

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST
Part XXXII: Applying The Truth That Believers Are Complete In Christ

I. Introduction

- A. Various religious groups try to impress believers in Christ to feel obligated to observe a part of the Mosaic Law or to observe some sacrament or other practice either to be fully saved or to live acceptably before God.
- B. One of the 33 positional truths the believer possesses the instant he trusts in Christ is that he is complete in Him. (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 264-265). Applying this truth in its Scriptural context of Colossians 2 addresses these matters in an edifying way (as follows):

II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are Complete In Christ.

- A. Having stated that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ in His God-man incarnate state, the Apostle Paul wrote that we believers in Christ are "complete in Him" (KJV), or, as the ESV has it, "you have been filled in Him," Colossians 2:9-10.
- B. By this claim, Paul could **not** have meant that the fullness of the Godhead fills up the believer's nature as it does Christ (Colossians 2:9), for the believer is not God, Revelation 22:6-9. Rather, the Colossians 2 context reveals Paul saw Christ's completeness as filling up all that the believer needs in the spiritual realm so that nothing else is needed to complete his salvation or to equip him for sanctified living (as follows):
 - 1. Paul began the Colossians 2 chapter by expressing concern that his Christian readers appreciate the full knowledge of the spiritual riches they possessed in Christ lest they be deceived by the "plausible" (ESV) or "fine-sounding" (ESV) arguments of errant teachers they faced, Colossians 2:1-4.
 - 2. Rather, Paul desired that his readers be "rooted and built up in him and established" in Christ, and thus to abound with thanksgiving instead of yielding to the false teachers' claims that they needed to do some work or gain some additional state of holiness to obtain God's full acceptance, Colossians 2:5-8 ESV.
 - 3. Paul then applied this truth to equip his readers not to yield to three errant views they faced (as follows):
 - a. First, the believer's completeness in Christ frees him from being subject to **legalism**:
 - i. Christ so fully provided for the believer's positional acceptance by God at the cross that even the requirements of God's own Mosaic Law have been completely met by Christ, Colossians 2:11-15.
 - ii. Thus, believers in Christ are free from any obligation to observe any part of God's Law, be it the Ten Commandments or the ceremonial parts of the Law, for God's full acceptance, Col. 2:16-17:
 - 1) The ceremonial rule of the Law seen in food and drink rules has ceased for believers, 2:16a, 17.
 - 2) Also, the rule of the Ten Commandments seen in Paul's reference to the Sabbath in Colossians 2:16b, has ceased for believers in Christ. [Seventh-day Adventists reject this view, holding that Christians are still under the Ten Commandments (Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 1988, p. 244), alleging that "sabbath" in Colossians 2:16 refers to the Leviticus 25:1-7 sabbatical **years**, the word "day" (*hemera*) not appearing in Colossians 2:16 [U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 698], meaning Christians must still observe Sabbath **days**! Yet, Paul in Colossians 2:16 also wrote that believers are not bound to observe "festivals" (*heortes*) or "new moons" (*neomenias*) (Ibid.; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 279-280, 537), what are **day** observances, so **believers are not bound to keep Sabbath years or days!**]
 - b. Second, the believer's completeness in Christ frees him from being subject to **mysticism**:
 - i. Paul urged his Christian readers not to give heed to teachers of mysticism who exalted a false humility or a worship of angels and claimed to have some deeper spiritual insight through experiencing visions, Col. 2:18; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, ftn.; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 678:
 - ii. Rather, Paul's Christians readers were to hold to Christ, their Head, from Whom each believer derived his fullness and in Whom each grew with God's increase apart from mysticism, Col. 2:19.
 - c. Third, the believer's completeness in Christ frees him from being subject to **asceticism**:
 - i. Paul urged his readers not to yield to those who promoted ascetic tendencies like artificial humility or denying the meeting of bodily drives in order to be holy, Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Colossians 2:20-23.
 - ii. Rather, in Christ, the believer is already as positionally holy and acceptable to God as he can be.

Lesson: *We believers are positionally so complete in Christ that nothing we can ever do can improve our standing before God. All we can do is mature in our relationship with the Lord, Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 4:15-16.*

Application: *May we not yield to legalistic, mystical and ascetic pressures, but instead mature in the Lord!*