

**SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST - 1**  
(Col 2:9-10) 08/06/17  
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I. CONTEXT

- A. Paul had been writing to the Colossians about the doctrinal truth of the person and work of Christ (Col 1:15 - Col 2:7).
- B. From Col 2:8 on, Paul defends the faith against the various aspects of false teaching that threatened the church at Colossae.
- C. In Col 2:8, Col 2:9-15 Paul will address the false teaching that denies the sufficiency in Christ.
- D. *This is one of the most blessed passages in all of Scripture. It presents the glorious majesty of Christ's Person and His complete sufficiency. Verse 9 is perhaps the most definitive statement of Christ's deity in the epistles. It is the rock upon which all attempts to disprove Christ's deity are shattered. Obviously, these heretics were saying Jesus was not God, and that was the most damning and disturbing element of their satanology -- as it still is in any false system.* (MacArthur in loc.)

II. SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S DEITY (Col 2:9)

- A. Paul begins with the transitional word “**for**” between vs. 8 and 9. It is the Greek conjunction *hoti* which can mean *because* or *since*. The idea being expressed is that the Colossians were not to be taken by false philosophy “because” 1) the false teachers were wrong, and 2) it is absolutely true that Christ is God, the second person of the Godhead.
- B. Though every word in this verse is emphatic, the force of this verse is centered on the deity of Christ. “**Deity**” is the Greek word *theotês* which is only used one time in the N.T. If Paul was going to choose a word that clearly stated Christ's full deity, it would be this word.
  - 1. *Theotês* clearly refers to the being or essence of God (i.e. deity). *Theotês* is to be distinguished from *theiotês*, which also is used only once in the NT.
  - 2. *Theiotês* is found in Rom 1:20 and refers to God's divine nature or attributes that can be observed in creation.
  - 3. While *theiotês* refers to the “divine” aspects of God, Paul does not say that Christ is simply an aspect of God's attributes (*theiotês*) such as the Gnostics believed. Rather, he declared that Christ is full deity (*theotês*), that is, all that God is. Christ is very God of very God.
  - 4. The best rendition to describe the word and the meaning of the entire verse is from John Eadie, “*The fulness of the Godhead is a fulness filled up by it -- is that Godhead in all its native attributes and prerogatives. And it is the whole fulness -- not one cycle of Divine perfections -- a single cluster of Divine properties - not a partial possession of isolated glories -- nor a handful of meted and fractional resources, but the entire assemblage of all in existence and character that constitutes the Divinity. What He is, and as He is, in being, mode, and manifestation, dwells in Christ.*”
- C. The Gnostic Jesus is an emanation of the divine being who is among other emanations (aeons) of the divine being. Together they comprise the “Entirety” or the “Plêroma” (“fulness”) of the Invisible Spirit.
- D. However, Paul declared that all the “**fulness**” (*plêroma*) of Deity dwells **in Him** (Christ). Not that the word “fulness” needed to be qualified, but Paul qualified it by stating that “**all**” (not some) the fullness of Deity dwells in Christ.
- E. In one small sentence, Paul not only wrote perhaps the strongest verse on the deity of Christ, but through a play on words, he defeated the full spiritual reality of the Gnostic *Plêroma*.
- F. Yet there was one more nail for the coffin of Gnostic cosmology. Paul set forth the truth that all the fullness of Deity dwells in Christ **in bodily form**. As a result, Gnosticism's view that material is evil and spirit is good couldn't be farther from the truth since the fullness of deity continually resides at home (**dwells** - *katoikeō* - *settle down, reside*) in the incarnated Christ.

III. SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S BODY (Col 2:10a)

- A. If Christ is full deity, then He is able to save and sanctify. In sanctification, Christ supplies everything the believer needs to be complete (Col 2:11-15). However, this completeness is only found in Christ.

