

More on Colossians Two

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Today we're going to take a second look—or maybe a third or fourth or tenth or twentieth or fiftieth look—at Colossians, the second chapter. Col. 2 becomes a very key important chapter, concerning the Truth of God and what we should do. The world—especially Protestantism as well as Catholicism—has taken the very Scriptures that say what to do and they tell you it means not to do it.

Before we begin, let's look at one verse in particular, and let me just tell you this that's important to understand: *The New Age Bible versions help facilitate this error!*

Colossians 2:17: "Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the Body of Christ"--referring back to:

Verse 16: "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon, or *the Sabbaths*."

The *NIV* translates this: "Which are a foreshadow of things which were to come." Then they make the claim that since Christ came, they were fulfilled and there is nothing left in the way of keeping any of these things mentioned in v 16. That's how they explain it.

We will see that it is just the opposite; and we will answer the questions:

- Who were those who were judging them?
- Why were they judging them?

We get much of the answer out of this book called *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight. So, what we will do in order to thoroughly cover this, I'm going to read from certain select sections from this book, and what I will do is quickly survey Col. 1.

Now then, let me begin reading; it's well worth it, there's an awful lot in here. Even though this man is not currently with a fellowship group that we know of that came out of Worldwide, he has been attending Church of God Seventh Day, because he couldn't find anything else around here. But what it does, it show that ***if you want to know the Truth you can find the Truth***, which is important, brethren. God is not just going to give it to just a few people and nobody else. God is able to give Truth to anyone that He wants to, and if you seek it you'll find it. And there's something that's very important: ***If you keep His commandments you will have a good understanding***. That's very important to realize.

This book *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* does this for us; or just kind of liken it unto if you

take a pair of binoculars or a telescope and you finally focus it in. I would have to say that our understanding of it in the past has been right on, no problem with that, but what Alan Knight brings us in this book helps clarify it so about the last eight or ten percent to really make it clear and understandable.

When we get done with Col. 2, this time you will really understand it like never before. There will be no mystery to it. It will not be difficult at all. However, without some of this knowledge and understanding, when you approach something with a religious view of the past (i.e. Protestantism or Seventh Day Adventism or Catholicism) you may view some of these things from a pre-conceived notion, which is not correct. But remember, Paul wrote this in about the 60s_{A.D.} He was dealing with a current, ongoing problem within the Church at Colossi as well as the other churches.

Colossi is located in Asia Minor. They had the Greek language and the Greek philosophy—which is the Greek religion—for hundreds and hundreds of years. In this book, Knight shows what the Gnostics have done. A Gnostic is someone who *knows*, because the Greek word for *knowledge* is 'gnosis.' So, a Gnostic is someone who *knows*. They claim that they had special revelation from God after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Since the New Testament was not finalized and was in the process of being written, it just made open slaughter upon the true Christians; because the Gnostics were those who professed Christ, who professed the sacrifice of Christ, and they didn't have the New Testament as we do today to combat it.

So, Paul wrote the book of Colossians to combat several particular problems noted in chapter two. The whole focal point of the book is chapter two. Let's get a little background on this and let's understand something here concerning philosophy, religion, and also magic.

Philosophy today is supposed to just be knowledge. But philosophy back then, in the Greek culture, was also 'religion.' They also believed in magic; that is called 'theurgy'—and 'theurgy' is the *divination in calling up of spirits*. What we have here is 'theurgy' in part:

from: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight:

...as magic, sorcery, especially that practiced by certain Neoplatonists who profess to work miracles by the intervention of beneficent spirits. (p 38)

When we get to chapter 2 we'll talk a little bit more about angels. But I want you also to be alert that today there's an awful lot to do with angels. You will find even whole television series devoted to angels. All of that is just a re-dressing of the ancient old demonism that was extant in Greece and Rome and every society. They try and make you feel good. They have fuzzy warm stories. Always ends up on a good note. That's what they try and profess with these beneficent spirits.

The underlying idea is the typical Hellenistic belief that all phenomena in the world, both spiritual and material, are linked together as a whole. In the end, everything is based on forces radiating from God into the world, giving form and life to all things. (p 38)

And this is where you get the pagan philosophy that God is in everything. This is where you get the pagan philosophy, like the modern false prophet Deepak Chopra that God is within you, within soul with a Divine spark that you have to discover. And I'll have more to say about that later on when I get his book.

This was an especially prominent theme in the Stoic philosophy. (p 38)

Acts 17—We will see that Paul had his run in with the Stoics and the philosophers of his day in Athens. This is very important that this section was recorded for us; so that we can see that the Truth of God's Word has nothing to do with Greek philosophy, or, as we could put it, Hellenistic philosophy. Hellenism is just another word in Greek not translated.

Acts 17:18: "Then some philosophers... [who believed in magic, beneficent spirits; it was their religion] ...of the Epicureans and the Stoics..."

