

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

“Behave and Beware”

Colossians 2:8-10

Considerations

1. The apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter to the church at Colosse (4:10, 18). Consequently, he was absent from them (2:5).
2. Paul had great praise that the Colossian believers exhibited an ordered discipline in their assembly (2:5). There was quiet concord and subjection to the spiritual overseers and to one another (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40).
3. Moreover, they demonstrated steadfastness. Their faith was solid. They acted as a close phalanx. In the face of error, they maintained a strong doctrinal front. There was no Laodicean attitude (cf. Rev. 3).
4. The great exhortation (2:6) presents a strong appeal to persistence. There was no doubt that the Colossians had “received” the Lord Jesus as Saviour (strong verb in the aorist tense). He had been accepted as the Christ (Messiah), Jesus (Saviour), and the Lord (as Jehovah God and as Master). They were commanded to walk in Him (present imperative).
5. Accompanying this clear stand, they were “rooted,” “built up” and “established.” Added to this was an overflowing expression (present tense) of thanksgiving to God. Hence, both in what they believed and how they believed, there was every evidence of reality.
6. It is just at this juncture of his letter, that the Spirit of God instructs Paul to warn the saints at Colosse. Beloved, make no mistake about it -- often it is those who appear to be strong who need the admonition of warning (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11 - 15!!!).
7. Mark it carefully, there is a warning. Do not neglect it.

1. ABOUT PHILOSOPHY v. 8

This is the only place in the N.T. that the word “philosophy” is found. It was Pythagoras who, in humility, indicated he was a “lover of wisdom.” So be it, but we must take the warning of Scripture. It may be a specious make believe. It may be empty deceit and therefore illusionary. The use of the present tense “spoil” points to the pressing need to be watchful (“beware”). The Bible does not decry knowledge, but it warns about the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:20). The specific sort of philosophy Paul attacks is Gnosticism. Ultimately, this advanced the idea of

angels as intermediaries between God and man (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5). The two rocks on which most philosophy splits are sin and redemption. To deal with these broad subjects, we must confront human depravity and divine salvation. Too often there is the craving after a system of thought, contrary to God, in these matters. It is this which is the warning of the apostle here.

2. ABOUT TRADITION v. 8

The word “tradition” indicates what has been handed down from the side of one person to another. This “tradition” is after or like what is “after man,” hence it is anthropocentric. The point is clear and the warning is patent. The philosophy which is empty deceit is leading astray according to man’s standard. It is to be judiciously “looked out” for!

3. ABOUT RUDIMENTS v. 8

Partially developed reasonings of the cosmos world system apart from God are indicated by the term “rudiments.” They are the ABC’s of paganism. The same preposition used with “tradition” is here. It denotes a yardstick by which the “philosophy” can be measured. Both “tradition” and “rudiments” denote what is apart from divine revelation.

4. ABOUT CHRIST v. 8, 9

Stated negatively, the philosophy has nothing to do with the Lord Jesus. By so writing, the Spirit indicates a. The finality of Christ and b. The fullness of Christ (all that He is! cf. John 1:1, Col. 1:15-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-3). Anything which does not extol Christ as the standard is to be rejected as erroneous. The reason for this is given (v. 9): all the fullness of absolute Godhood (the very essence of God) continually (present tense) dwells (is at home) in the Lord Jesus Christ bodily (in bodily form, even in His glorified humanity). With such an exalted standard, it is no wonder that a warning is issued. Any deviation from the Lord Jesus is obvious error and to be shunned.

Conclusion

The extent to which one understands the prepositional phrases of verse eight and the focus of verse nine, insomuch will he/she comprehend the periphrastic perfect passive indicative “ye are made full” in Him. To believe on Christ is to partake of all that Christ is (1 John 4:17). There is no need to seek help from philosophy when you have all in Him. Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit --Amen!