

## Lesson 1 – Colossians 1:1-2

Randy Thompson  
Valley Bible Church  
www.valleybible.net

### Summary of Paul's Apostolic Age History

It is the spring of AD 33. Jesus was crucified on Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and rose that Sunday. To His disciples, “He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3) After Jesus’ ascension from the Mount of Olives, the disciples “all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*” (Acts 1:14) Ten days later (50 days after the resurrection), on the feast of Pentecost, Sunday May 24<sup>th</sup>, the church was born (Acts 2), the gospel was preached, and 3000 souls surrendered their life to Christ (Acts 2:41).

The infant church grew quickly as “<sup>42</sup>They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)

Soon there was purification of sin from within as the Holy Spirit brings judgement on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32-5:11). There was also persecution from without with the stoning of Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60) by Saul of Tarsus. “<sup>1</sup>Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and **they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.** <sup>2</sup>*Some* devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.” (Acts 8:1-3) This scattering only caused the gospel to spread more as “those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4)

Saul, wanting to persecute the followers of Jesus, encountered the King of Glory, Jesus the Christ, on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-21). From this day on, Paul’s life would never be the same. He soon was sent away to Arabia where he was taught by the Lord (Gal 1:17). From AD 33-47, Paul preaches the gospel and ministers to the brethren in Damascus (Acts 9:22-35), Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29), Caesarea and Tarsus (Acts 9:30), and Antioch (Acts 11:19-26). During this time, around AD 44, the Apostle James is martyred under Agrippa’s persecution and the first New Testament epistle, **James**, is written by Jesus’ half-brother.

In AD 48 (15 years after the birth of the church), the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, when they had fasted and prayed ... they sent them away. (Acts 13:2-3) This is the “first missionary journey” (Acts 13:1-14:28) during AD 48-49 (see figure 1). Barnabas, Paul, and John Mark begin the journey with their first stop on the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12). Then they ministered in the

southern Galatian region: Perga (where John Mark leaves them), Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lycaonia, Lystra (perhaps where Timothy was converted), and Derbe (perhaps where Titus was converted) (Acts 13:13-14:20). They then return to Antioch (Acts 14:21-28) from where Paul writes his first epistle, *Galatians*.

In AD 49/50, the Jerusalem council is convened to address the question of the law and how it relates to believers, specifically do the gentiles have to obey the law after coming to Christ (Acts 15:1-34).

