

**THE DANGER OF KNOWING JESUS CHRIST:
A DANGEROUS IDEA, INDEED! ©
COLOSSIANS 2:8-15
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All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves." ~ Blaise Pascal

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame (ESV).

I will be raising up, in a provocative way, why no other person, philosophy, or power other than Jesus Christ can fully satisfy your longings to make sense of this world and your relationship to it. He alone can fill the incompleteness you might be experiencing within. The reason why He can is that Jesus Christ is undiminished deity and perfect humanity united in One Person. Thus, no other substitute will do. In fact, all other substitutes will extract the best from you. But Jesus Christ is what we need the most and Colossians 2:8-15 will tell why, what we need to complete us, and even how He completes us. ¹

¹An Extended Abstract:

No one is immune to the power of ideas. Whereas some ideas are good, some are horrific. No matter how mature you are in the Christian faith, *any* idea can take us captive, extracting the best parts from us. But these false ideas do not merely come from false teachers who enter into our churches or become established in our communities. They also come into the privacy of our homes disguised as

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. It took place in the 1990s. I was a Dallas Seminary student working on my Th.M. It was a chilly windy night. I was leaving the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Dallas where I served as a concierge making my way home. But before I reached the comforts of home and family, I had already decided to make a little detour and God willing do some personal evangelism in one of my favorite coffee houses in an area I pass through each time I come and go from work, namely, Deep Ellum. Deep Ellum, at least in the 1990s, was an area where eclectic art, jazz, blues, and great restaurants were found. My

entertainment. Moreover, we ourselves, who are so frail and self-centered, can even create our own ideas or willfully enslave ourselves to ideas that we deem attractive with little or no concern of their lack of (1) logical strength, (2) empirical evidences, (3) workability, (4) existential relevance, or (5) ethical implications. Like Blaise Pascal, a 17th century thinker, once observed, *"People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive."*

But if we look to the historical person and work of Jesus Christ, who is 100% God and 100% Man, Undiminished Deity and Perfect Humanity, we will discover that He alone offers what no other figure, philosophy, religion, or worldview can do: the free gift of eternal life, absolute freedom from spiritual death, the complete forgiveness and payment of all our sins, and the ultimate defeat of all our spiritual enemies. He has our best interests at heart. Therefore, as captivating as certain ideas may be, no other substitute will do. Why? Jesus is God! He alone is able to complete (fulfill) us.

Since God is good, He stands to freely give what we need the most, namely, union with Himself. All we have to do is trust Him for salvation by believing that Jesus Christ is God, who died on the cross for our sins and who rose bodily from the dead. Consequently, "in Him" we have all the resources we truly need to be complete or fulfilled. The question then becomes will we live a life well lived by glorifying Him in moment-by-moment in the choices we make, the values, we embrace, and the pleasures we pursue with the resources God has given us?

But there is another reason why all other figures, philosophies, religions, or worldviews are inadequate to complete us: They flow from what is created and not from Him who is the Creator. Thus, any time we exchange God Himself for something He has created, we will find ourselves empty and incomplete. Any time we "absolutize," "follow," or "worship" what is created (e.g., philosophical worldview generated from a finite person) we pursue that which is inadequate to truly meet us where we are and take us where we need to be.

Only in Jesus Christ, who is God, do we find answers that will complete us in every way. Once again, no other substitute will do. Only Jesus can satisfy you. Only Jesus can give you the kind of life that you are looking for. Jesus has committed Himself to your true good; He has your best interests at heart.

Realizing that we can be taken captive by the power of ideas and those that represent them, we must be continually reminded, given all the images we see, the personalities we meet, and the voices that we hear, that all other persons, philosophies, and powers are inadequate. Why? Be Aware! But do not merely be aware, know the facts: Jesus Christ is Fully God and Fully Man! But do not merely know the facts-be fulfilled! Since Jesus Christ is God, only He can complete us.

