

# Hyperlinks to Topics

## “Introduction”

“1.0 Identify the Central Idea of the Text” on page 2

“2.0 Develop an Exegetical Outline of the Text” on page 3

“3.0 Develop a Semantic Diagram of the Text”

on page 5

“4.0 Develop a Sermon Brief of the Text” on page 6

“5.0 Develop a Teaching Outline of the Text” on page 8

## “Summary Conclusion”

# VOLUME 15

# Colossians

# 1:1-2

# EXPOSITION



## English Edition

## Pericope 01



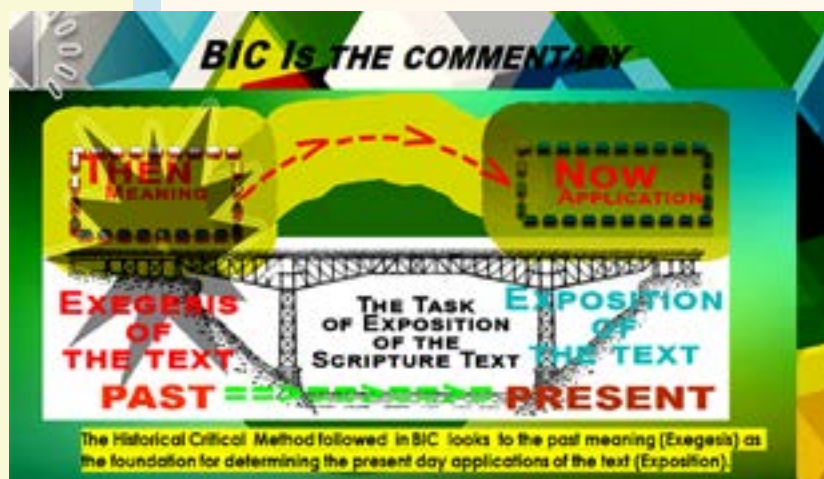
### INTRODUCTION

The term ‘exposition’ is used in the BIC commentary project to refer to the contemporary application(s) of the scripture text to the life of the targeted listeners as this scripture passage is being explained. It is built exclusively upon the foundation of the prior exegesis of the passage. The historical meaning of the text establishes the boundaries of potential applications of the scripture passage. Within these established limits, the range of relevant

applications of the passage are rather extensive. But finding legitimate applications is not the easiest aspect of the process.

A central hermeneutical principle is important to follow here. A commonly used label for this is ‘analogy of scripture.’<sup>1</sup> In simple terms, the more

<sup>1</sup>A major bridge across the historical-cultural gap is provided by analogies between the church Paul addressed and the church today. These analogies are not figments of our imagination, for they exist by virtue of the fact that there is basically but one church and but one Word of God. Preachers, therefore, need not construct analogies but uncover existing ones. This search requires a thorough understanding of both the church addressed by Paul and the church today. It requires cognizance of the question behind the text—the question to which Paul responded. [Sidney Greidanus, “Preaching from Paul Today,” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 741.]



alike the modern situation, being addressed, is to the ancient historical situation in the scripture text, the simpler and more direct the application. Conversely, the greater the distance between the ‘then’ and the ‘now’ meanings, the less applicational certainty there is. If no logical connection between the scripture text and some modern problem can be found, then the passage should never be used to address this particular modern situation.

The modern interpreter of the text must be aware of both his world and that of the text. The text must not be ‘bent into shape’ in order to force it to address the modern issues. Success in making legitimate connections comes about both with a lot of training and a lot of artistic skills. The guidance of the Holy Spirit here is very import-



ant.<sup>2</sup>

Now, let's seek to find legitimate applications of Col. 1:1-2 to our religious life today. The nature of the proposed actions listed below are not designed to generate a long listing of potential applications. Instead, they are intended to immerse the interpreter in several creative actions which can produce understood applications. Such conclusions then need to be carefully validated against the exegetical boundaries established in the part one exegesis.

### 1.0 IDENTIFY THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THE TEXT

From the part one exegesis insights come several pointers toward the basic idea set forth in Col. 1:1-2. Realization here of the literary form of a letter Praescriptio in the common pattern of ancient Greek letters sets up general boundaries for perceived meaning. The purpose behind the ancient Praescriptio, beyond serving to identify both the sender and recipients of the letter, was to establish a friendly tone of the letter sender toward the targeted recipients. The letter could inform the reader, but almost always requests or demands would also be made of the recipients. Given the often very formal nature of friendship in the first century world, a letter with lots of demands needed to get off on the right foot of friendship, and usually in more personal ways than possible with just formal friendship ties.

