

Colossians Chapter 2

Colossians 2:1 "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and [for] them at Laodicea, and [for] as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;"

“Great conflict”: The word means “striving” and comes from the same root as (in 1:29). Both the Colossians and Laodiceans were among those for whom Paul struggled so hard in order to bring them to maturity.

“Laodicea”: The chief city of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia, located just South of Hierapolis in the Lycus River valley.

We see in this verse, that Paul had sent some of his people who actually did the founding of the church. It was at Paul's direction, so in a sense Paul did start this church. Paul had not actually been with them in person, because we see that they had not seen Paul's face.

In the first lesson, we had discussed that Paul started the church, and he did, because he had sent men that he had trained here.

The persons who worked with Paul had been trained by him, and they were actually working under his supervision. Paul's concern for them was the same as for the churches he physically started, because he felt responsible for what had been taught them at the first.

Colossians 2:2 "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;"

“Full assurance of understanding”: “Understanding” of the fullness of the gospel, along with inner encouragement and shared love, mark mature believers who, thereby, enjoy the “assurance” of salvation (see notes on 2 Peter 1:5-8).

This verse could also be translated: “That their minds may be strengthened by being lovingly instructed, and so obtain all the wealth of assurance that comes from (proper spiritual understanding). More precisely, to obtain a mature knowledge of God's mystery about Christ.” The Colossians' “minds” need to be “instructed” in the truth to safeguard them against the circulating heresy.

“Mystery ... Christ” (see note on 1:26). The mystery Paul referred to here is that the Messiah Christ is God incarnate Himself (1 Tim. 3:16).

Paul is trying to do what he can to put them at ease. Paul is trying to emphasize the bond that should be between all believers in Christ. The heart of man is what he really is. Whatever we believe in our heart determines what we really are. The following Scriptures have a great deal toward the explanation of the mystery.

Matthew 11:25-27 "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them

unto babes." "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and [he] to whomsoever the Son will reveal [him]."

One of the most important parts of our salvation is found (in Romans 10);

Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

We may not fully understand how salvation is accomplished. We must believe that Jesus paid the price for our salvation, and that He rose from the dead. This must not be a surface confession of this, we must truly believe in our heart.

Colossians 2:3 "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

“Hid” does not mean unknown. For not all these “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are unknown to man (as 1:26 clearly shows). “Hid” signifies “laid up,” “stored away,” or “reserved.” Christ, then, is the source from which all wisdom and knowledge come.

“All the treasures” (verses 9, 10, 1:19. The false teachers threatening the Colossians claimed to possess a secret wisdom and transcendent knowledge available only to the spiritual elite.

In sharp contrast, Paul declared that all the richness of truth necessary for salvation, sanctification, and glorification is found in Jesus Christ, who Himself is God revealed (John 1:14; Rom 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; 2:6-8; Eph. 1:8-9; 3:8-9).

All wisdom and knowledge are of God. Wisdom that we have, is a gift from God. The treasure of knowledge can be ours by the study of the Bible. The Holy Spirit reveals to us exactly what it is saying.

Colossians 2:4 "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words."

“Beguile” means “deceive.” Paul did not want the Colossians to be deceived by the persuasive rhetoric of the false teachers which assaulted the person of Christ. That is why throughout chapters 1 and 2, he stressed Christ’s deity and His sufficiency both to save believers and bring them to spiritual maturity.

Man's knowledge and wisdom gotten from the world are not truth. God is Truth. From the very beginning, there had been false teachers who were there to try to separate the new converts from the realities of God. One thing that should have triggered them, and should trigger us, that something is false, is if it appeals to the flesh.

Colossians 2:5 "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

“Absent in the flesh ... with you in the spirit”: Because he was a prisoner, Paul was unable to be present with the Colossians. That did not mean however, that his love and concern for them was any less (1 Cor. 5:3-4; 1 Thess. 2:17). Their “good discipline and “stability” of faith; (both

military terms depicting a solid rank of soldiers drawn up for battle), brought great joy to the apostle's heart.

This appears to me, to be very much like many of the churches of our day. They really are Christians, and really do want to do the will of God. They have just listened to some teachers who have confused them in certain areas. They were caught up in knowledge and the power of the mind. Unknowingly, they had been deceived. They had great faith in Christ.

Paul had discerned their problem in his spirit, since he was not there in person. He rejoiced over their faith in Christ being firm, but wanted them to be careful not to get into mind control.

Colossians 2:6 "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him:"

"Walk ye in him": "Walk" is the familiar New Testament term denoting the believer's daily conduct (1:10; 4:5; Rom. 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 1 Cor. 7:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; 10:3; 12:18; Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:16; Eph. 2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15; Phil. 3:16-18; 1 Thess. 2:12; 4:1, 12; 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 John 1:6-7; 2:6; 2 John 6; 3 John 3-4). To walk in Christ is to live a life patterned after His.

