

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

COLOSSIANS 1-2

The last pagan emperor of Rome was Flavius Claudius Julianus. He died in 364 AD. And his dying words were revealing, “[You have conquered, Galilean.](#)”

Julian’s quote was a reference to Jesus... *and an admission of defeat.* The Emperor realized that in just 300 years, Christianity had overwhelmed paganism and prevailed as the leading religion of the Empire.

Pagan Rome had become **Christian Rome.**

Yet now who would’ve thought that today - in the early 21st century - we’d be witnessing a revival of ancient, Roman paganism. It’s making a comeback...

Realize, paganism is the attempt to tap into and manipulate the power of God, *without any real allegiance to God.* It’s an *amoral spirituality.* It requires no *love of God* or *loyalty to God.* In paganism there’s no such thing as truth, orthodoxy, or right belief. God is reduced to a cosmic blessing dispenser. You just plug in the right prompts, and get out the desired result.

Today, paganism goes by the title, “[The New Age,](#)” or “[New Spirituality](#)” or “[Post-modern Spirituality.](#)” It claims various spiritual techniques for self-betterment: *meditation, good karma, centered breathing, positivity, astrology, crystals, visualization.* Paganism promises esoteric or divine knowledge apart from the Bible.

Yet remember the wise words of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 1:9, [1:9](#) “[There is nothing new under the sun.](#)” We’ll learn today that much of what is our modern spirituality was also found in the first century town of Colosse. The Bible exposes New Age religion as not new at all. [The New Age is a repackaging of an old lie.](#)

Chapter 1 begins, [Colossians 1:1](#) “[Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother](#) [1:2](#) [to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.](#)” Colosse was a small Greek village in what is today western Turkey. It rested on a hill 100 miles up-river from Ephesus. Colossians was the only letter Paul wrote to people he’d never visited.

The Church in Colosse was probably a byproduct of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus. One of the converts was a man from Colosse, named *Epaphras.* After he became a Christian, Epaphras went home to start a church.

The Colossians’ faith flourished... *until false doctrine put a chokehold on their growth.* Pastor Epaphras, himself a new Christian, realized he needed help, so he traveled 1000 miles to Rome, to consult with Paul.

So, from a Roman prison Paul pens this defense of Christian orthodoxy - while dissecting the Colossian heresy... a form of paganism later called **Gnosticism**.

He continues in verse 3, ^{1:3} “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you...” And here’s the greatest gift you can give a person: **prayer**. Paul was praying for the Colossians, ^{1:4} “since we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and of your **love** for all the saints; ^{1:5} because of the **hope** which is laid up for you in heaven.” Notice, **faith, hope, love**.

Commentator, RC Lucas refers to “**faith, hope, and love**” as “*apostolic shorthand*” for genuine Christianity. These are the marks of a real relationship with God.

The Colossians were flirting with dangerous doctrine, but this didn’t nullify the good and godly in them. Paul saw *problems*, but he also saw *potential*. He writes too correct, but first he acknowledges what was right.

Notice verse 6, the Colossians had rested their hope on the Gospel. He says, ^{1:5} “of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, ^{1:6} which has come to you, as it has also in all the world...” The year was 62 AD. Just 30 years had elapsed since Jesus’ resurrection... Of course, this was before the days of motorized travel, printing presses, radio, film, internet.

Jesus had left the Gospel in the hands of a few fishermen all gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. *What kind of progress would you have expected?*

Amazingly, in just three decades no corner of the Mediterranean world was untouched by the Gospel. In verse 6 Paul writes everywhere it went it was ^{1:6} “**bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; ^{1:7} as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ^{1:8} who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.**” Whenever believers *embrace God’s grace* spiritual fruit results...

Verse 9, ^{1:9} “**For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you...**” *And pay attention to **how** Paul prays for the Colossians...*

^{1:9} “**And to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ^{1:10} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ^{1:11} strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power...**”

We usually pray for a person’s physical health and happiness. Our praying focuses on their material welfare... *But Paul prays for their spiritual condition!* **Not for frills, but to know God’s will. Not to walk safely, but to walk worthy. Not for fluff, but for fruit. Not for an increase in income, but an increase in insight. Not for possessions, but for power...** If you pray for this pastor, I hope you’ll mimic Paul’s prayer for the Colossians!