- goal was two-fold: (1) share my Christian faith while (2) enjoying an outstanding cup of coffee.
- B. So, there I am at this coffee house listening to an amazing acoustic classical guitarist, praying for a divine opportunity when all of a sudden a 26 yr. slender hippy looking fella sits next to me. In his hands was C. S. Lewis' *God in the Dock*. I didn't hesitate. I immediately said, "I see you are reading C. S. Lewis." He immediately looked at me as if he knew me for years and said, "You know C. S. Lewis?" I said, "Bro, I love C. S. Lewis!"
 - C. That was all that was needed for a conversation to begin the lasted into the early hours of the morning. But the conversation involved a tragic story. He was looking for both answers and release from this type of anxiety that was striking the core of his being.
 - D. He shared with me how he was raised as a Christian in one of the most known and phenomenal Baptist churches in Dallas and how he came to saving faith. He attended a Christian academy associated with the church. After his high school graduation he attended Baylor University where he studied film. He graduated and has been a cinematographer for nature films. In fact, he was about to leave to do some filming in Nova Scotia.
 - E. Sadly, while attending Baylor University he abandoned the Christian faith for a worldview that was pantheistic.
 - F. In essence, he believed that the entire universe is God. But he also possessed strong affections for American transcendentalism that contends that physical nature is inherently good. He read repeatedly the writings of Emerson and Thoreau; he loved their works.
 - G. But he was facing a crisis... something I call a worldview fracturing. The worldview he left Christianity for wasn't squaring up with reality as it actually is.
 - H. As he unpacked the inherent problems he was having with his worldview you could see his pain and grief. He so desperately wanted his worldview to work.

1. We do that too, don't we? We want something so badly-but no matter how deep our desire is for it or how hard we work for it, it never seems to work out.
 2. Consequently, the experience can be painful.
- I. It was sometime after 3am when he finally asked me what I thought about his situation. Now, all he knows about me is that I love C. S. Lewis and that coffee is not an addiction but a passion. I looked him into his eyes and replied with a question, "So, it seems to me that what you are discovering is that your worldview is not working? If it doesn't work, then I wonder if it may not be true?" That was all he needed. He responded, "It doesn't work!" I said, "If something is true, then it will work!" All I did is help connect the dots with a fresh set of eyes.
 - J. His incoherent worldview came crashing down and we spent the remainder of the morning discussing an alternative worldview, and one that possesses logical strength, physical evidences, and deep relevance to our lives, namely, the Christian faith. After unpacking the explanatory power of the Christian faith, he re-dedicated himself to Jesus Christ.

⁸ **See to it [Be on your guard] that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.**

II. BE AWARE! COLOSSIANS 2:8:

- A. **Every one of you are at risk!** You are at risk at being taken captive by false philosophies, powerful ideas, and deceptive teachers. Like this young man experienced, no one is immune to being taken "*captive*," literally, being placed in chains as a trophy, a spoil, a reward of war.²
- B. In fact, false teachers were known back then as "men-stealers."³ Even though their ideas and belief systems may be hollow and deceptive, dependent upon human traditions with their pagan theories, and even have rules and regulations they might enforce on you, they can be attractive--no matter how (1) logically incoherent they may be, (2) the lack of evidences they have, or (3) the terrible ethics they might generate. I've seen it countless times (e.g., Marxism)!

² "Colossians" by Curtis Vaughan in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 11:197.

³ *Ibid.*, 198.

- C. They will attract you like a fish's lure disguised with the *ooh* and the *awe!* Then they hook you and proceed to pull you up into their particular boat. Thereafter, they take away your best parts and discard the rest.
- D. Ideas have consequences. While some ideas have good consequences, others have horrific consequences.
- E. Even if you are firmly rooted, born again, and have new life, be doctrinally sound, and ever so grateful, you can find yourself being dragged away by captivating ideas (Colossians 2:6-7).
1. Consider the church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:18-29. A false prophetess identified as Jezebel led many astray in this church.
 2. The Apostle Peter's words should never be ignored: 1 Peter 5:8
"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him..."
- F. Thus, immediately after Paul gives the exhortation to live in Christ in Colossians 2:6-7, he says *be aware!* Be on your guard! *What is one critical way to be on your guard?*
1. Seek to understand and be able to understand the ideas and belief systems around you! Hence, hence the desperate need to know apologetics and biblical worldview thinking!
 2. I like the way my wife Jill R. Shockley and Dr. Norman Geisler (both independently made the exact statement) frame the kind of action we need to take: *"We cannot properly beware of philosophy unless we be aware of philosophy."*⁴
 3. But these philosophical ideas or even false systems of thought do not have to come from a philosopher or a religious leader. They can also come from...
 - a. One who loves or hates you;
 - b. One who is well-meaning or malicious;
 - c. One who is popular or one who is marginalized;
 - d. One who is well educated or one who is ignorant;

⁴ Norman L. Geisler, "Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42:1 (March 1999): 18.