The Epicureans were the ones who said: 'It doesn't matter what you do because everything on the outside is physical, and as long as you have the inner part of your spirituality remaining true, whatever you do doesn't make any difference.'

The Stoics said: 'No, No, No!' The way you overcome sin and lust is to beat the body. Don't touch! Don't handle! Don't do this! Don't marry! Don't have sex! This is where monasticism and nunneries came from. It didn't originate with the Catholic Church. They had the so-called *Virgins of Delphi*, and the so-called virgins in Babylon. So you see, once you get a few keys, you can tie all of these things together.

"...the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him. And some of *them* said, 'What will this babbler have to say?' And some *said*, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods,' because he was

preaching to them the gospel of Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought *him* to Mars Hill [Aeropagus]..." (vs 18-19). That's the one whenever they show the great glory of Greece, they show this nearly tumbled down the temple of Diana, the Aeropagus.

"...saying, 'May we know what this new teaching *is* that is spoken by you? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears....'" (vs 19-20). Why would the resurrection be strange to them? *Simply because they believed in the immortality of the soul*; and that is the key thing with all Gnostic religions—ancient and modern—believe in the immortality of the soul.

"...So then, we desire to know what these things mean.' (Now all *the* Athenians and the strangers sojourning *among them* spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.)" (vs 20-21).

This was kind of like a public square where everyone came and just spoke whatever they wanted. How many have ever been to Los Angeles? *They have the city square down there with all kinds of preachers and all kinds of people standing around!* It's not quite like San Francisco; San Francisco doesn't have it quite as bad as Los Angeles. They also, in Piccadilly Park in London, have the same thing: little groups here, little groups there, standing here, preaching this, doing that. This is the same thing that was going on there.

Verse 22: "Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars' hill *and* said, 'Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities [superstitious].'" The Greek for superstitious means *you are devoted to demons*.

That's what we just read in this book with the beneficent spirits and theurgy. You're devoted to demons, not to God. So, this is angel-worship, because demons are *fallen angels*. 'Satan was cast down and his angels with him' and 'the dragon fought and his angels fought.' Demons are angels that have fallen. There are good angels.

Verse 23: "For *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, 'To an unknown God.' So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you."

This is telling us very clearly that all the philosophy of the Greek religions are ignorant of the Truth of God; and they are held in bondage to the elemental spirits of this world. We will see that's what Paul was combating in Col. 2.

Verse 24: "He *is* the God Who made the world..." This is important to understand because we'll talk about the God that made the world *from*

the viewpoint of the Gnostics or the Hellenists.

“...and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth...” (v 24). That’s a key, prime statement. Not just in heaven, but of earth!

“...He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things” (vs 24-25). He is virtually—and this is a summary—wiping out, completely destroying, the basis of all Greek Hellenist philosophical religion. Yet, that is what is prevalent in the world today.

Verse 26: “And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him...” (vs 26-27).

God is seeking those who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. If you’re seeking God in Truth and want the Truth, you will find Him (John 4:23-24)

“...though truly, He is not far from each one of us” (v 27). That’s interesting, because the philosophy is that since God is everywhere—He has no being; He has no need of a head or arms or legs or a voice or a tongue—He’s just everywhere; an emanation.

Verse 28: “For **in Him we live and move and have our being**; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead... [we’ll talk about Godhead in Col. 2] ...*is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man; for *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance...” (vs 28-30).

God wrote that, so what is God saying through the Apostle Paul? *All you wise men are ignorant of the Truth!* That’s why the Truth of God never comes from the wisdom of this world. That’s why all seminaries are in graveyards; they bury the Truth and substitute it with their own.

“...He now commands all men everywhere to repent” (v 30). That’s quite a sweeping statement! Here Paul walks into the very center of the philosophical religion of Greece and says, ‘You’re wrong! It’s ignorant! You worship demons! You worship idols and the things made by hands! We’re the offspring of God and we need to seek God! And you need to repent!’

Verse 31: “Because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a

Man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all *by* raising Him from *the* dead.”

For a summary, this is pretty powerful summary. Can you imagine what the whole message was? Arguing back and forth with them!

Verse 32: “And after hearing *about the* resurrection of *the* dead, some mocked...” Notice that they believed in the immortality of the soul, when you die you go to heaven:

“...but some said, ‘We will hear you again concerning this *matter*.’ And so, Paul went out from among them. But certain ones *who* believed joined themselves to him, among whom also *were* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” (vs 32-34). So, some believed!

Can you imagine starting out with a congregation like that? Boy! That gives you a little more background concerning the ‘religion’ of the Greeks and the philosophers.

