

# THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

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One of the major themes that St. Paul was dealing with in this letter was false teachers who had invaded the young church at Colossae.

## The themes of Colossians 2:

- The Supremacy of Christ
- Freedom from human traditions and regulations
- The completeness in Christ
- Warning against false teachings
- Spiritual circumcision
- Resurrection with Christ

**Colossians 2:1-7** — I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. <sup>2</sup> My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

In the first verse we see the curtains pulled back from Paul's heart. He is in a Roman prison and will be facing death shortly. He's never personally met the Christians in Colossae, and he's concerned that they will perhaps listen to the wolves in sheep's clothing instead of him.

Most theologians believe that the oldest Paul lived to was probably 67 or 68. The New Testament Apostles certainly lived a much more difficult life than any of us, most likely. Paul's physical, emotional, and mental strain through the years of Christian service far outweigh anything we've ever done for the Lord. The thousands of miles he walked in his life. The beatings and sufferings he experienced for following Christ. He was amazing.

## In verses 1-5 Paul emphasizes **STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY**

Paul begins by expressing his struggle for the Colossians and others, who have not personally met him, wishing for them to have a complete understanding and knowledge of Christ. He warned them about deceptive arguments, emphasizing his physical absence doesn't undermine his spiritual connection and concern for them. It's not that Paul wants them to like him more than the phonies. It's that Paul wants them to know the truth.

**Colossians 2:5** — For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**Colossians 2:6-7** — So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

**Ephesians 3:17-18** — So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

What he writes to the church at Colossae sounds a whole like what he writes to the church at Ephesus. He's writing here to remind them of what it means to Live with Christ on this planet

## Paul writes about **GUARDING AGAINST DECEPTION**

**Colossians 2:8-10** — See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

<sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

So Paul warns the church at Colossae not to be taken captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition, and the basic philosophies of mankind. That foolishness has no root in Jesus Christ. He emphasized that the fullness of Deity that means "God Himself" lives in Christ, and through him, we have been filled with Christ's fullness.

## How do we call out the names of Jesus? We call him **JESUS CHRIST THE LORD.**

What was Paul saying? DEITY MEANS GOD! So he's saying that Christ is God. The word DEITY is embedded in the title of CHRIST. So, JESUS means — God with us, Emmanuel, He became flesh. CHRIST — Jesus is God — The LORD — means over a city or province or ALL PEOPLE state or nation or Lord, as in he is the LORD of All!

## Jesus became man — he is the CHRIST, meaning DEITY meaning GOD — and he is ... **LORD OVER ALL.**

Paul ends these two verses with this line.. **"AND IN CHRIST YOU HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO FULLNESS!"**

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**Fullness of what?** Fullness of everything that Jesus possesses if you will take hold of it! Everything that Jesus has you are capable of accessing! But it's according to your faith! What are you willing to take hold of?

**Colossians 2:13-15** — When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

In real time, church — He has guaranteed your forgiveness of sins through his sacrificial death and burial and resurrection. No matter what you've done, if you have asked forgiveness — YOUR sins have been nailed to the cross by Jesus and you are forgiven! Will you walk in your forgiveness, or will you keep acting like Mrs Lot who looked back wanting her old life in Sodom and died?

I'm going to walk in my forgiveness, and that's what St. Paul was saying to the church at Colossae — Don't let these false teachers try to talk you into the idea that Jesus isn't enough — NO! Get rid of that thinking and walk toward your bright future in Jesus! YOU ARE FORGIVEN!! Forgiven by the blood of Jesus!!

**Colossians 2:16-23** — Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. <sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. <sup>19</sup> They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

<sup>20</sup> Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup> "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? <sup>22</sup> These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Paul is speaking to the Christians at Colossae largely concerning a prevailing vain philosophy of his day and even today known as GNOSTICISM.

**GNOSTICISM: The thought and practice of various cults especially in the late pre-Christian and early Christian centuries distinguished by the conviction that matter is evil and that emancipation comes through "GNOSIS."**

What is Gnosis you may ask?

**Pastor Rich's Definition of "GNOSIS"** — Gnosis had to do with certain individuals having a personal bank of information that had been given to them by a god or an extra-spiritual visitation, and that by keeping a strict list of rules and "yes you can" and "no you can't" activities, one could reach a kind of peace on earth. These people became known as GNOSTICS.

There are many different organizations and so-called religions in our country that I believe you could call modern day GNOSTICS, not the least of which is SCIENTOLOGY.

In St. Paul's day Gnosticism was rampant and it was invading several of the new Christian church plants. The Gnostics believed all matter is evil. Everything you see, hear, and touch is BAD. And they had the answer ... "Follow our cult! And we will show you the way." Paul is saying ... NO, NO, NO! Jesus is all you need. He is supreme over all!

**RETROGRESSION: Movement backwards. A return to a previous and less complicated level of development or organization.**

A couple of centuries before Christ's arrival and a couple of centuries after the Christian faith was established, GNOSTICISM was a spiritual force to be reckoned with and they were preaching to the young Christian faith — a doctrine of Retrogression. They were saying FAITH IN JESUS is way too complicated. Come backward towards our way of teaching. In other words RETROGRESS from what is complicated (CHRISTIAN FAITH) to what is actually reasonable. (GNOSTICISM). But faith in Jesus is easy in comparison to man's rules. Gnostics were telling the Christians in the early church to Retrogress back to an easier way of living than the demands of Christianity. But what did Jesus say?

**Matthew 22:37-40** — Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

**BUT LET ME ASK A QUESTION ...**

To all the Gnostics alive in Paul's day and alive today I ask ... *How hard is it to please God when all HE asks of his people is to Love God and Love People — as compared to YOUR ENDLESS study of and the following of astrological signs and the study of angels and searching under a tree looking for your third eye?*

**PAUL was saying ... "We will not Retrogress to your way of believing," and "Jesus Christ is our ALL AND ALL! He is Supreme above and beyond all so called gods and ideologies and vain philosophies."**

This "WOKE MOVEMENT" is not about the future, it's about Retrogression and going back to a lousier time in our country and the world. It's about putting all of us under the control of certain wealthy oligarchs in our nation and the world that will call the shots. But it's also directing us toward the end of the world as we know it and the final Battle of Armageddon! Whether it's going to happen this year, or 10, or 25, or 50 years from now, Paul is calling all believers to get ready.

The future will not be easy for us today who truly believe — and it certainly wasn't easy for St. Paul and the early Christians, as the beloved Apostle would suffer execution not long after he wrote these words. Yet, I am anxiously awaiting what awaits us — at this most excellent time in history. Could it be that we will be the generation that hears the sound of the trumpets and the eastern sky opens and the king of kings calls his bride — we the CHURCH — to the greatest meal in history? The marriage supper of the Lamb! I'm ready! Are you?