

Vapid

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 2nd, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE TAKES YOU
CAPTIVE THROUGH PHILOSOPHY
AND EMPTY DECEPTION, ACCORDING
TO THE TRADITION OF MEN,
ACCORDING TO THE ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, RATHER
THAN ACCORDING TO CHRIST.
~COLOSSIANS 2:8 (NASB)**

1) Initial Faith Should Lead To Increasing Depth

- A) As Paul addresses those who have "received Christ Jesus as Lord" (Colossians 2:6), he utilizes a more formal/technical word construction in order to communicate more than a reception of a personal relationship, but a whole "way of life" or "new tradition."

* Paul uses an "indicative-imperative" form (cf. 2:20; 3:1-4; Romans 15:7; Galatians 5:25; Phil 2:5) to introduce the subject of tradition, for when Paul says that his readers have "received" (παρελάβετε) Christ Jesus as their Lord he is not simply reflecting on their personal commitment to Christ (though this is no doubt included), but he uses the semitechnical term specifically employed to denote the receiving of something delivered by tradition. The Colossians have received Christ himself as their tradition. The expression τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον is not an allusion to sayings of Jesus communicated as directions for right conduct (though cf. 1st Corinthians 7:10, 11; 9:14), but is an early credal confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" (cf. Romans 10:9; 1st Corinthians 12:3; Philippians 2:11). No doubt it summarizes the tradition delivered to the Colossians in Epaphras' initial evangelism which focused on the person of Christ Jesus (note 2nd Corinthians 4:5). The one whom the Colossians received as their tradition is the center of God's mystery (1:27, 2:2), and the Lord in both creation and reconciliation (1:15-20). He is Lord absolutely (1st Corinthians 8:5, 6), not just one among many. Excerpts from *Word Biblical Commentary, Colossians & Philemon* by Peter T. O'Brien, pages 105-106.

- B) The emphasis is that following Christ is not a singular moment in time, but a reception of a lifestyle (tradition) in which we are to continue to progress (walking, cf. 2:6).

- C) As followers of Christ, we are to grow like a living organism (2:7). The Christian life is not a religion or set of moral guidelines,[†] but a growing deeper into the mystery of God, which is our relationship with Jesus Christ.

2) Thinking Too Highly Of Complexity

- A) Since biblical times, the great threat to “walking in Christ” have been the voices of those who seek solutions for the existence of mankind and individual purpose outside of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

- B) Paul cautions us to not be “captured” by these philosophies and deceptions (2:8). The philosophical intelligence (e.g. science, medicine, etc.) of the world seems profound today (and very appealing to our natural instincts), but will prove to be foolishness in the future.

- C) How do we contend against the forces (internal and external) which threaten to “carry us away?” Paul calls us to find our complete satisfaction in the “fullness of Deity” (2:9), which is a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ.

- D) Rather than leave us “empty,” Christ makes us “full” (2:10), and will prove to be the ultimate ruler and authority!

[†] Following Jesus has these aspects (religious and moral implications), but they are secondary to a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. Our religious and moral thoughts and practices flow out of a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, much in the same way a husband and wife love one another from a basis of relationship. To say, in a marriage for instance, there are no obligations (rules, moral guidelines) would be absurd. But they flow from the relationship, they never (should) replace the relationship/romance.