Also pray, ^{1:11} “for all patience and longsuffering with joy...” We should ask God to help us endure difficulty - *and not begrudging* - but with a smile - ^{1:11} “*with joy!*”

^{1:12} “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” None of us are on probation with God. In Christ we are fully qualified to partake of His blessing...

For ^{1:13} “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love...” The image is of a victorious general relocating his defeated foes. We’ve been conquered by Jesus, who transfers us from darkness into His rule of love.

Verse 14, ^{1:14} “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Christianity vanquished Roman religion for it satisfied a need in the human heart paganism could never touch. Greek gods were cruel and vindictive. They hurled thunderbolts from Mt. Olympus. A Roman would sacrifice to his gods to *keep them off his back, and out of his life.*

But this Christian God hung on a cross because He loves and wants to forgive us. His desire is to set us free and restore us to what we were meant to be. **This love was irresistible**, and it defeated the pagan beliefs of Rome, *just as it’ll triumph over the forces today that oppose it...* “You have conquered, Galilean.”

But Paul is getting ahead of himself... before he extols what Jesus did, he first expounds on who Jesus is. From verses 15-19 Paul provides us one of the Bible’s most majestic descriptions of Jesus’ deity.

In fact, if we were reading in the original language we’d notice a rhythm. Scholars believe these verses made up a well known hymn sung in the early church. Apparently, these truths were so vital Paul set them to a catchy beat so they’d be easier to remember...

And each of Paul’s points corrects a heresy being preached in the church at Colosse - it shoots down a pagan assertion. Thus, to appreciate *what Paul is teaching*, we need to understand *what he’s fighting...*

One of the pagan ideas being taught in Colosse was that of **dualism**. Roman pagans believed that both good and evil are eternal. The material world is evil, while the spiritual world is good. And thus, since God is spirit and holy, He could never handle anything material or evil. And this complicated His creation...

Since the Creator couldn’t touch anything tangible, *He created by proxy*. God sent out “*emanations*” - or *personifications* of Himself - to do the dirty work.

These reverberations or revelations of God were like a rock splashing into a lake and creating ripples. Each ripple was a little less divine than the one before it, until

finally a ripple evolved that didn't even know God - it was completely evil - and thus, could create the world.

The heretics in Colosse believed the “pleroma” or “fullness” of god - the divine essence, *that which makes god God* - was chopped up like a fine pepper, and sprinkled out over the entire religious spectrum.

This made Jesus one of many emanations - along with other gods, and angels, and gurus, and holy men. The Colossians said there was nothing unique about Jesus of Nazareth. He was just one of many links to God. The heretics believed god could be found anywhere, in anything. *Sounds like today's paganism.*

And because spirit is good and matter is evil, if Jesus was the Son of God He could've never created the physical universe, **or inhabit a fleshly body**. This is why the heretics opposed the humanity of Jesus.

Realize, no one living in the first century denied Jesus lived. There was too much evidence supporting His existence, but they said Jesus came as a ghost or phantom. They concocted fanciful tales of Jesus walking on the beach, but leaving no footprints. John addressed these lies when he wrote in 1 John 1:1, *1:1 “That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life.”* Jesus did come in human flesh. John touched Him.

Later John directly joins Paul in refuting the heresy infecting Colosse. *1 John 4:3 “Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.”*

And we can see where this heresy was going, if Jesus didn't come in flesh and blood He couldn't have been crucified. False teachers in Colosse had denied the role of the cross in salvation. This is why Paul wrote in verse 14, of “redemption through His blood.”

Rather than salvation by the cross of God's only Son, the heretics in Colosse believed salvation came through *spiritual enlightenment* or “gnosis” - the Greek word for “knowledge.” They taught a person needed the hidden knowledge of God's many emanations.

