Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

31 March 2019 Message 50 of 66

NLT 60 Minutes

Title

**Be Protected**

***Book of Colossians***

**Topic:** Heresy

**Subject:** How can you be protected from false teaching?

**Complement:** Embrace both Christ’s deity and a holy life.

**Purpose:** The listeners will be protected from false teaching by embracing both Christ’s deity and a holy life.

**Attribute:** We worship Christ as God

**Reading:** Colossians 1:15-20

**Song:** Worthy of Worship

**Benediction:** Colossians 3:1-2

# Introduction

Faces

### Interest: False teaching is all around us. Reputable survey organizations in the USA like Gallup and Barna reports that many fall for false teaching so that they leave the church.

#### This is especially true for teenagers. The influences on kids when they are young are seen only a few years later. The studies I have seen show that between 65-88% of teens in the church will not attend church in their twenties. Ken Ham & Britt Beemer note this in their 2009 book. That title means that young people are in our pews physically, but their values are already gone before their bodies are.

Already Gone

Quote

#### But for those of us older, the temptations to false teaching are also real.

Paths

TV

##### Have you even noticed how more enticing heresy is than truth? False teachers are more interesting than teachers of truth like me!

##### There is an allurement for men where sex continues in the afterlife. That is Mormonism and Islam.

Opened Lock

##### How cool to die and then go create your own planet and populate it with your harem—Mormonism again.

##### Most false teaching doesn’t get convicting with talk about sin—or make you feel bad.

##### I have a relative tell me that we can still live like we want and be “very spiritual.”

### Need: So what is your strategy to stay faithful to the Lord so you don’t fall prey to heresy?

#### What *should* you being doing to avoid false teaching?

Closed Lock

#### How much should you study these groups?

#### How do you avoid becoming part of the statistics of those who abandon the Lord Jesus? Today we will answer this question…

Subject

### Subject: How can you be protected from false teaching? What ways can we prevent heretical ideas from capturing us in their snare?

### Background: Colossians believers were being led astray.

Map

#### Paul had never visited Colosse when he wrote this letter. However, during his nearly three-year ministry in nearby Ephesus (Sept 53-May 56; cf. Acts 19) he probably met (and may have converted) Epaphras, who returned to Colosse and founded the church (1:7). Five years later, when Epaphras heard of Paul's imprisonment, he visited the apostle and brought news of their love (1:8).

#### Epaphras evidently also told Paul of a serious heresy plaguing the church. This prompted Paul to pen the epistle to the Colossians for Tychicus to deliver since he was returning to Colosse with Onesimus anyway. The nature of the heresy has been much debated, but the internal evidence suggests that it was the seedbed for what later developed into Gnosticism in the second century.

1:15-20

(8 slides)

Occasion

#### Paul’s response reveals the many problems with this heresy. It was a syncretistic heresy with five basic elements. We see these five problems in Colossians 2:

##### Its Jewish nature showed in its legalism by imposing Old Testament laws and rituals (2:16-17).

Jewish

(6 slides)

##### It had Greek philosophical roots in a so-called “deeper knowledge” (*gnosis*; 2:2b-4, 8-10) revealed only to a special “elite.”

Greek

(3 slides)

##### The system taught the worship of angels as mediators between man and God (2:18).

Angels

(4 slides)

##### The heresy denied the deity of Christ (1:15; 2:9), and thus his supremacy (1:15b, 17a) and ability to create (1:16) and sustain the world (1:17).

Deity

(2 slides)

##### Its ascetic nature had a low view of the body (2:20-23).

Asceticism

(2 slides)

#### It is difficult to peg the Colossian heresy with certainty since Paul nowhere officially lists or defines its elements, nor does he give it a name. However, the evidence above shows it to be a syncretistic Jewish-Greek-Ascetic-Pagan cult. Nevertheless, Paul fought the heresy by (1) affirming the deity and supremacy of Christ, and (2) encouraging the church to live pure lives.

Bottom of Slide

### Preview: Today we will see *two ways* to protect ourselves from false teaching.

Subject

(4 slides)

### Text: Paul gives two strategies to avoid heresy in his letter to the Colossians.

(What is the first way you can be protected from false teaching?)

MP

# Believe that Jesus is God (Col 1–2).

[Guard yourself from heresy by embracing the deity and supremacy of Christ over all things.]

Col 1

## Paul affirms his authority and God’s enabling to fight heresy (1:1-14).

1:1-2

### He greets them as Christ’s apostle for those who might question his teaching (1:1-2).

### He thanks God for their faith and prays that they would know Christ’s adequacy (1:3-14).

1:3-5

(2 slides)

## Christ is God and Redeemer so Paul’s labors for the church have not been in vain (1:15–2:5).

### As Creator God and the world Sustainer, Jesus made peace by his death (1:15-20).

TJC

(2 slides)

#### Most people that you know today do not believe that Jesus is God. Even the True Jesus Church next to Singapore Bible College does not believe in the true Jesus.

#### We are protected from false views of Jesus (heresy) by being familiar with the really true Jesus.

$100

#### So how do we know who the real Jesus is? Well, how would you train a teller to identify a fake $100 bill? I suspect it might be great to send them to a school to help them get trained in the various types of paper, ink, and major flaws of fake notes. However, the US Federal Bank tellers do not get training in the various types of counterfeit bills. Instead, they are sent to Washington DC where they sit in large rooms of freshly printed notes bound into large books. There they count sheets of these real bank notes for two weeks of boring tedium. When they get into their teller role after that and a fake note hits their hands, it just doesn’t look right—or feel right. They are so familiar with the real thing that the counterfeit is obvious.

Relational

#### I used to study the various belief systems of about every group imaginable. I learned the Mormon doctrine so well I could tell Mormons what they didn’t even know they believed! I read the Jehovah Witness stuff, the United Pentecostal cult, and many other “isms” our there. But I soon learned that I could never keep up! There were too many cults—especially where I grew up in the San Francisco area where one person said a new religious cult was started every week on the average!

#### Then I heard about the Federal bank teller training. I realized that I needed to know the *real* Bible, the *real* Jesus, and the *real* gospel. I started memorizing whole books of the Bible like Colossians and then I could see that when a new teaching showed up, it just didn’t look right or feel right because I knew the truth of Scripture.

#### Now when talking to people who claim to be Christians but something just doesn’t seem right, I simply ask them, “Do you believe Jesus is the son of God?” Nearly all say *yes.* Then I say, “Do you believe Jesus is God the Son?” Here is where I find out if they believe in the Trinity.

