

Theme: If we want to be free from sin and death, if we would not be taken captive, we must know who Christ is and what he has done. Then we must examine all our thoughts and desires to see if they are in accord with what we have received.

Background & Introduction: What is our best defense against being led astray? A certain, unshakable foundation.

I. The Present Danger

A. Taken captive (8)

1. Don't get carried off
 - Strong language - carried off into captivity!
2. Intellectual deception
 - a. Human tradition
 - That which has stood the test of time
 - Or in our case the "latest fashion"
 - b. Elemental spirits
 - 1) We are sure...
 - These belong to the material world - which Christ created!
 - They belong to the realm which is dominated by sin
 - 2) We are not sure...(the possibilities)
 - a) Elemental principles, foundational elements of the world (Galatians 4:9)
 - b) Elemental Spirits
 - Impersonal "powers" of the universe (Acts 7:42) - Personal powers (1:16; Ephesians 6:12)

(Note the use of the same phrase in 2:20. There we have been delivered from the dominion of those "spirits" that would enslave us. In v.8 the "elemental spirits," which Christ will "disarm," are placed in sharp contrast with the power of Christ.)

B. Not according to Christ

- Not what you received
- The "fullness" of Christ (1:9,19; 2:2,10)

C. Know the danger - Know the Enemy

II. Your Sure Defense

A. God In Christ (9)

1. The fullness of deity – is "In Him"
 - Jesus doesn't just have attributes of God – he has fullness of deity
2. God dwells bodily in Him
 - God has come bodily – in the incarnation
 - It is not a shadow, or representation
 - He is not an image that reflects God – He is God made visible

B. Christ in you

1. Perfect "fullness" (10) - We have no "lack"
2. A divine circumcision (11a)
 - a. In Him - you were circumcised
 - Though they didn't have the outward sign
 - b. Without hands
 - This was done by God "In Him"
 - A spiritual circumcision (Ephesians 2:12)
 - c. A perfect circumcision!

3. Putting off the body of flesh (11b)
 - Not our body of sin (1:22,24; 2:1,5)
 - Rather it refers to Christ's death
 - Christ's death, burial and resurrection are pictured in the passage
 - C. Christ over all
 1. We are raised from the dead (12, 13)
 - We were already dead
 - We were buried "with him" - in our baptism
 - Now we are raised with him! (Romans 6:3ff)
 2. The debt is cancelled (14)
 - a. The "record of debt"
 - Not just a metaphor for the written code (Mosaic Law), but
 - "Note" acknowledging a debt that must be paid (Philemon 19)
 - It has my name on it
 - The debtors were under a sentence of death
 - b. "Cancelled"
 - strong word - obliterated, blotted out
 - c. Nailed to the cross
 - Penalty is paid in full (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - Christ Jesus took our place (and we took his righteousness)
 3. Powers disarmed (stripped off) (15)
 - "Have put off" (3:9)
 - Stripped of their power
 - a. Regarding earthly powers...
 - They are put to shame
 - b. Regarding spiritual powers
 - They cannot accuse
 - D. The triumph of the Cross
- III. Staying Vigilant
- A. We have nothing to fear
 - B. There is nothing to add
 - C. We would know more of Christ Jesus the Lord