

COLOSSIANS 1:9-11 | PAUL'S UNCEASING PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS

VERSE 9 – BLUE

Because of the report of Epaphras, Paul and Timothy claim that **we...do not cease to pray for you**. Both their prayer and **desire** are for **the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**. This is the first of three major items in Paul and Timothy's prayer for the Colossians.

It is impossible to **be filled with the knowledge of his will** without being filled with the knowledge of His Word. And if you use the knowledge of His Word without right division, it is impossible to have **all wisdom and spiritual understanding**.

Note on the *Rightly Divided* color-coding. Unless noted otherwise, the first-person plural (we/us) will be taken as a reference to Paul and Timothy, and the second person plural (you/ye) as the Colossian church. Since the Colossian church includes both Jew and Gentile, we will take care to note if there is material which is only directed to the Jewish portion of the congregation. When no reason comes to separate the information between Jew and Gentile, we will assume that the material can be applied to the body of Christ, and thus is in blue print.

VERSE 10 – BLUE

Paul and Timothy desire that those in the Body of Christ **might walk worthy of the Lord**. This is the second of three items in the prayer for the Colossians.

The two signs of a worthy walk are **being fruitful** and **increasing in the knowledge of God**.

On **being fruitful**, Titus 3:14 says that **good works** are essential. Therefore, this must not be internal and spiritual fruit, but the results of good works. If a person doesn't have a **knowledge of his will** (v. 9), then their work, regardless of the effort put forth, will not be fruitful, because it will be against the purposes of God for this age.

On **increasing in the knowledge of God**, this is not a priority of the church today. The only way to know God is to know His Word, in which He is revealed. Many modern Christians would rather feel good about God than have knowledge of God. This is why books like "The Shack" are so popular.

VERSE 11 – BLUE

The third of three items in Paul and Timothy's prayer is that the Colossians would be **Strengthened with all might**. The word **might** comes from δύναμις [dynamis] which is often taken to be *physical power* (as in the English *dynamite*), but it should rather be considered as *inherently powerful* in the way that electricity or truth itself would be powerful (as in the English *dynamic*). This understanding fits in our day, which is an age of silence. Thus, God does not give us *physical strength* but gives us that which is *inherently powerful*: His Word and His will.

The strength comes from **his glorious power**, in which the authors use the word κράτος [kratos]. It is the word that is *power that is displayed*. Therefore, our power is a *dynamic* that comes from His display of force, which is recorded in God's Word. This dynamic should lead to **all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness**.

COLOSSIANS 1:12-14 | PAUL AND TIMOTHY REJOICE IN GOD'S WORK IN THEIR OWN LIVES

VERSE 12 – BLACK

Verse 12 presents a huge interpretive demand. First, who is **Giving thanks**? Are the Colossians to be **strengthened** (v. 11) and **giving thanks**? Or are Paul and Timothy praying (v. 9) and **giving thanks**? Though grammar allows either, I favor Paul and Timothy as those who are **giving thanks**.

With that interpretation, it is Paul and Timothy who are made **meet to be partakers of the inheritance**. Thus this phrase should not be taken as pertaining to the Colossians. This would be consistent with the first-person plural **us** as relating to Paul and Timothy. Those who would like to insist that the **us** is the Colossian church (and thus the Body of Christ) would have to explain why Paul used the second-person plural consistently in verses 9-11, then switches to the first-person plural in verses 12-14, then (after a parenthetical statement in verses 15-20) back to the second-person plural in verse 21.

The **inheritance of the saints in light** is defined in Matthew 25:34 as **the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**. The saints at Colossae would also have this inheritance because they are **saints in light**. If the **faithful brethren** (v. 2) and other Gentiles are also partakers of this inheritance, they would have to use another passage of Scripture as proof.

Why would Paul and Timothy need to be **made...meet to be partakers** when they were both Jews? Because there is evidence that both walked in darkness and disobedience. Paul persecuted the church and Timothy knew the Scriptures and yet still had not been circumcised. Such blatant rejection of God's Messiah and God's covenant instruction caused them to have **neither part nor lot in this matter** (borrowing the words of Simon Peter to Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8:21, nothing that the word **lot** is of the same root as **inheritance**.)

VERSE 13 – BLACK

This verse continues with the pronoun **us**, referring to Paul and Timothy. They had been **delivered...from the power of darkness**. This is in the aorist tense which speaks of a point-in-time deliverance and not an ongoing deliverance (in which case the perfect tense would have been used). Note that the verb is used in the aorist three other times (2 Cor. 1:10, 2 Tim. 3:11, 2 Pet. 2:7) and is always speaking of a singular delivery in the past. Almost always, preachers today take this verse in a "name it and claim it" fashion to claim deliverance from darkness for every believer today. Even Paul wasn't claiming that for himself, and certainly wasn't claiming it for the Colossians.

The word **translated** comes from the Greek μεθίστημι [*metahistami*] is *meta* (a change) and *histami* (to stand), thus *a change of standing*. This does not say that they are *in the Kingdom*, but rather are headed that way. The word **into** comes from *eis*, which "denotes motion *to or unto* an object, with the purpose of reaching or touching it" (*The Companion Bible, Appendix 104. vi.*). Paul and Timothy have *been given a change of standing, now aimed toward the kingdom*.

VERSE 14 – BLACK

It is God's **dear Son** (v. 13) that Paul and Timothy claim to **have redemption**. Note that they still use the second-person plural pronoun, **we**, thus it is a celebration of benefits that can be stated to be theirs alone, except with the use of other Scriptures which would broaden the application. Ephesians 1:7 (along with Zech. 9:11 and others) would broaden this to faithful Israel. Romans 3:24 would apply the same concept to Gentiles.

Paul and Timothy celebrate their **redemption** in Christ, which is equated as **the forgiveness of sins**.