

WHY PSYCHOLOGY HAS FAILED IN HOUSTON

P.O.W.s IN HOUSTON

YOU ARE COMPLETE IN HOUSTON

OUR ROOTS IN HOUSTON

taken from
Colossians 2:4-10



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Divine Viewpoint

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WHY PSYCHOLOGY HAS FAILED IN HOUSTON

As far as this life is concerned, there is no real happiness, there is no real peace, there is no satisfaction of any kind until one is in union with the Person of Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which every member of the human race is INCOMPLETE, frustrated, always seeking, never satisfied, never at peace with himself or anyone else, until he fulfills that purpose for which he was originally designed. That purpose was fellowship with God, based upon relationship with God. That is really what is wrong with the human race.

There are many ways to describe it. But "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23. That is exactly the problem, because sin means death, which means spiritual death. Spiritual death means no fellowship with God in time. We are facing now what I consider one of the greatest passages in the New Testament, and the center of this passage. We will skip down and read this verse and then I will get back to where I stopped. We will get back to verse 4.

I want you to read with me for a moment verse 10, "Ye are COMPLETE IN HIM." The subject we face before us now is COMPLETENESS. Really, this is an understanding of life. This is orientation to life. This is everything that is really important. You have perhaps already observed, as far as human life is concerned, and I have observed with you, the frustration of the human race. There is a tremendous subject that has been developed only since the turn of the century, or a little before the century, a tremendous subject we call psychology.

What psychology tries to do is explain man's behavior, his motivation, his inner thoughts and his activities. Psychology is simply trying to explain man's frustration. In itself, it is a rather interesting and fascinating subject, but you never come to the end of it. The reason is that psychology has NO ANSWER. Psychology can explain man's behaviors, and one which we mention quite often and that is sublimation. Sublimation is

simply a psychological term which simply means if you are unhappy about one thing, you try to find a substitute. That is exactly what the human race is doing all the time, trying to find a substitute for the things that make them unhappy. Then the substitute makes them unhappy, and then they go to another type of escapism.

Then that makes them unhappy so they keep moving around. Man is basically never happy and never at peace with himself or others, until he knows Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. Then, the moment we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, then something happens that becomes the basis for really finding the meaning of life. Life has a purpose for the believer IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Life has definition.

Of course, there are many believers, who are just like all of us when we drive through a fog IN HOUSTON. A lot of believers IN HOUSTON are unhappy and miserable because they are in a spiritual fog. They can't even see as far as you can when you drive down the freeway IN HOUSTON in an early morning fog. They are in a spiritual fog and don't even realize this.

I consider the second chapter of Colossians, along with the third chapter, one of the most important passages as far as the believer is concerned. "Ye are COMPLETE IN HIM." There is no other way to be COMPLETE. There is a perfect illustration of this and it is found in Ephesians 5. It is the woman. The woman recognizes that sooner or later that she is INCOMPLETE and therefore, God so constructed her so she is COMPLETE when she has her Right-Man. Sooner or later every woman wants her Right-Man. She always feels that this is the solution to everything, that this will be her COMPLETION. If she gets her Right-Man that is true, but from the Divine standpoint, we are all INCOMPLETE and our only Source of COMPLETION is the Person of Christ. This is the COMPLETION that solves the problems

in life. Without it we are absolutely nothing, and with this, we become something. Then our life has true meaning and true purpose. In chapter two the whole subject, at least the first 14 verses, is our COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST. Our subject is COMPLETENESS.

First of all, in verse 4, we are introduced to the fact that the Devil would do everything in the world to keep us from discovering that there is only one secret to happiness in life, that there is only one secret to blessing in life. It isn't what we have materially and it isn't our social relationship with anyone. It isn't having a person, it isn't having a materialistic thing. Christ didn't own anything. As far as we know, the Lord Jesus Christ only had the clothes on His back. Yet as a man, He was COMPLETE and we are in union with this COMPLETE man, the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the Devil would like to obscure all of these facts.

