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## **For in Christ**

**dwells all the**

## **Fullness of the Godhead.**

**(Colossians 2:1-9)**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

# For in Christ Dwells all the Fullness of the Godhead.

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**INTRODUCTION:** Paul wrote, "For in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). The word Godhead has been used by some to support the theory that Jesus is God, since it is thought that the word Godhead embraces the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All Christians know that there can only be one God so it is reasoned by some that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit must all be the same divine being meaning they are all, the one true God which is summed up in the word Godhead. This study sets about to discover if this logic and reasoning is correct. Before we look at the word Godhead we need to see what the context of Paul's letter is and the best way to do this is to start at the beginning.

- **Colossians 2:1-3:** For I (Paul) want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, <sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Paul is praying the Colossians and those of Laodicea (and by extension all who believe in Christ) will understand what God's hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ are because he is worried they do not have full assurance of their salvation and concerned that they have not fully understood the Gospel message of grace that God the Father had planned in His eternal mind before the world began. Paul's deep desire is that all faithful believers would attain total confidence and full assurance of salvation through understanding the knowledge of God's mystery concerning Christ. Paul is saying that in Christ are hidden great and priceless treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In the following verses of this chapter Paul shines a brilliant spotlight on what God's hidden treasures in Christ are. This knowledge Paul is about to share brings the full understanding of the eternal plan of God for the salvation of mankind into brilliant light. In the following verses Paul reveals the mystery that was hidden from the faithful who lived under the Old Covenant of Law, but before he does, he gives the following warnings.

- **Colossians 2:4-8:** I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup> 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.

The words, through philosophy and empty deceit (v8) refer to philosophy blended with Christianity. Paul was fully aware that when the Good News of the Gospel is mixed with man's reasoning and shallow and superficial human knowledge by the teachers of such philosophies. It matters not how much they may promise prosperity and happiness in this world and eternal life in the next and how well their teachings and speculations about things of God may please people's fancies and tickle their ears their teachings cannot accomplish what they promise. This is because mixing and blending the Good News of the Gospel with man's philosophies rob the Gospel from the power to save.

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## THE ELEMENTAL SPIRITS OF THE WORLD

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To the Jews the elemental spirits of the world refer to:

- Those who believe they can be saved by strictly keeping the laws of Moses and Jewish customs (i.e., eating of meats, drinks and washings, etc.), and by adhering to their religious system of ceremonial rites and

their teachings as taught according to the legalistic minds and harsh and traditional interpretations of the Chief Priests, Pharisees and Scribes.

To the Gentile the elemental spirits of the world refer to:

- Those who believe they can be saved by self-discipline and self-denial and by spiritual symbolic mysteries and initiatory rites used to attain God's favour and eternal life.

The elemental spirits of the world are things religious teachers tell their followers they must keep and maintain to earn eternal salvation and the things people of the secular and unbelieving world do to earn righteousness so that God will accept them into heaven. This is why Paul immediately follows his statement with the words:

- Not according to Christ (v8).

Meaning, they are not seeking salvation according to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything a person does to earn righteousness that leads to eternal life makes void the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and nullifies what he achieved on the cross since they are setting about to earn their own righteousness and their own salvation by their own self-effort and religious works.

**NOTE:** earning salvation by self-effort and religious works has an appeal to the flesh (self, ego and pride) and especially to those who do not have a humble or right heart before God because though most people clearly see the faults and sins of other people without the working of the Holy Spirit they rarely see how deeply sin like a cancerous virus has infected us all nor do they see their own-selfishness, ego and pride and therefore they are able to attain to their own standard of righteousness. Blindness to the sin of one's own life often leads to self-righteousness and in self-righteousness a person not only feels superior to others, but can look down on those who don't attain to their standard of righteousness or their commitment in keeping religious works or their intellectual knowledge of the Bible and in their aloofness not only is pride and ego energized, but they feel wonderfully superior and spiritually exalted such is the deception of the flesh (ego and pride).