### The gospel Paul preached is that Christ reconciled us enemies to God (1:21-23).

### Paul’s goal is Christ-likeness in them since Jesus is wisdom in its fullness (1:24–2:5).

Col 2

(2 slides)

## Christ’s deity prioritizes him over deceptive precepts and practices attacking them (2:6-23).

Wrong

### “Gnosticism” is wrong since deity is in Christ (2:6-10).

### Legalism is wrong since reality is in Christ (2:11-17).

### Mysticism is wrong since headship is in Christ (2:18-19).

### Asceticism is wrong since immunity is in Christ (2:20-23).

Subject

(So, what is the first way you can be protected from false teaching? We have seen not to diminish Jesus in any way but to embrace his deity—hold him up as God made flesh. But what is the second way to be protected from false teaching? Here is more of the proper response to seeing the implications of Christ’s Godhood. What does it look like when a Christian embraces the deity of Jesus? He embraces holiness. The second way you can be protected from false teaching is to…)

MPI

# Embrace holy living (Col 3–4).

MP

[Protect yourself from heresy by your pure lifestyle.]

3:1-2

## Our *position* in union with Christ is the basis for a holy (heavenly) living (3:1-4).

## Our *practice* of holy living in every area of life will shame the enemies of the church (3:5–4:6).

## Holy living replaces the sins of the old life with virtues of the new life (3:5-17).

3:5-17

#### Step 1 puts off sins of the old life: bodily sins, materialism, and bad speech (3:5-9).

Put Off

(15 slides)

#### Step 2 puts on virtues of the new life: holy relationships, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Scripture, singing, and glorifying God (3:10-17).

Put On

(11 slides)

Chart

3:18-19

### Our union with Christ should lead to holiness in every relationship in life (3:18–4:6).

#### Families improve when wives, husbands, children, and fathers obey (3:18-21).

##### “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord” (3:18 NLT).

###### Of Susan’s college roommates, she knows that 6 of the 8 women have divorced now four decades years later!

###### I am not saying this is due to them not submitting to their husbands. I am only highlighting the fact that those in Christian universities are not exempt.

##### “Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them” (3:19 NLT).

###### Here is even a harder challenge.

###### Men, you brothers know my weaknesses. But if I can help you better love your wives, let’s meet together an hour weekly as I do with some of you.

###### Roman society had three types of women for each man—one woman for sexual fulfillment, one lady for society functions to make him look good, and a legal wife to bear legitimate children. God has a much higher view of wives than this! They are to be loved.

##### “Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord” (3:20 NLT).

##### “Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged” (3:21 NLT).

###### Would you like to know how to do this?

###### I can tell you guys how to do it, as I learned how to aggravate my sons, who are not ages 32, 29, and 26.

###### Maybe if I tell you how I did it, you can learn how not to do it.

##### Employees must obey your bosses in everything you do (3:22-25).

###### Of course, we know that “everything” does not include disobeying the law.

###### I know two Christians in the last five months who have lost their jobs because they refused to disobey the law in order to obey their boss.

#### Work is harmonious when slaves and masters honor Christ (3:22–4:1).

##### Employees must obey your bosses in everything you do (3:22-25).

##### Of course, we know that “everything” does not include disobeying the law.

##### I know two Christians in the last five months who have lost their jobs because they refused to disobey the law in order to obey their boss.

#### Unbelievers are blessed when believers pray, speak, and act with wisdom (4:2-6).

Col 4

## Fellow-workers greet the church to affirm that the Colossians do not stand alone (4:7-18).

Subject

(How can you be protected from false teaching?)

# Conclusion

Main Idea

### Protect yourself from false teaching by embracing both Christ’s deity and a holy life (MI).

Outline

(3 slides)

### We need both theological and practical ways to avoid heresy (Main Points):

#### *Theological:* Believe that Jesus is God (Col 1–2).

#### *Practical:* Embrace holy living (Col 3–4).

Embrace

### Exhortation: Does your *theology of Jesus* work out into *practice about Jesus*? What needs to change for you to live the kind of holy life Paul discusses?

### Step 1 puts off sins of the old life: bodily sins, materialism, and bad speech (3:5-9).

Put Off

(2 slides)

#### Jewish legalism

#### Greek philosophy

#### Worship of angels

#### Denying Christ’s deity

#### Asceticism

Put On

### Step 2 puts on virtues of the new life: holy relationships, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Scripture, singing, and glorifying God (3:10-17).

### This means holiness in every relationship in life (3:18–4:6).

#### Families improve when wives, husbands, children, and fathers obey (3:18-21).

##### “Wives, submit to your husbands…” (3:18a NLT).

##### “Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them” (3:19 NLT).

##### “Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord” (3:20 NLT).

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#### Employees must obey your bosses in everything you do (3:22–4:1).

#### Unbelievers are blessed when believers pray, speak, and act with wisdom (4:2-6).

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Paul was under house arrest in Rome where he wrote four letters that we call the Prison Epistles.

### The probable order of these was Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### The church was in a serious situation with false teaching in their city.

### As the Colossians faced heresy and needed to know what to do, so the same is true for us today.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Occasion: Paul had never visited Colosse when he wrote this letter. However, during his nearly three-year ministry in nearby Ephesus (Sept 53-May 56; cf. Acts 19) he probably met (and may have converted) Epaphras, who returned to Colosse and founded the church (1:7). Five years later, when Epaphras heard of Paul's imprisonment, he visited the apostle and brought news of their love (1:8).

### Epaphras evidently also told Paul of a serious heresy plaguing the church. This prompted Paul to pen the epistle to the Colossians for Tychicus to deliver since he was returning to Colosse with Onesimus anyway. The nature of the heresy has been much debated, but the internal evidence suggests that it was the seedbed for what later developed into Gnosticism in the second century.

### Paul’s response reveals the many problems with this heresy:

#### Its Jewish nature showed in its legalism by imposing Old Testament laws and rituals (2:16-17).

#### It had Greek philosophical roots in a so-called “deeper knowledge” (*gnosis*; 2:2b-4, 8-10) revealed only to a special “elite.”

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# Questions

### What was the nature of the heresy at Colossae?

### How is Christ’s deity related to holiness of life?

# Tentative Main Ideas

Be Blameless

Be Sure

# Illustrations That Apply

### Doctrine

#### ETS requires belief only in the Trinity (=deity of Christ) and inerrancy )=Bible without error) to affirm one as an evangelical.

#### 29 March 2019 Salt & Light survey on religion in SG

#### How would you train a teller to identify a fake $100 bill? I suspect it might be great to send them to a school to help them get trained in the various types of paper, ink, and major flaws of fake notes. However, the US Federal Bank tellers do not get training in the various types of counterfeit bills. Instead, they are sent to Washington DC where they sit in large rooms of freshly printed notes bound into large books. There they count sheets of these real bank notes for two weeks of boring tedium. When they get into their teller role after that and a fake note hits their hands, it just doesn’t look right—or feel right. They are so familiar with the real thing that the counterfeit is obvious.

