

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

“First Class Living”

Colossians 2:20-23

Introduction

1. The religious world is content if professing Christianity becomes a religion of prohibitions, rites, and ceremonies. Scripture, however, is opposed to this.
2. The Bible teaches that all men (human beings) are sinners by birth. This is due to their seminal relationship with Adam Psa. 51:5; 58:3; Ro. 5:12.
3. God, in ineffable mercy and grace, has provided salvation for sinful men through the perfect Sacrifice, His well beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' death at the cross satisfied God the Father, reconciled all men to God, and redeemed from sin. The work of salvation stands finished.
4. The incredible message of the Word of God is that “whosoever believes” on the finished work of Christ personally will be saved i.e. totally and perfectly accepted before God.
5. Those who oppose being saved from sin by this grace of God, are in conflict with Scripture. This was the case at Colosse. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this letter to say just that. Outward ceremonies do not add to the work of Christ (2:16, 17). Moreover, nothing must be allowed to detract from Christ as Head (2:18, 19).
6. It is the understanding of these wonderful truths which raises the flag “wherefore” (2:20). It is the complement to “therefore” (2:16). The “wherefore” flag points out three significant conclusions:

1. A SAFE POSITION v. 20

a. The fact of it

The aorist tense of the verb “to die” is incorporated into a first class condition. In Greek grammar this assumes the condition to be true and may happily be translated “since.” In the mind of God it was at the Cross. For men it was at the moment a person believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour (cf. 2:12; Ro. 6:1-13; 2 Tim. 2:11).

NOTE: Christ died to sin (Ro. 6:2). Christ died to self (2 Cor. 5:15); Christ died to the law (Gal. 6:14).

b. The Person of it

This is the key -- “with Christ.” Hence, everything is tied in with His spotless Person and satisfying Work. Christ is all in all!

c. The effect of it

The preposition “from” indicates separation. All ceremonial observances are involved. Consider: 1. Christ was born under the law and bound to their fulfilment. But, He died FROM them! 2. Christ was the Substance of which the ordinances were the shadow. In His death they were abolished. Ordinances are an infringement on the efficacy

of His work at the Cross. His death brought us into fellowship with the Father so that NOTHING is needed to bridge the distance between God and man. Christ did it ALL!! Hallelujah.

NOTE: Inasmuch as Christ is ALL, His death and ours “with” Him, has forever separated us from “the rudiments (elementary religious practices) of the world.” Christ alone is fully satisfying. Blessed be His Name.

2. A SOLEMN PROTEST vv. 20b - 22.

a. By subjection

Five words are used to translate the one verb in the text. It is rendered as passive in the KJV, but may just as well be middle, therefore, reflexive. This is a monstrous inconsistency.

b. By explanation

The three negatives (touch not, taste not, handle not) are fruit of a problem, the root of which was dealt with at the Cross. To major on the outward observances and rules instead of the inward conviction and principle is wrong. These negatives are “after” (Greek “according to the standard”) of “commandments” and “doctrines” of men (generic term). How foolish can one be to ignore these matters and add to the “grace” of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The fact of the matter is -- these things (negatives, ordinances, outward ceremonies, etc.) are designed to perish. If they are “used,” they only turn out to be unfit for further use. What a powerful argument.

3. A SPIRITUAL POWERLESSNESS

a. Its character

The Greek term employed for “show” is the common one for “word.” It is often used of mere talk, hence “reputation.” Thus, the “which things” (which very things) have a mere reputation for wisdom. It is mere talk!

b. Its nature

In reality, all these ascetic matters are a demonstration of 1) voluntarily adopted worship effected by oneself, 2) utterly mock humility, 3) merely severity to the body, an ascetic discipline.

c. Its use

This is the final word “honor” is better rendered value and the preposition “to” as “against.” Therefore, external ceremonies etc. serve no useful purpose or value against the satisfying (indulgences) of the flesh (the self life, old man, what we were before believing in Christ). Mere rules do not foster a relationship with God.

Conclusion: Salvation -- what a word! -- from sin is only possible through the Lord Jesus Christ. His perfect Person accomplished an infinite Work. It is DONE (John 19:30) and that's it. As salvation is a work of God, so is sanctification (God's separating work in a believer by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit). So be it today and forever. Amen.