ensured both churches received comprehensive apostolic instruction. The practice established precedent for circulating apostolic writings, eventually forming NT canon.

## Historical Context

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Before printing, documents circulated through copying and personal delivery. Paul's letters were considered authoritative apostolic teaching, worthy of preservation and circulation beyond original recipients (2 Peter 3:15-16). This organic canonization process—churches recognizing, collecting, and circulating

apostolic writings—eventually resulted in NT canon. Not all Paul's letters survived; some were lost (1 Corinthians 5:9 references another letter to Corinth).

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How seriously do you treat Scripture's public reading—casual routine or encounter with God's authoritative word?
2. What modern equivalents of letter circulation spread sound teaching among churches today?
3. How can churches today promote theological unity while respecting legitimate diversity, as Paul did through shared letters?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνῶτε παρ' ὑμῖν ἡ ἐπιστολή ποιήσατε  
**And** **when** **is read** **among** **you** <sup>G3588</sup> **this epistle** **cause**  
G2532 G3752 G314 G3844 G5213 G1992 G4160

ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνῶτε καὶ  
**that** **And** **in** <sup>G3588</sup> **of the Laodiceans** **the church** **is read** **And**  
G2443 G2532 G1722 G2994 G1577 G314 G2532

τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε  
<sup>G3588</sup> **the epistle from** **Laodicea** **that** **And** **ye** **is read**  
G1537 G2993 G2443 G2532 G5210 G314

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Thessalonians 5:27** (Parallel theme): I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

**2 Thessalonians 3:14** (Parallel theme): And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

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