

[2: COLOSSIANS & PHILEMON]

# UNBOUNDED

*Paul's Faith from Prison*



**WARRIOR'S HEART**  
BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM ONE MAN AT A TIME

BAND OF  
**BROTHERS**  
MEN'S MINISTRY



**Wednesdays**  
**6:30p in Room 507**

The image features two silhouetted figures on a rocky mountain peak. One figure is crouching on the left, reaching up with their right hand towards the other figure. The second figure is standing on the right, leaning forward with their right hand reaching down towards the first figure. A bright sun is positioned between their hands, creating a starburst effect. The background shows a range of jagged mountains under a warm, orange-hued sky.

# CONQUER

**BROTHERS PURSUING PURITY TOGETHER**



SAVE THE DATE



# STAND COURAGEOUS

MEN'S CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 4

HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH | HOUSTON, TX | 8:00 AM

*Check-In and onsite registration opens at 7:00 am on Saturday*



Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jerry Boykin



Tony Perkins



Stu Weber

*Registration  
opens October 1st*

*[standcourageous.com](http://standcourageous.com)*



## **Unbounded: Paul's Faith from Prison**

Free in Christ - Colossians 2:16-3:4

Daniel Williams

"Believer, beware!" Danger looms for the unwary believer. In Colossae there were several heresies, false teachings, to heed if we are to enjoy our fullness in Jesus Christ: they are legalism, mysticism and asceticism.

### **Legalism. Colossians 2:16-17**

- Legalism substitutes the law of God with man-made laws.
- What comes out of the heart that makes a person spiritual or unspiritual.
- The law reveals sin and warns of the consequences of sin – but it has no power to prevent sin or redeem the sinner. Only grace can do that.
- The law is mere shadow of His coming. Jesus is the real deal - the "substance."
- Legalism is bondage. In Christ we are free.

### **Mysticism. Colossians 2:18-19**

- Mysticism - the belief that a person can have an immediate experience with the spiritual world, completely apart from the Word of God or the Holy Spirit.
- False teachers in Colossae had visions and made contact with angels opening themselves to all kinds of demonic activity.
- "Claiming access" - "to set foot in the inner shrine, to be fully initiated into the mysteries of the religion."
- We have direct access to the throne of God. The veil in the temple was torn.
- Trying to reach God the Father through anyone or anything other than His Son Jesus Christ is idolatry. We don't prove our humility to praying to angels or saints because we are denying the truth of God's word. Seek God himself. (Colossians 2:2-3).

### **Asceticism. Colossians 2:20-23**

- Ascetics practice rigorous self-denial and self-mortification – they injured themselves – in order to become more spiritual.
- There is a clear relationship between legalism and asceticism. Because both enjoy rules.
- Physical discipline is needed in our lives
- Asceticism seeks to sanctify the soul by his discipline of the body, and it is heresy.
- There is a connection between discipline and physical health, there is no connection between discipline and holiness.

### **Chapter 2 Summary**

- This chapter emphasizes danger. Paul defended the preeminence of Jesus and he refuted the false doctrines of legalism, mysticism and asceticism. It now falls to us to believe his words and practice those spiritual principles.
- The answer to legalism is the spiritual reality we have in Christ.
- The answer to mysticism is the spiritual union with Christ.
- The answer to asceticism is our position in Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
- We put all of this into practice as we fellowship with Christ through worship, the Word, and prayer.



### Seek the Heavenly Colossians 3:1-4

- We died with Christ - Victory over the old sin nature that wants to control us.
- We live in Christ - Christ is our life. We are dead and alive at the same time – dead to sin and alive in Christ.
- We are raised with Christ.
- We are hidden in Christ – we have security and satisfaction. No one can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
- We are glorified in Christ – presently but will be revealed in Heaven
- What then? Seek what is above - habitually set your mind on things above, not on earth

### Conclusion

As Christians are identify is in Christ and we experience fullness in and through Him. Heresies of legalism, mysticism and asceticism are prideful, man-made efforts that detract and distract from the one true God. Believers, beware.

