

General Study Of Colossians – Part 2

Colossians 2:4-10 [New King James] *“Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 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. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. 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. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”*

The previous section of Paul’s letter naturally leads into this passage dealing with false teaching.

“Persuasive words” – the Greek word used is *“pēithōs”* meaning **a convincing argument**, true or false, given in a confident manner that could deceive the Colossian Christians.

Before challenging them to resist the false teaching, Paul rejoices over what he knows of them, [**Colossians 1:21-23**].

It is worth noting that the error arose from false speech rather than false practice.

The apostle seems to allude to the Gentile philosophers, who were notorious for this kind of argumentation, similar to Gnosticism.

The teaching was contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ in several basic ways.

- 1) It insisted that important secret knowledge was hidden from most believers. Paul however said that Jesus Christ provided all the knowledge we need.
- 2) It taught that the physical body was evil. Paul counted that God Himself lived in a body, that is, He was embodied in Jesus Christ.
- 3) It contended that Jesus Christ only seemed to be human, but was not.

Paul insisted that Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God.

Exposure to such teaching could easily seduce a church that did not know Christian doctrine well, as many in Christian fellowship today.

We can combat such heresy by becoming thoroughly acquainted with God’s Word, the Christian Bible, through personal study and sound Bible teaching.

Accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord is the beginning of life with Jesus Christ. We must follow His leadership by allowing the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [**Romans 8:9**] to lead us and develop in us the very character of God, [**Galatians 5:22-25**] and guide us into the truth about human life and God’s purpose for our existence, [**John 16:13**].

Colossians 2:11 [New King James] *“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,”*

Jewish males were circumcised as an outward sign of the Jewish covenant, [**Genesis 17:9-14**].

With the death of Jesus Christ ratifying the New Covenant, [Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26] circumcision of the physical body was no longer necessary.

So now our commitment to God's covenant is written in our hearts and minds, not our bodies.

Colossians 2:12 [New King James] *“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.”*

Circumcision is related to baptism, by total immersion, a sign of a new life in Jesus Christ, as it parallels our death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and also portrays an outward sign of the death of our old way of life, followed by a resurrection to a new life, following and serving Jesus Christ, not our own selves.

Romans 6:1-14 [New King James] *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”*

Paul expands on this thought and action that every true Christian should take, to show our acceptance of the New Covenant that was brought to humanity by Jesus Christ, [**Luke 22:20**].

Colossians 2:13-14 [NIV] *“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.”*

The main regulations were those of circumcision, and animal sacrifices for sin, Jesus Christ having made the one sacrifice for the sins of all humanity, [**Hebrews 9:22-28; Hebrews 10:1-10**].

Colossians 2:15 [New King James] *“Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”*

This mainly refers to demonic powers of Satan and his demons, [Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9-12**].**

Colossians 2:16-17 [New King James] *“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”*

For clarification of this please see the articles on this website under the main heading ‘Covenants,’ especially ‘What Day Is God's Sabbath Day?’ and ‘God Ordained Christian Festivals And Holy Days’ and ‘Colossians 2:16’ under ‘Bible Study’ main heading.

Colossians 2:18-23 [NIV] *“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has 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. Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’? These are*

all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. 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.”

To the Colossians, the discipline demanded by these false teachers seemed good, following a long list of religious rules requires strong self-discipline and can make a person appear moral, but **religious rules cannot change a person’s heart. Only the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit can do that.**

Galatians 5:22-25 [New King James] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

It is our following the lead of the Holy Spirit that the “fruits” [character] of God can develop in our hearts and mind.

This is how Jesus Christ can live His life on earth again in us.

John 14:15-18 [New King James] *“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

There are two levels of this work of the Holy in us mentioned in these verses.

First the Holy Spirit works “*with us*” as He guides us into all truth, [**John 16:13**] especially convicting us of our sins, and showing us true righteousness and prepare us for the judgement of Jesus Christ, [**John 16:7-8**].

Eventually the Holy Spirit will be actively “*in us*.”

John 7:37-39 [New King James] *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

By flowing through us out to others in acts of love and compassion, thus causing us to be a light to those who come in contact with us, [**Matthew 5:14-16**].

