

Colossians 2:1-15

Legacy Standard Bible 2022

Fifth century or earlier manuscript variants: [inserted] [~replaced] [–omitted]

Learning objectives

- Participants will define Paul’s use of “fullness”.
- Participants will evaluate past and current philosophies by revealed Truth.
- Participants will consistently behave as Christians.

Working Outline of Colossians Colossians 2:1-15

- II. My co-workers and I write to strengthen you. 1.3–4.6
 - A. We thank and pray to God for you. 1.3-12
 - B. Because Christ ranks above all others. 1.13–3.17
 - 1. God brings us into Christ’s kingdom. 1.13 – 2.5
 - a. God has made peace with us. 1.13-23
 - b. I now endure hardship for you. 1.24 – 2.5
 - (1) I rejoice in my sufferings. 1.24-29
 - (2) I struggle on your behalf. 2.1-5**
 - 2. Discern true and false Christians. 2.6 – 3.17
 - a. You learned to be true Christians. 2.6-7
 - b. You remain true Christians. 2.8-23

1 For I want you to understand how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not seen my face in the flesh, ...

Struggle: (Athletic image.) Against whom? (Eph 6:12, ‘wrestle against spiritual beings’.)

Query: How do Christians ‘struggle’ on behalf of others who remain far away? (1:9)

Query: How do clergy ‘grow their church’ from a distance?

2 so that their hearts may be encouraged, having been held together in love, even unto all the wealth of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, ...

Query: What are three results of Christian faith, that neither mysticism nor philosophy can provide?

Reply: encouragement, love, assurance, full knowledge.

3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.

Query: Can Christian faith stand against sound logic and scientific scrutiny?

Query: What is one claim that Christian faith can make that science and logic cannot?

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5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the stability of your faith in Christ.

In spirit: Interpretations:

- (a) Paul's spirit was transported to Colossae, where he could see them
- (b) Paul and the Colossian Christians share in the same Holy Spirit.
- (c) He and they had a same purpose.
- (d) He is assuring them of his affection for them.

6 Therefore as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and being built up in Him, and having been established in [~by] your faith—just as you were instructed—and abounding [therein] with thanksgiving.

Received: Interpretations:

- (a) They 'accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour'. (A non-biblical idea. Rather we believe in Jesus.)
- (b) Christ came to dwell in them.
- (c) Made Jesus Lord of their life.
- (d) They were to maintain the same faith that they had when they learned about him.

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, and not according to Christ.

Query: How do Jewish and secular philosophers still appeal to Christians? (They address our values.)

Principles: Interpreted (a) basic ideas; (b) ruling spiritual beings.

9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells bodily, 10 and in Him you have been filled, who [~which] is the head over all rule and authority; ...

Fullness: Interpretation:

- (a) Totality of the ruling aeons (3rd century gnosticism = Paul not author).
- (b) Paul inventing a new theology different from that of Jesus (Pauline christology).
- (c) All of the attributes of Yahweh (second-temple theology, applied by Paul to Jesus).

11 in whom you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ...

Circumcision: Interpretations:

- (a) spiritual, 'of the heart'. Deut 10:16; 30:6
- (b) Metaphor of Christ's crucifixion.
- (c) God imputes to believers Jesus' status as an obedient Jew. See 3:11.

Body of flesh: Interpretations:

- (a) Messiah's crucified physical body.
- (b) Believers' old way of life, which is now (being?) crucified, by faith in Messiah's death.
- (c) Christ's crucifixion imputed to believers as their own death.

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12 having been buried with Him in [~by] baptism, in which you [~we] were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- Query: Water baptism? Or Spirit baptism (Mark 1:8; 1 Cor 12:13.)
- Query: Whose faith? (Believers' faith in Jesus, and the community's faith in their profession.)
- Query: What makes this change happen?

13 And you being dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him, having graciously forgiven us all our transgressions.

- Query: How did we become 'dead'? (Transgressions and uncircumcision,)
- Query: What was wrong with uncircumcision? (Gentiles were born outside of God's community.)
- Query: What does God do about our sins? (He forgives us them.)
- Query: What does God do about our uncircumcision? (2:11)

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

- Query: What did we owe to God? (Love, worship and obedience.)
- Decrees: 'Jewish people used the term translated "decrees" (NASB) or "regulations" (NIV) for God's laws.' IVPbbc-nt2
- Nailed it: 'It' = Greek neutre genre pronoun → neuter genre noun certificate. As Pilate nailed his 'certificate' to Jesus' cross.

15 Having disarmed the rulers and authorities, He [also] made a public display of them, having triumphed over them in Him.

- 'in Him': Alternate translation, 'by it (the cross)'.
- Public display: Where? When? How?
- Query: How does Jesus, as 'the head over all rule and authority' (2:10), 'triumph over them'?
- Query: Did Jesus death and resurrection (a) erase the human debt, and (b) proclaim the coming death of fallen spiritual powers, now disarmed, neither redeemed nor to be forgiven?

In Christ

In Christ 1.2	In Christ 2.5		
In Christ 1.4	In Him 2.6		
In Him 1.17	In Him 2.7		
In Him 1.19	In Christ 2.8		
In the Spirit 1.8	In Him 2.9		
In Christ 1.24	In Him 2.11		
In Christ 1.28	In Him 2.15		