



COLOSSIANS

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...and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. Colossians 2:10

The word “complete” in Greek signifies being made full, and the word “you” is plural. It is speaking to all who are in Christ. The order of the wording in Greek gives us the idea of what is being relayed – “And you are in Him, made full.” Thus it is a combination of two statements. “You are in Him,” and “You are filled full in Him.” It is a sentence which takes us back to the previous verse which said, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

Therefore, the thought for us to see is that “In Him dwells all the fullness, and as you are in Him, you are filled. Paul is showing them that our sufficiency is of Christ alone. There is no need for the things that he referred to in verse 8 concerning the philosophy which the Greeks taught and the traditions of man which the Jews taught. Rather, everything necessary for salvation, and continued spiritual growth, is found in Christ alone, “who is the head of all principality and power.”

This is a term that he uses also in Ephesians 1:21. The words which are translated as “principality and power” give the idea of government and the authority committed to that government. Christ’s position is above all such things. As there are both earthly and heavenly hierarchies, it signifies that He is the ultimate authority on earth and in heaven; He is God. Because of this, it is contrary to what is proper to petition lesser beings, such as angels or popes, in order to seek God’s grace and blessings. To do so would deprive Christ of His position within the Godhead, and it would thus diminish what it means for us to be in Him.

Albert Barnes notes four areas in particular in which this thought especially applies. 1) In wisdom needed to guide us; 2) in atonement needed for sin; 3) in merit by which a sinner is justified; and, 4) in grace needed to sustain us. We derive these things from Christ Jesus, not from lesser sources.

Life application: There is no praying to angels, to Mary, to a pope, or to a saint authorized in Scripture. There is no class of person who is initiated in spiritual matters that we need to seek in order to be saved, or to continue to be saved. There is no tradition of man that can help us

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in our walk with or to God. In Christ, we have the fullness of what we need in order meet these and all other spiritual challenges and needs. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, Colossians 2:11

Paul seems to suddenly, even abruptly, introduce circumcision. However, one need only go back to verse 8 to see what he is referring to. There he says, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." Circumcision of the Gentiles, which the church at Colossae was comprised of, would be a tradition of man. It was intended not for Gentiles, but for the people of Israel as a sign to them of their inclusion in that body. As circumcision was a picture which pointed to Christ, then it is fulfilled in Christ. To expect someone to fall back on a picture, rather than the substance, would make no sense. As Paul continues in verse 10, "and you are complete in Him." There is nothing lacking which needs to be filled up in the physical body.

Rather, "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." This is referring to Christ. Those who have called on Him receive the true circumcision; the sign which shows that we are included in the body which is His church. The words "made without hands" speaks of a spiritual, rather than a physical, circumcision. It is a term used several times in the New Testament to indicate something which is not of the material world (see Mark 14:58, 2 Corinthians 5:1, and Hebrews 9:11 & 24). The believer in Christ is so circumcised. As Paul says in Romans 2:29, "...circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter." In that verse, "not in the letter" is speaking of the Law of Moses; a law which is now obsolete in Christ.

This circumcision made without hands points to our "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." The word translated as "putting off" is found only here in the New Testament. It gives the sense of casting off a garment. It contains two prefixes, making it a strong expression for completely casting something away from oneself. It would be comparable to saying, "I took it off and I cast it away." The words "of the sins" are not found in some manuscripts. They may belong there, or they may have been added by some scribe to explain what "the body of the flesh" is speaking of. Either way, it is evident from the rest of Scripture that "the flesh" speaks of that which is morally carnal and earthly, not that which is spiritual. It is the passions and lusts of the earthly person which stand opposed to that which is spiritual and holy.

Paul finishes the thought with, "...by the circumcision of Christ." The Greek reads "in the circumcision of Christ." It is a circumcision of the whole corrupt spiritual nature of man. It is cut away because of the work of Christ. This stands in contrast to the mere cutting of a portion of the physical body in the Jewish rite of circumcision. In our union with Christ, this circumcision

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occurs. He kept the whole law without erring under it. This work of His is imputed to us, and in that imputation we are granted His righteousness. Therefore, our circumcision cuts away the law which stood opposed to us, and which could only highlight our sin-nature, not remove it. In Christ, however, it is removed. In verse 14, Paul will say that the law is “nailed to the cross,” indicating that it died with Him on the cross.

Life application: Physical circumcision is not required for believers in Christ. As that was the preeminent sign of inclusion into the corporate body of the people of Israel, then any lesser sign or mandate must necessarily be done away with it as well. Don't let the Judaizers of the world fool you into believing that you must meet this demand of the law or that demand of the law. The Law of Moses is finished and annulled. Why is this so hard to get through the minds of God's people?