

Colossians – The Supremacy of Christ

[4] Avoiding False Doctrine in Christ (2:6 - 23)

1. Reading: **Col. 2:4-10**
2. Paul described his desire that the Colossians would continue firmly in Christ (**Col. 2:6-7**) – a positive foundation
3. He then proceeds to give a negative warning concerning false doctrines which are opposed to Christ, which many will try to draw us away from Christ with (Col. 2:8-23)
4. These false doctrines pervert the simplicity which is in Christ by bringing in:
 - a. Philosophies and traditions (2:8-10)
 - b. Fleshly circumcision (2:11)
 - c. Rules of Jewish Customs/Ceremonies (2:16-17)
 - d. Worship of angels (2:18-19)
 - e. Regulations of Asceticism (2:20-23)
- 5.

Discussion:

I. A WARNING AGAINST PHILOSOPHIES AND TRADITIONS (**COL. 2:8-10**)

- A. [v.8] Beware lest anyone cheat you – i.e. plunder, rob, take captive
- B. They use Philosophy and empty deceit to draw Christians away from the simplicity of the gospel. (**c.f. Col. 2:4; Eph. 5:6**)
(Elders to rebuke those who attempt to do so - **Titus 1:10-14**)
We are surrounded today by all sort of philosophies and traditions – humanism, evolution, Protestantism, Catholicism, etc.
- C. Philosophy and empty deceit described:
 1. The traditions of men (**c.f. Mt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:8-9,13**)
 2. The basic principles of the world (i.e. men’s philosophies are lacking in wisdom, they pail in comparison to God
-OR- reference to the OT law being thrust on Christians being described as “*weak and beggarly elements*” (**c.f. Gal. 4:9**))
 3. Not according to Christ (the problem with all men’s ideas)
- D. [v. 9] Again, Christ is emphasized as supreme – He is deity
- E. [v. 10] We are complete in Christ, who is the head of all rule – don’t be drawn away by anything, only He has authority

II. CIRCUMCISION IN CHRIST NOT THE FLESH (**COL. 2:11-13**)

- A. Paul emphasizes spiritual circumcision in Christ NOT circumcision of the old law
 1. Circumcised in Him
 2. Circumcision made without Hands
 3. Circumcision of Christ
- B. This circumcision involves:
 1. Putting off the body of sins of the flesh (**Rom. 6:6; 8:4-8**)
 2. Buried with Him in Baptism (**Rom. 6:4**)
 3. Raised with Him through Faith (more than just the act of immersion is involved – in must be coupled with our faith in Christ [and putting away sin])
- C. Before and after this circumcision:
 1. Before – Dead in trespasses and uncircumcision of flesh
 2. After – Made alive together with Him by forgiving our sins
- D. All of this required Christ to die on the cross and in so doing, Christ wiped out the force of the Old Law (:14-17)

III. BEWARE OF BINDING THE OLD LAW (COL. 2:14-17)

- A. The Old Law described [v. 14]:
 1. Handwriting of requirements (OT law – regulations, 10 commandments, sabbath law, etc. -- written by the hand of God and copied by the hand of Moses into a book – **Ex. 20-31; 31:18; Deut. 12:1; 2 Cor. 3:7; Eph. 2:15**)
 2. Was against us (condemned sin but offered no forgiveness - **Gal. 3:10-12**)
 3. Was contrary to us (a yoke we were unable to bear – **Ac. 15:10; Gal. 5:1-4**)
- B. What Christ Did:
 1. [v. 14] Wiped it out
 2. Took it out of the way
 3. Nailed it to the cross (it served its purpose and was complete at the cross – **Gal. 3:19, 24-25**)
 4. [v. 15] Disarmed principalities... (God proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Christ by His death and resurrection – proving again that HE has all authority - **c.f. Col. 2:10**)
- C. Therefore (SO) – since the old law is no longer in force, and you have been circumcised with Christ, not the flesh – don't let anyone try to bind the old law on you or ANY of the Jewish rituals/customs! (**Col. 2:16-17**)
- D. Specifically mentioned:
 1. Food and Drink
 - **Lev. 7:10-27; Lev. 11**
 - No dietary restrictions in Christ (**Rom. 14:2-3, 17; 1 Cor. 6:13; 8:8; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Heb. 9:10**)
 2. Festivals
 - Many described in **Lev. 23** [Passover, tabernacles, Pentecost...]
 - No command to esteem any day above another now (**c.f. Rom. 14**)
 3. New Moon
 - **2 Chron. 31:3; Num. 28:11**
 4. Sabbaths
 - **Ex. 31:13; 20:11; Deut. 5:15**
 - No such day under the new Law
- E. Already established the Old Law had been wiped out, taken out of the way, nailed to the cross – but reiterates about all of these things in the old law – They are a shadow of things to come – the image is of Christ
 - A shadow IS NOT the substance
 - A shadow gives an idea of something before it arrives, but is not identical
 - Christ has come, the shadow has passed
- F. Many denominations today still try to enforce these same remnants of the old law
 1. Keeping of Sabbaths
 2. Food regulations – no meat on certain days, clean/unclean distinctions in food
 3. Purification laws, etc.
 4. Fleshly circumcision

IV. BEWARE OF FALSE HUMILITY / THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS (COL. 2:18-19)

- A. Again – Let no one cheat you of your reward (take you away from Christ)
- B. False humility – outward appearance of humility (**c.f. Mt. 23:25-28**)
- C. Worship of angels-
 - claiming humility – not worthy to worship Christ
 - introduced angel worship as a means of showing humility
 - we aren't commanded to do so and further it's a realm we don't see – 'intruding into those things he has not seen'
 - claiming humility – actually 'vainly puffed up by fleshly mind'
- D. A rejection of Christ's headship [v. 19]
- E. They have severed themselves from the head and won't receive the nourishment and growth of being connected to Christ – DON'T let them take you with them away from Christ!

V. BEWARE OF ASCETICISM (COL. 2:20-23)

- A. Asceticism – the voluntary self-denial, neglect, or abuse of the body for ‘religious’ reasons
 - Goes beyond abstaining from sinful things like lust of the flesh
 - Goes beyond the concept of fasting and prayer, etc.
- B. These are man-made regulations that those who have died with Christ should have no part of (**Col. 2:20,22; c.f. Col. 2:12**)
- C. Characterized as – do not touch, taste, handle (**Col. 2:21**)
 - reminiscent of the list found in **1 Tim. 4:1-5**
- D. These things are:
 - An appearance of wisdom
 - in self-imposed religion
 - false humility
 - neglect of the body
 - of no value against the indulgence of the flesh
- E. These regulations are faulty because they are not given by God but by man and also they don’t even solve the problem they claim to

Conclusion:

1. Are we watching out lest anyone should:
 - a. Deceive us with persuasive words (Col. 2:4)
 - b. Cheat us through philosophy/empty deceit (:8)
 - c. Judge us in food, drink, festivals, sabbaths (:16)
 - d. Cheat us of our reward through false humility (:18)
2. Let us walk in the lord, be rooted and built up in Him, be established in the faith, and abound in it with thanksgiving (**Col. 2:6-7**)
3. Are we grounded in the truth or are we easily drawn away by the false teaching of men?
4. The Lord is pleading with us to come to Him, He has given us everything we need to accept His invitation.