

The MYSTERY

Hidden for Ages

Is Now REVEALED

A Study of the Book of Colossians

LESSON 12

This Week's Passage:

Colossians 2:11–14

New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Memory Verse: Colossians 2:3

² My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ³ *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Day One: Read Colossians 2.

1. Read Colossians 2:9–10. In these verses Paul reminds the Colossian believers of the supremacy of Christ and of the “fullness” or completeness they have already been given in him. To fill in what that fullness looks like, “Paul begins to enlarge on it by explaining what the Lord Jesus has done for His people in specific matters”¹ in verses 11–14.

List the specific benefits that are ours because of what Jesus has done.


v. 11

v. 12–13a

v. 13b

v. 14

How do these benefits become ours?

2. In laying out these works of Christ, Paul refutes some of the false teaching that had crept into the Colossian church. The false teachers may have been claiming that physical circumcision was a necessary “act of dedication and consecration...[by which] the believer would enter his full inheritance.”²
- a. What did circumcision represent for Jews in the Old Testament? (Gen. 17:1–14; Gal. 5:3)
 - b. Why does circumcision “performed by human hands” (v. 11) have no place under the new covenant? (Gal. 5:1–4; 6:13–15)
 - c. If this circumcision is not “performed by human hands,” how is it performed? (vv. 11b–12; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28–29;  2 Cor. 5:17)

Day Two: Read Colossians 2:11–14.

3. Through the new covenant circumcision we are freed from being “ruled by the flesh” (v. 11b).
- a. What is it like when the “whole self [is] ruled by the flesh” (v. 11b)? (Gal. 5:16–21a; Eph. 2:3)
 - b. We have been freed from the things listed above. How can we avoid returning to them? (Gal. 5:13, 16; 5:22–6:2)

4. Using Colossians 1:13–14 along with 2:13–14 fill in the chart below to explore how Paul describes our salvation. (Some pre-salvation descriptions may not be stated but can be found by looking at what God has done for us.)

Our pre-salvation condition	What God has done in saving us

Day Three: Read Colossians 2:11–14.

5. Read verse 12 and Romans 6:1–14.
- What does Paul say happens to us when we are baptized? (Rom. 6:3–4a)
 - What are the implications of this?
Rom. 6:4b–5, 8

Rom. 6:6–7

Rom. 6:11–14

Day Four: Read Colossians 2:13–14.

6. The ESV translates verses 13–14 this way: “God made [you] alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”
- Why did we have a “record of debt that stood against us” (v. 14)? (Ps. 51:4; Rom. 3:9–20)

- b. Why was it impossible for us to pay this debt ourselves?
- c. What did it take to cancel the debt? (Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18–19; 2:24–25)
- d. What is our new standing before God? (1:21–22)

Day Five: Read Colossians 1—4.

- 7. In Colossians 2:11–14 Paul is “countering any suggestion that God can do for people anything greater than he has already done for them in Christ....He does this...by freshly describing...the sheer immensity of what God has already done for them through the death of Christ.”³ With this in mind, read over these verses, but this time replace “you” with “I.”
 - a. What, if anything, strikes you differently reading it this way?
 - b. How do these truths impact how you think, speak, and act as you go about your daily life?
 - c. How do these truths impact the way you respond to praise, criticism, or failure?

*📖 Indicates verses for further study

¹ Everett F. Harrison, *Colossians: Christ All-Sufficient* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 59.

² Dick Lucas, *The Message of Colossians & Philemon* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1980), 101.

³ Lucas, 105.