Thus given this insight, the words of Col. 1:1-2 should be understood in the context of friendship and care from Paul and Timothy for the Christian

<sup>2</sup>For more detailed guidelines on these analytical steps, see "Appendix 5: Steps to a Literary Structural Analysis of the Greek Text," *Learning Biblical Koine Greek*, volume 35 of the Biblical Insights Commentary at cranfordville.com: <https://cranfordville.com/gkgrma05.pdf>.

community at Colossae. This becomes even more significant in the realization that the apostle had never visited this community and only knew personally a few of its leaders. So he was writing to strangers who were different from him ethnically, socially, and career wise.

But they shared one core reality: they were spiritual brothers in Christ, ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, with God as their Heavenly Father, θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν. And this common bond superseded all of the differences. It gave them a common set of ethical and moral values. It immersed them into the common experience of life changing faith commitment to God and to Christ. It provided them with a common religious faith that set them apart from all other people. In other words, their spiritual lives shared being τοῖς... ἀγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, holy and faithful brothers.

The details of the verses affirm this general role of the ancient letter Praescriptio. When Paul then felt free to make strong requests of these Christians, he did so not just as a brother but also as an apostle, ἀπόστολος. That is, his calling from God was to be a leader of the Christian movement and to spend his life promoting the Gospel of Christ. The technical sense of ἀπόστολος as used here stresses first hand relationship with Christ and a commitment to follow this Christ wherever He led.

Timothy stood also as a brother, ὁ ἀδελφός, both to Paul and to the Colossians. His role as the actual composer of the words of the letter and as the explainer of the letter when he read it to the Colossians placed him in a special relationship both with Paul and with the Colossians.

At the heart of this message of salvation



stood God's grace and peace, χάρις...καὶ εἰρήνη. Communicating this message in greater detail was central to the motivation behind the writing of the letter. What does it mean to be ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ? Two sets of assertions flesh out this posture of being in spiritual union with the resurrected Christ. From the human obligation aspect it requires ἀγίου καὶ πιστοῦ, holiness and faithfulness. To be in God's family demands that His children live like He lives and are fully committed to Him. From the divine angle, there comes a continuous stream of χάρις... καὶ εἰρήνη, grace and peace. For this stream to continue coming to the Colossians in abundant manner is the apostle's prayer wish set forth at the outset of the letter in the Salutatio.

What does that have to do with us today? The formula expression of this Praescriptio abounds with timeless truths about the nature of salvation for God's people of all ages. Central to our religious experience is the relation of being in Christ, ἐν Χριστῷ. The demands coming out of this upon us are unchanged over the centuries. We must live like God, as His children. Holiness and faithfulness are essential traits of that lifestyle. We experience God's favor and blessing continuously with Him as our Father. And foundational to all this is the principle of brotherhood. The differences among us indeed are great and potentially destructive. But the commonality of us all being spiritual brothers overcomes these differences and brings us into a world-wide family of shared values and commitment to God. And Paul, as God's apostle, seeks to instruct us in the ways of Christ through the contents of this letter. He has every right to make demands but chooses to make them in the spirit of being our spiritual brother.

How can we summarize this in a short but

insightful sentence expression? Here is one approach. *With the full authorization to speak in behalf of God, Paul seeks to instruct us into the deeper aspects of being a spiritual brother sharing together the in Christ relationship.*

Once this CIT statement is finalized satisfactorily, then sermons and teaching plans need to be developed affirming this central principle. Just how this application is done will heavily depend upon the situation and the particular needs of the targeted listeners to the sermon or teaching session. The following four action plans, listed below, are intended to facilitate the communication of the stated central truth of this scripture passage. It is possible to develop multiple sermons and teaching plans from a single passage. Just one example of each will be provided in the commentary. And this is mostly intended to be a stimulus in order to encourage you to develop your own expressions. Be sure to make a permanent record of your work so that you can come back to it later on when working with this particular scripture passage.

## 2.0 DEVELOP AN EXEGETICAL OUTLINE OF THE TEXT<sup>3</sup>

This outline is based on the block diagram of the scripture text. Col. 1:1-2, is highlighted below with the core elements in **bold red print**, and the expansion elements in bold black print.

