

**Lesson 7**

**Colossians 2:6-15**

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- 6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the<sup>a</sup> Lord, so walk<sup>b</sup> in him,  
7 rooted and <sup>c</sup>built up in<sup>d</sup> him and established<sup>e</sup> in the<sup>f</sup> faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
- 8 See to it<sup>g</sup> that no one takes you captive<sup>h</sup> by philosophy and empty<sup>i</sup> deceit<sup>j</sup>, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits<sup>k</sup> of the world<sup>l</sup>, and not according to Christ.
- 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity<sup>m</sup> dwells bodily,  
10 and you have been filled<sup>n</sup> in<sup>o</sup> him, who is the head of all rule<sup>p</sup> and authority<sup>q</sup>.
- 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision<sup>r</sup> made without hands<sup>s</sup>, by<sup>t</sup> putting off the <sup>u</sup>body of the flesh<sup>v</sup>, by<sup>w</sup> 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<sup>x</sup> of God, who raised him from the dead.
- 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses<sup>y</sup> and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses<sup>z</sup>,  
14 by canceling<sup>A</sup> the record of debt<sup>B</sup> that stood against us<sup>C</sup> with its legal demands<sup>D</sup>. This he set aside<sup>E</sup>, nailing it to the<sup>F</sup> cross.
- 15 He disarmed<sup>G</sup> the rulers<sup>H</sup> and authorities<sup>I</sup> and put them to open shame<sup>J</sup>, by triumphing over them<sup>K</sup> in him<sup>L</sup>.

- Notes
- a NJB sim., REB, NIV "as"
  - b NJB, NIV sim. "now live your lives"
  - c NASU inserts "now"
  - d NJB "rooted in him and built on him"
  - e REB "grows strong"; NIV "strengthened"
  - f ASV "your"
  - g KJV "Beware"; ASV "Take heed"; NEB "Make sure"; REB "Be on your guard"; HCSB "Be careful"
  - h KJV, ASV sim. "spoil you"; CEB "enslaves you"
  - i KJV, ASV "vain"
  - j REB, NIV sim. "hollow and delusive speculations"
  - k KJV, ASV "rudiments"; NJB "principles"; HCSB "elemental forces"; NAB "elemental powers"; NIV "spiritual forces"
  - l NRSV, REB "universe"
  - m KJV, ASV, REB "Godhead"; NJB "divinity"; HCSB "God's nature"
  - n KJV, NASU sim. "are complete"; NJB "find your fulfilment"; REB, NIV sim. "brought to fulfilment"; NAB "your share in this fullness"
  - o HCSB "by"
  - p KJV, ASV, NAB "principality"; NRSV "every ruler"
  - q KJV, ASV, NAB "power"
  - r NRSV "spiritual circumcision" (omits "made without hands")
  - s REB "not in a physical sense"
  - t KJV, ASV, NASU "in"
  - u KJV inserts "sins of the"
  - v NAB "carnal body"
  - w ASV, NRSV "in"
  - x KJV "operation"; NRSV, NAB, CEB "power"; REB "active power"
  - y KJV "sins"; REB "because of your sins"

- z REB, NIV "sins"; NASU, NAB "transgressions"
- A KJV, ASV "blotting out"; NRSV "erasing"
- B KJV "handwriting of ordinances"; ASV "bond written in ordinances"; NASU "certificate of debt"
- C KJV, ASV, NASU sim. "which was contrary to us"
- D HCSB "with its obligations"; NAB "with its legal claims"; CEB "with its requirements"; NJB "He has wiped out the record of debt to the Law"; NIV "having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness"
- E KJV, NASU sim., HCSB sim. "took it out of the way"; NJB "destroyed it"
- F KJV "his"
- G KJV "spoiled"
- H KJV, ASV "principalities"
- I KJV, ASV "powers"
- J NRSV, REB "made a public spectacle of them"
- K REB "leading them as captives in his triumphal procession"
- L KJV, ASV, NRSV, REB sim., NAB "it"; NIV "by the cross"

### Comments / Questions

1. Paul, as he often does, draws implications from them "receiving Christ." The primary implication is that they are now "to walk in him." But what three things are necessary for them to be able to walk properly?
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - 3)
2. Paul again expresses his concern. Being in Christ implies how they ought to live, but Paul warns them not to heed teachings that would draw them away.
  - a. He does not delineate the particular teachings in this passage (that will come later), but he does tell us the source of this false teaching. According to v.8, where does the false teaching originate?
  - b. What is the probable scenario behind Paul's warning: "See to it that no one takes you captive"? Is this teaching just something that exists "out there" in their society, or are there actual people who are trying to convince the Colossians of its superiority?
  - c. To Paul, there is a choice the Colossians must make: Christ or this 'philosophy'. Are they mutually exclusive?
3. To reinforce the point that Christ is sufficient, as opposed to human philosophies, Paul in v.9-14 highlights three things that God has done for the Colossians "in him" (Christ).
  - 1) The fullness of deity dwells bodily in Christ with the consequent of them having been filled in him.
  - 2) They have been circumcised by the circumcision of Christ when buried with him in baptism and then raised with him.
  - 3) They are freed from their sin since God cancelled their debt by the cross and thereby disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame.

4. Each of the three points listed in Comment 3 above raises at least one question.
  - 1) In 1:19, Paul has already made the point that the fulness of God dwelled in Christ. Why does he expand that to say that the fulness of God dwells in Christ "bodily"?

Paul expands his comment to say that the Colossians were "filled in him (Christ)" (v.10). What were they filled with?

- 2) Grammatically, the "circumcision of Christ" could mean either a) that Christ himself was circumcised (probably meaning in his death), or b) that Christ circumcised others (in their baptism). Could either make sense in this passage? Which do you think Paul means?
  - 3) Paul observes that we are "dead in our trespasses" and uses the metaphor 'record of debt' to refer to our indebtedness to sin and its consequent, death. In forgiving us our trespasses he thereby 'cancelled' the 'record of debt'. So, to be clear, what exactly was nailed to the cross (another metaphor)?
5. By the way, who was it that forgave us our sins and disarmed the rulers and authorities? God or Jesus?
6. Review Paul's letter to this point. Is Paul addressing Jewish or Gentile Christians? Or both? What are the indicators?
7. As we have noted, both Colossians and Ephesians were written at the same time. This would be a good time to read the first two chapters of Ephesians. List the similarities you see in the two letters to this point.