

Colossians 1:1-2 Paul an Apostle

1

Introduction

We begin our study this morning in the book of Colossians. It is one of four epistles (Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon), Paul wrote while in prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church of Colossae was facing the pressure of several different heresies and Paul writes to confront those issues. Though the book was written almost 2000 year ago, it is still relevant to today's culture.

2

Colossae



Colossae with nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis were part of a triad of cities in the Lycus Valley, about one hundred miles east of Ephesus.

3

Colossae

The population of Colossae was predominantly Gentile, but there was a sizeable Jewish community. Many Jews were drawn by the trade in wool and other business ventures. Still others came for the mineral baths at nearby Hierapolis. Because Colossae had a mixed Gentile and Jewish population, it is not surprising that the heresy threatening the Colossian church contained both Jewish and pagan elements.

4

Colossae

Luke tells us that during Paul's three-year stay in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord." It was at this time that the churches in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae got their start. We know that Paul did not found the church since he included the Laodiceans and Colossians among those who had never seen him in person (2:1). The book of Acts does not make any mention of Paul founding a church at Colossae, or visiting there.

5

Colossae

The man God used to found the church at Colossae was Epaphras. In Colossians 1:5–7 we will learn that the Colossians had heard the gospel from him. Epaphras was also a native of Colossae (4:12) who was probably converted to Christ while visiting Ephesus during Paul's stay there. He then returned to his city and began the church.

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Colossae

Despite the diligent labors of Epaphras, the Colossian church was in jeopardy. A serious heresy had arisen, and Epaphras was so concerned that he made the one thousand mile trip to Rome to visit Paul in prison. The Colossian church had not yet been infected by that heresy, and Paul writes to warn them against its dangers. Colossians was a preventative letter.

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Colossae

The city of Colossae included a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. It is not surprising, then, to learn that the heresy threatening them contained elements of paganism and Judaism. The gentile population had come out of pagan idolatry and false Greek philosophy. Paul may have been countering the teaching that would later become Gnosticism. Like Israel in Jesus' day, the Jewish population brought legalism and ceremonialism into the mix.

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Colossae

The heresy that confronted the Colossian church had many diverse elements, but at its core was a denial of the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. Not surprisingly, the sufficiency of Christ becomes the theme of Colossians.

Colossians can be summed up in the words of Colossians 3:11: “Christ is all and in all.” He is God (2:9); Creator (1:16); Savior (1:20; 2:13–14); and Head of the church (1:18). It was Paul’s desire in writing Colossians that his readers would realize that Christ has “come to have first place in everything” (1:18).

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Colossians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

10

Greetings

The form that letters were written in Paul's day was much different than our own. You stated your name as the writer, and whom you were writing to at the beginning of the letter. It was also customary to include some form of greeting and blessing.

11

Greetings

Colossians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The core information that we see here:

- The Apostle Paul wrote the letter,
 - Timothy was with him,
- It was written to the church of Colossae.

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Digging Deeper - Paul

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

The book of Acts tell us that Paul (Saul) stated off as a persecutor of the church. He was present and condoning of the stoning of Stephen and was on his way to Damascus when Jesus confronted him. Paul surrenders and commits his life serving Jesus and becomes the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul was Pharisee and was educated in the Old Testament under Gamaliel.

He was also a Roman citizen by birth and exposed to Greek culture in his home city of Tarsus. Such a background rendered him uniquely qualified to communicate the gospel in the Greco-Roman world.

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Paul an Apostle

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Apostle mean “one sent on a mission”. In the Bible it is one whom God has *sent* on an errand or with a message. An apostle is accountable to his Sender and carries the authority of his Sender.

Jesus Christ Himself has an “apostleship.” He wears the title “Apostle” as one of His descriptive titles in Hebrews 3:1. He was sent to earth by the Heavenly Father with God’s authoritative message, which He faithfully delivered (John 17:1-5).

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Paul an Apostle

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

The requirements for being an Apostle in the church has 2 basic requirements..

1. They had to have seen the risen Christ
2. They had to be appointed by Jesus Himself.

We see that Jesus taught, trained, appeared to and sent His disciples on their mission to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Salvation. Paul, however, was not one of the disciples. Yet Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus and called him into service. Acts 9:15 states, "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

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Paul an Apostle

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Paul's teaching stood in contrast and opposition to that of the false teachers. As a result, these teachers ridiculed and undermined Paul's teaching and authority. Lest anyone doubt his authority, Paul describes himself as **an apostle of Jesus Christ**. He is not simply a messenger, but an official representative of the One who sent him. What he writes in this letter is not merely his opinion, but God's authoritative Word.

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Paul an Apostle

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Paul did not become an apostle through his own efforts. Neither was he nominated for the position by any human organization. Paul was an apostle **by the will of God**. God, having chosen him and brought His sovereign choice to realization with his conversion on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1–9). It climaxed in his being set apart for missionary service by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2).

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Paul an Apostle

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Though there are none that qualify to be apostles today, we each have been gifted by the will of God to perform our role within the church. Each of us will stand accountable before God to how we used our gifts and yielded our lives to His Will!

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Timothy our Brother

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Time does not allow for an extended look into the life to Timothy. It is enough to say that he was a disciple of Paul and a faithful companion.

What I would like to focus on is that the church is family.

Timothy is referred to as “our brother”. Not just from Paul’s perspective, but the reader as well. In Christ we all become brothers and sisters of one another.

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Saints and Brethren

Colossians 1:2a

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colossae:

Paul addresses his readers as the **saints and faithful brethren**.

Saints and faithful brethren are not two distinct groups and the terms are equivalent. **And** [*kai*] could be translated, “even.” The word translated **saints**, refers to separation, in this case being separated from sin and set apart to God. **Faithful** notes the source and commitment to that separation - saving faith. Believing saints are the only true saints. Again we see the emphasis on family – brethren.

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Saints and Brethren

Colossians 1:2b

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Grace to you and peace” was the greeting Paul used to open all thirteen of his letters. Paul says these two blessings derive from God and Father, and from Jesus. There are two essential elements that every believer needs.

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Saints and Brethren

Colossians 1:2b

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is where God gives us all that we do not deserve. All the good things that God gives us is out of His grace. This includes our Salvation and every Spiritual blessing we receive. Grace can also speak of God giving us His strength and wisdom to face the events of this life.

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Saints and Brethren

Colossians 1:2b

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We were enemies with God, but He reconciled us together through Jesus' sacrifice. We now have peace with God and offered the opportunity to have peace with each other.

The world is filled with conflict for the believer as we are in enemy territory. Paul may have been asking God to give them shelter in this conflict. Even if God does not remove the conflict, one can find peace and rest knowing that God is in control.

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So What ...

Like the Colossians, we live in a world that is filled with false philosophies that stand in opposition to the things of God.

We need to carefully examine what we believe, especially with regard to who God is and our relationship to Him.

God gives His Grace and Peace for all that we will face in this life. However, you must make the choice to live in that grace and peace.

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