

## A The benefits of faith:

### ❖ Consolation, praise, and order (Colossians 2:1-5)

- Although he did not personally know the church in Colossae, Paul knew that it was being threatened by false teachings (Col. 2:1, 4).
- For this reason, he writes to them with three clear purposes that will help them face this danger (Colossians 2:2 NIV): they may be encouraged in heart; and united in love; that they may have the full riches of complete understanding. In order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ.
- Before identifying the false doctrines, there is a double commendation for the Colossians: they have good order; and they are firm in the faith (Col. 2:5).
- The “order” Paul refers to here means order in worship and in the various activities of the church. There must be leadership and a division of responsibilities; activities must be carried out with due decorum; and so on. This will result in a better proclamation of the gospel and will protect them from certain errors.

### ❖ Rooted in Christ (Colossians 2:6-8)

- We obtain salvation by accepting a Person, not by accepting doctrines (Col. 2:6). However, these are essential. Paul exhorts us to walk in Christ “as you have been taught” (Col. 2:7b).
- As we walk with Jesus, we are rooted in Him. We are, metaphorically, “the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified” (Isaiah 61:3). We are “trees” clinging to Jesus and His teachings (Psalm 1:3).
- Now, there are two types of doctrine:
  - (1) According to Christ and his teaching recorded in the Bible: We are strengthened in the faith and abound in thanksgiving (Col. 2:7)
  - (2) According to philosophies and empty subtleties, according to the traditions of men: We are deceived, judged, and deprived of our reward (Col. 2:8, 16, 18)

### ❖ The handwriting of ordinances nailed to his cross (Colossians 2:9-15)

- Abraham ratified his covenant with God through circumcision (Gen. 17:11). We ratify our covenant with Jesus through baptism, which is “the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2:11-12). This implies that physical circumcision is no longer necessary.
- Having clarified this point, Paul speaks of Jesus' work on the cross. What did Jesus accomplish?
  - (1) He gave us life, forgiving our sins (Col. 2:13)
  - (2) He canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us (Col. 2:14)
  - (3) He triumphed over the powers and authorities of evil (Col. 2:15)
- Ephesians 2:14-15 clarifies that the “ordinances” or “requirements” that was against us was the ceremonial law, which constituted a wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles.
- For this reason, we no longer need to worry about observing the ritual laws of the Old Testament, which had their fulfillment and end in Christ.

## B Problems that shake faith:

### ❖ Holyday, new moon, sabbath days (Colossians 2:16-19)

- Along with circumcision, there were other points that differentiated Jews from Gentiles: religious rites and festivities.
- Paul had already made the role of circumcision clear. Now, with the expression “let,” Paul indicates the implications of the annulment of the “handwriting” (the ceremonial laws): it was no longer obligatory for salvation to observe the rites and festivals, which Jesus fulfilled by dying on the cross (Mt. 27:51; Col. 2:16).
- Paul appears to quote Hosea 2:11 to summarize the entire ceremonial system of the Sanctuary in one sentence. This implies that the Sabbaths mentioned here are the seven ritual Sabbaths (observed regardless of the day of the week on which they fell), and not the weekly Sabbath (included in the moral law, universal and applicable to all, Jews and Gentiles).

### ❖ Commandments of men (Colossians 2:20-23)

- The false teachers, whom Paul refers to several times in his letter, were Jews who taught the necessity of adhering to Jewish law to obtain salvation (Acts 15:1, 5). These laws also included many rules devised by the rabbis.
- Let us follow Paul's reasoning. In baptism we have died to “the rudiments of the world” and live for Christ. If we continue to worry about, for example, ceremonial impurities, we still live in the world, and we are concerned about things that disappear with use (Col. 2:20-22).
- However, Paul clarifies that, for Jews accustomed to these rites, these have a certain moralizing value for themselves, although they are not useful for transforming the heart (Col. 2:23).
- In summary, we must be guided by the teachings contained in the Scriptures –divinely inspired–, and not by human philosophies or reasoning.