

6/6/99

Colossians 2:11-23

Paul has made it clear that the heresy involved human philosophy based on the traditions of men and the basic principles of the world but now he also will show that there was a judaistic blend with it.

Paul now turns to declare how it is that in Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily and that we are complete in Him. Col. 2:11-23

Then he will command the Colossians to not give in the false teachers ritualism of legalism, mysticism and asceticism.

2:11-15 The explanation of the sufficiency of Christ.

2:11 To overcome sin nature.

- 1) In Him you were circumcised.
 - a) The covenant of circumcision came to Abraham after his trusting in the flesh to beget a son, it was a seal of the covenant. Gen. 17:10-14; Rom. 4:11
 - b) It was a rebuke and reminder that he had failed to trust God.

- c) It was to be an everlasting covenant for every Jewish male and any Gentile proselyte.
 - d) God honors His word above His name, so the Lord sought to kill Moses for not having circumcised his sons. Ex. 4:25
- 2) The particular type of circumcision is without hands.
- a) It is opposed to the physical surgery, spiritual the inner circumcision of the heart, which was the true intention always. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26; Rom. 2:25, 28-29
 - b) The implication is that it was a divine work not human.
 - c) The point that it happened at was conversion, past tense “were”.
- 3) The evidence of the inner circumcision is the putting off the sins of the flesh.
- a) Not that the body is evil in and of itself but that the sin nature and principle of sin is able to be overcome, so as not to be a slave of one’s sin nature by reckoning the Old Man dead. Rom. 6:6, 11; 7:24; Col. 3:9
 - b) Putting off “apekduai” denotes both a stripping off and a casting away as getting out of one’s clothes.

- c) The picture is of discarding a piece of a filthy garment.
 - d) It is an inner slaying of our sin nature by Christ. Gal. 3:27-28
- 4) Sin nature is never eradicated while in this body, it can only be overcome in Christ. Gal. 5:6, 11; 6:15; Phil. 3:3

2:12 To live in the Spirit.

- 1) Buried with Him in baptism is the outward public confession of what has happened inside by the circumcision without hands, death to the old life of sin.
- 2) Buried with Him in baptism also identifies the believer's participation in the death and burial of Christ, spiritually. Rom. 6:1-4
 - a) Jesus was baptized to identify with sinful man, not that He had sin. Matt. 3:15-16
 - b) Jesus had to fulfill all righteousness.
 - c) The Holy Spirit was to descend on Him at baptism
- 3) Burial has a counter part, resurrection, not only were they buried but also raised with Him.
 - a) This does not refer to the physical resurrection of our body but spiritual resurrection for the new life.

- b) Through faith in the working of God who raised Christ from the dead. Col. 3:6
 - * A vicarious work of God, in Christ, the object of our faith!
- c) Total and complete faith in the revelation of the gospel, that Jesus Christ is the redeemer of the world who died and was raised by God and that God is also able to bring death to my sin nature and impart resurrected life to my Spirit, the New Man.
- d) Though the ritual or ceremony has no real power to bring it about, it is to be a celebration of the personal experience of death to the Old Man and life to the New Man. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9

2:13 To forgive all sins.

- 1) The past state of the Colossians prior to coming to Christ was spiritual deadness.
 - a) In trespasses "paraptoma" means willful disobedience. Eph. 2:1, 5
 - b) In the uncircumcision of your flesh means depraved nature, the source of our sins and trespasses.
- 2) Their present state of the Colossians after coming to Christ was that He made them alive with Him.

- a) The manner is by having forgiven “chariographon” them their trespasses.
* The word was used for the cancellation of a debt. Lk. 7:42, 43
- b) The extent of the forgiveness is “all” trespasses to be whiter than snow.
 - 1)) Once again the superlative “all” to communicated no lack in the work of Christ.
 - 2)) Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Ps. 32:1-2

2:14 To remove all charges.

- 1) Having wiped out the handwriting of requirement that were against us and contrary to us.
 - a) The reference is to a certificate of debt where the indictments were written out by hand to charge the individual prisoner.
 - b) Others see it as an I.O.U. note of an individual, “a signed confession of indebtedness”. Bruce
 - c) Paul is dealing with the Mosaic Law in the context, which the Gentiles were never under it but were nevertheless all guilty before God, Jew and Gentile by law or conscience. Rom. 2:14-29; 3:9-20, 27-31