The daemons of Hellenistic belief (equivalent to angels in the Bible) were viewed as personifications of various kinds of power and energy flowing into the world from above. They’re equivalent in the New Testament “elemental spirits” mentioned in Colossians 2:8, 20 and Galatians 4:3. They are the spirits which control the “elemental forces” that sustain the world around us. (p 38)

It should be obvious from the start that Gnostic ‘Christianity’ in general is merely another manifestation of the reformation of Greek religion that began with Orphism and Pythagoreanism. There are also differences, of course. It is considered a more extreme example, in that it is developed a passionately negative condemnation of material existence. In the Hellenistic religious mainstream, especially from the earlier centuries, creation was not evil and material existence, though defective and base compared to the true life of the spirit above, generally was considered good.... For the Gnostics, the world is altogether evil. So it’s Creator, Yahweh and His religion must be absolutely evil, as well. (p 42)

And this starts planting the seeds of the hatred for the Old Testament. And you hear that even today; just listen to some of these Protestant ministers. *They hate the Law!*

Before Gnosticism, nearly all manifestations of the new religion had been pagan, separate from the religious

traditions of the Bible. The Gnostics, however, were Christians.

There was a transition.

They came into existence in the first century of the Christian era, and almost immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ and the founding of the Church. (p 42)

Guess where they went to attend? I wonder how many of the Gnostics were in the area of Galilee and Judea? *There was the sect of the Essenes; there were other sects; there were sun-worshippers; there were philosophers.* I wonder how many of them saw all the miracles that Jesus did? And believed in Him, but clung to their Hellenistic philosophy? *Lots of them because they infiltrated the Church!*

The teachings of the Bible, about evil, the emphasis on evil as the great problem of mankind, had to be incorporated into the mix. Under the influence of the Hellenistic religion, the idea of evil became focused on materialism and, as they saw it, and the evil God Who created the material world. The new Christian teaching of the transition from the Old to the New Covenant was just the device needed to harmonize Biblical Christianity with Hellenistic religion and its rejection of creation. Though Gnosticism made liberal use of the teachings of the spirituality of the New Testament *versus* the inferiority of the Old Testament, most Gnostics did not see Christianity of a reformation of the Hebrew religion. There were more moderate Gnostic sects who took the lenient view of Yahweh and the Old Testament. However, in the Gnostic mainstream, Hebrew religion was viewed as totally evil. (pp 42-43)

Now when we grasp that and understand it then we'll realize what's happening here.

Gnostics saw themselves as a reformation, not of Judaism, but of the New Testament Church, the so-called Primitive or 'Jewish' Christianity that prevailed for a time after founding of the Church in the 30_{S.A.D.} For them, Primitive Christianity was a partial enlightenment. Nevertheless, it was decidedly inferior, precisely because it failed to completely break its ties with the deception of the Old Testament religion. Gnosticism took a unique interest in Primitive Christians, with devastating results for the history of the Christian faith. (p 43)

Then they categorized human beings. Most of those

were considered animals; they did not have a soul, so this is a takeoff of Judaism. Then you have those who have a soul who were in the Christian Church, and they were evangelizing to save. Then you had to those who were the Gnostics or the ones who had the inner-gnosis or knowledge and they were the ones who had the inside track to God. They were the perfect spirituals.

Now then, it talks about the process of creation and so forth, and how that the God of the Old Testament was evil.

I want to read you a little bit of the section of Valentinian Christianity because this will tie in with Col. 2. What I want to do is cover this information first. Then you will understand the structure of why Paul wrote Colossians the way he did. In particular, the introduction of the first chapter.

The Valentinian school of Gnosticism is important both for its wide geographical spread and influence, and the close ties it established with the early Roman Church. Valentinus began in Alexandria...

Almost all Jewish heresy comes out of Alexandria via the Hellenist Jews.

...but moved to Rome where he became one of the leading Gnostic teachers.... In Valentinian theology the highest spiritual realm is composed of 30 male-female pairs of spiritual powers, called 'aeons.' This is *pleroma* (Greek 'fullness')...

Col. 2 talks about 'pleroma'

The sense of *pleroma* is completeness and perfection, which for Valentinus is the highest heaven, the realm of the true, spiritual Father.... This perfection [of the *pleroma*] is broken by the fall of one of the youngest *aeons*, Sophia.... Redemption comes from the descent of another aeon, Christ, Who unites with the man Jesus at His baptism, or at conception. (p 57)

Of course, when He's crucified only the man Jesus is crucified and the Christ goes back to heaven.

Now, if you want to know the truth of it, Mormonism is a complete Gnostic religion. They say all human beings were spirits in heaven and they needed to have a human body to possess, so whenever a baby is born a spirit comes down and possesses that baby. Pure Gnosticism! The whole thing with Mormonism is absolutely pure Gnosticism!

