

YOU ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST

Colossians 2:8-15

⁸Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. ⁹For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. ¹⁰So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

¹¹When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. ¹²For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

¹³You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

Colossians 2:8–15 (NLT)

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Last week, we studied some of the meaning of verse 8. The New Living Translation includes it (as do many commentators) with the verses we study this week. If verse 8 presents the attack, Paul begins equipping them to give an answer. *What do we have "in Christ" (2:9-10)?*

Circumcision in the Bible is a ritual the removal of the foreskin. It was the sign of participation in the covenant with Abraham (*Genesis 17:9-14; Exodus 4:26; Leviticus 12:3*), thus it is an important part of Jewish identity. *What is "a circumcision made without hands" (2:11-13)?*

The early church was divided over the issue of whether it was necessary to require the Gentiles to be circumcised and follow the Law in order to follow Christ (*Acts 15:1; Galatians 6:12-13*). The decision of the church at Jerusalem was no to both (*Acts 15*). Spiritual circumcision takes place when we come to Christ. It is identified with the putting away of our sinful nature (*Colossians 2:11-12*).

What is the condition of all those who have not been made alive with Christ (2:12-14)?

What is “the record of the charges” and how was it set aside (2:14)?

Who are “rulers and authorities” and how were they disarmed (2:15; compare 2:10)?

“Rulers and authorities” is a phrase which can refer to the political authorities, such as the Roman governor (*Luke 20:20*) who crucified Jesus. It is before these that Christians will be brought to testify of Christ (*Luke 12:11*) so we need to be obedient to them by doing what is good (*Titus 3:1*; see a similar concept in *1 Peter 2:13-17*). Christ will abolish all secular authority at His coming (*1 Corinthians 15:24*). This concept of an earthly ruler is expanded also to include rulers in the spiritual world (*Ephesians 1:21*). Many of these are “unseen” and must be fought with spiritual methods (*Ephesians 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:10, 15*).