- 1)) God is the One who wrote the law with His own finger. Deut. 34:1
- 2)) The Law made no one just before God, it only accused them and condemned them! Gal 3:10-11
- 2) All charges and debts that accused us and made us libel have been taken out of the way having nailed it to the cross. Eph. 2:15
 - a) By all evidence we were guilty according to God’s law.
 - b) By all legal demands we were to pay for our sin and trespasses, according to God’s law.
 - c) By the work on the cross, Christ canceled and removed all charges and debts by His blood. Col. 1:14
 - 1)) The picture of “nailing it to the cross” points to the placard above the head of the criminal crucified, bearing the charges against him.
* This is the only time it appears in the New Testament!
 - 2)) The phrase wiped out “exaleipho” was used often signifying a scraping of the papyrus sheet, so it could be used again, to erase.
 - a)) It was through the instrument of the cross, which equates death, that forgiveness and complete acquittal of all offenses against God

and mean were erased,
remembering them no more! Matt.
27:39; Jn. 19:19; Ps. 50:1; Jer.
18:23

b)) Some think it refers to the
doing away of the Law, though it
is true in the act of the work of
Christ, the context is to the
individual guilt and culpability by
not being able to keep the law unto
perfection.

c)) Christ fulfilling the Law men
and women are dead to the Law
and able to marry another, namely
Christ, who kept the entire Law.
Rom. 7:4-6

3)) Removing guilt and shame to give
us a clean conscience without guilt
or condemnation.

4)) It is finished. Jn. 19:30; Rom.
3:24-25; 1Jn. 2:2

5)) Some see an allusion to woman
accused of adultery. Num. 5:23

2:15 To destroy the power of Satan.

1) Having disarmed principalities and
powers. Eph. 6:12

* Disarmed "apekdusamenos" means to
strip off from oneself all the powers
of darkness that attempted to destroy

Him, revealing they have no power
over Him.

- 2) He made a public spectacle of them.
- a) Here is the well know scene of the
victory march of a conquering general
who returns with the spoils of war,
exhibiting their disgrace and lack of
power to conquer him.
 - b) He put them to open shame and
disgrace.
 - c) This is the climax of Christ's authority
which they are not to allow anyone
cheat them, through philosophy. vs. 8
- 3) He triumphed over them on it.
- * The Roman general would parade his
captives through the streets to display
his triumph of kings, generals,
soldiers and people.
 - a) Jesus preached to those in hades. 1Pet.
3:19-20; Eph. 4:8
 - b) Hell could not hold Him. Acts 2:24,
"Ps. 16:10"
 - c) He tasted death for every man. Heb.
2:9-10
 - * In garden by a tree, innocence was
lost by choice, at the cross, another
tree, redemption was gained and
made real only by personal choice!
 - d) Paul used this type of vivid picture of
the Roman triumph for the ministers
of Christ. 2Cor. 2:4

2:16-19 The reasoning from the sufficiency of Christ.

2:16 The imposition of legalism.

- 1) The false teachers at Colosse were teaching a rigid life restriction for their living by legalism.
- 2) The proclamation is to not allow anyone to judge them regarding five things, the implication being that someone had already.
 - * Literally, “Stop letting anyone judge you”.
 - a) Their food, which most likely indicate Jewish origin, though could include pagan asceticism, dealing with vegetables and meats. Lev. 10:9; Num. 6:3
 - b) Their drink, prohibiting some things.
 - c) Their feast days, observing certain holidays as more holy than others, dealing with the Jewish calendar.
 - d) Their new moons, for religious observation, according to the law.
 - e) Their Sabbaths, as law to obey.
 - * Jesus was always getting in trouble over the Sabbath.
- 3) Legalism has turned more people off to Christ than we even know and the problem started way back in the first church council and it was settled. Acts 15

- a) The New Testament is clear about legalism to a self-righteous form of life to exalt oneself or merit God, it is mere bondage.
- b) In fact it is really a matter of those who are weak in the faith and those who are strong, immature and mature. Rom. 14:1-15:13; 1Cor. 8-10; 1Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:14; Heb. 9:10; 13:9-10; Gal. 4:9-11; 5:1

2:17 The identity of these things.

- 1) They were all prophetic of Christ, shadows and types of things to come, therefore temporary and inferior. Gal. 3:19-20
- 2) The efficiency and permanence of the New covenant is superior to the Old covenant, also in glory. 2Cor. 3:7-13
- 3) The arrival of Christ finalized them all, being the very substance “soma”, the body that cast the shadow and they have no value, having been fulfilled. Heb. 9:23-28; 10:1

2:18 The imposition of mysticism.

- 1) Let no one cheat you of your reward. vs. 16
 - * Again many of these phrases are most likely direct quotes from the false teachers.