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JESUS God made man (1 John 1:1)

[From Shoebox to Showcase](http://illustrationexchange.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=181c69bf3d2275e6dc9157a34&id=3203eba614&e=aa849ca33b)

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The life of J.C. Hall, founder of Hallmark Cards, is a true rags-to-riches story. Born to poor parents, J.C. was quickly put to work, mostly in sales, to help keep himself and his family afloat. Along with his brothers, he began selling postcards in Norfolk, Nebraska. But the postcard business wasn't thriving there. So, with little else than a couple of shoe boxes of postcards, he moved to Missouri to start afresh. Full of innovative ideas, he moved on from postcards to greeting cards. When the store from which he operated burned down in 1915, he and his brothers invested in an engraving business and began printing their own cards.

But it wasn't just the quality of the cards that burgeoned the business. It was Hall's groundbreaking idea to move the cards from behind the counters, where clerks would pick an "appropriate" card for the customer, out into display cases where customers could see them, handle them, and admire them.

By the time he died in 1982, Hall had turned two shoe boxes of postcards into a multi-billion-dollar company.

Says the Hallmark corporate website, "J.C. Hall took greeting cards out of drawers in retail stores, and into displays that let shoppers see all their choices, dramatically changing the way cards were merchandised."

**Application**:

God did the same thing when He sent Jesus Christ into the world. That's when the Word of Life was moved from behind the counters, out of the drawers and placed in a display case for all the world to see, handle and admire.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us" (1 John 1:1-2).

### Practice of Holiness

#### Marriage: Roman society had three types of women for each man—one woman for sexual fulfillment, one lady for society functions to make him look good, and a legal wife to bear legitimate children.

#### LUST causes images to damage you long after (1 Thess. 4:3-7)

If you see a shameless woman in the theatre, who treads the stage with uncovered head and bold attitudes, dressed in garments adorned with gold, flaunting her soft sensuality, singing immoral songs, throwing her limbs about in the dance, and making shameless speeches… do you still dare to say that nothing human happens to you then?

Long after the theatre is closed and everyone is gone away, those images still float before your soul, their words, their conduct, their glances, their walk, their positions, their excitation, their unchaste limbs—and as for you, you go home covered with a thousand wounds.

Source: Gerald Sittser, ‘*Water from a Deep Well’: citing a sermon of John Chrysostom.*

#### **LUST** sinful pleasure in our minds (Matthew 5:28)

Two monks were on their way home to their monastery. They came to a river, and saw a beautiful young woman standing by the bank. She told them that she needed to get across but was afraid. The older monk took her into his arms, and carried her across. He put her down on the other side, and the two monks went their way. An hour later, the younger monk asked, “How could you do that? You touched a woman; you carried her.” The older monk replied, “Yes, I carried her, but I put her down. But one hour later, you are still carrying her in your mind.”

The older monk touched the woman, but thought nothing beyond helping her across the river. The younger monk never touched the woman, but in his mind, entertained the pleasure derived from such touch. It goes to show that we can easily and frequently fall into sin without physically committing it.

*Making Them Laugh, Help Them Learn* by David W. F. Wong, BAC Printers, 2002.

#### RIGHT do what is right

UPS drivers only make right turns--fact of fiction?

Fact…mostly.

The truth is, in 2004 UPS enacted a policy for their drivers to avoid ALL left hand turns whenever possible and practicable. The result is that UPS drivers make right hand turns more than 90% of the time, turning left only in sparsely populated residential neighborhoods or when right turns are otherwise unavailable or impractical. UPS explains the strategy:

Years ago ... UPS engineers [began] to devise route-optimization plans to increase efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and get drivers back to their centers earlier. They came up with a simple rule. Minimize – or sometimes, eliminate – left-hand turns. It's simple but effective.

Since 2004 UPS has saved an estimated 10 million gallons of gas.

Carbon emissions were reduced by 100,000 metric tons – the equivalent of 5,300 cars off the road for an entire year. ...

Even if this meant traveling a greater distance, results showed that more packages could be delivered in less time with reduced emissions by driving in a series of right-hand loops. It helped the bottom line, met consumer demands and increased safety.

"Left turns are unsafe for everyone," [reports the WASHINGTON POST](http://illustrationexchange.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=181c69bf3d2275e6dc9157a34&id=d5a481014f&e=aa849ca33b):

Federal data have shown that 53.1 percent of crossing-path crashes involve left turns, but only 5.7 percent involve right turns. That’s almost 10 times as many crashes involving left turns as right. A study by New York City’s transportation planners concluded that left-hand turns were three times as likely to cause a deadly crash involving a pedestrian as right-hand turns. And 36 percent of fatal accidents involving a motorcycle involve a left-hand turn in front of a motorcycle, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association.

“Left turns create some concerns when it comes to generating potential for congestion, back-up traffic flow, safety, accident situations,” said Phil Caruso, the deputy executive director for technical programs at the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

**Application:**

Choosing to only make *right* turns is a bit like choosing to only ever do the *right* thing. Sure, there are plenty of left turns that would get you where you want to go more directly, but at what cost?

Following God's way--the *right* way--will certainly take you on a more circuitous route, but you can be sure that you will avoid a lot of unnecessary troubles along the way.

"But for those who are righteous, the way is not steep and rough. You are a God who does what is right, and you smooth out the path ahead of them" (Isaiah 26:7, NLT).

Author: [Illustration Exchange](http://illustrationexchange.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=181c69bf3d2275e6dc9157a34&id=6f30defdb5&e=aa849ca33b)

Scripture: Isaiah 26:7

Source: "When in doubt: UPS avoids left turns. How a simple rule increased our drivers' efficiency," posted UPS COMPASS, July 2012

[Visit the source](http://illustrationexchange.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=181c69bf3d2275e6dc9157a34&id=063f846870&e=aa849ca33b)

#### LOVE in action...

A group of professionals posed the question to 4-8 year olds, "What does it mean to love?"  Enjoy their responses : )   
  
"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day."   
--Noelle, age 7  
  
"When my grandma got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandpa does it for her now all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."  
--Rebecca, age 8  
  
"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouths."  
--Billy, age 4  
  
"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs."  
--Chrissy, age 6  
  
"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."  
--Bobby, age 7  
  
"Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and my Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss."  
--Emily, age 8  
  
"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate."  
--Nikka, age 6  
  
"During my piano recital, I was on stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."  
--Cindy, age 8  
  
"My Mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night."  
--Clare, age 6   
  
"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."  
--Mary Ann, age 4  
  
"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you."  
--Karen, age 7  
  
And the winner was a 4 year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly man who had just lost his wife. When the child saw the man cry, the little boy went over into the man's porch, climbed on top of the man's lap and just sat there.  
  
