

Complete in Christ

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Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:8-10).

The greatest discovery that any human being can make is the discovery of the *ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST*, and the utter worthlessness of man without Him. Christ is all, and in Him we have all. Without Him we are nothing, absolutely nothing.

“Christ is all” is the covering principle of this Book of Colossians. Look at the following verses:

That in all things He might have the preeminence (1:18).

In Him should all fullness dwell (1:19).

In Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3).

In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9).

In Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power (2:10).

Christ is All, and in all (3:11).

It was Bishop Moule who said, “No surer test according to Scripture can be applied to anything claiming to be Christian teaching. Where does it put Jesus Christ? What does it make of Jesus Christ? Is He something in it, or is He *ALL*?”

When anyone says that we are to be saved or kept by the Law, they have never understood the phrase, *“Complete in Him.”*

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes (Romans 10:4).

When any one suggests that we can add to our salvation by doing something, they never understood the phrase, “*Complete in Him.*”

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

When anyone suggests that water baptism in any form is necessary for salvation, or as a testimony to one’s faith, or the “door” to the church, they do not understand the phrase “*Complete in Him.*”

For we are “*buried with Him in baptism*” (Colossians 2:12).

When we are told that we must keep the Sabbath, we know men do not understand the *completeness we have in Christ.*

... The sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the Body is of Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

“*Complete in Him*” – Nothing can go beyond completeness. You can add nothing to it.

You might well try to purge a sunbeam, or purify the whiteness of the newly fallen snow as to add to what is already perfect. It is not only true that “*all fullness dwells in Him,*” but also that we are “*complete in Him.*”

It is the privilege of every person to recognize their completeness in Christ. This can be done first by,

RECOGNIZING CHRIST’S FULLNESS

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

Christ’s fullness is resident in His person (“*in Him*”). This phrase is given the emphatic position in the verse, and draws our attention *first* to the One Who has the fullness.

Permanence

We must also recognize the *permanence* of the fullness in the word “*dwells.*” This means “to settle down, to be at home.” Deity is at home in Christ, and dwells so in a permanent way.

Plentitude

There is also the *plentitude* of this fullness as seen in the words, “*all the fullness of the Godhead.*” To make this matter exceedingly clear, the Apostle uses “*all,*” emphasizing that the fullness is *complete.*

Christ Is the HEAD of All Creation

Who is the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15ff).

In creation Christ is preeminent.

All creation was in Him ... In Him God created all else, for the whole universe was created in Him. This includes the celestial as well as the terrestrial spheres and every form of spiritual power and dignity. These exist through Him and for Him and He makes all a unit for the accomplishment of God's purpose.¹

Christ is the HEAD of All Redemption

And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself (Colossians 1:20).

When He cried, "*It is finished,*" it was finished. Nothing was left undone, and nothing needed to be added. In His death He became our means of peace and provision for every spiritual blessing; in His resurrection He became our power over death and the grave; in His ascension and seating at God's right hand He became our guarantee of all future glory with Him. Nothing has been left undone for our future glorification with Him "*in heavenly places.*"

Christ Is the HEAD of the Church, His Body

And He is the Head of the Body, the church (Colossians 1:18).

The head is the glory of the Body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. Christ is fairer than all. We are circumcised with Him, baptized with Him, raised with Him, ascended with Him, and seated with Him in glory. What a complete identification!

Christ Is Again the HEAD of Our Hope

When Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

So our Lord Jesus Christ is *ALL* and *in ALL*. We are God's heavenly people; our citizenship is in Heaven, and from thence we look for our Savior.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

The Fullness of Christ is but half of the story: the apostle hastens on to show the other side. So we must also

1. Added comments from A.E. Knoch, Concordant Commentary on the New Testament. p. 303

RECOGNIZE THE CHRISTIAN'S FULLNESS

You are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10).

Note our present possession in the words “*you **are.***” “*In Him*” is the richest little phrase in all of Paul’s Epistles. It is the sphere of the believer’s life. If we are “*complete in Him,*” and we are “*saved by grace through faith,*” then it follows as Paul sets forth in this Epistle:

We Are Complete Without Philosophy

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2:8).

We need no sophisms of this world to prop our faith. There is nothing new in philosophy except old error. One day three friend philosophers came to Job to comfort him and to “set him straight” as to his thinking. These three represent the reasoning of the best of men.

Eliphaz reasoned on **human experience**:

Even as I have seen ... I have seen (Job 4:8; 5:3; 15:17).

Bildad comes from **human tradition**:

For enquire, I pray, of the former age ... Search of the fathers (Job 8:8, 10).

Zophar reasons on **human merit**:

If you prepare your heart (Job 11:13-14).

This is the gospel of humanism. Six thousand years of human groping after wisdom have not given men the true knowledge of God, nor His ways with man. Man’s reasoning is inadequate to understand either the will or way of God. If man by his own reason could find God and His way of redemption, then there would be no need of a revelation. Like little David we are content with the sling and the stones. As for the armor of philosophy, we leave that to proud Goliath to wear. “*Spoil you,*” says Paul, means “to carry off as a captive, a slave, as booty.”

We Are Complete Without Ceremonies

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days (Colossians 2:14, 16-17).

All these ceremonies had their day. They belong to the time of shadows; we now have the Substance, Christ. Finished are the types and shadows of the ceremonial law. Circumcision, sacrifices, Passover, water baptisms, temple services, priestly functions, etc., are but “*weak*

and beggarly elements” of a past age, encumbrances no longer needed. Yet man is prone to be religious, and add something to Christ. He must “touch,” “taste” and “handle” something (Colossians 2:21).

Again, we are “**complete in Him**” without any human merit.

*For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
Not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

If we were “*dead in sins,*” and we were, how could a dead man do anything? He cannot see, hear, touch, smell, speak or walk. So how utterly foolish it is like Zophar to talk about preparing one’s heart to appease God or to merit His favor.

Therefore, if “*in Him*” there dwells “*all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,*” and we are “*complete in Him,*” let us live as those who know this fullness! The Pauline doctrine of Christ is His absolute *fullness*. Christ should therefore command all our admiration, our love. There is at our disposal the infinite merit of His righteousness, the infinite efficacy in His blood, and the infinite power of His resurrection and glorification.

Muskegon, MI
1955

Taken from the *Bible Student’s Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed)

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