



## Colossians 2:6-23

# Adequacy of Christ

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How did you receive Christ?

That is the most important question you will ever answer. Your response to Jesus Christ will determine your eternal destiny. What is your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NASB95). God offers the free gift of eternal life to all who will receive it by faith in Jesus Christ. He went to the cross and died in your place and rose from the dead. Because Christ paid our debt to the righteousness of God in full the Bible consistently teaches us to Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved (Acts 16:31). Again the words of Jesus, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6).

Jesus Christ is the infinite, all-sufficient Savior who offers salvation full and free to every sinner. It is all of grace and it is based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God in grace reaches down to the lost sinner and offers cleansing, forgiveness and eternal life. He can be known only by the revelation of Himself in His Son.

Salvation is God's free gift to all who will call upon His name. It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

## ALIVE IN CHRIST

"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude" (Colossians 2:6-7).

Keep on walking in Christ just as you trusted Christ to save you. Just as you trusted Christ to save you, keep on trusting Him every day and live in your vital union with Him. This new life in Christ is a vital union with Him.

How do we walk with Christ? The apostle Paul explains: walk in Him having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith. We are rooted once-for-all, permanently rooted in Christ, but we also enjoy a continual process of being built up and established in our faith in Him. The Christian is always a work in progress.

Faith can refer to our sense of trust in, reliance upon Christ. You can compare it to a tree with roots going deep down into the earth. Our roots of faith grow deep in Christ and draw nourishment from Him. That faith is nurtured by the body of truth. These Christians at Colossae were in danger of being taken captivity by a philosophy of empty deceit.

Christ cannot be supplemented. You cannot add anything to the finished work of Christ. Christ plus anything else will send you to hell for all eternity. It is Christ plus nothing. Accepting the finished work of Christ gives eternal life.

Our hearts should be overflowing with gratitude to God for His abounding grace and mercy. We do not need anything else to have a right relationship with God. Therefore, Paul warns these believers in the church at Colossae to not allow themselves to be carried away by any teaching that is not according to Christ.

## **CHRIST IS ALL YOU NEED (2:8-15)**

### ***Warning against False Philosophies***

Look out lest someone takes you captive. The word *blepete* means to be constantly looking out, keep a watchful eye open. Take you captive or spoil is a rare word and was used of carrying off a man's daughter by kidnapping. It has the idea to carry off booty, carry off as a captive or as a slave. There was a real danger of false teachers taking these believers away like captives in a war. We are always in danger of being seduced spiritually in a spiritual war.

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8). It is easy in our day to be led captive by humanistic philosophy, empty deceit according to human traditions and demonic spirits.

The believer must always live in Christ or be taken captive by the culture of the world. Be ever on guard lest someone takes you captive by means of philosophy and empty deceit

The word philosophy is used only here in the New Testament. The heretics made use of it to impress on unsuspecting gullible individuals that their knowledge was superior. The word philosophy simply means love of wisdom. However Paul is using it here in a sense of vain speculation as opposed to true knowledge. Paul was a lover of wisdom and truth. He is not opposed to philosophy per se. He is not afraid of real knowledge and truth.

The kind of philosophy Paul is concerned about in this context is characterized as vain deceit, devoid of truth, futile. It is filled with empty traditions and religious ceremonies of washings, Essenic asceticism, pagan secret mystery cults, etc.

## ***Fullness of the Godhead in Christ***

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority" (Colossians 2:9-10). The whole plenitude of God dwells in Christ. In Him there dwells all the fullness of the absolute God head. He was and is the absolute and perfect God. Everything that makes God, God is found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is God of Very God.

Dwells has the idea of a permanent residence as opposed to a temporary occupant. In Christ there is continuously and permanently at home all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily fashion. The entire fullness of the God head permanently dwells in Christ. J. B. Lightfoot said, "Christ is the fountainhead of all spiritual life."

M. R. Vincent emphasized "the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him before His incarnation, when He was in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6). The Word in the beginning was with God and was God (John 1:1). It dwelt in Him during His incarnation. It was the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and His glory which was beheld was the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father (John 1:14; cf. 1 John 1:1-3). The fullness of the Godhead dwells in His glorified humanity in heaven. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him in a bodily way, clothed with a body. This means that it dwells in Him as one having a human body. Moreover, "The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in His person from His birth to His ascension. He carried His human body with Him into heaven, and in His glorified body now and ever dwells the fullness of the Godhead."

