

---

## §1 *Paul's Greetings (Col. 1:1-2)*

---

The opening greeting in this epistle is typical of the way in which Paul has addressed other churches to whom he has written (1 Cor. 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 1:1-2; Phil. 1:1-2; 1 Thess. 1:1-2; 2 Thess. 1:1-2; cf. Eph. 1:1-2). Although the form of these salutations is quite similar to contemporary Greek models, the content is distinctly Christian and, in the case of Colossians, sets forth statements that are important to the body of the letter.

**1:1** / Paul links Timothy with the writing of this letter (**and Timothy our brother**). This beloved co-worker had won a respected place in Paul's heart and had become a vital cog in all that Paul was attempting to do for Christ (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; 2:19-24; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:1ff.; Philem. 1). By including Timothy in this greeting, Paul communicates to the Colossians that he is not alone in his imprisonment and that someone whom they know from his ministry in Asia Minor joins him in this epistle.

Paul uses a phrase that helps to convey the authority of his message: He is an apostle of Christ Jesus **by the will of God**. An apostle is one who is regarded as possessing power and authority. Although there is no indication that the Colossians were questioning Paul's apostolic authority, the content of the letter reveals that they were in danger of falling away from the truth of the gospel by turning to false teachings (2:1-8). Consequently, they needed to hear a strong and authoritative message from one of God's messengers.

**1:2** / The Colossians are identified in two ways: First, they are **holy** (lit., "saints," *hagioi*). It was not uncommon for Paul to call Christians saints (1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Eph. 1:1), referring to their status in Christ and not to the degree of holiness that they may have attained (cf. 1:4). As saints, they are a distinct class of people who are called out and separated from their former way of life in order to live in and for Christ (1:21ff.).

Second, they are **faithful brothers in Christ**. Here there is some uncertainty whether Paul's use of **faithful** carries the sense of "reliability," or of "belief," that is, is the apostle referring to those who are faithful to the gospel, or is he referring to those who have been joined together by their faith in Christ and who now form a believing community? Given that many of Paul's greetings and thanksgivings foreshadow later pastoral concerns, it is quite possible that he has the readers' steadfastness or faithfulness in mind (1:10, 23; 2:6, 7).

The greeting ends with an appeal for **grace and peace**, which have their source in God the Father. This serves to draw attention to the favor that God freely bestows upon his undeserving people and to the healthy or peaceable condition of life that they enjoy because of it.