

Chapter 7: Not to be Cheated by Paganism and Gnosticism.



Gist: Start with the Word and keep to the word as we delve a little through the quagmire of modern theology. Here is the good start and where we are ultimately headed in ultimate integration –

"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." Colossians 2:6-9

Dr. Peter Smith is a welcome sound for conservative Bible Christians out of the quagmire of theology. It is a surprise that this person can graduate from both Princeton and Harvard with good sound doctrinal Bible beliefs, youthful Bible friends have not made it through theology that well. Here is his warning however on where theology and Bible studies are headed--

We are in the presence of a powerful pagan/Gnostic theological agenda, claiming to be spanking new, objective and scientific, but as old as the hills. It is my belief that this trend in biblical studies is part of the setting in place of a pagan reconstruction of human culture for the planetary era.

And at the end of his paper/blog/message on The Paganization of Biblical Studies, he quotes another theologian that agrees with him on where the trend in theology and biblical studies is headed, and it is frightening:

"...Gnosis in one form or another is expected to become the main expression of secular religion in the new millennium. In order to equip the Church for this new age, the scientific study of Gnosticism is vital."

{ Johannes van Oort, Professor of church history and the history of dogma at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands, and world expert on Manichean Gnosticism }

Leaders in this new emphasis in theology and Bible study come from in great part the falsely called Jesus Seminar which while among us in many Universities like TCU meet once a year to vote on whether Jesus claimed or not to be the Son of God. However, this

chapter insert, chapter 7 on Colossians and Ephesians and the Holy Spirit was added with the cultural shock of those involved in the capture of the hearts and minds of the millennials with extremely large crowds at PASSION CONFERENCES.

NOTE: The greatest Bible arguments against these so called Christian leaders is: (1) they are in it for the money, (2) popularity is these days of the falling away is a no-no; and (3) any leader that promotes an optimistic future for youth or anybody contrary of God's clear statements that these are the pessimistic and realistic times of the great apostasy called the falling away, they are like all the prophets, priests, and people of Jeremiah touting "Peace, peace, peace" for the future when God has said that there will not be peace, and it is a reminder of what Paul said, "If in this life only we have peace, we are of all men most miserable." Plain and simple, it is not good Bible like Swaggart and these Passion people, by the way almost all Pentecostal and tending to special revelations from themselves, also condemned in Jeremiah.

How do we intend to avoid the quagmire of modern theology, for much better youthful Christians than us have started at well and been sucked into because of their natural seeking of academic excellence and because of the pressures of churches for their leaders to be PhD's of Th.Ds.? Three ways: (1) a member of Dr. Peter's group known as "Christian Witness to a Pagan Planet" in a book especially for youth has a chart shown below that illustrates putting on the whole armor of God, which by the way which come in these last chapters of One Commentary on Ephesians, with a comparison of some of the major beliefs of modern paganism' (2) Keeping myself and yourself safe from such beliefs out of the pit of hell, the word of God from both Colossians and Ephesians is presented, a work done long ago in a book on the Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul; and (3) as John MacArthur has scared the pants off of us with his messages on how these so called leaders are blaspheming the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will be studied in all the times it is mentioned in both Colossians and Ephesians.

EACH PIECE	CHRISTIAN PARADIGM	GLOBAL PARADIGM
<i>Put on:</i>	<i>Know and affirm:</i>	<i>Recognize and resist:</i>
Belt of TRUTH	His sovereignty, love, wisdom, and holiness. (Deut. 4:39; Ps. 18:1-3)	Pantheistic, monistic, polytheistic gods and goddesses.
Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS	Jesus Christ and His blood, which cleanses us from sin. The cross which frees us from bondage to selfish nature.	The natural goodness, connectedness, and sacredness of all life.
Sandals of PEACE	Our peace through our union and ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ.	Peace through occult practices and union with a cosmic force or nature spirits.
Shield of FAITH	Our continual trust in God, His Word, and His promises.	Trust in Self, inner wisdom, dreams, visions, gods, goddess, cosmic force, coincidences, etc.
Helmet of SALVATION	God's promises of daily and eternal salvation in Jesus Christ.	Evolving spiritually by growing in consciousness staying tuned to the cosmic mind.
Sword of the Spirit His WORD	The power of God's Word to counter deception and triumph over spiritual foes.	The power of thoughts, words and affirmations to change reality and direct spiritual forces.

