



## Sunday School- May 9, 2010

### DISTINGUISHING TRUTH FROM DECEIT

#### Unifying Topic: AN ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY

#### Lesson Text

I. Paul's Struggle For The Colossians (Colossians 2:1-3)

II. Stand Firm In Christ (Colossians 2:4-7)

III. Fullness In Christ Growth (Colossians 2:8-10)



**The Main Thought:** 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. (Colossians 2:8, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** People are deceived by all kinds of philosophies and human traditions that lead them away from the hidden treasures of knowledge and wisdom. Where can we find those hidden treasures? Paul tells the Colossians that knowledge and wisdom are in Christ Jesus and in the lives of those who are growing in Christ.

**Lesson Aim:** To help students understand that they have everything they need in Christ.

**Life aim:** To teach Christian to live full in Christ, knowing that He is the Son of God who completely gives us all we need for salvation and for blessings in this life and in heaven.

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- 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;
- 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;
- 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- 2:4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.
- 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 stedfastness of your faith in Christ.
- 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:
- 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.
- 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.
- 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
- 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

#### **HISTORY:**

##### **INTRODUCTION (Chapter 1:23-29)**

The little book of Colossians (only four chapters) was written by the Apostle Paul to a group of believers in a city called Colosse. Colosse was not a city of tremendous importance, but it had some significance as one in a triad of cities (Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse) in the Lycus Valley. The Apostle Paul wrote to this little church which had been founded and initially pastored by a man named Epaphras, because they were undergoing some problems. They were being confronted by men teaching false doctrine about the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to straighten them out.

<sup>1:23</sup>*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;* "Paul says "IF INDEED YOU CONTINUE..." Once saved (reconciled to God), we can still be lost!

1. What about "the security of the believer?"
  - 1) Though the Bible does teach the security of the BELIEVER
  - 2) It also teaches the insecurity of the UNBELIEVER
  - 3) And it teaches that a BELIEVER, if not diligent, can become an UNBELIEVER! (He 3:12-15; 16-4:2,11)
2. And so, Paul emphasizes that we must "continue in the faith", which involves:
  - a. Being "grounded and steadfast" (thus the need for follow-up)
  - b. "not moved away from the hope of the gospel," which can occur through:
    - 1) Error or false doctrine (2Pet. 3:17).
    - 2) Temptations to sin (2Pet. 2:20-22).
    - 3) Trials and hardships in life (Rev. 2:10).

...whereof I Paul am made a minister; Now, Paul talks about his source. Paul often defended his right to speak for God. Every time he said, "I am an Apostle," he was saying, "I am a sent one from God." At the end of *Colossians 1:23* he says, "...I, Paul, am made a minister." In other words, he didn't choose to become a minister, God made him a minister. That fact gave him credibility and punch in speaking to the Colossians. When Paul referred to his ministry, he was defending his right to speak for God--to establish his authority. Paul wanted the people to hear him as the spokesman for God--not as a self-styled, self-appointed, non-credentialed teacher like so many that existed in the world. So, he repeatedly accredited his ministry.

**Colossians 1:24-29** is simply a detailed look at Paul's ministry. In these verses, Paul presents eight different aspects of the ministry of a servant of God--eight different aspects that should characterize the life of anybody who serves the Lord Jesus Christ, whether it's teaching, preaching, or ministering in any capacity within the framework of Christianity.

<sup>1:24</sup>**Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church (NIV).** Paul was in prison when this Epistle was written, being a minister of the gospel of Christ, was not ashamed of his imprisonment, but was willing to rejoice in his suffering to fulfill his God given task. As we serve the Lord Jesus Christ with the recognition that God has called us, what kind of attitude should we have? What spirit should we have? Paul answers this in the first three words of verse 24: "Now I rejoice...." What's the spirit of the ministry? Joy. The spirit of the ministry is joy. Whatever ministry you have been given is to be enjoyed.

He's simply saying that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the Good News of Christ to the world. When we suffer, Christ feels it with us. But this suffering can be endured because it changes lives and brings people into God's kingdom. There are two needs of the church:

1. The need for a minister who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ.
2. The need for believers who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ.

