

# COLOSSIANS: OVERCOMING SYNCRETISM THRU CHRIST

## Part III: The Church And Its Fulfillment In Christ

(Colossians 1:24-2:5)

### I. Introduction

- A. Recent research indicates that the average American adopts beliefs and practices from approximately nine distinct worldviews, what produces a jumble of often contradictory philosophies known as syncretism.
- B. The epistle to the Colossians handled a mixture of Jewish legalism, Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1690, "The Colossian Heresy"), so it applies to the syncretism we face.
- C. Colossians 1:24-2:5 presents Paul's revelation of the Church and its fulfillment in Christ for our insight:

### II. The Church And Its Fulfillment In Christ, Colossians 1:24-2:5.

- A. Having explained Christ's All-Sufficiency and All-Supremacy for the Church, Paul told how God had given him the ministry of revealing the Church itself that had not been revealed in the Old Testament, Col. 1:24-27:
  1. Paul rejoiced over the sufferings he experienced for his readers, for such sufferings were still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, Col. 1:24a. Paul did not here refer to Christ's sufferings on the cross, for those sufferings for our **salvation** were completed when Jesus said, "It is finished" and then died. (John 19:30) Rather, Paul referred to the believer's privilege of suffering in **service**, that one participates in those sufferings along with Christ Who suffers in His people according to His words to Paul outside Damascus when He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts 9:4 KJV; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 675)
  2. Where Paul had persecuted the Church, Christ's spiritual Body before his conversion, Paul was now in the receiving end of such persecution, suffering affliction **on behalf of** Christ's Church! (Colossians 1:24b)
  3. Of that Church, Paul had been made a minister according to the dispensation of God given to him to make known the "mystery," the previously unknown truth that had been hidden from the ages and generations of men but has now been made manifest to Christ's saints, Colossians 1:25-26; Ibid.
  4. That previously unknown truth full of the riches of God's glory was that Christ would indwell Gentile believers, the hope of their future glorification, Colossians 1:27. Thus, the Church, consisting of believing Hebrews and Gentiles, would be the unified Body of Messiah, a truth that was not revealed in the Old Testament, but is now revealed in the Church era, Ibid. Thus, the Church did not exist in the Old Testament like amillennial and posttribulational teachers assert, for Paul taught the dispensational view that the Church was begun on the Day of Pentecost! (cf. Matthew 16:18 with Acts 2:1-13, 47)
- B. Paul then stated that understanding Christ's All-Sufficiency and All-Supremacy provides believers in the Church discernment against being deceived by false teachers who promote religious syncretism, Col. 1:28-2:5:
  1. The apostle wrote that he and his ministry team [with the other apostles] preached Christ, warning and teaching every man in all wisdom that they might present to God every believer as spiritually mature in Christ, Colossians 1:28. This warning that aimed for the maturity of believers was meant to produce comfort, unity in love and the riches of full understanding regarding acknowledging the formerly unrevealed truths of God the Father and Christ, Colossians 1:1-2.
  2. This mature, full knowledge of Christ in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge would defend believers against the efforts of false teachers to deceive them with enticing words into falling for a syncretism of a mixture of false religious views, Colossians 1:3-4. Such knowledge would uphold the good order and firmness of the believers' faith in Christ in contrast to their exchanging a full reliance on Christ for a mixture of false beliefs of other religions, Colossians 1:5.

***Lesson:*** Paul testified that God had given him the ministry of making known the truth that was hidden in the Old Testament that even uncircumcised Gentile believers would be indwelt by and positionally enclosed with the Messiah along with believing Hebrews, the dispensational view of the Church. Paul added that he and his coworkers warned and taught every believer of the completeness they had in Christ that they might mature in being settled in the blessings they had in Christ and thus be immune to the deceptive efforts of false teachers who sought to make them adopt a mixture of false religious beliefs.

***Application:*** (1) May we realize that Christ's spiritual indwelling of even uncircumcised Gentile believers and His union of them with believing Hebrews in the Church was unknown in the Old Testament, but is now revealed, the dispensational view of Scripture. (2) May we then rest in Christ's All-Sufficiency and All-Supremacy to avoid falling into errant syncretism.