Now, continuing on concerning Valentinian Christians—in this section here it says that later the angelic thing was changed to the trinity. Quite

interesting—isn't it? What is the key thing that all Protestants and all Catholic orthodox say you have to believe in? *The trinity!* What was the key thing they brought into the Worldwide Church of God to take it down? *The trinity!*

The introduction of Hellenistic culture into Palestine spawns heretical Hellenistic Jewish cults before Christ appears on the earth. These mingle Hellenistic belief with Old Testament Biblical themes to create a heterodox Hellenistic Jewish theology. (p 72)

That's why the Church was so subverted. Remember there in 2-Cor. 11, talking about false apostles? Paul says, 'Are they Hebrews? *So am I.* Are they Israelites? *So am I.* Are they ministers of Christ? *I'm insane!* **No they're not!** Pharisees have their own Gnosticism, but it is a strict, rigid, legal Gnosticism. Yes, they were, they were influenced by them, no doubt.

[it talks about] The themes of fallen angels, introduction of evil to the world by sexual misconduct of angels (a prime foundation of Gnostic asceticism)... (p 75)

Asceticism means *monasticism—you deprive yourself* of any pleasures of life; you live with just the meager things; you take a poverty vow; you own no property, you don't enjoy anything and you sacrifice your life in a life of doing good deeds. That's what Buddhism is all about, what Catholicism is all about with the monastics and so forth.

It is ironic that Paul's letter to the Colossians did not have to wait until our day to be misinterpreted and turned on its head.

We'll see the thing concerning decrees. But what they said was that the decrees that Jesus nailed to the cross were the '13 great aeons' of evil angels. We'll see that that's not true.

These are the evil angels of creation that keep man in bondage to the material world. In Gnostic theology this is equivalent of the destruction of the Hebrew religion and the law of the Old Testament. (p 86)

That's profound how they did that.

We'll also see, when we get to it that what they did, the Gnostics who professed Christ paired with angels. Today there's even a book out entitled *Find the Angel Within*. So, we're coming full-circle. Remember what Solomon wrote in the book of Ecclesiastics: 'There is nothing new under the sun. That which is new shall be old, and that which is old shall be declared new.' What we are seeing is a recycle, clear back to the Hellenistic 'religion' that

covered the whole world—it's coming right back again, and we will see it in everything. That's all a part of 'Mother Babylon' and her harlot daughters. And it's going to become more and more profound.

Upon conversion, Valentinian Christians took part in sacraments culminating in a divine marriage ceremony during which they were spiritually married to angels.

In the Mormon temple, when people go there, they are married to each other, but they're paired with angels. And once you go through the temple you have to wear your sacred garments, which is long underwear, and they have certain markings on them. As long as you have on your sacred underwear you're under the protection of 'divine angels.' Moroni^[transcriber's correction] was an angel that brought the truth of Mormonism to Joseph Smith. And when we die we go back to heaven as angels. And that's all Mormonism.

In this way, the original sin of the breaking of submission and interdependence is reverse in the life of individual Christian converts, and the original perfection of the *pleroma*... [that is the connection with God to the Divine spark of life within you] ...is restored. (p 88)

Then they say that this gives you control over the evil passions.

The Valentinian belief in union with angels is alluded to in several texts. Here's one from the *Gospel of Philip*. Here in one passage it explains that evil spirits come in genders, and tempt human beings of opposite sex. However, if a Gnostic Christian is united with an angelic partner, they cannot [from that time forth] be sexually tempted. "So if the image... [which is the person] ...and the angel are united with one another, neither can any venture to go into the man or the woman." (p 89)

That's how they supposedly control lust.

Is that why Mormons believe in polygamy to bring more children into the world? *Yes!* That obviously controls lust and temptation. Brings more children into the world, so more angels from heaven can come down and possess the children. Not too much different than Catholicism. They do it a little bit differently. You bring children into the world for the glory of the pope.

This book talks about this concerning the things that actually exist vs the things that shall become. This is almost pure Deepak Chopra, which is this:

Quoting from the Gospel of Philip (pp 122-123):

It is not possible for anyone to see any of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them.... But you...saw something of that place, and you became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ.

Notice the counterfeit

So {in this place} you see everything and {do} not {see} yourself, but {in that place} you do see yourself—

that is if you have the right understanding and ‘that place’ refers to *the place of initiation*

and what you see you shall {become}.

Here the author is arguing that in material life you see many things, but are ignorant and blind to the real self within, the soul. This is the ignorance into which man has fallen, having lost the *gnosis* of the inner-spiritual nature of the soul and its destiny to be liberated and returned to heaven.

That is almost describing to a ‘T’ what Protestantism says. Now then, so much for reading here. Let’s briefly go through chapter one. I just want to hit on key words and go back and restudy it for yourself.

Colossians 1:4: “Since hearing of your **faith** in Christ Jesus, and the **love**... [so we have *faith* and *love*.] (v 5): ...because of the **hope** that is laid up for you in heaven, which... [Christ is going to bring from heaven, as we know] ...you heard before in the **Word of the Truth of the Gospel.**”

What is he combating? *The so-called truth of secret gnosis from Hellenism.* You don’t get it from them. It’s in “...the Gospel...” *that I have preached*, Paul says.

