

# An Appearance of Wisdom

*PART 1: TRUE WISDOM COMES ONLY  
FROM GOD THROUGH CHRIST*



**For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge  
and understanding.**

(Proverbs 2:6 ESV)

## OUTLINE ... Colossians 2:16-23

1. Do not allow false teachers to undermine our complete dependence on Christ for the spiritual growth—maturity and wisdom—that comes only from God, 2:16-19.

We are to reject any spiritual manipulation that depends on a legalistic system—you do this; you get this—for spiritual growth and maturity. These human rules and formulas undermine our dependence on Christ as our sole source of nourishment and bonding that comes from God.

- (Colossians 2:16–19 ESV) Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

### FIVE ESSENTIAL FACTS WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS TO AVOID THEIR ATTEMPTS OF SPIRITUAL INTIMIDATION, MANIPULATION AND CAPTIVITY.

**Fact #1:** False teachers attempt to spiritually intimidate by passing judgment based on human rules and traditions, 2:16.

**Fact #2:** False teachers attempt to spiritually intimidate through truth that is merely a shadow of the truth, 2:17.

**Fact #3:** False teachers attempt to manipulate through a false humility and an inflated spirituality that are the products of a sinful mind corrupted by pride, 2:18.

**Fact #4:** False teachers do not hold fast to Christ, 2:19a.

False teachers do not hold fast to Christ because their pride has rendered them incapable of doing so—"they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind" (Colossians 2:18b NIV).

False teachers hold to a view of Jesus Christ that is both incompatible with and subversive to the biblical instruction concerning ***the Person and Work of Jesus Christ—specifically, the sufficiency of Christ.***

**The false teaching of works salvation is incompatible with a biblical understanding of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.**

Not holding fast to Christ does not mean that they do not profess Christ—even profess to hold fast to him. But their practice and theology tell a different story. Any and every teaching that takes the form of ***Christ plus something*** is contrary to the biblical instruction.

**INCOMPATIBLE ...** an excellent word choice.

Incompatible speaks of two things—in our case *Christ alone versus Christ plus something*—so opposed in character as to be incapable of existing together; two things so different in nature as to be incapable of coexisting; antagonistic—incapable of harmonious association; clashing—sharply and harshly discordant; contradictory, mutually exclusive—unable to be both true at the same time.

**So the teaching of Christ plus any work—such as water baptism—is incompatible with the biblical doctrine of the sufficiency of Christ alone.** People who cannot or will not let go of a works-based salvation are captive to a falsehood that is a shadow of the truth—a version of the truth that is not the truth at all.

**The false teaching of works salvation is subversive to a biblical understanding of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.**

**SUBVERSIVE ...** means tending to weaken or destroy an established authority; intended to destroy the power or influence of an established belief; tending or intending to subvert or overthrow, destroy, or undermine an established set of beliefs.

**Fact #5:** In not holding fast to Christ, false teachers subvert the only source of spiritual growth that is from God, 2:19b.

- **THE GREAT CONTRAST ...** (2 Peter 3:17–18 ESV) You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own**

**stability.** 18 **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2. Based on the foundational truth of our death with Christ to the elemental teaching of this world, we must see the foolishness and futility of submitting to any of the rules and regulations that are according to human ways and thoughts, 2:20-22, cf. 2:8, Isaiah 55:8-9.

- (Colossians 2:20–22 ESV) **If with Christ you died** to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?
- (Colossians 2:8 ESV) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, **and not according to Christ.**
- (Isaiah 55:8–9 NLT) “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”

3. Do not be “taken in” by the appearance of wisdom that is based on self-made religion and false humility and is useless in fighting sin, 2:23.

- (Colossians 2:23 ESV) These have indeed **an appearance of wisdom** in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

## LOOKING AHEAD ...

- (Genesis 3:6 ESV) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one **wise**, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.
- (Psalm 19:7 ESV) The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making **wise** the simple.
- (Psalm 90:12 ESV) So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of **wisdom.**
- (Proverbs 11:2 ESV) When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is **wisdom.**
- (Proverbs 17:24 ESV) The discerning sets his face toward **wisdom**, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
- (Proverbs 26:12 ESV) **Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?** There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- (Proverbs 3:7 ESV) **Be not wise in your own eyes;** fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
- (Proverbs 12:15 ESV) The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a **wise** man listens to advice.
- (Isaiah 5:21 ESV) **Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,** and shrewd in their own sight!
- (Romans 1:22 ESV) **Claiming to be wise,** they became fools.
- (Romans 12:16 ESV) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. **Never be wise in your own sight.**
- (1 Corinthians 3:18 ESV) Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is **wise** in this age, let him become a fool that he may become **wise.**
- (Ephesians 5:15 ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as **unwise** but as **wise.**
- (James 1:5 ESV) If any of you lacks **wisdom,** let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.



# HAVE YOU DIED WITH CHRIST?

## "IN CHRIST" MORTUARY & FUNERAL SERVICES

SINCE YOU DIED WITH CHRIST AND WERE MADE FREE FROM THE RULING SPIRITS OF THE WORLD, WHY DO YOU ACT AS IF YOU STILL BELONG TO THIS WORLD BY FOLLOWING RULES LIKE THESE.

(COLOSSIANS 2:20 NCV)



*FROM BURIAL TO RESURRECTION*



- (Colossians 2:20 ESV) **If with Christ you died** to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations.
- (Colossians 2:11–12 ESV) In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, **12 having been buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.
- (Colossians 1:21–22 ESV) And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death**, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.
- (Galatians 4:8–11 ESV) Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, **how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world**, whose slaves you want to be once more? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years! 11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.
- (Romans 6:5–11 ESV) **For if we have been united with him in a death like his**, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 **We know that our old self was crucified with him** in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 **For one who has died** has been set free from sin. 8 **Now if we have died with Christ**, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 **So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**.