**Week of June 23, 2019**

**Colossians 2:1-15**

1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein\* with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil\* you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein\* also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly\*, triumphing over them in it.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

In today’s lesson we look at Paul’s letter to the Colossian believers. Paul was concerned for the Gentile believers. The neighbors of the Colossian believer were Gnostics, whose beliefs threatened the early church. Gnostics did not accept Jesus as the risen Savior and Son of the living God. Falsely claiming to have a higher knowledge of wisdom (not based on the Word of God) and deeper knowledge of God, Gnostics believe their doctrine was not just true, but better than Christianity.

Paul did not want the Colossian believers to follow false teachings, so he encourages the believers by assuring them that he and been thinking and praying that they would continue to be faithful to God. Although Colossian Christians never met Paul, he reached out to encourage them to continue in the truth of God, rather than false teachings. Paul warned the church in Colossae of the details of Gnostic false teachings: 1) Knowledge as the means of salvation, 2) vain deceit, 3) angel worship and 4) strict Jewish ceremonial rules/laws which became a religion to the Jews.

Paul boldly contradicted that Christian salvation required to one to combine his or her faith in Jesus with secret knowledge and legalistic devotion to circumcision, eating, drinking and observance of religions festivals. Gnostics rejected the truth that Jesus is Lord. Not only did God cancel out the accusations of the Law against Christians, but God also conquered and disarmed the evil angel who entice people to follow false teaching about Christ. The metaphor used in verse 15 recalls a Roman general leading his captives through the streets so the citizens could see and celebrate victory.

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