- The church needs a minister (servant) who will willingly suffer for others. V24

Not only was Paul looking to heaven for comfort, but he realized that while he was on this earth, doing the work of the ministry for the sake of people like the Colossians, he was filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. The message teaches that the minister of God actually completes the suffering of Christ. When Christ was upon the earth, He loved the church and gave Himself for it; therefore, He poured out His heart and life for the church, that is, for believers. Christ ministered, served, worked, labored, and did it all laboriously. Christ bore whatever was necessary in order to build the church. And in so doing He left the pattern for all those who would follow after Him. Serving the church in this world is not easy. The believer knows that without Christ men are lost and doomed to judgment. Therefore he suffers whatever burden and pain necessary to reach and grow people. So Christ's afflictions are not yet complete. His body will still suffer until the day that we are caught up to be with Him for eternity. Part of the reason that Paul rejoiced was because he was counted worthy to share in the sufferings of Christ. According to verse 24, Paul endured his suffering for the sake of the church--to win people to Christ and then to mature them in Christ. And he certainly paid a price. What benefit do people get from ministers? There is much benefit to having the Word of God presented to us, having the complete Word preached to us.

<sup>1:25</sup>**Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;**

- The church needs a minister who has been chosen by God to proclaim the Word of God. V25

Paul was made a minister by God. He was not in it because:

- He thought it was a good profession to enter.
- Some friends thought he would make a good minister.
- He had the natural talents for the ministry

What an enormous call and responsibility, yet it comes from God; therefore, it must be fulfilled by God. Paul was chosen to carry out, minister the Word of God, that is, to make the Word of God fully known.

<sup>1:26</sup>**Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: <sup>27</sup>To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (NIV).**

- The church needs a minister who will share the great mystery of God—the glorious message of "Christ in you, the hope of glory."v26-27

What does this mean? You see the false teachers in the Colossian church believed spiritual perfection was a secret and hidden plan that only a few privileged people would discover. Their secret plan was meant to be exclusive. However, Paul calls God's plan "*the mystery*", a secret, not in the sense that only a few would understand, but because it was hidden until Christ came. Remember that the word "*mystery*" means secret, some

secret that God was not able to reveal to the world until man had been prepared to receive it. "...now made manifest to His saints." This is two-fold, two parts to its revelation:

- First, the mystery is that Christ actually will live within the hearts and lives of the believer. The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of Christ.
- Second, the mystery of God is that Christ will live within any person, no matter who they are—God is no respecter of persons.

Who could have imagined that God's secret plan was to have His Son Jesus Christ, live in the hearts of all who believed in Him? Christ was made known to and dwells in the Gentiles; that is, it is not limited by racial or national lines. The critical fact is that it is now revealed: it cannot only be known, but known by many persons.

When God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for man, God showed the world that He loves every person equally. He does not favor anyone—not one person—much less a class or nation of people. Every person can **now** approach God and become acceptable to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, the hope of glory. Jesus Christ is the mystery of God and it is Jesus Christ that reveals God to men.

- When people look at Jesus Christ, they see God.
- When people come to know Jesus Christ, they come to know God personally.

Once a person approaches God through Jesus Christ God places His Spirit within the person's heart.

<sup>1:28</sup>**Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**

- The church needs a minister who will preach Christ and will warn and teach every man. V28
  - The minister is to preach Christ.

For this declares the very opposite of what man has always done. Man has always proclaimed principles, ideas, theories, positions, rules, codes, morals, laws, philosophies, institutions, and religions. This is not the minister's proclamation. He is to preach a Person, not things, no matter how good they may be.

- The minister is to warn every man.

Man must be warned: he cannot enter glory unless Christ is in him. No man is perfect; no man has enough righteousness to make himself acceptable to God. Man cannot earn or do enough righteousness to become perfect. Man's only hope is Christ, for Christ alone is righteousness; Christ alone is perfect. Man must be warned.

- The minister is to teach every man.

It is not enough to warn men. Once they respond to the warning by inviting Christ into their hearts, they have to be taught. They need to learn how to live out the great teachings of Christ. The minister is to teach in all wisdom

<sup>1:29</sup>**Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.**

- The minister is to labor and labor to present every person perfect in Christ Jesus. (Eph.4:12-16)
- The church needs a minister who will labor and work—strive laboriously, depending upon Christ for energy.