<sup>3</sup>For more detailed guidelines on these analytical steps, see "Appendix 5: Steps to a Literary Structural Analysis of the Greek Text," *Learning Biblical Koine Greek*, volume 35 of the Biblical Insights Commentary at cranfordville.com: <https://cranfordville.com/gkgrma05.pdf>.



## Superscriptio:

1. 1 **Παῦλος**  
 ἀπόστολος  
 Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ  
 διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ  
 καὶ

2 **Τιμόθεος**  
 ὁ ἀδελφὸς

## Adscriptio:

ἐν Κολοσσαῖς  
 ἀγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς

3 2 **τοῖς...ἀδελφοῖς**  
 ἐν Χριστῷ.

## Salutatio:

4 **χάρις**  
 ὑμῖν  
 καὶ  
**εἰρήνη**  
 ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.

Off of the above block diagram can then come the following exegetical outline. The two compound expressions can be taken as separate statements or as a unitary expression. We will take them as unitary for this work.

- I. A persuasive letter was composed by Paul and Timothy (1:1)**
- A. Paul based his role as sender on his apostleship**
- B. Timothy based his role on being a brother.**
- II. The letter was sent to the brothers at**

**Colossae (1:2a)**

- A. The brothers were among the residents of the city of Colossae.**
- B. The Colossian brothers were holy and faithful**
- C. The brothers shared spiritual union with Christ.**
- III. The senders prayed to God for the brothers as they said hello. (1:2b)**
- A. Continued grace and peace was requested for the Colossians.**
- B. God as Heavenly Father is the source,**

The threefold outline builds off the threefold Praescriptio structure of Superscriptio, Adscriptio, and Salutatio. The expansion elements provide the second tier of outline development. The wording of the Exegetical outline is past tense reflecting a historical understanding of the meaning of the text. It incorporates both direct evidence and indirect evidence which was developed in the Part One: Exegesis materials. A third tier of division is possible in two places. The holy and faithful modifying adjectives could be developed as separate statements. Thus outline section II. B. could be expanded into 1. holy and 2. faithful statements. In a similar way, outline section III. A. could be expanded into 1. Grace and 2. Peace. A third possible expansion of the outline could be made under I. A. where apostleship is expanded with 1. About Christ Jesus and 2. Through God's will.

The outline headings should be short, simple, full sentence summations of a perceived meaning of the text. Reducing the headings down to short phrases will create a tendency for cutside logic to take control, rather than the scripture text



to remain in control. If we genuinely value the interpretative principle *sola scriptura*, of the Bible as the preeminent authority for faith and practice of our Christianity, then we should consistently let this scriptural authority stand all the way through our work in outlining the passage. Complete sentence headings will force us to think through the scripture text meaning more accurately.

Testing out one's outline should include honest questioning of whether adequate attention was given to both the historical and literary aspects of the passage. Also, is there a clearer way of saying what you said? Once you are satisfied with the exegetical outline, then you are ready to jump across the bridge of time into your own world and the people you will speak to about this passage.

### 3.0 DEVELOP A SEMANTIC DIAGRAM/OUTLINE OF THE TEXT

The leap across time from 'then' to 'now' comes at this point in the interpretive process. The semantic diagram is an applicational outline focusing on the relevancy of the scripture text to some point of concern in our modern day. The simplest way of approaching it is merely to shift the past time headers in the exegetical outline into a present time header for the semantic outline. But often this approach won't work correctly. It is most feasible with a very direct applicational possibility for the scripture text.

Before writing out the semantic outline, careful thought needs to be given to the relevancy of the spiritual truths to our contemporary world. Again, some sense of just how much distance between the 'then' and the 'now' exists must be thought through. Another important aspect is a careful assessment of

the spiritual needs of one's audience. If the passage deals with moral or ethical issues, then the situation of the potential audience needs to be carefully analyzed. If, for example, marital unfaithfulness is the issue of the text, and, if this is a problem within the listeners to your preaching or teaching, then a rather direct application of the text is the way to go.

