


	<p>BIC1504 <b>Storyboard</b></p> <p>Colossians 1:11b-14</p>	<p>Part One: Exegesis</p>	
			

- List of Audio Files
- BIC1504E-AEg01.mp3\*
- BIC1504E-AEg02.mp3\*

Manuscript of the Video Audio Texts:



## Welcome

to the study of Colossians 1:11b-14. This is the exegetical study that seeks to establish a historical meaning of the text. That is, what was the meaning of these words to the Colossian believers who first heard them read in a gathering at a private home in the city of Colossae?



This video is a summary of the online commentary that centers on this passage. It is found in the revised BIC series at cranfordville.com. Go to the BIC1504 homepage for not just the commentary but also for several study aids that will assist in the study of this scripture passage. Additionally, a printable copy of this storyboard text is available. This video will cover the main points of the online commentary in a summarizing manner.

- List of Graphic Files
- BIC1504E-GEg01.png\*
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The following topics will be treated in the video as taken from the online commentary:

**1.0 HISTORICAL ASPECTS**

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## 1.1.2 Transcriptional Aspects

## 1.2 Internal Aspects

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**2.0 LITERARY ASPECTS**

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## 2.1.2 Analyze the role of the literary forms.

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## 2.2.2 Assess the literary arrangement of the text.

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Implied in this listing is a twofold approach to the text. We examine both the historical and the literary aspects found in the written text. Out of this will come a historical reconstruction of the text in the Conclusion of our study. This approach will give us a solid method for determining the most likely original meaning of the Greek text as composed by the apostle Paul.

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Part One: Exegesis

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Also important to note is the context of 1:11b-14. The second sentence in the letter itself contains 1:9-20. The main clause sets the theme of the entire sentence as intercessory prayer with the declaration ***“We...do not cease praying for you and asking (1:9a).*** Then the long ἵνα clause in 1:9b-20 specifies the content and goal of this praying by Paul and Timothy for the Colossians. The core segment of this clause is “that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will.” Behind this divine filling lies the goal “in order to walk worthy of the Lord.” Then the parameters of this worthy lifestyle define its meaning by four participial phrases: “bearing fruit,” “growing,” “being empowered,” and “giving thanks.” This last participial phrase includes 1:11b-20. But 1:15-20 is a citation of the remnants of either an early Christian hymn or a confession of faith. It is attached via a relative clause structure to the participle but centers on Christ and His work. This leaves 1:11b-14 as the second sub unit of material in this sentence. And this unit contains the core elements of the lengthy participial phrase on thanksgiving.

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Now we need to both hear and see the original words of Paul that he dictated to Timothy who wrote them in this letter. We must always remember that we are looking at an ancient letter.

BIC1504Greek text.mp3\*

Μετά χάρις 12 εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί· 13 ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, 14 ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν

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ἀφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

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Text.mp3\*

Now what are these words saying? Here is a literal translation of them into American English:

“With joy 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you for a share of the inheritance of the saints living in Light, 13 who rescued us out of the control of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

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Let's take a close look at these words and the spiritual truths that they affirm.

### 1.0 HISTORICAL ASPECTS

The first three studies laid a solid foundation on which we can build some more insights into the mid first century world of Colossae. Again we divide out the various aspects into the external and internal perspectives. The external centers on the composition and the copying of the two for the next several centuries as it was first written. The internal probes various markers that specify people, places, time movements, and events. In the second major division, 2.0 LITERARY ASPECTS, we will examine the words of the original Greek text against the backdrop of how the Greek language worked in the first Christian century.



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AEg08.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
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In trying to get back to the historical setting through the written document of the letter itself, one needs to look first at the circumstances surrounding the creation of the letter. Then, how faithfully it was copied by successive generations to become a document in the canonical New Testament. Since we do not have access to any original document in the New Testament, the challenge is to examine the history of this document from every possible angle, which can provide a factual basis for drawing our historical conclusions about its meaning.