When the boy's mother asked him what he'd said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

# New Testament Survey Notes

**Colossians**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Deity of Christ vs. Syncretistic Heresy** | | | | | |
| **Supremacy/Deity** | | | **Practical Instruction** | | |
| **Chapters 1–2** | | | **Chapters 3–4** | | |
| **Heretical Living** | | | **Holy Living** | | |
| **Belief** | | | **Behaviour** | | |
| **Greeting & Prayer**  **1:1-14** | **Supremacy & Deity**  **1:15–2:5** | **Syncretistic**  **Heresy**  **2:6-23** | **Position:**  **Union with Christ**  **3:1-4** | **Practice:**  **Holiness in Relationships**  **3:5–4:6** | **Conclusion**  **4:7-18** |
| **Rome** | | | | | | |
| **Autumn AD 61 (first Roman imprisonment)** | | | | | | |

**Key Word: Deity**

**Key Verse: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).**

**Summary Statement: The way to protect the church from *syncretistic heresy* isto embrace the *deity of Christ* and holy living.**

**Application:**

**Affirm Christ’s deity and holy relationships to fight the New Age movement and other heresies.**

**Colossians**

**Introduction**

**I. Title:** The Greek title (Pro.j Kolossaei/j *To the Colossians*) follows the practice of naming Paul’s epistles after their recipients, even though the letter was to be read in nearby Laodicea too (4:16).

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: Early Christian writers attributed the authorship to Paul but modern radical critics assume a second century author using Paul's name.

1. Early support for Pauline authorship comes from Justin (*Dialogue* 85.2; 138.2), Marcion (*Dialogue* 84, 85), Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.14.1; *ca.* AD 185), Tertullian (*DePreascr. Haer.* 7), and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.1).

2. Pauline authorship was unquestioned until the 19th century German scholars denied it based on internal factors. Mayerhoff argued for dependency upon Ephesians and Baur with his Tübingen School considered the heresy combated in the letter as second century Gnosticism.

B. Internal Evidence: Several verses within the letter itself affirm Paul’s authorship:

1. The letter claims to have been written by Paul (1:1, 23; 4:18).

2. The similarity of Colossians to Ephesians argues for Pauline authorship in that they were written about the same time (see comparison in “Characteristics” section below).

3. Colossians has many affinities with Paul's letter to Philemon, of which the authenticity is impeccable (Geisler, *BKC*, 2:667). Both books include Timothy's name in the salutation (1:1; Philemon 1); mention Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (4:10-14; Philemon 23-24); refer to Archippus' ministry (4:17; Philemon 2); and confirm the sending of the slave Onesimus back to Colosse (4:9; Philemon 10).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: Paul wrote Colossians during his first imprisonment in Rome (Feb. 60-March 62; cf. Acts 28:30; dates from Hoehner, 381-84). The best evidence suggests a specific date of autumn 61.

B. Origin/Recipients: As noted above, the epistle mentions Paul's many associates (4:7-17), especially Tychicus (4:7), who carried the Colossian and Ephesian letters (Eph 6:21) accompanied by Onesimus (4:9) with the letter to Philemon (Philemon 10, 12, 17). This shows that the Ephesian, Colossian, and Philemon letters all had the same origin. The other two books mention Paul's imprisonment (Eph 3:1; 4:1; Philemon 1, 9) that was in Rome (see Ephesians notes). Therefore, Colossians must have been written in Rome to be sent to Colosse (1:2).

C. Occasion: Paul had never visited Colosse when he wrote this letter. However, during his nearly three-year ministry in nearby Ephesus (Sept 53-May 56; cf. Acts 19) he probably met (and may have converted) Epaphras, who returned to Colosse and founded the church (1:7). Five years later, when Epaphras heard of Paul's imprisonment, he visited the apostle and brought news of their love (1:8).

Epaphras evidently also told Paul of a serious heresy plaguing the church. This prompted Paul to pen the epistle to the Colossians for Tychicus to deliver since he was returning to Colosse with Onesimus anyway. The nature of the heresy has been much debated, but the internal evidence suggests that it was the seedbed for what later developed into Gnosticism in the second century.   
  
Paul’s response reveals the many problems with this heresy:

1. Its Jewish nature showed in its legalism by imposing Old Testament laws and rituals (2:16-17).

2. It had Greek philosophical roots in a so-called “deeper knowledge” (*gnosis*; 2:2b-4, 8-10) revealed only to a special “elite.”

3. The system taught the worship of angels as mediators between man and God (2:18).

4. The heresy denied the deity of Christ (1:15; 2:9), and thus his supremacy (1:15b, 17a) and ability to create (1:16) and sustain the world (1:17).

5. Its ascetic nature had a low view of the body (2:20-23).

It is difficult to peg the Colossian heresy with certainty since Paul nowhere officially lists or defines its elements, nor does he give it a name. However, the evidence above shows it to be a syncretistic Jewish-Greek-Ascetic-Pagan cult. Nevertheless, Paul fought the heresy by (1) affirming the deity and supremacy of Christ, and (2) encouraging the church to live pure lives.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Colossians uses many terms found only here in the New Testament.

1. The 35 unique words include “visible” (1:16), “supremacy” (1:18), “fill up” (1:24), “philosophy” (2:8), and “deity” (2:9; Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 193-97).

2. Paul redefines terms used by the heretical movement with an orthodox meaning (e.g., *pleroma*, “fullness,” 2:9; and *gnosis*, “knowledge” 2:3; cf. *TTTB*, 413).

3. Many scholars see so many unique words as supporting non-Pauline authorship, but the unique Colossian setting calls for special vocabulary not needed in Paul’s other writings (Guthrie, 553).

B. Paul uses no Old Testament references in his epistle to the Colossians.

C. Colossians gives the fullest explanation of Christ’s deity of any NT writing. Especially worth noting are:

(1) “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [‘preeminent one’] over all creation. For by Him all things were made…” (1:15)

(2) “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” (1:19), and

(3) “For in Christ all the fulness of Deity lives in bodily form” (2:9).