We read in verse 4, "Now this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." The Greek word here for "beguile" is literally, deceive you. Literally this says, "Lest any deceive you with enticing words." The Devil is the author of this deceit.

2 Corinthians 4 tells us that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

The devil is definitely in the business of deceiving. You will notice that he deceives through "enticing words." There are literally hundreds of thousands of volumes and books of enticing words that have been written. Man grabs these things and says, "This is the answer." How to win friends and influence people. How to think positively. How to get the most out of life. All of these are books of enticing words. They all sound good, and man thinks that this is going to make everything fine for him. None of them are any good. The secret to life is not in any of these books. How to live the best kind of a life, how to get the most out of life.

The secret is to believe IN JESUS CHRIST and then to have the knowledge of your posi-

tion IN CHRIST, which teaches us our COMPLETENESS IN HIM. Then we must apply it to our experience. The moment that you believed IN JESUS CHRIST, the moment you trusted IN HIM, you entered into union with Christ. The Holy Spirit placed you INTO CHRIST. We will see that a little later on when we get down to verse 12, "buried with Him in baptism." This is the Spirit baptism. We are in union with Him. We are joined to Him.

This is the secret of our COMPLETENESS. We are not COMPLETE in ourselves. We are not COMPLETE because we have a lot of money, because we have a home, because we have materialistic things, or even if we have some person. That doesn't make us COMPLETE. The Thing that makes us COMPLETE is Christ. We are in union with Him. The whole point of this passage is our COMPLETENESS through the Person of Christ.

As a matter of fact, it will come up again in chapter 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things of the Earth." WHY? Well, verse 3 says, "Ye are dead." WHY? Because we are identified with Christ in His death. "And your life is hid with Christ in God." That is another way of stating our COMPLETENESS. You are in union with the Person of Christ. Every person here IN HOUSTON who has trusted IN CHRIST is COMPLETE IN CHRIST.

Let's go back and review this week IN HOUSTON. Have you been upset at any time this week? Were you discouraged? Did you have any difficulties or any problems? Were you disturbed this week by things that happened to you? Did you feel frustrated at any time this week IN HOUSTON? Were you upset at any time? Were you unhappy? Well, you see, there is no excuse for that because you are COMPLETE IN HIM and He is our Stabilizer. It doesn't make any difference how tough things get, or as a matter of fact, how wonderful things get. We are COMPLETE IN CHRIST.

You will notice that this statement is unique, because we are not COMPLETE in anyone else. You know everyone IN HOUSTON is either single and looking to get married or else they are trying to get out of marriage. This is the height of instability, because everyone thinks that if I just had the right person, I would have it. But that is not exactly true, unless you happen to know that the Person is Jesus Christ. It isn't what we have in life. It isn't our position in life. It isn't what people think of us in life. It is a relationship with Christ that counts. Everything else will then take its proper place. What we have or have not, makes absolutely no difference.

You may have an occasion someday to remember this. It may be that the Lord will have to put us all in some kind of a Siberia, and then we will realize this. Siberia could be a wonderful place, if you have the Lord. That is beyond our experiential plan at this time, but just remember this passage. You'll remember the time that you came out through the fog, whatever the fog was, your fog, to hear this particular subject. Because this is one of the most important subjects in the Word of God. COMPLETENESS. Because COMPLETENESS means happiness. COMPLETENESS means peace. COMPLETENESS means strength and impact. COMPLETENESS means stability. COMPLETENESS is simply the realization of our position, or knowing what we have.

Of course, you realize that most Christians do not know what they have. This is most unfortunate. Part of the reason is because they have gotten into "enticing words." It is so easy these days to be enticed by words. Therefore, the devil has used, as one of his greatest weapons, the "enticing words." Many believers are reading peculiar books about how to have joy in life, and blessing in life, and how to get the most out of life. They have neglected the only Book that can tell them. It's right here, the Word of God. So much for the devil's weapon, "enticing words."