### Discussion Questions:

- Is there any area in your life that legalism may have crept in? Do you ever keep “spiritual score” with other believers? How might our good deeds and spiritual disciplines become a source of pride?
- What are some signs to watch for legalism in our church? How would a homeless person feel if they visited? Someone of another race, color, ethnicity or native language? See this list below for ideas. Source: Lifeway Research, “9 Signs Your Church is a Breeding Ground for Legalism”, May 28, 2019.
  1. The people in your church have an “Us vs. Them” mentality: *Those who believe in Jesus are good. Those who don't believe in Him are bad.*
  2. There's talk about the church extending “too much grace” when it comes to a less-than-desirable person in the pew.
  3. You notice there seem to be many people who never believe they're doing enough for God. They say things like, “I should pray more often” rather than “I love to pray.”
  4. Outsiders don't visit often (perhaps because the church his known for its legalism). People who are deeply hurting due to their sins or poor choices feel humiliated and embarrassed around you or people in your congregation.
  5. Congregants actively avoid people who have a different worldview from them or who struggle with an outwardly visible sin.
  6. There's a general attitude among church members that being right is more important than being kind.
  7. People are smug about their Bible knowledge and feel superior to those less educated about Scripture.
  8. People who are deeply hurting due to their sins/poor choices feel humiliated and embarrassed around you.
  9. This list has made you very uncomfortable, angry or indignant and you want to start defending yourself or your congregation—with Bible verses.
- What are some examples of mysticism and spiritism we see today? What should be our response when we encounter them?
- Self-control, self-discipline and periods of abstinence (i.e. fasting from food or technology) are good. But when they become a source of pride, they are sin. How can we guard ourselves from that happening?
- Discuss how we might “habitually set ours mind and attention on heavenly things. Think of an example of a situation and look at it from an earthly view then a heavenly one.



The background of the slide is a photograph of the Colosseum in Rome, Italy, during sunset. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The ancient stone structure of the Colosseum is visible on the left side, with its iconic arches and columns. The overall mood is serene and historical.

**Free in Christ**

**Colossians**

**2:16-3:4**



# Free in Christ

Christ is Preeminent  
Beware – Three Heresies

- Legalism
- Mysticism
- Asceticism

Our identity in Christ







# Christ is Preeminent

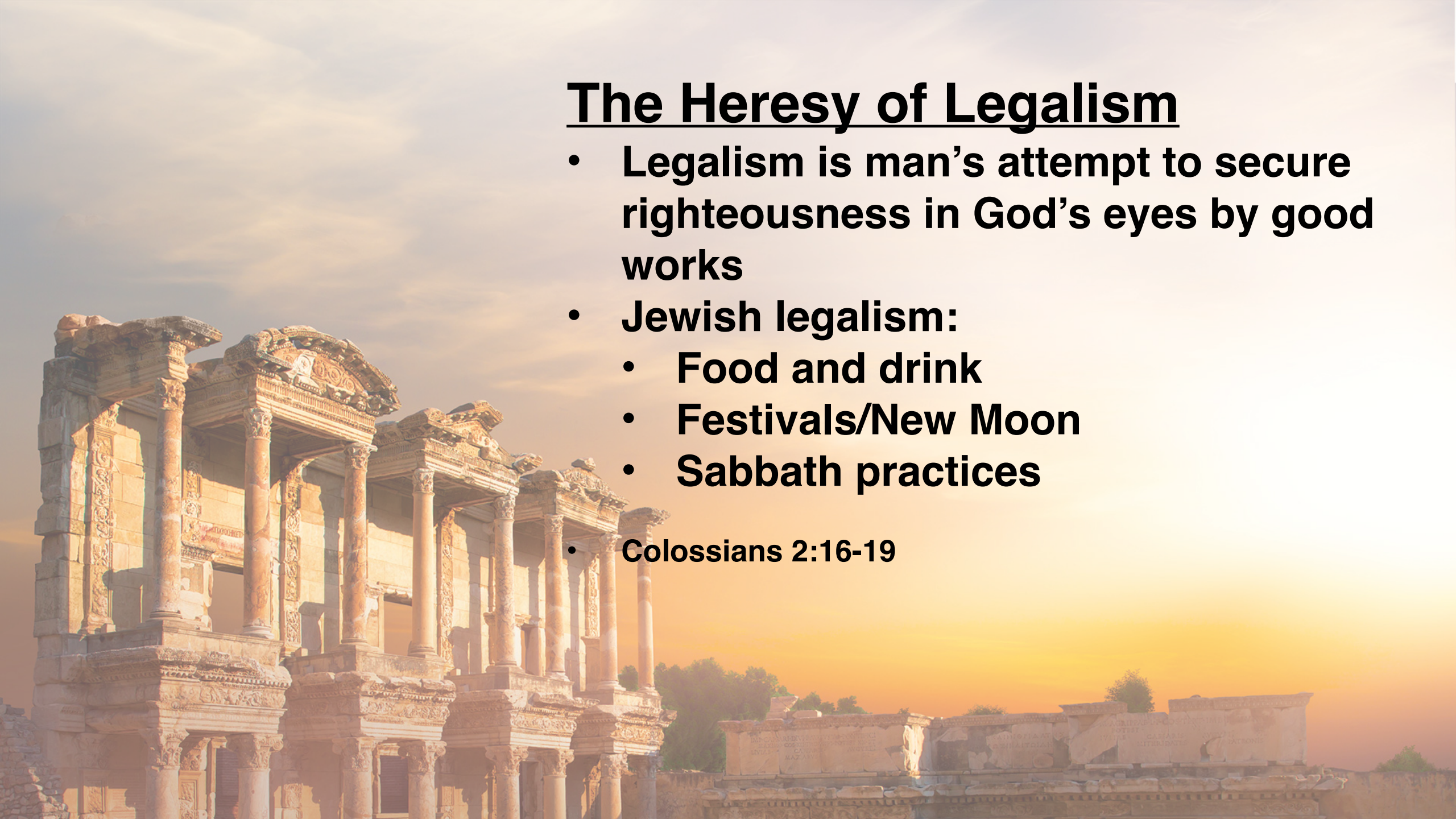
- **Jesus is central to all things**
- **He created all things**
- **He was before all things**
- **He holds all things together**
- **Head of the body**
- **He is the beginning**
- **Firstborn of the dead**
- **God's fullness rests in Him**