D. The twin epistles of Ephesians and Colossians have many points in common and some differences (adapted and expanded from *TTTB*, 413):

**Ephesians Colossians**

**Similarities:**

Written in prison, carried by Tychicus Written in prison, carried by Tychicus

Stresses wisdom, knowledge, fullness, Stresses wisdom, knowledge, fullness,

and mystery and mystery

First half—position First half—position

Second half—practice Second half—practice

**Ephesians Colossians**

Similar passages: Similar passages:

“In Him we have redemption through His “in whom we have redemption, the

blood, the forgiveness of sins…” (1:7) forgiveness of sins” (1:14)

“to be put into effect when the times will “and through Him to reconcile to Himself

have reached their fulfillment–to bring all things, whether things on earth or things

all things in heaven and on earth together in heaven, by making peace through His

under one head, even Christ” (1:10) blood, shed on the cross” (1:20)

1:15-17 1:3-4

1:18 1:27

1:19-20 2:12

1:21-23 1:16-19

5:22-24 (wives) 3:18 (wives)

5:25-33 (husbands) 3:19 (husbands)

6:1-3 (children) 3:20 (children)

6:4 (fathers) 3:21 (fathers)

6:5-8 (slaves) 3:22-25 (slaves)

6:9 (masters) 4:1 (masters)

**Differences:**

Emphasizes the Church Emphasizes Christ

as the body of Christ as the Head of the body

General, universal Specific, local

Irenic, calm Polemic, concern

Reflective, quiet Spiritual conflict

**Argument**

Paul writes the Colossian letter to protect the church from a serious heresy threatening its very life since it is attacking the deity of Christ. His response to this cult takes a two-pronged approach. He first establishes the supremacy of Christ as God to provide the theological basis of the false teaching (Col 1–2). He then provides practical instruction in light of the deity of Christ which, when followed, will put the enemies of Christ to shame as they see holy living in the church (Col 3–4). Thus, Paul’s strategy to fight this cult is a holy lifestyle founded in a solid christological foundation. This alone could successfully defeat a heresy that is both legalistic/ascetic (not free) and philosophical/ knowledge-oriented (not lifestyle-oriented).

**Synthesis**

**Supremacy/deity of Christ vs. syncretistic heresy**

**1–2 Supremacy/deity**

1:1-14 Greeting/prayer

1:15–2:5 Supremacy/deity

2:6-23 Syncretistic heresy

2:6-10 “Gnostic”

2:11-17 Legalistic

2:18-19 Mystic

2:20-23 Ascetic

**3–4 Teaching on Holiness**

3:1-4 Position: union with Christ

3:5–4:6 Practice: holiness in relationships

3:5-17 Holy living

3:5-9 Put off

3:10-17 Put on

3:18–4:6 Relationships

3:18-21 Family life

3:22–4:1 Work life

4:2-6 Public life

4:7-18 Conclusion

4:7-15 Commends colleagues fighting heresy

4:16-18 Distribute the letter to fight heresy

**Outline**

**Summary Statement for the Book**

**The way to protect the church from *syncretistic heresy* isto embrace the *deity of Christ* and holy living.**

# The way to protect the church from syncretistic heresy is to embrace the deity and supremacy of Christ over all things (Col 1–2).

## Paul's greeting and prayer for the believers affirms his authority and God’s enabling the church to fight heresy (1:1-14).

### Paul greets the church as Christ’s apostle to establish his spiritual authority before those who might question his teaching in the letter (1:1-2).

### Paul thanks God for their faith and prays that they would know Christ’s adequacy in them to fight the heresy in their midst (1:3-14).

## Christ is over all things in his person as God and in his work as Redeemer so his labors for the church have not been in vain (1:15–2:5).

### Since Jesus is God the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, he has reconciled everything to him by his death (1:15-20).

### The gospel Paul preached is that Christ reconciled us to God from our former status as alienated enemies (1:21-23).

### The goal of Paul’s suffering and work is to form Christ-likeness in the church since Jesus is wisdom in its fullness (1:24–2:5).

## The deity of Christ means that higher life is in Christ rather than the deceptive precepts and practices attacking the church (2:6-23).

### “Gnosticism” is wrong since deity is in Christ (2:6-10).

### Legalism is wrong since reality is in Christ (2:11-17).

### Mysticism is wrong since headship is in Christ (2:18-19).

### Asceticism is wrong since immunity is in Christ (2:20-23).

# The way to protect the church from syncretistic heresy is to shame Christ’s enemies as they see holy living in the church (Col 3–4).

## The believer's *position* of union with Christ is the basis for a holy (heavenly) living rather than the sinful (earthly) living of the false teachers (3:1-4).

## The believer's *practice* affects every area of life to shame the enemies of the church through holy living (3:5–4:6).

### Holy living replaces the sins of the old life with virtues of the new life (3:5-17).

#### Step 1 in holy living is to put off sins of the old life: sins of the body, materialism, and improper speech (3:5-9).

#### Step 2 in holiness puts on virtues of the new life: holy relationships, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Scripture, singing, and glorifying God (3:10-17).

### A believer's union with Christ leads to holy living that improves relationships in every area of life (3:18–4:6).

#### Families improve when wives, husbands, children, and fathers obey commands about their roles (3:18-21).

#### Work is harmonious when slaves work for Christ and masters treat their slaves with fairness (3:22–4:1).

#### Unbelievers see a positive witness when believers pray, speak, and act with wisdom (4:2-6).

## Paul commends his fellow-workers and sends greetings from these who have been faithful in the face of error to affirm that the Colossians do not stand alone (4:7-18).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **False Teaching at Colosse** | **New Age Movement** | **Christianity** |
| Salvation | Christ + Other Ways | Many Ways | Through Jesus Christ alone |
| Worship | God + Angels | Via Spirit Guides | Through the Holy Spirit |
| Sanctification | Via Rituals and Ceremonies | Via Enlightenment | Through Holy Living in the Spirit’s power |
| Hope | Uncertain | Reincarnation | Resurrection |
| Deity | Christ is not God | We are God | Christ is God |
| Theism | Syncretistic | Many Gods | Trinity |
| Basis | Human Effort + Secret Knowledge | Human Effort | Christ’s Work on the Cross |

*Adapted from the 1997 Colossians Class Presentation*

**Colossians Crossword Puzzle**

Adapted from an SBC Class Presentation

1. What type of false teaching filtering into the Colossian church emphasized knowledge?

2. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter?

3. What is the key word for the book of Colossians?

4. Colosse was located in what modern day country?

5. Who probably founded the church at Colosse?

6. What was the chief problem plaguing the church?

7. Who formed the majority of the Colossian church membership?

**The Sabbath in Colosse**

Adapted from Richard J. Griffith, “The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath,” ThD diss., Dallas Seminary, 1990, pp. 164-171

"Of all of the statements in the New Testament, these verses most strongly refute the Sabbatarian claim for observance of the Jewish Sabbath."[[1]](#footnote-1) Colossians 2:16 expressly forbids observance of the Sabbath day which served as a mere shadow of what was to come, that reality being in Christ (v. 17). Chafer summarized Paul's argument thus, "Having the Substance, the believer is warned against turning to the mere shadow."[[2]](#footnote-2) Throughout Paul's ministry he fought the continued encroachments from Judaizers who sought to place believers under the yoke of the law. Such was the situation with the church at Colosse, which was confronted with infiltrators whose teachings were destroying the believers' freedom under the gospel message and thus threatening a relapse back into Judaism.