However, in this book on Ultimate Integration, the overwhelming desire is to pick up the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, the Bible and hurl it at these goliaths of paganism, hopefully in a way that some of them may accept. Even as in the last century with the bitter experiences of the falling away evidence in two diverse churches, came the conviction the FALLING AWAY IS NOW, so with good friends like Shirley McMichael, a professed pagan, and John Quinn, a professed sceptic turning to a form of paganism in entropy and the Gospel of Thomas, and of course the MTD with which this book started, the conviction has come that Dr. Peter's is right, the Jesus Seminary and others of modern theology and a new Biblical study are leading us over the cliff with paganism, a form of Gnosticism.

7-1: Colossians and Ephesians.

You have no doubt noticed the similarities between the epistle of Ephesians and the epistle to the Colossians. It is almost as if Paul had the same outline or parchment for both and did a rewrite to address any special problems that he both remembered from his ministry there and the words about the churches that came to him from messengers, especially from his own sons in the faith like Timothy and Titus.

We do know from the history of the development of the New Testament Canon of 27 books that when church councils met to decide on which books would be in the list for the Canon, one of the most decisive criteria was how generally accepted were all the epistles and books for the Canon in practice among the churches. In other words, the councils only put a stamp of approval on what was widely circulated and accepted in the early churches, which immediately tells us of a practice whereby the church at Laodicea would also share the epistle to the Colossians, etc. We see the beginnings of this in Colossians 4:16.

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” (Colossians 4:16)

Since we do not have in our Canon an “epistle to the Laodiceans”, and since the ministry of Paul to Ephesus was really a ministry to all of Asia Minor--“And this continued for two years **{the ministry at Ephesus}**, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”--is it then possible that Colosse like Galatia was a region and one of the specific churches of the region was the church at Laodicea. We certainly know that as near the end of the first century as persecution of Christians increased, and as the Apostle John--which tradition has as the pastor of the church at Ephesus--wrote from exile on the isle of Patmos, just off the coast of Asia Minor and Ephesus, that both Ephesus and Laodicea were two of the seven churches of Asia Minor to be specifically addressed in the book of Revelation.

“What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to (1) Ephesus, (2) to Smyrna, (3) to Pergamos, (4) to Thyatira, (5) to Sardis, (6) to Philadelphia, and (7) to Laodicea.” (Revelation 1:11)

We also know for the context of Revelation 1 that the Ascended Christ, “the Son of Man”, chose for John to write to these seven churches, perhaps not only because of the unique problems of unsound doctrine and practices in each church as presented in Revelation 2 and 3, but also because that these seven churches, seven is always a number of completion in Scripture, were typical of the problems in all the churches of Asia. While we know of the specific problem in the church of Laodicea during the life of the Apostle John was Luke warmness--“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3:16), we do not either how seriously the church at Laodicea took the epistle of Colossians when Paul wrote it, if indeed Colossians was written to them; nor how seriously they took the message from Christ through John to be “zealous and repent” (Rev 3:19). We are encouraged by the oft mentioning in early church history of a Bishop at Gaul **{France}** who came out of the church of the Laodiceans. **{By the way, we also have encouraging words of faithfulness from Bishops in Antioch, Smyrna, and Alexandria. We are discouraged by the developments in the church at Rome whereby, under the decree of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the bishop of the church at Rome was declared in 313 A.D. to be a head bishop of all bishop, a “Pope”. We are also discouraged that secular government had such control over early church affairs, although we might be encouraged that this Emperor made Christianity the official religion of the state, mostly for unity in the Empire reasons, which stopped the persecution of Christians according to Fox “Book of Martyrs”. We find that persecutions of Christians and churches the first three centuries were by the government of the Roman Empire, and encouraged by Jews throughout the Empire, the persecutions then well after 313 AD came more from Rome and the Roman Catholic Church as they attempted to force a conformity and orthodoxy on churches throughout the Empire that was based on unsound doctrine, practices, and extra-biblical revelations based on an authority of the Pope and his officials who took to themselves an authority of writing Scriptures that were the Word of God; and in some cases, making orthodox only these interpretations of Scripture from Rome.}**

7-2: Some Background on the Asia of New Testament Times.

