

COLOSSIANS: THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Part 5—Warnings, Continued

Colossians 2:8-15

This week we are looking at our complete nature in Christ Jesus because of His deity, His saving power and our faith therein. We will also see the reasons why we should not be taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit but instead embrace our new alive identity—a new identity that finds all of its substance in Christ!

Read Colossians 2:8-15 in its entirety. As always, review it in as many translations as you can.

1. Having discussed, in last week's lesson, some of the false teachings and philosophies that were seeping into the church, what do you think it means to not be taken captive by them?

There are three characteristics of the “empty deceit and philosophy” warning. What does Paul mean by each of them? Talk through each of these.

- ***What are the **traditions of men**?***
- ***What are the **elementary (base) principles of world**?***
- ***What does he mean, **not according to Christ**?***

2. Verses 9 & 10 give two major truths as to why we shouldn't be taken captive by empty deceit. Discuss the importance of each of these truths.

- **In Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily (the stamp of His identity)**
Look back at 1:19 & 2:3
- **We are complete in Him, who is the head of all power (the stamp of our identity in Him)**
Read Hebrews 10:14 (note context)

Verses 11-15 draw an interesting parallel between circumcision and baptism. They also reveal another aspect of our complete identity in Christ. To better understand this section, read about the circumcision of the Old Testament and its corresponding covenant as it is found in Genesis 17. Then read Colossians 2:11-15 and work your way through the following questions.

3. Colossians 2:11 says that we have been circumcised in putting off of the flesh or body. Verse 13 says we were dead in our uncircumcision but have now been made **alive**. This implies that our new circumcision includes receiving a new body and one that is alive. Where else is this idea found in scripture? What are the stipulations about obtaining it?

Read Romans 6:4-1

- These verses present a similar idea of circumcision except in the context of baptism. Discuss their relationship to the verses in Colossians.

4. If circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham, then does baptism have any deeper meaning than a simple public declaration of your faith?

- Have you ever thought of baptism as a covenant sign of promise—a promise of a fully resurrected glorified body at Christ's second coming? Share your thoughts about that promise and what it holds for you.

- Do you see an aspect of God reaching down to rescue you like he did to Abraham?

5. In verses 13-15, what is the result of this new circumcision?

- What are your initial reactions when you read that your certificate of debt was not only cancelled out but it was nailed to the cross? Pause here and really talk through what that means. How many of your sins are forgiven? What about the ones you haven't yet committed? How does that make you feel?

- Verse 15 even says that Christ made a public spectacle, or put to shame publicly, all principalities and powers (the image is of the victorious Roman army general as he rides through the magnificent city of Rome, parading the vanquished leaders in their shame before all the people). Who or what are the rulers and authorities? What does it mean that He (Christ) triumphed over them? What promise does His victory hold for us?

Close your time together praying for wisdom and understanding.