

LESSON 7

PAUL'S PICTURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST, PART 2

COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST (2:10, 11)

Because Jesus embodies the “fullness”—the entirety—of God’s divine nature, He is able to make His followers full, or “complete.”

1. What will be the basis of judgment for those living in the Christian Age?
2. What does Paul mean by the phrase “made without hands” in verse 11?
3. What are seven ways the word translated “flesh” in verse 11 is used in Scripture?
4. What differences are there between the covenant of circumcision and that of baptism?

LIFE AND FORGIVENESS IN CHRIST (2:12, 13)

Spiritual circumcision comes about when we are buried with Christ in baptism (2:11–13). The writer was comparing two physical acts—circumcision and immersion in water—with the spiritual realities of baptism. In baptism a person is made alive by sharing Jesus’ burial and resurrection. Paul explained that, in baptism, one is brought from being dead in sin to being made spiritually alive and forgiven of sins.

5. How is baptism an act of submission both to Christ and to one’s brother?
6. How can we answer those who claim that baptism does not call for immersion?
7. What kind of faith must a person have when baptized?
8. What are the three results of baptism?

9. What does God do to a person when he is baptized?
10. Why are those who try to separate baptism from forgiveness unjustified in doing so?

**FREEDOM IN CHRIST
FROM LAW ORDINANCES
(2:14)**

While the Law served its purpose, there was much it could not do. Thus, in accordance with God's plan, Paul was able to say, "And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

11. What does the phrase "certificate of debt consisting of decrees" refer to?
12. In what way was the Law "hostile to us"?
13. Where else in the Bible can we find justification for the idea that Christians are not under the Law?
14. If the Law "has [been] taken . . . out of the way," of what value is the Old Testament to Christians?
15. Can any aspects of the Law still be kept by Christians? Explain.

OPPOSITION EXPOSED BY CHRIST (2:15)

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God defeated all opponents of His plans. Through His resurrection, Jesus triumphed over the Jewish leaders who put Him to death, the power of the devil, and all other opposing forces. Jesus informed Peter that the Jewish soldiers who had come to apprehend Him had no power over Him (Mt. 26:53). Jesus revealed to Pilate that the imperial authority of the most powerful nation in the world has no power over Him (Jn. 19:11). Through His death and resurrection, He showed that death has no power over Him (Acts 2:24). Through His death, He destroyed the power of the devil (Heb. 2:14; see also 1 Cor. 15:55–57) and his evil messengers (Mt. 25:41), the demonic forces.

16. What is unusual about the word translated "disarmed" that makes its exact meaning difficult to know?
17. Who are the "rulers and authorities" of verse 15?

18. How did god disarm these powers, triumph over them, and display them publicly?
19. What did Paul mean by the word “display” in this verse?
20. From what Roman context did Paul borrow the word translated “triumph” here?