**Colossians 1:16-20**



# The Heresy of Legalism

- Legalism is man's attempt to secure righteousness in God's eyes by good works
- Jewish legalism:
  - Food and drink
  - Festivals/New Moon
  - Sabbath practices
- Colossians 2:16-19







# Response to Legalism

## Food and drink – Matt 15:17-18

"Don't you realize that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated?"

But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man."

## Feasts/New Moon Rituals – John 1:17

“for although the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

- Colossians 2:16



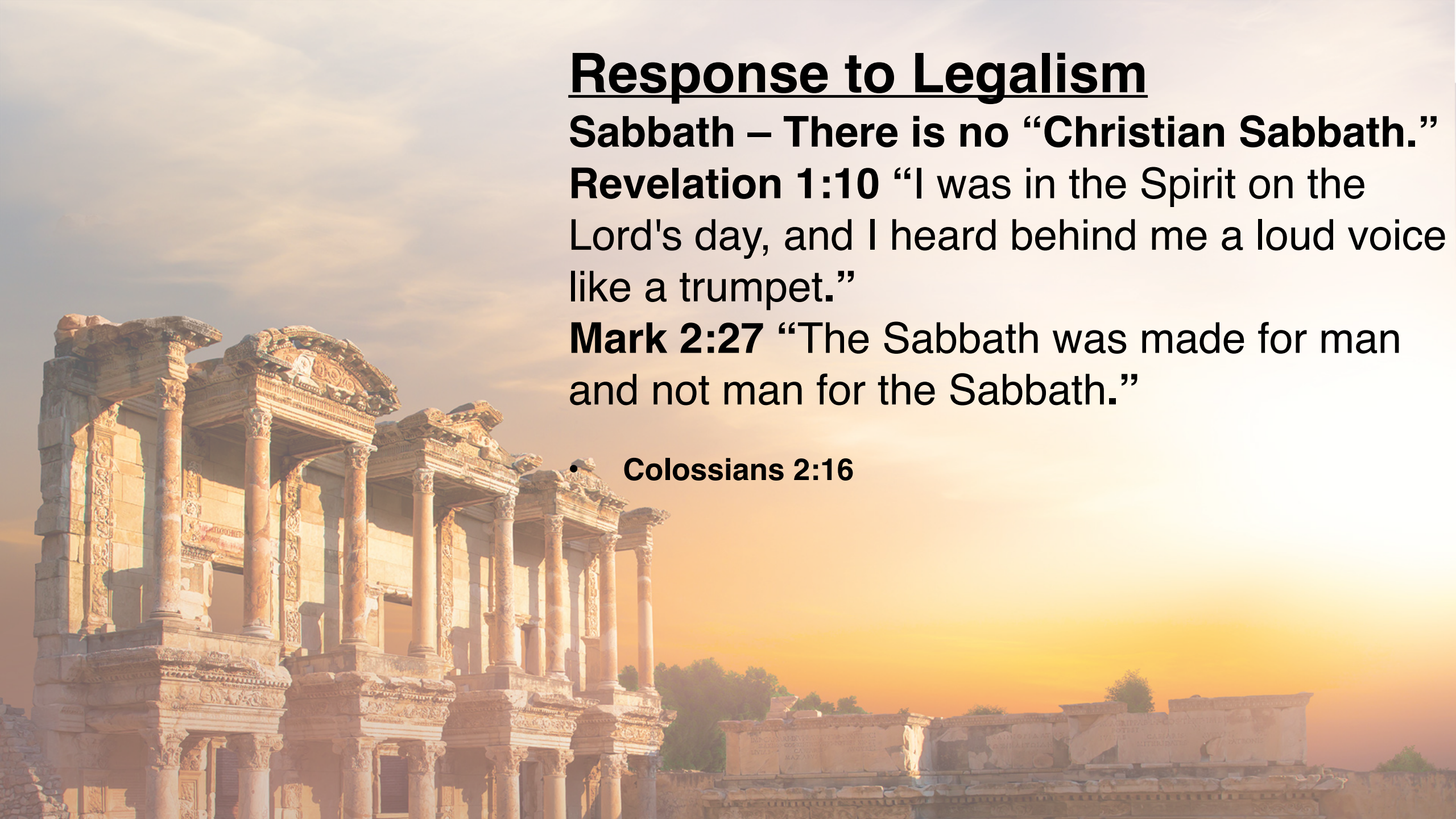
# Response to Legalism

**Sabbath – There is no “Christian Sabbath.”**

**Revelation 1:10** “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.”

**Mark 2:27** “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.”

- **Colossians 2:16**





# **Response to Legalism**

**The law is a mere shadow of Jesus. He's the true substance.**

- **Colossians 2:17**





# Response to Legalism

**Legalism is bondage**

**Let no one judge you through the lens of legalism, nor us others**

- **Colossians 2:16**





# Mysticism

**Mysticism – the belief that a person can have an immediate experience with the spiritual world, completely apart from the Word of God or the Holy Spirit.**

- **Colossians 2:18-19**





# Mysticism

**Mysticism – the belief that a person can have an immediate experience with the spiritual world, completely apart from the Word of God or the Holy Spirit.**