The word "*labor*" (kopiao) means to toil and to struggle in labor and work to the point of exhaustion, fatigue, and pain. It is a picture of an athlete struggling, agonizing, and pushing himself well beyond his capacity in order to achieve his objective. The word "*working*" (energeia) means energy and efficiency, and is only used of superhuman power (Wuest). In this case, it is the power of Christ! When the minister has gone as far as he can, Christ steps in and infuses energy and power into his body—an energy and power that works in him mightily. The only way to experience this physical energy and power of Christ is to use all of your own strength; being completely empty. Paul depended upon God in his labors! He realized that without God he was nothing, and could do nothing worth lasting. So he always looked to God for help in accomplishing his goal. If we will view ourselves as Paul viewed himself, as a servant and steward, consider your suffering for your brethren a great privilege and source of joy, then we will be convinced that we gladly devote ourselves to the same goal Paul had!

<sup>iii</sup>As we completed chapter one of the book of Colossians, verses 23-29, we heard Paul talking about how he'd been made a minister of the gospel, and how he'd made sure that he was a beneficial one: a minister who proclaimed Jesus to them, admonished them about sin, and taught them the full Word of God. He knew that it was only by presenting the whole counsel of God that he could know they would be presented as complete in Christ. And it was because of this that Paul worked so hard, laboring and striving.

## Colossians 2:1-3 Paul's Struggle For The Colossians

### 2:1 How Great A Struggle

We have covered the need for a minister who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ.

Now we will cover the second need: The need for believers who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ; who are consistently growing (a mature believer) in the Lord. One of the great tragedies of

today's society is the lack of consistency. Few people are consistent in their daily walk with the Lord. It has become a struggle. When Paul talks about what a great struggle, *Col. 1:29-2:1* go hand in hand.

<sup>1:29</sup>For this I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me. <sup>2:1</sup>FOR I want you to know how great is my solicitude for you [how severe an inward struggle I am engaged in for you] and for those [believers] at Laodicea, and for all who [like yourselves] have never seen my face and known me personally (AMP).

Remember Paul had never seen the Colossian church personally; he was not the minister on the field, Epaphras was. Paul also wanted this letter passed on to the Laodicean church and all others, and he was counting on ties of love to bring the churches together to stand against this heresy, and to encourage each other to remain true to God's plan of salvation in Christ. He did not only write a letter, he labored in prayer.

#### POINT:

*This says something of enormous importance: ministers are to wrestle in prayer for believers and churches all over the world. In fact, churches can be mature in the Lord only as the ministers of the world wrestle in prayer for all the churches of the world. A half-hearted, half-committed minister can only produce half-hearted, half-committed people.*

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Paul was struggling and striving against adversaries for the sake of Christians everywhere. He labored hard, toiled, strove, agonized, struggled, and wrestled in prayer. Prayer is not easy; it is labor. This giving and striving is an example not only coming from Paul but originates from the One that placed it in him, our Lord Jesus Christ. Striving for people that we'll never meet this side of heaven is a great calling. As you look at the usage of these words of agony throughout the New Testament, you begin to understand that Paul's battlefields were both spiritual and physical. The contests of struggle were fought both in prayer (Luke 22:44; Col. 4:12) and in earthly conflict (1Thess 2:2; Phil 1:30). And the reason for his struggle was that they would be kept on the right path, not following after false doctrine (Luke 13:24; 1Cor 9:25; 1Tim 6:12; 2Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1).

#### 2:2-3 Be Encouraged

Paul hoped that the ultimate result of his struggle for them would be two things: <sup>1</sup>Encouraged (*comforted*) hearts and <sup>2</sup>full assurance of understanding **v2**. The word "*comforted*" (*paraklethosin*) means to be strong, strengthened, established, and braced. Where does such strength come from? Where is the spring from which such confidence and assurance flow?

- Strong hearts come from love—from being knit together with others in love.

A person who feels emotions of neglect, overlooked, ignored, without friends, left out, or by-passed seldom feel strong, confident, or assured; On the contrary, he feels weak unacceptable, and incapable of handling situations. He feels insecure, which either causes him to withdraw or react in a superior and boastful attitude. The point is this: the answer to a strong, confident, assured heart is love—being knit together in love with others. The church is to build love among everyone, not neglecting or overlooking anyone. This does not certainly come from religion, ceremony, ritual laws, or rules and regulations; it comes from love—hearts knit together in love.

