

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE BRING OUR LOOK AT COL. 2:6-23 TO A CLOSE.

▶▶ In this section, ~ Paul gave us a series of five exhortations.

▷▷ Five exhortations calling believers ~ to continue ~ to stay faithful, ~ and not ~ buckle under the pressure of false teachers.

▶▶ But ~ we just don't get an exhortation.

▷▷ Paul expands on each one ~ with additional teaching.

SO FAR, ~ WE HAVE LOOKED AT THE FIRST TWO EXHORTATIONS AND THEIR expansion.

▶▶ Here I'll just briefly mention the exhortations.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ Paul urged us, ~ to stay faithful, ~ to sound doctrine in both belief and practice ~ and ~ to our commitment to Jesus.

▶▶ In the second exhortation, ~ Paul called believers to ~ ¶¶

▷▷ maintain a constant watch, ~ so that ~ no false teacher takes us captive.

▷▷ Jesus said, ~ If you abide ~ [or continue] ~ in my word, ~ you are truly my disciples, ~ and you will know the truth, ~ and the truth will set you free.

▷▷ On the other hand, ~ false teaching, ~ like sin, ~ leads us into slavery. ¶¶ 1/16

TODAY, ~ WE'LL LOOK AT THE LAST THREE EXHORTATIONS. ⇨⇨ 2:16-23.

AS WE HAVE SEEN IN THE PREVIOUS VERSES, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ Jesus' sacrifice on the cross on our behalf ~ was ~ 100% ~ sufficient ~ to effect our salvation.

▷▷ Need ~ no one and nothing else ~ to complete our salvation.

▷▷ And we will never need to do something to help or complete it.

▶▶ We noted that ~ at conversion, ~ our old nature as the dominating force in our life ~ was stripped away.

▷▷ And the new self was created. ⇨⇨ A finished act.

▷▷ There are no religious rituals needed ~ to complete this act ~ or to help create this new self.

▶▶ We observed ~ the sufficiency of the believers' sharing ~ in the ~ death, ~ burial, ~ and resurrection of Christ.

▷▷ It is complete.

▷▷ The old nature is dealt with, ~~ new life has begun, ~~ complete salvation is ours.

▶▶ We noted that everyone of our sins has been forgiven.

▶▶ And we saw ~ that Jesus totally defeated the spiritual forces of evil for good.

▶▶ Complete salvation. ⇨⇨ Complete forgiveness. ⇨⇨ Complete renewal. ¶¶ 2/16

BUT, ~ AS WE ALSO OBSERVED, ~ FALSE TEACHERS TRY TO CONVINC BELIEVERS ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that Christ's sacrifice was not 100% sufficient.

▶▶ The false teachers that Paul was dealing with ~ agreed ~ that we do indeed need faith in Christ.

▶▶ But claimed, ~ that saving faith of itself ~ was not enough.

▶▶ According to them, ~ something more was needed.

IN THIS FINAL SECTION OF PAUL'S FIVE EXHORTATIONS, ~ 2:16-23, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ he ~ deals with and refutes ~ ¶¶

▷▷ three specific practices ~ that the false teachers ~ were claiming were necessary for salvation.

▷▷ Ritualism, ~ verses 16-17; ⇔⇔ Angel worship, ~ verses 18-19; ⇔⇔ And asceticism, ~ vv. 20-23.

IN VERSE 16, ~ PAUL BEGINS WITH THE WORD ~ "THEREFORE," ~ POINTING BACK ~ TO what he was just talking about in the previous verses.

▶▶ And what we just reviewed.

▷▷ All about our salvation being complete. ⇔⇔ That Jesus' sacrifice 100% sufficient.

▶▶ Basically Paul is saying, ~ since these things are true, ~ don't fall into the trap ~ of these three hollow and deceptive doctrines. ¶¶ 3/16

## WHY PAUL NAMES THESE THREE, ~ I HAVE NO IDEA.

▶▶ There are certainly ~ many more hollow and deceptive doctrines.

▶▶ Perhaps, ~ these were the main false doctrines ~ plaguing the believers in Colossae and the surrounding region.

▶▶ We should look at them as a representative list.

▶▶ In the broadest sense, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ any teaching that contradicts the biblical teaching about the Person and work of Christ, ~ is a false doctrine ~ ¶¶

↪↪ and must be exposed and rejected.

## OK, ~ NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE FINAL THREE EXHORTATIONS.

▶▶ The last three exhortations ~ calling believers ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to continue ~ to stay faithful, ~ and not ~ buckle under the pressure of false teachers.

## EXHORTATION # 3 AND ITS EXPANSION, ~ VERSES 16-17.

### THE THIRD EXHORTATION, ~ VERSE 16.

▶▶ Therefore ~ let no one pass judgment on you ~ in questions ~ of food and drink, ~ or with regard to ~ a festival ~ or a new moon ~ or a Sabbath.