Let me remind you that this was especially true in the day in which this epistle was originally written. There were men by the

names of Cerinthus, Valentinus, Basilitees, Marchain and Tachian. These men were very persuasive speakers. They were some of the greatest speakers of the ancient world. Every one of them was a Gnostic. Every one of them was the devil's evangelist. They were teachers of Gnosticism. They taught these things which we introduced this chapter with, and these things are very important in the understanding of this passage, in the understanding of this epistle. They taught Gnosticism. They taught Greek philosophy, and paganism, and Judaism with a Christian vocabulary.

Now, by the way, we are getting the same thing today in many, many forms. For example, every cult uses Christian vocabulary in order to teach Greek philosophy, paganism and legalism. You will find that every cult has exactly the same thing that Gnosticism had in it. Furthermore, you will discover certain things like crisis theology, and other things of that sort. What is crisis theology? It is neo-orthodoxy. What is it that makes some theologians popular today? Why it is philosophy.

It is not the rationalism of Plato. It is simply the rationalism of Kant with a Christian vocabulary. That is all in the world that it is. Do believers fall for it? Well, you will notice in our passage, that in verse 8 it says, "Beware lest any man spoil you." "Spoil" in the Greek means to take you as a prisoner of war. Here are some spiritual P.O.W.'s. There are a lot of Christians who have become prisoners of war to the satanic forces because they have made philosophy their criterion, because they rationalize the Scripture. If it isn't philosophy, it is "vain deceit." This is, of course, another one of these interesting terms here in verse 8, which is used for Gnosticism. It means literally, empty delusion. It has to do primarily with paganism, which is a part of Gnosticism.

"After the tradition of men." This is Judaism. This has to do with keeping the Mosaic Law. "After the rudiments of the world." The "rudiments of the world" refer to asceticism, self-effacement. "And not after Christ." You will notice here in verses 4 and 8 there are two warnings about satanic operation. Re-

member that Satan will do anything in the world to keep you from understanding that right now, regardless of circumstances, regardless of your bank account, regardless of your home, or your car, regardless of your lack of, or the having of, some person, or your social situation, or the fact that no one seems to care about you, regardless of any single factor, you are COMPLETE right now IN HOUSTON.

I want you to see in this passage the satanic forces that are stacked up against you. Everything is geared in this life to deceive you, to delude you, to make you think that you really don't have what you do have, to make you lose awareness of the Person of Christ, and an awareness of what you have in the doctrine of positional truth. Everything is so geared to keep you from understanding this point. That is why this will come up again in the third chapter and we will have position, experience, position, and experience.

You will notice that every item of experience is based on position when we get to Colossians 3. As a matter of fact, this second chapter of Colossians is simply a warning, a warning to you to wake up as believers. Don't be deluded. The only way to really wake up is to get into the Word of God and find out what belongs to you IN CHRIST, IN HOUSTON, to find out the truth of this tremendous GRACE, "You are COMPLETE IN HIM." You are not COMPLETED by anything else. As long as you are not aware of your COMPLETION IN HIM, then you will never enjoy the benefits.

How does all of the COMPLETENESS begin? Well, now we go and start with verse 5. The Phalanx of faith. Remember that Paul is writing from Rome. He is in prison there. That is his command post, as it were. He is the apostle, he is the greatest of all. He is the greatest of all apostles. So, he is writing to the troops in the field, as it were, from Rome.

This is what he says. Verse 5, "For though I be absent in the flesh," (he is in Rome) "yet am I with you in the spirit," (we could say in spiritual things). He is conveying spiritual things to them. "Yet I am with you in spirit, and I am rejoicing." He is rejoicing in some-

thing. Remember that joy is a mental attitude. He is stimulated mentally. He is stimulated in his inner life.

"Joying and beholding." The word "beholding," in the Greek, is a most interesting one. It is the Greek military word for inspection. Paul is inspecting "your order." And the word for "order" is actually their advancing line, literally, what causes Paul to rejoice in prison IN ROME? Even though Gnosticism, the satanic revival, has come to the Lychus Valley, and even those great and persuasive speakers have come to Colosse, these people, believers IN COLOSSE are advancing against Gnosticism. They are aggressive against it. The reason is found, "beholding your advancing line."

