

Week 2: CHRIST IN COLOSSIANS

Colossians 2: 1 – 15

Why are we here? – This our Thursday agenda!! - Worship – find God or better, God to find us, change us – learn scriptures – Galatians 4: 9 & 19. Can we or our church be side-tracked in worship? Colossian church influenced, diverted from Jesus Christ as their only focus by false teachers who offered a ‘spiritual fullness;’ an extra blessing, experience; appealing and attractive but divisive. Twentieth century development of: Deeper life; higher plane; full surrender; re-commitment; baptism of Spirit as extra, etc!

Dr. Jim Packer, converted at University, nurtured by ‘heavily pietistic group,’ was taught there were ‘two sorts of Christians, first class and second class, spiritual and carnal’ ... ‘As a lonely, nervy, adolescent introvert whose new-found assurance had not changed his temperament overnight, I had to conclude I was not ‘spiritual’ yet. But I wanted to be useful to God. So what was I to do?’ Told to ‘Let Go and Let God;’ total consecration and one way to a nervous breakdown.¹ Packer discovered seventeenth century Puritan John Owen’s Works, Vol. VI, Romans 7 & 8, and ‘Mortification’.

Paul wrote to confront the ‘Colossian heresy’ = Jewish legal ordinances, circumcision, food regulations, Sabbath, new moon, angels, principalities and powers, early Gnosticism (matter & spirit). Paul emphasised: Jesus Christ is sufficient for all believers are in Christ; **1: 13 & 14**. Pre-eminence of Christ; He alone is sovereign; **1: 15 - 20**. The word translated “fullness” has OT Biblical and non-Biblical (Philo) use. NT use can mean, ‘to fill with a content’, and may be Satan or God. God fills richly; He gives knowledge and joy in fullness.

Today; similar intellectual, spiritual, concert style religious bait through media and churches in our pluralistic society. -- *Christ in you, the hope of glory*, 1:27. Paul continues his warning in second chapter and clearly presents the same answer; **2: 8 – 10**. (KJV/AV; “Ye are complete in Him”.) *You* = emphatic, cf. **Ephesians 1: 22 & 23**. In Jesus Christ dwells the whole ‘fullness’ of God, meaning that Christ is the complete incarnation of God Himself. We are complete as believers in Christ because we have been incorporated into His

¹ J. I. Packer, *John Owen – The Mortification of Sin*, in Puritan Portraits, Christian Focus, 2012, 78

body, the church. What does this mean? There are no essential truths outside of Christ; all is in Him. The non-Christian is incomplete! -- The believer in Jesus Christ has union in Him now, by faith. This was a primary emphasis for the eloquence of false teachers was persuasive and plausible but delusive. Beguile cf. James 1: 22, *be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*. Astrology, zodiac badges, charms, media bait; we need to examine the content of teaching from scripture and not allow our mind to be caught by attractive advertising and redirected from the truth. Truth is a Person; John writes of Him as the LOGOS and we are, by faith, in Him and His Holy Spirit is in and with us.

If the message is less than or divergent from Colossians 1:15 – 20 it is not the gospel. All spiritual treasures are found only in Christ. How does the Christian life work in practice? = **2:6 & 7**; *you have received*, at conversion. *Christ Jesus as Lord*; emphatic; *continue to live in him*; your actual life guarded and guided by Christ Jesus; cf. **1:10**. So, **2:7**, rooted and built up in Him; perfect participle, therefore brought to its appropriate conclusion in a way that its results still remain in action; present state resulting from past action. Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ ... built up = being built up in him *strengthened in the faith*. Again there is strong warning about being taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit. Paul is not only referring to Greek philosophy but sects and cults that claim knowledge of divine mysteries; the trap of so-called spiritual enlightenment; keep alert! The false teachers were/are imposters for all spiritual fullness is in Christ alone and we have been filled in him; he *who is the head of all rule and authority*.

True *circumcision* is without hands; **2: 11 – 15**. United with Christ, believers now share in all he has won and have now all that can be theirs in this world.

Peter Taylor Forsyth (1848 – 1921): “The essential thing in a New Testament Christianity is that it came to settle in a final way the issue between a holy God and the guilt of man. All else is secondary. All criticism is a minor matter if that be secure ... A faith whose object is not such a Christ is not Christianity; at least it is not New Testament Christianity; and the great battle is now for a New Testament Christianity”.²

² P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, London, Independent Press, 1948, 5 & 6