

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS – LESSON 6
COLOSSIANS 2:10-23
WEEK OF JANUARY 26 – JANUARY 31

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

The false teachers in Colossae intimidated the Christians by teaching that faith alone in Christ alone for salvation was naive and simplistic. The false teachers taught that a higher knowledge, a mystical experience, legalism, adherence to man-made rules or asceticism was needed in addition to Christ to truly experience a right relationship with God. Paul again refutes those deceptive and destructive ideas and philosophies by teaching in Colossians 2:10-15 the truth that man is saved and complete only in Christ. Faith in Christ alone is all that is necessary for salvation. Paul continues in his teaching of the Colossians in **Colossians 2:16-23** with the purpose of warning the believers of specific heretical ideas and teaching attacking and undermining the complete sufficiency of Christ.

Read Colossians 2:10-15:

1. In **Colossians 2:10** the NASB translation says “in Him you have been made complete” and in the LSB that phrase is translated “in Him you have been filled”. What do the following verses tell you about what it means that in Christ, we are “complete” or “filled”?
 - **Rom. 3:22**
 - **Phil. 3:9**
 - **John 1:16**
 - **2 Pet. 1:3-4**
2. The false teachers taught that physical circumcision was necessary for salvation. However, physical circumcision was symbolic of man’s desperate need for cleansing of the heart. In **Colossians 2:11**, how is this circumcision of the heart accomplished? How does **Ezekiel 36:26** further explain this?
3. From **Colossians 2:13(a)**,
 - a. How does Paul describe the unsaved person?
 - b. Who initiates spiritual life (salvation)?
4. In **verses 13(b)-14**, Paul describes the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement with two illustrations to describe forgiveness. What are those illustrations and how do those describe the thorough forgiveness God provides in Christ?

Penal substitutionary atonement-Christ’s death is a sacrifice offered in payment of the penalty for our sins. It is accepted by God the Father as satisfaction in place of the penalty due to believers in Christ.

Read Colossians 2:16-23 where Paul warns of three heresies: Legalism (**vs.16-17**), Mysticism (**vs.18-19**) and Asceticism (**vs. 20-23**).

Legalism is the religion of human achievement. Christ plus human works and conformity to man-made rules as the measure of spirituality, MacArthur Commentary Colossians & Philemon, p. 116.

Mysticism is the “pursuit of a deeper or higher subjective religious experience. It is the belief that spiritual reality is perceived apart from the human intellect and natural senses it looks for truth internally weighing feelings come intuition and other internal sensations more heavily than objective, observable, external data. Mysticism ultimately derives its authority from a self actualized, self authenticated light rising from within.

Macarthur, p. 120

Asceticism is a “rigorous self-denial and even self-mortification in order to become more spiritual”. “The ascetic hopes to sanctify the soul by his discipline of the body.” Be complete, Warren Wiersbe, p.93-94

5. In **verses 16-17**, how does Paul describe the deceptive legalistic requirements imposed by these false teachers? How were the believers to respond to this intimidation?

6. In **verses 18-19**, what was the heretical practice of the mystics? How did Paul instruct the Colossians to counter these beliefs and practices?

7. Paul concludes his warnings in **vs. 20-23**. How did Paul describe the actions of the ascetics which they thought would create an appearance that they were more spiritual and holy than others? How did Paul tell them to respond to this?

8. What are examples of legalism, mysticism or asceticism you have seen or have experienced in churches or religious groups today?

9. What specific steps or actions can we take to guard against the influence of these false and dangerous ideas, practices and philosophies?

Paul's message to the Colossians is also a warning to us. We are not to be intimidated by false human philosophy, legalism, mysticism or asceticism. Those are but “broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer.2:13). We must hold fast to Christ in whom we have “been made complete” (Col. 2:10).

MacArthur Commentary Colossians & Philemon, p.124