

## ***“Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, ‘All the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge’, Part 2”***

### **Introduction:**

***This may be the most relevant letter of Paul’s to our current day, for in our day the worshipping of angels and the invention of special esoteric, cultic, or “spiritual” rituals are again in vogue among many who call themselves “christian”. It was so in Paul’s day as well with false teachers promoting Gnostic/Jewish fables along with their associated religious practices to believers to lead them astray into satanic worship. The message in these verses is that nothing can be added and much may be lost by turning aside from what the apostle had taught the Colossians. So his word to all was simply “beware”!***

***Verses 1 through 3 and 6 through 8 are a wonderful introduction to our scriptures today in the last half of the second chapter of Colossians:***

### **Review:**

- ***Paul’s Great Conflict for the Colossians Is Explained***
- ***The Threat of Deception and Our Defense Is Made Clear***
- ***Strong Warning is Given Against the Enemy’s Spiritual Attacks***
  
- ***Paul’s Great Conflict for the Colossians Is Explained***

#### ***Col. 2:1-3***

***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 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;***

***3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

- ***Again, the apostle addresses those to whom he is writing, the members of the churches in Colosse and Laodicea, and all other believers as well! That includes us!***
  
- ***Paul then sets the context of what will follow as he elevates in importance the knowledge of the Sacred Secret and a recognition of how the acknowledgement of the Mystery revelation relates to the***

*comfort we as believers should enjoy with the love abounding in our hearts. This follows immediately the verses at the end of chapter 1 that we have made our theme verses in this Colossians study. But false teachers had taken their toll in this assembly and that prompted this correctional letter.*

- *These verses are so foundational, if only we would take them to heart:*
  - *“In whom [in “the” Christ, Christ as the head of the Body Church] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”*
- *Are we not called to take Paul’s words to heart and to take them quite literally? Well, does “all” mean “all” or does it mean only “some”? This is the strongest possible statement and should settle all arguments. But for many it does not for they seek other religious or non-religious and anti-Biblical or extra-Biblical means to satisfy their hearing [their “itching ears”?] for even more knowledge and wisdom.*

*But all that wealth, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the risen and ascended Christ Jesus, who is the head of the Body Church”, is revealed in this chapter to be in strict contrast to what the liars with all of their “enticing words”, verse 4, were promoting. So the enemy is active. What is the proper defense to be?*

- *The Threat of Deception and Our Defense Is Made Clear: It Must Be an Active Response for this will be spiritual warfare indeed!*

**Col. 2:4-7**

**4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.**

**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.**

**6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:**

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

- *But, apart from the threat of false teachers with their abounding lies, the apostle is still positive about these saints and gives a powerful and surely very encouraging three verse summary of the transformed life of the believer under the fullness of grace.*

- ***Aren't the details given here encouraging? For being in the Body provides many benefits and blessings. Some are listed here.***
- ***So, with these provisions, we should never accept the lies of the enemy and begin walking as unbelieving Gentiles, in the emptiness and hopelessness of mind of unbelievers. It is so clear when we see it written this way, isn't it?***
- ***But, back to our text in Colossians chapter 2:***
  - ***Verse 6: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him": We were saved in a moment of our own personal history when we believed that message of God's wonderful grace through our Lord Jesus. Here he describes that time as the very moment when we received Christ Jesus. "So walk ye in him" is the exhortation here for all those who are redeemed.***

***We should live in the light of all that we have "in Christ Jesus."***

- ***The truths of Christ's own righteousness imputed to our accounts. Body Truth, or the benefits of being in his blessed Body with all the consequences of that. The Ephesians chapter 4 details are so encouraging?***
- ***Verse 7a: "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught..." ***This is so wonderful. We are to be edified "in him" and in no other. This is to be the sphere of our living, of our walking. Is it? Are we truly "redeeming the time for the days are evil."******
- ***Verse 7b: "... abounding therein with thanksgiving": To abound is to exceed the limits in some sense. But Paul here exclaims that abounding in the truth of the Sacred Secret will result normally in thanksgiving to God. That should be so clear to us. Is it?***

- **Strong Warning is Given Therefore Against the Enemy's Spiritual Attacks**

- ***Paul now returns now in verse 8 to the threat before these believers, for that is the central focus of this letter. He now uses the strong word, "beware", due to the exceedingly great power of the satanic lies that are at the heart of false teachings. For even God's well instructed children are often so easily deceived.***

