

## ACCORDING TO CHRIST OUR HEAD

Introduction: Paul wrote to the Colossians to affirm their spiritual condition and the foundation of their faith. This chapter was intended as a preventative measure to preclude the false teachers from deceiving them. Paul addresses various heresies that were either from multiple groups or a teachers melding belief systems together.

- I. Paul begins by encouraging them in what they had been taught. (v1-7)
  - A. They had available to them great spiritual wealth incumbent upon full assurance of understanding from the gospel.
  - B. They had a true knowledge of God's mystery.
    1. Christ Himself is God's mystery
      - a. In chapter one the mystery related to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church body(v27)
      - b. Another aspect of the mystery is Christ Himself.

I Tim. 3:16 By common confession, great is (AF)the mystery of godliness:

He who was (AG)revealed in the flesh,  
Was [m](AH)vindicated [n]in the Spirit,  
(AI)Seen by angels,  
(AJ)Proclaimed among the nations,  
(AK)Believed on in the world,  
(AL)Taken up in glory.

2. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him.
  - a. Hidden(lit. stored up) in Him.
  - b. They are spiritually accessed I Cor. 2:14-15a  
But [f]a (AA)natural man (AB)does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are (AC)foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually [g]appraised. <sup>15</sup> But he who is (AD)spiritual appraises all things
    - c. Christian wisdom centers around Jesus Christ who is our savior.
      - i. Federal head
      - ii. Redeemer
      - iii. Mediator between God and man.
      - iv. Sub. Atonement

- v. Spiritual liberator
- vi. "The" way to God the Father.

### C. The Colossians were healthy and growing.

1. They were firmly rooted in Christ.
2. Established in their faith, Paul rejoiced to see the stability of their faith in Christ. Not wavering with every wind of doctrine.
3. From there being built up in Him.
4. The fruit of being in Christ was positive, "overflowing with gratitude".

D. Paul directs them to continue in Christ the same way they had received Him.

1. Not adding to or subtracting from what they had originally believed.
2. They were showing good discipline and stability in faith, therefore "walk" or carry on in the same manner as they started.

## II. Warning against philosophy of men v8-10

A. These teachers were spreading human philosophies from the minds of natural men.

1. The teachings sounded reasonable, but denied the sufficiency of Christ. The term here is pithanologia, "persuasive speech." It is derived from pithanos, "persuasive," and logos, "word, argument, speech." In this context Paul uses it in a negative sense of speech that sounds convincing and reasonable, but is actually false. This word only occurs here in the New Testament, but in "... other literature it is a word of the law court and refers to the lawyer's persuasive speech and its power to influence an audience towards an unjust verdict. In Classical Greek the word referred to the use of probable arguments as opposed to demonstrable arguments.

- a. Philosophy is the love of reason or wisdom
- b. Human philosophies in the end do not improve on "all the treasure of wisdom and understanding" embodied in Christ!

2. They were deceptive in that they may have referenced Christ, but had the potential to take them captive to men instead of to Christ.
3. Gnostic teachings that purported esoteric knowledge derived from subjective experience, intuition, that was necessary to attain the peek of spirituality.

4. Reduced Christ to one of many emanations of God functioning as an imperfect mediator between them and the Father.

B. Paul explains the reality of the Christ, the fullness in Him!

1. The fullness of deity bodily, not one among many. Also defeating greek dualism that matter was evil and therefore God would not reside in it. Here almost every word is emphatic. First, "All the fulness of the Godhead"—not a mere emanation from the Supreme Being. Next, "dwells" and remains for ever—not descending on

Him for a time and leaving Him again. Lastly, "bodily," *i.e.*, as incarnate in His humanity. The whole is an extension and enforcement of [Colossians 1:19](#), "God was pleased that in Him all the fulness should dwell." The horror of all that was material, as having in it the seed of evil, induced denial either of the reality of our Lord's body, or of its inseparable connection with the Godhead in Him. Hence the emphasis here; as also we find (somewhat later) in St. John, "The Word was made flesh" ([John 1:14](#)); "The spirit which confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh . . . is the spirit of antichrist" ([1John 4:3](#)).

2. Christ is the head over all rule and authority.
3. Complete in Him: full, perfect
4. Circumcision of the heart, cleansing from sin, actually accomplished in Christ.
  - a. When dead, Christ made them alive spiritually when they were regenerated.
  - b. In that the Father forgave all our sins in Christ's death on the cross.
  - c. Victory over rulers and authorities when He triumphed at the cross. God's people delivered from their power in Christ.

