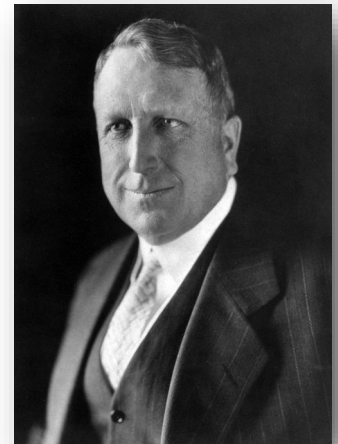


“GIVE ME MORE” SYNDROME

“Lord, give me more.” This phrase “Give me more” is common among believers who seek for signs and wonders and experiences.

Ephesians 1:3 *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”*

William Hearst, an American business man, newspaper publisher and politician during 1887-1951, invested a fortune in collecting great works of art. One day he read of some valuable pieces of art that other collectors were searching for to add to their vintage collection. Hearst appointed an agent to locate the treasured art. Months went by as the agent meticulously investigated the records of art sales. To the agents surprise and more so to Hearst, the prized art pieces were found in Hearst’s own warehouse, he had purchased many years ago and was searching for what he already had.



It’s analogous to the ***alarming*** number of Christians today who are on a desperate search for spiritual resources they already possess. Theirs is a futile quest for something more. It’s a heretical fire fanned in part by the false notion that salvation is insufficient to transform believers and equip them for Christian living. Those, thus influenced believe they need something more, more of Christ, more of the Holy Spirit, some kind of ecstatic, experience, mystical visions, signs, wonders, miracles, a second blessing, tongues, a higher or deeper spiritual level, or whatever.

Spirit soaking and grave sucking is a quest to be given the same spirit that empowered the “generals” of the faith.

Page 2/....

But as we have noticed, to have Jesus is to have **every spiritual resource**. All we need is found in Him (**Psalm 23:1**). Rather than attempting to add something to Christ we must simply learn to use the resources that are already ours in Him.

Perhaps the watershed passage in all of Scripture on our sufficiency in Christ is the book of Colossians. Paul wrote it to believers who were strong in faith and love:

Colossians 1:4 *“Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people,”* some are confused by a heresy that denied Christ’s sufficiency. Our study demands a very careful look at some key portions of this critical text.

We don’t know the precise nature of the heresy in Colosse because Paul didn’t define it in detail but spent time naming and denouncing its leaders. Instead he refused it generally by showing that it was rooted in an inadequate and erroneous view of the Person and word of Christ. He wrote to the Colossian church an entire epistle focusing on Christ, His place in the universe, His work in salvation, His pre-eminence as God, His position as head of the church and His utter sufficiency for every human need. In so doing, Paul demonstrated that the best defence against false teaching is thoroughly Biblical Christology. He warned the Colossians that attempting to add to or take away from Christ always ends in spiritual disaster.

In **Colossians 1: 13-22** Paul writes:

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

The apostle makes a profound summation when he says that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (**vs 2:3**) because in Him dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form. He is head over all rule and authority (**vs 2:9-10**). He is life itself (**vs 3:4**). What more could the apostle say to affirm our Lord’s utter sufficiency.

The error he was addressing was multifaceted. It seems clearly to have been an early form of Gnosticism. The Colossian heretics claimed that Christ alone could not elevate someone to the highest spiritual level. They were advocating a variety of artificial spiritual additives, including philosophy (**2:8-10**), legalism (**2:11-17**), mysticism (**2:18-19**) and asceticism—self-sacrifices like a monk or nun. (**2:20-23**).

Christ plus Philosophy

Our English word “philosophy” is a transliteration of the Greek word *philosophia*, which is a compound of two common Greek words: *phileo* (to love) and *sophia* (wisdom). It literally means “the love of human wisdom.” In its broad sense it is man’s attempt to explain the nature of the universe including the phenomena of existence, thought, ethics, behaviour, aesthetics and so on.