Some argue that Colossians 2:16 points not to the regular *weekly* Sabbath, but *yearly and monthly* Sabbaths (i.e., "ceremonial" sabbaths). This is the official Seventh-day Adventist position affirmed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*:

SDA's . . . have usually held that since the context deals with ritual matters, the sabbaths here referred to are the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jewish annual festivals "which are a shadow," or type, of which the fulfillments were to come in Christ; that although the sequence of terms might appear to class the Sabbath with the ceremonial holy days, the rhetorical form cannot outweigh the facts established elsewhere in the Bible, that the types and symbols extending only to Christ do not include the Sabbath of the Decalogue.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The eminent Seventh-day Adventist scholar Nichol also claims that Colossians 2:16 refers to the ceremonial or annual, not weekly, sabbaths.[[4]](#footnote-4) Nearly all Adventists[[5]](#footnote-5) and even several non-Adventist[[6]](#footnote-6) scholars follow this reasoning. They say that the underlying assumption of this argument is a distinction between the so-called "moral" and "ceremonial" aspects of the Law[[7]](#footnote-7) and the belief that the designation of a weekly sabba,twn as a "shadow" (skia.; v. 17) is inappropriate:

Paul can hardly be referring to the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue, for the Sabbath is not a shadow of anything, it is the reality. Further, although to some extent the Sabbath points forward to the promised rest in Christ (see Hebrews 4), it does not obtain its primary significance from "things to come" but from an event in the past—the creation of the world in six days (Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 20:8-11).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Therefore, most Adventists believe that ceremonial sabbaths must be in view since the weekly Sabbath looks *back* to creation whereas the ceremonial sabbaths look *forward* to their fulfillment in Christ.

A second line of reasoning is also used to take away the force of Colossians 2:16. Even if Paul *is* referring to the weekly Sabbath, some Adventists claim that his concern is with a *ritualistic observance* of the day "as part and parcel of the works-righteousness concept of rabbinical Judaism,"[[9]](#footnote-9) not a prohibition of Sabbath observance itself. Likewise, Wood claims that the verse indicates that "sabbaths have no value for salvation."[[10]](#footnote-10) A modification of this ritualistic observance view sees not the Jewish Sabbath in view, but rather pagan "sacred days" based upon astrological movements.[[11]](#footnote-11) O'Brien believes that the Sabbath *is* in view but that Paul prohibits observing it with the wrong (astrological) motive.[[12]](#footnote-12)

A third argument aimed against the meaning of weekly Sabbath here is the use of the plural form "sabbaths." Some believe that this form indicates ceremonial sabbaths.[[13]](#footnote-13) Bacchiocchi acknowledges that the plural form (sabba,twn) is used for the entire week (LXX Ps. 23:1; 47:1; 93:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7), so he suggests that it more properly refers to weekdays rather than to the Sabbath.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Can these interpretations be sustained? Is Paul really speaking here of ceremonial sabbaths, ritualistic observance of the Sabbath, pagan sabbaths, or even weekdays? The best evidence, as most scholars recognize, is that Colossians 2:16 condemns all forms of Sabbath-keeping, including observance of the weekly Sabbath.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Ritualistic observance is excluded in that all of the practices mentioned are deemed types. Surely Paul would not refer to empty, ritualistic Sabbath worship as a (divinely ordained) type. Pagan sabbaths also must be excluded for the same reason. The apostle would not say that a heretical, astrological observance was now to be abolished because of the appearance of its antitype. Paul warns the church not to allow others to convince them of the necessity of observing Jewish holy days, irrespective of motivation.

The annual ("ceremonial") sabbaths also cannot be in view. All non-weekly Sabbaths are already mentioned in the verse as they are included under "religious festivals" (e`orth/j), so another designation for yearly and monthly Sabbaths in the same phrase would be redundant.[[16]](#footnote-16) This same list of holy days in descending order of time is repeatedly used in the Old Testament, and in each case the Sabbaths refer to the weekly day of rest and worship. The law for daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly offerings is explained in Numbers 28–29[[17]](#footnote-17) then listed in this same order many times elsewhere in the Old Testament.[[18]](#footnote-18) These are the same celebrations mentioned in Colossians 2:16, which argue convincingly against the Adventist claim that they are peculiar celebrations associated with the Colossian heresy. The contention that ceremonial sabbaths must be in view because the weekly Sabbath looks back at creation (not forward to something) is unwarranted. There is no reason the day cannot have both a retrospective and prospective viewpoint. Indeed, the present tense of tw/n mello,ntwn ("which are to come") in Colossians 2:17 indicates that the festivals of verse 16 are typological of things *still* forthcoming.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Further evidence that the weekly Sabbath is in view stems from the New Testament usage of the word sabba,twn. This word is used sixty times in the New Testament in both the singular and plural, always referring to the seventh-day Sabbath.[[20]](#footnote-20) While Adventists themselves admit that fifty-nine times it refers to the weekly Sabbath, they still insist based upon "context" that Colossians 2:16 remains the only use of the word for ceremonial sabbaths.[[21]](#footnote-21) Such alleged contextual evidence is lacking. It appears that the normal meaning for sabba,twn has been abandoned to maintain a moral/ceremonial dichotomy within the Law. Bruce adds, "When the sabbath is mentioned in the OT or the NT with no contextual qualification, the weekly sabbath is intended."[[22]](#footnote-22)

Finally, the use of the plural also does not argue for the ceremonial Sabbaths in that it is simply a Hebraism.[[23]](#footnote-23) As such the plural is commonly used in Scripture with a singular sense in reference to the weekly Sabbath.[[24]](#footnote-24) The translators of the Septuagint also felt free to employ the exact plural form (sabba,twn) in their translation of the singular tB;V'h' in the Decalogue itself (Exod. 20:8; Deut. 5:12), as well as in many other passages where the singular weekly Sabbath is in view.[[25]](#footnote-25) Also, assuming Bacchiocchi's "weekday" view, one must wonder how Paul would be condemning the church for an improper use of weekdays, especially in light of the Jewish emphasis in the book. Further, how "weekdays" serve as a type is never explained by Bacchiocchi.

Since the weekly Sabbath must be in view here, it remains to ask what Paul says about it. His main purpose is to warn the Colossians not to let anyone judge them regarding the observance of the day. In other words, Paul cautions the church members against anyone convincing them of the necessity of Sabbath observance.[[26]](#footnote-26) He does not declare Sabbath observance wrong *per se*, since Paul's attitude about Sabbath-keeping "is that it, like many other things, does neither harm nor good."[[27]](#footnote-27) However, he does forbid required observance of the day. This is because the Sabbath served as a mere shadow, whereas Christ is the substance (v. 17).

