

# Not False Philosophy, But Christ!

## Colossians 2:1-13

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**Teaching Aim:** To demonstrate that not all philosophy (*the love of wisdom*) is bad, but only those forms of philosophy that take away from God's Word and the finished work of Jesus Christ. To illustrate that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form. To show the kind of circumcision God requires for salvation is circumcision of the heart.

### DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

#### Part I: In God are hidden all the treasures of true wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:1-4)

1. How does Paul's struggle in **verse 1** relate to **Colossians 1:28-29**? NOTE: The root word for "striving" (*Gk –agonizomai*) in **Colossians 1:29** is the same root word as for "conflict" in **Colossians 2:1** (*Gk –agon*). From both words we get our English word "agonize". What danger to the churches in the Lycus River Valley (*Colosse, Hierapolis, Laodicea*) was Paul agonizing about?
2. According to **verse 1**, had Paul ever met the people he was writing to? What was Paul's desire for the people of the Lycus River Valley as he struggled in prayer for them (**vs. 2**)? Why is it so important for Christians to be "knit together in love"? What happens if we are not?
3. According to **verse 2**, Paul's prayer for the Christians of the Lycus River Valley was that they would come to know the richness of understanding the mystery of God. According to **Colossians 1:27**, what was that mystery? How does the truth of this mystery encourage you today?
4. In whom do we find "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" according to **verses 2b & 3**? How does **verse 4** link to the preceding verses? Does it appear from **verse 4** that people were trying to teach the Colossian Church false doctrine? Why is it important for Christians today to check the words of persuasive speakers against Sacred Scripture? **PRINCIPLE:** "The Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are our authority for what we believe." What should our response be to eloquent speakers who speak contrary to Sacred Scripture? How do you think should students in school should respond if their teachers teach material contrary to the Bible and they need those classed to graduate?

#### Part II: Protecting yourself against the deception of false philosophy and empty deceit (Col. 2:5-10)

1. What does it mean for one person to be with another "in spirit" (**vs. 5**)? Have you ever experienced

this in your own life? When? How does this concept apply to Paul? What can we learn about Paul's love for the people of the Lycus River Valley in **verse 5a**? What can we learn about the believers in Colossians from **verse 5b**?

2. When we come to Christ in faith, we are just starting our spiritual walk. What is meant by the concept of a "spiritual walk" (**vs. 6**)? How does our "spiritual walk" affect our everyday lives? In what way is a kayaker paddling up a whitewater river a good illustration of a Christian's spiritual walk? What happens when a kayaker stops paddling?
3. According to **verse 7**, what four characteristics can we find in the Christian moving forward in his or her spiritual walk? Why is each characteristic important to the spiritual life of a Christian?
4. What is the meaning of the word "philosophy" (*Gk – sophia*)? (See Dictionary) Is Paul implying that all philosophy is bad (**vs. 8**)? Why or why not? Discuss the place philosophy had in the ancient Greek and Roman cultures. (**See Acts 17:18,21-23**) What was Paul's response to the philosophers in Athens?
5. Secularism, or Secular Humanism is one of the pervading philosophies in America today. It is defined as "the belief system that denies the reality of God, religion and the supernatural order and hence maintains that reality entails only this natural world. Secular humanism in turn promotes and glorifies the human creature to the exclusion and denial of the Creator." (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms – Grenz, Guretzki & Nording p – 106*) In a few words, share how this philosophy is affecting our culture today. What is the solution? (**See 2 Chron. 7:14**) Why should **2 Cor. 10:4-5** be every Christian's philosophy?
6. The Colossian heresy taught the fullness of God was spread out among a number of angelic beings, including the created being and angel "Jesus Christ". How did Paul counter these false teachings in **verse 9**? What does it mean for the fullness of the Godhead to dwell in Christ in bodily form?
7. There are a lot of people in the world today desperately searching for fulfillment. According to **verse 10**, who is the only person who can bring true fulfillment and completion to life? As stated earlier,

the false teachers in Colosse taught that Christ was a created being, an angel. How did Paul counter their teachings in **verse 10b**? What is Christ's real relationship to the angels according to **Heb. 1:3-8**?

### **Part III: Circumcised in heart and buried in baptism, new life in Christ (Col. 2:11-13)**

1. Is Paul speaking of "physical circumcision" or "spiritual circumcision" in **verse 11**? What is the difference between the two? What is the significance of physical circumcision? (**See Gen. 17:10-12a**) What does cutting off the flesh symbolize? What is portrayed by circumcision of the heart? (**See Deut. 10:16; Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 2:25-29**) According to **verse 11**, who performs this life changing operation? (**See vs. 13**) When does this "heart surgery" occur? (**See John 3:3, 16; Acts 16:31**)
2. Is **verse 12** a reference to "physical baptism" or "spiritual baptism"? What is the difference? How does baptism by immersion portray the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ? What promise is given to us in the sacrament of water baptism (**vs. 12**)?
3. According to **verse 13**, what is the spiritual state of every person before coming to Christ? Does a person who is dead spiritually have any genuine sensitivity to the things of God? Why or why not? What prerequisite is required to even see the kingdom of God? (**See John 3:3**) According to **Eph. 2:1-7**, who made us alive while we were dead in our trespasses and sins? Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? If not, why not? Why not do so right now in prayer in the quietness of this moment? (**See John 1:12,13; John 3:16,36; Acts 4:12; 16:31**)

### **MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!***

- \* As Christians, "The scriptures, and the scriptures alone are our authority for what we believe."
- \* Coming to Christ is just the first step in our spiritual walk. We need to constantly be moving forward in our Christian walk or we will turn around and go backward.
- \* Paul is not saying that all philosophy is not bad, but is referring to any philosophy that takes away from God's Word and the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- \* Circumcision of the heart is an operation performed by God and occurs at the moment of regeneration (*the moment of true belief in Christ as Savior and Lord*).
- \* It was God who brought spiritual life to us out of death in our regeneration. Each Christian is a living monument to the grace of God and the miracle of new life in Him!