**Visions, contact with angels = exposed to Satan's counterfeit experiences**

- **Colossians 2:18-19**







# Response to Mysticism

**Hebrews 10:19** “Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus,…”

**Hebrews 4:16** “Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.”

**We have direct access to God himself. All else is idolatry because we deny God’s word.**

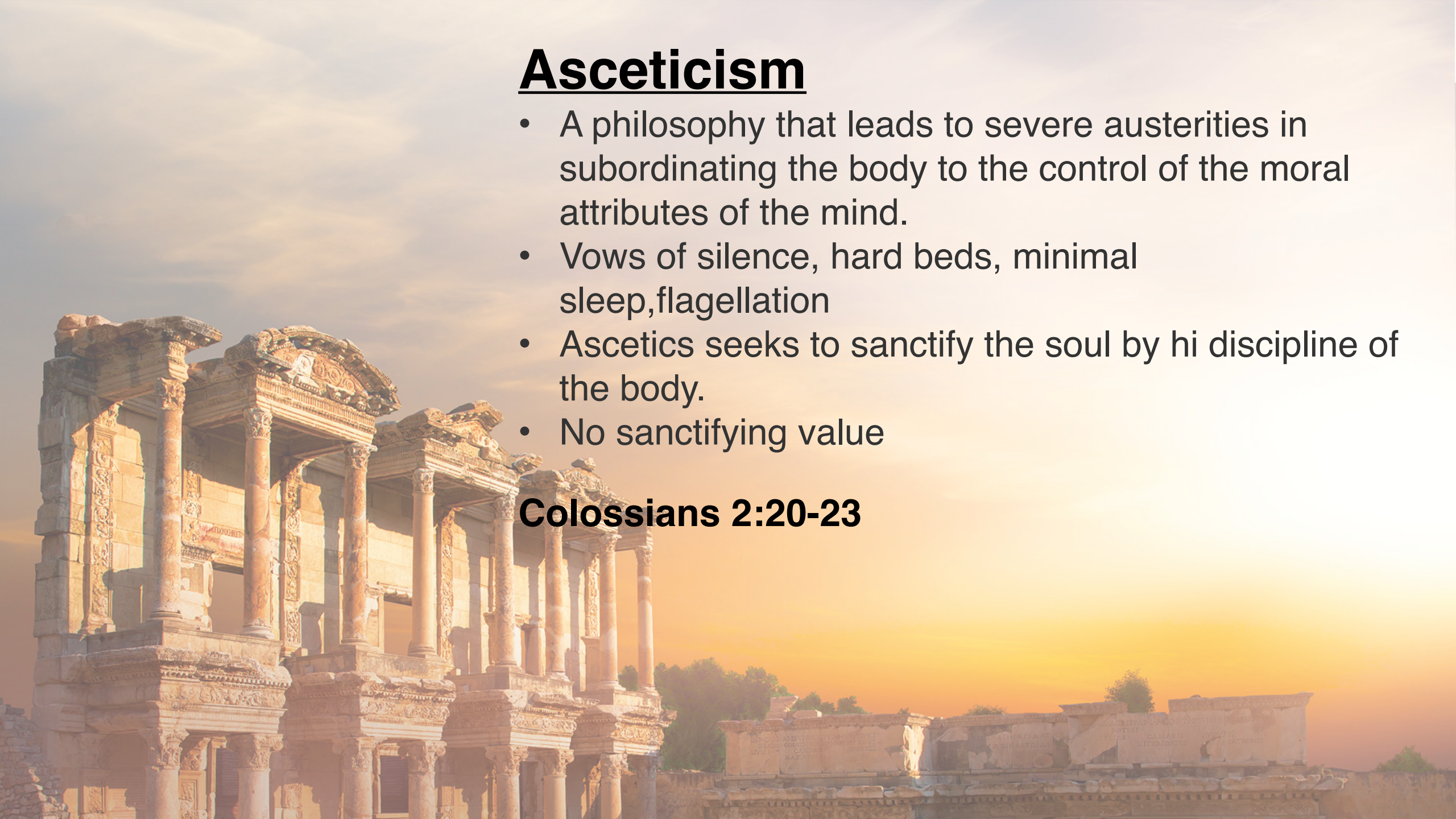
**Colossians 2:18-19**



# Asceticism

- A philosophy that leads to severe austerities in subordinating the body to the control of the moral attributes of the mind.
- Vows of silence, hard beds, minimal sleep, flagellation
- Ascetics seeks to sanctify the soul by hi discipline of the body.
- No sanctifying value

**Colossians 2:20-23**





# Response to Asceticism

- No sanctifying value in self-denial
- Connection between discipline and physical health
- No connection between discipline and holiness