▶▶ This is a warning ~ against ritualism. ¶¶ 4/16

▶▶It looks like the false teachers were saying, ~ 77

▷▷in order to complete salvation, ~ believers had to carry out certain ritualistic observances.

▶▶In brief, ~ they claimed ~ it was Christ ~ plus ~ ritualistic observances.

THE WORD FOR ~ "PASS JUDGMENT ON" ~ CARRIES THE SENSE ~ 77

▶▶of passing ~ an unfavorable judgment ~ upon a person.

▶▶In Rom 2:1b, ~ the word is paralleled by "condemn."

▷▷For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself.

▶▶So, ~ Col. 2:16 could be translated this way.

▷▷do not let anyone condemn you ~ in questions ~ of food and drink, ~ or ~ with regard to ~ a festival ~ or a new moon ~ or a Sabbath.

MORE GENERALLY, ~ PAUL WAS SAYING ~ IN THIS THIRD EXHORTATION, ~ 77

▶▶"Don't let anyone condemn you ~ for not participating ~ in these ritualistic observances."

▶▶Why? ⇨⇨ Because they're useless.

▶▶Our salvation is complete.

▶▶Besides, ~ the Bible makes it clear ~ that we can't do anything ~ to gain God's favor ~ or effect our own salvation. 77 5/16

## THEN PAUL IDENTIFIES THESE RITUALISTIC OBSERVANCES.

(V. 16) FIRST UP, ~ WE SEE THE FALSE TEACHERS HAD CERTAIN FOOD RESTRICTIONS.

▶▶ That they said were necessary for salvation.

▶▶ The false teachers' prohibitions about food and drink ~ were probably based ~ on the Old Testament ~ or Old Covenant ~ dietary laws. ~~ cf. Lev. 11.

▷▷ Those laws were given ~ to mark Israel ~ as God's distinct people ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and to discourage them ~ from intermingling with the surrounding nations.

▶▶ Because believers are under the New Covenant, ~ the dietary laws of the Old Covenant are no longer in force.

▶▶ Jesus made that clear in Mark 7:14-19 . . . .

▶▶ Paul reminded the church in Rome ~ that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ For the kingdom of God ~ is not ~ a matter of eating and drinking ~~ but of ~ righteousness ~ and peace ~ and joy in the Holy Spirit. ~~ cf. Rom. 14:17.

▶▶ That the dietary laws are no longer in force was illustrated by Peter's vision.

▷▷ Acts 10:9-16. ⇔⇔ Acts 11:5-9

↳↳ What God has made clean, ~ do not call common ~ [or ~ impure].

▶▶ And it was formally ratified by the Jerusalem Council. ⇔⇔ Acts 15:28-29a. ¶¶ 6/16

▷▷ For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit ~ and to us ~ to lay on you ~ no greater burden than these requirements: ~ that you abstain ~ from what has been sacrificed to idols, ~ and from blood, ~ and from what has been strangled, ~ and from sexual immorality. ~ If you keep yourselves from these, ~ you will do well.

▶▶ To reiterate the point, ~ because believers are under the New Covenant, ~ the dietary laws of the Old Covenant ~ are no longer in force.

(V. 16) NEXT, ~ THE FALSE TEACHERS PLACED EMPHASIS ON THE RITUALISTIC observance of ~ ↴↴

▶▶ festivals and the new moon practices and worship on the sabbath.

▶▶ A festival ~ was one of the annual Jewish celebrations.

▷▷ Such as ~ Passover, ~ Pentecost, ~ the Feast of Tabernacles, ~ or the Feast of Lights (cf. Lev. 23).

▶▶ Sacrifices were also offered ~ on the new moon, ~ or first day of the month (Num. 28:11-14).

▷▷ The thing of it is, ~ Jesus' sacrifice for sins ~ was final.

▶▶ Christians are not required to worship on the Sabbath day.

▷▷ It is not required ~ under the New Covenant.

▷▷ Consider these three points.

↳ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ the Sabbath was the sign to Israel ~ of the Old Covenant (Ex. 31:16-17; Neh. 9:14; Ezek. 20:12). ↴↴ 7/16

↳↳2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ the New Testament nowhere ~ commands Christians to observe the Sabbath.

↳↳3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ in our only peek of an early church worship service in the NT, ~ ¶¶

→→we find the church gathering on Sunday, ~ the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

OK, ~ PAUL'S THIRD EXHORTATION CALLING BELIEVERS ~ ¶¶

▷▷to continue ~ to stay faithful, ~ and not ~ buckle under the pressure of false teachers.

▶▶"Don't let anyone condemn you ~ for not participating ~ in these ritualistic observances."

IN VERSE 17, ~ IN HIS EXPANSION OF HIS THIRD EXHORTATION, ~ PAUL TELLS US why.