**Be Protected**

***Colossians***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The way to protect the church from *syncretistic heresy* isto embrace the *deity of Christ* and holy living.

# The way to protect the church from syncretistic heresy is to embrace the deity and supremacy of Christ over all things (Col 1–2).

## Paul's greeting and prayer for the believers affirms his authority and God’s enabling the church to fight heresy (1:1-14).

### Paul greets the church as Christ’s apostle to establish his spiritual authority before those who might question his teaching in the letter (1:1-2).

### Paul thanks God for their faith and prays that they would know Christ’s adequacy in them to fight the heresy in their midst (1:3-14).

## Christ is over all things in his person as God and in his work as Redeemer so Paul’s labors for the church have not been in vain (1:15–2:5).

### Since Jesus is God the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, he has reconciled everything to him by his death (1:15-20).

### The gospel Paul preached is that Christ reconciled us to God from our former status as alienated enemies (1:21-23).

### The goal of Paul’s suffering and work is to form Christ-likeness in the church since Jesus is wisdom in its fullness (1:24–2:5).

## The deity of Christ means that higher life is in Christ rather than the deceptive precepts and practices attacking the church (2:6-23).

### “Gnosticism” is wrong since deity is in Christ (2:6-10).

### Legalism is wrong since reality is in Christ (2:11-17).

### Mysticism is wrong since headship is in Christ (2:18-19).

### Asceticism is wrong since immunity is in Christ (2:20-23).

# The way to protect the church from syncretistic heresy is to shame Christ’s enemies as they see holy living in the church (Col 3–4).

## The believer's *position* of union with Christ is the basis for a holy (heavenly) living rather than the sinful (earthly) living of the false teachers (3:1-4).

## The believer's *practice* affects every area of life to shame the enemies of the church through holy living (3:5–4:6).

### Holy living replaces the sins of the old life with virtues of the new life (3:5-17).

#### Step 1 in holy living is to put off sins of the old life: sins of the body, materialism, and improper speech (3:5-9).

#### Step 2 in holiness puts on virtues of the new life: holy relationships, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Scripture, singing, and glorifying God (3:10-17).

### A believer's union with Christ leads to holy living that improves relationships in every area of life (3:18–4:6).

#### Families improve when wives, husbands, children, and fathers obey commands about their roles (3:18-21).

#### Work is harmonious when slaves work for Christ and masters treat their slaves with fairness (3:22–4:1).

#### Unbelievers see a positive witness when believers pray, speak, and act with wisdom (4:2-6).

## Paul commends his fellow-workers and sends greetings from these who have been faithful in the face of error to affirm that the Colossians do not stand alone (4:7-18).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will be protected from false teaching by embracing both Christ’s deity and a holy life.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: False teaching is all around us. Barna reports that many fall for it.

### Need: What is your strategy to stay faithful to the Lord so you don’t fall prey to heresy?

#### What *should* you being doing to avoid false teaching?

#### How much should you study these groups?

### Subject: How can you be protected from false teaching?

### Background: Colossians believers were being led astray by a syncretistic heresy with four basic elements.

### Preview: Today we will see *two ways* to protect ourselves from false teaching.

### Text: Paul gives two strategies to avoid heresy in his letter to the Colossians.

(What is the first way you can be protected from false teaching?)

# Believe that Jesus is God (Col 1–2).

[Guard yourself from heresy by embracing the deity and supremacy of Christ over all things.]

## Paul affirms his authority and God’s enabling to fight heresy (1:1-14).

### He greets them as Christ’s apostle for those who might question his teaching (1:1-2).

### He thanks God for their faith and prays that they would know Christ’s adequacy (1:3-14).

## Christ is God and Redeemer so Paul’s labors for the church have not been in vain (1:15–2:5).

### As Creator God and the world Sustainer, Jesus made peace by his death (1:15-20).

### The gospel Paul preached is that Christ reconciled us enemies to God (1:21-23).

### Paul’s goal is Christ-likeness in them since Jesus is wisdom in its fullness (1:24–2:5).

## Christ’s deity prioritizes him over deceptive precepts and practices attacking them (2:6-23).

### “Gnosticism” is wrong since deity is in Christ (2:6-10).

### Legalism is wrong since reality is in Christ (2:11-17).

### Mysticism is wrong since headship is in Christ (2:18-19).

### Asceticism is wrong since immunity is in Christ (2:20-23).

(So, what is the first way you can be protected from false teaching? We have seen not to diminish Jesus in any way but to embrace his deity—hold him up as God made flesh. But what is the second way to be protected from false teaching? Here is more of the proper response to seeing the implications of Christ’s Godhood. The second way you can be protected from false teaching is to…)

# Embrace holy living (Col 3–4).

[Protect yourself from heresy by your pure lifestyle.]

## Our *position* in union with Christ is the basis for a holy (heavenly) living (3:1-4).

## Our *practice* of holy living in every area of life will shame the enemies of the church (3:5–4:6).

### Holy living replaces the sins of the old life with virtues of the new life (3:5-17).

#### Step 1 puts off sins of the old life: bodily sins, materialism, and bad speech (3:5-9).

#### Step 2 puts on virtues of the new life: holy relationships, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Scripture, singing, and glorifying God (3:10-17).

### Our union with Christ should lead to holiness in every relationship in life (3:18–4:6).

#### Families improve when wives, husbands, children, and fathers obey (3:18-21).

#### Work is harmonious when slaves and masters honor Christ (3:22–4:1).

#### Unbelievers are blessed when believers pray, speak, and act with wisdom (4:2-6).

## Fellow-workers greet the church to affirm that the Colossians do not stand alone (4:7-18).

(How can you be protected from false teaching?)

