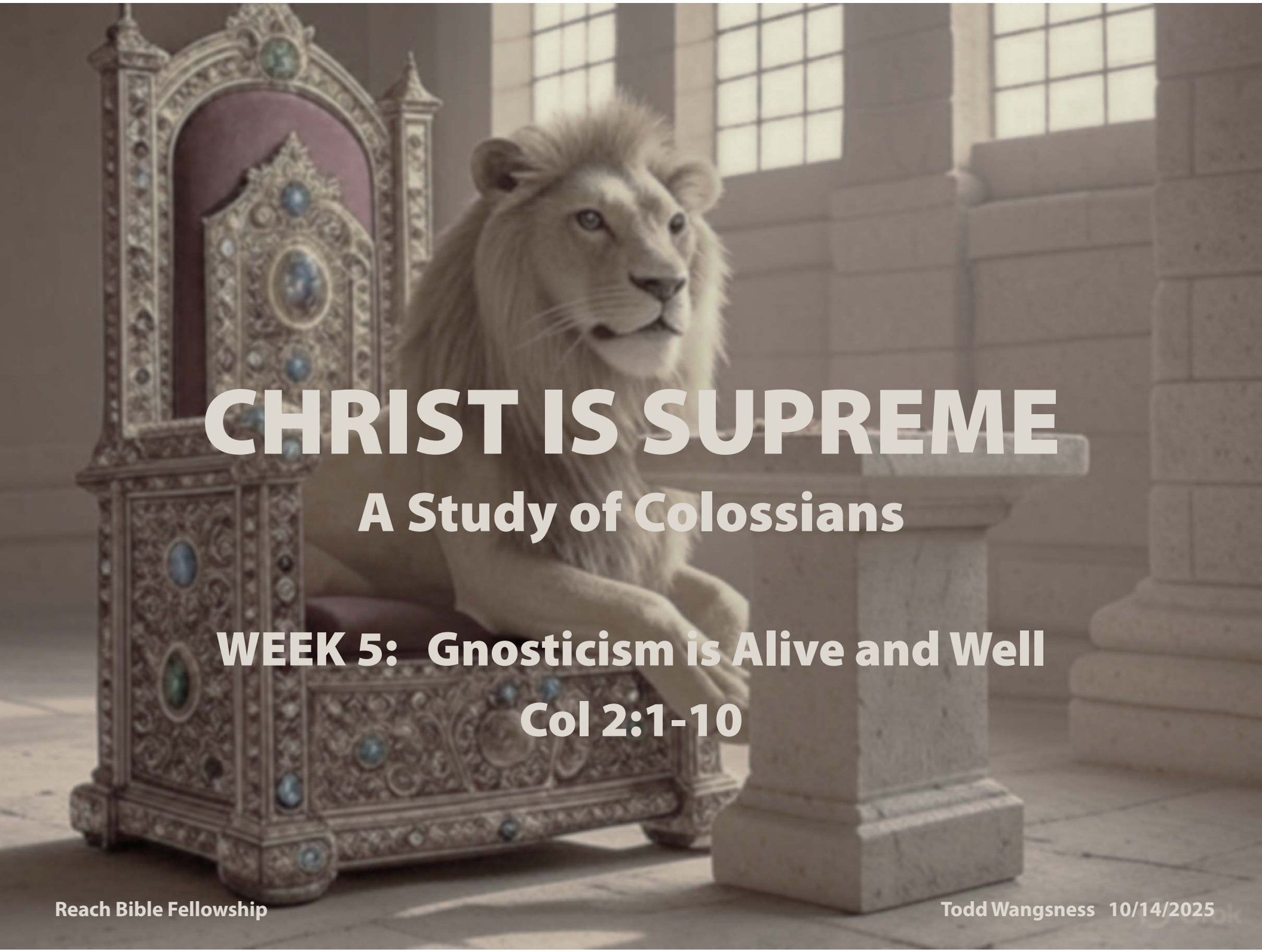


CHRIST IS SUPREME

A Study of Colossians

WEEK 5: Gnosticism is Alive and Well

Col 2:1-10

Reach Bible Fellowship

Todd Wangsness 10/14/2025

Christ is Supreme: Gnosticism is Alive and Well

WEEK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Week 1	Overview	Overview of the book of Colossians
Week 2	Col 1:1 – 14	Introduction and God's Redemption
Week 3	Col 1:15 – 20	The Preeminence of Jesus Christ
Week 4	Col 1:21 – 29	The Mystery of the Ages
Week 5	**Col 2:1 – 10**	**Gnosticism is Alive and Well**
Week 6	Col. 2:11 – 23	The Futility of Legalism
Week 7	Col. 3:1 – 17	Set Your Mind on Things Above
Week 8	Col. 4:1 – 18	Exhortation to Prayer and Final Greetings

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Notable quotes on Col 2:1-10

"The Word was made flesh, not merely appearing as man, but truly taking on our nature, so that in Him all the fullness of God dwells bodily. Those who deny this, saying the body is unworthy of divinity, fall into the error of the Gnostics, who despise the creation and its redemption."