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AEg09.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
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Every indication suggests that this was a typical letter-writing situation for the apostle Paul. It was written while Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government. Although much of the Roman Catholic church tradition wants to locate Rome as the place of writing, I'm convinced that Caesarea in the Roman province of Judea is more accurate.<sup>1</sup> This would place



the location of the writing during the time Paul was being held in the prison in the governor's palace there during 57-60 AD. Timothy functioned as the writing secretary to write down Paul's dicta-<sup>1</sup>For more details on this issue, see this topic in the first three studies on Colossians. These can be accessed at the [BIC1504 homepage](http://BIC1504homepage) under volume 15 of the revised BIC commentary series at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com).

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tion of the contents of the letter. The strong emphasis upon thanksgiving in our text has sharpened emphasis in light of when and where it was written.

This letter was one of several letters carried by a delegation from Caesarea to the Roman province of Asia. Ephesians was the so-called cover letter of the group that included Colossians, Philemon (who lived at Colossae), and a letter to the Laodiceans (cf. Col 4:16). The group arrived at the Lycus River valley region that



**And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. (ESV)**

included the towns of Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. After presenting the materials to the various gatherings of believers in different private homes through the valley, they made their way westward along the major trade route that followed the Lycus River eventually reaching the provincial capital of Ephesus, some 160 kilometers west of the river valley. Wherever they encountered a Christian community along the way, the contents of these letters were presented to them for discussion.

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AEg10.mp3\***1.1.2 Transcriptional Aspects**

The very first action of interpretation is to establish the text in its precise wording. This is essential in New Testament studies since

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we have no access to the original documents. Instead, we must work with copies that only reach back to the late third and fourth centuries. The very technical scholarly discipline of Text Criticism emerged in the previous century to allow systematic evaluation of all of the existing copies of the text under consideration. The dominant methodology used for this is labeled "Reasoned Eclecticism." And it will be followed in our study. The textual apparatus found in the United Bible Societies *The Greek New Testament* (5th rev. ed.) and the apparatus in the Nestle Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th rev. ed.) will serve as the launchpad for this work. Heavy dependence will

be given to Metzger's *A Textual Commentary*, and Omanon's *A Textual Guide*. Produced primarily for Bible translators, these two sources are good at presenting very technical material in greatly simplified form.

In Colossians 1:11b-14, there are five places where variations in readings surface. We will summarize each of the five places.

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**(1) 1:11 Segmentation.**

Ancient Greek in the first century was written in all capital letters with no spaces between words or punctuation marks such as commas, periods etc. Because all modern Western languages depend heavily on such things, the publishing of modern print Greek texts inserts these as appropriate to the wording of the text. In the vast majority of instances, this is easy to do with accuracy. But occasionally, some uncertainty is present. The prepositional phrase Μετὰ χαρᾶς, "with joy," is one of those instances. The uncertainty has to do with whether this prepositional phrase goes with the participle δυναμούμενοι, "being enabled," or whether with the participle εὐχαριστοῦντες, "giving thanks," that follows it. Although evidence for either understanding exists, the more likely role is as a modifier of the second participle.<sup>2</sup> Thus we are to give thanks with joy.

**(2) !:12 τῷ πατρὶ (to the Father)**

A wide variety of readings add qualifiers to the Father. For example, "of Christ," "even God," "God." But the ear-

<sup>2</sup>An example of the split view points is seen with the older Revised Standard Version translating this as "enduring patiently and steadfastly with joy." But the New Revised Standard Version has "joyfully giving thanks."



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lier and more important manuscripts simply read “to the Father.” Just the word τῷ πατρὶ without any further qualification seemed strange to the copyists in light θεοῦ πατρός ἡμῶν in 1:2 and τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 1:3. Their desire for clarity prompted them to add a qualifier to the reference to Father. But these come as later corrections to what was originally written.

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g10c.mp3\***(3) 1:12 ἱκανώσαντι (who has enabled/qualified)**

The participle has a variety of early witnesses supporting it. “Several witnesses, chiefly Western, substitute the participle καλέσαντι (who has called). This variant reading may have arisen accidentally when a copyist confused τωικανωσαντι (who has enabled) for τωκαλεσαντι (who has called), which would have been easy to do. Or the variant reading may have arisen deliberately when the familiar expression “who has called” was substituted for an unusual expression (the verb ἱκανώω occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in 2 Cor 3:6).”<sup>3</sup> But the manuscript evidence clearly favors the participle ἱκανώσαντι.

