

Colossians 2

Complete in Christ

Purpose of Letter to the Colossians Correct Heresy: False Teaching

- **Established in Ch. 1**

1. Jesus is God
2. Jesus Owns everything
3. Jesus Created everything
4. Jesus is Before everything
5. Jesus Sustains everything
6. Jesus is Head of His body the church
7. Jesus is Preeminent above everything. Simple yet deep/profound...

2 Corinthians 11:3 [Paul's heart] ...I fear as the serpent **deceived** Eve by his **craftiness**, so your minds may be **corrupted** from the **simplicity that is in Christ**.

- **Deceived** Beguiled. Cheated. Deluded
- **Craftiness** Subtle false wisdom. rt. Used skillfully to deceive
- **Corrupted** Defiled. To Pine/Waste/Shrivel/Wither away contrasted with...
- **Simplicity** Singleness of mind. Free of Pretense/Hypocrisy. rt. To be whole/sound

IOWs Sincerity of mind toward Christ...Single-hearted faith in Christ

- **Heretical Teaching**

1. Draws us from the simplicity found in Christ
2. Complicates/Confuses the only way of Salvation
3. Draws its victims to the false-teacher [Group/Cult/Religion/Philosophy]

They come with persuasive words/literature/lies/fake smiles
Excited to hunt you down as prey. To catch you that they might impress others of the same ilk

Galatians 4:17 They **zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you [from Christ] , that you may be zealous for them**. Cults, Isms, godless philosophes

They use the Same Tactics as Satan
Deception/Craftiness/Persuasion...Desire? An all out assault on Truth

Heresy: Lit. Act of Taking and/or Capturing with False Teaching
rt. To take for oneself. rt. To raise up. Initiated by pride

- **Act of the Flesh:** Inspired/Empowered/Sustained by Satan

Galatians 5:19 ...works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, **heresies**, 21 envy, murders etc...**those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

2 Peter 2:1 [Always been around and...] there will be **false teachers among you**, who will **secretly** bring in **destructive heresies**, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And **many will follow their destructive ways**, because of whom [heretics] the way of

truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will **exploit you with deceptive words**; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and **their destruction does not slumber.**

Jude 1:10 [Arrogant haters of authority] ...these **speak evil of whatever they do not know**; and whatever they know naturally, like **brute beasts**, in these things they corrupt themselves.

- **2 Heretical Doctrines** at the door of Colossi...
 1. **Gnosticism** You need to know these things to be saved
 2. **Judaism** You need to do these things to be saved

- **4 Subcategories here in Ch. 2**
 1. 8-13 Philosophy Need to Know
 2. 14-17 Religion Need to Do
 3. 18-19 Mysticism Need to Know
 4. 20-23 Asceticism Need to Do

...Deceptions hand-crafted by Satan for the purpose of drawing us away from Jesus
Paul hears these wolves are headed to Colossi and Laodicea

I. Persuasive Words

1 For I want you to know what a **great conflict** I have **for you** and those in **Laodicea**, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts **may be encouraged**, being **knit together in love**, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the **mystery of God**, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Paul hears of potential great danger and is agonizing
Sends comfort from afar: Letter written from prison to Colossi

- **Hearts Encouraged** Knit together by the draw string of love
- **Understand/Know** Mystery of Christ in us making us complete. No Jesus plus
- **Find In God/Jesus** All Treasures of Wisdom/Knowledge there for our taking

Become Complete: A promise heretics could never deliver

- **Wisdom Hidden in Christ** *a-pok-ru-phos*

[Paul's] very use of that word is a blow aimed at the Gnostics who believed that a great mass of elaborate knowledge was necessary for salvation. That knowledge they set down in their books which they called *apokruphos* because they were barred to the ordinary man. [Barclay] Yet Jesus is Savior of ordinary men

- **True Wisdom** Not hidden in secret books but in Jesus Christ and accessible
- **False Wisdom** Tempting carnal mind/Cannot deliver. Not neutral...but **satanic/deadly...**