**Col. 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.**

- ***There is such a great contrast described here between those speaking truth and the liars with their enticing words. But now he is more specific what those words may be, for they are words of "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ". Clearly these lies will be presented as "christian", for otherwise they would have little power over believers. Today we call all of this "new-age christianity" though it has been with us always. Satan is its source and its object. It is all about him and his glory, not Christ's. But all the ministers of these lies and religious systems (and their disciples) "glory in their shame", the apostle writes in Phil. 3:19. But what has he written here?***
  - ***"Philosophy and vain deceit...": This is the only place the word "philosophy" is used in the New Testament! Paul puts it together with "vain deceit", or, in other words, empty and deceiving temptations whether they be from riches, lusts, unrighteousness, or sin. All are easily able to deceive anyone not instructed in the righteousness that is by faith. Then he adds other satanic threats as well:***
  - ***"The traditions of men ...": In times of great change (like today), the safety of human tradition is especially dangerous. Why? Because the order we all value so highly is often based on human traditions.***
  - ***"The rudiments of the world ...": So the elements or rudiments of this world system are what holds it all together — as God sees it, not as man (or the scientists so-called) see it. Remember, this world system is satan's and he rules it with his own subjects on earth AND in the heavenlies, fallen***

***angelic spirits satan controls. This gives us a good introduction to the rest of this chapter.***

**Today's Outline: "In Christ Are All the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Part 2" Heavenly living versus new age legalistic Gnosticism**

- ***Our Identification with Christ Jesus and Its Consequence Is Extolled***
- ***All Religious Schemes Are Contrary to the Working of Christ in Us***
- ***Our Proper Defense Against Spiritual Assaults Therefore Is Active Opposition***

**I. Our Identification with Christ Jesus and Its Consequence Is Extolled:**

***[READ ] Col. 2:9-12***

***9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.***

***10 And ye are complete [made fullness] in him, which is the head of all principality and power:***

***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 [in death]***

***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.***

- ***The contrast is now complete: in Christ [and only in Christ] "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"! See Romans 6 as well. Amen and amen. The only sure and enduring blessings in this life therefore are in him! Though there are many proposed substitutes, none of them are truly satisfying or enduring. Their glory is short lived and as Paul writes in Philippians 3, those that dwell in them "glory in their shame". Yes, if we have not eternal hope we may well "eat, drink and be merry" for a time, but before long it will be clear that next is death and then, ...?***

***Rom. 6:3-4***

***3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?***

***4 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.***

- ***Our identification with Christ speaks to how God sees us "in him"!! At the cross and then in his resurrection to newness of life.***

- ***So much has been imputed by Almighty God to us along with many transformations allowing us to participate in God's working in and through us!!***

***The apostle now explains it all with these blessed and transforming words:***

- ***Verse 9: "... for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily": All that the false gnostic, new-age teachers were promoting was directly opposed to the truth concerning the risen and ascended Christ Jesus. They were teaching that Christ was far less than the truth here shows. Christ really was ALL, far more than can even be imagined, even the fullness (being filled to even overflowing) of the Godhead in bodily form no less! But the apostles point is even more here:***
- ***Verse 10: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power... : Literally, here we read "and you are made fullness (to overflowing) in him". And he adds who "is the head of all principality and power". We now see a little more of their teaching. For the Gnostics held that God was so far outside the realm where physical humanity dwelt that there was no way he could be approached apart from intermediaries, some of which are named here "principalities and powers". Apparently they saw Christ as one of them, perhaps one on a lower level even than those named here.***

***But Paul states the truth boldly that Christ is above them all!! Indeed he was since the Gnostic false teachers were being taught by demonic forces who were elevating themselves as intermediaries between God and man! Indeed, they were even created by him and he was therefore as their creator above them all. In Ephesians we see a more detailed teaching about the same thing in the parallel passage there:***

***Eph. 1:19-23***

***19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,  
20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,  
21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:***

**22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,**  
**23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

- ***But there is so much more on the apostle's heart and it is very practical, a teaching that cuts to the heart of the Gnostic religious and ritualistic system that involved circumcision and water baptism:***