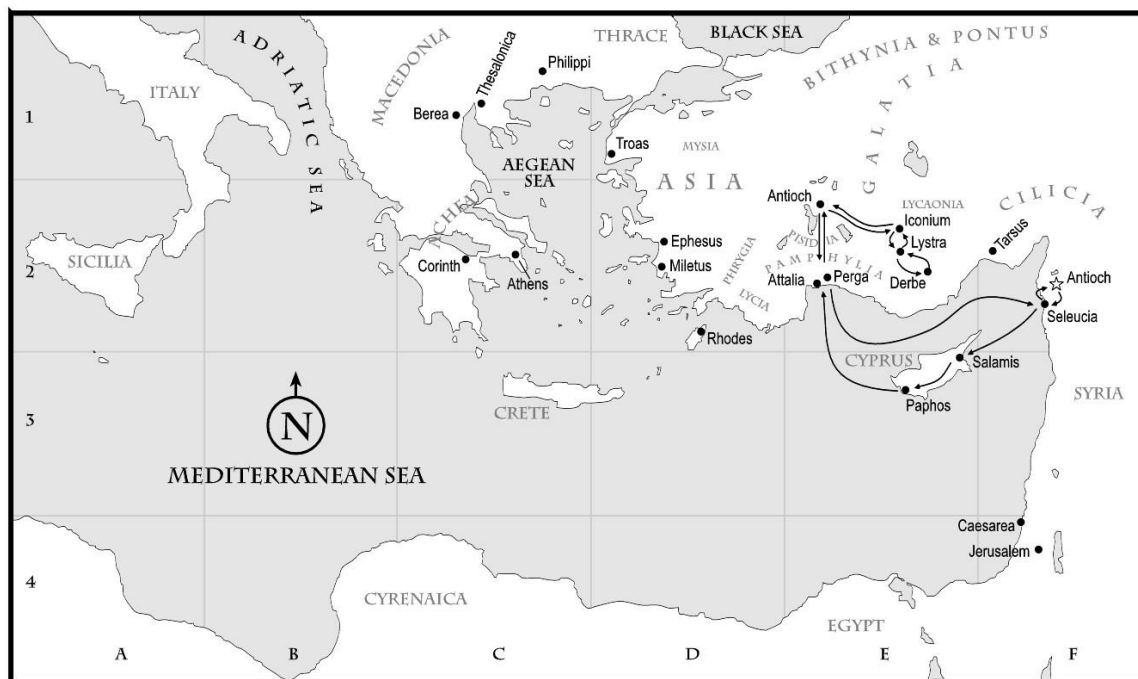


Figure 1 – The First Missionary Journey (from classic.net.bible.org)

In AD 50, the “second missionary journey” (Acts 15:36-18:22) (see figure 2) begins when Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are.”<sup>37</sup> Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also.<sup>38</sup> But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.<sup>39</sup> And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.<sup>40</sup> But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.<sup>41</sup> And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:36-41). Timothy joins Paul and Silas at Lystra (Acts 16:1-3). At Troas Paul receives his Macedonian call (Acts 16:6-10). Crossing into Macedonia, Paul ministers at Philippi (Acts 16:11-40), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), Berea (Acts 17:10-15), Athens (Acts 17:16-34), and Corinth (Acts 18:1-17). In AD 51 and 52 Paul writes *First and Second Thessalonians* from Corinth. In AD 53, Paul journeys from Ephesus through Jerusalem finishing the second missionary journey at Antioch.

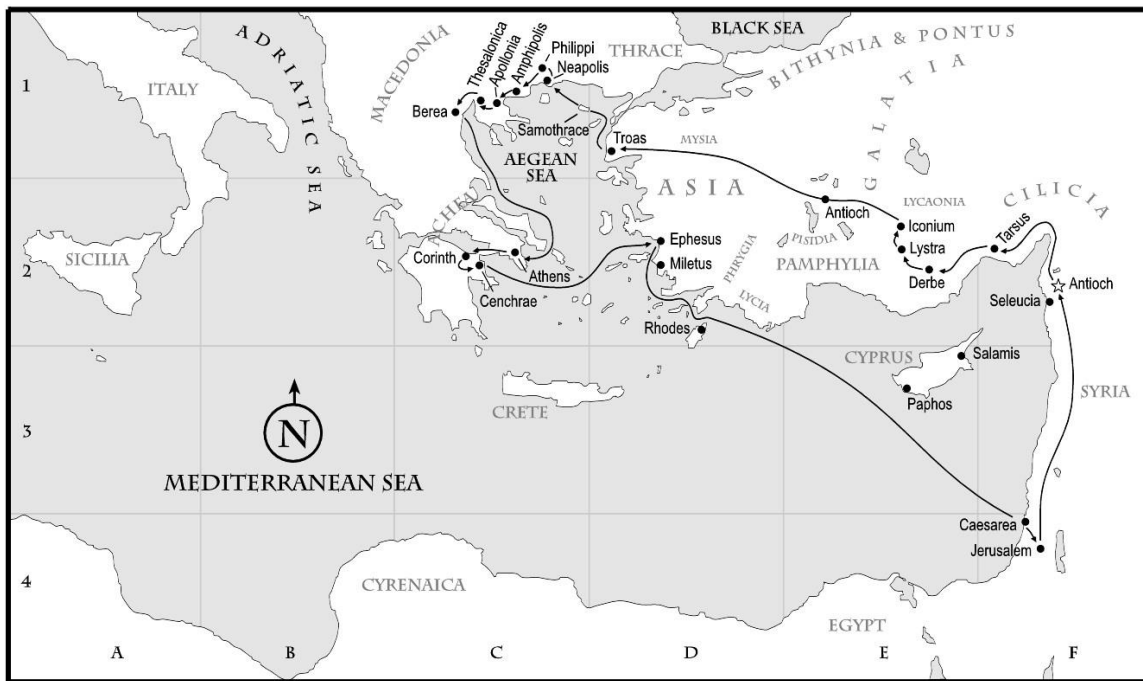


Figure 2 – The Second Missionary Journey (from classic.net.bible.org)

