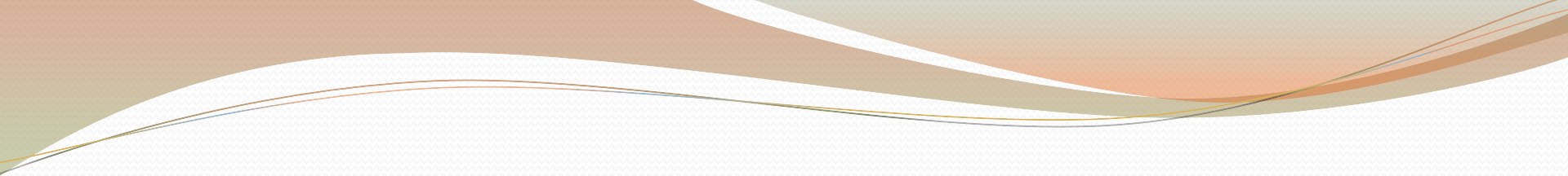


# A Question of Identity

Colossians 2:9-23

# Elements of Heresy

1. They wanted to teach an additional philosophy – in addition to Christ and him crucified (v.8)
2. They wanted them to accept either a system of astrology or spirits. (v8)



<sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

# Elements of Heresy

1. They wanted to teach an additional philosophy – in addition to Christ and him crucified (v.8)
2. They wanted them to accept either a system of astrology or spirits. (v8)
3. According to some commentators they wanted to impose circumcision on Christians (v 11)
4. They wanted to lay down ascetic rules and regulations (vv 16, 20-23)
5. They wanted to introduce the worship of angels (v 18)

## Context

<sup>16</sup> *Therefore* do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. <sup>19</sup> He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

<sup>20</sup> Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup> “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? <sup>22</sup> These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.



# A Proper Perspective on the Spiritual Life

<sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

# 5 Radically Important Questions

## 1. What is fullness and how is it gained?

- Whatever fullness means Jesus had it

Yet it is him (Christ) that God gives a full and complete expression of himself (within the physical limits that he set himself in Christ). Moreover, your own completeness is only realized in him, who is the authority over all authorities, and supreme power over all powers.

J B Phillips (J B P)

- Whatever Jesus had God wants to give to those who love him
- What do we have to do to gain “fullness?”

# 5 Radically Important Questions

2. What is the significance of circumcision?
  - Possibly raised due to influence of Judaizers
  - Possibly raised as a counter-point to the ascetic elements of Gnosticism
  - What does circumcision represent
    - Submission
    - Identification
    - Covenant

# 5 Radically Important Questions

3. What makes baptism so important?

- “Christ did not come to make good men better but to make dead men alive.” Ravi Zacharias

4. What is the significance of God forgiving us? How did he do it? What’s the deal with the law?

“He (God) has forgiven you all your sins: Christ has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads, and has completely annulled it by nailing it over his own head on the cross.” J B P

# 5 Radically Important Questions

5. How did *faith* get to be so significant?
  - Is *faith* the same thing as belief? If not what distinguishes the two?
    - Belief is agreement(intellectual)
    - Faith is commitment (volition)
    - Faith is demonstrable (emotion)
  - What makes faith so powerful?

## So What

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# Letting the Truth Take Root

- If you had been Abraham how would you have responded to the command regarding circumcision?
- Do you live your life as one in whom the fullness of God dwells?
- What keeps us from living the regenerated life that baptism portrays?
- Have you paused today to give thanks to God for all that He has given you in Christ?