The only mention in Scripture of the word "Colosse" is in Colossians 1:2 where Paul addresses "the saints and brethren at Colosse", obviously not addressing a specific church in the city of Colosse. Young's Concordance provides this definition of "Colosse": "A city of Phrygian Pactiana, on the confines of Caria in Asia Minor, near the conflux of the Lycus and the Maeander." **{Does this mean that the church in the city of Colosse to whom Colossians was written is the church at Pergamos of the seven churches?}** The church of Revelation 2:12-17 that: (1) how they held fast to the name of Jesus in spite of environmental and governmental efforts to make them deny the name of Christ in favor of the name of the Roman Emperor; (2) suffered much persecution as sort of a center of opposition to Christianity, having one of the first martyrs, Antipas, and how in spite of this intense persecution in their city did not deny the faith of Jesus; (3) had some unsound doctrine in the church which they allowed to be taught, perhaps more by a minority than the majority, the doctrine of Balaam which allowed God's people to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality in the name of idol worship; and (4) they also allowed a group of church members to hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, a doctrine hated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some maps of early Christian churches **{before 100 A.D.}** do show a church at Colosse, just below a church at Laodicea in Asia Minor, while the church at Pergamos is shown between Troas and Thyatira. One of our great conservative and trustworthy Bible scholars of all time, recently passed away, F. F. Bruce notes how the intense missionary activity of Paul and companions spread the word from Ephesus to all of Asia from 52-55 A.D., and how through the ministry of Paul's companions the work went beyond Ephesus to many churches where Paul never visited. "Among these last," Bruce writes in his commentary on Colossians in the NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARIES, "were the churches planted in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis, which appear to have the fruit of the missionary activity of Epaphras. This is plainly to be inferred from the references to Epaphras in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (1:7f and 4:12f)." And you know how we love the informative, preachy, and more expository than exegetically style of B.H. Carroll in AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE; well, Carroll always a lover of history and knowledgeable on history, writes--

"Colosse is only sixteen miles from Hierapolis and only six miles from Laodicea--all right there together, all on the Lycus, a tributary of the Meander. The man who planted these three churches--who directly established them--was Epaphras, an evangelist, who lived at Colosse. He established the churches, but Archippus, the son of Philemon, was the pastor at Colosse--a rather slow-going pastor. He had to be stirred up right sharply, and Paul takes occasion in two of his letters to stir him. These people ethnologically were Phrygians, but politically they belonged to the Roman province of Asia."

While we are in Carroll on Colossians, we should also get the benefit of his insight from history and the Bible about the reason for the writing of the epistle to the Colossians.

“The occasion of the letter to the Colossians was the visit of Epaphras to Paul in Rome, giving him an account of the state of affairs in the Lycus valley **{so the problems being dealt with in Colossians at Colosse as well as in Revelation in the church at Laodicea would be problems of the Lycus valley}**. The conditions were much sharper at Colosse than elsewhere, but the same errors prevailed somewhat in the whole province. Hence, while he wrote a special letter to Colosse, he used the main thoughts of the letter and elaborated them into a circular letter. {You see, we did notice similarities between Colossians and Ephesians, not to mention the also noticeable and oft mentioned in this commentary place of Ephesians as a summary of the doctrine and the first ten epistles from Paul}.”

“The letter to the Ephesians was certainly not addressed primarily to Ephesus. A great many copies were distributed among the churches of Asia....There is a reference in Colossians to a letter which they would receive from Laodicea, which doubtless is the circular letter which we call the letter to the Ephesians. As the letter to the Romans elaborates the line of thought presented in Galatians, making it an abstract discussion, so Ephesians elaborates the line of thought in the letter to the Colossians, making it an abstract discussion. **{Don't you just love the boldness, generalizations, and comments of Carroll in a set of commentaries not verse by verse or strictly exegetical, but more topical, practical, and a total look at all of the Bible as well as some of the best of scholarship?}**”

One more thing from Carroll before we get into the messages of Colossians and Ephesians; and that is a definition of what Carroll and others consider to be the problem about which the epistles primarily deal, the problem of “Gnosticism”, which is so important to us today because it is very similar, if not the same, as the many “extra-biblical revelations” that we are hearing from Pentecostals and other charismatics today. **{You know what I mean, “God told me”, or “God gave me a special word for you”, or something similar not specifically based on any Scripture.}** Paul calls “Gnosticism” the common problem of the Lycus valley which, of course, would include Colosse and Laodicea. **{Thus, the problems of Colosse and Laodicea would be similar to those of the book of Revelation; in fact, when in approximately 250 AD a council of churches was held at Laodicea, the same heresies dealt with there were the heresies dealt with the epistle of Colossians.}**

