

Series: Colossians, # 1
Secure Identity
Colossians 1:1-14

At the writing of this letter, the church in the town of Colossae is new, and likely most of the members are new believers in Jesus. Possibly many are not fully aware of their heritage or identity, so Paul and Timothy open the first chapter reminding them of their spiritual riches. List the descriptions in these verses, and see if the summary aligns with how you view yourself:

Vs. 2 God's _____ people

Vs. 4 _____ in Christ, _____ for God's people

Vs. 5 _____ that is stored up in heaven

Vs. 6 The _____ is bearing fruit and growing among you

Vs. 6 You truly understand God's _____

Also note these things Paul and Timothy are praying for them:

Vs. 9 to be filled with the _____ of God's will

Vs. 9 _____ and _____ from the Spirit

Vs. 10 that you live a _____ life, and please God

Vs. 10 that you bear _____ in good _____

Vs. 11 you need power, _____ and _____

Vs. 12 God _____ you to share in his inheritance

Vs. 13 God _____ you from darkness, brought you into the light

Vs. 14 in him we have _____ and _____

Colossae – a small town in the Lycus Valley, 100 miles east of Ephesus Located in the region of Phrygia (now Turkey), in Asia Minor Hierapolis and Laodicea (Col. 4:16, Rev. 3) were nearby; there were groups of Christians in all three cities

The church was probably birthed during Paul's three years in Ephesus (Acts 19), when two prominent men from Colossae became believers, Philemon and Epaphras – they were active in spreading the Gospel in their home area > Col. 1:7-8, 4:12-13, Philemon 1-2, 5

It seems Paul and Timothy had not visited the church, but heard about it from Epaphras. They likely wrote from Rome where Paul was in prison, in the year 61. The letter was hand delivered by Tychicus (4:7-9) who may have carried the Ephesian epistle at the same time. Onesimus was with him, the runaway slave whom Paul was sending home to Philemon.

From reports Paul heard, there was much to be thankful for, but also some news that concerned him. The main trouble in this young church was *syncretism*, which means the mixing of beliefs: introducing ideas from other religions or philosophies that contradict Christian doctrines. As people came to faith in Jesus, it was natural to cling to their old ideas too, and may have seemed harmless to try to incorporate those into Christianity. Combatting this tendency is the main thrust of Paul's brief letter.