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g10d.mp3\***(4) 1:12 ὑμᾶς (you).**

As Metzger notes, “Although on the basis of superior Greek evidence (*P*<sup>46</sup> and early Alexandrian and Western authorities) ἡμῶν might seem to be preferable, a majority of the Committee, impressed by the widespread currency of ὑμῶν in versional and patristic witnesses, considered it probable that copyists introduced the first person pronoun under the influence of the preceding ἡμῶν and the following ἡμῖν.”<sup>4</sup> Such changes to the text as this were fairly common in the copying of texts.

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AEg10e.  
mp3\***(5) 1:14 ἀπολύτρωσιν (redemption)**

There is little significant evidence for adding διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, “through His blood.” The late medieval Textus Receptus does add it based on the phrase in Eph. 1:7, Ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, “in Whom we have redemption through His blood.” “If the phrase had been present originally, there would

<sup>3</sup>Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 411–412.

<sup>4</sup>Bruce Manning Metzger, United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 552–553.



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have been no reason for scribes to omit it.”<sup>5</sup>

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As becomes obvious from these variant readings, almost all of them have to do with the desire of copyists to make the text more clear. In the mindset of ancient copyists, respect for the text necessitated such “corrections.” One other point should also be obvious. None of the variant readings changed any doctrinal issue. Such will be the case in the vast majority of instances of text variations in the New Testament.

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GEg11.png\*

## 1.2 Internal Aspects

Every text contains markers that allude to people, places, time references, and events. Not all contain all of the markers. But probing those that are present in a written text is essential to understanding a historical time frame assumed by the writer of the text. With Col. 1:11b-14, we are moving toward fewer markers than in the first three pericopes. With Col. 1:11b-14 coming as the second segment of the long sentence in 1:9-20, it is understandable to this part would have fewer markers than in the first segment of 1:9-11a. The core idea of the entire sentence is established in this first section. Some of the markers may be direct references, while others may be implied, or indirect. But some markers are found here in 1:11b-14. We need to take a close look at them.

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<sup>5</sup>Bruce Manning Metzger, United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 554.

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## !2.1 People

The participle εὐχαριστοῦντες, “giving thanks,” here in the nominative case, masculine plural spelling, reaches back to the second person plural verb πληρωθῆτε for its “subject,” in verse 9. It refers to the Colossians. As does also the second person plural pronoun ὑμᾶς, “you,” in verse 12. Its close proximity to ἡμᾶς, “us,” led to efforts to change it over to the first person form. See above discussion under text variants for details. A few ancient manuscripts substitute the pronoun with Κολοσσαῖς, “Colossians,” in order to clarify any potential misunderstanding. In this context, Paul is singling out the Gentile segment (ἔθνος, ethnos) of the Christian community at Colossae. He affirms the principle that non-Jews have the same status as do Jewish Christians in God’s family (cf. Rom. 3:29; Eph. 3:6).

The noun τῷ πατρὶ, “Father,” clearly refers to God as Father. In 1:2, God is the Father of believers. In 1:3, He is the Father of Jesus Christ. In 3:17, He is simply designated as Father.<sup>6</sup> The image of God as Father is rather frequent in this letter. Here the focus on Father stresses His relationship with His people. But the lack of specificity here prompted all kinds of “corrections” in the later copying of this text, as discussed above in the !:12 text variant section. What Paul stresses about God as Father here is affirmed by the participle phrase τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς, “who qualified you.” God has the power to make sinful Gentiles fit to participate in the inheritance promised to His saints.