- a) The word cheat “katabrabeueto” to rob you, umpire against you as an athlete.
 - b) In other words, do not keep on allowing anyone to deny your claim to be a Christian or declare you disqualified in relation to Christ who has prized you with Himself and salvation. 1Cor. 9:24; 2Tim. 4:7
 - c) Jesus was superior to all angels, He created them. Col. 1:16, 20; 2:15
- 2) The individuals attempting to cheat them of their Christian reward were the false teachers who were taking delight in false humility and worship of angels.
- a) Men who delight or willfully were disqualifying them by false humility most likely because they professed they were not worthy to come to God directly but rather an intermediate!
 - * The same goes for Mary or any saint in the Catholic Church!
 - c) Men who are into the worship of the hierarchy of angels, rather than Christ who created them, whose damnation was sure. Gal. 1:8
 - d) Fictitious humility which in fact umpired against them, due to not abiding by the rules, God’s revelation.
 - * Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. Heb. 1:14

- 3) The activity of these men is identified as intruding into those things which he has not seen but imagines, being vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.
- a) Men who relish and glory in their devoted search of such things by their paraded humility or religious pride as being initiated into their mystical rites, entering into fallen angel worship of visions of these emanations and aeons.
 - b) Men who relish in intimidating others by their proud mystical experiences, yet they were not of God.
 - c) Men and their experience then become the standard for spirituality and elitism.
 - d) Men who pride themselves in false humility because of their supposed access to God, rather than the one that has been secured by Jesus.
 - * Knowledge puffs up but love edifies. 1Cor. 8:1
 - e) Men who are dominated by the depraved and sinful natures and unspiritual abilities, condemn by he Scriptures.
 - * A syncretistic mixture of Jewish and pagan elements!

2:19 The simple failure of the false teachers.

- 1) They were not holding fast to the head, Christ.
 - * Jesus is the head of the body, the church, the one who has the preeminence. Col. 1:18; 2:10
- 2) They were disconnected from that which is the source of all the body.
 - a) Christ nourishes all the body, they were being mal-nourished by their false experiences.
 - b) Christ knits it all together by joints and ligaments, they were being knit together by something that would fall apart. Eph. 4:16
 - c) Christ causes it to grow and to increase, they were not growing but dying.
 - d) Christ is God, they did not have God.

2:20-23 **The imposition of asceticism.**

2:20 The conclusions in view of the sufficiency of Christ.

- 1) The reasoning is, since in fact they had died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, meaning that they had abandoned their old religious, superstitious ways. 3:1

- a) The apostle Paul identifies these legalistic and mystical practices to be of pagan origin “basic principles” sacred days, years, etc of their pagan calendar which was “philosophy and empty deceit” and without any doubt were syncretized into a Jewish background.
 - b) They were using worldly so called wisdom to measure spirituality!
 - c) They were to stand and defend their liberty in Christ.
- 2) The rebuke is, why are they subjecting themselves to religious worldly regulations which they left behind? 2:8
 - a) The word subject “dogmatizesthe” means to permit oneself to be dominated by rules again.
 - b) The word dogma and dogmatized come from this Greek word, they were not to be impressed not intimidated by the false teachers.
 - c) I am always amazed at the amount of people who embrace teachings and practices that are contrary to the Scriptures .

2: 21 The ascetic practices are mentioned.

- 1) Do not touch ‘
- 2) Do not taste.
- 3) Do not handle.

- 4) These were most likely the very slogans of the false teachers.
- a) These are human regulations contrary to Christ, in addition or substitution of the atonement of Christ, that promise not only to make one spiritual and holy but are the very evidence of one's spirituality!
 - b) Asceticism was due to the belief that the body was sinful and must be denied.
 - c) The result led to the deprecation of the body, marriage, exaltation of virginity and monasticism, with endless self-torture.

- 2:22** The source of these ascetic regulations is human not divine revelation.
 * This is a good reason not to practice them!
- 1) Things that by their nature perish with use of temporary things that are perishable and unimportant to godliness. Rom. 14:17; 1Cor. 6:13
 - 2) Things that are teachings of men and not God, taboos of human inventions. Col. 2:8
 - a) Jesus said to the Pharisees, "But in vain you do worship me teaching the commandments and doctrines of men". Matt.15:9; Mk. 7:7

- b)) On the sermon on the Mount, "You have heard it said....but I say unto you".

- 2:23** Their efficiency regarding spirituality.
- 1) These practices seem to have as appearance of wisdom in self-impose religious worship.
 - a) They are not true wisdom, but only appear to be, due to the fact they are not being drawn from the treasury of Christ. Col. 2:3
 - b) They are self-imposed by religion devoid of God's commands.
 - * The worship of angels.
 - c) They are based on false or mock humility and abusive denial of the body needs.
 - * Serving to exalt man's wisdom, honor and pride!
 - 2) These practices have no value against the indulgences of the flesh.
 - a) They have no power to remedy the sin nature of man nor sins of man, only appearance of wisdom. Gal. 5:16-17, 21
 - b) They are things of their particular "Philosophy", the love of wisdom. Col. 2:8
 - c) Legalism, mysticism and asceticism lead to gratify one's flesh.

d) Yet as Christians we recognize that though we are no longer bound by rules, there are certain things that we do not do or practice due to the fact that they are sin or not conducive to spiritual growth and pleasing God.

* All things are lawful but all things are not necessary, all things are lawful but all things are edifying.

1Cor. 10:23