In later years, the Colossian lie grew into a heretical system called “Gnosticism.” Jesus was not the end-all revelation of God, but merely a starting point in a quest for spiritual discovery. They rejected Jesus as Lord.

Like neo-pagans today the Colossians, and the *later Gnostics, were looking for God in all the wrong places.*

So in verse 15 Paul counters the falsehood in Colosse with a magnificent portrait of the truth about Jesus... He begins, ^{1:15} **“He is the image of the invisible God.”** The term **“image”** means **“exact representation.”**

Not just alike in form, but in substance. A stone statue is similar *in shape* to its human subject, *but stone isn't flesh*. The two objects are not comprised of the same stuff... Likewise, Jesus was not only God's look-alike, He was of the same substance as the Father. **What God is, Jesus is.** Jesus is fully God.

And He is ^{1:15} **“the firstborn over all creation.”** The chief Gnostic theologian would be a heretic named Arius. In the third century Arius used this verse to infer that Jesus was a created being - and not truly divine.

Arius said, *“Jesus was ^{1:15} “first-born” - thus, to be born meant he was created - and if created; He couldn't be Creator - and if not the Creator; then He wasn't God.”* Today, Jehovah's Witnesses echo this Arian heresy.

But the early church fathers, at the Council of Nicea, headed by Athanasius, correctly explained that the term ^{1:15} **“firstborn”** referred more to status, than birth order. Exodus 4:22 called Jacob the ^{Exodus 4:22} **firstborn**, even though he was born after Esau... In Jeremiah 31:9 Ephraim is ^{Jeremiah 31:9} **firstborn**, over his older brother Manasseh...

Biblically speaking, ^{Colossians 1:15} **firstborn** is a title of authority and preeminence. Thus, as ^{Colossians 1:15} **“the firstborn over all creation,”** Jesus is not part of God's creation, but over it all. Jesus occupies first position. In NASCAR terms, **He sits on the pole.** Jesus is CEO of all God's creation...

Verse 16, ^{1:16} **“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.”** What we see through either **microscope** or **telescope** was created by Jesus. As one theologian puts it, **“There is not a square inch of creation about which Jesus does not cry out, This belongs to me!”**

And I love the next line, ^{1:16} **“All things were created through Him and for Him.”** Have you ever wondered, **“Why you were created? Why do I exist?”** Here we're told. We were created **through Jesus...** and **for Jesus.**

If I drove my truck into the ocean I wouldn't get very far... for my truck was not made for underwater travel. *If I drove it off a cliff I would crash...* for my truck isn't made for in-air flight... But on the freeway my truck does fine, because that's what it was designed to do.

And likewise, you were not designed to simply *work, and play, and party, and earn, and spend, and save, and sex, and sleep, and eat, and toil, and try, and sweat, and cry, and eventually die.* You were designed for more. You were created **for** Jesus, and you'll never know real fulfillment apart from a relationship with Him.

Verse 17, **1:17 “And (Jesus) is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”** Jesus is not only the *Creator* of the universe, but it's *Sustainer*. He holds it together.

Coulomb's law of physics states **“like charges repel.”** Yet at the nucleus of every atom there's a cluster of protons - with like charges. *What binds them together? What is the mysterious atomic glue?* The Bible says it's Jesus!... He holds all things together, *and not just atomically* - He's holding together my life, my family, my sanity, my schedule, my health, and my ministry!

2 Peter 3:10 tells us that one day **2 Peter 3:10 “the elements will melt with fervent heat.”** In the future the Sustainer, Jesus, will release His grip, and the physical universe will vaporize. It ushers in a new heaven and new earth.

Colossians 1:18 “And He is the head of the body, the church...” *Who is the head of Calvary CSM?* Not the pastor, or elders, or the congregation... or even the church secretary!