- Strong hearts come from knowing that what you believe about God is accurate, and true.

Once God's Spirit infuses strength within the believer's heart, both assurance and confidence comes alive and gives absolute assurance that we truly know God and are adopted as His dear sons and daughters; that what we believe about God is accurate. The Spirit of God instills that confidence within our hearts. When a person has "*full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" **v2-3**, then that person has matured in truth and have the ability to apply and use truth wisely. The Colossians didn't need to go to the Gnostics and pay to learn secret knowledge of how to reach God. The teaching of Christ was open to everyone. We never exhaust the treasures of knowledge in Christ, there is always more to learn.

Often, we get overwhelmed by our own circumstances, and become convinced that God will never get us out of this mess, that this trial will never be over, or that we'll never have victory over our sin. But then God brings someone like Paul across our path who has a testimony of victory, of deliverance, of God's faithfulness. It encourages us that God is still working, still on the throne, and still paying attention to us. You can recognize people that God brings to you for encouragement, because He makes a supernatural, spiritual connection between your hearts. They become knit together in love.

## Colossians 2:4-7 Stand Firm In Christ

<sup>2:4</sup>And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

- The church needs mature believers who will resist seduction and deception **V4**.

Now this is the point I need you to comprehend: "...lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." The word "*beguile*" (paralogizetai) means to mislead, delude deceive, cheat, seduce, and lead someone astray. The need for believers

- Believers can be seduced by the persuasive and eloquent words of false teaching. Arguments:
  - The creation of the world by God.
  - The virgin birth or the incarnation of God in human flesh.
  - The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
  - Salvation by grace through faith etc.

The argument can be against any of the major teachings of Scripture. If they are persuasive enough, some persons are led astray. They begin to question the truth and to wonder and doubt. The very reason Paul has proclaimed that all wisdom and knowledge exist in Christ is to protect believers against false teaching. Believers are to know that all truth is in Christ, and they are to seek all truth in Christ.

- Believers can be seduced by the enticing and appealing words of those who live after the lusts of the flesh. Human nature is easily influenced by...
  - appearance      ▪ attractiveness      ▪ charisma      ▪ thoughts
  - insinuations      ▪ suggestions      ▪ imaginations      ▪ desires

Therefore when some idea is made in an appealing way, people are enticed and led astray from Christ. Again, the truth and the wise course of behavior for the believer is found in Christ. The course of wisdom is to turn away from the seduction of enticing words and suggestions.

*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.*

- The church needs mature believers who will maintain discipline—order and steadfastness V5.

The word "*order*" (taxin) means to maintain military discipline, array, and arrangement; to hold a solid front. The word "*steadfastness*" (stereoma) means to stand fast and persevere; to be immovable, steady, and unyielding; to never crack, give in, or back up. This too, is a military word. AND THE BELIEVERS WERE RESPONDING LIKE A VICTORIOUS ARMY. They were maintaining their discipline and holding their order and standing fast, even as Paul was writing this letter. Even during the standing a minister's encouragement is still needed. Paul says that he was with them in spirit, joying, and watching them gain the victory over the false teachers.

*2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 2: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

- The church needs mature believers who will walk in the Lord V6.

This means at least **two things**:

1. First, believers walk just as they have received Christ—by faith.

You received Christ by faith, so you are to walk and continue with Christ by faith. When you received Christ, you trusted **His** righteousness, **His** death to cover your sins and to make you acceptable to God. Therefore, we are to walk continuing to trust His righteousness and death. It is all of that that continues to cover our sins and make them acceptable to God. We have nothing within ourselves to earn, merit, deserve, or make God accept us. We can do nothing and we can possess nothing that will secure the approval of God. The believer's only acceptance before God is Christ—trusting His righteousness and death.

2. Second, believers received Christ as Christ Jesus the Lord.

That is, when believers received Him, they accepted Him as the true Messiah and Lord from heaven; you accepted Him as the Lord of your life. Therefore, we are to walk before Him as Lord; we are to continue walking and serving Him as the Lord of our lives.