- e. One who is successful or who one who has nothing;
 - f. One who seems to have your best interest at heart or one who is quite manipulative and perhaps even malevolent.
 - g. Behind these ideas we have to remember that dark forces are at work. As creatively given to us by C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, never underestimate the counterfeit kingdom with all of their strategies, subtleties, and suggestions.
4. While young marrieds living in _____ Jill and I were members of an outstanding church. Potlucks! Great preaching! Emphasis on missional living! Even more potlucks. But it wasn't too long after Jill and I left town for Dallas Seminary that we heard about this lady who started attending this church we dearly loved. She appeared to be so mature in the things of God. She new her Bible, gave incredible advice to these young marrieds and young moms, and loved on those girls and their families... until she took those young wives away from their families to her private commune outside of Tyler, Texas. Leaving their husbands and kids behind, these ladies followed her. One husband told me it took him two years to reclaim his wife!
5. One of the most pervasive ways people are being taken captive by false ideas, belief systems, and captivating worldviews is not merely by false teachers who might enter into our churches and take up residence in our communities.
6. No, there are also powerful ideas entering into our homes disguised *in the form of entertainment*. As we sit there in our comfortable chairs and couches being entertained by images, words, and sounds, presented in attractive ways, are making their way into our minds and affections. But I am not the only one saying such things. Consider the following observations by people in the entertainment industry:
- a. "Film and visual entertainment are a pervasively important part of our culture, an extremely significant influence on the way our society operates. People in the film industry don't want to accept the responsibility that they had a hand in the way the world is loused up. But, for better or worse, the influence of the church, which used to be all-powerful, has been usurped by film. Film and television tells us the way we conduct our lives, what is right and wrong."⁵ ~ George Lucas

⁵ George Lucas, quoted by Aljean Harmetz in "U.S.C. Breaks Ground for a Film-TV School," *New York Times*, Nov. 1981, C16.

- b. "Movies are powerful. Good or bad, they tinker around inside your brain. They steal up on you in the darkness of the cinema to form or conform social attitudes... In short, cinema is propaganda."⁶ ~ David Putnam, Producer of *Chariots of Fire* & *The Mission*.
 - c. "...the film industry can capture an idea and make it glamorous and gorgeous so that the audience isn't even aware that they're embracing something they never would have embraced before."~ Actor Tom Hanks.⁷
7. Be sober! Be vigilant. Have a discerning biblical worldview. Recognize these captivating ideas when they come! Beware and be aware of what these ideas are. For indeed some tinker around inside your brain, changing you in ways in which you might later regret. Interestingly, the poet Allen Ginsberg once stated, "**Whoever controls the media, the images, controls the culture.**"⁸
- F. But entertainment might not be the greatest factor in enslaving you or me. You can be your own worst enemy! We are so prone to deceiving ourselves, flirting with things yet thinking we have it all together both intellectually and spiritually. But as the trappings, affections, and disillusionment make their way into your life, eventually we willfully place ourselves in prisoner chains-even if that belief system is foreign to reality as it is and more inclined to our imagination. The prideful, stubborn attitude of the heart coupled with a vivid imagination can leave a wake of destruction in the path it creates.
 - G. Verse 8 is not opposed to philosophy, in general. Technically, philosophy is the love of wisdom. Who doesn't want to be wise? I've very much have benefited from learning philosophy.
 - H. Paul, for example, even used Stoic and Epicurean philosophy in reaching the Athenians where they were in an effort to take them where they needed to be.
 - I. No, Paul's warning in verse 8 not against philosophy, but being taken captive to any philosophy, idea, or belief system that diminishes Jesus Christ: His person, His work.

⁶ *Movieguide*, Nov. 1990, 13.

⁷ *New Dimensions* (June 1992), 13.

