

Colossians 2:6-15 NIV

“Securing you relationship with Jesus”

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

⁸“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.⁹ **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,¹⁰ and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.**

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.¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

Did you ever wonder what God looks like?

Archaeological evidence shows us how people pictured God or what they thought was a god in past eras.

Those mythical, imagined deities make interesting studies.

You might find another reality even more intriguing.

To what do I refer?

Modern space scientists seem fascinated with the mythical gods of the past.

They name rockets and space missions after ancient gods—Thor, Atlas, Apollo, etc.

In Germanic religions, **Thor** was the Norse god of thunder and the chief cult among the Norse people.

“Identification (of Thor) with Jupiter resulted in translation of *Jove’s (Jupiter’s) Day* into *Thursday*.”¹

Thor is same as Jupiter (aka Jove), chief divinity of the Romans; Thursday was originally Thor’s Day.

So also Wednesday (Woden’s Day). Woden was the highest Teutonic god (probably the same as the Roman god *Mercury*), the messenger god of merchants, commerce, and trade. *Merchant* and *mercury* share the same prefix in.

In Greek religion, *Apollo* was the Olympian god of light, music, pastoral pursuits, prophecy, and medicine as well (he was father of *Asclepius*).

Does this continuing tendency on the part of space scientists (naming their projects after ancient gods) make you wonder about their true ambitions?



Project **Mercury**



Thor rocket



Jupiter rocket



Apollo

U.S. space scientists recently announced that the new Mars mission will be called *Artemis*.

Ponder the implications of this choice.

In Greek mythology, Artemis was Apollo’s twin sister, goddess of the moon and night; also the protector of women.

Devotees said that *Artemis* fell out of the sky near the ancient city of Ephesus (SW Turkey).

Worshipers there built a huge temple for *Artemis*, whom the Romans called *Dianna*.

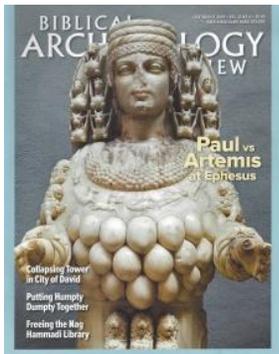
Archaeologists unearthed two large and one smaller statues of *Artemis-Dianna*.

¹ *Columbia Desk Encyclopedia*, p 1823

A photo of one appeared in **Biblical Archaeology Review**² as seen.

Experts at first thought that the appendages on her chest were breasts.

Having that many below the those on head are many



noted, however, of the figures appendages and either side of her bulls, goats, etc., experts think the bulbous objects likely represent animal scrota.

Do you wonder why space folks choose mythical deities such as Artemis & Apollo?

One truth appears evident in human quests for power, knowledge, and supremacy.

We mortal human beings covet the dominance and knowledge of God or the gods.

Can we even know God or come in contact with Him?

² July/August 2016, Vol. 42, # 4 In this statue, lions appear (seven total) on her upper arms and at her waist signifying her supremacy.

The Bible tells us that our creator “alone is immortal and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.”³

Though we cannot see our Creator, we can both know God and experience Him.

We don’t find God, though in the ways or places folks usually try to discover Him.

The City of Colossae was about 120 miles east of Ephesus, the center of *Artemis* worship.

Archaeologists have done numerous digs in Ephesus and Laodicea, but few in Colossae.

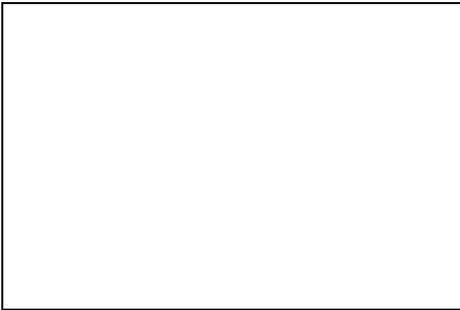
Yet this Colossian letter tells us a lot about finding God:

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form ...”

This verse (2:9) summarizes what Paul wrote earlier in chapter 1: 15.

God is invisible but Jesus Christ, “The Son is the image of the invisible God...”

³ 1 Timothy 6:16 NIV



If hidden cameras took pictures of our invisible Creator-God, this is what would appear in all photos.

The word *image* translates the Greek word, *icon*.

Want to know God?

Go to the “APP” known as Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Will you find a picture of God there?

No, but you will find a prized gift.

Recall the conversation between Jesus and the Apostle Philip?

“Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’ 9 Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”?’”⁴

Philip asked Jesus for a picture of God:

“Jesus, can you arrange a special showing for us?”

Do you hear rebuke in Jesus’ answer? “How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

“Haven’t you learned anything after being with me all this time?”

Carefully read every word of every Gospel. You won’t find one physical description of Jesus.

We don’t know if he was tall, medium, or short.

We do not know the color of his eyes or his skin shade.

We do not know if he was sturdy or lean. The only hint comes from Isaiah’s prophecy:

“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.”⁵

⁴ John 14:8, 9 NIV

⁵ Isaiah 53:2b, 3 NIV

The lack of portrayals gives an advantage.

Physical descriptions tend to make some people proud; others envious and disappointed.

We know only that Jesus was a Jew, a minority which has suffered more scorn than any other in history.

But defining “Jewish” based on race or color is impossible.

Matthew’s opening genealogy lists the following women in Jesus’ earthly ancestry:

- Tamar a young Canaanite, who pretended to be a harlot;
- Ruth, a Moabite (Gentile);
- Rahab, a possible harlot (Gentile);
- Bathsheba, a willing adulteress.

These facts prove that associating Jesus with any physical descriptions is baseless.

We can’t associate God with any physical characteristic or any human being.

God is Spirit.

We human beings take pride in visible, tangible attributes.

Yet the traits in which we take pride divide us and arouse envy and resentment.

The Gospels inform us that the educated, powerful, established folks envied Jesus and therefor hated him; envy (jealousy) and hate are first cousins.

Consider another truth.

Jesus built no buildings.

He left no instructions about erecting monuments or memorials.

Jesus established no trust funds or charities. He considered no place on earth holier than another:

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.”⁶

Many like to take pride in famous people, who profess to be Christians.

“Look who attends our church!”

We glorify human beings at great risk.

⁶ Acts 17:25 NIV

Years ago many churches took pride in a popular actor who professed to be Christian.

I foolishly dropped his name a few times.

On one occasion, I was trying to interest a young couple in the Lord.

They eventually became believers, valued church members, and worked hard in the Lord.

This actor didn’t attend Hollywood at the time, but at one point in our studies, I mentioned his name as a church member.

The young man reacted: **“Bob, don’t talk to me about him. I was on a flight with that actor not long ago, and he was hitting on one of the stewardesses the whole trip.”**

Jesus called all his followers unworthy servants.⁷

We imperfect human beings let one another down; only Jesus is a dependable model.

From start to finish, Jesus put God absolutely first in his life.

Here’s what the Philippian letter advises:

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”⁸

Jesus humbled himself and he obeyed God—though it cost him his life.

That’s why God was completely in Christ.

We cannot pretend humility.

Working as unworthy servants, we demonstrate humility.

Most of us hope to cruise easily through life.

Easy is the magic word.

“Learn in three easy lessons.”

In contrast, knowing and obeying God are not complex, but do require life-long commitment.

The Bible relates Jesus’ teaching and his acts.

⁷ See Luke 17:10

⁸ Philippians 2:5-8 NIV

As we follow Jesus, learn about him, and trust God, we discover new, exciting realities.

He makes himself known in profound ways.

- 1) **Nothing we have now is permanent and we aren't either.**
- 2) **Only God is eternal.**
- 3) **Only God our Creator can create life.**

Turn your life over to him, follow Jesus and love as Jesus loved, forgive as Jesus forgave, God will raise you from death, just as He powerfully raised Jesus.

He gives us immortality only He has.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

Envy and spite in our society are crowding out gratitude.

⁸“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather

than on Christ.⁹ **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,¹⁰ and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.”**

How do we see God in Christ?

We put aside greed, hate, spite, selfishness, and lust and we put on Christ in baptism.

Our text refers to that getting rid of the old person as *circumcision*.

Once we do that and join Christ's death in baptism, God's Spirit dwells in us, and we gain access to God we never dreamed existed.

“We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.”⁹

“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus walked.”

Then we shall know God as he knows us.

⁹ 1 John 2: 3 & 6 NIV

As we model Christ’s loving commitment to God, God increasingly reveals himself to us.

We look forward to resurrection from the dead in an entirely new body and totally new “set of wheels” if you will.



God already changes creatures.

Are you letting him change you to be like Christ? Christ in you is the hope of glory!

And the end of envy, hate, and violence.

God bless you as you honor him in Christ.

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