“Gnosticism is derived from the Greek “gnosis”, which means “knowledge”, like “agnosticism,” which means ignorance--not knowing. The knowledge to which they pretended was a mystical knowledge above that which was written **{extra-biblical and away from the Scripture, at least beyond the Scriptures without any pretence otherwise}**, and it took the place of the written word. **{Oh, how horrible we would say, for what any Bible teacher or preacher would say to take the place of the Word of God; but yet so subtle of the many itching ears Bible teachers today of the Falling Away,**

that we fail to recognize what they say, while sounding good, as taking the place of the Written Word.}

Marcus Borg, another Seminar fellow of the Jesus seminar with Bible apostasy writes"
"I do not believe that Christianity is the only way of salvation, or that the Bible is the revealed will of God, or that Jesus was the unique Son of God."

From NT times to now there have always been men and women, inspired by Satan and his disciples, who practiced such "Gnosticism" but who have used different words. In the time of B.H., it was "The Spirit moves men now as well as he did in bible days", so that they go on "Spirit knowledge", saying things in Carroll's day like "I just feel that it is so", or they spiritualize, saying "the letter is nothing, the Spirit is everything" and "you must not interpret the Bible literally".

I don't know about you; but I am getting anxious to get into both epistles for an exposition of the Word itself. All these historical and background matters hardly make any difference at all as long as we get the messages of the Word, to be used where possible and if possible, to assist us in the understanding of that Word. Where I think it is helpful is to see that even as Solomon said of his time, "there is nothing new under the sun", that the problems faced by Christians in Colosse, Laodicea, in Ephesus, and in Carroll's day are so similar, often only modified by the words used to express the same heretical thoughts.

7-3: OT quotes in Colossians and Ephesians.

Even as the Amplified version translates the words of description of the work and ministry of Paul in Thessalonica and in Acts 17, where Luke records of the preaching and demonstration of the word, the demonstration interpreted by Amplified as how Paul quoted OT verses to prove the Christ, so also those OT quotes in both books can prove some of the similarities and differences.

1. OT quotes in Ephesians.

(1). Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8.

"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8)

Paul uses that as a basis of authority to support the authority of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as authority from the Ascended Christ, the head of the church. Christ gives the gifts for such and gives the authority for such ministry of the gifts; and the implication is that there are to be no other authorities of gifts. **{Recall also how we discussed in I and II Corinthians of how the gifts are given to churches, not individual churches, even as the members like a toe, foot, eye, and ear are members of the total body rather than each local church having all the foot/eye/ear etc. members of the body; therefore how also some churches proliferated for extra-biblical reasons may not have any or all of the members, thus may not also have any of the gifts.}**

(2)., Zechariah 8:16 in Ephesians 4:25.

“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.” (Zechariah 8:16 and Ephesians 4:25)

Even as the region of “neighbors” grew throughout the Empire, the extent of the one body of the one church also grew and the many neighbor-members of whom the church at Ephesus was spiritual joined. However, it should be added that the dominant thought of the Ephesians 4:25-32 passage is not to “grieve the Holy Spirit”. **{I have often wondered why it is necessary for God to withdraw the Holy Spirit from the earth before the end of the last days, although of course it is not my place to question God as the clay should never question the potter; but often wondering that if somewhere in the recesses of the OT is not a simple statement to explain a reason for the loosing of Satan by the withdrawal of the Spirit. I could do without it, for one; and the only reason so far, I can think of is in order that Satan and his leader, the man of sin, might collect all the unbelievers in the world for the great and final battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The gathering of such a large group of nations of unbelievers would otherwise not be easy, and it does facilitate God’s work of separation between believers and unbelievers as well as making it easy for the Returned Christ and His angels to in one swift blow destroy all the rebellious and unbelievers, that is, that live at the time of the Second Coming. This kind of speculation is always dangerous as it gives the wind bag with all the answers an opportunity to step in with a solution! Of course, he has an answer just like he or she has answers on all questions, difficult or otherwise.}**

(3). Psalm 4:4 and Ephesians 4:26.

“Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.” (Psalm 4:4 and Ephesians 4:26)

Not easy but it is possible to get righteously mad and not sin. One way to guard against the kind of angry that does sin is by not letting the sun go down on that angry. In other words, deal with it like any other problems with action and prayer, and do not allow the devil to take advantage of you here as in any other problems. Even as it is possible to get angry without sinning, and to not let the sun go down on your wrath, so it is also possible to judge righteous judgment. **{Don’t you know that you will be judges in the life to come, and that God has placed you here on earth as unique creatures that are afforded the authority to make righteous judgments on many matters.}**

(4). Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:31.

“For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:31,32 and Genesis 2:24)

Always and ever in the Scriptures of the Word of God, Paul wants every local church and every member of every local church to know that they are first of all members of the total body of Christ, the church; and as such become members of Christ with the necessity of first of all recognition of the authority of Christ over the church, then also of apostles and

prophets through Scripture, and the pastors, teachers, and evangelists to propagate the Scriptures consistent with what Christ, the Apostles and the Prophets put in there. "Wives submit yourselves to your husbands in the Lord" should primarily be wives submit to the authority of Christ and Scriptures; "husbands, love wives as your own bodies" should first of all be husbands love Christ and the total body of Christ more than yourself; and so on.

(5). Deuteronomy 5:16 and Ephesians 6:3.

“that is may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” (Ephesians 6:3 and Deuteronomy 5:16)

You know what this is another way of saying: obey the Word of God as well as the teachings of your father and mother from the Word of God. Acknowledge and respect the authority of the Scriptures!

2. OT in Colossians.

Well, this is easy as there are not direct quotes of OT Scriptures in the book of Colossians, so momentarily we will look at the possible paraphrases on the five quotes in Colossians that Paul uses in Ephesians; and we will look for other possible paraphrases as well as references to the OT. **{Although it really does not make that much difference, and with all due respect to Carroll and others, this lack of similarity of quotes between Colossians and Ephesians--especially this lack of any quotes in Colossians which puts it in a category of when Paul stopped quoting and summarized in epistles; leads me to think that Ephesians was written before Colossians, although the distribution to the churches may have been vice versa, perhaps Paul writing Ephesians as a preliminary parchment at Tarsus before the missionary journeys.}**

(1). Colossians 1:15.

The "He "Christ" is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" of Colossians 1:15 reminds us of Hebrews if not of OT, especially of the first chapter of Hebrews where there are so many OT quotes. Like the "You are My Son, today I have begotten you" of Hebrews 1:5 and Psalm 2:7; like Romans 8:29 where we are to be "conformed to the image of His Son" by the One Baptism, also Christ as the firstborn among many; like II Corinthians 4:4 where Christ is the image of God; and like in Hebrews 12:23 where the total body of Christ is called the assembly of the firstborn.

(2). Colossians 1:18, Christ remains the head of the church.

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18)

We might consider this as necessary in our study flow on Colossians and Ephesians as a definition of the firstborn as "the firstborn from the dead". Also, we might note that Carroll considers the book of Hebrews to be a supplement to and a commentary on Colossians and Ephesians. Increasingly as we progress through the first 10 epistles of Paul with the foundation in all the OT quotes, and progressively as those quotes peter out in Philemon, Colossians, and Philipians, we also have sufficient foundation in the

OT and NT Scriptures combined of the first ten, to start to use them as authority on other NT Scriptures, like on Colossians and Ephesians. **{The old guideline of comparing Scripture with Scripture gets additional justification in the internal evidence of the Bible itself.}**

(3). While we would have difficulty in summarizing all of the OT Paul had in mind as he wrote of “the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, we know it is OT based even as we know all wisdom and knowledge like treasures and mysteries, were based on OT Scriptures. We also know that this knowledge and wisdom was supplemented in the life and ministry of Paul when He met Jesus on the road to Damascus, when he was taught by the Ascended Christ in Arabia, and when the Spirit worked with him back during the so-called 7 silent years at Tarsus as he read back through the OT with the help of the Spirit and based on what had previously been taught and learned, recording all the OT quotes that he intended for the epistles like Colossians and Ephesians to come. In short, I think Paul knew at the time in Tarsus, even in Arabia, and as you can see written here in Colossians of his ministry as chief editor of the NT. Don’t you see that in Colossians 1:25?