▶▶These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

▷▷Also translated: ~~ ¶¶

↳↳These are a shadow of the things ~ that were to come; ~ the reality, ~ however, ~ is found in Christ.

▶▶Point: ~~ all of these things were symbolic, ~ pointing toward the reality.

JESUS ~ IS THE REALITY TOWARD WHICH THESE SHADOWS POINTED.

▶▶All these things were part of the Mosaic law ~ which pointed toward Jesus.

▷▷Now that Jesus has come, ~ the shadows are no longer needed. ¶¶ 8/16

▶▶ The same truth ~ was expressed by Paul in [Galatians 3:24-25](#), ~ where Paul explained ~ that the Mosaic law ~ acted as a tutor until Christ.

▷▷ But since Christ has come ~ the tutor is no longer involved. ⇔⇔ The law had fulfilled its function.

▶▶ It was Jesus who, ~ with His plan of salvation, ~ cast the shadow in Old Testament times ~ to prepare humanity for His coming.

▷▷ All the types and shadows are fulfilled in Him.

▶▶ Any continuing preoccupation with the shadows ~ once the reality has come ~ is pointless.

#### EXHORTATION #4 AND ITS EXPANSION, ~ VERSES 18-19.

#### HERE PAUL IS COMBATTING ANGEL WORSHIP.

▶▶ Basically, ~ as we'll see, ~ the false teachers seemed to have been insisting on believers preparing themselves for and then worshipping angels.

▶▶ Likely insisting: ~ in order to complete or enhance our salvation.

▶▶ Larger category of mysticism.

▷▷ It may be defined as ~ the pursuit ~ of a deeper or higher ~ subjective religious experience.

↳↳ Much larger sense, ~ attacking mysticism as a whole.

NOW THE DETAILS: ⇔⇔ VERSE 18 ~ IS A DIFFICULT VERSE ~ TO TRANSLATE AND understand. ↴↴ 9/16

▶▶ The terms Paul used would have been familiar to his first readers, ~ but obscure for us.

▶▶ The following is based on my research of this verse.

OK, ~ THE FOURTH EXHORTATION, ~ VERSE 18a.

▶▶ Let no one condemn you (Pao).

▶▶ The Greek verb for "condemn" ~ can be translated various ways, ~ but condemn seems to be the better rendering.

SO PAUL'S 4<sup>th</sup> EXHORTATION, ~ IS THIS.

LET NO ONE CONDEMN YOU, ~ INSISTING ON ASCETICISM AND WORSHIP OF ANGELS.

▶▶ The idea here ~ seems to be ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Let no one condemn you ~ for not participating in these activities that the false teachers were insisting on."

▶▶ Some trans. insert the word "false" here ~ and read "false humility and the worship of angels," ~ and that's fine.

▷▷ Grk. text: ~~ simply word for humility.

▶▶ But false teachers ~ would probably not insist on false humility.

▶▶ Asceticism other possibility.

▷▷ And I think this is a good translation. ¶¶ 10/16

## AND HERE'S WHY.

▶▶ In other sources, ~ this word was used extensively to denote fasting and other sorts of self-denial.

▶▶ These ascetic practices ~ were believed to enhance visions ~ of "heavenly mysteries."

## SO IT COULD BE THAT, ~ THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE INSISTING ON THE WORSHIP of angels ~ ¶¶

▶▶ and ~ to prepare oneself in advance through ascetic practices ~ in order to get the most out of it.

▶▶ And perhaps they felt they would encounter angels through these ascetic practices.

▶▶ Believers are right to reject this kind of stuff.

## I'VE GOT NEWS FOR PEOPLE LIKE THIS.

▶▶ If you prepare and start worshipping angels, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ it's not the holy angels who are going to show up.

▶▶ This sounds much like the occult and the new age movement.

▶▶ Believers are rightly to reject this.

▶▶ I would call it nonsense, ~ but it's not.

▶▶ It's very dangerous. ¶¶ 11/16

IN HIS EXPANSION OF HIS FOURTH EXHORTATION, ~ IN VERSES 18b-19, ~ Paul gives us some insight ~ into the false teachers' mindset.

DESCRIBES 3 FEATURES OF THEIR MINDSET.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ VERSE 18c, ~ THEY GO ON IN DETAIL ABOUT VISIONS.

▶▶ I.e., ~ they brag about visions they claim to have seen.

▶▶ Most likely to add authority to what they're teaching.

▷▷ They come across as authoritative about these matters.

▶▶ And the unsuspecting can get sucked in.

2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ VERSE 18d, ~ THEY ARE PUFFED WITHOUT REASON BY THEIR SENSUOUS MIND.

▶▶ Their sinful minds have made them proud. ⇨⇨ They think they are someone special.

▶▶ This in itself ~ shows that such teachers are not from the Lord.