## II. Danger of legalism.(v16-17)

A. Some were teaching that they needed to observe a particular diet in addition to Christ for salvation. In [Colossians 2:8](#), "philosophy" is tied together with the words, "vain deceit" by the fact the two nouns are joined by one article, literally, "the philosophy and vain deceit." "Vain deceit" describes the nature of human philosophy. "Vain" is *kenos*, "empty." It is used figuratively of things: (a) "without content, without any basis, without truth, without power," or (b) of the effects, "without result, without profit, without effect, without reaching its goal." As the apostle teaches us later in [chapter 2:22-23](#), man's wisdom by which he seeks to add to the message of Christ is totally empty and without effect when it comes to dealing with the flesh or our sinful patterns. [Mk 7:1-13](#) nullifying word of God. Keathly.

1. They were judging people wrt to food and drink. [Rom. 14:17](#)
2. This would have been a blend of Judaism and gentile religions as drinks were never regulated in OT.

B. Some were teaching that certain days of the year needed to be observed.

1. Festivals from the Jewish commemorations.
2. New moon--when sacrifices were offered under Jewish ceremony.
3. Sabbath days.

C. Paul clarifies that these were mere shadows of which Christ is the substance. [Heb 10:1](#); [Rom. 10:1](#)

1. Deliverance from Egypt at passover---Christ from sin.
2. Sacrifices of animals--Christ the antitype as the offering for mankind.
3. Sabbath day rest---Christ our rest from works righteousness.

### III. Temptation to rely on spiritual experiences.(v18-19)

#### A. Individuals were professing to have visions from God.

1. These afforded them special knowledge and authority.
2. Paul exposes as merely the product of a fleshly mind.
3. Disconnected from the head who supplies the entire body

with growth from God not only privileged individuals. In this lay the fatal error. All these speculations and superstitions interfered with the direct hold of the soul on the mediation of Christ, as the Head, from whom alone, as being "the image of the invisible God," come all spiritual life and growth.

The death with Christ is a death unto "the life of the flesh." But this may be (as in [Romans 6:1-2](#); [Romans 6:6-7](#); [Romans 6:11](#)) "the life of sin"; or it may be the outward and visible life "of the world." The latter is the sense to be taken here. This outward life is under "ordinances" (see [Colossians 2:1](#)), under the "rudiments of the world" (see [Colossians 2:8](#)), or, generally, "under law." Of such a life St. Paul says (in [Galatians 2:19](#)), "I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live unto God." There ([Galatians 4:9](#)), as here, he brands as unspiritual the subjection to the "weak and beggarly elements" of mere ordinances. Eadie

Examples: Pope, prophets/apostles, "word from the Lord", tongues

### IV. Warning against asceticism.(v20-23)

#### A. Some were teaching that it was necessary to deny the body.

B. They eliminate all earthly pleasures thinking that will make them holy--monks

#### C. Some even torture their bodies to "achieve" greater spirituality.

D. These are spawned from the elementary principles of the world, from the natural minds attempt to reach God. "Self-made religion" See Galatians 4:3, 9

E. Danger of these heresies: no power to combat indulgence of the sinful nature. Lead to pride(I Cor. 8:1) instead of the real purposes of the mystery of Christ--I Tim, 3:16

#### F. What is the allure of these diversions from Christ?

a. Check list ("love they neighbor", reply: who is my neighbor) instead of vital/fruitful relationship with the living God.

b. Going beyond what is written in "visions" or personal spiritual experiences See I Cor. 4:6. The experience becomes the center of ones spiritual life instead of Christ as taught in the scriptures.

c. Following philosophies/traditions of men offers not power over sinful indulgences.

Anchor our faith here:

Whatever men receive in the gospel, it is Christ. He is the soul of doctrine-for prophets foretold Him, and apostles preached Him; and the oracles of the one and the sermons of the other had no splendour but from Him, and no vitality but in Him. Ethical teaching has as close a connection with Him, for it expounds His law, defers to His authority, and exhibits the means of obedience and fertility in His imparted Spirit and strength. Promise is based upon His veracity, and sealed in His blood, and suffering looks for sympathy to Him who bled and wept. The great mystery of the Divine government is solved in Him, and in Him alone is the enigma of man's history and destiny comprehended. Spiritual life has its root in Him-the growth of the Divine image, and the repose of the soul in the bosom of Him who made it. In believing the gospel, men receive no impersonal abstraction, but Christ Himself-light, safety, love, pattern, power, and life. And they receive Him as "the Lord." He won the Lordship by His death. He rose from the sepulchre to the throne. To Him the universe bends in awful homage, and the church worships Him in grateful allegiance. Eadie, Scottish Puritan