



Pointers and questions on Paul's letter to the
COLOSSIANS

Session 5

2:8-15

The Triumph of the Cross

Summary

- 2:8-10** The enemy that the Colossians face (the false teaching) is a 'philosophy' based on human tradition and evil forces. They should beware of giving in to it. Christ is all they need, for he is God!
- 2:11-12** In yielding their lives to Christ they underwent a cutting-off ('circumcision') from all that, expressed in their baptism.
- 2:13-14** Their happy position in Christ has come about through none of their own doing; it is God himself who, through Christ's cross and resurrection, set them free from the old life.
- 2:15** The 'powers and authorities' which governed their old life, and which are raising their heads again in the false teaching, have been totally conquered by Jesus, who has made them look foolish.

Questions to get you thinking

1. What people and ideologies today would you say are trying to 'take Christians captive' (v8)?
2. What do the words 'hollow' and 'deceptive' tell us about such ways of thinking?
3. Talk about ways in which 'human tradition' (v8) can shape your attitudes. Give some examples of areas in which becoming a Christian has required a major shift in your views.
4. Verse 9 has been described as one of the most mind-boggling statements in the whole of Scripture. Is that a fair description?
5. What are the connections, both stated and implied in v11-12, between circumcision and baptism?
6. If baptism is a 'putting off of the sinful nature' (v11), how well are you doing at living according to the new nature that is yours in Christ?
7. In practice what does it mean to be 'raised' with Christ (v12)? Are you living that way?
8. Look at the phrase '*dead in your sins*' in v13. What does this say to those who believe that becoming a Christian is a matter of self-improvement or 'pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps'?
9. What do you think Paul means by 'the written code, with its regulations' in v14?
10. Note 'powers and authorities' in v15. Where else in this passage are they mentioned? Do they—as the false teachers taught—stand on an equal footing with Christ?

