

## Colossians 2:4-10 – Warning Against Deceit

Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles. He was not only concerned with churches he had planted but also churches planted by others, like the church at Colossae. Given that God gave Paul his apostleship, Paul could speak with authority. The teachers of deception and falsehood could not legitimately claim that their authority was from God. Paul could not go to Colossae because he was in prison, but he could write a letter. Paul had to depend on what Epaphras and others told him, but Paul had dealt with similar false teaching before. Notice that Paul spend most of his time teaching the truth about Christ. Focusing on teaching the truth exposes false teaching.

### **Read Colossians 2:4-5.**

In verse 2:3, Paul told the Colossians that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. What does “this” refer to in verse 4? Does it refer to the previous verse or to all the previous verses about Christ? (2:4)

Based on verse 4, what was Paul’s purpose or goal in focusing on the uniqueness and superiority of Christ? (2:4)

Think about people who persuade you. What makes someone’s arguments persuasive? What can cause someone to be persuaded to believe a lie? Think about advertising. Why do they pay famous people a lot of money to sell their products? If, fill in the name of your favorite actor, says that a product is great, will you buy it? Celebrities are used to persuade people. Emotion is also used to persuade people. What else is used? 4 out of 5 dentists recommend... (2:4)

The first part of verse 5 is similar to 1 Corinthians 5:3 “though absent in body but present in spirit”. Though Paul could not be with them, he could write a letter which refuted the false teaching being circulated in the church. Paul did not think they were a lost cause. Why could Paul rejoice while being absent from them? (2:5)

### **Read Colossians 2:6-10.**

In verse 6, Paul told the Colossians to walk in Christ as they had received Christ. How had they received Christ? How did this also apply to their daily walk with Christ? (2:6)

What does it mean to be rooted in Christ? What does it mean to be built up in Christ? What does it mean to be established in the faith? (2:7)

A common appeal among New Testament letters is that the church must stick to the original teaching. Don't add things to it. Don't take anything away from it. We saw this in Galatians. Paul said in no uncertain terms that they must not deviate from the Gospel which Paul preached to them at first. There were no substitutes! In 1 John, John appealed to the recipients that they stick to the original teaching which they heard from John and the other apostles. There are no amendments to the truth. There are no "minor" adjustments. There are no "new and exciting" truths to enhance what had already been taught.

Why was it important for the Colossians to abound in thanksgiving? (2:7)

Paul wanted the Colossians to be on alert. How might some be taken captive away from the truth and into lies? Is philosophy bad? In this verse, "empty deceit" was paired with philosophy. This is the only time "philosophy" was used in the New Testament. It is the combination of two words; "love" and "wisdom". Where did Paul say wisdom was to be found? See 2:3. What "human tradition" was Paul referring to? What are some examples of human tradition being elevated above God's word? What are the elemental spirits of the world? See Galatians 4:3,9. What is taught must be according to Christ. (2:8)

Verse 9 is a powerful statement. The whole fullness of deity dwells bodily in Christ. This verse contains two key words which are only used once in the New Testament. "Deity" only occurs once. "Bodily" only occurs once. "Deity" is from the same word family as "God". "Bodily" is from the same word family as "body". In John 4:24, Jesus said, "God is spirit". In this verse, 2:9, God dwells in a body. This is explained by John 1:14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:1 had already stated that the "Word" was God. So, God the Son, became flesh and dwelt among us. What is the significance of verse 2:9?

In verse 10, what does it mean that "you have been filled" in Christ? KJV has "complete" in Christ. Verse 10 also states that Christ is the head of all rule and authority. What false beliefs do you think some of the Colossians had so that Paul needed to remind them that Christ is above all rule and authority?