The “third missionary journey” (Acts 18:23-21:26) lasted the longest from AD 53-57 (see figure 3). Paul begins by journeying through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23-28) “strengthening the disciples”. Paul’s extended ministry at Ephesus was AD 53-55/56 where “all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 19:10) This is most likely when the churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were founded, though not by Paul. In AD 55/56, Paul wrote *1 Corinthians* from Ephesus. Paul then journeys through Macedonia from where he writes *2 Corinthians* (Acts 20:1-2). He then spends three months in Greece (Acts 20:2-1) writing *Romans* from Corinth in AD 56/57. In AD 57, Paul returns to Jerusalem through Macedonia and then by sea (Acts 20:3-26).



Figure 3 – The Third Missionary Journey (from classic.net.bible.org)

The last part of Acts (Acts 21:17-28:16) details Paul’s arrest, imprisonment, and journey to Rome (AD 57-60). Upon Paul’s return to Jerusalem, the brethren welcomed him, and he shared the results of his missionary travels (Acts 20:17-19). However, the Jews began to stir up trouble. Paul was arrested and taken to Caesarea for his protection. From AD 57-59/60, Paul stays in Caesarea under arrest (“Caesarean imprisonment”) eventually appealing to Caesar (Acts 25:11) to judge his case. He then travels to Rome (AD 59/60) (see figure 4) where he is under house arrest (AD 60-62) – the “first Roman imprisonment”. From Rome, Paul writes *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*. Luke writes his *gospel* and the book of *Acts* to “Theophilus” during this first Roman imprisonment.

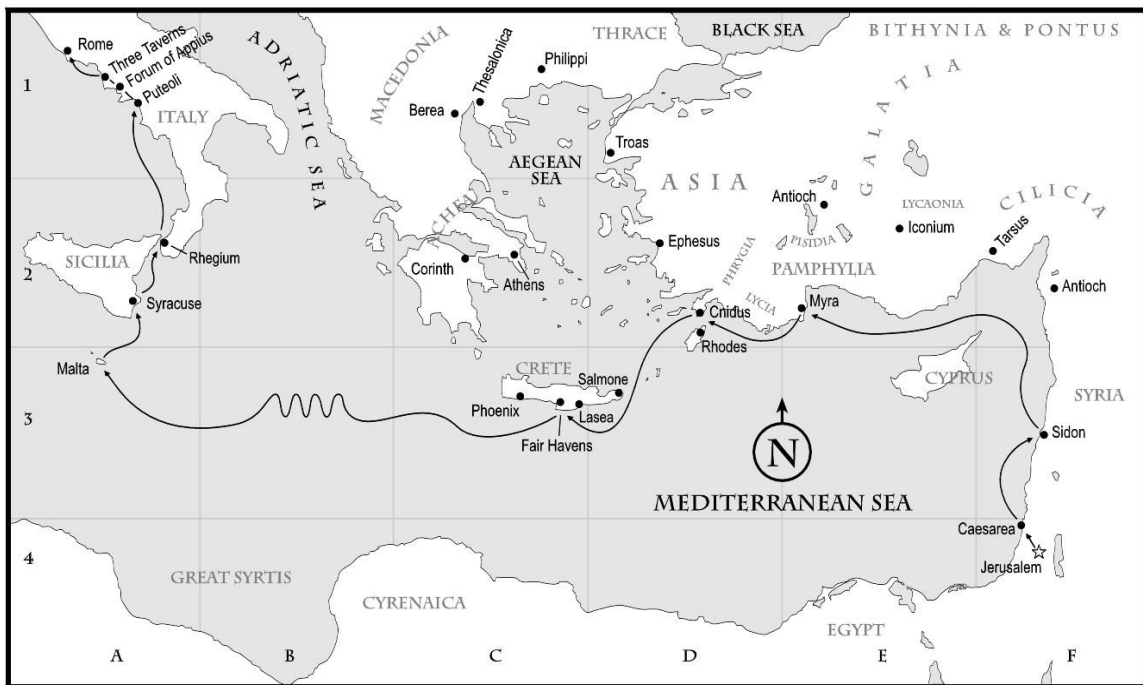


Figure 4 – Paul’s Journey to Rome (from classic.net.bible.org)

