



Edgemont Bible Church
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Colossians

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Intro: With all false teachers, the denial of the person and or sufficiency of Christ and His atonement is always the issue. False philosophies have infiltrated the church in many ways, such as psychology which is brought in as a supplement to God's word. Mysticism has infiltrated thru those who have had visions or extra-biblical revelations. Others include legalism which equates holiness with observing a list of cultural taboos or asceticism which equates poverty or physical deprivation in its path to godliness. Whenever these false teachings are brought in, much like the political correction of this age, intimidation is used to quiet its detractors. With the heretics of Paul's day, like the political correct people of today, they believed that they were privy to higher information, part of an elite, select, exclusive group. They disdained the unenlightened, simplistic, Christians. Because of the pressure, some were drawn away to accept the need for more than "Christ Alone." Paul writes with a frontal attack on these heresies.

X. Spiritual Intimidation

A. Legalism - vs 16-17

1. religion of human achievement
 - a. Christ plus human works
 - b. Conformity to man made rules is the measure for spirituality
2. Believers are complete in Christ
 - a. (So) Therefore let no one judge you
 - i. Stand in your freedom - Ro 10:4; Gal 5:1
 - ii. Legalism is
 - useless in that it cannot constrain the flesh
 - deceptive because the inwardly rebellious, even unbelievers can conform to its standards (Pharisees)
 - b. Paul's constant concern
 - i. commanded Titus not to pay attention to "not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. Tit 1:14-15
 - ii. Christian liberty and the only legitimate reason for restriction of it - Rom 14-15; 1 Co 8-10
3. What the false teachers were teaching
 - a. Prohibitions of "in food or in drink,"
 - i. probably based on OT dietary laws

ii. Jesus dealt with this issue in Mk 7:14-19

iii. Paul reminded us that

- “ the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

- the dietary laws are no longer in effect (Peter’s vision Act 10:9-16) and was formally recognized by the Church (Acts 15:28-29)

b. The above also applies to

i. festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, etc - Lev 23

ii. the new moon celebrated with sacrifices or the first day of the month - Num 28:11-14

iii. Sabbaths

- was a sign - Ex 31:16-17 'Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. **It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever**; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'" (see Heb 8)

- The NT repeats 9 of the 10 commandments

- only glimpse of the Church worship service in NT is on Sunday - Acts 20:7; see also 1Co 16:2; Re 1:10

- No hint in OT that God expected Gentiles to observe the Sabbath

- no evidence or command to keep the Sabbath before the law of Moses

- the Jerusalem Council didn’t impose Sabbath keeping on Gentile believers - Acts 15

- Paul warned Gentiles about a lot of sins, but never breaking the Sabbath

- Paul rebuked the Galatians for thinking that God expected them to keep special days - Ga 4:10-11 You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

- Paul taught that Sabbath keeping was a matter of Christian liberty - Ro 14:5

- Early Church fathers, Ignatius to Augustine taught OT Sabbath was not for a Gentile Church

4. Why they were wrong

a. which are a shadow of things to come,

- i. a shadow has no reality
- ii. The reality is what makes the shadow
- b. but the substance is of Christ.
 - i. Jesus Christ is the reality that cast the shadow
 - food - He is the bread of life - Jo 6:41
 - Passover - Christ is our Passover - 1 Co 5:7
 - Sabbath rest - God has granted us the possibility if experiencing His eternal rest - Heb 4:1-11
 - ii. Paul's point: true spirituality doesn't consist of keeping external rules, but having a relationship with Jesus Christ

B. Mysticism - vs 18-19

1. defined as the pursuit of a deeper subjective religious experience
 - a. weighing feelings, intuition, and other internal sensations more than objective, observable, external data.
 - b. ultimately derives authority from self actualized or self authenticated light rising from with-in
2. Let no one cheat you of your reward,
 - a. Cheat/ defraud - to award the price against, i.e. (figuratively) to defraud (of salvation):--beguile of reward.
 - i. taking delight in false humility
 - **tapeinophrosune** - humiliation of mind, i.e. modesty:-- humbleness of mind, humility (of mind, loneliness (of mind).
 - they were delighting in it, so it was false humility which is the same as pride
 - ii. and worship of angels
 - denying that there is one mediator between man and God - 1 Tim 2:5
 - was a common problem in the area as late as 739 A.D.
 - each time in Scripture where man worships angels, they tell them not to - Rev 19:10; 22:9
 - b. Paul warns the Colossians that far from being spiritual elites, they were actually out vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
3. and not holding fast to the Head
 - a. Col 1:18 who is Christ, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.
 - b. true spiritual growth comes from union with Christ, not just positional, but practical everyday walking with Him
 - c. There have been various efforts to bring mysticism to the forefront usually in the name of the Spirit over the centuries, but our authority

always comes back to the Scripture

C. Asceticism - vs 20-23

1. living a life of rigorous self-denial for righteousness
 - a. those that promote spirituality through self-denial forget two things
 - i. it is the **love** of money that is the root of all kinds of evil - 1 Tim 6:10
 - ii. Some of God's choicest servants were extremely wealthy - Abraham, Job, Solomon
 - b. to try an establish righteousness through self-denial is what Paul calls a religion based on "basic principles of the world"
 - i. why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations...according to the commandments and doctrines of men?
2. The heretics thought that the body was evil, so self denial was a way to free the spirit from the prison of the body
3. Asceticism is impotent
 - a. in that it focuses on things that are "subject to perish with the using"
 - b. the reason is found in vs 23 -
 - i. These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body,
 - ii. but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.
 - When fasting, Jesus said: "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. - Mt 6:16 –18