**Colossians 2:20-23**

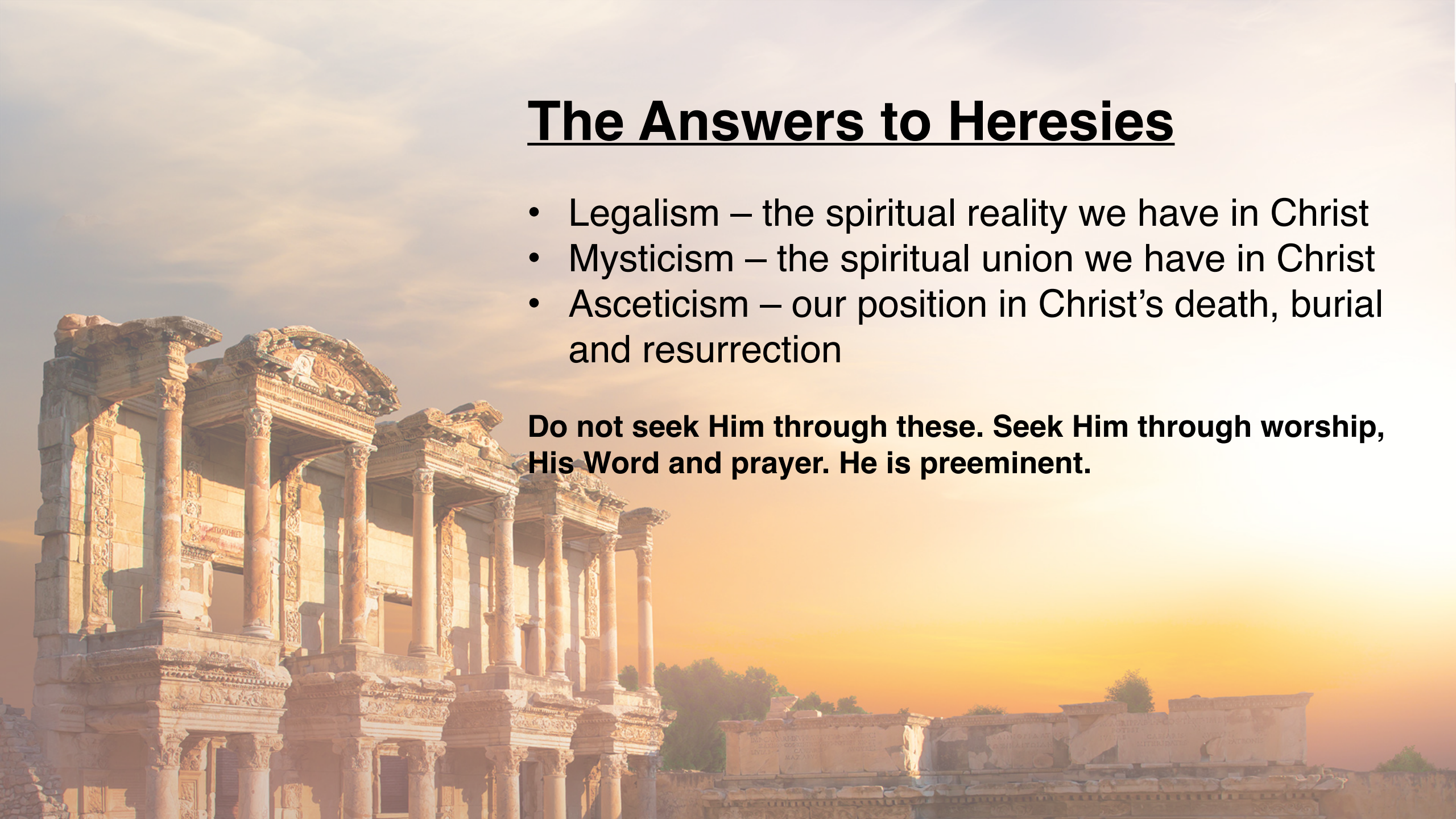




# The Answers to Heresies

- Legalism – the spiritual reality we have in Christ
- Mysticism – the spiritual union we have in Christ
- Asceticism – our position in Christ's death, burial and resurrection