The rest of Paul’s life and ministry is pieced together from the pastoral epistles. It is surmised that in AD 62, Paul is released from his Roman imprisonment and embarks on a “fourth missionary journey”. Apparently, Paul visited several cities in which he had ministered including Ephesus, where he left Timothy, and traveled through Macedonia (northern Greece) from where he wrote *1 Timothy* (1 Tim 1:3) and Crete where he left Titus (Titus 1:5). He then traveled to Nicopolis in Achaia (southern Greece) from where he wrote *Titus* (Titus 3:12). During this period (AD 63/64), Peter wrote his two epistles, *1 and 2 Peter*, from Rome before being martyred in AD 64 under Nero’s persecution.

In AD 66, Paul visits Troas (2 Tim 4:13) where he is suddenly arrested and taken to Rome (second imprisonment in a dungeon). From Rome, in AD 67/68, Paul writes (*2 Timothy*) to Timothy to “come before winter” (2 Tim 4:21). Titus joins Paul in Rome before being sent to Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10). During this period, AD 67/68, *Hebrews* is written. In AD 68, Paul is beheaded.

## Title, Date of Writing, and Author

Colossians is addressed to the church in the city of Colossae and is the third of four letters labeled "The Prison Epistles" since they were written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (AD 60-62). The other three were Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon and all four make reference to his plight (Eph 3:1; Phil 1:7; Col 4:10; Philemon 1:9). It was most likely written about the same time as Ephesians and Philemon which places it around AD 60-61.

The letter claims to be written by the Apostle Paul and the testimony of the early church confirms this. As far as we know, Paul had never been to Colossae (2:1).

<sup>1</sup>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, **and for all those who have not personally seen my face**, (Col 2:1)

However, his friend and coworker Epaphras reported on the condition of the church (1:7-8), its abounding love for God and the brethren as well as doctrinal problems. Epaphras was so concerned about the problems at Colossae that he made the ~1000-mile trip to Rome to consult with Paul.

<sup>7</sup>just as you learned *it* from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, <sup>8</sup>and **he also informed us** of your love in the Spirit. (Col 1:7-8)

Epaphras stayed in Rome to minister to Paul. The letter was carried to Colossae by Tychicus (4:7).

<sup>7</sup>As to all my affairs, **Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.** <sup>8</sup>*For* I have sent him to you for this very purpose,... (Col 4:7-8)

Tychicus also carried the letter to the church at Ephesus (Eph 6:21) and traveled with Onesimus (4:7-9) as he traveled back to his master Philemon with a letter from Paul.

<sup>21</sup>But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, **Tychicus**, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. (Eph 6:21)

<sup>9</sup>and with him **Onesimus**, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here. (Col 4:9)

The church at Colossae met in Philemon's house (Philemon 2). Colossians was intended for reading at the neighboring church at Laodicea as well (4:16).

<sup>16</sup>When this letter is read among you, **have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans;** and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea. (Col 4:16)

## Introduction

Colossae was a has-been city in Phrygia, along the Lycus River, about 100 miles east of Ephesus. It is in the Roman province of Asia Minor (south-central Turkey) and in the area of the seven churches of Revelation 1-3 (see figure 5). In Paul's time, Colossae was a small city

with a mixed population of Phryrians, Greeks, and Jews. Its Jewish settlement dated back to Antiochus the Great in 223-187 BC.



Figure 5 – Colossae in Relation to the Seven Churches

The gospel was probably taken to Colossae when Paul spent three years in Ephesus on his third missionary journey (Acts 19). It was Epaphras who was the key worker in the evangelism and growth of the Colossian believers. He was apparently saved during a visit to Ephesus and then started the church when he returned home to Colossae (1:5-7). Epaphras made the long journey to Rome to visit Paul in prison and tell him of a dangerous heresy that was threatening the young church. He was imprisoned with Paul at that time or later perhaps (Philemon 23). Paul wrote to address these theological problems and also wrote a letter to the church about the slave-convert, Onesimus.

