

Colossians 2:9-23 – Not rules, but Jesus

Paul was concerned for the Colossians. There were false teachers, who did not follow the real gospel. They were leading people away from the truth.

1. What the false teachers taught (Jesus plus...)

Verse 10 shows us the real issue – how to be complete. How to really make it. If we have begun as Christians then... what next? These false teachers had an answer. It was the law. The law of God – that was given through angels (Acts 7:53). They also made claims to have seen amazing things. They then added their own ideas, and believed them to be true. They told people to get circumcised (the sign of being a Jew), and keep all the Jewish food laws and festivals, and they added new laws about denying yourself. It all seemed wise, and they seemed very humble people. There are many people today who make big claims, and pick out laws from the Old Testament and add their own laws, and tell you that theirs is the way to be complete as a Christian. What would you say to such people?

2. The false teachers were wrong (Jesus is everything!)

All the fulness of God dwells in Jesus Christ (v9). He has all things in his hands. How can he not be enough? How can we add to him? If we see him as he really is, we will be content – we will not worship money, sports, girls or boyfriends or careers; but want to give ourselves to serve him. Paul shows us that Christians are the true Jews – they have all that the people of the Old Testament had, and more. They have the true circumcision – the circumcision of the heart, in conversion. They have died and risen with Christ and have a new and glorious life with him. The law is not the way to God's presence; it condemns us and says we should be punished. But Jesus took all our punishment at the cross so that through him we could have victory over sin, death and hell. We should boast and rejoice only in the cross. As we suffer and even die for Christ, we should rejoice, and not look for any other way to please God.

3. The false teaching did not work (Jesus only makes us holy)

The false teaching only touched the body. It did not improve the soul. The body is not evil, and treating the body badly cannot help to defeat evil! When we make our own rules, they have no power and they do not please God. Making our own rules makes people proud – they think they are more clever than other people. It makes people to trust in themselves and in their own efforts instead of in Christ's death and resurrection. The feasts and festivals of the Old Testament were good; but they were given to point people forward to Jesus. They were shadows – he is the reality. We do not need better and more rules, but we need the living power of Jesus Christ in our souls.

Don't add to God's word – you will remain with less. When we add poison to our drinking water, we lose the value of the water; it is ruined. When you add something to the gospel of Christ alone, then you destroy it. Find all your completeness and glory in Jesus Christ, and in him alone!