Jesus is our CEO! *And why wouldn't we want Him to be?* I'm a human with clay feet - *He's God...* I can't get grass to grow in my yard - *He's the Creator...* I get tired walking up a steep hill - *He sustains all things...*

1:18 “Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead...” In the Bible numerous people were miraculously raised from the dead, but Jesus is the only one resurrected never to die again. *He's overcome death.*

1:18 “That in all things He may have the preeminence.” Add it all up and Jesus isn't just a ripple from the original splash. He is the big splash. Jesus is the Rock.

And He needs to be treated as such! Stop playing games with Jesus. Stop toying with the Son of God!

We all need to look on the top shelf of our life and if there's anything there other than Jesus *knock it off!* It's where it doesn't belong. Clear off the top shelf, and make certain nothing is crowding out or rivaling your loyalty to Jesus! Jesus isn't just a slice of the pizza we call life - He's the cheese that covers all the pizza. As I like to say, **Jesus is the Big Cheese.**

Verse 19, **1:19 “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell...”** The word **1:19 “fullness”** is the Greek term **“pleroma.”** The heretics taught the fullness or essence of God was sprinkled out, but Paul says no, it's found in one place - in fact, in one person - Jesus!

Jesus is the sum total of all that is God. The knowledge of God isn't scattered about. It's *in Christ.*

1:20 “And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Verse 21, 1:21 “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 1:22 in the body of His flesh through death...” As I explained, Greek Dualism rejected the idea of God assuming human flesh. Yet the wages of sin is death, so to *pay sin’s debt*, Jesus needed a body that could bleed. It’s by His blood He reconciles us to God, verse 22, 1:22 “to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.” Jesus suffers shame so we can appear before God 1:22 “*holy and blameless...*”

1:23 “**If...**” and yes, there is an *if!* According to verse 23 salvation is conditional. It’s 1:23 “**If indeed you continue in the faith...**” God’s requirement for us to be saved is not just faith, we’re to 1:23 “**continue in the faith!**” Faith is not a one time profession, it’s an attitude in which I persist.

This verse and others like it teach us that saving faith isn’t just a faith that believes once, and expires. It’s a faith that keeps on believing. True faith perseveres. Believers become 1:23 “grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

Verse 24, 1:24 “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church...”

Here’s a hotly debated verse. Roman Catholics use verse 24 to foster the idea of purgatory. That in purgatory we suffer for sins done in this life to purify ourselves for heaven. Meaning, the cross of Christ isn’t sufficient for salvation. Thus, we have to 1:24 “**fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.**” Yet this is surely not the proper interpretation. For on the cross Jesus said of *His suffering and our salvation*, John 19:30 “**It is finished.**”

The only suffering Jesus still endures is the persecution aimed at His Body, the Church. Recall, when Jesus met Paul on the Road to Damascus, He asked him, Acts 9:4 “**Saul, why are you persecuting ME?**” Saul was hassling the church, but Jesus took it personally.

And this is how He still suffers - *not physically, but empathetically*. When believers suffer for Jesus’ sake, we are sharing in or filling up the afflictions of Christ.

Paul speaks of the Church, Colossians 1:25 “of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 1:26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 1:27 To them God willed to make known what are the

riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles (and here's the mystery God revealed to the Church through Paul): which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"

And this is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions. Christianity is not a philosophy I learn - or rules I obey - *it's an occupation of the soul*. Christ comes to live in me! It's not *imitation*, but *impartation*.

I can watch Lebron dunk a basketball a million times, and never be able to do it myself. I'm never going to play like Lebron through careful *imitation*... But what if you took the spring in Lebron's legs and put it in mine - *impartation*? At least, I'd be dominating 50-and-overs.

And likewise, it's impossible for me to consistently live the Christian life by simple imitation. If I don't have it in me, I won't consistently live it out. Christianity is more than *imitation*. **Christ in me** is ^{1:27} "*the hope of glory.*"

Paul adds in verse 28, ^{1:28} "*Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*"

This term ^{1:28} "*perfect*" means "*mature.*" Paul isn't saying we'll be flawless, but we can grow up. We can lay aside deception and walk in truth. This was Paul's goal for the Colossians. ^{1:29} "*To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*"

Chapter 2, ^{2:1} "*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...*" Paul had never personally met his readers. He's writing to believers in sister cities. Colosse and Laodicea were in close proximity. He's assuming they'll share this letter.