The Colossian heresy combined ideas from various religions and philosophies with the truth of Christianity. The sources seem to be Roman paganism, legalistic Judaism, Greek philosophies, and ancient mystery religions. The resulting heresy later became known as Gnosticism, emphasizing a special knowledge (gnosis), and denying the deity and saving work of Jesus. It became a major thorn in the side of the early church and is addressed in many epistles.

Paul addresses Gnostic heresy by presenting Christ as preeminent and completely sufficient for all the believer's spiritual needs. The theme of Colossians then is the supremacy and all sufficiency of Christ.

## **Gnosticism**

Gnosticism is not easy to define because it is a collection of features from several movements and belief systems. The term itself is derived from the Greek word for knowledge (gnosis). Gnostics believed that matter is evil and spirit is good. Therefore, they invented heretical views on how Christ could be God, yet take on human flesh. They taught that there is a spark

of divinity within human beings, and that the essence of spirituality is nurturing this immaterial side and denying material and physical urges. The chief means of releasing the divine element within a person was through attaining intellectual and spiritual enlightenment.

Gnostics believed they were privy to a higher level of spiritual knowledge than the average believer had access to, and this realm of knowledge (gnosis in Greek) was the key to spiritual illumination. This caused many to seek hidden knowledge beyond the Scriptures and Christ. Gnosticism was a very elite, exclusive movement that disdained “unenlightened” and “simplistic” biblical Christians. Does this sound familiar?

### Present-day Gnostic-like Tendencies

MacArthur identifies several Gnostic-like tendencies in the modern church (see “Our Sufficiency in Christ”).

Psychology Movement – Believes that other knowledge, apart from or in addition to Christ and the Word, is needed in order to meet people’s deepest soul needs. It is not enough to point Christians to their soul’s full sufficiency in Christ and His Word. Counseling from the Scriptures is widely viewed as unsophisticated, naive, and even hurtful.

Pragmatism Movement – Believes that the end justifies the means. There is a secret knowledge of how to do ministry apart from the principles in the Scriptures. The church can accomplish spiritual goals by fleshly means, and that God’s Word and the Holy Spirit alone are not sufficient to break through the sinner’s blindness and hardness of heart.

Mysticism Movement – Believes that spiritual reality is perceived apart from the intellect and natural senses. Extra-biblical “revelation”, individual feelings, and personal experience replaces sound biblical interpretation.

❖ **Do you have any of these tendencies in your life?**

### Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1-12)
  - A. Greeting (1:1-2)
  - B. Thankfulness and prayer (1:3-12)
- II. The Supremacy of Christ (1:13-2:23)
  - A. The supremacy of the person and work of Christ (1:15-23)
  - C. The supremacy of apostolic ministry (1:24-2:5)
  - D. The sufficiency of Christ over worldly philosophies (2:6-23)
- III. Life in the all-sufficient Christ (3:1-4:6)
  - A. Sanctification (3:1-17)
  - B. Various relationships (3:18-4:1)
  - C. Conduct in the world (4:2-6)
- IV. Conclusion (4:7-18)

### Greeting (1:1-2)

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, <sup>2</sup>To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, <sup>2</sup>To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. (ESV)

Paul begins with a salutation indicating his authorship and the intended audience for the letter. This greeting is almost identical to the greeting in Ephesians (Colossians' sister letter).

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 1:1)

<sup>1</sup>Paul, ...

We have already looked at a timeline of Paul's life. But let's look at the man before and after his encounter with Christ. Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). He was extremely well educated under one of the leading rabbis, Gamaliel (Acts 5:33-40; 22:3); and spoke Greek and Hebrew (Acts 21:37, 40). He was the Jew of Jews. He was "zealous for God" (Acts 22:3). He found his purpose in being religious. That sounds like many people today – zealous for religiousness. Let's see what Paul says about himself.