But if the text is dealing with doctrinal or conceptual ideas about who God is and you have folks hearing your sermon from this text, this will necessitate an application that addresses your audience's needs -- that also exist in the scripture text. But if the text deals in very general terms about the nature of God, then a relevant doctrinal sermon about God's nature will be in order from this text. One question to ask yourself. How much admonishment and how much informational emphasis typifies the scripture text? Such will shape the contours of your sermon. This is largely the difference between a doctrinal sermon and an action focused sermon.

Hopefully by this point something has become clear. Effective preaching is based on a real knowledge of your listening audience. Acquiring such knowledge means staying up with societal trends and cultural fads. Read, read, read the local newspapers, watch local TV news etc. But also be involved in the world that your audience lives in. Lots of time needs to be spent in the pastoral study. And lots of time needs to be spent rubbing shoulders with your people in their daily lives. Prof. Karl Barth's famous illustration of the role of the sermon remains relevant. The preacher should step into the pulpit with the Bible in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other. His task in the ser-



mon is to build connecting bridges between the two.

Now, what about Col. 1:1-2? How relevant is this scripture passage? From the exegesis of the passage, we uncovered assertions about salvation as clues for later discussion in the letter. We sensed both divine authority and brotherly love as motivating factors in the writing of the letter by Paul and Timothy as Christian leaders. Does your church need to understand better the meaning of their salvation? Do leaders in your church need a better grasp of motivations for leading the congregation? Do your people simply need greater understanding of how the documents of the Bible were written? These are a few of the possible perspectives in the passage that might have relevance to your listening audience. Prayerfully select the most relevant perspective to your audience, and then shape the Semantic Outline accordingly.

We will arbitrarily choose the theme of salvation as the applicational angle for the passage.

- I. *Salvation can be taught us by Paul's apostolic calling from God. (1:1)*
- II. *Salvation obligates us to a distinctive lifestyle centered in our union with Christ. (1:2a)*
- III. *Salvation flows out of God's continuing favor and blessing on us. (1:2b)*

This perspective centers on the central theme of salvation that is implicit in the scripture text. The exegesis established the legitimacy of this angle. Now the amplification of this theme can be developed in part by linking key words in 1:1-2 to the rest of the letter. For example, 1:9-14 expand the emphasis

upon holiness and faithfulness in 1:2a. Then 1:15-23 develops the role of Christ as the center of Paul's apostolic calling from God in 1:1. Also 1:24-29 expands the same calling from a different angle. This thematic emphasis will meet needs found in most congregations.

#### 4.0 DEVELOP A SERMON BRIEF OF THE TEXT

By definition a Sermon Brief is the beginnings of a full fledged sermon based on the chosen scripture passage.<sup>4</sup> The label Sermon Starter could just as easily be attached. It is not a complete sermon manuscript. But it represents the skeleton of what can be developed into a complete sermon ready to be preached. It would normally bear close resemblance to the wording in the Semantic Diagram above.

The elements of a sermon brief include the following:

- 1) A statement of the central idea of the text. This would be very similar to the previous Central Idea of the Text statement described in the above topic 1.0. The difference would be that this second CIT statement is more oriented to the application side of the interpretive process. For example in connection to Col. 1:1-2, here is the first CIT statement: *With the full authorization to speak in behalf of God, Paul seeks to instruct us into*

<sup>4</sup>For a more detailed discussion of Sermon Brief see "Sermon Report Form" for Greek 202/302 at cranfordville.com: <http://cranfordville.com/Ser-rpt.html>. The required reports described in this page go into more detail than we will here. What I am proposing here is an abbreviated form of the above Sermon Brief.



*the deeper aspects of being a spiritual brother sharing the in Christ relationship.*

But here is a restating of the CIT taking the semantic outline into consideration:

*From Paul as an apostle we can reliably learn the deeper implications of God's salvation both in terms of our obligations and God's provision in Christ.*

This should be relatively easy to develop after the first CIT has been written out. Remember that the more you wrestle with this in preparation, the clearer will be your presentation of these ideas to your audience.

2) Here is a sermon outline based on the semantic outline above.

