

Colossians - Chapter 1

1:1-2 Greeting – None of Paul's letters begin the same. This provides a clue concerning the content and attitude of the letter. Paul uses "apostle" not because his authority is under attack like in Corinth and Galatia, but as credentials for the right to discern false teaching and doctrinal error they are dealing with. Paul adds to authority in "the will of God" not self-appointment.

Timothy as "our brother" which seems to indicate a connection with Colossae, so Timothy's name is used.

Dual Kingdoms is introduced in this Greeting and will be developed beginning in 1:13. But for now it is identified as believers living "in Colossae" while also being alive "in Christ."

"Holy" means "set apart" for the work of God. They belong to the Lord while "in Colossae."

"Faithful" describes the quality of their relationship with the Lord. They are proving to be faithful "in Colossae."

"Grace" was common Greek greeting which meant "favor." Paul uses it to refer to God's favor offered to man.

"Peace" (91x in NT) is the Greek word for "shalom (250 x in OT). Means well-being, wholeness, total harmony.

This favor and wholeness are from God the Father, presented here as "God OUR Father."

In this greeting there is no specific problem hinted at. Consider the conflict in Galatians 1:1; the claim of authority, demand for holiness and conformity in 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; the embracing and presenting of the Gospel in Romans 1:1-3; 1 Tim, 2 Tim, and Titus = calling, calling, teaching; James 1:1, servant, Israel, Greetings; 1 Peter, an apostle to the scattered, yet elect!; 2 Peter, an apostle who is a servant to those who have the same, similar, valuable faith as me...stay focused on the knowledge; Jude, servant of Jesus, brother of James to those who are called, loved and kept. Revelation 1:4-8.

Colossians is to be read to all the believers according to Colossians 4:16.

Already in the greeting the need for a mystical experience or Merkabah vision for a full experience is rejected.

The "greeting" in Colossians 1:1-2 teaches that the believers have these things assured to them already:

1. An authoritative word from God... Paul is an "apostle"
2. Leadership from God... Paul in "the will of God"
3. A relationship with God...they are "saints"
4. An allegiance to Christ...they are "faithful"
5. Address the Cultural tension...they are "in Christ" while "in Colossae"
6. Affirmed relationship with God...they are "favored"
7. Confirmed attainment...they are at "peace" (wholeness, total well-being) with God
8. They are not alone, but belong...they are members of those who can say "our Father"

Paul's greetings include:

- 1) writer,
- 2) identification of the writer,
- 3) associates,
- 4) recipients with description,
- 5) blessing

1:3-8 Thanksgiving for what the Gospel had done in Colossae. Not what people had done or ministry or application or counseling or programs or etc. (Exodus 18:15-23, 18:17 and 20, "What you are doing is not good...Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.")

1:6 – The truth is producing fruit and it is growing...stick with the Truth of the Gospel!

1:9-14 Prayer for fruitfulness in the Kingdom of light they have been delivered into

1:15-20 Attention is drawn to Christ and his spiritual and temporal reality

1:15 – "Image" is εἰκόν and means "manifestation"

1:16-17 – ἐν, διὰ, εἰς or "in Christ" and "through Christ" and "for Christ"

1:21-23 Contrast to their past spiritual and temporal condition with the potential of their new position in Christ's kingdom if they will continue in it.

1:22 – note specific reference to "Christ's physical body" and how his "death" presents you "holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation"...that is, "IF YOU CONTINUE IN YOUR FAITH not moved from the hope" by some new philosophy or religious system.

1:24-2:5 Paul's ministry and purpose