

IS JESUS CHRIST AN ADEQUATE SAVIOR?

Colossians 2:8-10

Intro: I have said repeatedly that we do not really know how the church at Colosse was established. There is wide support for the possibility that Epaphras, whom Paul mentioned in 1:7 and again toward the end of the epistle in 4:12, had heard Paul preach the Gospel in Ephesus, and that he had brought the message of salvation to Colosse. Paul called him in chapter 1, “a faithful minister of Christ,” and in chapter 4 he called Epaphras “a servant of Christ.” These terms indicate that in the ministry of Epaphras, Christ was (to use Paul’s word in 1:18) “preeminent.” It was Epaphras’ purpose that the people of Colosse would hear about Christ. He wanted them to know Christ. He brought to Colosse the message of Christ. He wanted the people of Colosse to know Who Jesus Christ was, and what Jesus Christ had done which was of such supreme importance. The ministry of Epaphras, like the ministry of the Apostle Paul, was focused upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Epaphras’ ministry was a ministry of Christ. You could not listen to him without being impressed with the fact that Jesus Christ was the most important Person that Epaphras had ever known, and that he wanted everybody else to know Him. What the Apostle Paul had to say about the Lord Jesus Christ in chapters 1 and 2 was exactly what Epaphras had been telling them, and that was the reason that there was a church in Colosse. As Epaphras preached, the Spirit of God was at work bringing the conviction to the hearts of people in Colosse that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that He had come to earth to die for sinners, after which He was raised from the dead and eventually went back to His Father in heaven. So Epaphras preached that men were sinners, and that they needed a Savior if they were to escape the judgment of God, and that Jesus Christ was that Savior – the only Savior!

Furthermore, we have reason to believe that Epaphras taught and believed that Jesus Christ was just like God. Epaphras believed in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore Epaphras must have taught the people of Colosse that Jesus Christ was the Creator of the universe in which the Colossians lived, and that Jesus Christ was the One Who kept the universe operating as it did. And Epaphras had taught the people about the Church of which all believers were a part. There wasn’t anything that Paul wrote about the Lord Jesus Christ that would have raised the slightest objection from Epaphras. Paul may have gone more into detail than Epaphras had, but it is significant that you don’t find one thread of evidence that Paul in his epistle was trying to correct a single thing that this

“faithful minister of Christ,” this “servant of Christ,” had taught them. Epaphras fully agree with Paul that you can’t preach the truth if you don’t preach Christ! His message was not Christ plus a lot of other things, but Christ, and Christ alone!

Paul knew not only that Epaphras really prayed for the saints at Colosse, but he knew what the burden of his heart for them was. You see in it 4:12. It was that they “might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” In other words, he was concerned about how they lived from day to day. He prayed that they might live the way God wanted them to live.

Now we considered that last Sunday morning the first command that Paul gave in this epistle. I hope you remember that Paul wrote. You will see it in 2:6: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Walk in fellowship with Christ Jesus the Lord. Learn trust in Him at all times and for all things. When the Colossians received the Jesus Christ as their Savior, they were also receiving Him as their Lord. God had saved them to make them like the Lord Jesus Christ, and that meant walking “in Him,” and in fellowship with Him to see to it that their lives were lived according to the will of God. As Paul told the believers at Corinth, God has called us into a life of fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

In Acts 9 where we have the account of the salvation of Saul of Tarsus (who became the Apostle Paul) we are told that he did this right after he was saved:

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).

And Paul’s epistles, as well as the record of his ministry in the book of Acts, tell us that he never changed. Wherever he went, he went to tell people, saved and unsaved, *about Christ!*

Now I have gone at length today to emphasize this because right after Paul told the Colossians to “walk in” Christ, “rooted and build up in Him,” that is, in Christ, he followed with a solemn warning: “Beware!”

We all recognize that word, “beware,” as a word of warning. Paul was pointing out a danger that was ahead of every believer in Rome. But not only in Rome, but believers everywhere face the same danger. It is the danger of being turned away from Christ, not perhaps altogether, but from believing and acting upon the total, absolute preeminence of Christ.

This is the reason I have asked the question in the subject of my message today, “Is Jesus Christ an adequate Savior?” By this I mean, Is Jesus Christ alone sufficient for our salvation, from start to finish, or do we need some other things in addition to Christ? What actually do we need in a Savior?

Let me state it as simply as I can. First, in a Savior we need One Who can make us acceptable to God. So often when people talk about salvation they fail to recognize that God is the One Who determines whether we are saved, or not. Salvation has to be on His terms, not ours. And so, secondly, we need a Savior Who can save us from the penalty we are under because of our sins. And, third, we need a Savior Who can change our lives and keep us so that we will not continue on in sinning.

Already there were teachers in Colosse who were teaching that Jesus Christ is not enough. In fact some were teaching that you couldn't be saved if you ate the wrong kind of food. Or if you did not observe certain religious holidays. There were some who taught that it is necessary to worship angels. One of the main ways Jewish teachers were saying that faith in Christ was not enough was by their requirement of circumcision. Today there are people who are teaching that salvation is by Christ and baptism, and then they argue about the mode. Some say that you can't be saved unless you belong to the right church.

