

# **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – Epistle**

## **The Colossal God**

**Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]**

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## **Analysis by Marcus Felde**

Colossians 2:6 As you, therefore, have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of the deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; 12 when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

16 Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. 17 These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance

belongs to Christ. 18 Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

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## **DIAGNOSIS: Circumscribed**

### **Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – Bounded**

The presenting problem of the Colossians was apparently a tendency to kowtow to a whole alphabet of lords, including the LMNtal spirits (v. 8b). All this bowing at the new moons (v. 16) and scraping and circumcising seemed necessary, if they were to own the whole deity. But it sure kept them busy!

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – Hounded**

Being so extra religious left them open to hurt from every side. They were being “disqualified” (v. 18) and “condemned” (v. 16) even as they rabidly sought to make happy every hemi-, semi-, and demi- ruler.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – Impounded**

They were in grave danger of being taken “captive through philosophy and empty deceit” (v. 8a), locked up by the extra requirements they gullibly subscribed to in hope of . . . well, not that much, it would seem. Worse, these demi-rulers had no substance (v. 17). Consequently, neither they nor their followers belonged to Christ.

## **PROGNOSIS: Uncircumscribed**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – Unbound**

The Colossians are encouraged to remember that Christ had

“nailed to the cross” (v. 14) “the record that stood against us with its legal demands” (v. 13). Christ was not satisfied merely to be different from those other “puffed up” rulers and authorities (v. 18), he also “disarmed” them and “made a public example of them” (v. 15). The ones who bound us are themselves bound over to perdition, so we are free. (Buried and raised with Christ, we are made alive together with him, vv. 12-13.)

#### **Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – Owned**

Baptized into Christ, we therefore belong to Christ. We are “rooted” in him (v. 7), “buried” with him (v. 12) , “made alive together with him” (v. 13), “holding fast to him” (v. 19), “built up” in him (v. 7). We are “built” by association with a Lord who doesn’t lord it over us.

#### **Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – Abounding**

Who knows exactly how big life will get, as we live in Christ? The growth comes from God (v. 19). We abound in thanksgiving (v. 7); that is, there are “no bounds” to our thanksgiving. Everything else about this life is also colossal (Was Paul trumping the Colossus at Rhodes?): The good works (1:10), the strength (1:11), the patience (1:11), etc. After all, we are dealing with the only true colossus (1:16)-not just half a deity but the whole deity.