“...of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.” (Colossians 1:25)

To “fulfill the Word of God” would be to complete the Word of God by writing personally 14 books of the 27 of the New Testament and then to sponsor three more with parchments for John Mark and Dr. Luke. And certainly, you see in the larger context of Colossians 1, especially in 1:26 with “the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints”, an awareness of Paul that part of his ministry was revelation, “to reveal” those mysteries to the saints.

(4). The “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit” bespeaks of both Paul’s total education as a Roman citizen as well as a lawyer of the Hebrew nation, requiring extensive knowledge of the law and the Prophets. How would this “philosophy” from the Greek education and this empty deceit from both the Greeks and the education of the Romans come, even of the Jews who denied the Christ? (a) According to the tradition of men, and even today, what is considered the best of the traditions of men up to this point in history come to us in education--philosophy, government, law, ethics, and etc.; (b) According to “the basic principles of the world”--that is, much of what we learn of custom and tradition are of the world, come from the world, and is considered like the wisdom of the ages; and (c) not according to Christ--that is, where we must often part company with custom, tradition, the world, and education is when it is not according to Christ. When it obviously contradicts Christ and all we know of the teachings and life of Christ, all that comes to us from the Apostles of Christ in the Word of God. We have problems when we start listening to this extra-biblical proponent, then called the Gnostic, now called Pentecostals and other charismatics. It is the very same problem that Paul dealt with in I and II Corinthians where women and other church members acted as either (a) the Word of God came to

them only, and that is what the Gnostic did with their unique knowledge above and beyond the written words of the Apostles; or (b) the Word of God came out of them only, and that the Gnostic readily admitted to, would also that so many extra-biblical Bible teachers today would do the same. What an ego, to think when surrounded by all the Wisdom of the Word of God, that we in our little time and generation could come up with some new Word of God! That is sacri-religious, heretical, and is an avenue for profit-taking and ego building, the same problem of which Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders of how after his ministry would come some from both within the churches and from outside the churches who like wolves would scatter the flock, making disciples to themselves.

(5). We will find in the "circumcision" discussions of Colossians 2:11-23, really a discussion and presentation of the One Baptism, both much Old Testament about circumcision, law, and the real covenants with God and much of the NT previously presented by Paul in epistles where OT quotes were made. Paul often and ever tries to make it clear that even as the primary and One Baptism is "hands-off" so also is the true circumcision that really matters.

"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands {you, when you hear the word "circumcision" you think immediately of the circumcision of the OT that definitely required other hands; but this spiritual circumcision is "made without hands" even as the One Baptism is a spiritual baptism without the hands required in a water baptism}, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Colossians 2:11,12)

Surely you do not think that you are buried with Christ in water baptism, and surely you do not think that are raised with Christ in water baptism. You are raised with Him "through faith in the working of God", that working of God being salvation, and the salvation coming through faith: that is the One Baptism. How in the world the church of Christ got water baptism mixed in here as a requirement of salvation is beyond me; but any people who can claim to be the only Christians because they had placed a sign in front of their church building which says "the church of Christ" show the foolhardiness of their understanding of Scriptures. They are the same people that can hardly face up to spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism. The One spiritual baptism that comes immediately after "believe"; the One spiritual baptism, the true identification with the death and resurrection of Christ, that is as far from water baptism in importance as the spiritual circumcision is from the physical circumcision of the Hebrews.

What follows in 2:12 of the formerly "dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh" and then the "made alive together with Him", you must see as the same argument of the Before In Christ (BIC) and the After In Christ (AIC) of Ephesians 2.

"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians 2:1-6)

Ministry of the Mystery

And that Colossians was written before and it partly the summarizing basis for Ephesians is seen in Ephesians 3 where Paul writes about “the mystery” previously written to them, and of how the recording of this mystery was part of His designated ministry. And as always, part of that Ministry in Ephesians and Colossians, is that Gentiles are fellow heirs of the same total body of Christ, the church.