- B. The phrase “**in Him**” or “in Christ” is employed 9 times in Colossians in regard to believers and is a major theme (Col 1:2, 4, 14, 28; 2:5, 6, 7, 10, 11). But the point is that it is “**in Him**” (Christ) that the believer receives completeness (cf. Eph 1:3).
- C. The Greek word for “**complete**” is *plêroma*, which is the same word used of Christ. This was not a play on words against the Gnostics, rather, it was a play on words to explain the believer’s fullness through Christ’s fullness. The idea is that from Christ’s fullness, the believer is filled with everything he needs to live the Christian life. Here, *plêroma* is a perfect participle which implies that the believer was made complete at a point in time (salvation) and continues to be made complete (sanctification).
- D. This in no way means that the believer becomes God or is deified. What it does mean is outlined in 2Pe 1:3-4.
  - 1. We are complete in being able to live in all godliness because God’s divine power has granted it in Christ’s fullness (2Pe 1:3a).
    - a. This does not mean absolute perfection, but maturity and completeness (Php 3:12).
    - b. This does not preclude the believer from availing himself of Christ’s power.
    - c. This does not mean that the believer does not have to cooperate with Christ (Php 2:12-13).
  - 2. We are complete in being able to live in all godliness as we grow in the knowledge of Christ (2Pe 1:3b).
  - 3. We are complete in Him when our faith lays hold of the promises in His Word (2Pe 1:4a)
  - 4. We are complete in Him because we have become partakers of His divine nature (2Pe 1:4b).

#### IV. SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST’S AUTHORITY (Col 2:10b)

- A. Christ is not only able to make the believer complete in Christ, but He is **head over** all authority and wills to do so. No power, **ruler**, or **authority**, whether earthly or heavenly, is able to thwart Christ’s plan nor able to overthrow Christ’s sovereignty.
- B. The Gnostics believe that divine aeons and angelic beings rule the world. But Paul removes their authority and gives it to its rightful owner.
- C. Such would be expected from One in whom all the fullness of deity dwells. Such would be expected from One who created all rulers and authorities (angelic beings) (Col 1:16). In fact, the believer’s completeness is safeguarded because Christ disarmed all the rulers and authorities (Col 2:15).

#### V. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. Sufficiency in Christ and Contemporary Attacks
  - 1. Hank Hannegraff’s conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy
  - 2. Eastern Orthodoxy’s Beliefs
    - a. *“We believe a man to be not justified through faith alone, but through faith which works through love, that is to say through faith and works” (Decree 13)*
    - b. Theosis (Deification) - Becoming like God, union with God, sharing the divine nature, and part of the process of salvation.
    - c. Discouragement of individuals interpreting the Bible apart from tradition
    - d. The perpetual virginity of Mary
    - e. Prayer for the dead
    - f. Baptism of infants without reference to individual responsibility and faith
    - g. The possibility of receiving salvation after death
    - h. The possibility of losing salvation
- B. Sufficiency in Christ for Believers
  - 1. He has given the believer everything he needs to be complete to live out God’s will.
  - 2. The believer need not seek for more. In fact, seeking for more shows a lack of understanding of our completeness in Christ, a lack of faith, and a denial of the sufficiency in Christ.
  - 3. If the believer fails to live out his completeness it is because he has not fully availed himself of Christ’s fullness. Or it could also be that the believer has chosen to sin instead of living for the Lord.
- C. Sufficiency in Christ for Every Believer
  - 1. It is for the pastor, for the elders, for the church worker, for every employee, for every stay at home Mom, for every student, even for every child who comes to Christ.
  - 2. *As Christians, we find complete sufficiency in Christ and His provisions for our needs. There’s no such thing as an incomplete or deficient Christian. Our Savior’s divine power*

*has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness. Human wisdom offers nothing to augment that. Every Christian receives all he or she needs at the moment of salvation. Each one must grow and mature, but no necessary resource is missing. There's no need to search for something more. (MacArthur, Sufficiency in Christ SIC)*

- a. Not look to receive a gift,
  - b. Not look for a second blessing,
  - c. Not look for a higher level that comes through a mystical experience.
  - d. Nor look for sinless perfection - change definition of perfection or change definition of sin -
    - 1) *There was a remedy for the sickness of systemic sinfulness, namely, entire sanctification-a personal, definitive work of God's sanctifying grace by which the war within oneself might cease and the heart be fully released from rebellion into wholehearted love for God and others. (Five Views on Sanctification, Wesleyan Perspective, Melvin E. Dieter)*
    - 2) *Some within Pentecostal Holiness Movement - must experience the baptism of HS*
3. *When Jesus completed His redemptive work on Calvary, He cried out triumphantly, It is finished (John 19:30). The saving work was fulfilled, completed. Nothing was omitted. And all who are recipients of that salvation are granted everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 1:3). In Him we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). His grace is sufficient for every situation (2 Cor. 12:9). We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Him (Eph. 1:3). By one offering He has perfected us forever (Heb. 10:14). We are complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). What can anyone add to that? SIC*