

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2026: *Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philipians and Colossians* Lesson 10 “Complete in Christ”

Read for this week’s study

Colossians 2; Hebrews 7:11; Isaiah 61:3; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Deuteronomy 31:24–26; Romans 2:28, 29; Romans 7:7.

Memory Text

“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16, 17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Wisdom and Knowledge of God
- III. Rooted and Growing in Christ
- IV. Nailed to the Cross
- V. Shadow or Substance?
- VI. Commandments of Men
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week’s memory text was written not about the fourth commandment, but in response to errors taught by some false teachers in the church. [...] These false teachers were clearly religious and sincere, but they also got the gospel wrong. This week we’ll see why. And we will see why the memory verse has nothing to do with our keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Against early forms of Gnostic dualism, which devalued the material world and emphasized secret knowledge, Paul presents Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3). He wants the believers in Colossae to be “encouraged” or “strengthened” (Col. 2:2), not deceived with plausible arguments (2:4) or taken captive through philosophy and empty deceit (2:8). (Sunday’s lesson) How are similar trends present in our contemporary society? What can we do so that we are not taken captive and how can we help others as well?
3. Being a Christian is like riding a bicycle: unless you go forward, you will fall off. How does Paul summarize what he was saying so far in 2:6-7? (Monday’s lesson) What metaphors does he use to express this? How are ‘walking’ and being ‘rooted’ like a

tree in good soil and 'built up' like a solid house brick by brick on a solid foundation related? What lessons can we draw from these metaphors?

4. If in Christ "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (2:9), the believers do not need to be "taken captive" through "philosophy and empty deceit, based on human tradition, according to the elemental principles of the world" (2:8). Every believer shares in that fulness, "you are complete in him" or "you have come to fullness in him" (2:10, NRSV). Thus, the Christian growth is not a matter of *addition* but *nutrition*. Nothing needs to be added to Christ because he already is the very fulness of God. In Christianity, the salvation that we have in Jesus, is a **Jesus plus nothing else** plan.
5. Tuesday's lesson looks at "handwriting" (*cheirographon*) that stood over "against us" with its regulations (*dogmasin*) "legal demands" (2:15, NRSV) which was abolished or cancelled and powers and authorities, which were disarmed. How should we understand this? Which interpretation is the most faithful to the context?
6. Colossians 2:16 lists a number of regular Jewish practices that were apparently continued among some Jewish converts to Christianity. (Wednesday's lesson) There were also some teachings from Greek philosophy. There were pagan mystery cults that were impacting the church. There was Gnosticism. To all this, Paul says, "Do not settle for living your lives for a 'Jesus plus something else plan'". He identifies *four forms* of the hollow and deceptive philosophies that were invading the church then and can still invade our spiritual life, if we are not careful.
7. "Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink." All throughout Christian history there have been those who have come along, sometimes with great passion and energy, trying to create a **Jesus plus special diet plan**. It is Jesus plus be careful with what you eat and drink if, in their eyes, you want to be considered saved. Other plans are: **Jesus plus special days** plan; **Jesus plus special encounters** plan.
8. In Thursday's lesson these requirements are characterized as "simply human commands and teachings" (2:22). In verse 21 Paul lists special behaviors, "Do not handle." "Do not taste." "Do not touch." **Jesus plus special behaviors** plan. In verse 17, Paul says, "These are a shadow of the things that were to come." The reality, however, is found in Christ.
9. In chapter two Paul shows how the preeminence and supremacy of Jesus Christ is God's answer to legalism, mysticism and ascetism. The answer to legalism is the spiritual freedom we have in Christ. The answer to mysticism is the spiritual union with Christ, the Head of the church. The answer to ascetism is our spiritual position in Christ, his death, resurrection and ascension.
10. How can you experience the sense of relief that you are complete in Christ, and you do not need anything else? How can we help others to experience this exciting freedom?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Someone has asked this question: “Wasn’t the Sabbath in Colossians 2, doesn’t Paul say that the Sabbath has been nailed to the cross? And in the light of that, that no one should judge you regarding what you eat or drink or religious festivals or even a Sabbath day.” What about that Colossians 2?