<sup>4</sup>although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. (Phil 3:4-6)

<sup>13</sup>For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; <sup>14</sup>and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. (Gal 1:13-14)

<sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (1 Cor. 15:9)

### ❖ Do you derive your purpose in religiousness or your relationship with Christ?

Yet when Paul encountered the living Christ, everything changed.

<sup>12</sup>I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, <sup>13</sup>even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.** <sup>16</sup>**Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.** <sup>17</sup>Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be*



honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Tim 1:12-17)

<sup>7</sup>But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>**More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup>and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, (Phil 3:7-9)

<sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>**But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain**; but I labored even more than all of them, **yet not I, but the grace of God with me.** (1 Cor 15:10)

❖ **What happened when you encountered Jesus the Christ? How has your life changed? Are you ready to share that with others?**

... an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God ...

Paul identifies himself as an “apostle of Jesus Christ” or “Christ Jesus”. The order of Jesus and Christ is based on the Greek text used as the basis for that phrase. “Apostle” literally means “sent one”. It designates an individual sent from someone else with the sender's commission, necessary credentials, sender's authority, and the implicit responsibility to accomplish a mission or assignment.

In a broad sense this can refer to all believers. But the term is primarily used as a specific and unique title for the thirteen men (the Twelve, with Matthias replacing Judas, and Paul) whom Christ personally chose and commissioned to authoritatively proclaim the gospel and lead the early church. The thirteen were all called directly by Jesus and were witnesses of His resurrection, Paul having encountered Him on the Damascus Road after His ascension.

❖ **Do you view yourself as a “sent one” with a mission (Matt 28:19-20), an “ambassador of Christ” (2 Cor 5:20)?**

In his epistles, Paul refers to himself as an apostle on several occasions, but not every occasion. Looking at the comparison below we can deduce that he identifies himself as an apostle for three reasons. First, if he is writing to those whom he does not personally know (like the “churches of Galatia” and Rome). Second, if he is writing to a church where his apostolic authority is being questioned or he is refuting heresy (like Corinth and Galatia). And third, if the person he is writing to requires his apostolic backing (like the pastoral epistles). When he is writing to churches or individuals who know him and remain loyal to the Lord’s apostle, he leaves out the designation (like Thessalonica, Philippi, and the personal letter to Philemon). In the case of Colossae, it is both reason one and two. He was unknown to the church (2:1) and he was writing to refute heresy.

Epistle	Date	Self-Reference	Recipient
Galatians	49	Paul, an apostle ...	To the churches of Galatia
<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>Paul ...</i>	<i>To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ</i>
<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>Paul ...</i>	<i>To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:</i>
1 Corinthians	55/56	Paul, called <i>as</i> an apostle of Jesus Christ ...	<sup>2</sup> To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, ...
2 Corinthians	56	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ...	To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:
Romans	56/57	Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called <i>as</i> an apostle, ...	<sup>6</sup> among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; <sup>7</sup> to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called <i>as</i> saints
Ephesians	60-62	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ...	To the saints who are at Ephesus and <i>who are</i> faithful in Christ Jesus:
Colossians	60-62	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ ...	<sup>2</sup> To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ <i>who are</i> at Colossae:
<i>Philemon</i>	<i>60-62</i>	<i>Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, ...</i>	<i>To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, <sup>2</sup>and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:</i>
<i>Philippians</i>	<i>60-62</i>	<i>Paul ...</i>	<i>To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:</i>
1 Timothy	62	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ...	<sup>2</sup> To Timothy, <i>my</i> true child in <i>the</i> faith:
Titus	63	Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, ...	<sup>4</sup> To Titus, <i>my</i> true child in a common faith:
2 Timothy	67/68	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ...	<sup>2</sup> To Timothy, <i>my</i> beloved son:

Paul did not “self-identify” as an apostle. He was “called as an apostle” (2 Cor 1:1); “according to the commandment of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope” (1 Tim 1:1); “not *sent* from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead” (Gal 1:1). He was an apostle “by the will of God”. This is the Lord’s doing and Paul was committed to be faithful to the work that the Lord had given him.