<sup>6</sup>Although “Father” is the proper name of a specific divine person, the name may also be predicated of God’s essence, the essence in which each of the divine persons subsists. God in his being is first a Father to all human persons who, as image bearers, reflect the relation the Father has with the Son, who is the image of the Father. Second, God may be called “Father” because of the relation all creatures bear to him: every finite being receives its being from God, who is absolute being itself. Thus the order of God’s Fatherhood may be expressed from the most proper to most general like this:

**Father as personal name:**

- 1) Father of God the Son
- 2) Father of those united to the Son

**Father as an essential name:**

- 3) Father of image-bearing humans
- 4) Father of all creation

[Robert LaRocca, “God the Father,” in *Lexham Survey of Theology*, ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018).]

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The substantival adjective τῶν ἁγίων, “of the saints,” has a heavy Jewish tone and background: τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί, “participation in the inheritance of the saints living in Light.” Those who constitute the people of God will inherit an eternal existence with their Heavenly Father. To be sure, the Greek expression τῶν ἁγίων literally means the holy ones. This has led some interpreters to understand this as referring to the angels of Heaven, rather than the people of God. But this is very doubtful. The words of Paul recorded by Luke in Acts 26:18 are very similar to here, and clearly the people of God are in mind. Elsewhere in Colossians (1:2, 4, 22, 26; 3:12), it refers to the people of God.

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The first person plural pronoun ἡμᾶς, “us,” depends heavily upon the context for understanding who is referenced. The ἡμᾶς functions as the direct object of the verb meaning “has rescued.” What seems most likely is that Paul switches over to “us” in order to stress the action of the Father in rescuing and transferring through the work of His Son, Christ Jesus in dying sacrificially and being raised back to life. “Us” reaches out to include the Gentile converts at Colossae in God’s redemption along with Paul and Timothy.

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The phrase τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, “the Kingdom of His beloved Son,” is very unusual. The image of God as Father stands behind the image of Christ as Son. The image of Christ’s Kingdom, rather than God’s Kingdom, is also unusual.<sup>7</sup> The subject of the two verbs is the relative pronoun ὃς, “who.” It refers back to the Father and thus defines the actions of God. Since God’s people live in the Light (1:12), God’s deliverance takes those living under the control of darkness and places them in the Light of Christ’s reign over their lives. Thus in the climatic declaration of verse 14, it is in Christ (ἐν ᾧ) that we possess God’s deliverance (ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν). This deliverance is then defined as His forgiveness of our sins (τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν).

<sup>7</sup>In the phrase “the kingdom (βασιλεία) of his beloved Son” we note one of the few New Testament references to the kingdom of Christ, an interim period between the resurrection of Jesus and the final coming of the kingdom of God. Paul seems to have distinguished two aspects of the heavenly kingdom in the phrases “kingdom of Christ” and “kingdom of God,” the former referring to the heavenly kingdom in its present aspect, the latter concerning the final consummation (1 Cor 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; 2 Tim 4:1, 18; though some references have a more general significance: e.g. Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; Col 4:11).

[Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 44, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1982), 28.]

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## 1.2.2 Places

The spatial references in this text are somewhat more complex than the people references. The core participle εὐχαριστοῦντες that reaches back to the verb πληρωθῆτε (v. 9) assumes that the Colossians are engaging daily in prayers of thanksgiving at the time of the writing of this letter. This thanksgiving stands as validation of their spiritual status before God, even as non-Jewish converts to Christ.

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Where is God during this time? In verse 15, he is referred to as the invisible God (τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου). Jesus as the incarnation of God is the visible image of this God. But this was the earthly Jesus who returned back to the Heavenly Father in 33 AD. And yet this God is close enough to hear and respond to the prayers of the Colossians a couple of decades later.

