

Captivated
The Supremacy and Sufficiency of Jesus
Colossians 2:8-15, Coast Pastor's Class; Dan Rupperecht, November 3, 2013

Today, as in every age, old ideas are re-packaged in new lingo designed to trick you into believing that simply trusting in Christ to save you is naïve. How will you keep from being captivated? This text is an armory of truth, given to bolster your defenses against popular deceptions and strengthen your confidence in the cross.

The Warning:
Don't be carried off as spoil in the spiritual battle.

Can this really happen to a Christian...to me? (1 Cor. 8:9; 10:12; Gal. 5:15; 2 Tim. 3:6; Heb. 3:12)

⁸ *See to it that no one takes you captive*

The Villain: Philosophy

By what means would this happen? (2 Tim. 3:7; Rom. 1:18-23)

⁸ *through philosophy and empty deception, according to...*

Man's intellectual pursuit of a rational explanation for the universe and the human experience

What kind of Philosophy is Paul speaking of? Five characteristics:

Empty – Big sounding words and ideas that when tested are shown to be hollow, meaningless chatter. (Eph 5:6; 1 Tim 6:20; Acts 17:21)

Deceptive – It has the appearance of wisdom and knowledge, but is actually false. (Col. 2:23; 1 Tim 6:20)

Human tradition – Man's crude notions about the world that oppose God and amount to a pile of dung. (Mt. 15:2; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:4-6; Phil. 3:7-1)

Elementary – Baby talk! Childish imaginations that makes god's out of created things. (Gal. 4:3; Col. 2:20-22)

Anti-Christ – Anyone or anything that does not love, trust and obey Jesus. (Matt. 12:30)

The Hero: Christ
Two Divine Qualities and Their Benefits for Us

Is it possible to know God intimately, and be united with Him –heart, mind and spirit?

Quality 1: He is the God-Man (Col.1:19; Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:19; 2 Pet. 1:3,4; Jn. 1:14; Jn. 1:16; Jn. 10:30; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 17:22-23)

⁹ *For in Him all the **fullness of Deity** dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Him you have been **made complete***

Benefit: Since God fully joined Himself to a human person in Jesus, He can and does fully join Himself to us through Jesus! We have total confidence that in Christ we are made full and complete, in perfect union with God! Why would you go anywhere else to find a God-experience?

Quality 2: He is Head-over-all (Eph. 1:21-23; Eph. 3:10; Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:24)

*He is the **head over all** rule and authority*

What benefits come to the believer because of Christ's divine headship over all things?

Benefit 1: He removes our dead, sinful flesh (power of sin)

¹¹ *...a circumcision made without hands, in the **removal of the body of the flesh***

Benefit 2: He buries us with Christ in baptism and raises us to new life (power of sin)

¹² *buried with Him in baptism...**raised up with Him through faith** in the working of God*

Benefit 3: He forgive our sin and cancels our debt (penalty of sin)

¹⁴ *having **canceled out the certificate of debt** ...having nailed it to the cross*

Benefit 4: He disarm His (and our) opponents (penalty of sin) (2 Cor. 2:14-16)

¹⁵ *(He) **disarmed the rulers and authorities**...*

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The Supremacy and Sufficiency of Jesus

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⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; ¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him Colossians 1:15-20 (New American Standard Bible)

Summary of where we've come from/where we're headed:

A Gospel that Works (Col. 1:1-8) The gospel is at work in us and the world and is sufficient.

Prayer, Providence, Provision and Path (Col. 1:9-14) God is sovereignly providing for us, working through our prayers to produce a harvest of the fruit of our redemption.

Supremacy in Creation and Redemption (Co. 1:15-20) As Creator of the universe and it's Redeemer from corruption, Christ Jesus is surely heaven's Champion!

Immovable (Col. 1:21-29) With a firmly established faith in Christ we can have real joy in suffering.

Inscrutable Treasures (Col. 2:1-8) God's treasure chest is open, revealing the marvels of Christ.

Rest of chapter 2: The Fraudging Foursome: Philosophy, Legalism, Mysticism, Asceticism

Four notions that can rob you of your hope and joy in Christ.

