

The Double Threat Facing the Saints: Philosophy and Religion

Colossians 2:1-19

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Paul's Labors that the Saints would be Established (2:1-3)

CHAPTER 2

1 For I would have you know what combat I have for you, and those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in flesh; **2** to the end that their hearts may be encouraged, being united together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to *the* full knowledge of the mystery of God;

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The mystery of God is the same as the mystery of God's will in Eph. 1:9-10. it is broader than the mystery of Christ and the church.

3 in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. **v.3** Should be “in which” not “in whom” - referring to the mystery, not the person of God.

The Danger of Enticing Words (2:4-7)

4 And I say this to the end that no one may delude you by persuasive speech. **5** For if indeed in the flesh I am absent, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and seeing your order, and the firmness of your faith in Christ. **6** As therefore ye have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in him, **7** rooted and built up in him, and assured in the faith, even as ye have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

#1. Philosophy (Rationalism) and Truths that would Preserve us from it (2:8-12)

8 See that there be no one who shall lead “you” away as a prey through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the teaching of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.

Know that the fullness of God dwells in Christ as a Man (2:9)

9 For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; **v.9** It would be correct to say that “all the fullness of the Godhead dwells” in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But “dwells *bodily*” could only be said of the Incarnate Son of God!

Know that the believer is completed by Christ (2:10)

10 and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and authority,

Know that the flesh has been cut off in God's sight - Circumcision (2:11)

11 in whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ;

Know that we are dead, buried, and raised with Christ (2:12)

12 buried with him in baptism, in which ye have been also raised with *him* through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead.

#2. Religion (Ritualism) and Truths that would Preserve us from it (2:13-19)

Know that we are given life in Christ Jesus (2:13)

13 And you, being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together with him, having forgiven us all the offences;

Know that any obligation to the law has been taken away (2:14)

14 having effaced the handwriting in ordinances which *stood out* against us, which was contrary to us, he has taken it also out of the way, having nailed it to the cross;

Know that Christ has power over every angel, etc. (2:15)

15 having spoiled principalities and authorities, he made a show of them publicly, leading them in triumph by it.

Don't fall into the trap of Judaism (2:16-17)

16 Let none therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in matter of feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, **17** which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Don't fall into the trap of Pagan Superstition (2:18-19)

18 Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize, doing his own will in humility and worship of angels, entering into things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, **19** and not holding fast the head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God.

Judaizing teachers are mentioned in many of the Epistles: they had made inroads among the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:22), the Philippians (Phil. 3:2), the Colossians (Col. 2:18), but nowhere with as much success as among the Galatian assemblies. The tendency towards natural religion has been the bane of Christianity. They were those of whom Paul wrote, "*desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm*" (1 Tim. 1:7). They were of Jewish ethnicity, but had come under the umbrella of Christianity. They found some benefit to being among Christians. Their primary motive was to gain a following after themselves, and perhaps to profit financially. They claimed to be closely connected to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, but they could not prove their genealogy as Paul could (Phil. 3). Paul was raised up as a suited vessel to deal with the Judaizers, because he himself had been one!