⁸ "If you can write a nation's stories, you needn't worry about who makes its laws." ~ Dr. George Gerbner

- J. In fact, consider the last phrase in verse 8: "***not according to Christ.***" Here Paul measures all philosophies to the revelation of God in Christ Jesus.⁹
- K. *But why evaluate philosophical ideas to Jesus Christ? What is so significant about Him?* Simply put, Jesus is God. When we say Jesus is the Son of God we mean He is in the order of God.
- L. This leads me to my second major point:

Be Aware! But don't merely be aware, be factual: know the facts: Jesus Christ is Fully God. Colossians 2:9-10.

- M. Consider Paul's statement in Verse 9 states, ". 9 ***For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,***
1. Notice this phrase "in Christ." In the Greek the phrase, "in Christ" is emphatic asserting ***that in Christ alone*** the fullness of deity dwells.¹⁰
 2. Combined with the word "***dwells***" in present tense Paul is stating that in Jesus Christ alone the fullness of deity ***permanently dwells.***¹¹
 3. This correlates with John 14:8-9 in the Upper Room Discourse when ⁸ ***Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."*** ⁹ ***Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"***
 4. When some of our members were touring with us in Israel, several of them joined me to hear from a rabbi friend of mine in the Jewish quarter about some common misconceptions of the Christian faith. But in his talk to us, he said that there is not one passage in the New Testament that affirms Jesus Christ as God. "Prophet, yes! God, no!" But here in this passage we see otherwise!
 5. Observe that the word "fullness" is combined with the word "deity." These words together are emphasizing the very essence of God, not mere "qualities" or "characteristics."¹² One Greek scholar put it this way in his analysis of these words: ***For in him the whole fullness of***

⁹ "Colossians," 11:198.

¹⁰ Ibid.,11:199.

¹¹ Idem.

¹² Idem.

deity dwells: "the whole glorious total of what God is, the supreme Nature in its infinite entirety."¹³

6. But notice this last word in verse: ***For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily***,
 1. The fullness of deity dwells in Christ in bodily form. Just like the Apostle John stated in the first chapter of the Gospel of John: "*the Word was God*" (John 1:9); "*the Word became flesh*" (John 1:14).¹⁴ At the incarnation Jesus added, He applied, perfect humanity to His undiminished deity.

Be Aware! But don't merely be aware, know the facts: Jesus Christ is Fully God ***and*** Fully Man!

- N. *Why* does Paul express the fact that Jesus is fully and equally God and perfect man united in One Person? It seems someone came to Colosse, this city in Asia Minor, teaching a set of ideas that will later become full bloom Gnosticism.
- O. In fact, Gnosticism became a powerful alternative to both Christianity and Paganism in the second century. But for Paul and Epaphras, they were already encountering this unique concoction, one that actually claimed to be Christian, but in all actuality, it "dabbled in the occult."¹⁵ But at this point in the historical development of Gnosticism five seminal elements were already been expressed in Asia Minor. They were attractive:¹⁶
 1. An infusion of Jewish thought and practice with its high demands on circumcision, rituals, and observance of holy days. But it wasn't mere Pharisaic Judaism; it was something more severe.
 2. An infusion of paganism that combined oriental myths and Greek philosophy into a worldview that claimed that God Himself and physical matter were enemies.
 - a. In fact, God did not create this world. Instead, the Devil made the earth and all of its elements.

¹³ Idem. Cf. Handly C. G. Moule, *Colossian Studies* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1898), 144.

¹⁴ Ibid., 11:199.

¹⁵ Ibid., 166.

¹⁶ I am indebted to Curtis Vaughan's treatment of Gnosticism. See pages 166-68 of "Colossians" in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

- b. But what God do is he generated offshoots of Himself, a successive series of emanations (e.g., like a plant). Even though they were less and less divine with each offshoot, one following another, they were all to be worshiped.
 - c. These offshoots were equated with angels and they were all to be worshipped.
 3. Since they believed that physical matter was evil since the devil created it (enemy with God), the false teachers could not accept the fact that Jesus added actual humanity to His deity.
 - a. Consequently, there was a denial of the actual perfect humanity of Jesus Christ.
 - b. At best, Jesus only seemed human, perhaps disguising himself like an actor, as he sought to insert himself into the drama of human history.¹⁷
 - c. Stated differently, Jesus is reduced to an offshoot of God, a being that is less than what He actually is.
 4. Not only did they deny the actual humanity of Jesus Christ, but they also believed since they themselves possess physical matter they needed to inflict punishment on their physical bodies. Others believed that since the body no longer matters, they are able live very licentiously, giving themselves into all sorts of dark impulses. In either case, only "the soul is important."¹⁸
 5. Lastly, they prized this certain "secret higher knowledge" or type of enlightenment that would be required in order to transcend all that is physical so that one might possibly achieve both spiritual salvation and resurrection. Thus, salvation is obtained through knowledge but not through faith. But this knowledge was not mere acquisition of information in the frontal lobe. No, this type of knowledge involved mystical experiences involving magic and astrology.¹⁹