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AEg13b.  
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What we are encountering here is the simultaneous existence of two dimensions of reality: the visible material creation and the invisible heavenly domain where God is. The first dynamic means existing in darkness. It controls humanity and will ultimately doom humanity to eternal darkness in Hell. In this domain, one lives in ignorance of God, as had been the case of the Gentile converts at Colossae before coming to Christ. The alternative domain, where God is, stands as Light (ἐν τῷ φωτί) in contrast to darkness (τοῦ σκότους). For Paul, to be in the Light means being under the reign of Christ in His Kingdom (τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ). Both these realms exist at the same time and will continue into eternity. Physical death signals the complete removal from the material world and transition into the non-material world. But God in the work achieved through Christ made the transition into the realm of God's reign possible in this life prior to physical death. This transition point in time Paul terms as redemption (τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν). This happens at religious conversion based on the apostolic Gospel. Thus as Christians, we live from then on in two realms simultaneously: our material existence and our spiritual existence.



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Physical death terminates our existence in the material world. But conversion to Christ begins our spiritual existence in relationship with the Heavenly Father as His people. With it, we begin a period of tension between the "already but not yet" dynamics of the Kingdom. Only physical death, and the return of Christ to this world at its termination point, move us completely into the realm of existence with God. The key to this spiritual existence is the liberation from darkness to light in conversion. Thus our redemption means that the guilt of our sinful existence in darkness has been forgiven through the blood of Christ. God comes through His Spirit to live in us.

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1.2.3 Time

References to time in 1:11b-14 are limited to indirect markers embedded in the tense forms of the verbal expressions. The present tense participle εὐχαριστοῦντες, "giving thanks," and the present tense verb ἔχομεν, "we have," denote ongoing processes of daily prayer and continuous possession.

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But the aorist tense verbals reference completed action in past time. The aorist tense participle ἰκανώσαντι, "enabled," "qualified," points to the conversion of the Colossian Christians, and especially to the Gentile segment. This is signaled by ὑμᾶς, "you," as its direct object. But the two aorist tense verbs in ἐρρύσατο, "rescued," and μετέστησεν, "transferred," reach farther back to the work of Christ in His death and resurrection. This is signaled by the switch to ἡμᾶς, "us," as the direct object. God in this dual action provided salvation to all who would convert to Christ through the preaching of the Apostolic Gospel.

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## 1.2.4 Events

The three aorist tense verbal expressions allude to two past time events:

- 1) the conversion of the Colossians “qualified you’
- 2) the work of Christ in death and resurrection  
“rescued and transferred us”

God enabled (ικανώσαντι) the Gentile converts at Colossae to participate in the inheritance of His saints. They were qualified in their conversion experience. This was based on the earlier provision of salvation for all who would come to Christ. This provision was a rescue (ἐρρύσατο) from the control of darkness. And it was a transfer (μετέστησεν) into the Kingdom of Christ, God’s beloved Son. The consequence of this is coming to possess redemption by Christ (ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν) which means the forgiveness of sins (τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν). The switch from “you” to “us” as the direct object signals the move from conversion to the Christ event. The pronoun ὑμᾶς, “you,” in verse 12 focuses on the Gentile converts at Colossae. But the pronoun ἡμᾶς, “us,” in verse 13 broadens the inclusion to include Paul and the Colossian converts as part of God’s people, who have benefited from what Christ did in His death and resurrection. The two verbs, rescued and transferred, are flip sides of the same coin of God’s provision of salvation.

The resulting condition that continues from these points is possessing redemption (ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν), coming to live in God’s light as His people (τῶν ἀγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί), and continuing to give thanks to the Father (εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ).

The following timeline emerges from 1:11b-14,

<●> -----<●>=====

Christ	conversion	ongoing joyful thanksgiving
event		as God’s saints living in Light

The two events of Christ and conversion are closely linked as the foundation for the ongoing life of daily thanksgiving for the Father’s redemption and forgiveness of sins.

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## 2.0 LITERARY ASPECTS

The literary aspects of this text can give us additional insights into its historical meaning. The caution here, in light of many failures by modern commentators, is not to find artificial forms and patterns that prop up modern theological structures and liturgy. Because of the heavy Jewish orientation and use of many of the words and phrases in both the Old Testament and intertestamental Jewish literature, the temptation toward such false identification of forms is significant.

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## 2.1 External: Literary Forms

The external search focuses on the connection of literary patterns in the text to similar patterns in the surrounding literature. Are there similar forms? If so, what is the role of such patterns? Context in an expanding circle is the key.