The word "steadfastness" is a technical Greek word which was developed from the conquest of Alexander the Great. No man ever conquered this world in a shorter time. He didn't have armored forces and he didn't have aircraft. He didn't drop down any reinforced battalions behind enemy lines. He didn't have modern equipment. But, oh how he moved in a short time. That man completely conquered the entire world. He did it through a military system known as the phalanx.

Here is the Greek word for phalanx, "through the phalanx of your faith IN CHRIST." The thing that conquers the world, the thing that causes Christianity to move rapidly, and aggressively in one word is "phalanx." You advance, here, actually through knowledge of the Word of God, used in our context as the word GINOSKO. Gnosticism always belittled one thing and that was faith. Gnosticism said it wasn't what you believe, it is something else. Then they went into all of their systems. So, they belittled faith. See the word here, "steadfastness of your faith IN CHRIST." They said that justification by faith is ridiculous. They did everything they could to belittle it, to ridicule it, to make it seem as if it was the thing not to do. Yet, Paul turns around, right here in this verse, and says the thing that stops Gnosticism is faith, faith and more faith IN CHRIST. The whole secret to getting into touch with God, the whole secret of relationship with God is faith.

That is why we have in the next verse this thing summarized. Verse 6, “As ye have therefore received,” aorist tense, once and for all received, “Christ Jesus the Lord.” Stop right there. How did you receive Christ Jesus the Lord? BY FAITH. “BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” Acts 16:31. It is by faith. “These things are written that ye might BELIEVE, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by BELIEVING, you might have life in His Name.” “But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that BELIEVE on His Name,” John 1:12. You received Christ by faith. “For by GRACE are ye saved through FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast,” Ephesians 2:8, 9.

“Ye are the children of God by FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS,” Galatians 3:26. “Whosoever BELIEVETH IN HIM shall not perish but have everlasting life,” John 3:16. It is always by faith. We once and for all receive Christ by faith.

Now, the last phrase. “So,” now we have a change in tense, we have a present tense. “So keep walking IN HIM.” If you received Christ by faith, how are you going to continue to receive assets, blessings, for this life? How are you going to make it through this life as a believer here IN HOUSTON? In this life we have tremendous pressures, pressures from within and pressures from without. Inside of us we have an old sin nature. Inside we have worldliness, what we think. Outside we have the devil and all of his operations, like Gnosticism. We have tremendous pressures against us. How are we going to stand up against them? BY FAITH.

This is why we have a corollary verse in 2 Corinthians 5:7, “For we walk by faith and not by sight.” “As we have once and for all received Christ Jesus the Lord, so keep walking IN HIM.” Or, 1 John 5:4, 5, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.” Hebrews 11:6, “For without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

Remember this, seeing is not believing. That is one of the most ridiculous of all the sayings that runs around these days. You always hear, “seeing is believing.” **But, seeing is not believing.** “Faith is the evidence of things not seen,” Hebrews 11:1. All of these tremendous things that God has provided for us, our position IN CHRIST, the Person of Christ dying on the cross. We have never seen them with our eyes. Seeing isn’t believing. These things, which become more real than the things that we can actually see, come by faith. **It is possible to have a greater field of reality in the unseen things than in the seen things.** For we read over in Corinthians, “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are not seen are eternal, but the things which are seen are temporal.”

Now you have to ask yourself a very frank question. What is more real today, the things you have materialistically or the things that you have IN CHRIST? The things you cannot see but actually use everyday? Why was David such a great man when he stood before Goliath? It wasn’t because he saw Goliath as a big man. It was because he saw the unseen, he saw the Lord as more powerful than all the giants in the world. Faith does this. Faith opens up the unseen things world.

Faith gives us a realization of our COMPLETENESS IN HIM. It makes us realize, right now, in experience we are in union with the Person of Christ. Being in union with the Person of Christ, there is nothing in this world that can touch us. We can know perfect peace. Perfect rest. Perfect stability. Perfect power. Perfect everything else. There is the real meaning of life. Life is completely changed when we begin to realize these things.

