

Easy As 1-2-3



Colossians 1:1-8¹

It's As Easy As 1-2-3

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Overall Understanding

Colossians 1:1-8²

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse:

Here Paul calls himself “an” apostle clearly acknowledging that he was not the only apostle. This letter is from Paul and Timothy.

“Saints” means holy ones and appropriately refers to all believers in Jesus. You are a saint if you believe in Him. The word faithful might be more accurately translated “believing.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though this is a common greeting from Paul, it is packed with meaning. The gospel is often referred to as “the gospel of peace” or “the gospel of grace.” They are the same gospel but referencing different aspects of it. We have peace with God because we have been made righteous by faith (Rom. 1). By grace, we have been saved through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

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³We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

What a beautiful and loving statement. Paul and Timothy were thankful for the brothers and sisters in Colossae. They continually prayed for them.

⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;

Here we see the commands of Christ: to believe in Jesus and love each other. These commands were being lived out among the Colossians. For this, they gave thanks.

⁵because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

This life is not our final destination. We have hope and a future of abiding with Jesus forever. This is part of the good news.

⁶which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

The gospel came to the Colossians and was bringing forth fruit. Notice here that the gospel is called “the grace of God.”

⁷as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

From the Detailed Study Notes:

The “it” that the Colossians learned from Epaphras was the gospel. Epaphras learned “it” from Paul.

Paul refers to Epaphras as “beloved”. · This is a term used in the New Testament only of Jesus, Israel, and believers.

Paul calls Epaphras a “fellow” bond-servant. · This not only reflects Paul’s attitude of being a willing servant of the Lord, but also of not seeing himself as superior to Epaphras. Paul must have emulated this attitude in the way he treated others, for Peter referred to Paul as “our beloved brother Paul”, and not “the great apostle Paul” (2 Pet. 3:15).

While Paul did acknowledge that he was an apostle, he NEVER called himself by the title, “Apostle Paul,” NOR DID ANYONE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT REFER TO HIM AS “Apostle Paul”. The church has forgotten what Jesus said...that we are all equal and we are not to give each other titles (Matt. 23:1-12).

Who is a faithful servant of Christ can also be translated, “who, for your sake, is a believing servant of Christ”.

We see that Epaphras had been in communication with Paul and Timothy about the progress of the Colossians. He told them of their belief in Jesus and of their “love in the Spirit”. Again, faith in Jesus and love for each other are the true hallmarks of a believer.

Coming Up in Chapter 1:9-14

In the upcoming verses, Paul prays a very lengthy prayer for the Colossians, which we can rightly pray for others and ourselves.