

# Colossians

## Greeting

- Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς
  - Paul starts off the letter by identifying himself.
  - This is extremely important because Paul had not visited this church, but they definitely knew of him.
  - Paul then immediately identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ.
  - This carries with it the authority to write this letter.
  - Claiming to be an apostle of Jesus Christ is a serious matter.
  - There are many people who falsely claim to be apostles of Jesus Christ today.
  - In order to be a true apostle, one must have known Christ personally and have been an eyewitness to the His resurrection [Acts 1:21-22].
  - Paul meets this qualification [1 Cor 9:1; 15:7], but no one today can make this claim.
  - Paul also performed signs and wonders that attested to his apostleship [2 Tim 2:12].
  - Paul was specifically sent by Christ to bear His name to Jews and Gentiles [Acts 9:3-19; 22:6-10].
  - This is important because ἀπόστολος (apostolos) means “one who is sent” [John 13:16].
  - As an apostle, Paul had authority over local churches and matters of doctrine [Gal 2:11-21].
  - The church at Colossae certainly would have recognized Paul’s position of authority.
  - Paul then expresses his humility in noting that he was an apostle because he was called by God [Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1] according to His will, not by Paul’s own efforts or will.
  - Paul then mentions Timothy because he shared in Paul’s ministry and because he helped Paul write this letter to the Colossians.
  - Given that, Timothy would almost certainly have been familiar with the church’s situation as well.
  - Paul wants the Colossians to know that Timothy will be there for them even if Paul could not be.
  - Paul calls Timothy “the brother” indicating that he was his brother in Christ, but not a fellow apostle.
  - However, as far as Paul was concerned, Timothy was his spiritual counterpart [1 Cor 16:10].
  - Timothy was Paul’s son in the faith [2 Tim 2:1].
  - Paul had hand-picked Timothy to serve with him and the two were almost inseparable and were very like-minded in the faith [Phil 2:19-23].

- To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae:  
 τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ,
  - Paul now identifies the primary audience for this letter.
  - He starts off by calling them saints (holy ones) which means he is addressing believers.
  - He further identifies his audience of believers as faithful brethren.
  - The word ἀδελφοῖς (adelphois) is used often in the N.T. to refer to believers [Eph 6:23; Heb 2:17; ...].
  - Paul adds the word πιστοῖς (pistois) which indicates that he recognizes the diligent walk of faith being carried out by the Colossian believers.
  - Paul uses the important phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (en Christō) highlighting their position in Christ.
  - This is not the same as John’s use of the phrase “abide in Christ” which is experiential in nature.
  - The phrase “in Christ” is of particular importance in Paul’s writings as he is the primary teacher of positional truth [Rom 6:11; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 15:18, 22; 2 Cor 3:14; 5:17; Gal 3:13-14; 5:6; ...].
  - Spiritually, these believers are in Christ, but physically, they are located in Colossae.
  - Paul is writing to a specific group of believers, but the message is important to others also [4:16].
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father.  
 χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.
  - The phrase “grace to you and peace” was typical for greetings whether a letter was written to a Christian audience or not.
  - Paul uses this expression 10 times in his letters.
  - In this letter he adds “from God our Father”.
  - In most of his greetings Paul included Jesus Christ as well [Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 Thess 1:2; Phlm 3].
  - In 1 Thess 1:1 Paul does not mention the Father or the Son, although they precede the greeting.
  - In any and every case, Paul extends his heartfelt greetings to the saints he is writing to.