The verse may be paraphrased thus: "Therefore, just as you accepted the teaching that presents Jesus as both Messiah and Lord, so continue to maintain this relationship with Him." The recipients had been taught that Jesus is

- (1) Messiah (the One divinely anointed to secure man's salvation), and
- (2) Lord (the divine person to whom man submits in obedience).

The heretics denied Jesus' atoning death and lordship. So, the Colossians are urged to keep Him just as they were initially taught, as Messiah and Lord. They are to continue to look to Him for salvation and continue in submission to His authority.

This is just saying; walk every day with Christ in you making your decisions. Depend on His power within you, and not on your own power.

Colossians 2:7 "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

"The faith": The sense here is objective, referring to the truth of Christian doctrine. Spiritual maturity develops upward from the foundation of biblical truth as taught and recorded by the apostles (3:16). This rooting, building, and establishing is in sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Titus 2:1).

Paul is saying; let your roots be in Jesus Christ. Base everything on Jesus, your rock of foundation. Keep the faith in Jesus Christ.

Be like an old oak tree that wind cannot easily move. When winds of false doctrine come, you will not be shaken, because you have your roots in Jesus. Have faith, without faith, it is impossible to please God. Think back on the teaching that brought you to the Lord in the first place. Be thankful to God for all things.

Colossians 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

“Spoil you”: Here is the term for robbery. False teachers, who are successful in getting people to believe lies, rob them of truth, salvation, and blessing. “Spoil” could also be rendered, “carry you away from the truth by false teaching.”

“Philosophy and vain deceit”: “Philosophy” (literally “love of wisdom”), appears only here in the New Testament. The word referred to more than merely the academic discipline, but described any theory about God, the world, or the meaning of life.

Those embracing the Colossian heresy used it to describe the supposed higher knowledge they claimed to have attained. Paul however, equates the false teachers’ philosophy with “empty” or worthless “deception” (1 Tim. 6:20; see note on 2 Cor. 10:5).

“Rudiments of the world” are elementary religious teachings coming from the world system. The Greek grammar suggests that the particular “philosophy” in view here, is “vain deceit.” Not all philosophy then, is bad; when presented in a God-centered way, it can be helpful to believers.

Far from being advanced, profound knowledge, the false teachers’ beliefs were simplistic and immature like all the rest of the speculations, ideologies, philosophies, and psychologies the fallen satanic and human system invents.

Paul is trying to remind them that it was not their great knowledge that brought them to Christ, but simple faith. The worldly education of man builds up the man. This brings vanity and pride; which God is opposed to.

The Jews had followed the traditions of men, and they had missed God. Paul is saying; fix your thoughts and faith in Christ. Philosophy, many times, questions God. Have faith; do not question God's purposes.

Colossians 2:9 "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

“For” verifies the assertion (in verse 8), that the heretics’ “philosophy” is in accord with the tradition of men and not with Christ or in line with Christian doctrine. This is done by stating that the whole of the divine nature (“all fullness of the Godhead”), dwells in Jesus in bodily form.

“Fullness of the Godhead”: Christ possesses the fullness of the divine nature and attributes (see note on 1:19; John 1:14-16).

“Bodily”: In Greek philosophical thought, matter was evil; spirit was good. Thus, it was unthinkable that God would ever take on a human body. Paul refutes that false teaching by stressing the reality of Christ’s incarnation. Jesus was not only fully God, but fully human as well (see notes on Phil. 2:5-11).

This refutes the Colossians heresy denying the Son’s full deity and that He possessed a body that could die and make atonement for sin.

When Jesus came to this earth to minister and save the lost, it was the will of not only Himself, but the Father and the Holy Ghost as well.

John 14:10 "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

The fullness of the Godhead bodily means that God the Father, God the Word (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit, all are Spirit, and the fullness of the Spirit of God dwelled in the body of Jesus on this earth.

The fullness of the Power, goodness, wisdom, etc. was in the flesh of Jesus. The power in the body of Jesus was without measure. He was actually God with us "Immanuel". He was the Spirit of God made real in the flesh.

Colossians 2:10 "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"

"Ye are complete in him" (or, "you are filled by Him"): Believers have been filled by Jesus with all the spiritual blessings they need; hence, they are "complete" and lacking nothing. This too, refutes the heresy that denied the sufficiency of Christ and encouraged Christians to look to other spiritual beings for help.

Believers are complete in Christ, both positionally by the imputed perfect righteousness of Christ (see note on 1:22), and the complete sufficiency of all heavenly resources for spiritual maturity (see notes on 2 Pet. 1:3-4).