# Conclusion

### Protect yourself from false teaching by embracing both Christ’s deity and a holy life (MI).

### We need both theological and practical ways to avoid heresy (Main Points):

#### *Theological:* Believe that Jesus is God (Col 1–2).

#### *Practical:* Embrace holy living (Col 3–4).

### Exhortation: Does your *theology of Jesus* work out into *practice about Jesus*? What needs to change for you to live the kind of holy life Paul discusses? Remember…

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

31 March 2019

Message 50 of 66

**Be Protected**

***Colossians***

# Introduction

### False teaching is all around us. Barna reports that many fall for it.

### How can you be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from false teaching?

# Believe that Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Col 1–2).

## Paul affirms his authority and God’s enabling to fight heresy (1:1-14).

## Christ is God and Redeemer so Paul’s labors for the church have not been in vain (1:15–2:5).

## Christ’s deity prioritizes him over deceptive precepts and practices attacking them (2:6-23).

### “Gnosticism” is wrong since deity is in Christ (2:6-10).

### Legalism is wrong since reality is in Christ (2:11-17).

### Mysticism is wrong since headship is in Christ (2:18-19).

### Asceticism is wrong since immunity is in Christ (2:20-23).

# Embrace \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ living (Col 3–4).

## Our *position* in union with Christ is the basis for a holy (heavenly) living (3:1-4).

## Our *practice* of holy living in every area of life will shame the enemies of the church (3:5–4:6).

### Holy living replaces the sins of the old life with virtues of the new life (3:5-17).

### Our union with Christ should lead to holiness in every relationship in life (3:18–4:6).

## Fellow-workers greet the church to affirm that the Colossians do not stand alone (4:7-18).

# Conclusion

### Protect yourself from false teaching by embracing both Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a holy life (Main Idea).

### Does your *theology of Jesus* work out into *practice about Jesus*? What needs to change for you to live the kind of holy life Paul discusses?

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**Colossians**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Deity of Christ vs. Syncretistic Heresy** | | | | | |
| **Supremacy/Deity** | | | **Practical Instruction** | | |
| **Chapters 1–2** | | | **Chapters 3–4** | | |
| **Heretical Living** | | | **Holy Living** | | |
| **Belief** | | | **Behaviour** | | |
| **Greeting & Prayer**  **1:1-14** | **Supremacy & Deity**  **1:15–2:5** | **Syncretistic**  **Heresy**  **2:6-23** | **Position:**  **Union with Christ**  **3:1-4** | **Practice:**  **Holiness in Relationships**  **3:5–4:6** | **Conclusion**  **4:7-18** |
| **Rome** | | | | | | |
| **Autumn AD 61 (first Roman imprisonment)** | | | | | | |

**Key Word: Deity**

**Key Verse: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).**

**Summary Statement: The way to protect the church from *syncretistic heresy* isto embrace the *deity of Christ* and holy living.**

**Application:**

**Affirm Christ’s deity and holy relationships to fight the New Age movement and other heresies.**

1. M. Martin, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:108. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *SDAE*, s.v. "Sabbath," by Neufeld, ed., CRS, 10:1110-1111. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. "If Paul here was referring to the weekly Sabbath of the Decalogue, then the only conclusion to reach would be that in the Christian Era there is no weekly holy day of rest. And does Christendom, in general, believe that? No. The sternly enforced Sunday laws of the different Christian lands . . . provide . . . proof . . . that a weekly holy day is proper, right, and Scriptural" (Francis D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections*, 165; cf. 49, 166-70, 190). Unfortunately, rather than dealing with the textual evidence, Nichol appeals to a recent practice arising from the time of the Puritans which considers Sunday the "Christian Sabbath." This imposing of tradition upon exegesis is unacceptable. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Others include Kenneth H. Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, 338-42; Paul Giem, *"Sabbaton* in Col. 2:16," *AUSS* 19 (Autumn 1981): 195-210; Donald F. Neufeld, "Sabbath Day or Sabbath Days," *Review and Herald* 148 (April 15, 1971): 13; and especially the official statements of the Adventist movement in *Questions on Doctrine*, 131, and the *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, 6:294; A. R. Fausset, "Colossians," *JFB*, 6:448; Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, 1070; John Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 1:477-88; Glenn N. Davies, "The Christian Sabbath," *RTR* 42 (May-August 1983): 39; de Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," 182-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 338. The lack of biblical support for such a distinction has already been addressed earlier in this chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 33; *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *SDAE*, s.v. "Sabbath," by Neufeld, ed., 10:1110. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 339. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, Herm, 115-16. Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Appendix: Paul and the Sabbath," in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 339-69, seems to indicate this view as well as the ceremonial view. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word BC, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Clarke, 6:294; Barnes, 1070. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 360; id., *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, 116-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, ICC, 264; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 3:224-25; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 113-15; Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 282-97; H. M. Carson, *Colossians and Philemon*, TNTC, 72 ("weekly festivals"); John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians*, 176-77; Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon*, 168 ("weekly festival"); William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon*, NTC, 123-24; Henry Allen Ironside, *Lectures on Colossians*, 91; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon*, 127-28; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 260; Martin,162-66; Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians," *EBC*, 11:204; Kenneth Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament*, in *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, 1:210; Rordorf, 135; Congdon, 344-47. William Barclay claims that the verse prohibits Gnostic and Jewish weekly sabbaths (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, DBS, 145). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Congdon, 344-47; Ironside, *Lectures on Colossians*, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Numbers 28:3-4 (daily), 9 (Sabbath), 11 (new moon), 16, 26; 29:1, 7, 12 (five annual feasts). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 1 Chron. 23:31; 2 Chron. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh. 10:33; cf. opposite order (parallel to Col. 2:16) in Ezek. 45:17; Hos. 2:11. The new moon and Sabbath are adjacent in several texts (Amos 8:5; Isa. 1:13; 2 Kings 4:23; Ezek. 46:3), which provides additional weight for the Sabbath referring to the weekly day. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This eschatological meaning is further explored in the final chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 339-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Bruce, *Colossians*, 115, n. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Both the singular and plural forms indicate the weekly Sabbath in the New Testament: the singular sabba,ton and plural sabba,twn both stem from the Hebrew t/tB;v' whereas the plural sabba,ta stems from the Aramaic (at;B]v'; cf. Acts 17:2; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 95, 105; cf. James Hope Moulton, Wilbert Francis Howard, and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols., 2:128, 153; George Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, 177); "sabba,ta, though plural, means 'a Sabbath day,' being, in fact, a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic, and from its form mistaken for a plural" (Abbott, 264; cf. Lightfoot, 260). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Exod. 31:13; Lev. 19:3; Isa. 56:4; Ezek. 20:12; Matt. 12:5, 10; 28:1; Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14. The misleading translation "sabbath days" (KJV) in Colossians 2:16 does not reflect this usage. Adventists themselves admit that the plural often refers to a succession of weekly Sabbaths (Francis D. Nichol, ["D. F. N." in article] "Sabbath Day or Sabbath Days?" *RH*, 15 April 1971, 13; *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205); nevertheless, for the most part most of them follow the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* teaching that it refers to the ceremonial sabbaths (cf. *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. For example, th/ h`me,ra tw/n sabba,twn in Exod. 35:3; Num. 15:32; 28:9 and simply tw/n sabba,twn in Isa. 58:13 (cf. Alfred Ralfs, *Septuaginta*, 2 vols.). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. C. I. Scofield, ed., *New Scofield Reference Bible*, 1194. See also the many sources at footnote 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. De Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus,"182-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)