The actual deity of Christ is combined with His actual humanity in one person. All the attributes of God dwell in the Son of God who is also the Son of man, the incarnate Son of God, "notes A. T. Robertson. "Jesus was the Son of God before the incarnation, when He became the Son of man. He took back to heaven with Him His humanity and so obtained more glory than ever (Phil. 2:5-11). Wuest observed, "Paul never speaks of the divinity of Christ, only of His deity."

Wuest translates verse nine, "Because in Him there is continuously and permanently at home all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily fashion."

## ***You Are Made Complete In Christ***

The apostle Paul draws out the contrast between the all sufficient Jesus Christ and the empty deceit of the heretical teachers. In Christ "you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority." In Christ we find all that we need to have a personal relationship with God. He is all sufficient.

"In Him dwells the fullness; being in Him, you are filled," notes Vincent. "Your fullness comes from His fullness," says Lightfoot. It is in Christ that you are made full. Our fullness comes from Christ's fullness. Ephesians 3:19 says "that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

It is important to note carefully that the fullness of God communicated to the believers does not consist of the divine essence which is alone possessed by Deity, but of such qualities as holiness, righteousness. We do not become little gods. In Christ the Christian finds the satisfaction of every spiritual need. Therefore they do not need angelic powers, legalistic rituals and pagan philosophies. The believer is in Christ. Indeed, you are in a state of fullness in Him. However, Paul does not say "we have now reached this fullness or that we have the

state of fullness in Him. However, Paul does not say we have now reached this fullness or that we have the Godhead in us in the same way that it is true of Christ. We have become partakers of the divine nature by the new birth (2 Peter 1:4) but not in the sense that Christ is God's only begotten (John 1:18), writes A. T. Robertson.

### ***Paul's Warning Against Judaistic Ceremonialism***

Moreover, "In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).

### **Spiritual Circumcision in Christ**

The error of the Colossian heretics was a denial of the all-sufficiency of Christ. You don't need circumcision, worship angels, legalism, etc. for a higher spiritual life. All you need is Christ!

The false teachers in Colossae were either Pharisaic or Essenic, or both, mixed with pagan Gnosticism. In the verses that follow Paul draws out the contrast between true living vital union with Christ and this heresy.

The apostle Paul taught the new birth is Christian circumcision. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. In Romans 2:28-29 Paul taught the spiritual circumcision of the inner man, the circumcision of the heart is the essence of Biblical teaching. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God" (Romans 2:28-29). The Jerusalem Church Council had previously declared that Gentile Christians do not need the ordinance of fleshly circumcision, but the circumcision which belongs to Christ. Abraham had the circumcision of the heart before he was circumcised of the flesh. He believed God, and that was placed to his credit. The circumcision of the flesh was only the sign and seal of the faith which Abraham already had, writes Robertson.

### **Baptism with Christ**

Baptism and circumcision are both symbols of the spiritual change brought about in those who are believers in Christ. Baptism by immersion is a picture of the vital union with Christ. It is the believer's identification with Him.

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6:4-6).

Immersion in water symbolizes the death and burial with Christ and rising from the water the resurrection with Christ. Baptism, of course, does not effect this change from spiritual death to spiritual life. The work of the Holy Spirit in the inner person does that. The power of the sinful nature was broken by the death and resurrection of Christ, and it by our identification with Him it was deprived of its control over the believer's body.

M. R. Vincent says, "If spiritual circumcision, through Christ, the whole corrupt, carnal nature is put away like a garment which is taken off and laid aside. That is what Christ has accomplished for the believer.

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Lightfoot made the following observation regarding circumcision: (†) It is not the external but inward, not made with hands, but wrought by the Spirit. (2) It divests not of a part only of the flesh, but of the whole body of carnal affections. (3) It is the circumcision not of Moses nor of the patriarchs, but of Christ. ”

Moreover, "in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

Our baptism not only symbolizes the resurrection of Christ, and our vital union with Christ, but it also speaks of the final resurrection of the believer when we stand before Christ.

"When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (Colossians 2:13).

The uncircumcision pictures just the opposite –the unbeliever dead in trespasses and sins.