Galatians 5:7...Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 **This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.**

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one **deceive** you with **empty words**, for because of these things the **wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

Romans 16:17b ...note those who cause **divisions and offenses**, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who... by **smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.** 19 [love is not enough] ...I want you to **be wise in what is good**, and simple concerning evil. 20 And the God of peace will **crush Satan under your feet shortly.**

All the treasures of all Wisdom and all Knowledge are in Christ
Not Philosophy, Religion, Mysticism or Asceticism...but in Christ

4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with **persuasive words.** 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your **good order** and the **steadfastness of your faith in Christ.**

- **Warning:** They have not come yet/They will come with persuasive words. Ripe for God's judgment

Matthew 12:36b ...for every idle word men may speak, **they will give account** of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be **justified**, and by your words you will be **condemned.**

- **Persuasive Words:** We have what you're looking in our teaching/group
- **Colossi Present Condition:** Two Military terms
 1. **Good Order** Standing shoulder to shoulder. Not competing.
 2. **Steadfastness** gr. *ster-eh'-o-mah.* /Firm/foundation

1 Corinthians 15:58b ...be **steadfast, immovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

They will come with Persuasive Words Contradicting the Word of God
How will they be ready? How can we be ready?

6 **As you** therefore have **received Christ** Jesus the Lord, **so walk in Him**, 7 **rooted** and **built up** in Him and **established in the faith**, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

We received Jesus by faith...We live in Christ by faith
IOWs Ch.1: **Know** the will of God/**Do** the will of God

- **Rooted:** Roots down deep into the water of the Word

Psalms 1:3 [Godly man/woman/youth] ...shall be like a tree **Planted by the rivers of water**, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

- **Built Up:** As a house build on firm foundation

Matthew 7:25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, **for it was founded on the rock.**

If you are not actively seeking God's will and thus not walking in obedience to His will you are in real danger of being deceived by persuasive words [NJC]

- Paul heard Colossi was ready...

You are Established in the Faith...Walking in what you've been Taught
Be thankful you know the Word *because here they come...*

II. Philosophy

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through **philosophy** and **empty deceit**, according to the **tradition** of men, according to the **basic principles** of the world, and not according to Christ.

Don't be ripped off by man-made Philosophy. Cheated of what can make you whole

- **Philosophy:** Love of wisdom
 1. **Wisdom of God** Fear of God God-centered
 2. **Wisdom of Man** Humanism Man -centered

A true philosopher is a Seeker after truth, but truth is not found in human wisdom. Christ is the answer to philosophy. False philosophy is like a blind man looking in a dark room for a black cat that isn't there - there is no hope for its search for truth. Paul warns the Colossians to be aware of this. [McGee]

- **Cheated by Tradition:** Heresy w/mix **old religious ritual/new ideas**. Cafeteria style
- **Cheated by Basic Principles...**

Common to both Jews and pagans was the basic idea of cause and effect and in a sense it rules nature and the minds of men. We live under the idea that we get what we deserve; when we are good, we deserve to receive good; when we are bad, we deserve to receive bad. Paul warned the Colossians to not subject themselves to this **grace-eliminating kind of thinking**, and to consider themselves dead to it.

Let no one rip you off with man-made godless Philosophy
A path never leading to what we really need. **To be made complete in Christ...**

9 For **in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**; 10 and you are **complete in Him**, who is the **head of all principality and power**.

