

There is no reality involved.

- b. A relation. The Gnostic approach is further described as "will worship." This connotes a voluntarily adopted worship of some sort. It is something which is not of God but imposed by the person himself. It feigns humility, but it is a mockery. There is also the abuse of the body. Severity to the body is often a part of the ascetic approach. Literally this means there is no sparing of the body. The Greeks considered acetic discipline as the courageous exposure to hardships and danger. It is clear, therefore, that the whole connection of the ascetic practices were unBiblical.
- c. A satisfaction. The final comment of Paul is that the ascetic can bring nothing of value against the satiety of the body. This natural self finds a filling up in these ascetic practices. The body should be used for the performance of the will of God, not as an instrument for selfish satisfactions! See Rom. 6:13, 19; 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:13, 20).

Conclusion Far too many are content with an approach to God which is full of religious prohibitions and rites and ceremonies. They contend for these but allow all sorts of inconsistencies to thrive along with them. What really is Biblical Christianity? It is Christ! It is the indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the submission of the heart to His rights over the believer. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit through a life redeemed by Blood. Let's put the emphasis where God does: on the Person and Word of Christ our Lord. If He is all things in all things, then you will enjoy life intended in your salvation! Amen!

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

"Co-Crucifixion With Christ" Colossians 2:20-23

Introduction

1. The primacy of our Lord Jesus Christ is an essential of the Christian faith. This is true both in salvation and in the progression of a life with Christ.

2. Let's get this firmly fixed in our minds: no man ever gained the forgiveness of his sins on his own, and no man will ever get any place in his Christian life without the centrality of Christ! Christ must be all things in all things!

3. To support this Biblical contention, may we suggest three wonderful items of discussion. The argument of Paul is logical, pedagogical, and theological. It's convincing IF you will listen!

1. CRUCIFIXION v. 20.

a. A condition. It will be noted that the verse is in the form of a conditional clause. But the condition is the first class sort and therefore assumes the matter to be true! No question about reality here. Better rendered: "since then you are dead with Christ . . ."

b. A decision. The aorist tense of the verb "dead" notes the decisive character of the event and the change which was wrought. When Christ died, then the believer did too. This is an expression of the ground for all Christian conduct! It is the only Biblical frame of reference for proper Christian living. BUT NOTE: It is something already done and now to be accepted as done!

c. A separation. The death involves a separation from the "rudiments" of the world. The word used here is one which means a series or row of items. It is variously used in the N.T. (cf. Acts 15:10; Gal. 4:3, 9; Heb. 5:12; 2 Peter 3:10; here). The crucifixion with our Lord has wrought something definite with these series of items related to the world! God said it; we are to believe it!

2. SUBJECTION vv. 20-22.

Assuming the co-crucifixion with the Lord to be true, Paul now takes up his argument as to why Christian conduct and belief at Colosse is inconsistent with this arrangement of things. Here is the discussion:

a. A question. Using the concessive participle, Paul asks: "if the crucifixion is a real factor, how can you live as though it had not happened? This is a question a lot of people need to be asked! The question is not about security, but it is about reality!

b. A consternation. One word is used in the original Greek for the phrase "are ye subject to ordinances." The verb may be either middle or passive for both make good sense. The "ordinances" concerned include both the Mosaic law (cf. vv. 14, 15) and the Gnostic philosophy (v. 8). These are inconsistent with a proper relationship to the Person of our Lord Jesus and the effects of His death at Calvary. How can people be subject to that which has been dealt with at Calvary?!

c. A prohibition. Three specific prohibitions are mentioned by Paul which the Gnostics advanced. They are these:

1) Handle not. Verb means to fasten or cling to.

2) Touch not. Verb means to touch or handle. Is a bit weaker than the previous verb.

3) Taste not. Common verb for giving taste to.

d. A Corruption. All of these items which have been advanced for asceticism are actually "for corruption." The preposition used with the noun notes their ultimate end. The compound meaning "using" notes that in "using up" these factors, there is corruption. Simply stated, Paul argues that in the very nature of things, these outward items perish with their use. Now if the person can annihilate them, they certainly cannot be called upon to rule the believer!

e. A connection. The final straw which breaks the back of these ascetic matters is that they are all according to (so the Greek preposition for "after") the commandments and doctrines of men. The word commandments means precepts and concerns the authority involved while doctrines means the instructions involved. Both, however, are according to the standard of men and not the Word. What a charge which Paul makes! Let's stand where he stood! See Mark 7:7-23 and compare Isaiah 29:13 and Matt. 15:9-20.

3. DEMONSTRATION v. 23.

As an explanation of the entire matter, Paul concludes his argument by showing the characterization of the regulations advanced by the Gnostics.

a. A reputation. The word used for "show" is the one which means word. It is sometimes used of talk which a word occasions, hence the resultant meaning "reputation." This is the thought here: "a reputation for wisdom."