

Avoiding Three Pitfalls That Would Divert Us From Christ

Study 6, Colossians 2:16-23

Introduction: The largely *Gentile* Christians in the city of *Colosse* were facing a bewildering attack from false teachers who were trying to impose their agenda on them.

One part of their agenda was to force the Christians to obey all the minutia of Jewish religious rituals. Another facet of their agenda was to use visions which they had supposedly seen which gave them a superior knowledge. Their knowledge was tempting the new Christians to focus on angels instead of on Jesus. A third part of their agenda emphasized asceticism - depriving oneself of legitimate pursuits in the name of "super-spirituality." We today may have slightly different issues, but the principles remain the same. Here is how Paul instructed the believers ...

- A. Don't Let Anyone Judge the Way You Observe Jewish Religious Rituals. 2:16-17.
1. What are the five observances concerning which the false teachers were trying to make an issue? (2:16).
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 2. Why should we not make an issue of these things? (2:17a).
 3. What is the reality on which we are to focus, rather than being side-tracked by the shadows which anticipate the reality? (2:17b).

B. Don't Live By a "Super-Knowledge" Obtained from Visions. 2:18-19.

1. These influence - peddlers delighted in "self-abasement," (what the NIV labels "false humility"). What kind of false worship did they push? (2:18a).
2. What did they cite as evidence to justify this false worship? (2:18b).
3. What well known Christian evangelical recently came out with a prediction based on a supposed revelation from God that America would experience "mass killings" by terrorists in 2007?
4. Instead of relying on visions, on what should we rely? (2:19).

C. Don't Live As An Ascetic. 2:20-23. (An ascetic is "a person who practices unusual self-denial or severe discipline over himself for religious reasons;" or, "a person who refrains from pleasures and comforts." (*The World Book Dictionary.*)

1. What is the reality that means we don't have to live by arbitrary rules and regulations? (2:20).
2. What are three examples of asceticism? (2:21).
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. What is going to happen to these man-made rules? (2:22).
4. Asceticism is really a failure (2:23).
 - a. On the surface, what does it appear to be?
 - b. What is it really?
 - c. What can asceticism not do?

5. Can you sum up in one sentence the most valuable thing you have learned from this passage of Scripture?

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