In him dwelleth all the *pleroma* - this is a clear-cut statement of the deity of Christ it could not be stated any stronger than it is here in him dwells all the fullness of the godhead. [McGee]

In Jesus dwells the fullness of the Godhead
Father, Son, Holy Spirit. One God/Revealed in Three Persons

- **We are complete in Jesus:** Ready to live navigating life's ups/downs

The word *complete* is a nautical term that can be translated in a very vivid way: You are ready for the voyage of life in Him. Isn't that a wonderful way of saying it? [McGee]

[Complete in Jesus] A fact to be enjoyed, not a status to be achieved. [Guzik]

- Godless philosophy is not neutral but deadly
 1. Marxism/Naziism
 2. Socialism/Communism
 3. Atheism/**Humanism...**

On Friday's broadcast of HBO's "Real Time," host Bill Maher said...pro-lifers believe abortion is "**murder, and it kind of is. I'm just okay with that. I am.** There [are] 8 billion people in the world, I'm sorry, **we won't miss you.** That's my position on that." [April 12th 2024]

Romans 1:20 ...since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but **became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools...**

The final destinations of humanistic philosophies are pride followed by insanity and culminating in spiritual death [NJC] Yet...

Jesus offers Life and Life Abundant. We are complete **in Him...**

11 **In Him** you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the **sins of the flesh**, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 **buried with Him** in baptism, in which you also were **raised with Him** through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being **dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses...**

- **In Him we were circumcised:** Freaked out the new Gentile believers?
- **Past tense: Were circumcised** I.e. When they believed they were spiritually circumcised

The moment they believed: Dead Fleshly Nature was Crucified on the Cross

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither [physical] circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a **new creation.** [Circumcision of the heart done by God]

- **In Him we have sweet communion...**

1. **Buried** with Him Repentance
2. **Raised** with Him Salvation
3. **Made alive** with Him Filled with His Spirit to lead Spirit filled life...

Stoicism can't do it... Epicureanism won't work
We are complete in Jesus who forgave all of our sin

- **Greatest Philosophers:** Without Jesus...Dead even while they lived
- **All born Dead in Trespasses:** Not restoration/rehabilitation...regeneration/renewal

Ephesians 2:1 ...even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ

Stoics and Epicureans both tried to deal with the problem of the flesh and failed. Holiness is not found in trying harder or in ceasing to try at all...Holiness is found in intimacy with Jesus as we yield to His Holy Spirit within us [NJC]

- Philosophy can never make us complete
- **Religion can never make us complete**

III. Religion Legalism

14 [Jesus] having **wiped out the handwriting** of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And **He has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- **Handwriting of Requirements** Law of God nailed to cross/Indictment of our guilt
- **Requirement was against us?** Must be kept perfectly or Judgment
- **Only Remedy?** **Jesus...** taking our judgment on the cross

The Slate of Accusations against us is Clean

Jesus has obtained *for us* a legal discharge from the hand-writing of ordinances, which was against us [Henry]

Heresy: Jesus Plus the Law [Religion]

The Law could never save because we could never keep it

Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant [Law] had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second [Grace] ...**13** In that He says, "**A new covenant**," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and **growing old is ready to vanish away.**

- Adam/Eve did not have the Law of God yet walked in intimacy with God
- In the same way we as a New Creation now have no need of Law

My friend if God has saved you and raised you from the dead and joined you to a living Christ why should you go back to the law that you couldn't keep in the first place? You can't even keep the law today in your own power and in your own strength you see the law was given to discipline the old nature. But now the believer is given a new nature and the law has been removed as a way of life. [McGee]

16 So let **no one judge you** in food or in drink, or regarding a **festival or a new moon or sabbaths**, 17 which are a **shadow of things to come**, but the **substance is of Christ.**

Hebrews 10:1 For the law, having a **shadow of the good things to come**, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? ...**9b [Jesus] takes away the first that He may establish the second ...11** [IOWs] every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which **can never take away sins**. 12 But this Man, after He had offered **one sacrifice** for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God ...**14** For by one offering **He has perfected forever** those who are being sanctified.

Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the **curse of the law**, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")**14b...**that we might receive the **promise of the Spirit through faith.**

Ephesians 2:15 [Jesus] ..having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances...**16** and that He might reconcile them both [Jew/Gentil]to God in **one body through the cross...**

The Old man cannot be rehabilitated/reformed...Must be killed. Crucified with Christ
Then Filled with New Wine of the indwelling Holy Spirit...Christ in us

Romans 7:6 But now we have been **delivered from the law**, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the **newness of the Spirit** and not in the oldness of the letter.

