



The Gospel vs. the Colossian Heresy

(Colossians 2:6-15)

Bob Newhart: Conversational Reconstructions



Previous sermons in our series on Colossians

- Sermon #1: Paul gives thanks for the Christians at Colossae and prays for them (Colossians 1:1-12)
- Sermon #2: Includes a “Christ Hymn” that emphasizes that Jesus is God in bodily form (Colossians 1:13-20)
- Sermon #3: The body is not bad/evil, disputing a common notion from “Docetism” (Colossians 1:21-2:5)

Blueprint Statement

In today's passage, Paul further delineates the differences between the Gospel message and the teachings known today as "The Colossian Heresy"

Don't Walk Away

- ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. (Revelation 2:4)

“Five things to Grow Deeper in Our Faith” (Fall 2020)

Scripture

Worship

Service

Prayer

Stewardship

“Syncretism”

- Taking bits and pieces of different religions to form a hybrid religion that is more to one’s liking. However, this practice tends to create “easy theology”: you only select those components that you already like.
- Example: The Jefferson Bible
- Application: which components of orthodox Christianity are you tempted to discard in favor of something from another religion or culture that is more to your liking?

Colossian Syncretism

- Jewish traditionalism (legalism)
- Greek mythology (gods stay separated from humans)
- Early form of “Gnosticism” (Jesus was a phantasm)
- Eastern mysticism (elemental spiritual forces)

Phantasm

- a figment of the imagination; an illusion or apparition

Pleroma

- *Pleroma* is a Greek word that has to do with filling or being full, or completing or being complete. . . In the New Testament, the *pleroma* is the fullness of God, the complete set of divine attributes that were incarnated in Christ. . . In Gnostic writings, “the *Pleroma*” takes on a technical meaning. The *Pleroma* is that spiritual perfection that is in contrast to physical deficiency. (Gnostics believed that matter was evil.) In Gnosticism, the *Pleroma* descended upon Christ at His baptism and left Him at the crucifixion before His death. Gnostics also hope to be able to experience the *Pleroma* themselves as they progress in Gnostic teaching.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/pleroma.html>

Definition: “Sarx”

- Human proclivity/tendency to sin: our “default setting”
- Jonathan Edwards: human beings cannot not sin
- “In Paul’s writings, the flesh stands for the natural desires of a person operating apart from God. . . The pull of the world and temporal, physical needs and pleasures”

<https://www.gotquestions.org/flesh-vs-spirit.html>

Ezekiel 36:26-27

(New Living Translation)

- . ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you [a heart of flesh] a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

Romans 5:6-8

English Standard Version (ESV)

- ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

“Justification”

- ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood,
Romans 5:9a (ESV)
- He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Colossian 2: 13b-14

“Justification”

General Ledger

Date: 4 / 2 / 12

| date | location | budget category | expense amount | account balance |
|------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | | | | \$500 |
| 4/7 | Regal 7 Cinema | Entertainment | -\$10 | \$490 |
| 4/9 | Gift from Uncle Ron | | +\$100 | \$590 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

“Triumphing over them by the cross”

Colossians 2:15



Take-aways:

The Colossian Heresy

Secretive (“esoteric”) teachings may be:

- Overly complicated
- Prone to error
- Cause excessive Pride
- Used to intimidate other believers

Take-aways:

Real Spiritual Growth (“Sanctification”)

- Spiritual growth (“Sanctification”) is the slow process of becoming more and more like Christ
- It requires first being rooted in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of one’s life, and holding fast to this faith
- Additional spiritual growth occurs by setting deep the roots of your faith through: worship, prayer, studying Scripture, service, and stewardship

Benediction

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be
gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you
peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26