¹⁷ "Colossians" by Curtis Vaughan cf. Ralph P. Martin, *The Church's Lord and the Christian's Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11:167.

¹⁹ *Idem.*

- P. Epraphas was so very concerned about this heresy that he traveled all the way from Colosse to Rome (distance of 1,200 miles each way) to discuss this problem with Apostle Paul.

Why was this heresy so troubling to the extent that Paul felt the need to write a letter to the church at Colosse with this word of warning?

- Q. I will tell you way: Adapting some words from Bible scholar Curtis Vaughan, this Colossian heresy "wore the mask of Christianity."²⁰

1. While this emerging type of Gnosticism did not deny Christ, it did dethroned Christ.²¹
2. Since Christ was considered to be an offshoot of God, He was to be worshipped, but His incarnation, which we celebrate at Christmas, was denied.
3. Jesus Christ as fully and equally God was denied. In sum, His deity was diminished, reduced down.
4. Jesus had a place in this worldview, but not the place of supremacy. But this stands in direct opposition to not only to the claims of Scripture but to actual history for Jesus came to earth added perfect humanity to His undiminished deity.

- R. But let's think about it another way. For sake of argument, borrowing from Josh McDowell, if God became a man, what expectations would we have? What expectations would we have if God became a man:

1. Have an utterly unique entrance into humanity history.
2. Be without evil and sin.
3. Use supernatural powers to do great and noble deeds.
4. Speak the greatest words ever spoken.
5. Have an enduring and universal influence
6. Satisfy the incompleteness within.
7. Overcome our most pervasive and feared enemy, namely, physical death.

²⁰ Ibid., 11:168.

²¹ Idem.

8. Remove sin and vanquish evil itself. Jesus Christ took care of the sin problem at his first coming whereby it is no longer a sin question but a Son question, but at His second coming the vanquish of evil begins and will culminate with the new heavens and new earth.

Be Aware! But don't merely be aware, know the facts: Jesus Christ is Fully God and Fully Man! But don't merely know the facts, be fulfilled. Since Jesus Christ is God, only He can complete you.

III. THE INHERENT LONGING FOR ULTIMATE INTELLIGIBILITY:

- A. One of the greatest desires or deepest longings we inherently possess is the need to understand. We inherently possess, I contend, a hunger for ultimate intelligibility whereby we can put everything we observe together that makes sense of the world and our relationship to it. We long to know that what we believe in is actually true and will comfort us no matter how fierce our troubles become. We want something that we can believe in that will also give meaning to our lives, especially in view of the ups and downs of this vaporous, vaporous life where everything we know and love can be snatched from us.
- B. To know that something is actually true can be so comforting. That young man so wanted this captivating concoction of pantheism and American Transcendentalism to not only provide a coherent set of answers to the ultimate questions of life (e.g., why are we here?), but also be able to be lived out in the daily grind of life, and experience the peace, the completeness that he hoped would come from such a worldview.
- C. When we come to discover that what we believe is not actually true, it can cause us to spiral downward into confusion, experimentation, pain, depression, and even despondency. On the other hand, when we take that crisis on and **NOT** give into the pitfalls of skepticism, relativism, or worse, apathy, we can discover that there are answers that can truly satisfy the intellect, the heart, and emotions in the most dynamic and refreshing ways: liberation is possible!
- D. I submit to you that you should consider Jesus Christ for the completion that you are looking for.