### **Introduction**

*Work on grabbing the attention of your listeners right off the bat and then keeping them involved in your message. At some point share your goals for this message and a brief synopsis of the contents of the message.*

#### **I. Learn the true details of God's salvation. (1:1)**

*Explanation: stress the meaning of apostleship as an authority title here. This implies correctness of teaching in contrast to the false teaching addressed in chapter two*

*Illustration: the popular TV preachers as examples of false teaching about the Gospel.*

*Application: stress the importance of personal study of scripture in order to understand more.*

#### **II. Discover the implications of God's salvation. (1::2a)**

#### **Explanation:**

*Explain the meaning and connections of 'holy,' 'faithfulness,' and 'in Christ' in the Adscriptio section. The Part One: Exegesis materials will provide abundant resources. Don't forget the central role that 'brothers' play in the text.*

#### **Illustration:**

*The bonds of earthly brothers toward one another can provide an inspiring backdrop to this text.*

#### **Application:**

*Press your audience with the importance of meeting their obligations to God because of His provision in Christ.*

#### **III. Experience God's continuing favor and blessing on your life (1:2b)**

#### **Explanation:**

*Explain the very rich concepts of grace and peace in Paul's world and Koine Greek language. The LXX Hebrew words provide in depth understanding.*

#### **Illustration:**

*Contrast the modern ideas of grace and peace to the NT words of χάρις... καὶ εἰρήνη*

#### **Application:**

*Stress the importance of how divine grace and peace should change our outlook on each day.*

### **Conclusion**

One foundational principle of good speeches: tell them what you intend to say, say it, and then tell them what you said. The sermon conclusion should include the last part somewhere before ending the



sermon. In preaching, in contrast to speech giving, an appeal for action of some kind is appropriate. That appeal should be relevant to the theme of the sermon.

In a sermon, the outline forms the skeleton of the message. This you want your audience to take home with them. So work hard on creating memorable expressions that your audience will remember. The flesh on this skeleton is comprised of three elements: explanation, illustration, and application. The artistry of the preacher shines here in the differing creative ways these three elements are woven together in the sermon. You can stack them, blend them together, multiply them etc. The more creative you are here the greater will be the interest in hearing your sermon.

#### 5.0 DEVELOP A TEACHING OUTLINE OF THE TEXT

What is the difference between preaching a text and teaching a text? In Judea of the first Christian century, the answer would be not much difference at all. In the beginning days of Christianity, the influence of the Friday evening Jewish Sabbath meeting over the shape and contour of Christian meetings was profound. The worship patterns, along with the meeting structures of Christianity, were little more than a mirror of the synagogue Sabbath service. After prayers and the reading of pre-determined passages from the Hebrew Bible, the rabbi, especially a visiting guest of the synagogue, would be given the opportunity to make comments on the scriptures that had been read to the assembled group. His comments largely were drawing teachable principles and lessons from the sacred texts. The focus was on contemporary application, and not on establishing a

historical meaning of the texts. These ideas would be presented to the group and then followed by a question and answer discussion period. Quite typically, differing interpretive views on the scripture texts would be offered for discussion. The quoting of authority sources centered on citing a well known and highly respected rabbi either currently living or else one who had passed away sometime previously. John 1:38 defines the Hebrew 'rabbi' as teacher **ῥαββί**, ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνευόμενον **διδάσκαλε**, **rabbi**, which being translated means **teacher**. Mark 1:22 quite typically labels what Jesus said to groups as τῆ διδαχῆ αὐτοῦ, His teaching. But in 1:39, Jesus ἦλθεν κηρύσσων εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν, came preaching in their synagogues. Several Koine Greek words are usually translated as preach or proclaim: κηρύσσω, εὐαγγελίζω, παρρησιάζομαι, λαλέω, καταγγέλλω, ἀποδείκνυμι. Both Hebrews and James stand as examples of Jewish Christian teaching, or sometimes labeled as sermons. In fact, the writer of Hebrews labels the document itself (in Heb. 13:22) as τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, the word of exhortation.

But in modern Christian circles today, often a sharp distinction between preaching and teaching, sermon and teaching is made. Frequently one is viewed positive and the other negative. If what the pastor says from the pulpit seeks to inform the congregation about some Christian idea, he is teaching. But if he passionately raises his voice admonishing the group to take some kind of action, he is preaching. In both instances he might be speaking on the same subject, and even from the same scripture text. Thus the labels preaching and teaching have rather fluid definitions. And what the pastor does in the pulpit can be labeled either





# BIBLICAL INSIGHTS COMMENTARY



Slide 01

Slide 02

Slide 03

Slide 04

Slide 05

Slide 06

day School settings, a good teacher needs to push the listeners into verbal contribution to the 'discussion' of the lesson. All of these things together comprise teaching the scripture text in a modern view.