Graham: That’s so significant, it’s worth several hours. How to do it in a moment or two; I think the first thing to do there is to note what was nailed to the cross. The *King James* says, “the handwriting of ordinances,” and that’s taken to be the Law. Now actually that word “handwriting,” I’ll pronounce it to show you I know it’s there “*cheirographon*.” “*Cheir*” is hand and “*graphon*” is handwriting. That’s a very technical term for an agreement, for a bond. It’s the sentence that stood against us that was nailed to the cross.

But to suggest that the Sabbath was nailed to the cross suggests that the Sabbath was against us, because it says that “when this handwriting was nailed to the cross, it is what was contrary to us, against us.” He took it out of the way because it is bad. Now nowhere in the Bible is the Sabbath pictured as against us, contrary to us. It was given to help us. Did Jesus say, “The Sabbath was made for you, and in a moment I’m going to nail it to the cross because it’s been against you”? He says it’s for you. So they’ve been nailing the wrong thing to the cross. Rather, when He died He took care of the sin problem. He took care of the sentence, or whatever word you want to use there. “Therefore let no one judge you in these legal matters.” And I think when it says, “Don’t let anyone judge you with respect to the Sabbath, either,” He said, “You’re right. Don’t you go around condemning people who disagree with you on the Sabbath.”

Sometimes we say “That’s ceremonial sabbaths. Don’t criticize people when they disagree on the ceremonial. But when they disagree with you on the seventh day, you can condemn them all you want to.”

You can’t condemn anybody for anything. That’s not our business. The same as in Romans 14: Paul says, “One man esteems all days alike. Another man esteems one day above another.” And I’m about to come in and imprison some of you who don’t agree with me? No! He says, “Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. And who are you to criticize another?” I include the seventh-day Sabbath in that. We are in **no** position **ever** to criticize or condemn anybody else who disagrees over this matter of the Sabbath. No. Paul says, “We shall each give account of ourselves to God.”

So going back to Colossians, something that was **against** us was nailed to the cross. And once we understand how God has handled this sin, distrust, rebellion problem, then we don’t go around condemning other people. But in my own heart I’m very much persuaded that the Sabbath is for me. I wouldn’t want to waste it. I hope I can make it look good to other people so they won’t waste it. And we present it as a gift, not an obligation. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio

series, Conversations About God, #10 with Lou Venden, “The Reminder of The Evidence” recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {SC 68.1}

Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent, yet he had given them no tokens of his love. He had done nothing for their happiness and benefit; while God had given them every thing that was good for food, and pleasant to the sight. Everywhere the eye might rest was abundance and beauty; yet Eve was deceived by the serpent to think that there was something withheld which would make them wise, even as God. Instead of believing and confiding in God, she basely mistrusted his goodness and cherished the words of Satan. {3SG 43.1}

Every conceivable deception will be brought to bear upon those who have not a daily, living connection with God. Satan’s angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions and will teach for doctrine the commandments of men. . . . Many apparently good things will need to be carefully considered with much prayer, for they are specious devices of the enemy to lead souls in a path that lies so close to the path of truth that it will be scarcely distinguishable from it. . . . {CTr 362.2}

From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. {DA 210.2}

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan’s deceptions. {CT 457.1}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

The manifestation of God’s love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. {5T 744.2}

If the people of God had obeyed the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the specific directions given to Moses, which he wrote in a book, relative to their duty to God and to one another. The definite directions which the Lord gave to Moses in regard to the duty of His people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the Ten Commandments simplified and given in a definite manner, that they need not err. {SR 149.1}

When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. "Acquaint now thyself with Him" (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind. {AA 126.1}

Faith is the medium through which truth or error finds a lodging place in the mind. It is by the same act of mind that truth or error is received, but it makes a decided difference whether we believe the Word of God or the sayings of men. When Christ revealed Himself to Paul, and he was convinced that he was persecuting Jesus in the person of His saints, he accepted the truth as it is in Jesus. A transforming power was manifested on mind and character, and he became a new man in Christ Jesus. He received the truth so fully that neither earth nor hell could shake his faith. {1SM 346.3}

If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts. {SC 57.2}

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving. {COL 101.1}

When Adam fell, provision was made for his restoration. In due time Jesus, the Prince of life, came to our world to enter into controversy with the powers of darkness. In this world Satan had an opportunity to exhibit the result of the working out of his principles of freedom from all law, and Christ, by His unswerving obedience to His Father's commandments, made manifest the result of practicing the principles of righteousness. {1SM 347.4}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}