Pray

Read text

Introduce text: Today, as in every age, old ideas are re-packaged in new lingo designed to trick you into believing that simply trusting in Christ to save you is naïve. How will you keep from being captivated? This text is an armory of truth, given to bolster your defenses against popular deceptions and strengthen your confidence in the cross.

Q. Have you ever been defrauded?

Illustration: Jim Thorpe, the great American Athlete in the 1st half of 20th century, who grew up in the Sac and Fox Indian Nation of OK, won gold medals in both the pentathlon and the decathlon in the 1912 Olympic games in Stockholm, Sweden, sweeping the field and setting an over-all point record that would stand for two decades. When awarding the medals, King Gustav V of Sweden is reported as saying, "You, sir, are the greatest athlete in the world". But, he was stripped of his medals in 1913 when a newspaper published a story revealing that Thorpe had received wages for playing semi-pro baseball

in the summers of 1909 and 1910, a violation of the amateurism rules of the day. Thorpe died from alcoholism in 1953. The IOC posthumously restored Thorpe's medals in 1988, 35 years after his death, when it was shown that the Olympic committee in 1913 violated their own rules for disqualification.

It is a tragic thing to have something of worth and then to forfeit it!

Our story today has a warning, a villain and a Hero!

Outline

1. Warning (v8): Beware! Don't be carried off as spoil (by means of...)
2. Villain (v8): Philosophy –Five characteristics
 - a. Empty (or hollow)
 - b. Deceptive
 - c. Human - based on tradition
 - d. Elementary – based on the world
 - e. Anti-Christ; (rather, be captivated by...)
3. Hero (vs9-15): Christ –two divine qualities and their benefits
 - a. Quality: God is fully united to a human person in Jesus
 - i. Benefit: God fully joins Himself to us through Jesus!
 - b. Quality: Head over all power and authority –four benefits
 - i. Remove our dead, sinful flesh (power of sin)
 - ii. Bury us with Christ in baptism and raise us to new life (power of sin)
 - iii. Forgive our sin/cancel our debt (penalty of sin)
 - iv. Disarm His/our opponents (penalty of sin)

Explanation and Illustration of Text:

⁸ *See to it that no one takes you captive*

Imperative: **Beware! Don't be carried off as spoil**

captive v8 – “spoil” (AV); Gk: *sulagogeō* (συλαγωγέω) *sule* –spoil, *ago* –to lead; to carry off as spoil, plunder, booty; to lead captive; to seduce

(stripped naked, head shorn, eyes gouged out and led off in chains as human plunder/booty)

Illustrations: Sampson, David's emissaries, 10 tribes, Hezekiah)

Illustration: Conservative (Tea Party) perspective on Obama “defrauding America”

Can this really happen to a Christian...to me?

1 Cor. 8:9 “take care that you liberty does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak”

1 Cor. 10:12 “let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall”

Gal. 5:15 “if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another”

2 Tim. 3:6 men who “enter households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins”

Heb. 3:12 “an evil and unbelieving heart (in any one of you) that falls away from the living God”

By what means would this happen?

through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Answer: **Philosophy**

Man’s intellectual pursuit of a rational explanation for the universe and the human experience.

“ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” 2 Tim. 3:7

philosophy (v8) – Gk: *philosophia* –the love and pursuit of wisdom; the investigation of truth and nature; occurs only here in N.T.; for Greeks, the highest effort of the intellect

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²²Professing to be wise, they became fools,²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Rom. 1:18-23

Q. Why study philosophy? What is the value of knowing something of human philosophy?

What kind of Philosophy is Paul speaking of? Not Greek. Not contemporary. Rather, a mish-mash of Jewish legalism and pagan mysticism with a spattering of Gnosticism.