There are **three** particular **things** the believer is to do in verse 7:

1. The believer is to be rooted and built-up in Christ.

There are two pictures in this statement. The picture of being rooted is that of a tree. The other is the picture of being built or constructed is that of a building. The point is this: the emphasis upon a strong attachment and a flow of nourishment and life from Christ to the believer. That is the believer is to walk in a continuous, unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ. His life and mind are to focus upon Christ without interruption, drawing all nourishment and strength from Him. This is critical, for there is no other permanent nourishment or strength—not that lasts forever and imparts eternal life to the human soul.

2. The believer is to walk established in the faith just as he has been taught.

The word established means to be firm, stable, holding fast and not letting go. This shows the utter necessity for strong teachers in the church. When believer have strong teachers, they are to learn all they can about the faith and hold fast to it. They are not to let it go!

3. The believer is to walk overflowing with thanksgiving.

Christ Jesus has done so much for the believer—so much that flows on and on, never ceasing, not even for one moment of any day. Therefore, the believer learns to walk in an unbroken spirit of thanksgiving—a thanksgiving that overflows in praise to the Lord moment by moment throughout the day.

## Colossians 2:8-10 Fullness In Christ

As we have learned, the Gnostics were trying to pull the Colossians away from the simple teachings of Christ and back into the slavery of a human system of rules that could not help them. The importance of this passage is clearly seen in the meaning of scripture.

**<sup>2:8</sup>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.**

(8a). The word "*beware*" (blepete) means to take heed, look out, guard yourself. Why? Lest any man spoil you through philosophy. The word "*spoil*" (sulagogeō) means to lead into captivity or slavery. Being continually watchful for false teaching does not come naturally. Paul is not encouraging a "*critical spirit*" but a "*discerning spirit*." When we know Christ and His truth well, anything false is revealed immediately by the light of Christ's Spirit. When we are filled up with Christ and His blessings, there is no emptiness in us looking for something else to fill it. See that no one takes you captive through philosophy.

(8b). <sup>i</sup>Philosophy (philosophia from philōs = friend/lover + sophía = wisdom) is literally a love of wisdom and came to mean tenets (doctrine) of heathen Gentile philosophers. The Gnostics were fond of philosophia. The love of human wisdom characterizes every system of philosophy; they all follow the tradition of men and the elements of the world. Instead, men should love Christ, Who has made true wisdom unto us and in whom are stored all the treasures of true wisdom and true knowledge. Philosophers tried to discover what is true and what is right. A hunger for truth is to be admired. But philosophy is a product of the human mind and it produces human tradition. It is not God's revelation; rather it was speculative, mythical and misleading. Worse, some of the teachings originated from demonic spirits (1Tim.4:1). That means it sounded good but there was nothing inside. They brought ruin and disappointment to those who depended on them. Only Christ's truth carried a real reward.

(8c). <sup>v</sup>The word "*rudiments*" (stoichieon) refers to parts of a systematized, regulated arrangement. What is represented is something that is in itself is only "*elemental*" and thus less than complete. Paul contrasts these limited elements with the fullness which is put on display in the person of Jesus. That is the theme of this chapter - the contrast between limited, elemental things, and the completeness that is found only in Jesus Christ. We end up concentrating on all the little bits and pieces and forget the big picture. It doesn't matter if the systematized approach to faith is built up from worldly philosophy, science, religious doctrines and rituals, etc. It doesn't matter what rituals you perform, food you eat, festivals you keep, or day you worship on since all of those things are elemental types and shadows that reach their fulfillment in Christ. The purpose in all these is to lead to spiritual understanding and it is not in themselves righteousness. To assign them a place of importance equal to faith in Jesus is to then take away from and diminish the completeness of Jesus. To concentrate on the rudiments can result in capture of the person. The person can become more concerned with these limited elements than with the fullness of unity with Christ. They never reach unity in Christ because they are always trying to add something to Him that is of their own will power; to build up knowledge bit by bit or act by act. People trust their own talents and "career" for material provision and become captured by material things. All of it can capture the mind to the point where it directs the heart away from the fullness that is only in Jesus Christ. Anyone who seeks to add on to or replace Jesus with anything else is using vain philosophy and deceitful speech for the purpose of capturing the heart, mind and soul of others. I could go on and on; however, the point has been covered.