From this latter understanding, a teaching outline of Col. 1:1-2 will be offered as an example. The example is created as a MS Power Point Presentation. On the left side of the page is copy of the slides that form the presentation. It represents but one example of how a teaching outline can be developed from the Semantic Outline discussed above.<sup>5</sup>

Some observations behind the Teaching Outline that are helpful to understand.

- (1) The intended setting is a Sunday School class made up of senior adults. The vast majority are professing Christians who sometimes struggle to know how to best serve Christ at this stage of their lives.
- (2) The lesson title and outline focus centers on meeting understood needs among this age group in church life.
- (3) The assumption is that a high percentage of the group has read both the scripture text and the BIC Part One: Exegesis commentary in

as preaching or teaching by different individuals.

But in more recent trends in public school and university settings, teaching entails much more than delivering a lecture on a specific topic. This thinking then drifts over into church life as well. The older, more traditional understanding of a teacher as being a lecturer is being replaced by the newer view of a teacher doing much more than just talking to an audience. They must create learning aids such as power point digital presentations, printed handouts to be distributed to the listeners et als. In church Sun-

<sup>5</sup>For a copy of the PPP go to [BIC1502PEEgPresentation](https://www.biblicalinsightscommentary.com/BIC1502PEEgPresentation). Click on the hyperlink in order to gain access.

Slide 07

Slide 08



advance of the group meeting time. With some reflection on the materials in the commentary, there should already be some questions ready to be asked during the class discussion time.

**(4) *The format of the class time will be a combination of lecture and discussion.*** Statements of belief, historical and literary aspects of Col. 1:1-2, thought provoking questions designed to think new thoughts, and others are included with each slide. These are intended to generate discussion of questions beyond those already in the minds of the class members. They also will help keep the discussion from 'chasing too many rabbits' during the class time.

**(5) *The format of the slides is to provide first an outline with highlighted point for each slide.*** This is on the left side with the blue background. The larger section of each slide will contain the scripture text and the listing of questions etc. for discussion.

The learning goal for the lesson is that each person in the group will carry with them at the end of the class session a deeper understanding of the nature of salvation provided in Christ by the Heavenly Father. With that deeper understanding will also come hopefully a renewed enthusiasm for the Gospel message that is foundational to their Christian experience. Additionally, that the class members will find excitement for doing serious Bible study in the awareness that with the right tools in hand opening up the Bible to hear God speak is indeed exciting and something to eagerly anticipate.

The Teaching Outline divisions not only grow logically out of the Semantic Outline, but also seek to speak directly to spiritual needs in the life of each participant. That is, it tries hard to be genuinely biblical in its conceptual foundation and also to be truly relevant to real needs in the lives of the class mem-

bers. Achieving both with the ever present tension between these two objectives is not easy. But this we should always aspire to when teaching God's Word.

### SUMMARY CONCLUSION

In summing up the work on Col. 1:1-2 allow me to opportunity to underscore two main points. First, the interpretive methodology set forth the parts one and two on this scripture passage represents the insights gleaned from teaching a NT methodology PhD seminar for many years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. As I would tell each new group of seminar students, the goal is to train you in how to use the existing tools for interpretation so that you become knowledgeable of their strengths and weaknesses. But more importantly, out of that understanding you will formulate your own personal methodology that can serve you well in Gospel ministry. The methodology adopted for use in the BIC commentary project you need to develop some understanding of. But not as any final word on interpretive methodology. Use your understanding to develop your own methodology. Use it in your Bible study, and also write it down in written expression so that you can review it periodically. I completely trust the leadership of the Holy Spirit to guide you into the best possible procedure for your personal use.

The second major point centers on Col. 1:1-2. As the Praescriptio of the letter addressed to the Colossians, these verses provide us with an important introduction to the letter. Our study has underscored how this letter fits into the collection



of Pauline letters. We better know the circumstances that prompted the writing of this letter. And out of the expansions of the core elements in the Prae-scriptio, we are alerted to the coming discussions on different aspects of God's great salvation that He provided in Christ for sinful humanity.

Hopefully you have found encouragement to pay close attention to the words of each scripture text. The religious, moral, and social insights embedded into the scripture text have life changing power invested in them. With proper procedures for studying the text, God's Word can come alive in our lives as they did to those who first heard them read at Colossae.