This philosophy was not connected to any particular historical system of thought. It contained elements of what later became known as Gnosticism, i.e., that God is good, but matter is evil, that Jesus Christ was merely one of series of emanations descending from God and being less than God, and that a secret higher knowledge above scripture was necessary for enlightenment and salvation. This heresy also embraced aspects of Jewish legalism, e.g., the necessity of circumcision for salvation, observance of the ceremonial rituals of the OT law (dietary, laws, festivals, Sabbaths), and rigid asceticism. It also called for the worship of angels and mystical experience. –MacArthur Bible Commentary

Five characteristics of this Philosophy:

empty (hollow) – “empty words” Eph 5:6; “avoid worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments...” 1 Tim 6:20; “spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new” Acts 17:21; called Paul “idle babbling”

deceptive – “appearance of wisdom” Col. 2:23; “...falsely called ‘knowledge’” 1 Tim 6:20

human tradition – man’s ideas, crude notions about the world; Pharisees said “your disciples break the tradition of the elders, for they do not wash their hands when they eat” Mt. 15:2; Jesus said, “Why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?” v.3; Paul said that as he was advancing in Judaism, he was “extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” Gal. 1:14; “confidence in the flesh...circum. the 8th day...of the tribe of Ben...a Heb. of Heb...as to the law a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the right. of the law, found blameless” Phil. 3:4-6; “

BUT! whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Phil. 3:7-11

elemental principles (spiritual forces) of the world – Gk. *stoicheion*; “rudiments” (AV) – “one of a row or series”; the verb form means “to walk or march in rank”; used of the letters of the alphabet, as elements of speech; Paul may have had in mind the fact that both Jews and Gentiles in the district of Colossae supposed that the constellations were either animated heavenly beings, or were governed by them;

*...while we were children, were held in bondage under the **elemental things of the world**... But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the **weak and worthless elemental things**, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? Gal. 4:3*

*If you have died with Christ to the **elementary principles of the world**, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹ “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” ²² (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? Col. 2:20-22*

“You’ve heard of Plato, Aristotle, Socrates? Morons!”

Q. What are some philosophies, or let’s just say ideas that you’ve come across that try to lead people away from simple faith in the gospel of Christ?

It's very important that we don't treat this as merely something historical. We mustn't be naïve regarding the anti-Christian ideas in our day that threaten to captivate us and lead us away from Christ.

anti-Christ

“He who is not with Me **is against Me**; and he who does not gather with Me scatters” Matt. 12:30

Let's make the comparison: Rather than be captivated by empty, deceptive, man-invented, elementary, anti-Christ philosophy that will defraud you of your hope and joy, why not be captivated by Christ?

Christ (our Hero) -Two Divine Qualities and Their Implications

Q. How can you experience God, up close and personal? Is it possible to know Him intimately? Is it possible to have all obstacles removed between you and God? Can you become “one with God”, united with God, your mind with His mind, your spirit with His spirit? Does God do this kind of thing? How can we know? Do we have any examples or evidence of Him behaving this way before?

A. YES!

Quality 1: He is the God-Man

⁹ *For in Him all the **fullness of Deity** dwells in bodily form,¹⁰ and in Him you have been **made complete** (brought to fullness -ESV)*

Benefit: Since God fully joined Himself to a human person in Jesus, He can and does fully join Himself to us through Jesus!

(since) “it was the *Father's* good pleasure for **all the fullness** to dwell in Him” Col.1:19

(then) we are blessed “with **every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly *places* in Christ” Eph. 1:3

(since) “**God was in Christ** reconciling the world to Himself” 2 Cor. 5:19

(then) “has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.” 2 Pet. 1:3,4

(since) “we have seen his glory, as of the only Son from the Father, **full of grace and truth**” Jn. 1:14

(then) “For of **His fullness we have all received**, and grace upon grace.” Jn. 1:16

(since) Jesus said, “**I and the Father are one**” Jn. 10:30

(since) Jesus said, “He who has **seen Me has seen the Father**” Jn. 14:9

(then) Jesus also says, “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, **that they may be one, just as We are one**; I in them and You in Me, that they may be **perfected in unity**” Jn. 17:22-23

We have total confidence that in Christ we are made full and complete, in perfect union with God!