**<sup>2:9</sup>For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. <sup>2:10</sup>And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:**

The word "*fullness*" (pleroma) means that not a single part of God's nature is lacking in the nature of Christ. The word "*dwells*" (katoikei) means to be at home, to be permanently settled and present. This tells us that the fullness of God has always dwelt in Christ, even before He came to earth; that the fullness of God was not just a temporary gift to Christ. What does all this mean to us in a day to day living? It means two wonderful things:

1. First, God is not far off in outer space someplace. God is not unconcerned with the world.
2. God is love, not evil. Only a God of evil would leave man in the dark where he would have to grope and grasp and stumble.

The Gnostics believed Christ was not the supreme God but only one of the lesser emanations from Him, one of the angels. They claimed to know the secret and only way to God, but actually it was Christians who knew the way (Christ). The answers to the world and life are not found in a philosophy, nor in human ideas, but found in a

Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think for a moment: if a Person (God) really created the world, then the answer to life and creation (truth and reality) are bound to be wrapped up in Him. Christ is not just a partial representation of God, like an angel sent as God's representative. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. And those who worshiped Christ were worshiping God since Christ has the fullness of Deity. For in him dwelleth - Inhabiteth, continually abideth, all the fulness of the Godhead. In Jesus of Nazareth, God was uniquely and bodily among us. The incarnation was real. Here our Lord Jesus Christ was one person with two natures: the God-man. Since the power of God rested in Jesus Christ, Christ overcomes all other powers. Believers are complete (filled up) in Christ. The word "*complete*" (pepleromenoi) means to be made full. We seek no other source of grace and truth; we show no allegiance to anyone else; and we submit to no other authority. Christ is the head; He is the source of life; and He is sovereign over life. God did this in connection with Jesus Christ.

## SUMMARY:

Paul was struggling (contending) for those at Colosse and Laodicea and all whom he never seen. He wanted the church to be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding; that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. He did not want them to be deceived in any manner by fine-sounding words. He told the Colossians that all wisdom and knowledge were found in Christ so that no one would delude them with persuasive argument. The Gnostic heretics were preying on Christians. False religion is often presented in a way that fascinates the intellect. The teachers appear to know things that others do not understand. Protecting the flock from such teachers is serious work. Even in writing the letter in a Roman prison, Paul was present with them in spirit.

Paul was in a Roman prison at this time, but he was happy to hear about the fact that they'd come to faith in Jesus. The things that pleased him were how orderly they were and how firm their faith in Christ was, and he didn't want them to lose that. He wanted them to continue to live in Christ; to live worthy of the call they received. They received Jesus, as well as we have, because we were sinners that needed a Savior. That's the way we should walk in Jesus, too. Our trust, our faith, our dependence must be completely in Him, not in ourselves. It is not our self-righteousness. It is not our religious observation. It is all about continually coming back to the fact that we are sinners, and Jesus paid the price for our sins. Three words about the Colossians that pleased Paul in verse 7 were:

1. Rooted and Built-up (in Him)
2. Stablished (in the faith)
3. Abounding (with thanksgiving)

The people that came to the Colossian church with persuasive arguments were the same kind of people that are in the church today. However, the warning was to "*beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.*" There are two sources that the false teachers' philosophy and empty deception come from: the tradition of men, and the elementary principles of the world, that is:

- Man's traditions:
  - Why can't Catholic priests be married? Why must we call them "Father"? Why does the Catholic church believe in Purgatory? Why must we pray to Mary and the saints?
  - Why must we pledge membership to certain churches? Why must we wear a suit and tie to attend? Why must we only sing certain styles of hymns?
- Rudiments (basic principles) of this world—signs and spirits of the stars rather than Christ.

*"For in him all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." "The Word was with God and the Word was God; the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, who from the Father, full of grace and truth; from the fullness of His grace we all received one blessing after another" Jh.1:1, 14, 16 NIV.* We do not lack anything when we are in Christ. Christ is the Head over every power and authority.

## APPLICATION:

Everything is in Christ. Continue to follow after Him being established in your faith! Make a distinction in what the Word says and what someone says. Check it out for yourself.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sg2137.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> [http://executableoutlines.com/col/col\\_05.htm](http://executableoutlines.com/col/col_05.htm)

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/51-Colossians/Colossians0201.html>

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.preceptaustin.org/colossians\\_28-15.htm](http://www.preceptaustin.org/colossians_28-15.htm)

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.pheugo.com/faithmatters/index.php?page=FaithMatters.Avoidcapture>