

**Text:** Colossians 2:8-10

**Title:** Christ the Fullness of God

**Truth:** Don't be carried away with false teaching: You have Christ!

**Date/Location:** Sunday October 4, 2015 at FBC

## Introduction

The apostle, under God's direction, writes more to combat the false teaching that was sweeping into Colossae.

### I. Don't be Carried Off with False Teaching, v. 8

- A. I am not sure where the NKJV translation *cheat* came from. The word means to take captive or make into spoils of war and is far stronger than mere 'cheating.'
1. The imagery is of carrying someone away from the freedom of truth into the slavery of error (adapted from BDAG). It is not talking about actual kidnapping, but being captivated by a teaching or idea that leads away from God. In a sense, you might as well be kidnapped, because your life will become a total wreck if you are lured away from the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  2. Most people don't look at false teaching as if it is as serious as kidnapping, but it is. It is so serious that we should be calling for an 'Amber Alert' for a child who is dragged away into a false religion.
- B. What is used to accomplish this kidnapping? The listeners are captivated by "persuasive words" (2:4). Take two false teachings as examples.
1. "Look, God would never give us things we cannot understand. So those complicated doctrines the Christians are trying to explain to you must be false."
  2. "Obviously marriage has a physical aspect to it, and in a similar way partaking of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist is physical and not merely symbolic. Both are delightful things in our lives that allow us to express love – toward our spouse, and toward God."
  3. The first is taught by Jehovah's Witnesses; the second by the Catholic church. You cannot find these doctrines in the Bible.
  4. Today we are urged to be nice and not mention such things or mention groups by name because it is divisive or unloving to do so, or at least it is impolite. To the contrary, what is not nice is to let people be led away into error that can destroy their souls forever.

C. The content of these persuasive words has a four-fold description:

1. Philosophy – We think of the term as “love of wisdom.” It has to do with systems of thought. In one ancient writing (4 Macc. 4:11), the word “empty” is added to it to indicate an “empty religion.” It is a system of thought or religion.
2. Empty deception – It lures you away with the promise of something when it contains nothing (Jude 12’s waterless clouds; 2 Peter 2:19). Examples: Riches deceive (Mark 4:19); sin deceives (Heb 3:13), lust deceives (Eph. 4:22, 2 Peter 2:13). False religious ideas also deceive. They are empty, void of value in any category whether intellect, morality, or spirituality. There is no basis, no truth, no power, no content, no reality, no ultimate helpfulness. But though the contents of the deception are empty, the results of it are devastating.
3. According to the tradition of men – This is everywhere in tradition-based churches, sects, and cults that base their religious practice on an individual person. You should wonder why God would invest his truth in only one human being with no other substantive witnesses, or in an ever-changing self-conflicting tradition. These man-made ideas are set over against the divine traditions that were delivered to the Colossians by Paul and other Christian ministers, which were revelations from God, not man (Gal. 1:1, 16; John 5:34). The question naturally arises, “How do we know our Bible is not from man—it was written by men, after all?” I would answer that by saying that it was written by far more than one man; it was superintended by God Himself so as to be 100% accurate; it was authenticated by divine miracles; and many of the false cults claim the Bible as well as their other sacred books. So, all we have to do then is to compare their other religious teachings to the Bible and see if they agree. If not, we know the system is false because it is “not according to Christ.”
4. Basic principles of the world – This phrase is difficult to understand, but I believe it refers to worldly religious principles, like what we have today: tolerance-without-truth, love-without-truth, diversity, self-esteem, man-is-basically-good, etc. These include emotionalism, ear-ticklism, ecumenicalism, evolutionism, and other ideas that promote sinful lifestyles, etc.

D. The false teaching is according to man, not according to Christ.

1. Previous to these verses there was an appeal to walk in the Lord Jesus and be established in the faith (2:6-7).

2. The worldly ideas have a kind of attractiveness but they have nothing to do with what Christ taught as recorded in the gospels or the rest of the New Testament. One thing you can notice is that they do not refer to Christ explicitly; nor even implicitly! If they do, it is to a “Christ idea” that is foreign to Scripture and, thus, to reality.

## II. Why Not Be Carried Off: Christ is God, v. 9, 10b

The text gives two reasons why we should not be drawn away from Christ. The first one is that He is God.

A. In Him is all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (Col. 1:15-19).

1. Sometime you may have thought, “Am I doing the right thing in believe that Jesus, the Son of God, *is* God? Is it right to believe that He, along with the Father and the Spirit, is the three-in-one God?”
2. This doctrine is what orthodox Christianity unmistakably teaches. And the reason it does so is because of the overwhelming passages of divine revelation that affirm it. These passages offer a powerful defense of the Christian doctrine that *Christ is God*. And make no mistake—it is a *Christian* doctrine.
3. For instance: John 1:1, John 10:30, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:6, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:3, 2 Peter 1:1, 1 John 5:20, Isaiah 9:6. On the authority of the direct statements of God’s word in these passages, you have to be convinced. GOD TOLD US what to believe. Believe it!
4. Then there are the divine attributes that Christ has. There is not one attribute of God that is not either directly or indirectly attributed to Christ. Examples: eternity (Micah 5:2), omnipresence (John 1:48-50), omniscience (John 16:30), omnipotence (Phil. 3:21), immutability (Heb. 13:8), holiness (Luke 1:35), love (Eph 3:19).
5. Then there is the worship that Christ receives (John 9:38, Rev. 5:8-10).
6. The idea of “in bodily form” speaks of the incarnation and the present state of the Lord Jesus in His incarnate state, as He will be forever.

B. He is the head of all principality and power. First of all, He created all the principalities and powers (1:16), so He is obviously head = authority over them. But He is the sovereign God, so He actively rules over them as well. They exist “at his pleasure” so to speak, not that He is pleased with their behavior, but He has permitted them to exist.

1. As I understand it, the principality and power has to do with the angelic realm (Rom 8:38, Eph. 1:21, 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16, 2:10, 2:15).

Christ is the ‘head’ of them in a different sense than He is ‘head’ of the church. This is especially relevant to the Colossian heresy, because they were being encouraged to be involved in the worship of angels (2:18) and other earthly types of things (religious observances, false humility, material regulations, neglect of the body). But these things do nothing to help in our war against sin.

2. Why would we be drawn away to follow creations and perverted man-made ideas, when we can follow Christ the creator and Lord of all?

### **III. Why Not Be Carried Off: Believers are Complete in Christ, v. 10a**

The second reason that Christians should not be carried away with persuasive false teaching is that not only do Christians have Christ the God-man, but Christians are complete in Christ. There is no lack that needs to be made up by philosophies and empty deceits.

- A. We are complete but not yet fully matured (Col. 1:28). The word for complete is similar to the “fullness” in verse 9; being in Him who has the fullness of God in Himself, you are filled with something that needs nothing else. This is a reflection of the truth of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:27). The next section of the chapter will give more details about the things we have in Christ—spiritual circumcision, baptism, new life, etc.
- B. In Him—nowhere else—can you find *everything* that you need for spiritual life, or the One who makes every provision for your physical life as well.

### **Conclusion**

There are two explanations as to why we should not allow ourselves to be “taken captive” by those empty and worldly philosophies. The first is that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form. He is the fully divine God-man. The second is that Christians have everything they need in Him.

Anything less than Christ is a raw deal. You cannot find “the fullness of deity” anywhere else—no other system of thought or religion. So if your system is not according to Christ, then you are captivated by falsehood. The whole idea is that if you don’t have a Christ who is filled with the fullness of deity or you are incomplete without something else, then you have been robbed of all that is worthwhile and valuable. Don’t be deceived!

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