

YOU ARE COMPLETE in HIM.

COLOSSIANS 2:10, NOV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

Complete in Christ

Jesus was a preacher during the time of His stay on earth. In His own home, as described in Mark's gospel account, many were gathered, filling the house and spilling out onto the grounds outside, and Jesus "was speaking the word to them" (Mark 2:2). God, as prophesied in Isaiah, anointed Jesus "to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18). John the Immerser was a preacher, "preaching an immersion of repentance for forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4). Peter said that the risen Christ spoke to the apostles and "ordered us to preach to the people" (Acts 10:42). Paul said of the other apostles and of himself, "we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers" (Acts 13:32). Clearly the God who is over all ordained preaching, as the apostle Paul noted: "God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). Paul thus noted that he "was to fully carry out the preaching of the word of God," not only the simplistic "death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ," but also "the mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

▼ **The proclamation** — It is the Spirit of Christ who is the causative agent in the new birth, so that those properly immersed are "born of water and the Spirit." He assists in prayers, He strengthens Christians in the inner man, and He, as "the hope of glory," is the guarantee of the saint's resurrection to life at the last day. "And we proclaim Him," says the apostle to the Gentiles, "admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). Paul was not merely proclaiming Christ, he was proclaiming "Christ in you"! By not "shrinking back," but preaching the "whole message of this life," Paul was giving to the brethren the information from God about the indwelling Spirit, and the power and tools necessary for their own personal transformation. In teaching, he was giving them the information; in admonishing, he was giving them the encouragement and motivation. If the saints would apply all diligence on their part, the Holy Spirit was guaranteed to do His part, and they would have the potential of being "perfect in Christ."

▼ **The purpose** — The apostle Paul, the other apostles, and all who would follow in their footsteps in preaching the whole gospel, have the goal that "we may present every man complete in Christ." Paul superadds, "And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me" (Colossians 1:29). It is highly significant that the teaching and admonishing which the apostle did among the brethren to present each of them perfect in Christ would be termed "labor." It took tremendous energy on Paul's part to preach to the lost, but it took additional tremendous energy to work with the brethren, encouraging and strengthening them as they fought through their own spiritual battles in their individual ways to be fully embracing and exhibiting the character of Christ. To exert that tremendous energy, great love, and consistent encouragement, Paul would need help from God, which he acknowledges in these words, "striving according to His power." But this was not low voltage, this power "mightily works within me"!!

God's goal is that each person be perfect or complete in Christ. The record of the human race's having perfect character based on their own effort is zero; it is clear then that they need to be "born from above," to be no longer "mere men." Moving past the elementary teachings about the Christ, they can press on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1); they can "perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). And the Supreme Potentate, in order to make this possible, also strengthens the leaders of the churches, working mightily within them so that they can be positive role models for the newer Christians coming into the fold of Christ.

"AND FOR THIS PURPOSE ALSO I LABOR, STRIVING ACCORDING TO HIS POWER, WHICH MIGHTILY WORKS WITHIN ME."

JAY WILSON