



## The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and Philemon

### *The Believers' Doctrinal Treasures in Christ*

#### *Colossians 2:8-23; Colossians 3:1-4*

- I. THE THREAT OF DECEPTION (Colossians 2:8-15)
  - A. The Warning Given (Colossians 2:8)
    1. The admonition—"Beware"
      - a. Of people (Matthew 7:15; Matthew 10:17; Mark 12:38; Luke 20:46; Philippians 3:2)
      - b. Of doctrines (Matthew 16:6, 11, 12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1;
      - c. Of sin (Luke 12:1, 15)
      - d. Of self (2 Peter 3:17)
    2. The threat—"lest any man spoil you"
      - a. When one side defeats another in battle, to the victor goes the spoils (Genesis 34:27, 29; Numbers 31:9, 11-12).
      - b. The victor enters the camp of the defeated and takes its valuable possessions (including women, children, material goods, etc.).
      - c. With this truth in mind, the apostle Paul warned the believers at Colosse to be on guard, knowing that men would seek to spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit.
      - d. In other words, accepting the philosophies of men, or false doctrines, is likened to losing a battle and allowing the enemy to rob the believer of his most valuable possessions.
      - e. Although a believer can never lose his salvation, he can be robbed of his stability, growth, peace, and joy.
    3. The means
      - a. Philosophy (Acts 17:18, 32; 1 Corinthians 1:19-20)
        - (1) In a most basic sense, *philosophy* is the love of knowledge.
        - (2) One would think the love and pursuit of knowledge would naturally lead to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ.
        - (3) The first pursuit of knowledge led to the fall of man and it was Satan that pushed the pursuit (Genesis 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4).
        - (4) One of the great warnings of the last days is that the saints will be "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).
        - (5) God's desire is for men to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), but truth can only be found by the study of truth (John 17:17).
      - b. Deceit (Luke 12:16-21; Romans 1:20-22)
        - (1) Deception is problematic enough on its own, but vain deceit leaves the deceived with no reward after the deception.



- (2) Agents of deception
  - a) Self (1 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 6:3; James 1:22, 26; 1 John 1:8)
  - b) Spirits (1 Timothy 4:1)
  - c) Others (Romans 16:18; 2 Corinthians 11:13; Ephesians 4:14; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:13; Titus 1:10)
- (3) The desired outcome of deception
  - a) Turning aside (1 Timothy 4:1)
  - b) Reception of God's judgment (Ephesians 5:6)
- c. Tradition (Matthew 15:1-9)
  - (1) In a basic sense, a tradition is anything that men "have been taught" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). It is "delivered" (Mark 7:13) and "received" (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Peter 1:18).
  - (2) While there are traditions that do not take away from or contradict scripture, obviously from the context the traditions mentioned here are bad or harmful.
  - (3) The commandments of men posed great risk to the early church (Titus 1:14). Paul encouraged Titus to warn his flock against accepting extra-biblical teachings. These "fables" and "commandments" turned people from the truth.
  - (4) Many of man's traditions are in direct opposition to scripture (Mark 7:8-9). During the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, the religious leaders laid aside (Mark 7:8) or rejected (Mark 7:9) the commandment of God in order to hold (Mark 7:8) or keep (Mark 7:9) the tradition of men. By doing so, the Lord said they made "the word of God of none effect" (Mark 7:13).
  - (5) The key is to understand whose traditions they are (Mark 7:3-13). Sometimes a deep chasm exists between the doctrines, traditions, and commandments of men and those that are God-ordained. The religious leaders of Christ's day held "the tradition of the elders" (Mark 7:3, 5), "the tradition of men" (Mark 7:8), and their own "tradition" (Mark 7:9, 13). In doing so, they rejected "the commandment of God" (Mark 7:9). This clearly displays the critical importance of identifying whose traditions one willingly receives and accepts. In the context of our passage, the spoiling is "after the tradition of MEN."
- d. Rudiments
  - (1) The word *rudiment* means basic or early learning.
  - (2) The suggestion is that the world offers learning or training that is foundational to other levels of learning. The outcome is quite damning.
  - (3) These rudiments can involve
    - a) Science (1 Timothy 6:20)
    - b) Education (Acts 4:13)
    - c) Scholarship (2 Timothy 3:7)

**B. The Completeness in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10)**

1. His own fulness (Colossians 2:9)
  - a. The place of dwelling
    - (1) In Him
    - (2) Bodily
  - b. The nature of the dwelling
    - (1) All the fulness (Colossians 1:19)
    - (2) Of the Godhead
      - a) Personality of God
      - b) Power of God
2. His extended completeness (Colossians 2:10)
  - a. The beneficiaries—"ye are complete"
  - b. The source—"in him"
  - c. The superiority
    - (1) The identification of His superiority—"the head"
    - (2) The nature of His superiority
      - a) Of all principality
      - b) Of all power

**C. The Spiritual Circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12)**

1. Its nature (Colossians 2:11)
  - a. It is for all believers—"ye"
  - b. It is supernatural—"made without hands"
    - (1) The Messiah and His kingdom (Daniel 2:34, 45)
    - (2) The resurrected body of Christ (Mark 14:58)
    - (3) Our glorified body (2 Corinthians 5:1)
    - (4) The tabernacle of Christ's priesthood (Hebrews 9:11)
  - c. It is spiritual—"by the circumcision of Christ"
  - d. It separates the soul from the body.
    - (1) Before salvation, we were bound to follow the lusts of our flesh, because we were attached to our flesh (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2-3; Titus 3:3).
    - (2) After salvation, we can deny the lusts of our flesh, because we have been cut off from the flesh (Romans 6:6-12; Galatians 5:24).
2. Its benefits (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4)
  - a. Its enacting—"buried with him in baptism"
  - b. Its accomplishment—"ye are risen with him"
3. Its operation
  - a. Reckon yourself dead to sin (Romans 6:11; Colossians 3:5).
  - b. Count Christ to be your life (Romans 6:11; Galatians 2:20).
  - c. Refuse to obey the lust of the flesh (Romans 6:12).
  - d. Surrender yourself to God (Romans 6:13; Romans 12:1-2).
  - e. Yield your members as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13).