

Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. 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. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Colossians 2:4-10. NKJ

Paul wanted to present every person 'perfect' or mature in Christ, as noted in chapter one. Here (the text to the left) he gives warnings of teachings which are not from Christ, warning the church so they can be the mature saints God wants them and us to be. These false teachings often come with persuasive words and cheat the child of God in his or her spiritual growth. They are human philosophy which Paul calls empty deceit. They are based on the traditions of men rather than from God. They follow the basic principles of the world rather than Christ. Paul reminded the church of these dangers, and we need to be reminded as well. It seems that warnings of this type are included in nearly, if not all, the New Testament documents. We are expected to follow the words of Christ rather than the words of men (Matthew 7:21-27).

Note just a few passages of warning. Galatians 1:6-10; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 1 John 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Acts 20:28-30; Romans 16:17-18. In these passages there are warnings as well as instructions on how to avoid the errors.

The phrase "As you received Christ" is often misunderstood in our time. Paul is not teaching that one is saved when they 'receive Jesus into their heart'. Just a few verses after the text (to the left) Paul emphasized that our relationship to God changes when we are buried through baptism and rise with Christ (2:12-14). Jesus said we are saved when we believe and are baptized (Mark 16:16). Peter says that baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21). Never, in the New Testament, is anyone told to receive Christ into their heart to become a Christian. The reference here is a general reference to conversion and the new life as servants of righteousness (Romans 6:1-23).

The inspired apostles wrote, "the fulness of the Godhead" dwells in Christ bodily. This was not the physical form but the essence of Christ, the Spiritual being who took on flesh (see John 1:1-3, 14). The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus became the Son of God when He was conceived in Mary's womb (Luke 1:30-38). When He was born, He was Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus did not give up His nature as God but gave up His equality with God (Philippians 2:5-9). Think about the amazing fact that God, deity, came to earth in a physical body for us, for you and me. The purpose of His coming was to give His own life as a ransom for us (Matthew 20:28). It was His blood which takes away sin, which allows God in His divine justice to also forgive us of sin (1 Peter 1:16-18). Consider this blessing and the love it demonstrates: Jesus as deity gave up His position as equal to the Father to provide the opportunity for us to be saved and have eternal fellowship with God: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Take some time to reflect upon this great gift, then submit to Him as the One with all authority. He is the Head of all principality and power. See also Hebrews 5:8-9.