Let me call your attention to a statement that the Apostle Paul made in his letter to the churches of Galatia. I am referring to Gal. 5:2:

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

By this he meant that if you believe that salvation is by Christ plus circumcision, then you are not really saved. Christ plus circumcision does not equal salvation.

A godly Bible teacher by the name of William Pettingill wrote a commentary on the book of Galatians to which he gave the title, “By Grace Through Faith Plus Nothing.”

Baptismal regeneration, that is Christ plus water baptism, is not the Gospel. Christ shares His glory with no church, no ordinance, no Law, even the Law of Moses. Church membership has its place. Baptism has its place. Obedience has its place. But Christ alone is the Savior. If you are truly saved, your life is going to be changed, but it is not going to be

changed unless Christ has saved you. Christ saves us by His work on the Cross, and He left nothing undone, nothing for you or me to add to what He did in order to make it complete.

But people naturally don't like this kind of teaching. They like to feel that there is something they can do to merit salvation. They might agree that they have some faults, but they don't like to think about it as sin. But we are all sinners, except for Jesus Christ. He is a Perfect Savior. He left nothing undone.

You know, the word "beware" in the Greek is an interesting word. It is actually the common Greek word for *to see* – βλέπω. It is used in verse 5 of this chapter where it is translated "beholding." But here in 2:8 the word "beware" is a good translation. It carries with it the idea of keeping your eyes open, being careful about what you hear, watch your step. Don't be deceived just because a person says some good things about Jesus; make sure that he says all that the Bible says about Jesus Christ.

We as Christians need to learn what the Bible teaches, and always keep those wonderful truths in our minds. That's why we need to read the Bible, and to study it carefully. Get your heart full of Christ so you will be able to detect that false teacher who would draw you away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek word for "spoil" means *to seduce*. And that means *to lead you astray*. There are countless numbers of people who will attend church today, and who call themselves Christians, who do not realize that their pastor or priest, if he talks about Jesus at all, never talks about the Lord Jesus Christ, and never gives Him the honor of being the One Who is the Total Savior.

What is the great enemy of the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? How are many good people being deceived even by religious leaders of our day? Paul calls it "philosophy," "the traditions of men," and "the rudiments of the world."

The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth:

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Listen to Paul's words in 1 Cor. 1:17-25:

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Cor. 1:17-25).

Paul said to beware lit. *of anyone*, man or woman, regardless of who they might be, who is "devoted to the pursuit of wisdom" (Robertson, IV, 490). But it is wisdom on a purely human level. In Scripture we have a divine revelation, that which has to be brought down by God because man by himself is incapable of rising to it. "Tradition of men" is that which is passed down from one generation to another, but never rises higher than the human level. The "rudiments of the world" are the most elementary teaching. We would say the a, b, c's of knowledge.

So whether you get human knowledge in the university classroom, or that which is common knowledge handed down from one generation to another, or the most basic truth, whatever truth there might be which does not give Christ the preeminence, it is all "vain deceit." "Not after Christ" means that all teaching is to be judged on the place that it gives to Christ.

II. THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Col. 2:9-10).

The contrast between verse 8 and verses 9 and 10 is one which is despised by the world, but it is the only safe ground upon which a true child of God can stand.

Here the Apostle Paul clearly states the true doctrine of the incarnate Christ. And here Paul was striking at the popular Gnosticism of the day, some of which denied the true humanity of Christ, and other which said that Jesus became Christ at His baptism, but ceased to be Christ on the Cross when He asked why God had forsaken Him.

Here in verse 9 Paul declared, not that certain aspects of Deity were in Christ, but all the fulness of the Godhead dwelled in Him while He was a Man upon the earth. And so if we are in Christ, we are all that we will ever need to be. We are clothed in His righteousness. Our acceptance with God is in Christ. And He is the Head of all principality and power, that is, there is no person, whether man or angel, nor any power which is not under His sovereign power and authority.

Concl: So as we come to this place in the epistle where we are exhorted to make the Lord Jesus Christ Whom we have received, and in Whom we are to walk, we need to ask, “What can the philosophies of man add to what we already have in Christ? What deficiency is there in the Scriptures which are made up by the traditions of men, or by the rudiments of the world?” We have to recognize that the world by its wisdom does not add anything, cannot add anything, to what we have in Christ. He is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God. See 1 Cor. 1:24. The wisdom of this world only draws us away from Christ. Therefore we need to “beware,” to be on our guard, to be so occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ and so in love with Him, that nothing will be able to turn us away, but instead, will make us realize how grateful we need to be to God that in His infinite grace He has revealed the truth concerning His Son so that we have taken refuge under the cleansing power of His precious blood that was shed for our sins.

So let us “beware” on the one hand, and “walk in Him,” learning of Him, trusting Him, and loving Him as the One Who is sufficient, totally adequate, for all that pertains to the eternal salvation of our souls.