That is why this passage is saying, look, you are saved by faith. Now, how are you going to live? Well, you are going to live by faith. You are going to move into an entirely new realm. You are going to begin to see IN HOUSTON that you are in union with Christ, right now, and no matter how difficult things will be this week, you are in union with Christ IN HOUSTON. There is going to come

a time when things will **never** be difficult again, and that will go on forever, but that will not be IN HOUSTON.

So, you just have a short time IN HOUSTON to represent Christ as an ambassador. Some day you will be a king, right now you are waiting to be promoted. You have a tremendous responsibility IN HOUSTON and so do I. To live right here IN HOUSTON for Him. He has given us everything we possibly need. God has given us, through His Word, a specific promise for every need that could ever arise. It pays to know the Word. But, even greater, it pays to believe the Word. And that is where we are right now in this particular passage.

Therefore, as a result of walking by faith, we have the next verse. Verse 7, "Rooted." The word "rooted" is a perfect tense, which means rooted in the past with a result that we go on being rooted forever. The word "rooted" is simply a foundation word. Our foundation, which continues forever and ever, is the Lord Jesus Christ. We receive this foundation, and we receive these roots by faith. Then it says, "and built up." This is a change of tense, again to the present tense. Literally, constantly built up. We are rooted in the past, with a result we go on being rooted forever.

That one word, here, "rooted," is eternal security. We will never lose our roots. Our roots are the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Foundation. He is always there. He always will be. This is what it means when it says, "Ye are COMPLETE IN HIM." Why are we COMPLETE IN HIM? Because we are IN HIM. He is our Foundation, our Roots, our Building, our Everything. We will never be out of our relationship with Him. We will have a position which we will always enjoy. We will always be in union with Christ.

When the Holy Spirit put us into union with Christ, that was perfect and nothing can ever pull us out. That is why it says at the end of Romans 8, "I am persuaded," literally, fully persuaded, "that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers," principalities and powers are fallen angels, evil angels, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is," then the next few words are important, "IN CHRIST JESUS, our Lord." IN CHRIST.

Nothing can take us out of Christ. Death won't do it. Death will only give us a greater realization. Life won't do it. Good angels can't do it. Michael can't do it. Fallen angels can't do it. Principalities and powers, the devil, can't do it. NOTHING can do it. You can't get too high, and you can't get too low. No matter where you are, you are always going to be COMPLETE IN CHRIST. So you might as well realize it so you can get with it. That is the point of this passage.

"Rooted and built up." Well, how do we get built up? It is the same pattern as you had in verse 6. "We are rooted." How did we get rooted? BY FAITH. How do we keep building up? BY FAITH. So, rooted in the past with results that go on forever, and constantly built up IN HIM.

Notice again "IN HIM." "IN HIM" is a reference to our COMPLETENESS, our union with Christ again. "And established," the word "established" simply means stabilized. "Stabilized in the sphere of faith." You see, our faith gives us stability, because we realize our COMPLETENESS IN HIM when things are tough. We realize our COMPLETENESS IN HIM when we have prosperity. So no matter what our condition, we keep on realizing this thing and we keep moving right along with wonderful blessing and we get the most out of life.

"As ye have been taught." Now, here is a phrase that is just a slap to modern Christianity. Modern Christians IN HOUSTON today are not taught these things. You will notice one thing, the only way you are going to get these things is to be taught them. "As ye have been taught." The primary objective of those in leadership in Christianity IN HOUSTON is to teach the Word of God. What a blow. If there is anything that Christianity is not doing today IN HOUSTON, it is not teaching the Word. See, here is the whole point: how many pastors IN

HOUSTON today will go through verse by verse by verse?

Now, that is the way the Holy Spirit wrote it. He didn't write it in multiples of threes. He didn't take a phrase and break it up into three parts and then give a little devotion. See, this is the way the Spirit of the Living God wrote this Word. He spoke through human authors. So, logically, that is the way to present it, the way it was written. "Stabilized in the sphere of faith." "In" is locative, in the location of, in the sphere of. The only way to be stabilized is in the location of faith. "As ye have been taught."