- **Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 AD)**

"The Apostle teaches that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, not in some other philosophy or secret doctrine. Those who seek wisdom apart from Him are deceived by empty speculations, as the Gnostics were, who trusted in their own minds rather than the Word."

- **Gregory of Nyssa (335-395 AD)**

"When he says, 'In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' , he shows that no additional knowledge is needed beyond Christ. Those who introduce philosophies and human traditions, as if they could add to the truth, are deceived. Christ is the mystery of God, and in Him is all sufficiency."

- **Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 AD)**

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Col 2:1-2 ***For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,***

- **Encouragement:** ***"that their hearts may be encouraged"***
- **Endearment:** ***"being knit together in love"***
- **Enrichment:** ***"attaining to all riches"***
- **Enlightenment:** ***"the full assurance of understanding"***

Col 2:3 ***in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

- **The Gnostics taught a limited and perverted kind of knowledge**
  - **They taught knowledge was an end in itself and needed to be parceled out through intermediary beings and 'enlightened' teachers**
- **Paul vehemently rejected this view and insisted that a full knowledge of God only comes through Christ**

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Keep making spiritual progress

Col 2:4-5 ***Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.***

- **Satan is the great deceiver!**
  - **One of the tools in his arsenal to deceive is to use words**
  - **"Persuasive": Greek '*pithanologia*'. Arguments presented by a lawyer. Persuasiveness of speech, specious discourse leading others into error.**
  - ***Joh 8:44 He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.***
- ***"Order and the steadfastness"***
  - **Military terms to describe an army solidly arrayed against a common enemy**
    - **Order: Describes the organization of the army within the ranks with every soldier in his proper place**
    - **Steadfastness: Describes the army in battle formation against the enemy**

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Col 2:6-7 ***As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.***

- **We are to continue our Christian life the same we started … by FAITH!**
  - **We received Jesus Christ by faith, now we are to walk by FAITH!**
  - **The gnostic teachers would have us believe that we need some 'new hidden truth' to 'enlighten' us**
  - **All we need is the person and presence of Jesus Christ operating in and through us!**
  - **Paul uses imagery of a tree with an expansive root system deeply embedded in Jesus Christ**
    - **The Greek verb tense describes it as "once and for all having been rooted"**
  - **He also uses architectural terms, '*built up and established*' with the Greek emphasizing that our walk is a continuous, ongoing process of *being built up***

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Col 2:8 ***Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.***

- ***"Cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit"***
  - **Literally, the Greek says, "*Beware lest any man carry you off as a captive*"**
  - **The gnostic cultists did not go out and win the lost … they *kidnapped* converts from churches, just like *enlightened* (sarcasm!) false teachers continue to do today!**
  - **Gnosticism is alive and well today … here are only a few movements and names:**
    - **New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)**
    - **Kingdom Now Theology**
    - **Manifest Sons of Destiny**
    - **Seven Mountain Mandate**
    - **Bethel Church – Bill Johnson**
    - **International House of Prayer (IHOPKC)**
    - **Morningstar Ministries – Rick Joyner**
    - **HRock & Harvest International – Che Ahn**
    - **Global Awakening – Randy Clark**
    - **Elevation Church – Steven Furtick**
    - **Hillsong Church**

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What are the prominent philosophies of the New Apostolic Reformation?

- **Five-fold Ministry Restoration**
  - Apostles are seen as authoritative leaders with divine mandates to govern churches and regions
  - Prophets deliver direct revelations from God to guide strategy and expose spiritual 'realities'. True prophets of God have a 100% accuracy rating. These guys – not so much.
- **Supernatural Ministry, Signs and Wonders**
  - The church should operate in the "supernatural" through miracles, healings, prophetic words, and other spiritual gifts as a normative part of Christian life
- **Dominionism & Seven Mountains Mandate**
  - Christians are called to take "dominion" over society by influencing seven key spheres: religion, government, education, media, arts/entertainment, business, and family
- **Spiritual Warfare and Territorial Spirits**
  - The church must engage in spiritual warfare to defeat demonic forces controlling geographic regions, institutions, or individuals
  - This fosters an unhealthy preoccupation with the angelic spirit world – good and evil
- **Prophetic Activation and Personal Destiny**
  - Every believer can access prophetic gifts and fulfill a unique, God-given destiny to impact the world. This is a hallmark of NAR's appeal to younger generations.