Five of these blessings, with which believers have been filled, are listed (in verses 11-15). They are:

- (1) Spiritual circumcision (verse 11);
- (2) Being raised from the old life (verse 12);
- (3) New life (verse 13);
- (4) The removal of the curse of the law (verse 14); and
- (5) The conquering of Satan and his demonic forces (verse 15).

"The head of all principality and power": Jesus Christ is the creator and ruler of the universe and all its spiritual beings (see note on 1:16). not a lesser being emanating from God as the Colossian errorists maintained.

The key words in this Scripture are (in Him). We are hid in Christ, if we are Christians. It is actually the shed blood of Jesus covering the Christian which hides us from the enemy. Even the principalities and powers are all subject unto Him.

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

Verses 11-12: Circumcision made without hands”: Circumcision symbolized mans’ need for cleansing of the heart (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:29), and was the outward sign of that cleansing of sin that comes by faith in God (Rom. 4:11; Phil. 3:3).

At salvation, believers undergo a spiritual “circumcision” by putting off the sins of the flesh (Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:17; Phil. 3:3; Titus 3:5). This is the new birth, the new creation in conversion. The outward affirmation of the already accomplished inner transformation is now the believer’s baptism by water (Acts. 2:38).

Colossians 2:11 "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:"

Circumcision denotes a cutting off or removal. The “circumcision” in view here is not physical but spiritual, whereby the ruling power of the believer’s “flesh” or sinful nature is broken or removed by Christ.

This is speaking of the circumcision of the heart which occurs when we receive Jesus as our Savior. Jesus spiritually cuts away all the flesh away from the heart, and gives us a heart stayed upon Him.

Romans 2:29 "But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God."

This heart is what makes us a new creature in Christ. This new body desires to please God. We are no longer a flesh man, but a spiritual man. Our sins were nailed to the cross. We have now been quickened by the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:12 "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

“Buried with him in baptism”: This is not water baptism, but Spirit baptism, by which Christ brings the believer into an intimate relation with Himself and with His people (the church), through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

“Ye are risen” signifies that God has raised the Colossians from the sins, habits, values, and guilt of their unconverted life, not allowing them to remain in their old ways and iniquities.

Romans 6:3-5 "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection:"

Colossians 2:13 "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;"

“You ... hath he quickened”: God gave them new (spiritual), life.

“Dead in your sins” (See notes on Eph. 2:1, 5). So, bound in the sphere of sin, the world (Eph. 2:12), the flesh (Rom. 8:8), and the devil (1 John 5:19), as to be unable to respond to spiritual stimuli; totally devoid of spiritual life. Paul further defines this condition of the unsaved (in 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:17-19; Titus 3:3).

“He quickened together with Him” (See notes on Eph. 2:1, 5). Only through union with Jesus Christ (verses 10-12), can those hopelessly dead in their sins receive eternal life (Eph. 2:5). Note that God takes the initiative and exerts the life-giving power to awaken and unite sinners with His Son; the spiritually dead have no ability to make themselves alive (Rom. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:9).

“Forgiven you all trespasses” (1:14). God’s free (Rom. 3:24), and complete (Rom. 5:20; Eph. 1:7), forgiveness of guilty sinners who put their faith in Jesus Christ is the most important reality in Scripture (Psalms 32:1; 130:3-4; Isa. 1:18; 55:7; Mica 7:18; Matt. 26:28; Acts 10:43; 13:38-39; Titus 3:4-7; Heb. 8:12).

The penalty for sin is death. We were condemned to eternal death before we received life in Jesus Christ. I love the word "all" in the verse above. When He took our sin on His body on the cross, it abolished all of our sin. When He rose on the third day, it gave all believers in Christ the hope that they would rise also.

Jesus is the quickening Spirit. He is life. When we receive Him, we receive Life. We are justified (just as if we had never sinned), because Jesus destroyed our sin.

Colossians Chapter 2 Questions

1. What does verse 1 reveal about the founding of this church?
2. How then did Paul found this church?
3. What is Paul trying to emphasize in verse 2?
4. What shows us what a man really is?
5. What is the most important thing that brings us salvation?
6. All wisdom and knowledge are of _____.
7. How can the treasure of knowledge be ours?
8. How were they trying to beguile these Christians?
9. What is one thing that should make us know a teaching is false?
10. Paul was not with them in person, but in what?

11. What does verse 6 mean by "walk ye in Him"?
12. What is Paul saying in verse 7?
13. Beware lest any man spoil you through _____.
14. What had brought them to Christ?
15. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the _____ _____.
16. What does "Immanuel" mean?
17. What hides us from the enemy, if we are Christians?
18. When is the heart circumcised?
19. We are no longer a flesh man, but a _____ man.
20. We have now been quickened by the Spirit through _____ in _____ _____.