Verse 6: “...and knew... [knowledge] ...the **grace** of God in Truth”

Verse 9: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with **the knowledge**... [gnosis—‘epignosis’ in this particular case] ...of His will in all **wisdom and spiritual understanding**”—which comes from *God*, not from angels! *From God*—not the ‘pleroma’!

Verse 10: “...growing in the knowledge of God.... [you have fruitful good works, which are things that you do] ...Being strengthened with all power...” (vs 10-11)—which *comes from God!*

Verse 12: “Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the Light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His

own blood, *even* the remission of sins.... [through Christ and not through angels; so Paul is building this whole thing] ...Who is *the* image of the invisible God...” (vs 12-15)—showing that God has image, God has form; God has a body.

I’m just going through here very quickly so we can get a little background so when we get to Col. 2 we’ll understand what he’s doing.

Verse 18: “And He is the Head of the Body, the Church; Who is *the* Beginning, *the* Firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the **fullness**... [pleroma] ...should dwell... [not the ‘pleroma’ or ‘fullness’ of Hellenism or Gnosticism] ...and having made peace through the blood of His cross... [focusing on the blood of Christ and the crucifixion] ...by Him to reconcile all things to Himself... [v 21]: For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you*” (vs 18-21).

Verse 23: “**If** indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the **hope** of the Gospel...” He had to give that because there were those trying to take them away from the hope of the Gospel.

Now you see how much sense this makes. When you understand the underlying problem that he was combating. People coming along and saying: ‘Oh well, you mean you actually believe that Old Testament? You actually believe in the things that are there. Don’t you know that this was an evil God. Don’t you understand that these laws that are there are harsh and mean and evil; they were given by evil angels. Don’t you understand that?’ **So, Paul is combating all of that now!**

Verse 25: “Of which I became a servant... [for the Church] ...according to the administration of God that *was* given to me for you *in order* to complete the Word of God”—to finish writing it. Paul, Peter and John finished writing it. Now we can be even more guaranteed that the apostles wrote it and canonized the New Testament. Do you think that God would have left it to the Church infiltrated with the Gnostics? Who believed in the gospel of Philip? *and* the gospel of Barnabus? *and* the gospel of Thomas? *and* all those things which were counterfeit writings? *Of course not!*

I think we will see the fulfillment of these counterfeit epistles and things in our day. We will have a new one-world religion Bible. They’ll take parts of the Old Testament, parts of the New Testament, parts of the Koran, parts of the traditions of Catholicism and Orthodoxies, parts of the religion of the Hindus, Buddhists, Shintuists and even the Shamans and put it all into one-world Bible and say,

‘Oh look what we have. We have a wonderful, wonderful thing.’ I think we’ll see it.

Verse 26: “*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints; to whom **God did will to make known**... [God is the One Who’s doing it] ...what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory... [not a union with angels] ...Whom we preach...[Christ] ...admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.... [the Gnostic Christian says *you’re not perfect unless you do it our way*] ...For this cause I also labor, striving according to His inner working, which works in me with power” (vs 26-29).

Now we come to Colossians 2—we’re going to divide this down as we have in the past, into ‘A/B’:

‘A’ are those things that have to do with Christ and God the Father and the Truth of the Gospel

‘B’ has to do with men who are trying to take them away from that

A—vs 1-3: “Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Saying you don’t need the gnosis. You don’t need this secret information. ***It’s all in Christ!***

B—v 4, why did he say this?: “Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech.” It’s a warning! Isn’t that something? What were they trying to do; we’ll see here.

A—vs 5-7: “For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet, I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him”

And we can put ‘not in secret gnosis; not following angels,’ which we’ll see a little bit later. Why?

“Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” That is exactly how you were ‘taught by us’—me, Paul, by letter; and ‘Epaphras, your faithful minister, rather than being taught by other men.’

B—v 8, notice how he interjects these

warnings: “Be on guard so that no one takes you captive **through philosophy and vain deceit**... [there it is, right there] ...according to the traditions of men... [Hellenistic religion] ...according to the elements of the world... [the fallen angels] ...and not according to Christ.”

Now you know why I read all of that first. I know it was a little laborious going through it, but that was laying the foundation for understanding why he wrote this. Now you go through and read this and you say, ‘Oh man, look at that! I can’t believe it!’ There it is.

A—vs 9-15—this becomes very profound: “For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily... [you can tie in there Acts 17, the Godhead is not thought to be like things made of stone, of silver and so forth—but ALL. The Gnostics said not all of it is there. They said the pleroma—which is fullness—belongs in the Father. No, the pleroma is in Christ] ...and all the fullness of the Godhead **bodily**.”

Meaning that He has a body, a head, torso, arms, legs, feet, eyes, mouth and ears. What did Jesus say when Philip said, ‘Show us the Father?’ ‘Philip, have I been with so long a time and you have not known Me? The one who sees Me has seen the Father.’ So *bodily* is very important because gnosis says that God is the glob in the air. Just a big pool of ‘pleroma,’ and God is in everything with emanations coming down to the physical world, into the spiritual world. So, this is completely knocking that.