He hopes ^{2:2} "*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, ^{2:3} in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" The heretics in Colosse claimed they were the secret-keepers of God's mysteries, but Paul says the riches and wisdom of God are found **in Christ!**

^{2:3} "*In whom are hidden all the treasures...*"

Tycoon, William Randolph Hearst, was an art connoisseur with a vast collection. One day, thumbing through a magazine, he saw an exquisite painting. He coveted the masterpiece, and sent his aide, armed with millions, to purchase it and add it to his collection.

After an extensive search his aide returned with the painting. Hearst asked, "*How much did it cost?*" His aide replied, "*Nothing, we found it in our warehouse.*" He'd possessed the painting all along, but had no idea.

And so it is with many believers. In Christ we have all God's riches and wisdom. We are **complete in Christ**. Yet we listen to false teachers tell us the opposite.

Verse 4, ^{2:4} "Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words." Deceivers use big terms, and sophisticated arguments that sound impressive. Don't be gullible. Lofty language doesn't make it true.

Years ago, a Junior Higher won first prize at a Science Fair by showing how conditioned people are to believe anything labeled "**science**." In his project he urged folks to sign a petition demanding strict controls on the chemical "**dihydrogen monoxide**."

And for numerous reasons... It leads to excessive sweating, it's a major component in acid rain, it causes severe burns in its gaseous state, it triggers erosion, it decreases the effectiveness of automobile brakes, it's found in cancerous tumors. People were alarmed, 86% of folks supported the ban... Only one person realized "**dihydrogen monoxide**" is another name for *water*.

Hey, just because someone uses spiritual-sounding verbiage and *holy hype* doesn't make it true. *Complicated* and *convoluted* isn't the same as "*deep*." If an idea is not clearly taught in the pages of the Bible, reject it - no matter how spiritual it might sound to you!

Paul continues, ^{2:5} "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. ^{2:6} As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ^{2:7} rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with **thanksgiving**." Understand, Christian maturity is being rooted in the basics. It's learning to walk by simple faith. ^{2:6} "*As you received Christ, so walk in Him.*"

Yet rather than stick with the truth about Jesus, the Colossian heretics collected a diversity of spiritual experiences. Like people today they sampled elements of various religions to build a faith that suited their own tastes. Their's was a cafeteria faith - a buffet religion.

Rather than possess a pure faith, they arrogantly created an eclectic faith. They concocted their own spiritual smorgasbord. It included some *eastern mysticism*, and *Jewish legalism*, and a little *Roman asceticism*. They felt they had *out-grown* Christianity.

Yet Paul writes, verse 8, ^{2:8} "**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.**" This new spirituality originating in Colosse was

steering believers away from simple faith in Christ. And in doing so, it was cheating them out of a real relationship with God.

Hey, I've been a Christian now for 45 years and the deepest truth I've ever heard is "Jesus loves me His I know for the Bible tells me so." It's a lie to think you have to go beyond Christ to grasp God's wisdom and treasure. Any ritual, philosophy, tradition, or spirituality that exalts itself above Jesus is a rip-off from Satan.

2:9 "For in Him (in Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 2:10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." Rather than sprinkling the "pleroma" - the essence of God - across creation - God put all the eggs of revelation in one basket. Listen, Paul says *all of God is found in Christ!*

And if Christ is in you, and you are in Christ - then you have *all access* to everything God, *through faith in Jesus Christ*. You never have to go outside of Christ...

You are complete in Him! So much so, that no ritual or good deed or experience can add to that status.

The Colossians were non-Jews or Gentiles, but the false teachers were Jewish, who majored on rules and rituals. Thus, legalism was part of their heretical mix.

Especially circumcision. In the OT God required His people, the Jews, to circumcise all males as a symbol of commitment. At the primary physical pleasure center of a man's life, he bore a mark of loyalty to his God.

