

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

**Introduction:**

***We return now to Paul’s blessed letter to the Colossian believers living in Asia Minor and those in surrounding areas including Laodicea. Paul writes that these believers had all been very well taught in the doctrines of grace, but nonetheless many in this group had turned aside to worldly religion and philosophy. For they had begun to promote strange doctrines that he here boldly calls evil and contrary to the true doctrines he had been sharing.***

***Col. 1:25-29***

***25 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;***

***26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:***

***27 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:***

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

***29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.***

***This is the subject really of the rest of the letter to which we turn now after our diversion to consider all the various dimensions of the Sacred Secret, the Mystery Revelation through Paul.***

**Review:**

***What are those dimensions of the Sacred Secret or Mystery revealed to Paul for us saints, members of his heavenly Body of Christ?***

- 1. A New Dispensation, of Grace and Not Law, Our Current Reality (Eph. 3:1-9) with A Better Gospel, the Gospel of the Grace of God, Given for the Faith of Sinners (1 Cor. 15:1-8)***
- 2. Every Benefit of Christ’s Work on Calvary, Fully Provided (Eph. 1:3; Rom. 8:28-30)***
- 3. The Indwelling of the Triune God, Providing Constant Resources in Living (Col. 1:26-27; Rom. 8:8-10) and The Church Which Is One Body, Given for Our Mutual Blessing (Eph. 4:4; 5:32)***
- 4. An Abundant and Eternal Life, Offered Freely, Based on Christ’s Righteousness! (Rom. 5:17)***

5. ***The Mature Life of the Believer Under Grace, Endowed in Every Way to His Glory (Gal. 5)***
6. ***The Blessed Hope & Expectation, the Rapture, Assured by Almighty God (Tit 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; 5:9-11; 2:1-3; 2:13-17)***
7. ***A Heavenly Warfare, Demanding Our Constant Engagement (2 Thess. 2:6-12; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Tim. 4:1-4)***

- ***The last dimension was our spiritual warfare, where, as we have seen in our last several studies, there are also several components for our defensive preparations for spiritual warfare and also one for offense:***

1. ***Our Spiritual Warfare is Heavenly In Character, Not Earthly — Eph. 6:10-12***
2. ***First of All, We Must Protect Our “Loins and Heart” — Eph. 6:13-14***
3. ***Then We Must Also Protect Our “Feet and Body” — Eph. 6:15-16***
4. ***Finally, We Also Must Protect Our Minds — Eph. 6:17a***
5. ***Additionally, We Have Been Well Prepared Offensively — Eph. 6:17b***
6. ***We Should Never Enter Spiritual Conflict Without Prayer — Eph. 6:18-20***

- ***So we are exhorted to prepare our defenses for battle with spiritual forces in the heavenlies. Then, armed with our offensive weapon, the utterance of God and fortified with prayer, we may enter battle as called forth by Almighty God.***

**Today’s Outline: “In Christ Are All the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge”**

- ***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***

**Next Time:**

- ***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***
- ***Our Bulwark Is Sure Against New Threats By New-Age Religious Systems***

***I. Paul's Great Conflict for the Colossians Is Explained:***

***[READ ] 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.*

***If only they would continue further on this path described here, if only! Why are so many so willing to turn aside from Paul's revelation? Why?***

- *This is theological but there are practical consequences as well.*

***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?***

***II. The Threat of Deception and Our Defense Is Made Clear:***

***[READ ] 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.***
  - ***Paul was “with them in the spirit” and rejoicing at their most proper founding “in Christ Jesus”. He had no doubts concerning their salvation. But now he strongly exhorts them regarding their “walk”, with all the challenges that this world offers, that it might be always founded on the sure foundation of Christ Jesus in whom they might always dwell as members of his Body Church.***
  - ***The descriptions of this in the Ephesian letter are parallel (written at the same time) but there they are more detailed and explicit.***

***Ephesians is the teaching letter while Colossians is the correctional letter. So let’s read from the Ephesians:***

***[READ ] Eph. 4:15-17***

***15 But speaking the truth in love, may [you] grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even [the] Christ: “the Christ” in the best manuscripts!***

***16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.***

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

- ***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. There is a definite article here and the word order is significant. For Paul, Christ Jesus emphasizes the risen and ascended heavenly Son of God while Jesus Christ emphasizes the humanity of the Lord as anointed and Israel's Messiah. “So walk ye in him” is the exhortation here. 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?**

- ***But again, Paul now returns 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.***
- ***Pray always to Almighty God that we should be spared from their deceptions. For these letters are our spiritual food indeed. May we always be spiritually healthy and abounding in the work of the Lord!***

**III. Strong Warning is Given Against the Enemy’s Spiritual Attacks:**

**[READ ] 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.**

- ***Again the contrast is with the liars with 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:***

**[READ ] Phil. 3:17-21**

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is *their* belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

- ***“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. So Paul uses the very strong word “beware”! Then he adds other satanic threats as well:***
- ***“The traditions of men ...”: The threat of human tradition is especially dangerous. Why? Because the order we all value so highly is often based on human traditions. So we are easily deceived.***
- ***“The rudiments of the world ...”: The same word is translated “elements” in Gal. 4:3 and 4:9 and “principles” in Heb. 5:12. Peter in his second letter also uses this word and in the KJV it is translated “elements” where he prophesies of the coming destruction of this world: “... the elements shall melt with fervent heat”. So the elements or rudiments of this world system are the structures that hold 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. That is still the Lord God’s design in our current dispensation of grace.***
- ***But these none of these listed here (and this is the short list) are “after Christ”: These are all the same therefore, all based on the lies of the enemy, the many who are caught in the trap of this world system with its “rudiments” or “elements”, are not really Christians though they may very well seem to be and most assuredly believe themselves to be. That is very sad but so true.***

### **Conclusions & Application:**

- ***As at the beginning, and now at the conclusion here, all revolves on those words at the 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.” ***Amen.***