

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

F. Nurture In Focusing On Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Contrary To Gnosticism (Colossians 2:8-10)

I. Introduction

- A. The plot in Dan Brown's book, The Da Vinci Code that was made into a movie asserted that a "Great Cover-Up" had occurred when the Roman Catholic Church in the fourth century A. D. *allegedly* removed from the canon all but the four Gospels that teach Jesus' Incarnate deity, thus suppressing the Gnostic Gospels that deny Christ's Incarnation, all to defend the Church's power against belief in Mary Magdalene who allegedly married Jesus and had children by Him. (Darrell L. Bock, Breaking The Da Vinci Code, 2004, p. 151-152 et al.)
- B. However, to nurture believers who faced Gnostic error in the *first* century A. D., Paul in Colossians 2:8-10 exposed the Gnostic *error* in its seed form, giving the *truth* on Christ's Incarnation that is applicable to us:

II. Nurture In Focusing On Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Contrary To Gnosticism, Col. 2:8-10.

- A. Paul warned his readers to beware lest any man "carry you off captive" (*sulagogeo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 784) through "philosophy" (*philosophia*, Ibid., p. 869) and "empty" (*kenos*, Ibid., p. 428-429) "deception" (*apate*, Ibid., p. 81) after human "tradition" (*paradosis*, Ibid., p. 621), after the "elementary principles" (*stoicheion*, Ibid., p. 776-777) of the world and not after Christ, Col. 2:8.
- B. The "philosophy", "empty deception," "tradition of men" and "elementary principles of the world" of which Paul warned in Colossians 2:8 is *countered* in Colossians 2:9 as seen by that verse's introductory conjunction, *hoti* (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 697) meaning "because, since," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 592-594.
- C. That Colossians 2:9 statement **directly CONTRADICTS** ancient **Gnosticism** as follows:
1. Paul wrote that in "Him," that is in Christ (Col. 2:8b), "**is continually dwelling**" (*katoikei*, the third person singular present active indicative of *katoikeo*, Ibid., p. 425; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 225) all the "fullness" (*pleroma*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 678) of the "divinity, divine nature" (*theiotes*, Ibid., p. 354) "bodily, corporeally, bodily-wise, in concrete actuality" (*somatikos*, Ibid., p. 807; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, 1972, p. 621), Colossians 2:9.
 2. In other words, Paul claimed that in Jesus Christ is consistently residing all the fullness of the divinity and divine nature of God in concrete actuality of physical bodily format, a statement that totally contradicts the Gnostic view of Christ (as follows):
 - a. Gnosticism held "the body was inherently evil," so the idea that deity dwells in a body in Christ could not be tolerated by Gnostics, so they denied the Incarnation, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1690, 1770.
 - b. As a result, Christ in Gnosticism fails to be a true Mediator between God and man since He fails to exist as **both** God **and** man in the God-man incarnation, and that undermines Christ's atonement and salvation!
 - c. However, **Paul** stated that **in Christ**, (1) **all** the **fullness** of **deity**, the fullness of the divinity and divine nature of God, (2) **is constantly dwelling** in (3) **concrete, physical bodily form!** That is to say that Jesus Christ is perpetually fully God dwelling in concrete, physical human bodily form as God Incarnate!
 - d. Thus, Christ is **evermore** the Adequate Mediator, and His atonement and salvation is fully credible!
- D. Having made this important claim, Paul added its great **application**, noting that his Colossian readers were "completed ones" (*pepleromenoi*, perfect passive participle of *pleroo*, "to fill, fulfill," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 316; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 676-678) in Christ, meaning they had been made positionally complete in Christ in the past to where that status would continue eternally, Col. 2:10a!
- E. This is another sharp criticism of Gnosticism, for the Gnostics held that salvation came by "*knowing* the truth" and that it was "understood only by a select few," Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. Two, p. 738; Ibid., Ryrie, p. 1770. Thus, Paul taught that salvation was **not** by the Gnostic knowledge way, but every believer in Christ is utterly, eternally spiritually and permanently complete in the Incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ!
- F. Paul added that Jesus is head over every *arches* (ruler) and *exousias* (ruling power), including the errant Gnostic teachers who plagued his Colossian readers, Colossians 2:10b; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 677.

Lesson: *In the first century A. D., the Apostle Paul directly countered the early claims of Gnosticism that undermined the deity and full incarnation of Jesus Christ in defense of His complete, full salvation of the believer.*

Application: *(1) May we rest in the full deity and humanity of Christ as all it entails. (2) May we see the "plot" of The Da Vinci Code as being false historically and doctrinally in support of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ!*