But the false teachers in Colosse were making physical circumcision mandatory for Gentile believers.

And Paul objects, verse 11, 2:11 "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..." Christians don't need to be physically marked; for there is a spiritual circumcision. A 2:11 "*circumcision made without hands*" occurs when Christ transforms our desires - when His Spirit cuts back our physical longings and instills in us His love.

For Christians today this gets illustrated in baptism. Paul writes in verse 12, 2:12 "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."

Baptism is now a symbol of what circumcision foreshadowed. The old life is **cut off** in circumcision as it is **buried** in baptism. We rise with new life in Christ.

Verse 13, 2:13 "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, 2:14 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.” Our salvation occurred on the cross!

When a person was nailed to a Roman cross the tribunal also nailed to that cross a list of the laws the victim had violated. Here, Paul says the entire Jewish Law was nailed to Jesus’ cross. He died to satisfy all its demands, and in so doing, put an end to the Law so we would never be guilty of breaking it again. He ended life for us under the Law. Thus, it’s no longer the rules that make us right with God, but faith in Jesus.

When Kathy and I married we didn’t agree to a list of rules. She didn’t sign up to always scratch my back at night, nor did I agree to always take out the garbage.

We took a vow to live in a committed relationship and give our all to each other, not follow a set of laws.

Now she does scratch my back (I think she plans to do it tonight), and I *do take out the garbage* (I definitely plan to do it tonight) - but we do it, not because of some rule, but it’s in our hearts to love each other.

And this is how God wants us to live - not by rules, but in a committed relationship with His Son Jesus.

A lot happened on the cross. Verse 15 also tells us, ^{2:15} “**Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.**”

The cross was God’s decisive blow against Satan. Jesus disarmed the devil - stripped him of his authority. Now the only power Satan has is what we allow him.

When a Roman general returned from victory, he led his defeated foe in toe. His enemy was made a spectacle - a trophy of the general’s triumph. And that’s what happened to Satan. He fell because he refused to glorify God, yet at the cross his defeat did just that! The cross exalted Jesus as supreme - as Lord over all.

So put your faith in Christ, not in certain **days** and **diets**. Verse 16, ^{2:16} “**So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths.**” And people will try. Seventh Day Adventists teach if you don’t worship on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, you’re headed to hell. **Paul says we should know better!** *What we eat* and *when we worship* don’t get us closer to God. We cross over from death to life, from wrong to right, only through the sacrifice of Jesus.

The feast days and diet of Judaism were pictures of the work of Christ - symbols pointing to the Messiah.

In verse 17 Paul refers to them as ^{2:17} “**a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.**” When I finally get home after a long trip I don’t hug and kiss my

wife's shadow. *I hug the real thing!* If I only hugged Kathy's shadow you'd think I was a *shady person...*

And the same is true with people who get caught up in observing specific days or diets. They're focusing on the shadow. Let's **hug the Savior, not the symbol.**

2:18 "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels..." The Gnostics taught that angels were also ripples in God's revelation. But Paul sees an obsession with angels as a distraction. *All of God is found in Christ, not angels.*

People fixated on angels are 2:18 "intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 2:19 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." We're complete in Christ! We grow in Him.

Sadly, some Christians are prone to tangents. *Walking with Jesus is never enough for them.* They need a hobby horse - *angels, or fasting, or feasting.* Hey, don't ever relegate Jesus to a secondary role.

Verse 20, 2:20 "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 - 2:21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," (which is the language of legalism) 2:22 which all concern things which perish with the using - according to the commandments and doctrines of men?" If we're saved by Christ, why live by dos and don'ts... live unto Christ!

2:23 "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." There're a lot of ways we can appear spiritual without really being spiritual. Religion is a stage on which you can show-off spiritually without actually being more kind and loving. Just depriving oneself or feigning humility doesn't yield true godliness.

If you really want to please God and live a righteous life **trust Jesus.** Walk with Him. You are complete in Christ. Never forget, *Colossians 1:27 Christ in you is the hope of glory!*