“how that by revelation {always the writings or epistles of Paul are by revelation so that they are Word of God, Scriptures in the same category as the OT Scriptures, as also Peter testified to} He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)...” (Ephesians 3:3,4)

Here is the way it goes: An Apostle like Paul or a Prophet by “revelation” is given some understanding of the mysteries of God and Christ, which is not similar but not exactly the same as the understanding that any reader must have in order to know what it is all about. The similarity is a matter of degree rather than of kind, in that the Holy Spirit is both the common source of the Revelation to an Apostle and the source of the illumination of that same Revelation to a reader. I think if you nowhere else in this commentary saw the Ministry of Paul as both writer of Scriptures and chief editor of the NT, you should begin to see it here. The call to any Apostle is the call to write books of the Word of God even as the call to a Writing Prophet of the OT was the call to write Scripture; and what was unique in the call of Paul to the ministry of Apostleship was the fullness of his understanding of the plan of God, not only for one body of believers of Jews and Gentiles, but also of the place the complete Bible Canon, of which Jews were made custodians, would play in the Fulness of the Gentiles as the Gospel was preached to every nation.

The Form that the Gnostic Special Revelations were Taking

We spoke of how Gnosticism was a movement, much like the “God told me” charismatic movement of this day and much like those of the time of Carroll, that claimed special and extrabiblical revelations to supplement and replace the written Word of God which can come only through the 12 Apostles. We know the problems it creates in the kingdom and church today, and in the time of Carroll, and know we come to the problems that it was creating in the early churches like Ephesus, Laodicea, and Colosse (Colossians 2:16-23): (a) little matters of formality and imposed regulations for worship were placed forward as important as true worship, like certain food or drink, or about a special festival, new moon, or Sabbath--all more in the category of II Timothy as proofs of “a form of godliness without the power thereof {these are shadows not the substance*}; (b) false delight and humility in the worship of angels which God never intended to be worshipped as Hebrews makes clear; (c) “not holding fast to the Head”, that Head of the church is of course Christ, and any time that Christ is not allowed to run the local church, we have a practice of extrabiblical revelations; (d) don’t subject yourselves to special regulations that are man-made like “don’t touch, don’t taste, and don’t handle” as these are

“according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (2:22); and then a summary in 2:23.

Louie Giglio of the Passion Movement and in his bestselling book on David and Goliath stresses the importance of real worship as if this new generation of the MTD can lead on such for the church, but a young Christian lady once a member of his Passion Church in Atlanta describes those regulations of worship as: (1) loud music, (2) darkness and flashing lights like a night club atmosphere’ (3) loss of personal identify in the crowd, (3) rudeness in spite of claiming something special, (4) secular music and other band groups more close to secular music than Gospel music (Louie owns a record company and it making money out of this music even like Swaggart has made bundles of money out of his music and popularity.); (5) no adults allowed because even as Jesus according to Giglio is David, so Goliath is the past generations in the churches of the youth that become his scapegoat for all the ills of Christian faith; and (6) merchandize for sale called faith resources.

<https://pulpitandpen.org/2017/04/10/the-passion-of-louie-giglio-a-personal-testimony-of-passion-city-church/> from the young Christian lady of strong convictions, Kym Duarte.

And to briefly express the most positive of this young Christian lady on true worship and testimony is quoted the concluding paragraph of her blog: *“Thanks for reading. If you come from a biblical background and currently attend PCC, chances are this is resonating with you. Don’t be afraid to speak your mind, you are not alone. If you belong to God, he is always with you and is more than able to provide for your needs according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus.”*

“These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom {you know how when you hear these special revelations on TV, etc. they do have that “appearance of wisdom”, with a real problem for the hearer to tell where they have departed from the Written Word to get into special revelations--of course a key is always words like “God told me”, or “God gave me a word”, or “The Spirit told me” as in the day of Carroll} **in self-imposed religion** {you must see much of this from the itching ears teachers of TV and bestselling books is SELF-IMPOSED religion, and if that is what you want that is exactly what you can get; however remember that it can “cheat you of your reward” (2:18)}, **false humility** {this is certainly a humility that we do not want}, **and neglect of the body** {it is not even physically healthy as God has ordained these meats and drinks for our own welfare}, **but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”** (Colossians 2:23)

NOTE: Brother and brothers if we want the SBC back of our youth, we must get back to the Bible and the Christ of Carroll and Truett and Scarborough, of Dr. R. G. Lee; and of the Apostle Paul.