What is it to be united with Christ? Well, it doesn't mean to cease to be who you are. When you marry a person, you don't cease to be who you are. You continue to be who you were. But you are united to them in a relationship, in an intimacy, in a closeness, that you have never had before. When we are united with Christ, we do not become Christ, Christ does not become us. We do not become God. But we enter into a covenantal relationship with Him whereby He is ours and we are His. And whereby all the benefits of His life and death flow to us.

–Ligon Duncan

Why would you go anywhere else to find a God-experience?

Q. What popular notions threatened the idea that in Christ, you have all of God- all that He is, all that He gives?

Quality 2: He is Head-over-all

He is the head over all rule and authority

²¹ *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.* ²² *And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,* ²³ *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* Eph. 1:21-23

¹⁰ *so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.* Eph. 3:10

¹⁵ *When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.* Col. 2:15

²⁴ *then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.* 1 Cor. 15:24

Four Benefits of Christ's Divine Headship Over All Things:

Benefit 1: He removes our dead, sinful flesh (power of sin)

¹¹ *and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;*

Circumcision symbolized man's need for cleansing of the heart and was the outward sign of that cleansing of sin that comes by faith in God. At salvation, believers undergo a spiritual

“circumcision” by “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh”. This is the New Birth, the new creation in conversion. The outward affirmation of the already accomplished inner transformation is now the believer’s baptism. –MacArthur Bible Commentary

God performed radical surgery on your spiritual heart, cutting off the sinful flesh, ridding you of its infectious power over you. Sin is no longer endemic and systemic. It is merely topical. It hangs around you like a lingering odor and a fading memory, at times overwhelming your spiritual sensitivity to God and tempting you to wallow in its’ stench. But make no mistake, you are rid of it. You have power over it!

Benefit 2: He buries us with Christ in baptism and raises us to new life (power of sin)

¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him,

God buried you and raised you with Christ. You die to sin so that you can begin a new life to the glory of God. This is why you are not to “present the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but to present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Ro. 6:12

Theology Points:

1. Spiritual circumcision, not baptism is the N.T. symbol that corresponds to O.T. circumcision.
2. Baptism is a death-burial-resurrection drama, in which the believer visibly demonstrates his faith in the working of God.

Q. What popular notions threatened the idea of that Christ has removed the power of sin?

Benefit 3: He forgive our sin and cancels our debt (penalty of sin)

¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Paul, the master of mixed-metaphors:

1. Cancelled a certificate of debt, thereby removing the basis of any further legal action against us.
2. Wiped the ink off the page, erasing all record of its existence.
3. Nailed our crimes to the cross of execution rendering them paid in full upon death

Benefit 4: He disarm His (and our) opponents (penalty of sin)

¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him

He begins and ends this text with the idea of the “spoils of war”.

The picture is that of a victorious Roman general parading his defeated enemies through the streets of Rome. Paul extends the imagery in 2 Cor. to the official and exalted Roman “Triumph Ceremony” where the general was honored with a festive, ceremonial parade through the streets, complete with the aroma of burning incense and flowers strewn under horses hooves.

¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. ¹⁵For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? 2 Cor. 2:14-16

We are beside the great conquering Christ in the chariot as He parades through the streets of Heaven. We still bear the marks of the chains of slavery to sin and Satan that recently bound us. We are the fragrant incense and crushed flowers, pleasing to Him as we gladly lay down our lives in our spiritual service of worship. We are also the smell of death to the captives behind us, chained to the chariot, heading to their execution. They were formerly our captors, but they hold us no more. If you listen closely, you can hear them muttering curses and insults about their conqueror and our Hero, Christ. Something about Him not being who He claims to be. Something about Him not really being able to keep us safe and free and provided for and satisfied. Something about other paths... Are you listening? Will you climb down from the chariot, release their bonds and follow them down a side alley?

Q. What popular notions threatened the idea of that Christ has removed the penalty of sin?

Q. What are some of the venues through which these ideas come to us?

Higher Education –

Religious media –televangelists, radio, articles, books

Entertainment –Hollywood, movies, music, videos

Advertising –

Words: captive, philosophy, fullness, complete, Head, circumcision, baptism, canceled, cross, triumph