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The immediate context of 1:11b-14 is the long sentence of 1:9-20 in which the words of our text are found. As already concluded, 1:11b-14 is the second segment of this long sentence. The core idea of the sentence is Paul's promise of intercessory prayer for the Colossians ("we...do not stop praying for you and asking."). The ἵνα clause (1:9b-20) defines both the content and objective for this praying. In 1:9b-10a, Paul's prayer was that God would fill the Colossians with expanding knowledge of His will so that they would walk worthy of the Lord. Our text, 1:11b-14, stands as the fourth participial phrase that defines what constitutes a worthy walk. All four participles are in the Greek present tense which signals ongoing patterns of action.

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What is thanksgiving in Paul's understanding? The participle εὐχαριστοῦντες comes from the word group containing the verb εὐχαριστέω, "I give thanks," "I am thankful" (37 NT uses).<sup>8</sup> The noun form is εὐχαριστία (15 NT uses), and also denotes either the posture of gratitude or the action of expressing it. The adjective form is εὐχάριστος, -ον (1 NT use) and is only found in Col. 3:15 in the entire New Testament with the same double meaning. Being thankful and expressing it is heavily oriented toward Jewish religious practice. It was often linked to prayers of thanksgiving at meals. Jewish religious practice emphasized formal worship in the temple with thanksgiving. But in the less formal pattern of the weekly Friday evening meeting thanksgiving was an integral part of the prayers offered during the gathering. In public worship, one of the appropriate psalms would be used to express thanksgiving to God. But in the daily prayer life of the devout Jew, these psalms of thanksgiving could be prayed by the individual. Seldom were spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving offered up to God.

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But early Christian practice, even though at the beginning from 33 to around 50 AD when virtually all Christians were Jews, did not rigidly adhere to the Jewish practice of using the psalms of thanksgiving for their prayers. Spontaneous prayers, along with the reciting of an appropriate psalm, were offered up both in the gatherings, as well as by individuals in daily praying. With the explosive influx of non-Jews into the Christian movement, largely through the ministry of the apostle Paul, distinctly Christian expressions of thanksgiving began dominating prayers.

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Paul's use of the word group (verb 3 times; noun 2 times; adjective 1 time) in Colossians focuses on expressing thankfulness in both corporate worship and private devotions, but without requiring any formal pattern to be used. Gratitude to God was to be an ongoing posture of the believer that prompted repeated expression all through daily living. In particular, the present tense participle εὐχαριστοῦντες shows up in Colossians 1:12 and 3:17, as well as in Ephesians 1:16 and 5:20. But no set liturgy or pattern is implied in any of these uses. This stands in contrast to the contemporary

<sup>8</sup>Another word group, with the verb εὐλογέω and the noun εὐλογία, can have the meaning of giving thanks when a blessing is invoked. But Paul makes very limited use of this word group with the idea of expressing thanks to God. The verb εὐλογέω with this meaning of giving thanks shows up only in 1 Cor. 14:16. Both the noun and the verb, along with the adjective εὐλογητός, -ή, -όν, are used by Paul in their more basic sense of something good that God does to/for people. Or else, the more general sense of speaking of good words to God in prayer.



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Jewish sources which restricted thanksgiving to the use of specific psalms. This was especially the case with the thank offering in temple worship (e.g., Leviticus 7:12; 2 Chronicles 29:31; Psalm 56:12; Jeremiah 17:6).

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AEg18.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
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### 2.1.1 Identify the literary forms.

The one place where very set liturgical patterns of worship focused on thanksgiving was the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Here especially during the Thank Offering festival, one would encounter prescribed rituals of worship that included specified psalms to express thanksgiving to God. Expressions of thanksgiving were an important part of the Friday evening sabbath meetings in Jewish synagogues. But again only prescribed psalms emphasizing thanksgiving were included in the prayers.