Let’s go to John, the first chapter, and we will see that *in Christ* all the fullness dwells and through the power of the Holy Spirit that God gives us, then we partake of His fullness:

- He gives us knowledge
- He gives us truth
- He gives us hope
- He gives us love
- He gives us all the things

—and we are to *grow in grace and in knowledge!* That all comes from the ‘fullness of Christ.’

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word... [Is this combating Gnosticism? *Yes!*] ...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” What do the Gnostics say? *The Yahweh Who created the earth was a lower, evil demiurge or demigod!* John says He **was** God!

Verse 2: “He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him.” (vs 2-3).

I don’t know about you, but this just excites me. You say you get ‘cranked’ over something, this

really ‘cranks’ me. What it does, brethren, it shows *you can prove the Truth over and over and over again!* That’s what’s so profound with the Word of God. You don’t have to worry about finding something that will disprove it. If something appears to disprove it, it is because there’s a lack of understanding; understanding *God can give you.*

Verse 14: “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full... [pleroma] ... of grace and truth. John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, ‘This was He of Whom I said, “He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me.”.... [*existed before Me; as we saw as God*] ...And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace” (vs 14-16). In other words ‘the fullness of God’ comes from Christ.

That’s why it says back here in Colossians 2:9: “...in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.... [you could almost give a full sermon on just that one sentence.] ...very important: “And you are **complete**... [another word very similar to ‘pleroma’] ...in Him, Who is the Head of all **principality** and power” (vs 9-10). Principality could also be *authority*. Showing that if you’re dealing with Christ, you’re dealing with the Highest Authority. You don’t have to deal with angels.

Verse 11: “In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [then he explains what the circumcision of Christ is] ...having been buried with Him in baptism... [the covenant death of baptism—he’s reminding them of it] ...by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead” (vs 11-12). He’s reminding them once you have been buried into the death of Christ, you’re to come out of that watery grave and walk in newness of life.

Verse 13: “For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses.”

This is important: *You need nothing else for the forgiveness of sin but the sacrifice of Christ.* You don’t need angels. You don’t need other works. You don’t need special religious regulations such as touch not, taste not, handle not.

Verse 14: “He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees *of our* sins, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross.”

Now, let’s read that in the *King James*—and

let’s see how this is generally explained by the Protestants, and yea, the Catholics—to justify then what they do. Here’s where they get the saying that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross, which is a wild, twisting, lying interpretation of

Colossians 2:14 (*KJV*): “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances... [which they claim were the Ten Commandments] ...that was against us, which was contrary to us... [Are the commandments of God against us? *No, they are FOR us, because they tell us what sin is!* Is it contrary to us? *NO!* We have to walk in the commandments of God.] ...and took it out of the way... [that is remove the Ten Commandments] ...nailing it to His cross.”

That is a very unfortunate and bad translation, as well as a bad interpretation. The Greek there: ‘toise dogmacin’ means *the decrees*. What is a decree? Why did I put in there ‘(note of death)’ (v 14 *FV*)? *Because that’s exactly what it was in the pagan religions!*

Let me read to you from *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, pp. 146-147. I want you to notice the angel involvement here:

On this structure... [that is the bridge going over to heaven, or going over to hell] ... which they assert connects heaven and earth, sits the Angel of Justice...

We still have that in all of our courts. We have the Angel of Justice with a pair of balances. Are we pagan? *Yes!*

...to weigh the actions of mortals; when the good deeds prevail...

This is salvation by works; and still, many people have that concept today.

...the soul is met on the bridge by a dazzling figure...

This reminds me of Daffy Duck—with the good angel/evil angel with the pitchfork in his hand. Or Bug Bunny. Does it stick with you through life? *Yes!* Does it program you to accept things that are wrong? *Yes!*

...which says, “I am thy good angel, I was pure originally, but thy good deeds have rendered me purer...”

Notice, angels are involved in this. I want you to understand that.

...and passing his hand over the neck of the blessed soul, leads it to Paradise. If iniquities preponderate, the soul is meet by a hideous spectre, which howls out, ‘I am thy evil genius; I was impure from the first, but thy misdeeds have made me fouler; through thee we shall remain miserable until the resurrection; the

sinning soul is then dragged away to hell, where Ahriman sits to taunt it with its crimes.” Such is the doctrine of Parseism.

The same is the case in China, where Bishop Hurd, giving an account of the Chinese descriptions of the infernal regions, and of the figures that refer to them, says, “One of them always represents a sinner in a pair of scales, with his iniquities in the one, and his good works in another. We meet with several such representations,” he adds, “in the Grecian mythology.” Thus does Sir J. F. Davis describe the operation of the principle in China: “In a work of some note on morals, called *Merits and Demerits Examined*, a man is directed to keep a debtor and creditor account with himself... [that is, write it down] ...of the acts of each day, and at the end of the year to wind it up... [that is sum them up]. If the balance is in his favor, it serves as the foundation of a stock of merits for the ensuing year: and if against him, it must be liquidated by future good deeds....