**Do not seek Him through these. Seek Him through worship, His Word and prayer. He is preeminent.**



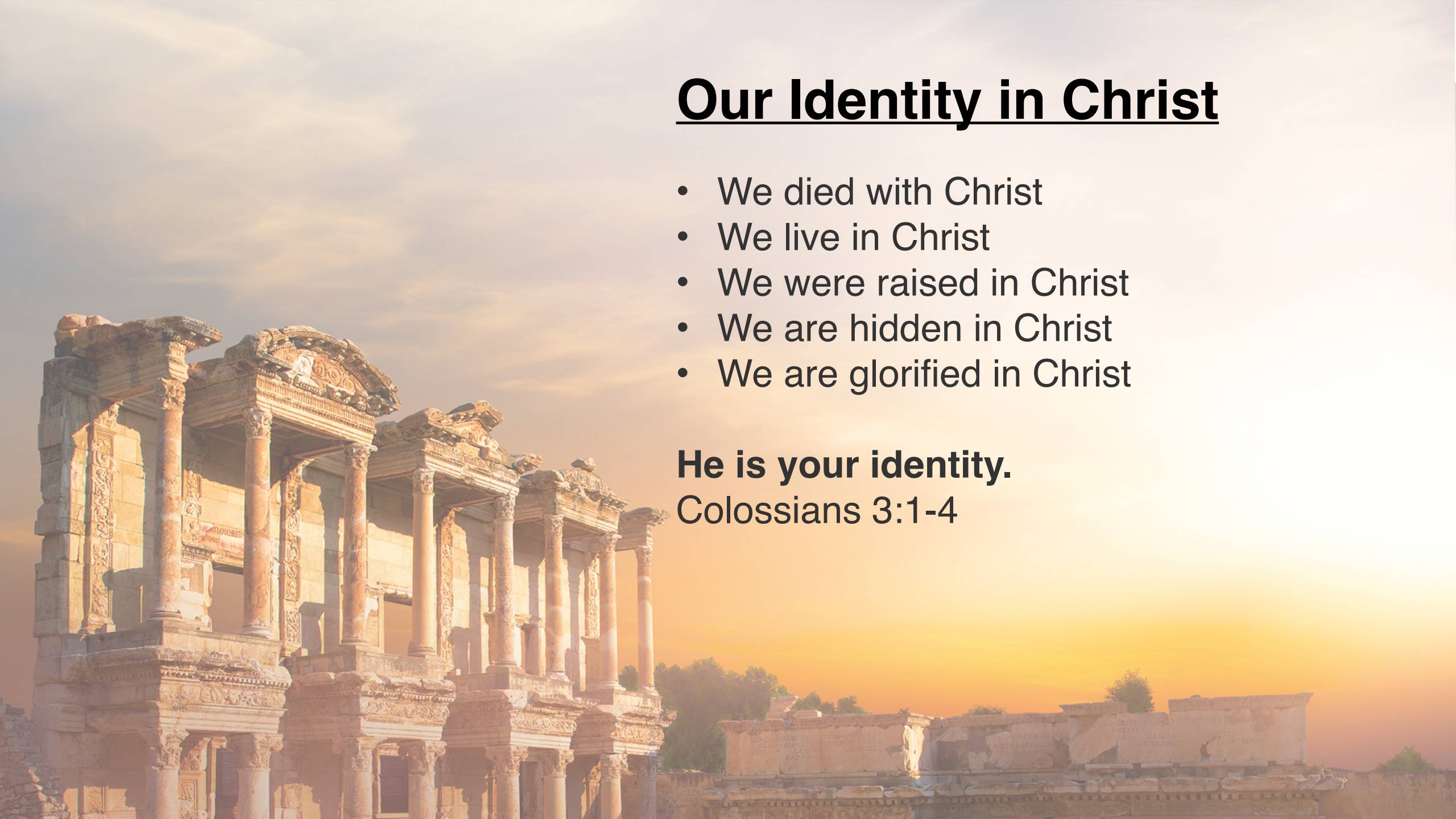


# Our Identity in Christ

- We died with Christ
- We live in Christ
- We were raised in Christ
- We are hidden in Christ
- We are glorified in Christ