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g18a.mp3\*

In the various Christian meetings across the Roman empire during this first century, thanksgiving was an important part of the gatherings in private homes. These expressions could come from chosen psalms, or be spontaneous expressions of gratitude lifted up to God. But equally important was the expression of thanksgiving in private devotions each day by the followers of Christ. Paul's instruction to the Colossians in our text stresses the use of thanksgiving but without any prescribed ritual form.

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AEg19.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
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**2.1.2 Analyze the role of the literary forms.**

In the various admonitions regarding thanksgiving in Paul's letters (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20; Romans 16:4), the general thrust is to possess a posture of profound gratitude to God and to regularly express it both in corporate worship and private devotions. In the biblical language of the New Testament, thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) is closely related to grace (χάρις). Thanksgiving is seen as the natural response to the coming of God's grace into the believer's life. As in most of the first century Jewish writings, so also in the New Testament, the expression of thanksgiving is often associated with meal time. Mostly Christians are to thank God for what He has accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ. Sinful humanity has been given a way out of enslavement to darkness and sin. Through Christ comes cleansing from the guilt of sinfulness and possession of Christ's protection under His lordship. Such a marvelous gift as this will prompt continuing expressions of thanksgiving by redeemed folks. Interestingly, the absence of thanksgiving is seen as an indication that one does not know God in a saving relationship.

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AEg20.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
GEg20.png\***2.2 Internal: Literary Structure**

The emphasis here is on the words of the original Greek text. A clear understanding of their meaning is essential. This necessitates a parsing of each word. Because we are looking at a text written in ancient Koine Greek originally, a close examination of the words has to be achieved in order to understand the meaning. But the words of the text are also inner connected in a sentence. Understanding how the words fit together to create ideas is likewise very important. Ancient Greek linguistically stands somewhat foundational to most all modern Western languages. Along with ancient Latin, ideas could be created at very precise levels of meaning. Much more so than with all modern Western languages. We are looking at this text through the lens of modern American English. Making this transition from Greek to English and maintaining an accurate sense of meaning is a huge challenge not just for Bible

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translators but also for Bible interpreters.

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### 2.2.1 Develop an understanding of the wording.

In the online commentary for Part One of this passage, each word is parsed out completely. A separate copy of the parsing of Colossians 1:11b-14 is also available at [the BIC1504 homepage at cranfordville.com](http://theBIC1504homepageatcranfordville.com). Now parsing simply means the identification of the different aspects of each word. Is it a noun, a verb, a pronoun etc.? Because ancient Greek was heavily inflected, the range of possible spellings for each word is massive, especially when compared to modern English which is the least inflected of all modern western languages. Those who have studied Koine Greek in your university training will well remember the very steep learning curve inherent in parsing the Greek words. In this video, we will not parse out each word. Instead, some observations from the parsing will be offered.

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1. The text contains 44 words including the articles.
2. 1:11b-14 stands as the second part of the sentence found in 1:9-20.
3. The text is structured around the participle εὐχαριστοῦντες meaning “giving thanks.” The present tense form stresses continuous action. This signifies the ongoing need for thanksgiving.
4. The related word for joy in the prepositional phrase Μετὰ χαρᾶς qualifies the participle by adding the tone of joy to the thanksgiving.
5. Thanks are to be given to the Father (τῷ πατρὶ). The unusual dative of direct object is used, rather than the normal accusative of direct object.
6. The remaining expansions of thought are attached to Father. These are the aorist tense participle ἰκανώσαντι (v. 12) and the parallel set of aorist tense verbs ἐρρύσατο and μετέστησεν in the compound relative clause in verse 13. The completed action nature of the aorist tense pushes the time frame of the action into past time in contrast to the present time of the main participle.

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7. The direct object ὑμᾶς, “you,” of the participle ἰκανώσαντι points to the prior conversion of especially the Gentile converts at Colossae.

8. The direct object ἡμᾶς, “us,” of the two verbs points farther back to the provision of salvation by God in the death and resurrection of Christ.

9. These two actions have enabled the Colossians and Paul to come into possession of redemption as signaled by the present tense verb ἔχομεν in the second relative clause.

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AEg22.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
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### 2.2.2 Assess the literary arrangement of the text.