In Paul’s time “everything that had to do with theories about God and the world and the meaning of human life called ‘philosophy’, not only in pagan schools but also in the Jewish school of the Greek cities.” The first century Jewish historian Josephus adds that there were three forms of philosophy among the Jews:

- The **Pharisees** came from all economic classes but were distinguished by their rigid adherence to specific behaviour prescriptions arising from their interpretation of the ambiguities in the Torah.
- The **Sadducees** were upper class wealthy men mostly from Jerusalem who made up the Jewish aristocracy.
- And the **Essenes** were members of an ascetic sect around the time of Jesus.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead and in an afterlife in which people would be rewarded or punished according to their actions in this life—as opposed to the Sadducees, who believed that the soul perished at death, and the Essenes, who believed only in the immortality of the soul and physical denial.

Paul strongly condemned any philosophical theory about God that professed to show the cause of the world’s existence and to offer moral direction apart from Divine revelation. In **Colossians 2:8-10** he says:

*“See to it that **no one takes you captive** through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.”*

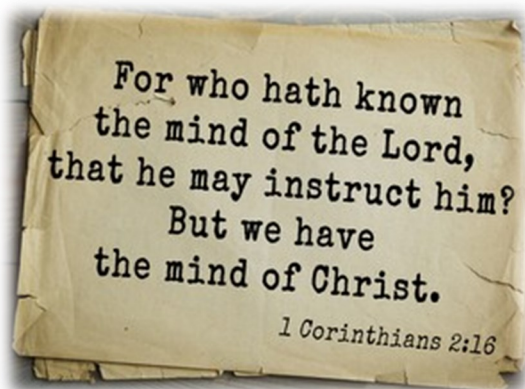
The phrase “takes you captive” (**v8**) comes from the Greek word “*sulagōgeō*”, which referred to carrying off captives or other spoils of war. In that sense it conveyed that idea of a kidnapping. It pictures the way the Christ-plus-philosophy heresy was abducting the Colossians away from truth into the slavery of error. This the apostle portrayed philosophy as a predator that seeks to enslave undiscerning Christians in “vain deceit” (**v8 KJV**).

“Vain” speaks of something empty, devoid of truth, futile, fruitless, and without effect. Philosophy claims to be true but is utterly deceitful, like a fisherman who captures his unwitting prey by concealing a deadly hook within a tasty morsal of food. The fish thinks it’s getting a meal but becomes one instead. Similarly, those who embrace a human philosophy about God or man might think they’re getting truth, but instead they get empty deception, which can lead to eternal damnation.

Philosophy is useless because it’s grounded in “the tradition of men” and “the elementary principles of the world” (V8) rather than in Christ. “The tradition of men” refers to human speculations passed on from generation to generation. Most philosophers stack their teaching on the pile of their predecessors’ teachings. One will develop a thought so far, then another develops it further, and on it goes. It’s a series of variations within the flow of human tradition that only perpetuates error and compounds ignorance. (Tertiary education contains these philosophies)

The phrase “**elementary principles of the world**” literally means “things in a column” or “things in a row” (such as 1,2,3,4 or A,B,C,D). It refers to the kind of instruction one would give a child. Paul was saying that though it purports to be sophisticated, human philosophy is actually rudimentary, childish and unrefined. To abandon Biblical revelation for philosophy is like returning to kindergarten after graduating from university. Even the finest of human philosophy can offer nothing to augment the Truth of Christ. It hinders and retards true wisdom and produces only infantile foolishness, **error and deceit**.

In **1 Corinthians 1:18-21** Paul says “*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.” Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*”



Human wisdom cannot enhance God’s revelation. In fact, it inevitably resists and tries to contradict Divine Truth. Even the best of human wisdom is mere foolishness in comparison with God’s infinite wisdom. Christians needn’t look to human wisdom anyway. They possess the mind of Christ (**1 Cor.2:16**). His great, perfect, incomprehensible wisdom is revealed to us in God’s Word and through His Spirit.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

Why be held captive to philosophy when you can ascend to God’s perfect truth? In **Colossians 2:9-10** Paul draws a significant parallel, “*In (Christ) all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete.*” “Fullness” and “complete” in this passage are translations of the same Greek word “plērōma”. Just as Christ is utterly Divine, so we are utterly sufficient in Him. Human wisdom adds nothing to what is already revealed in Christ.