**He is your identity.**

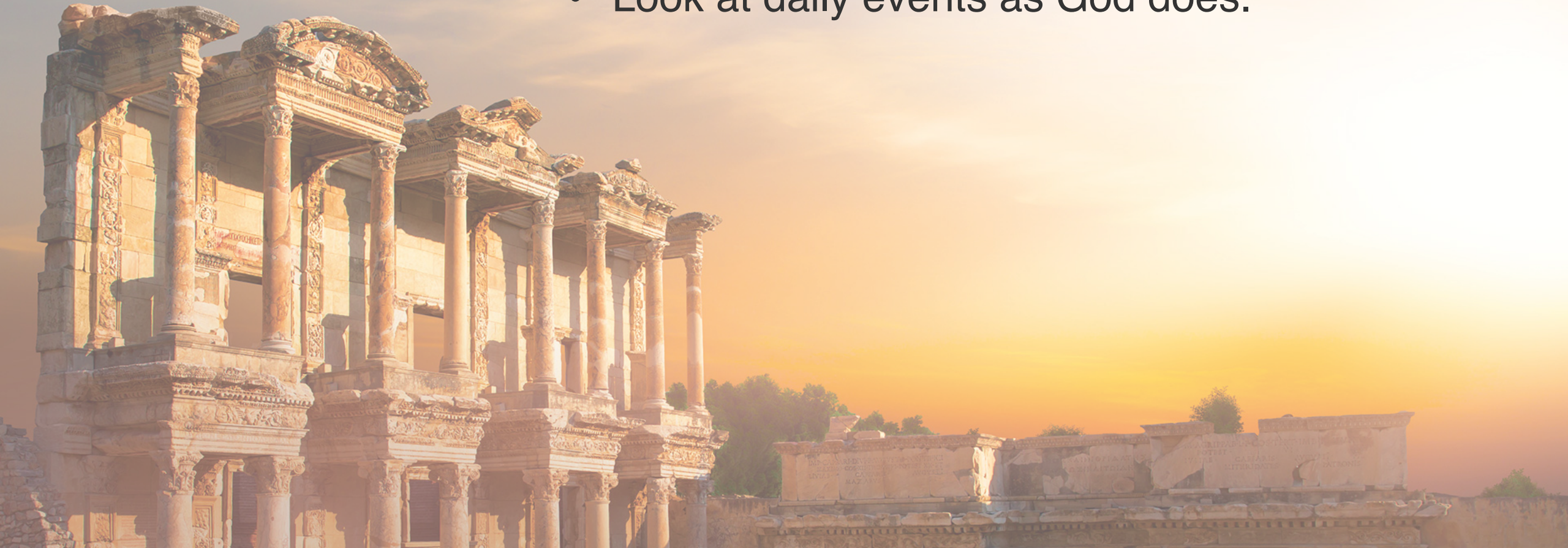
Colossians 3:1-4





# Our Identity in Christ

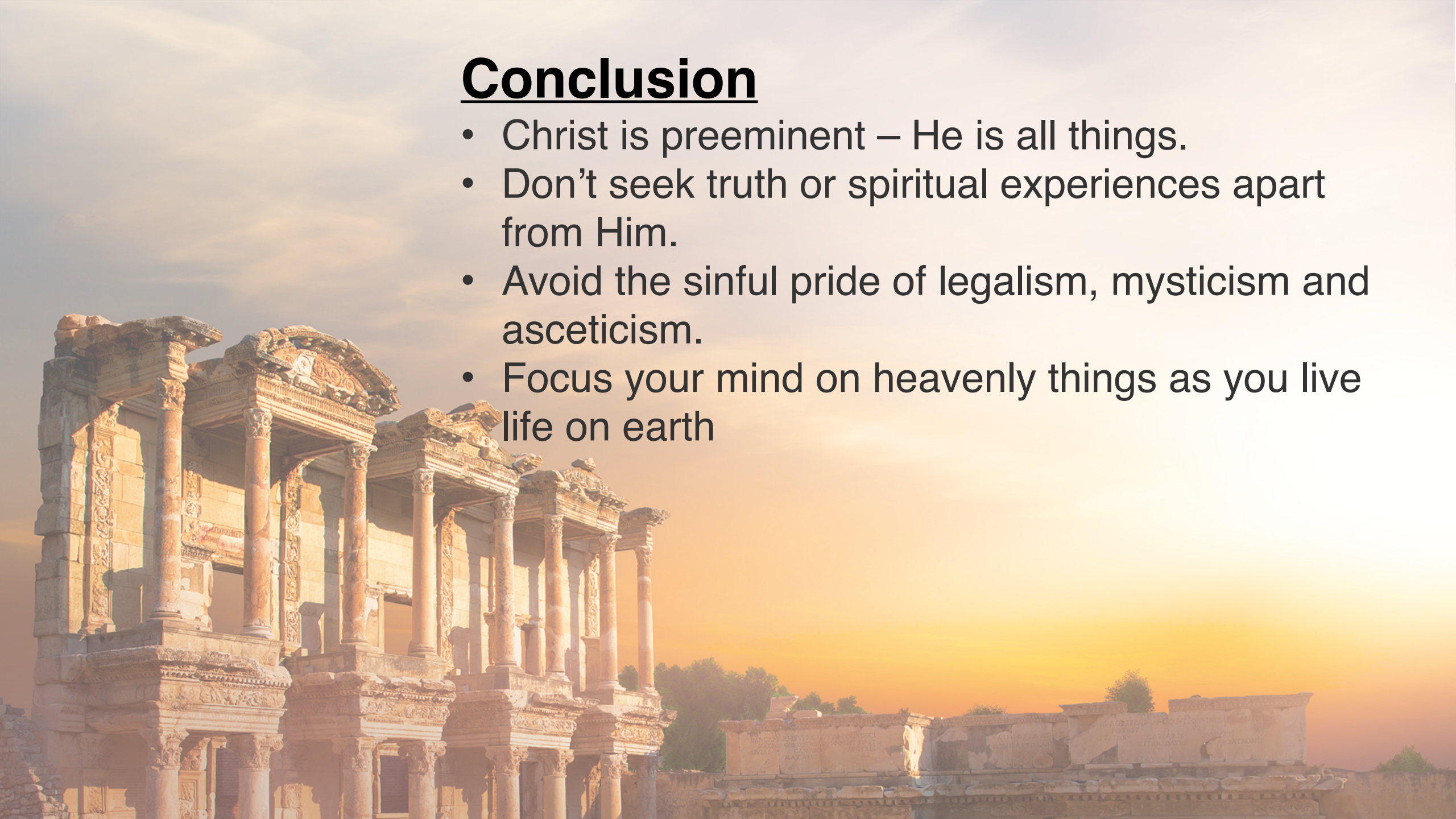
- What now? Seek what is above.
- Set your mind on heavenly things, not earthly.
- Look at daily events as God does.





# Conclusion

- Christ is preeminent – He is all things.
- Don't seek truth or spiritual experiences apart from Him.
- Avoid the sinful pride of legalism, mysticism and asceticism.
- Focus your mind on heavenly things as you live life on earth





# Table Talk

1. Is there any area in your life that legalism may have crept in? Do you ever keep “spiritual score” with other believers? How might our good deeds and spiritual disciplines become a source of pride?
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