1. In verse 10 the brilliant apostle Paul, who is familiar with philosophy of his day, gives an answer to those perennial questions. He states that for the believer, **"and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."**
2. Because Jesus Christ is the God-Man, Undiminished Deity and perfect humanity united in One Person, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He is the Son of God, who died on the cross for our sins and rose again, we are made complete or "made full." In other words, because of our union we are share in His fullness. Once again, that phrase, "in Christ," is quite emphatic.
3. I love the way John Calvin puts it:

"Ye are made full does not mean that the perfection of Christ is transfused into us, but that there are in him resources from which we may be filled, that nothing be wanting in us."²²
4. Curtis Vaughan states it powerfully: *"Possessing Him, we possess all."*
5. Therefore, there is no philosophy, person, or power under heaven that matter will complete you. All you need is Jesus Christ.
6. Why? Consider the rest of verse 10: **"who is the head of all principality and power."** In sum, He is the source of and authority over all of life. Every other philosophy is rooted in human tradition thus less adequate to complete you.
7. In her outstanding work, *Finding Truth*, Professor Nancy Pearcey observes:

"The Bible teaches that humans are made in the image of God. When a worldview exchanges the Creator for something in creation, it will also exchange a high view of human made in God's image for a lower view of human made in the image of something in creation."²³

See, all other worldviews lead to a low view of human life because they absolutize a part of creation.²⁴

²² Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians," 199.

²³ Nancy Pearcey, *Finding Truth*, 44.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

"Instead Christianity offers a high view of the human person, created in the image of a transcendent Person. It affirms all the features that make us fully human."²⁵

IV. 7 WAYS IN WHICH CHRIST COMPLETES US: COLOSSIANS 2:11-15
No Other Substitutes Can Do These Things

- A. Since Christ is God, the Author of Creation, we have a good reason to consider how Christ may complete us. What we discover in verses 11-15 that there are *seven* ways in which we are complete in Christ.²⁶
1. Because of your union with Christ, the power of the sin nature is broken.
 - a. The word "putting off" in verse 11 is a double compound meaning a stripping off and a casting away of our sin nature, our whole carnal nature, or "accumulation of corruptions."²⁷
 - b. No longer are you required to follow the dictatorship of your "lower nature."
 - c. You are free from its commands to pursue a higher life. A life that reflects God's glory, His beauty is one that will bring about your best interests.
 - d. In fact, your heart, that is, your inward being, has been circumcised by Christ. The tense of the verb "were...circumcised" points to the specific moment of conversion.²⁸
 2. Not only has the domination of your sinful nature been broken, but you have been brought to new life. Your former way of life was buried with Christ (vs. 12).

²⁵ Idem.

²⁶ I am indebted to Dr. Tom Constable's "Expository Notes on Colossians." Retrieved on 8 & 9 April 2016. <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Colossians/Colossians.htm>. He offers a superb summary of verses 11-15.

²⁷ Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians," 200.

²⁸ Idem.

3. Not only has your former way of life was buried with Christ, thus coming to its end, but you have been raised with Christ by the same power that raised Christ from the dead. In other words, you have been raised out of spiritual death (vs. 12a)
4. Not only have you been raised from out of spiritual death, but you have received new life (2:13a). The old you is dead and now you are alive, like never before!
5. Not only are you are alive like never before, but verse 13b states that all of your sins have been forgiven. Everything that once alienated you from God has been removed.
6. Not only have you been forgiven for everything, but all your indebtedness to the claims of the Mosaic law has been cancelled out. Your debt to God has been fully paid. In fact, "He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross! In fact, the manner in which Christ took it way emphasizes permanent results. In other words, The Mosaic Law has been removed permanently (vs. 14b).²⁹
7. Lastly, Christ secured our victory over Satan and His counterfeit Kingdom. These evil forces thought that that the crucifixion would be their victory. Instead, Christ conquered His enemies and ours. And now they are his captives! They are now His spoils of war! Jesus Christ Won!

B. SUMMARY OF THE BELIEVER'S COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST IN 2:11-15³⁰
Since Jesus Christ is Fully God & Fully Man He alone is able to fulfill you! He accomplished these things for you! All you have to do is receive Jesus Christ by placing your trust in Him for salvation.

1. In Christ, your sin nature is broken. (2:11)
2. In Christ, your old manner of life is dead. (2:12a)
3. In Christ, you have been raised from the dead (2:12b)
4. In Christ, you have new life. (2:13a)
5. In Christ, all your sins have been forgiven. (2:13b)
6. In Christ, your debt to God is paid. (2:14)
7. In Christ, your spiritual enemies are conquered. (2:15)

²⁹ Ibid., 201.

