

“SAINTS IN SAN TAN VALLEY; FAITHFUL BRETHREN IN CHRIST”

COLOSSIANS 1:1-2

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INTRODUCTION

Although the words used by Paul here are fairly standard in his letters, the reader must not look upon them as “a simple salutation.” We will not oversimplify the words if we grasp some of the depth of meaning poured into almost every word by the touch of Heaven.

Paul used the conventional method of letter writing in his epistles to various churches and individuals; however, as a believer he beautified and sanctified these conventional methods of mentioning author, recipient, and giving greetings by relating both author and recipient to Jesus Christ and by connecting his greeting with Christian graces: “grace and peace.” Paul often attaches words in his initial greeting that provide clues to the main “talking points” in the letter-body that follows; however, the mention of sender and addressee along with his greeting here in Colossians do not really provides much of a clue to what follows in this book. But, these words do tell us a great deal about the writer, Paul, and about the recipients, the Colossian Christians.

Whatever Paul did he did by the will of God. His entire life and ministry was surrendered to God. IS YOURS?

The Christians found themselves in two locations: in Colossae and in Christ. In Colossae they were **saints**—set apart and holy; in Christ they were **faithful/believing**. ARE YOU? Moreover, their entire lives were lived according to God’s **grace** and were governed by God’s **peace**.

IN THIS WORLD YOU MAY LIVE IN SAN TAN VALLEY/QUEEN CREEK/FLORENCE, BUT REALLY YOU LIVE IN CHRIST.

I. THE SENDERS (1)

A. Paul

1. An Apostle

An apostle is generally a special messenger or emissary sent forth with dignity and authority in order to represent someone—here God Himself in the person of His Son, Christ Jesus. The apostle also had a special commission and was given special powers—miraculous gifts from the Spirit—that he was able to utilize in carrying out his commission. The term especially applies to the 12 trained by Jesus (e.g. Lk. 6:13) and for Paul.

2. Sent by and in relation with Christ Jesus.

3. Saved and serving by the will of God

God has a plan and purpose to fulfill and selected Paul in order to fulfill His plan; it was not a case of Paul aspiring to apostleship and usurping his position, for the Lord even told him where to go and to whom to speak once he got up from the Damascus Road (Acts 9:11-12). Moreover, other men, even other apostles, had not been proactive in choosing him or appointing him (Gal. 1:1, 16-17). His apostleship was a matter of divine preparation and selection as seen e.g. in Gal. 1:15-16.

B. Timothy

1. Not the author or even a co-author

That **Timothy**’s name is mentioned here in such a prominent way is due to Timothy’s sharing Paul’s ministry on a permanent basis. Timothy is a faithful and sympathetic co-worker who evidently also was known to at least some of the Colossian believers from the extensive time Timothy had spent with Paul during his Ephesian ministry (cf. Acts 19:1, 22) when many in the vicinity had come to hear Paul (19:10). The latter verse opens the possibility that Timothy may even have visited and ministered there at some point.

2. Not an apostle

3. “Our brother”

“Brother” in this case as so often does not speak of a literal human family relationship, but rather of a spiritual relationship “in Christ” as seen here even in verse 2 where the believers in Colossae are referred to as “faithful **brethren**.” Timothy was not also an apostle, but was still very close with Paul who was an apostle; Paul loved Timothy deeply and was deeply appreciative of Timothy’s selfless efforts in the cause of the Gospel (**Phil. 2:19-23**).

II. THE RECEIVERS (2a)

A. Saints

1. Meaning of “saints”: the plural adjective “holy” is rightly translated by KJV, NASB and most other versions as a noun meaning “**holy ones, saints,**” those **set apart and consecrated for Christ**.
2. Location of saints—In Colossae. Since the Person who “sets apart” or “consecrates” the believer is **absolutely morally pure**, of necessity the one so set apart must partake of the same character of moral purity as the one with whom he now has such a new relationship. Despite the morally and spiritually corrupt atmosphere of the physical location of the city where they lived (see introduction), they were safe and secure due to their far more important spiritual location; cf. Jesus: “in the world” (Jn. 16:33) but yet not “of the world (17:16).

B. Faithful brothers [and sisters]

1. Meaning of terms
 - a. *Brothers*: As noted above in relation to Timothy, “brethren” puts emphasis upon “the intimacy of the fellowship of the Christian community. Despite their differences of culture, social status, and racial background, the Colossian believers were bound together by a common bond of love and thus constituted one spiritual family. Believers have one spiritual parentage—having been begotten by God the Father.
 - b. *Faithful/believing*

The word likely implies that they are faithful in contrast with those who aren’t—especially those who are shaken and tempted to defect from sound doctrine. These Christians need to continue in allegiance to the Gospel tradition and to continue to fulfill God’s purpose for their lives.
2. Location of faithful: in Christ—under His power and influence and in relationship with Him in the mystical union between Christ and the believer.

The believer “in Christ” is then also in “the kingdom of God’s Son” (v. 13) and his entire existence has become reordered. Christ is the object of the *faith/faithfulness* and is the center of the *brotherhood*—children of the Father and brothers of each other through faith/faithfulness in Christ.

III. THE GREETINGS (2b)

A. Grace [cf. the traditional letter, “Rejoice”]: God’s unmerited favor through Christ.

B. Peace [cf. the traditional Jewish letter, “Shalom”]

“Peace” must not be interpreted in its usual secular usage as merely the absence of war or conflict. “Peace” involves the wish for God’s total well-being and prosperity (spiritual, material, and physical) upon the believer—just as the OT term did for the Jews, and it involves a right relationship with God (see v. 20), with other believers (cf. Eph. 2:14-18), inward peace from guilt and anxiety (cf. Phil. 4:6-7), and even peaceful relationships with those outside Christ. The two characteristic words aptly sum up the blessed relationship of a saved person with his God and Savior.

C. From God our Father

CONCLUSION

Live in God’s will. Live a separated life in holiness. Live a faithful life as a believer.

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