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A little insight into what goes on behind the scenes at Bethel and Global Awakening

At Bethel Church



At Global Awakening



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We don't object to all of NAR Philosophies – just their emphasis

- **Five-fold Ministry Restoration**
  - It is possible that Apostles may exist at this time, however the NT model is that the Office of Apostle is by divine appointment. Jesus appointed the 12. He later appointed Paul on the road to Damascus.
  - While the gift of prophecy is mentioned several times in the NT, there is not a clear indication that the Office of Prophet is active at this point in time. The two witnesses will clearly hold that office in the future.
- **Supernatural Ministry, Signs and Wonders**
  - It would be wonderful to see Believers operate more actively in the gifts. The idea of holding workshops and working ourselves into a religious fervor is not mentioned as a NT model, however.
- **Dominionism & Seven Mountains Mandate**
  - This is the one thing that orthodox Christianity finds challenging to embrace. The bible DOES NOT TEACH that believers are to *prepare the world* to enable it to become righteous enough for Jesus to return. We should certainly evangelize though.

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- **Spiritual Warfare and Territorial Spirits**
  - Much of what constitutes "spiritual warfare" in charismatic churches is without scriptural basis
  - ***Jud 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"***
- **Prophetic Activation and Personal Destiny**
  - Believers *should* actively seek out their spiritual gifting, but all things should be done "decently and in order"

Concluding comments on NAR Philosophies

- Being "drunk in the spirit", screeching and caterwauling during a religious service, going into Kundalini convulsions, dabbling in "spiritual yoga", "spiritual tarot cards", "grave-soaking", etc., should have NO PLACE in our worship.
  - There is *absolutely no scriptural basis* for any of these highly questionable activities, other than actions recorded of demonized individuals!
- An unhealthy focus – however well-intentioned – on angelic manifestations only invites trouble and opens a gateway to the evil side of the spirit world

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NAR Bible Translation – The Passion Translation: Highly Inaccurate!

Luk 1:37	ESV:	For nothing will be impossible with God.
	TPT:	No promise of God is empty of power, for with God there is no such thing as impossibility.
Rom 1:16	ESV:	For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes …
	TPT:	I refuse to be ashamed of sharing the wonderful message of God's world-changing power spilling into our lives through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One!
2 Tim 4:2	ESV:	Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.
	TPT:	Proclaim the Word of God and stand upon it no matter what! Rise to the occasion and preach when it is convenient and when it is not. Preach in the full expression of the Holy Spirit—with wisdom and patience as you instruct and teach the people.
Gal 4:12	ESV:	Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are... You did me no wrong.
	TPT:	Beloved ones, I plead with you, follow my example and become free from the bondage of religion.

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What about their music?

- Bethel Church (Redding, CA) is the parent organization to both Bethel Music and Jesus Culture Music
- Elevation Church (Charlotte, NC) is the parent organization to Elevation Worship
- Hillsong Church (Sydney, Australia) is the parent organization to Hillsong Music, Hillsong United, and Hillsong Young & Free
- In my opinion – for what it is worth!
  - Much of the music is good and scripture based
  - However, some is repetitive (mantra-like)
  - Some songs have a noticeable lack of scriptural depth with perhaps too much emphasis placed on what God has done for the believer
  - Personal peeve: Commanding the Holy Spirit to come and do this or that. The Holy Spirit is not our lap dog … He is God!
  - Discretion and discernment are encouraged and advocated
- As with any organization claiming to be Christian, some members are genuine believers, while others may not be. Some artists are true followers of Jesus, others may not be.

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Not Philosophy but Christ

Col 2:9-10 ***For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.***

- **"*dwells*": Greek '*katoikeō*'. To permanently house, reside or inhabit. God is said to dwell in the temple, i.e. to be always present for worshippers.**
- **"*fullness*": Greek '*plērōma*'. That which is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God. Completeness, abundance, sum total.**
- **"*complete*": Greek '*plēroō*'. To fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim.**
- **Paul's argument in these two verses goes head-to-head with the claims of the false teachers**
  - **They claimed:**
    - **That Jesus was one of many *emanations* from God**
    - **That Jesus did not come *in the flesh*, but only as a spirit manifestation**
    - **That we need special *secret* knowledge that only certain *enlightened* ones can pass along**

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"who is the head of all principality and power"

- **Jesus is the sum total of God … He IS the PREEMINENT ONE!**
- **He is over *all* things, including all *principalities and powers***
  - **Not just over the 'good' angels, but ALL principalities and powers**
  - ***Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.***
  - ***Heb 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil***
  - ***Jam 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!***
- **He is not merely another emanation from God … He IS GOD! He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!**
  - ***Isa 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

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Questions to ponder …

- **In what ways can false teachers take us *captive* with their words?**
- **What are some common false teachings spoken from a pulpit (or TV studio)?**
- **What is worse, a false teacher or a denomination that embraces non-scriptural teachings?**
- **Should we listen to music from an organization that is known to have false or questionable teachings?**
- **Is there anything *sinful* about some of the questionable practices of organizations that embrace NAR philosophies? I.e., grave-soaking, Christian yoga/tarot cards, their 'glow sessions' where people are slain in the spirit, drunk in the spirit, convulsing, etc.?**
- **Should our church(es) become more passionate and demonstrative in our worship and personal life regarding our belief in Jesus Christ?**