³⁰ Adapted from Dr. Tom Constable's "Expository Notes on Colossians." Retrieved on 8-9 April 2016.

- C. What other person, power, or principle can do that?! You not only have a new nature, but you also have a new purpose, you have meaning, you have identity, you have freedom! No other philosophy, figure, principle, or power can compare!
- D. Or consider the words of Dr. Ravi Zacharias: "In the Christian message alone, love precedes life; in every other worldview, life precedes love. Therefore, in the Christian framework, love has a point of reference: God Himself."³¹

Be Aware! But don't merely be aware, know the facts: Jesus Christ is Fully God and Fully Man! But don't merely know the facts, be fulfilled. Since Jesus Christ is God, only He can complete you.

V. A TESTIMONY:

- A. It was a windy October evening underneath the pinewood trees in Nacogdoches, Texas. I had just finished teaching on Plato's view of virtue and was making my way to my vehicle when I heard a student yell out to me, "Doc Shock! Doc Shock!" I turned around and there was one of my favorite students. He was a senior student who recently changed his major from horticulture to philosophy. He said, "May I ask a personal question?" I replied, "Certainly." Borrowing from my lecture on Plato he asked, "How is it that you have a well-ordered soul?" I replied, "I said you might be surprised by my answer since I am a philosopher." Anxiously waiting for the answer, I looked him into his eyes and with an earnest smile I said, "Jesus Christ." I then asked if his truck was still in the shop. He said, Yes." "How about I take you home so you don't have to walk and I will explain why I say Jesus Christ."
- B. There in the car I shared my testimony about how I was raised as a non-believer and how my life changed after I started reading the Bible at the age of fifteen. Then when a fella shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with me I thought he was crazy. But I continued to read the Bible. Then I discovered while reading the Book of Romans that my friend was right. I then placed my faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He is the Son of God, who died on the cross for my sins and rose bodily from the dead. As a result, Jesus Christ filled the void within. I didn't even realize how empty I was until I came to saving faith. I lacked purpose, vision, meaning, and significance until I met Christ as my Savior; I had no idea how lost I was.

³¹ Ravi Zacharas, Facebook Posting (11 April 2016).

- C. He left my car. He went into his house. He picked up a dusty Bible and proceeded to read the Scriptures all night long. I asked a young man I was mentoring in apologetics to befriend him. He was such a blessing to this senior student answering questions and discussing the Christian faith.
- D. Then a few weeks later we three were having breakfast together. I asked him where he was in his spiritual journey. "When we first met over coffee you said you were interested in Zen Buddhism and that you were finding some luck there. But where are you now? Are you ready to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior?" His response was simple and quite decisive, "I do not merely want to come to Him; I flee to Him."

Be Aware! But don't merely be aware, know the facts. But don't merely be factual be-fulfilled. Since Jesus is fully God and fully Man, only He can complete you!

VI. CONCLUSION:

- A. Why is knowing Jesus Christ dangerous? Jesus Christ is dangerous because no other philosophy, person, or power can fully complete you. But He alone can! Jesus Christ stands to offer you infinite and perfect love, undeserved favor regardless of your propensities, past, or mistakes, and give you a certain inexpressible joy and peace that will last for all eternity. All other sources are finite, frail, or even non-existent- no matter how differently we wish them to be. But you can readily claim those seven benefits and more by receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior in the open arms of faith at this very moment. Receive Jesus Christ! Place your trust in Him right now for salvation, believing that He is the Son of God, who died on the cross for your sins and rose bodily from the dead.
- B. Once you understand the (1) logical coherence of Christ's teachings, (2) the actual historical and verifiable evidences for Christ, including His existence, miracles, his death, burial, and bodily resurrection, (3) the literal fulfillment of prophecies from the Hebrew Bible about the coming of Christ, (4) His relevance to your personal identity, (5) the worthwhileness of following Christ, (6) the actual workability of Christ's teachings, and (7) the ethical duties, virtues, and consequences that come from Him, you come away with greater reasons to believe in Him than any other philosophy, figure, or power. Moreover, when you accept His personal invitation of salvation given to you, He will come into your life and complete you like no other can. In fact, no matter how hard you try, no other substitute will ever do!