- ***Verses 11 & 12: This circumcision and this baptism of which the apostle writes here is in no way the physical circumcision or the physical baptisms that the Mosaic Law required. For the circumcision and the baptism that is for today under grace has nothing to do with any of those rituals which the Jewish-Gnostic teachers were promoting. For this circumcision was Christ's own "death" circumcision and in the next very, Christ's burial baptism, both of which we participate in as believers the moment we believe.***

***For our identification with Christ includes both of these, and not those alone, but also his resurrection as our next verses state so powerfully. His resurrection also insured ours, first spiritually, and then finally physically:***

- ***The Romans 4 ending is instructive here:***

***Rom. 4:23-25***

***23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;***

***24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;***

***25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.***

- ***Take note that these are past tenses with a future view. Amen. Such incredible blessings are ours through our ascended Lord Jesus Christ. We are made fullness in him — so much is included in this identification!***

## **II. All Religious Schemes Are Contrary to the Working of Christ in Us:**

- ***So the Lord God works not through but above and beyond the religious trappings of the new-age religionists, ancient or modern. And he is not finished with his teaching on this subject:***

**[READ ] Col. 2:13-15**

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;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

- **But there is so much more here seen in these next words and these are bold and powerful words indeed:**
  - **Verse 13:** “are dead”, “quickenened”, forgiven”: **Past tenses, all, here. This has already been accomplished!**
  - **Verse 14:** “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”: **This was both historical and revelatory indeed regarding the Law and the Cross. Who would have known apart from Paul’s teaching here?**
  - **Verse 15:** “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”: **“Led captivity captive” is found in the parallel passage in Eph. 4 and I am reminded here of that. The hierarchy of evil angelic agents in the heavenlies had plotted together to destroy Christ by crucifixion, but they failed instead by his cross work enabling the redemptive work of God and their own eternal defeat. This result was of course not anticipated by them in any way. See this instructive passage in 1 Corinthians:**

**1 Cor. 2:6-9**

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

- ***And, he adds, in his glorious resurrection he triumphed over them openly. Amen. This is so encouraging, isn't it? If all the forces of evil could not succeed in their assassination plot against the Seed of the Woman or his progenitors, how can they succeed against us?***

### **III. Our Proper Defense Against Spiritual Assaults Therefore Is Active Opposition:**

- ***These verses provide perhaps the most easily applied teaching found in Paul's letters, if only we would gladly receive them. Let's quickly proceed but will again dwell here next time, Lord willing. Take special note of his reference to angels and seeing secret things.***

#### **[READ ] Col. 2:16-19**

***16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:***

***17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.***

***18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,***

***19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.***

- ***Now the exhortation, perhaps long expected although perhaps not long awaited by these Colossian believers:***  
***Verses 16 & 17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.":***
  - ***There is so much detail here concerning the current crisis of faith in Colosse. All of these were Jewish and based on the Law of Moses. But those religious observances were never intended to be permanent for all time, he writes, for they all pointed forward (in type) to another time yet future when Messiah would rule this earth. The body causing the shadow was the appointed one, the Seed of the Woman, the anointed one, the Christ himself. But he has come, the apostle writes, and that has changed everything for now and therefore they cannot be more than mere anachronisms if still practiced. Those condemning scriptures were "nailed to his cross" even. So don't allow anyone to judge you regarding this, as you fail to participate in their rituals. And, by application, we should be encouraged to live our lives independently of those***

***religious systems as they were in Colosse. But the apostle is not finished for he continues:***

**Verses 18 & 19:** “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God”:

- ***And then these words, getting even more directly to the heart if the matter, which was not only to do with a false system of worship but the spiritual errors behind that false religious system. And this is very easy to apply today, for the largest cults are caught up in these false teaching and religious practices even today. Consider the Mormons, for example. And I could name many more. The false and satanic worship of unseens (or seens, even, is contrary to and destructive of the inward working of God in us corporately which is the life of the Body enlivened by the Head, Christ Jesus.***

#### **Conclusions & Application:**

- ***As at the beginning, and now at the conclusion here, all revolves on those words at then end of chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2...***”the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 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” “unto all riches of the 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.”
- ***With such blessings already granted, why would anyone want possibly even more? That is Paul’s argument here. Amen.***