

COLOSSIANS: STABILITY BY CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY AND SUPREMACY

Part X: The Believer's Complete Stability In Christ From Living In False Spirituality, Colossians 2:11-23

B. The Believer's Complete Stability In Christ From Bondage To Legalistic Mysticism (Colossians 2:18-19)

I. Introduction

- A. Today's unsettling, insecure world has led many believers to become unsettled and insecure, so in contrast to today's world, we believers need to focus on the stability and security we have in our Lord.
- B. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians presents Christ's all-sufficiency and supremacy in ways that settle and provide security, and one way it does so is teaching the believer's complete stability in Christ from living in false spirituality, with one realm of that liberty being freedom from bondage to legalistic mysticism.
- C. Colossians 2:18-19 teaches this provision, and we view it for our insight and stability (as follows):

II. The Believer's Complete Stability In Christ From Bondage To Legalistic Mysticism, Colossians 2:18-19.

- A. One characteristic of the theological error that the believers at Colossae faced was pressure to observe rules from mystics who claimed to have received them by way of visions, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Colossians 2:18. Another characteristic of this error was a philosophical emphasis on "some special or deeper knowledge" that produced "perfection" in a "select few who belonged to this philosophical elite," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 668.
- B. To counter the false spirituality of having to submit to such rules, Paul wrote that believers in Christ are to focus on the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, from whom all true discipling nurture proceeds, Col. 2:18-19:
 1. The Colossian believers risked being robbed of their spiritual rewards for uprightly, truly following Christ due to mystical legalists who were trying to influence them to turn aside unto their error, Colossians 2:18a.
 2. Paul then described this mystical legalism that the Colossians faced in Colossians 2:18b,c,d,e,f:
 - a. First, this error was characterized by a **false humility**, a form of godliness without any true spiritual power behind it, Colossians 2:18b with 2 Timothy 3:5; *Ibid.*, p. 678.
 - b. Second, this error was marked by a **preoccupation with spirit beings** that involved the worship of angels, a practice strictly forbidden by Exodus 20:3-4 and Revelation 22:8-9; Colossians 2:18c; *Ibid.*
 - c. Third, this error was marked by such angels who were actually demons bringing people into slavery to legalistic rules by way of **experiential visions**, Colossians 2:18d ESV; *Ibid.*, p. 679.
 - d. Fourth, this error was marked by the presence of **pride** in those involved in it, Colossians 2:18e ESV.
 - e. Fifth, this error was marked by an unspiritual, **sensuous mind** in those involved in it, Col. 2:18f ESV.
 3. To correct this error, Paul directed his readers to hold fast to Christ, the Head of the Church, Col. 2:19a,b:
 - a. Instead of turning aside after the lure of falsely humble, experiential, proud, sensuous mysticism marked by visions and a preoccupation with spirit beings that were actually demons, Paul called his readers to stay connected in their experiential walk with Christ, for He alone provided the spiritual resources needed for the entire body of believers to grow in the Lord, Colossians 2:19a NIV, ESV.
 - b. Christ alone spiritually supports and holds together the whole body of believers so that God alone causes it to grow without the involvement of false humility, experiential visions, preoccupation with angels, pride and a sensuous mind, Colossians 2:19b NIV, ESV.

Lesson: Paul taught his readers that religious mysticism that is marked by false humility, a preoccupation with spirit beings, experiential visions, pride and a sensuous mentality that produces bondage to legalistic rules is a false spirituality that, if followed, robs the believer of God's rewards. This mystical legalism is overcome by not turning aside to false humility, preoccupation with spirit beings, with visions, with pride and with sensuous mentality, but by staying focused on the Person of Jesus Christ for the spiritual support and unity in the whole body of believers that is needed for true spiritual growth in the Lord.

Application: (1) May we always adhere to the CENTRALITY of the PERSON of JESUS CHRIST in our spiritual walk to AVOID errant diversions of an EXPERIENTIAL nature that occupy one with false humility, spirit beings, visions, pride and sensuality. (2) May we rely on SCRIPTURE over EXPERIENCE for the BASIS of the reality of what we are to believe and practice. (3) May we AVOID teachings and teachers who philosophically promote a supposed "deeper" kind of "spirituality" that allegedly perfects the faithful few to belong to some select group, for such spirituality is FALSE, distinctly OPPOSITE the true humility and simplicity that is in Christ, the Head of the whole body of Christ, and from whom all believers gain true spiritual growth in the Lord.