"You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Paul's message to the church against the false teachers is powerful. Look what Christ did for you. Christ died for you and rose from the dead. Your identification as a believer in Christ in His death broke the power of indwelling sin. Moreover, His identification with you in His resurrection gave you power to live the Christian life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. We have a new spiritual life and it is centered in Christ. We do not need anything else. Christ is all sufficient.

### ***Our Debt Has Been Cancelled***

Paul continues to give encouragement saying God "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

J. B. Phillips paraphrases verse fourteen: Christ has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads. Other scholars translate: Canceling the record of debt (ESV), having blotted out the bond written in ordinances (ASV), He cancelled the bond (TCNT), cancelled the note that stood against us, with its requirements (Williams). The NET Bible reads: "He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

The law is seen in this verse as a bill of debt or bond that is owed by the sinner. It was a charge list which set out all of the charges, debts against the sinner. It was literally an autograph, a hand signed note by a debtor acknowledging his indebtedness. In our day we call it an I. O. U. As depraved sinners we have a mountain of debt to the righteousness of God. And the wages of sin is death. No individual can possibly pay his own debt. He is incapable. It is completely out of his hands.

The word "cancelled out" (*exaleipho*) means to wipe off, to wipe away, to obliterate, erase. William Barclay suggested the ancient documents were written on papyrus or vellum and the ancient ink had no acid in it. Therefore, it did not bite into the surface of the writing material. When the scribe needed to erase the

in it. Therefore, it did not bite into the surface of the writing material. When the scribe needed to erase the writing on the surface he took a sponge and wiped the writing off. It was on the surface of the paper and therefore not permanent. The ink could be wiped out as if it had never been. God has wiped our bill of indebtedness completely clean by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. We are no longer under the curse of the law.

Using another analogy, Paul says our indictment has been nailed to the cross. The bill has been marked Paid in Full. The debt has been wiped out, cancelled. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Why? It is because we have been justified by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:22-26 ESV).

The saving work of Christ is totally adequate for the believing sinner. Our sins have been forgiven and we have been empowered to live the new life in Christ. There is nothing that any Gnostic philosophy can offer to the Christian or non-Christian that will make a person right with God. Christ has done everything already.

"When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Colossians 2:15).

### ***We are Free from Gnostic Asceticism***

"Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day —things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

Name off any supposed advantages of the Gnostic influences, worship of angels, pagan philosophical sects you think might help you spiritually. Not a single one can come up to level of spiritual reality as the person and work of Jesus Christ.

### ***Paul Warns Against Angel-Worship***

"Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God" (Colossians 2:18-19). The body severed from the head dies.

Did you notice Paul's answer to the threat of the false teachers? They are not holding fast to the head Jesus Christ! From Him the entire body receives its strength. Our spiritual life is imparted and sustained by our vital union with Christ.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, because apart from me you can accomplish nothing" (John 15:5). Christ is our sustenance.

### ***Paul's Warnings against Asceticism***

"If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the

"If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch! (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) —in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Colossians 2:20-23).

The statement is a fulfilled condition and it is in past tense. If you have died it's better since you have died. In view of the fact that you died with Christ. These Colossian believers died with Christ at the Cross. This is true of every believer in Christ. We are separated from all these things in verse 20-23. All of our old relations, sin, law, world system, etc. have been separated.

This is another reminder of Romans 6. Again Paul stresses the message of the cross and our identification with Christ. We died to self (2 Cor. 5:15), to sin (Rom. 6:2), to the law (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 2:19), to the world (Col. 2:20; 3:2) (Robertson).

## SOME ABIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Alexander Maclaren said, "There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us, and that is the power of the indwelling Christ."

God can be known only by the revelation of Himself in His Son. In Jesus Christ there dwells all the fullness of absolute Godhead. As Trenchard declared, "He was, and is, absolute and perfect God. He is God of very God."

Our evil nature is not eradicated when we become Christians. That evil nature remains in the believer until death. We deceive ourselves as we think we are not still sinners (1 John 1:8-10). Everyone else knows the difference. However the power of sin is broken and it has no more power over the believer than he allows it to have. The penalty has been paid and the power has been broken. One day we will stand before God complete in Christ. We will have resurrected bodies and our character will be conformed to the likeness of Christ (1 John 3:1-3).

However, there is absolute forgiveness and cleaning from all our sins as we put our faith in Jesus Christ to save us. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). The reason is because we have been justified by grace through faith in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:21-28).

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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Wil is a graduate of William Carey University, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

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