AND 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ VERSE 19, ~ THEY ARE NOT HOLDING FAST TO THE HEAD, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

▶▶ I.e., ~ they are not connected to Jesus, ~ the Head. ⇨⇨ I.e., ~ the Head of the church.

▷▷ Jude says that false teachers ~ do not have God's Spirit in them. ¶¶ 12/16

▷▷1 Jn. 2:19.

↳↳They went out from us, ~ but they were not of us ~ [i.e., but they did not really belong to us]; ~ for if they had been of us ~ [i.e., ~ for if they had belonged to us], ~ they would have continued with us. ~ But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

▷▷IOW, ~ false teachers are not genuine believers. ⇔⇔ Enemies of the true gospel.

▶▶Furthermore, ~ we see from Col. 3:19, ~ that ~ true spiritual growth ~ comes from God, ~ through his word and a close relationship with Jesus.

▷▷It does not come from visions, ~ ascetic rituals, ~ or the worship of angels.

▶▶Also, ~ by what Paul says here, ~ we see ~ that ~ the church, ~ the body of Christ, ~ is totally dependent on Jesus.

▷▷Not on a bunch of false practices.

▷▷We are to go to Jesus for everything.

↳↳He is our source for everything we need for living the Christian life

▶▶The false teachers are not connected to Jesus. ⇔⇔ Jesus has nothing to do with them.

▷▷Which means, ~ they are not getting their direction ~ from Jesus.

↳↳They are getting their direction ~ from their human minds and from demons.

▷▷This also means ~ they cannot be experiencing ~ true spiritual growth. ⇓⇓ 13/16

▶▶ Pay careful attention to what teachers/preachers say about Jesus.

▷▷ Listen carefully, ~ and I think we'll be able to detect ~ whether or not ~ they are connected to Jesus.

↪↪ What kind of Jesus are they presenting?

I THINK PAUL HERE ~ HAS GIVEN US ~ THREE HELPFUL CLUES ~ to help us spot ~ false teachers.

EXHORTATION #5: ~ A WARNING AGAINST ASCETICISM, ~ VERSES 20-23.

PAUL ALREADY ATTACKED THE ASCETIC PRACTICES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that false teachers engaged in ~ in preparation for worshiping angels.

▶▶ Now he turns his sights on asceticism as a whole.

▶▶ Asceticism ~ is the religious philosophy ~ that teaches that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ depriving the physical body of its normal desires ~ is a means of achieving greater holiness and approval from God.

▶▶ And the false teachers were promoting this.

IF ~ [SINCE] ~ WITH CHRIST ~ YOU DIED TO THE ELEMENTAL SPIRITS OF THE WORLD.

▶▶ Again, ~ this refers to the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

▷▷ Satan & his army of demons. ¶¶ 14/16

▶▶ Jesus defeated them on the cross.

▶▶ And we are dead to them, ~ no longer under their control.

▷▷ Why, ~ in the world, ~ Paul wants to know, ~ would we put ourselves back under their control?

▶▶ And ascetic practices ~ will do just that.

▶▶ Asceticism has nothing to do with ~ God, ~ our salvation, ~ or ~ our spiritual growth.

### ASCETIC PRACTICES ARE INADEQUATE FOR THREE REASONS:

▶▶ (vv. 21-22a) ~ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ the things prohibited were destined to perish through normal usage.

▷▷ Food and drink are consumed in the body.

▶▶ (22b) ~ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ the practices referred to ~ were of human origin.

▶▶ (23) ~ 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ ascetic practices ~ do not solve the real problem, ~ namely, ~ the desires of the flesh.

▷▷ And this is where I want to put our focus.

▷▷ These practices ~ may seem wise.

↪↪ Because they require ~ strong devotion, ~ pious self-denial, ~ and severe bodily discipline.

▷▷ But they provide no help ~ in conquering a person's evil desires. 📖 15/16

▷▷ They don't help people ~ stop doing the evil ~ that the sinful self wants to do.

▷▷ That's because, ~ our problem is not outside of ourselves.

↳↳ It's inside.

↳↳ No amount of religious practices ~ can change a person's heart.

↳↳ They have no value ~ in conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.

↳↳ Only the Holy Spirit can do that.

→→ Because ~ we need to be changed from the inside out, ~ not ~ from the outside in.

▷▷ Asceticism ~ is a hollow, ~ deceptive, ~ and demonic doctrine.

↳↳ And must be exposed and rejected by believers.

## CONCLUSION.

## AND THAT BRINGS US TO THE END OF PAUL'S FIVE EXHORTATIONS

▶▶ Five exhortations ~ calling believers ~ to continue ~ to stay faithful, ~ and not ~ buckle under the pressure of false teachers.

▶▶ Much to ponder, ~ process, ~ and apply to our lives.

LETS' PRAY . . . . 16/16