Individual words don't show up in isolation from one another. They are connected to one another to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. In this way ideas can be set forth in written expression. The best way to visually illustrate this is through a Block Diagram. Here is a block diagram of our text:

| Μετὰ χαρᾶς

1:12 εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ

τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς

| εἰς τὴν μερίδα

| τοῦ κλήρου

| τῶν ἀγίων

| ἐν τῷ φωτί·

1:13

ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς

| ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας

| τοῦ σκότους

| καὶ

-- μετέστησεν

εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν

τοῦ υἱοῦ



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1:14

τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ,  
ἐν ᾧ

ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν,

| τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.

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Some observations about the diagram:

1. With this text, we are dealing with a participial phrase as the second segment of the long sentence in 1:9-20. The phrase actually extends through verse 20. But verses 15-20 stand as a citation unit that has been attached to this participle.
2. The foundational idea is “giving thanks to the Father.” This is stated as a present tense participle which states the idea as continuing action.
3. In the larger context of the sentence, this participial phrase stands as the fourth participle phrase that defines the worthy walk infinitive phrase περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου in verse 10.
4. The participle is itself modified by the prepositional phrase Μετὰ χαρᾶς that attaches the idea of joy to the participial action of giving thanks. This idea is related to Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 9:7, ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός, “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (NRSV).
5. The etymological connection among these word groups (εὐχαριστία thanksgiving; χαρά, joy; and χάρις, grace) is an important linkage of these ideas in the minds of first-century readers of this letter. Unfortunately, in translation this connection is lost. Together they produce the picture of a joyful giving of thanks for the gracious favor of God.
6. The close linkage of “rescued” and “transferred” is heightened with the two contrastive prepositional phrase modifiers: ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους, “out of the control of darkness,” and εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, “into the kingdom of His beloved Son.”
7. This “out of” and “into” structure sets up the summarizing term ἀπολύτρωσιν, “redemption.” The literal meaning of the term is to be set free from slavery to enjoy freedom.
8. Central to this divine deliverance is τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, “the forgiveness of sins.” The noun ἄφεσις literally means “the act of freeing from an obligation, guilt, or punishment, pardon, cancellation.”<sup>9</sup> The noun goes back to the verb ἀφίημι with the idea

<sup>9</sup>William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 155.

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EAg22b.  
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of separating something from something else.

9. The second relative clause introduced by ἐν ᾧ, “in whom,” attaches itself to υἱοῦ, “Son,” via antecedence. This clause then helps set up the citation found in verses 15-20 that focus on Christ.

10. The present tense verb ἔχομεν, stressing ongoing possession brings the depiction of action full circle back to the continuing thanksgiving. In between are the three completed action aorist verbs alluding to the work of Christ and the conversion moment of the Colossians. The profound continuous enjoyment of spiritual liberation prompts never-ending thanksgiving.

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AEg23.mp3\*BIC1504E-  
GEg23.png\***CONCLUSION**

Paul affirmed to the Colossians the central role that thanksgiving must play in our Christian life. Here in 1:9-20, continuous thanksgiving is perhaps the most important marker of authentic Christian existence. Biblical thanksgiving is deeply linked to the joyous celebration and praise of God. It is the natural response to receiving the grace of God that liberates us from the control of sin and darkness. All of this is possible only when we come to Christ in faith-commitment to Him. This was the good news of the apostolic Gospel that had been preached and taught to the Colossians by Epaphras prior to his trip to see Paul. The theme of such thanksgiving will periodically surface in the letter body as an extension of his words here at the beginning of the letter. Here thanksgiving emerges from two sources of action. First is the work of Christ in his death and resurrection. Second, is the conversion from a life of sin and darkness into status as God’s people under the lordship of Christ and who eagerly anticipate the inheritance of eternal life promised by the Heavenly Father.

There should be an easy transition of this historical meaning of the text to the modern application of it in sermons and teaching settings.

*List of  
Audio  
Files*

*Part One:  
Exegesis*

# C & L Ventures

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*List of  
Graphic  
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