

## **BIB 271 Church Epistles**

### **Lesson 10 Colossians**

Intro. Paul again follows his customary style in this epistle of dividing the letter in half. The first half is doctrinal and the second half is devotion. The doctrinal portion gives the basis for why we should live differently. The church was apparently being attacked by doctrinal heresy, which was a combination of gnosticism and Judaism. It is interesting to note how many of the cults and false religions of the day adopt many of the same teachings. Paul's answer to each of these heresies was Christ. A proper understanding of the Person of Christ will solve most doctrinal confusion in religion. (II John)

While the epistle doesn't give an extended explanation of the heresies, there are enough references that we can infer enough of their teachings to identify it with gnosticism and Judaism. It is not necessary to study false religions in detail, only enough to identify the purpose of why Paul made the statements that he did. This epistle will make more sense if we understand the basic tenets of their beliefs.

Judaism - the references to Judaism are obvious, referring to sabbaths, new moons, asceticism (touch not, taste not, handle not).

Gnosticism -

1. emphasized the importance of knowledge
2. believed that matter was evil therefore God could not have created it. Developed a series of emanations from God called aeons (middle beings or inferior gods) (genealogies) and the final one created the world and sin.
3. Denied the incarnation - deity came upon Him at baptism, leaving before the cross

Note: amazing how many of these teachings are present in most cults today: Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Adventists, etc.

Theme: the preeminence of Christ

Key verse 1:18

Note: There are numerous similarities between Ephesians and Colossians. The theme of Ephesians is the church of Christ while the theme of Colossians is the Christ of the church. In Ephesus the emphasis was upon understanding the plan and purpose of God for the unity of the body of Christ. In Colossians the emphasis is upon Christ the Head being the answer to the ideas of man in approaching God and our identification with Him.

#### **I. The Pre-eminence of Christ as the Head (1-2)**

##### **A. The Position of Christ (1)**

1. Paul's thanksgiving for their reception of Christ 1-8
2. Paul's prayer for their appreciation of Christ 9-14
3. Paul's identification for their recognition of Christ 15-19
4. Paul's explanation for their comprehension of Christ 20-22
5. Paul's ministry for their participation of Christ 23-29

- B. The Perfection of Christ (2) our position in Christ defends against these heresies
  - 1. Warning against departure from Christ 1-9
  - 2. Importance of identification with Christ 10-15
  - 3. Liberty of our position in Christ 16-23
  
- II. The Practice of the church as the body (3-4)
  - A. Behavior of the body (3)
    - 1. Put off disobedience 1-8 put to death the lusts of the flesh
    - 2. Put on obedience 9-17 the mind of Christ
    - 3. Put into practice 18-25 every practical relationship
  - B. Benefit of the body (4)
    - 1. Prayer for each other to witness properly 2-6
    - 2. Comfort each other 7-18

### Conclusion

Paul gives us our doctrinal position and then challenges us to live it out practically in our lives. Good lesson about giving the doctrine that should provoke a corresponding practice. He didn't teach practice without a doctrinal foundation. Nor did he teach doctrine without a practical application. This is who you are so live like it.