**TODAY:** the phrase the elemental spirits of the world applies to the general populations of the world who believe in spiritual teachings and gods that suit their own thinking, lifestyle and concepts of God, and to trusting in religious rites, customs and traditions etc., to be righteous in contrast to following God's ways and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace alone. Whoever believes they have to attain to righteousness that leads to eternal salvation by self-effort and keeping religious rites, customs and traditions is held captive to the law and religious works. Paul is warning every brother and sister in Christ to be careful of false teachers who imply that salvation comes through works or tradition or any other method or way other way than by faith in Christ alone.

Paul is saying that only in Jesus the Son of God and in him alone is the fullness of God the Father's plan of salvation for all mankind, there is nothing a brother or sister in Christ can add to the Gospel of salvation in Christ or do to make themselves more saved. Every faithful brother and sister are made complete in Christ meaning they are totally justified and redeemed in Christ and in him alone, because he is the fullness of God's plan of eternal salvation for all mankind from the beginning, manifested in bodily form on this earth and resurrected to eternal glory. This is the reason Paul says:

- In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (v3). (Referring to knowledge that leads to eternal life).

- **Colossians 2:9:** For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

The King James Bible says:

- For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

**Godhead:** the word Godhead comes from the Greek word (theos) and means godlike, divinity or divine deity (especially the supreme divinity). Figuratively theos can refer to an immortal deity, to God, to a goddess, a magistrate or to an idol that people worship as a divine being. It has the sense of being extremely or exceedingly godly and the thought of eternal power and divine nature and carries the idea of eternal plans, purposes and promises.

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### THE FOLLOWING ARE THE ONLY THREE VERSES THAT USE THE WORD, GODHEAD

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All verses are cited from the King James Bible.

1. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God (the Father), we ought not to think that the Godhead (the divine being in ESV) is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device (Acts 17:29).

In these verses the Godhead has nothing to do with the Lord Jesus Christ the expressing is applying to the divine nature and eternal power of God the Father contrasted with idols.

2. For the invisible things of him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead (divine nature in ESV) so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

Paul in this verse is saying:

- What can be known about God is made plain.
- All of creation declares God's existence.
- God's invisible attributes are clearly seen in creation.
- Creation declares God's eternal power and divine nature.
- There is no excuse, to say God does not exist.

The word Godhead in this context is about the nature and eternal power of God. It has nothing to do with Jesus.

3. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (deity in ESV) bodily (Col. 2:9).

Paul in this verse is teaching that God has not only given Jesus all power, all authority and all rule and the right to forgive sins and grant eternal life, but also given him authority over every principality and power. At Jesus water baptism God gave His Spirit to Jesus without any limitations. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily is not saying that Jesus is God, it is declaring that everything a sinner needs for salvation and eternal life is in Christ, in Christ is all the power of God that a repentant sinner needs for eternal salvation. Paul is saying:

- In Christ is all the knowledge of God's mystery concerning salvation.
- In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God.
- In Christ is the fullness of God's Spirit dwells without limitations.
- In Christ is, all rule, power and authority.

- In Christ all the faithful are united to God his heavenly Father.
- In Christ God has forgiven all repentant sinners.
- In Christ God has cancelled the debt of the Law with its legal demands.
- In Christ God nailed the record of debt that stood against us to the cross.

In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily is not teaching that Jesus is God, but that everything we need for eternal salvation and to know God the Father is in Christ.

The words:

- For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (KJV) and the words, For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (ESV) (Col. 2:9).

Mean that all the heavenly treasures and spiritual riches of God needed for salvation and eternal life are in Christ and that all the following spiritual blessings are in Jesus and in him alone:

- Forgiveness of sins and redemption to eternal life.
- The inheritance and eternal promises made to Abraham, David and Israel.
- Entry into the Kingdom of God, eternal life and everlasting glory.
- Full assurance of salvation and all the wisdom and knowledge of God.

When Paul said, "In Jesus the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily," (v9) he was not mystically or secretly implying as some religious ministers teach that Jesus the Son is actually God the Father (if that was the case Paul would simply say so) rather Paul was saying that God gave Jesus:

- All dominion and a name above every name.
- The highest authority to rule and judge and the power to give eternal life.

Every power and authority that God has, He gave to Jesus His Son it is in this sense that Paul is saying, "In Jesus the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily," (v9). It means that Jesus is the perfect mirror reflection and image of God the Father's character, power, promises and Spirit, because Jesus was filled with God's Spirit without limitation. Paul is not implying that Jesus is God, but that he has the Spirit of God and all the power of God dwelling in him without any limitations.

