

March 2

Scriptures: Read Colossians 2

Key Verse: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)

Overview

In chapter two, Paul confronts the heresy spoken of in the introduction. Its most fundamental flaw is its dependence upon “human tradition” and “basic principles of this world” (NIV) rather than on the finished work of Christ. The “human tradition” referred to, among other things, the rite of circumcision (v. 11), borrowed by the Gnostics from Jewish practice. The “basic principles” or “elemental spirits” (RSV) of the world refer to the elementary constituents of which the physical world is formed (earth, air, fire, and water—in Greek philosophic tradition). The heresy was comprised of a Jewish tradition/Greek philosophy hybrid with a little of Jesus thrown into the mix. As far as Paul was concerned, this mix was bogus. Faith in Christ alone was enough—nothing need be added.

That’s why Paul says, “He [God] has made [you] alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements [the written code—NIV] that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (vv. 13, 14). Because the Mosaic Law has been “nailed to the cross”, Paul tells the Colossians not to be intimidated by legalists (v. 16). Legalism kills. Jesus makes us alive (v. 13).

He also tells them not to be intimidated by spiritualizers who “delight in false humility and worship of angels” and “[intrude] into those things which [they have] not seen” (v. 18). These mystics, Paul says, have “lost connection with the Head” (v. 19 NIV). They are full of flapping and flurry, just like a chicken with its head cut off.

Paul’s point is clear: “[in Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (v. 9). All we need is Jesus; that’s all!

Prayer

Lord God, please help us to be careful lest we be robbed and cheated of the truth which is in our Lord Jesus. Keep us true always and help us again today to communicate Him to others by our words and deeds.