

### Paul Warns Against World Views

#### Colossians 2:8-10

Colossians 2:8-10 - *“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; <sup>10</sup> and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”*

#### Background Notes

The great theme of Colossians is the supremacy and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. This great theme emerges because Paul wrote this letter to the Colossian believers to warn them of false teaching that was circulating in their area.

This false teaching was a mixture of Judaism and what later became known as Gnosticism. The chief error was that the Person and work of Jesus Christ was lowered: Jesus Christ was not fully God, He was not supreme, and He was not all-sufficient. The apostle Paul soundly refuted that false teaching throughout the book of Colossians. Certainly in Colossians 2:8-10 it is refuted - in no uncertain terms!

#### Doctrinal Points

##### 1. Christ is supreme and all-sufficient.

Verses 9: *“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”* You couldn't say it any more clearly and plainly: **Jesus Christ is supreme and all-sufficient!** You couldn't say “Jesus Christ is fully God” in a more complete and concise way than the way it's said in verse 9. The New World Translation of the Jehovah Witnesses incorrectly says “all the divine qualities” dwell in Him. **No!** In Jesus Christ, **all the fullness of the Godhead** dwells in bodily form!

*“...who is the head of all principality and power” (v10).* You couldn't state the supremacy of Christ more clearly than that! As the Lord said in Matthew 28:18, *“All authority is given unto me, in heaven and on earth.”*

*“...and you are complete in Him...” (v10).* Here we see the all-sufficiency of Christ. Not only are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ (v3), but in Him we are complete! Jesus Christ is sufficient for our every need. All that your soul could ever possibly want for happiness, peace, joy, satisfaction, rest, challenge, motivation, strength, or for whatever else you want or need, all is found in Christ. He is **all-sufficient!** You don't have to add material possessions, you don't have to add this world's experiences of pleasure, you don't have to add eastern meditation - and

you don't even have to add Chicago Blackhawks victories! All that you ever need or want is found in Christ. Christ is supreme and all-sufficient.

## 2. Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false.

Verse 8: *"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."* Don't be taken in, don't be cheated, and don't be taken captive by philosophy that is not Christ-centered! Paul was not tearing down the study of philosophy here - he was refuting philosophy or worldviews that are not Christ-centered.

Philosophy is defined as "love of wisdom." A working definition of philosophy is "how you put it all together," or your "worldview." Everyone has a philosophy of life even, whether or not they studied philosophy in college. A person's worldview or set of presuppositions is like a grid in the person's mind. All data that comes to them is automatically filtered through that grid, or that personal set of presuppositions, and all that data is interpreted on the basis of that individual's grid.

For example: did you ever hear the story of the man who thought he was dead? He told people that he was dead, even though they told him that he wasn't dead, because he was walking around alive. Finally, he went to a doctor who convinced him that dead people don't bleed. Then the doctor picked up a pin and pricked the man's finger. He started bleeding, proving that he was alive, but his response was, "I'll be - dead people do bleed after all!" That man's worldview, or philosophy, or set of presuppositions included the idea that he was dead, therefore all incoming data was interpreted - incorrectly! - with that basic presupposition.

Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false. Verse 8 gives four reasons why worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false: because they are empty, because they are manmade, because they are deceptive, and because they are basic.

a. *"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit."* Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false because they are **empty**. They're futile. Take humanism, for example – that "ism" says that "man is the measure." Humanism is not Christ-centered – in fact, God is left out completely. God is now optional, even in the Girl Scouts pledge; you can leave God in or take God out.

That's the result of humanism. Ultimately it's empty. If we all started from nothing and we are going nowhere, what difference does it make what we do with our lives in between? Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false because they are empty, and ultimately they are futile.

b. Secondly, they are **deceptive**. That's the reason why so many translations have the word "captive" here. It's the idea of being taken captive by deception. Take New Age philosophy, for example. That's very deceptive because it does admit the supernatural. It does admit there is a spirit world. It doesn't deny the spiritual side, but it denies the truths of the Bible and the God of the Bible. It denies the truth of sin, and the truth that salvation is only through Christ. Many people are sucked into that worldview today.

c. Thirdly, worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false because they are **manmade**: "*according to the tradition of men.*" For example, take the theory of evolution as a worldview. Evolution is not based on evidence from the fossil record, and it's not based on proof from the laboratory. Evolution says that the lower and less complex life form goes - by itself - to the higher, more complex life form - through time and chance.

The theory of evolution is not based on evidence - but if you want to leave God and Christ out of your worldview, you've got to come up with something to account for everything that exists in this world. Thus you have the theory of evolution. It's not based on evidence – it was formulated as an alternative to a Creator.

d. Fourthly, we see that a worldview that is not Christ-centered is false because it's too **basic**. Notice verse 8 once again, "*according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*" Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are too small because they fall short of explaining everything. They're too basic.

Naturalism, for example, does explain some things. It explains the laws of nature and so forth – but it can't explain miracles. It's too basic. Only the biblical Christ-centered worldview ties up all the loose ends and explains everything. It explains stars, angels, man, salvation, eternity, everything. Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are too basic.

Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false because they are **empty**, because they are **deceptive**, because they are **manmade**, and because they are too **basic**.

## **Practical Application**

### **Don't be kidnapped by philosophies that are not Christ-centered!**

"Kidnapped" is really the idea of being "taken captive" or "cheated" or "spoiled." You're carried off as a captive. I want to make this application particularly for college-age young people, but of course it can apply to everyone.

Think of a jigsaw puzzle. The puzzle represents truth. Each piece in the jigsaw puzzle represents a piece of truth, and they all fit together into the puzzle frame. When you do a jigsaw puzzle, what do you do first? You do the edges, because everything else will then fit into that framework. In this illustration, the framework represents the Christ-centered biblical worldview. All "pieces" of truth fit properly into that framework or worldview. Maybe there's something that stands

out (like a white house or red barn) in your puzzle, and you put that together first. Then you look around for where that house or barn fits into the framework, and you put it into place properly. And all the other pieces fit together properly as well.

To carry this illustration to the college campus, here's what happens. Say a Christian young person goes off to college or university, and there they meet Dr. Mathematics or Dr. Science. That professor really has it all together in his/her area of specialty – for example, calculus or differential equations. The young Christian is wowed by this professor, and may conclude that the professor has it “all together” in every area of knowledge, and has a correct worldview. However, unless that professor is a Christian, he or she does not have a biblical worldview - or a proper “puzzle framework.” And because professors invariably philosophize in class, they begin to fit their area of knowledge (represented by the white house or the red barn) into their framework – but because they have don't have the proper framework, they have to force the pieces to fit. They do what's known as “piece pounding” - forcing the pieces to try to make them fit! But gaps and holes are always left in their puzzle, because they just can't fit all the pieces in properly. Their worldview just doesn't all fit together.

Yet that Christian young person may be deceived - “kidnapped” - into following a worldview that's not Christ-centered, because the student thinks that if Dr. Mathematics or Dr. Science has it all together in his area, then he must also have the framework right as well. But that's the wrong conclusion. If a person doesn't have a Christ-centered worldview, they have the wrong framework.

Be careful! Let's not be kidnapped by philosophies that are not Christ-centered!