

Bible Study Handout III – Deep Dive – Colossians 2

Focal Passage – Colossians 2:1-23

SCRIPTURE READING (COLOSSIANS 2:1-23 ESV):

2 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. 6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits[a] of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities[b] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. 20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATIONS & KEY VERSES

A PASTORAL BURDEN

- Paul is an apostle with a pastoral heart that “struggles” for the church; one that he did not found and has not visited in person
- 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 details Paul’s physical afflictions and all of these are for the sake of the Gospel which inevitably means the spreading thereof which means people
- Paul’s burden for this church is that they will be knit together in love; a unified church
- To know the mystery: what was hidden in the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament; The mystery is revealed in Colossians 1:27, Christ in you the hope of glory. The wall between Jew and Gentile is torn down because of Christ.
- Mystery is hidden in Christ; if I am in Christ and Christ in me, there is no need to search outside for wisdom and knowledge

NOTES

ALIVE IN CHRIST

- Walk in Him – indicative of a lifestyle (Paul mentions some iteration of walking with Him in every chapter of Colossians; (1:10; 2:6-7; 3:1-17; 4:5-6)
- Rooted in Him – the way to grow up is to grow down
- These terms are indicative of Sanctification
 - Sanctification - being set apart from sin and dedicated to God for holy use
 - We are both sanctified and being sanctified.

NOTES

PAUL’S ARGUMENT

- Philosophy – means the love of wisdom
- Paul does not argue that wisdom is bad, he simply argues it matters where your wisdom comes from.
- Do not be taken captive by spiritual human traffickers

- Acts 20:29-32
- Apologetics - the religious and academic field dedicated to providing a reasoned defense and explanation of the Christian faith
- The necessity of logos AND rhema
- The pre-Gnostic play on words concerning Pleroma which means fullness
- The fullness of God they believed had been distributed
- Circumcision – Genesis 17:10-14; Leviticus 12:3
- Multiple groups believed in Circumcision to include the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jews.
- Jewish circumcision of which Paul refers was the cutting away of skin on the eighth day; spiritual reality that the child is being dedicated to God as an affirmation they will live a spiritual life and not one after the flesh
- Paul's states that under Christ there is no longer circumcision of the flesh but of the heart; circumcision is not about outward ritual but inward reality.
- How is this inward circumcision made manifest?
 - Buried with Him in baptism
 - Immersion in a watery grave signifying the death of Christ; raised from the water signifying the resurrection of Christ

NOTES: PAUL'S ARGUMENT & THEOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS

DEAD IN TRESPASSES & CANCELED DEBT

- The unbeliever is not merely just a "sin sick soul" but that sin has made the unbeliever dead. If merely sick, that would indicate some ability for the sick to improve their own condition. Dead requires resurrection of which is only made possible through Christ
- In the day of the text, they wrote on things like parchment and papyrus. The tools they used for writing did not contain acid so when they would write they had to let it dry and settle onto the surface. While modern ink would have acid and would dry, their writing tools contained no acid so if something was written down it could easily be wiped away or as the KJV says blotted out.
- Paul says the debt has been canceled, and the record has been blotted out

NOTES: DEAD IN TRESPASSES & CANCELED DEBT

DISARMED RULERS

- Paul uses the word triumph which mirrors the practice of a Roman general when he returned from war in triumph there was a triumphant procession or parade held in the streets of Rome and people would hail him and throw gifts and flowers at him as he has come back triumphant.
- Paul says Jesus at the cross disarmed all of the officers, rulers, and authorities in the satanic army and made a public spectacle of them.

NOTES

LET NO ONE DISQUALIFY YOU

- Legalism - the mistaken belief that a person can earn salvation or God's favor by following a strict set of rules and good works, rather than receiving it as a free gift through faith and grace (Mark 10:17-22)
- Paul indicates these legalistic Jews got hung up on what to eat and drink, what day to worship.
- New moon - the monthly lunar festival celebrated in ancient Israel marked the start of a new month. Each month begins with the sighting of the first crescent moon. Israelites dedicated the beginning of the month to God by presenting specific burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, and a sin offering at the Tabernacle or Temple (Numbers 28:11-15)
- Mysticism (v.18) – a mystical relationship with God is all inward concerning what you feel verses God's revelation; looking for truth based on feelings rather than what the Bible says
- All of these emanations formed a bridge of which they wanted the church at Colossae to believe were required to get to God from the belief that God is so holy you cannot go directly to Him; you have to go through other things to get to Him. This is the belief of the Catholic church with praying to Mary in a means that every son listens to his mother and she will pray for you or a saint and Mary can talk to God on your behalf.
- Ascetism (or false humility, worship of angels, etc., these things DO NOT come from the Bible.
- Example of Ascetism: There were some early church fathers who castrated themselves by taking Scripture literally. Jesus said some have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God's sake; some took this literally. You CANNOT sanctify the soul by extreme discipline to the body.
- Paul says they are doing all of this to make themselves have a reputation of being so spiritual. This is probably why Jesus gave them instructions for what not to do when fasting (Matthew 6:16-18) but doing these things would make them appear spiritual
- Paul indicates this model you come to Christ (receiving Christ coming to you), and from that day forward you are complete in Him. Circumcision (inward), baptism, resurrection, and it's a done deal. Then Christ gives you new desires from the inside out not the outside in. (2 Peter 1:4)

 **NOTES**

GENERAL REFLECTIONS & LIFE APPLICATION

 **PERSONAL TAKEAWAYS / PRAYER FOCUS / ACTION STEPS**