

Wednesday Faith Connection
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Colossians 2 – Religion or Christ?

Trouble . . . brewing in Colossae!!

Spelled out . . . in Chapter 2.

8 See to it that **no one takes you captive** through philosophy and empty deceit,
• according to human tradition,
• according to the **elemental spirits of the universe**,

16 Therefore **do not let anyone condemn** you in matters

- of food
- and drink
- or of observing festivals,
- new moons,
- or sabbaths.

17 These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

18 **Do not let anyone disqualify you**,

- insisting on self-abasement
- and worship of angels,
- dwelling on visions,
- puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking,

Why do you submit to **regulations**,

- 21 “Do not handle,
- Do not taste,
- Do not touch”?

WHAT ARE THE FALSE TEACHERS SAYING?

1. There are powers in the world outside of Jesus’ control

Need to be addressed, placated in some way before one can be at peace, have confidence

- Angelic beings (stoicheia)
- Political, Medical, Economic, Informational

In Jesus’ life . .

Can see this tension played out between

Jesus’ miracles & the religious and Political Authorities

- Jesus calms the storm: who is this?
- Guards sent to arrest him: “Who is this?”
- Evil Circumstances seem to win out . . . with his death

-- but Easter, Resurrection!!

→ fact is . . . God in charge all along

¹⁵ He disarmed **the rulers and authorities** and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him

2. They are saying that . .

There are Activities & Experiences that are essential to have or pursue, to be a “super-Christian”

i. (last-time) “Super-spirituality” (Francis Schaeffer)

v.18 *Speak in tongues? Radical Conversion? Fasting? Etc.*

- Key Approach: May be helpful, very good; but not as legal requirements for others! Cf. Paul, Jesus; not a sign of superiority, 1st class in the sight of God

ii. Things you must do to add to Christ

v. 16 . . . *Liturgical correctness*

- “Episcopalian”: Follow the liturgical calendar . . . *Advent, Lent, etc.*
- “(Old) Presbys”: Keep *the Sabbath* in detail

Rationale:

- connection with the creator/maker”;

- calendar as divine: Dead Sea Community vs. Jerusalem controversy, solar/lunar, etc.

Key Approach:

Routine is not bad in itself!! We must ask – Is it Helpful?
Clear Purpose? OR is it Legally binding/ a sign of superiority, growth?
(e.g., Jesus and the Sabbath)

3. They are Saying that . .

The material world and the body are bad

v. 21 . . (do NOT) handle, taste, touch . . . Abstention!

Rationale: God is not the maker of materiality

Key Approach:

Jesus came eating and drinking

1 Tim. 4:4-5 God made all, receive with thanks!

SO – WHAT IS IT THAT WE REALLY NEED TO DO?

Focus on: The person of Jesus

17 These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

3 **in whom** are hidden all the treasures

- of wisdom
- and knowledge.

9 For **in him** the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

10 and you have come to fullness **in him**, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him

Focus on: What he did for you

¹¹ **In him** also

you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ;

- Jesus was “cut off” from God for us

¹² when you were buried with him in baptism,

you were also raised **with (in) him** through faith in (the faithfulness of) the (energy) power of God, who raised him from the dead.

- Baptism is THE ordinance required by Jesus (along with the Lord’s Supper)

¹³ And when you were dead in trespasses

and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses,

¹⁴ erasing the record (the IOU)

that stood against us with its legal demands.

He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

- The legal demand is “death” (Genesis 2:17) – the “wages” of sin

WHAT YOU REALLY NEED TO DO:

19 and not **holding fast to the head**,

from whom **the whole body**,

nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

⁶ As you therefore have

- received Christ Jesus the Lord, (1 Cor.15:1)

in him

- continue to walk (Matt.9:5, 11:5)
- ⁷rooted (Matt 13:6, 21)
- and built up **in him** (Matt 7:24-27)
- and established (confirmed) in the faith,
- just as you were taught, (Matt.5:1-2)
- abounding in thanksgiving. (Mat. 15:35-36, 26:26-27)