Then notice, present tense again, "habitually abounding therein with thanksgiving." When you realize your COMPLETENESS IN HIM through the teaching of the Word of God, and begin to walk by faith, then you will begin to do something else; 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God IN CHRIST JESUS concerning you."

1 Thessalonians 5:18. You will give thanks for everything in your life. You will be grateful for everything. No matter how difficult it is, you will have a true heart of thanksgiving.

We have already had the warning in verse 8. So, we move then to verse 9. Verse 8, "For IN HIM dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Notice again that phrase "IN HIM." We are built up IN HIM, verse 7. Now notice in verse 8, "IN HIM," IN CHRIST, "dwelleteth." The word here for "dwelleteth" means to dwell deep down, dwell way down deep, to dwell permanently. "IN HIM permanently dwells the fullness of the Godhead."

The Godhead is a reference to the essence of the Trinity. Remember, we have three Personalities in the Trinity, but they all have the same essence. That is, they are all made up of the same thing. What do we mean when we say three Persons in One? What does One mean? It means that they all are eternal life. Every Member of the Trinity is perfect righteousness and perfect justice. Every Member of the Trinity is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. Every Member of the Trinity is immutable. They are all made up of the same

things, but They are different in personality. **They are One in essence, but Three in personality.**

Now, here is a reference to essence. "IN HIM dwelleth all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily." This is one of the strongest verses in the Bible on the Deity of Christ. But, why does it say "IN HIM dwelleth all of the Godhead bodily?" Because He is also man. You see, He is the God-man. As Deity, having all the fullness of the Godhead, and also being man, He is the answer.

Because it goes on to say then, and this is the height of this chapter: Verse 10, "And ye are COMPLETE IN HIM." What a slap in the face it was to Gnosticism! Now, if we had hours to build up this principle of Gnosticism, you would begin to see that this verse is not only wonderful to us, right now IN HOUSTON, but this verse was the answer to Gnosticism at this time IN COLOSSE. Notice, "IN HIM dwelleth all the fullness." Fullness was the technical, philosophical term, the Greek word being PLEROMA, and it was the gnostic term for salvation. So, you Gnostics are wrong, because IN CHRIST there is salvation. IN CHRIST there is fullness, the PLEROMA.

Now, "Ye are COMPLETE IN HIM." This is where every believer IN HOUSTON needs to come as soon as possible after he is saved. This is what every believer needs to realize. This happens at the moment of salvation. This was the work of God the Holy Spirit. This is the baptism of the Spirit. We are COMPLETE IN HIM because we are in union with Him. **THIS IS IT!!!! "Ye are COMPLETE IN HIM, which is the Head of all principality and power."** This is sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have had His Deity, and we have here emphasis on sovereignty. Then, in verse 11 He goes on to say therefore, we have something that is superior to everything else.

Verses 11 and 12, **we have a superior tradition.** The tradition of Judaism is circumcision. The tradition of others is water baptism. This does not outlaw water baptism in verse 12. It just says that Spirit baptism is superior to water baptism, for obvious reasons. Verse 11, "IN WHOM also ye are circumcised with

the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." See, the Gnostics also brought Judaism into their picture and made a great deal out of circumcision. now we have a circumcision made without hands. Our circumcision, the putting away of the sins of the flesh, the blood of Christ accomplishes that.

So, actually this passage is emphasizing that our COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST means also that our sins have been blotted out. They have been removed by the blood of Christ. "For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," Hebrews 9:22. "IN WHOM we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His GRACE," Ephesians 1:7. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin," 1 John 1:7. Revelation 1:5 says we are jarred lose from our sins. It doesn't say "washed." It means jarred lose, loosened from our sins through the blood of Christ. And 1 Peter 1:18 says, "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, from our empty manner of life, but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without spot and without blemish." So it is the blood of Christ which makes Christianity superior.

