

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS  
“Warning About Christian Liberty”  
Colossians 2:18, 19

Review

1. The “church” or “Body of Christ” is a New Testament truth. Christ predicted He would build it (Mt. 16). We believe it was initiated at Pentecost with the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2, 10, 11).

2. Israel is the focus of God in the Old Testament. That “nation” received the attention of God, but miserably failed. Their future blessing was deferred until they acknowledge the Messiah nationally (Mt. 23:37-39).

3. When God ushered in the Age of Grace with the coming of Christ (Jn 1:17), the initiation of the church (Acts 2), and the inclusion of Gentiles into the Body of Christ (Ro. 16; Eph. 3; Col. 1), some Jews refused to accept these arrangements. Hence, wherever Paul the apostle preached “grace” and the “Body,” Judaizers followed to dissuade the believers. This caused divisions (1 Cor. 1:10, 11).

4. Not only were there Judizers, but there were pagan philosophers who sought to discredit God’s grace and the Body truth. These twin truths, (“grace” and “Body”) have always been the object of contention. God warns us about this matter. These are the means He uses.

1. God’s direct APPEAL v. 18

“Let no many beguile you of your reward . . . .”

a. Mode of the verb

Here is an imperatival form, hence it is a command. There is no choice in the matter. It is important to get God’s mind conveyed to yours!

b. Tense of the verb

The present tense indicates continuous action. Constant vigilance is indicated. There is never a time to relax. Persistence in the activity is ordered.

c. Person of the verb

The indefinite “no man” is singular. Not one individual is to be allowed to influence a believer against God’s grace and Body.

d. Meaning of the verb

A number of suggestions rise out of the basic meaning of the verb. Look at three of them.

1) Let no man rob you of your prize. A reward was to be given the one who won a game. An appropriate ceremony was associated with this. The “givers of the reward” did what this verb suggests. The recipient was not to be damaged. That is the idea here (cf. Gal. 5:7).

2) Let no man seduce you. This suggests not allowing false doctrine to drive a believer from the faith.

3) Let no man master it over you. The idea here is that the seducers assumed to be superintendents of the believers. Without practicing what they prescribed, it was not possible to gain the prize of one’s salvation.

2. Man’s distinct CLAIM v. 18

“ . . . voluntary humility and worshiping of angels.”

a. To humility

The pretext employed by the false teachers is “voluntary humility.” They alleged that the believer was too unworthy to present himself directly to God. This is high sounding piety, but it is false! Admittedly, the original text is difficult, but the meaning is clear: it is a mock humility! These false people “take pleasure in humility.” They are proud of it!

b. To angel worship

These false teachers introduced a “service” or “religion” or “worship” of angels. The idea which this advances is that a believer is too poor to present himself directly to God through the mediation of Christ. Rather, use must be made of intercession of angels (saints?!). God specifically contradicts this (cf. Mt. 11:28; Jn 14:6; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:16). We must reject the inventions of men and accept the clear determination of Scripture. Note the service of angels to God (Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2).

3. Scripture’s definite CONCLUSION vv. 18, 19

a. About false teachers

1) They intrude. This indicates the teachers took their stand on or spent time in searching into the significance of their visions. It is all a self-effort and divorced from revelation.

2) They see. The entire recourse of the false teachers is self-conceit. It is their own usual experience, own inferences, own observations. If the negative is retained (as in KJV), then it means that those who speak about worshiping angels just do not know what they are talking about.

3) They puff up This is the real problem with the false teachers -- they are puffed up for no purpose. Why? Because their conceit is sourced in their fleshly (i.e. totally unrenewed nature) mind. No wonder they have such unbiblical ideas!

b. About false doctrine

The nub of the matter concerns “not holding the Head.” The Greek negative here means actual desertion of Christ as Head! To accept other mediators, for example angels, is to dethrone Christ and place Him below a long line of aeons (cf. Col. 1:18; 2:10; Eph. 4:15, 16). This cuts into the fact of Scripture that Christ is the ONLY Source of spiritual life and activity. This is supported by three verbs:

1) Christ nourishes. This verb means that He and He alone maintains the union between Himself and the believers. The present passive participle indicates continuous action and full supply (cf. 2 Cor. 9:10; Gal. 3:5; 2 Pet. 1:5).

2) Christ knits. The present passive participle avers continuous action. He does this by drawing all the connections and ligaments together. The total 'body' is affected. Both the physical and the spiritual 'bodies' are 'fearfully and wonderfully made.'

3) Christ increases. Increase does not come by the inventions of the flesh, but by Christ. He emphasizes the 'increase of God,' that is, a divine and spiritual increase. Ultimately the 'Body' attains to the measure of its perfect stature in Christ (Eph. 4:13).

End notes: Let us lay aside all strange doctrines and hold fast to our holy and blessed Head, Jesus Christ the Son of God. Let us enjoy, with most profound respect, the great honor He has conferred upon us. May we never have any other Head than the Lord Jesus Christ! Let us live in such purity as may be worthy of His great Name. Amen.