❖ **Are you committed to being faithful in the work the Lord has for you?**

What the Lord’s apostle says is authoritative. His apostleship gave him the right and responsibility to instruct the Colossians even though he had never met them. And here he is writing to refute attacks on the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ.

... and Timothy our brother ...

Timothy was most likely converted during Paul’s first missionary journey during Paul’s stop at Lystra (Acts 14:6-20) in AD 48. Two years later in AD 50, during the second missionary journey, Paul wanted Timothy to join him and Silas (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy, in his late teens or early twenties, was circumcised and joined Paul. He was obviously committed to the work of making disciples.

<sup>1</sup>Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, <sup>2</sup>and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. <sup>3</sup>Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and **circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts**, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (Acts 16:1-3)

Except for Galatians (written before Timothy joined Paul), Ephesians and Titus, Timothy is mentioned in Paul's 10 letters and in Hebrews as having been in prison for his faith (Heb 13:23). He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment (Phil 2:19-22) and had the same pastor's heart as Paul.

<sup>19</sup>But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. <sup>20</sup>**For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.** <sup>21</sup>For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. <sup>22</sup>But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serv*ing his father. (Phil 2:19-22)

Timothy was considered "youthful" (1 Tim 4:12) in AD 62 when Paul wrote 1 Timothy, just shortly after Colossians was written. A word normally applied to people starting at age 30. Yet, Paul was so confident of his maturity that Timothy served as Paul's emissary to churches (see 1 Thess 3:1-2 and 1 Cor 4:17). Paul referred to himself and Timothy as "bond-servants" (Phil 1:1). Notable, Timothy was considered by Paul to be his equal with respect to servanthood.

#### ❖ **Are you striving to be a servant like Paul and Timothy?**

Here we see a glimpse at Paul's leadership, particularly his consideration of those he is leading. Timothy will be leading the churches when Paul is gone. Paul expresses humility in joining Timothy to himself and placing honor on Timothy. He supports Timothy's reputation. Paul was a team player who promoted the gifts and abilities of others. This puts his protégé in a position to lead in his stead.

... <sup>2</sup>To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae ...

Paul identifies his audience as "saints". "Saints" are those who are set apart from sin by God unto Himself and declared holy through their faith in His Son Jesus. Paul is not separating some Christians from others in the Colossian church. All the believers are "saints". All those who have exercised the gift of true saving faith are "saints".

"And" could also mean "even". "Faithful" refers to those who, because they have exercised true saving faith, are being kept trustworthy, steadfast in their relationship with the Lord. True saving faith is demonstrated in a saint's faithfulness (or perseverance). Saints are new creatures in Christ and therefore a natural behavior is that they are faithful. The phrase may add the additional idea referring to those who hadn't embraced the false teaching that concerned Paul.

#### ❖ **Are you striving to be faithful?**

... Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

“Grace and peace” is a standard greeting in all of Paul’s letters. “Grace” is God’s unmerited favor, the means by which we are saved (Eph 2:8-9). “Peace” is the result of salvation. It describes the situation where two things come together and there is nothing in between to cause friction. There is no longer a barrier between the two. This is peace with God (Rom 5:1) and obtaining peace from God (Rom 8:6).

❖ **Do you continually experience peace as a state of mind?**

### **Conclusion**

After nearly 20 years of ministry including three journeys across the eastern Mediterranean and a journey to Rome as a prisoner, the apostle Paul is imprisoned in Rome. It is here that he writes his “prison epistles”, one being to the church at Colossae, a church he does not know and one that is facing attacks on the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. Paul greets the church in his standard fashion and will now pray for them.

### **Additional Study**

1. Paul was a man who loved the Lord and loved the Lord’s body, the church. Does that describe you? If not, how can you change that and how would that be demonstrated?
2. Timothy was a fellow bond-slave of Christ, serving with Paul. In what ways do you serve the body of Christ?
3. The Colossian believers were referred to as “saints”. You are a “saint”. You have been chosen by God to be separated from sin unto Him. Are you striving in the Spirit to live as one separated daily from sin?
4. Ponder peace with God through salvation and peace from God as a result of Spirit-filling. Are you experiencing peace on a daily basis? If not, what needs to happen?