That is the *note of debt*—has nothing to do with the commandments of God. So, what Paul is explaining here: You don’t need to go through all of this and write down your good deeds and your bad deeds and add them up at the end of the year. Christ nailed that to the cross. Your *note of debt* of your sins.

Various lists and comparative tables are given of both good and bad actions in the several relations of life; and benevolence is strongly inculcated in regard first to man, and, secondly, to the brute creation. To cause another's death is reckoned at one hundred on the side of demerit; while a single act of charitable relief counts as one on the other side....

So if someone is killed, you have to spend your life doing good deeds. Does that undo the debt of the individual? *No!* Is there any repentance involved? *No!* So, this is what Christ took care of for those Gentile Christians in Colossi, whom He called. Taking that *note of debt* and nailing it to the cross. Has nothing to do with the Ten Commandments of God.

But when you’re dealing with people who are carnal-minded... Romans. 8:7 says: “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*.”

So at the slightest inclination, though they never check it out for a proper translation, or try to understand the true background of it, they

immediately assume that it is doing away with the commandments of God because they have an *enmity toward the Law of God*. They have a hatred toward the things that have been done. That’s why it’s so profoundly important that anyone who has an inkling of that attitude, go back and study Psa. 119 all the way through—every single verse. If you have a problem with the laws, commandments, statutes, precepts, judgments and testimonies of God, then go get on your knees and study it before God and let Him open your mind to understand.

He took away this *note of debt*. What do we have today? What do religions encourage people to do today? *The same thing, only they call it journaling!* Not many people know it, who have been in the Church of God for a long time, but the religions of the so-called Christian ‘religions’ of this world encourage you to ‘journal.’ That is the same thing as a ledger of your good deeds and your bad deeds. *Well, dear diary...or dear journal...today I was a real snot; I got in an argument with my boss. Next week: finally made up with my boss; I did good works and he really likes me now.* Note of debt!

Now, let’s come back and read Colossians 2:14 again. “He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees of our sins, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it... [the note of debt of sins] ...to the cross. After stripping the principalities... [these are the elemental spirits (v 8)] ...and the powers, He made a public spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it” (vs 14-15). That is the crucifixion overcame all of these demonic Hellenistic *religious practices* that people were in bondage to, and now they are liberated from.

Verse 16 is a combination of **A** & **B**: “Therefore... [that is because of what Christ has done and what you are now doing] ...do not allow anyone to judge you... [who was judging them? *The Gnostics!*] ...in eating or in drinking...”

Because you had the Gnostics who were the Stoics and said, ‘Well, you can’t enjoy anything. But when we have a Feast, we are to enjoy. Or you have it the other way; in eating or drinking: ‘Well, you mean that you follow the laws of clean and unclean meats and you don’t eat all this good pork, shrimp, lobster and calamari. You can suck up those little tentacles in your mouth! Just like spaghetti.’

Who was the one who was judging? Verse 8: “Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit...”

Verse 4: “Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech.” They were the ones who were judging, because they were keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days of God and were being judged as keeping those things which were

antiquated and evil and were nailed to the cross.

Verse 16: "...or with regard to a festival, or new moon... [and that's calendar calculation—not 'a' or 'the'] ...or *the* Sabbaths, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming..." (vs 16-17).

In keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days and living God's way, you understand the purpose of God and know that these things are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, which Christ will bring when He comes at his second coming. I hope this opens up Colossians to your understanding even more. We've understood this. We have preached it down through the years. No problem with that, but now we have the last bit of fine focus which gives us greater understanding into the reason why he wrote it.

Verse 17: "Which are a foreshadow of things that are coming..." If you are standing in the shadow of something and you say, 'Okay, here's a shadow and you walk toward that shadow originates, what are you going to come to? *Christ! And the plan of God*

B—v 18: "Do not allow anyone... [that is who is teaching philosophy and vain deceit] ...to defraud you of the prize... [that is of the reward that God is going to give you] ...*by doing his will...* [rather than the will of God] ...in self-abasement and *the* worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind and **not holding fast to the Head**, from Whom all the body..." (vs 18-19). All the body has to do with the Church.

Now, I'm going to read from Appendix D, p 248, *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*:

In essence, Gnostics identified Hellenistic, elemental spirits as Biblical angels. This was so prevalent and so important to religious belief at the time that it's not surprising that the New Testament writers refer to it. Remember that Gnosticism in the first century existed mostly *inside* the Church, so it was vital that the writers of the New Testament address these issues.

Gnosticism talks about evil angels and good angels. The good angels, according to Valentinian, were the Valentinian Christians—believed that angels are married

...to recreate the perfection of pleroma within themselves. Valentinian salvation comes from the Father via Christ, but it is affected through the agency of angels. The entire focus of Valentinian Christianity is the pleroma and its angels. The very substance and heavenly reality behind the

spiritual shadows of our world. In the Valentinian Christianity, the way to obtain spirituality is through identification with pleroma and its angels.