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### **IN CHRIST DWELLS THE FULLNESS OF GOD ALSO CARRIES THE FOLLOWING TWO IDEAS.**

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1. Jesus Christ was the fullness of God and the perfect image of God in that he was God's word manifested in the flesh (human body) displaying the wisdom knowledge love, kindness, compassion, grace and mercy of the invisible God in heaven in absolute perfection while here on earth and the majestic miracles he did revealed God the Father's love for a lost and dying sinful world.
2. Jesus was the complete fulfilment of the eternal plan of redemption and salvation for all mankind that God had purposed and planned in His eternal mind and foreknowledge. It is in this sense that Christ is spoken of as having, "The whole fullness of the Godhead dwelling in

him.” Paul is saying that Jesus Christ is not just another human man or great prophet, but the only begotten Son of God the Father, in who is the entire plan of God’s eternal salvation.

It means that in Christ alone is salvation in contrast to all other great prophets of the Bible who only had the power to lead people to Israel’s Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world. Whereas Christ is the Saviour in him alone is forgiveness of sins and eternal life, he is the final Lamb of God without blemish to be sacrificed for man’s sin and in him God’s complete plan of eternal salvation for Jews and Gentiles alike is fulfilled and, in this sense, the whole fullness of God dwells in him.

### **Paul told the Ephesian brothers and sisters that they could:**

- Know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephes. 3:19).

No one reading this today believes that a brother or sister who is filled with the fullness of God actually becomes God, rather we all know that Paul is saying that we can be filled with God’s Spirit, so why is it when Paul said:

- For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col. 1:19).

That certain religious teachers based on these words of Paul’s proclaim that Jesus the Son became God the Father? Rather than accept that God by His Spirit dwelt in Christ without any limitations in the same way that God’s Spirit (with limitations) dwelt in the prophets and apostles and in all who faithfully trust in Jesus and follow Him.

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## **MOSES AND THE ABUNDANCE OF GOD’S SPIRIT**

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Moses and the seventy prophets are a good example of God’s Spirit being poured out upon believers with varying levels of power. The following verses show that God is able to take a portion of His Spirit from one person and place it onto others as He chooses:

- Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD and he gathered seventy men of the elders and placed them around the tent then the LORD came down in the cloud and took some of the SPIRIT that was on him and put it on the seventy elders as soon as the SPIRIT rested on them, they prophesied. but they did not continue doing it and two men named Eldad and Medad remained in the camp and the SPIRIT rested on them and so they also prophesied (Numbers 11:24-26).

These verses clearly show that God is able to pour out His Spirit in varying portions on whoever he chooses. Though brothers and sisters in Christ can be filled with God’s Spirit, no one thinks they can become God no matter how much of His Spirit they may be filled with, yet when Paul talks of Jesus being filled with God’s Spirit it is used to support the mistaken theory that Jesus is God, but Paul is not teaching that Christ is God, but that he is filled with the fullness of God’s Spirit in every way and without any limitations.

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## **THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE THE SAVIOUR**

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Throughout the Bible both the Father and the Son are referred to as the Saviour this is because God the Father planned and purposed salvation in His eternal mind before time began and Christ fulfilled that plan in his ministry, death and resurrection thus the words, “For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” mean that in Christ alone is the fullness of God the Father’s plan of salvation for all or mankind. There is nothing a believer can add to the Gospel of salvation of Christ to make themselves more saved. Those who belong to Christ are complete (for eternal

salvation), meaning they are totally justified and redeemed in Christ and in him alone because in him is the fullness of God's plan of salvation. This is what the Bible means when it says:

- For in the Son dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Christ"

Both terms simply mean that in Christ is God's full plan of salvation. Jesus the Son of God is the fullness of the complete and entire eternal plan of God's salvation for all mankind which God in His eternal mind purposed before time, began. There is no other plan or way for man to be redeemed. Jesus is God's promise of eternal life and it is through faith in him that all faithful believers are complete, meaning they are fully forgiven, fully justified and fully redeemed and counted worthy of eternal life.

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