Colossians 3:1-11 [New King James] *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”*

Having exposed the wrong reasons for self-denial Paul now explains true Christian behaviour that is the result of where our thoughts are. On Jesus Christ now sitting on the throne in heaven with God the Father, preparing a people to work with Him when He returns to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, [Revelation 19:11-16; Revelation 20:4, 11-13].

Colossians 3:12-17 [New King James] *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”*

“*Elect*” Greek word “*ēklēktōs*” meaning chosen, not everyone is being called by God [**John 6:44**] at this time, only a chosen few in every generation, who will be “*rulers and teachers*” [kings and priests] with Jesus Christ at His Second Coming, [**Revelation 1:4-6; Revelation 5:9-10; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 Corinthians 6:2**].

In the last generation before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ the “*elect*” will have to be protected within the “*great tribulation*” [**Matthew 24:21-22**].

When we understand who and how the “*elect*” will be used by Jesus Christ in the future, we can see the importance of Paul’s instructions for the “*elect*” in his day and some true Christians in every generation.

Colossians 3:18-25 [New King James] *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”*

Paul’s thoughts are still on the “*elect*” and their future, for every aspect of this physical life is intended to be a training ground for our lives after Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.

Wives –

Revelation 19:7-9 [New King James] *“‘Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”*

The true Christian Church will become the bride of Jesus Christ, working intimately with Him, as a wife and husband should.

Husbands –

Should reflect the love that Jesus Christ has for the true Church, His future wife.

Children –

We are all children of our Spiritual Father and should obey Him in all things.

Fathers –

We need to learn how to encourage all the “*spiritual*” children we will be teaching after Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.

Bondservants –

All true Christians are bond slaves of Jesus Christ having been purged by His spilt blood, [Acts 20:28; Romans 12:1].

The Greek word translated “servants” when applied to true Christians is “*dōulōs*” meaning a “bond slave,” with no personal rights only personal responsibilities towards their Master.

Paul [Romans 1:1], James [James 1:1], Peter [2 Peter 1:1], Jude [Jude 1], John [Revelation 1:1], even Jesus Christ [Mark 10:43-45], all the apostles introduced themselves as bond slaves.

Masters –

Colossians 4:1 [New King James] *“Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”*

We can relate this command to employers today who should pay fair wages and treat their employees justly. Also, leaders should take care of their volunteers and not abuse them.

If we have any responsibility over others, make sure we are doing what is right and fair, for we are accountable to our Master, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 4:2-4 [NIV] *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”*

Paul tells us to be devoted in our prayers. The Greek words used mean to continue steadfastly, [Acts 1:14; Acts 2:42; Acts 6:4; Romans 12:12]. Note “with thanksgiving” which is an important part of our prayers.

Also included in our prayers is the need to be “watchful,” reminiscent of the injunction of Jesus Christ, [Mark 14:32-34; Matthew 24:42-44].

This watchfulness is to include both our own spiritual condition and world events leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Prayers should also include our true spiritual leaders who are fulfilling the commands of Jesus Christ, [Matthew 24:14] preaching the gospel message of the Kingdom of God as well as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that atones for our sins. Also using the authority and power of the Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus Christ to make disciples of Jesus Christ, [Matthew 28:18-20].

Colossians 4:5-6 [NIV] *“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

This is a reminder of the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in **Matthew 5:13-16**.

Paul closes his letter listing those who are working with him to enable other Christians to include them in their prayers, [Malachi 3:16-18]. Such concern and communication was prophesied to be part of the life of all true children of God.

Colossians 4:18 [New King James] *“This salutation by my own hand, Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.”*

Paul usually dictated his letters to a scribe, then ended with a short note in his own handwriting, [1 Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11]. This assured the recipients that false teachers were not writing letters in Paul’s name. It also gave the letters a personal touch.

It has been suggested that Paul's "*thorn of the flesh*" [**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**] was poor eyesight, a possible result of his encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, [**Acts 9:1-9**]. Also his remark in **Galatians 6:11**. This is why Paul used a scribe to write what he dictated.