And here's how it's done:

One receives them from the mirrored bridal chamber. The context is the divine marriage ceremony...

They had a marriage ceremony with an angel; that's worshipping the angel.

The context of this divine marriage ceremony, which scholars believe was a sacrament literally acted out. The *mirrored bridal chamber* refers to the belief that Christians became a mirror image (a shadow) of angelic beings, in the sense that they are imperfect shadow of the spiritual archetype within *pleroma*. Thus on earth they are a 'type' of the spiritual glory that will be fully realized after they die and ascend to their angelic home in the *pleroma*. (pp 252)

Valentinian theology taught that man's relationship to angels is the key to spiritual success, both by escaping evil angels associated with the religion of Yahweh, and by attracting believers to the *pleroma* by a mystical spiritual marriage that makes them a shadow of the spiritual reality of the *pleroma*. (pp 254)

That's why he says here—v 18: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize..." Why? *Because if you worship angels or you're married to angels, you then are committing idolatry!* You will lose your reward.

"...*by doing his will in self-abasement and the worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind*" (v 18). Isn't that what happens when people have this super-secret thing that they know. *They're all vain!*

A—vs 19-22: "...Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ...* [through baptism; through taking up your cross and overcoming daily] ...from the elements of the world... [the good angels and bad angels] ...why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world?*" (vs 19-20)—which was the Hellenistic world, with their beliefs and practices—*the decrees of men*. These so-called Christian-professing Gnostics had their own rules and regulations] (

Verse 21: “*They say, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’*... [all self-discipline] ...The use of all such things leads to corruption... [because it doesn’t stop sin—that’s why it leads to corruption] ...**according to the commandments and doctrines of men.**”

So philosophy, vain deceit, angel-worship, voluntary humility are *all according to the doctrines and commandments of men*. Those people, according to the doctrines and commandments of men, were *judging those who were keeping the Feast, the new moons and the Sabbath*. And ‘new moon’ meaning *following the Hebrew calendar*. Of course, the Hebrew calendar would be an awful, evil thing because it was invented and designed by that terrible Yahweh! (sarcasm)

B—v 23: “Which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom in voluntary worship of *angels*, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of *the body*, not in any respect to the satisfying of *the needs* of the flesh.” That means to overcoming the lust of the flesh.

You will see, when it comes up again this year, when we come to the time so-called in the world of Easter, over in the Philippines you will hear accounts there are men who are crucified. They run nails through their hands, put up on a cross and others sit there and flagellate themselves with little whips—and this all, ‘oh, look what they’re doing; oh, my!’ That does not take the place of a broken heart and repentance to God. It may look wise. ‘Oh, look what he’s doing, he’s punishing himself and disciplining himself.’ But it doesn’t stop the lust of the flesh. So, that’s quite something!

Verse 4: “Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech. For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ” (vs 4-7).

Verse 18: “Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by doing his will* in self-abasement and *the worship of angels*, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind and not holding fast to the Head, from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world, why are you

subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*? *They say, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’* The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men, which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom in voluntary worship of *angels*, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of *the body*, not in any respect to the satisfying of *the needs* of the flesh” (vs 18-23).

So I hope that gives you greater insight into Col. 2. Now, let’s come back and let’s just finish one section we need to finish:

Colossians 2:16 : “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking... [none of those men who practice Hellenistic Gnosticism] ...or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the Sabbaths*, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ” (vs 16-17).

We’ve always understood this and this is correct: ***Only the Body of Christ—which is the Church—should judge you in the matters concerning the Feast, the calendar and the Sabbaths.*** Not other men! That would certainly apply today with all the calendar schemes that different people have. Coming along debunking the calculated Hebrew calendar. It is the Body of Christ.

Now there is another thing that you can also understand out of it: You gain understanding of these things, which are *a foreshadow of the coming things*, in the Body of Christ. *Not out in the world!*

So the whole central theme of book of Colossians is to identify everything in Col. 2, to state the problems, to show what they are. And I am happy to have had this book which helps clarify and brings in sharper focus all of these things; and really gives us the Truth concerning Colossians, the second chapter.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 2:17, 16
- 2) Acts 17:18-34
- 3) Colossians 1:4-6, 9-15, 18-21, 23, 25-29
- 4) Colossians 2:1-15
- 5) John 1:1-3, 14-16
- 6) Colossians 2:9-14
- 7) Romans 8:7
- 8) Colossians 2:14-16, 8, 4, 16-19, 18-23, 4-7, 18-23, 16-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 4:23-24
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Acts 17
- Psalm 119

Also referenced: Books:

- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Finding the Angel Within* by Pamela H. Hansen
- *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop

FRC:bo Transcribed: 3-22-09 Reformatted/Corrected: December/2016