Then there is a superior baptism. Verse 12, "Buried with Him in baptism." What does it mean, buried with Him in baptism? As you know, there are seven baptisms in Scripture. This particular baptism is Spirit baptism. This is not water baptism. Water baptism will not wash away sins. Water baptism will not make us COMPLETE IN CHRIST. Water baptism will not enter us into union with Christ.

If a person is saved and then enters into water baptism after understanding positional truth, then it has meaning. That is the purpose of water baptism. Water baptism is for those who are born again, for those who are COMPLETE IN HIM. It is a testimony.

Now listen to this. Water baptism is a testimony to our COMPLETENESS IN HIM. It is a recognition of our union with Christ. It is a testimony of the fact that we are COMPLETE IN HIM. It is our way of saying, "I know that I am COMPLETE IN HIM." That is why we

don't baptize people until they know this, until they understand positional truth. Then they can enter into water baptism with the full significance of it.

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him." We are risen with Him right now because of our union with Christ. All of this took place, how? "Through faith," which is an objective genitive. "Through faith in the operation," literally, power or energy of God, "Who hath raised Him from the dead." That is the secret.

Moving on to verses 13 and 14. How does all of this come about? Well, the reiteration of salvation. Verse 13, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Uncircumcision of your flesh is your past, before salvation. This is what you were before you were COMPLETE IN HIM. You were dead to God. Spiritual death. "Hath He quickened," literally, "Hath He made alive together with Him." Why are we alive together with Christ? Because we are COMPLETE IN HIM. Because we are in union with Him.

Notice, in order to do this, He had to do something else first. "Having forgiven" is an aorist passive participle. The action of the aorist participle always precedes the action of the main verb. So, this took place first. "Having once and for all forgiven us all of our trespasses." When you were made COMPLETE IN HIM, the first thing He did was to forgive you. This is positional forgiveness. It means that our sins, past, present and future, even the sins we haven't committed yet, they are all forgiven at the moment of salvation. This is positional forgiveness of sin.

Everything was blotted out "as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. Therefore, we have blotting out, completely blotting out, once and for all blotting, the I.O.U. that was against us.

You see, every member of the human race owes God perfect righteousness. I had an I.O.U. I owed God perfect righteousness. I cannot pay because there is none in me. That is

why it says, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23. Sin, in its manifestation, is the transgression of the Law. But sin is anything that fails to measure up to the perfect and absolute righteousness of God. That is why “our righteousnesses,” plural, “are as filthy rags in His sight,” Isaiah 64:6. That is why it says, “The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9. Why is man desperately wicked? Because he doesn’t have God’s absolute righteousness.

We have all come short of the glory of God, God’s character, God’s righteousness. But there is nothing in me to generate such a thing. It is not within me in any way to produce this absolute and perfect righteousness and therefore, someone else must pay the I.O.U. Someone else must cancel it.

Verse 14, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances.” “Ordinances” is going back to the Law itself, which indicates that I am a sinner. “Which was contrary to it.” In other words, this is the thing that made us INCOMPLETE. This is the thing that destroyed us. This is the thing that kept us from having fellowship with God.

Verse 14, “And He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” He paid your I.O.U.

He paid my I.O.U. when “He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM,” 2 Corinthians 5:21. Imputed righteousness, which qualifies us to be COMPLETE IN HIM.

Verse 15, “And having spoiled,” He had taken prisoner, “all principalities and powers.” He has ruined the power of the devil and all the devil can do to you and to me is to try to deceive us with enticing words, to throw satanic revivals at us, to throw philosophy, to throw the traditions of legalism, paganism, all of these things, at us and to wind it up all in a nice Christian vocabulary.

Many, many believers today IN HOUSTON are deceived by the cults, deceived by the philosophical implications, such things as crisis theology. There are many things today which are deceiving believers. But, if you know your position IN CHRIST, if you recognize your COMPLETENESS IN HIM, your PLEROMA, you will never be deceived by the enticing words of the satanic revival.

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