

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

From the beginning of Christianity, doctrine has been a problem. Many of the New Testament books were written to counter doctrines that were not of God—especially doctrines which would subvert the gospel. Through the centuries a multiplicity of teachings have been held by those who claim to follow Christ, many of which are contradictory to one another, and often contradictory to Scripture. Christianity has thus evolved into a form unknown in the primitive church. All of this, of course, is confusing to those who would seek to know God. Every denomination and sect has its own set of doctrines which sets it apart from others. Denominationalism has become the norm. Such a situation causes seekers for truth to wonder, “Which group has the truth?”

In combating various dogmas and philosophies that had risen in the Colossian church, the apostle Paul wrote, referring to their relationship to Christ, “For in him dwelleth the fullness of the godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:9-10). Being “complete” in Christ is to be without lack of “all things that pertain to life and godliness”, as Peter described it (2 Pet. 1:3). This principal does not leave man free to impose his own authority upon others. No church is at liberty to decree that which is foreign to the teachings of Christ and His apostles. Earlier, Paul reminded the Colossians of the supreme authority of Christ, stating, “He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). So emphatic was Paul in this matter that he wrote the believers at Galatia, saying, “Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). The church is to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), but it is not the source of the truth. The source is Jesus Christ, who commissioned His apostles, saying, “All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:18:18-20). There is no supplementary source of grace or instruction that God has given us. They are to be found only in Christ and His word. The Lord’s church is “complete in Him.”

--Ron