- **Messianic Movements.** Wouldn't suggest it. We are complete in Christ without ceremony/festival

[Legalists] ...thought themselves wiser than their neighbors, in observing the law of Moses together with the gospel of Christ, that they might be sure in the one, at least, to be in the right; but, alas! it was but a **show of wisdom, a mere invention and pretense.** [Henry]

Adding to the Cross nullifies the Cross
Without the Cross...There is no Salvation

- **People will challenge us:** Why don't you keep the OT Sabbath?

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which **Christ has made us free**, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage [to the law we can't keep].

Stop working for Jesus and start walking with Jesus so the work actually gets done. Isolation/Introspection can never make us Holy. Walking with Jesus as He loves people through us sets us apart from the world. **IOWs** The closer we get to Jesus the more we will find ourselves keeping the moral law and walking in practical holiness...but not by trying harder. That's nothing...at best. [NJC]

- Philosophy can never make us complete
- Religion can never make us complete
- **Mysticism can never make us complete**

Job 4:12 [Eliphaz to Job. Hyper-Spiritual] Now a word was secretly brought to me, And my ear received a whisper of it. 13 In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, 14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, Which made all my bones shake. 15 **Then a spirit passed before my face;** The hair on my body stood up.

IV. Mysticism

18 Let no one **cheat you** of your reward, taking delight in **false humility** and **worship of angels**, intruding into those things which **he has not seen**, vainly puffed up by his **fleshly mind**, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and **knit together** by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Sages and mystics have little knowledge of the Bible... so they make things up

- Cheat you from the reward of Truth
- **Recognize these Mystic Heretics by...**
 1. False Humility
 2. Unbiblical Practices
 3. Fantastical Testimonies of things that never happened

Proud Fleshly Make-Believers

When these strange, mystical movements arise in the church, they don't appeal to the whole body, but only to a few "elite" Christians. This is not the cause under the Head, Jesus — He wants all the body to grow together. [Guzik]

Proud Fleshly Make-Believers

Used to Pop Up in Churches...Now inmates running the Asylum

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be **turned aside to fables.**

- **Why? Not holding fast to the Head/Brain**

Not holding on to the Head means that such people have a loose relationship with Christ... in other words their head is not screwed on as it should be by the way. [McGee]

- Philosophy can never make us complete
- Religion can never make us complete
- Mysticism can never make us complete
- **Asceticism can never make us complete**

The practice of strict self-denial as a measure of personal and spiritual discipline: Rigorous abstention from self-indulgence. Stoics

V. Asceticism

20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—
21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

- **Therefore since...**

1. We are complete in Jesus
2. We are Nourished/Knit together by His Spirit

Why do some supposed "saved by grace Christians" look like they had lemons for dinner?

IOWs I'm holy because of the *things I don't do*...Yep, you're wholly Miserable

- Didn't Jesus tell us to deny self? **Yes.** Deny acts of flesh/Keep Eternal Moral Law
 1. Not to climb up some non-existent spiritual ladder of man-made rules
 2. Not in competition w/others/Not for looking down on others

23 These things indeed have an **appearance of wisdom** in **self-imposed religion, false humility,** and **neglect of the body,** but are of **no value against the indulgence of the flesh.**

Asceticism/Trying Harder: Of the World/Devil and Flesh. And...
Because it is sin...It has no power to keep us from sin

- Philosophy can never make us complete
- Religion can never make us complete
- Mysticism can never make us complete
- Asceticism can never make us complete...We are complete in Jesus

God desires that we walk in His Spirit enjoying His presence as He freely gives us the desires of our hearts. Walking in the reality of being **complete in Christ** is the most fulfilling life a human being can live. [NJC]

Hold fast to the simplicity that is in Christ
In Christ the Solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand