

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Patternist: When Men Dictate in Religion

By Stan Cox

Paul’s letter to the Colossians contains his defense of Christ as the basis of our standing with God. He speaks of Christ’s preeminence (1:15-18). He contends that reconciliation comes through Christ’s sacrifice (1:21-22). As such, he warns *“every man”* to labor and strive as he did, *“according to His working which works in me mightily”* (1:28-29). Notice, we are to strive according to **His** working.

In chapters two and three, he contrasts the salvation which is in Christ with false influences which endanger Christians. For example, he notes in (2:1-10) that human philosophy is deceptive. In Christ *“are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (2:3).

He also calls for a rejection of lustful passions in (3:10-11), *“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (3:3). Because of this, the Christian is to *“put off”* (3:8), the sinful inclinations of the flesh.

Our attention is centered in (2:11-23). This section of the text is unfortunately labeled **“Not Legalism but Christ”** in my NKJV. The label misses the point of what Paul is saying.

What is legalism? The term is not found in scripture (just in the man supplied captions of some translations). Since the term is not found in scripture, we go to the English dictionary for a definition. 1) strict adherence, or the principle of strict adherence, to law or prescription, especially to the letter rather than the spirit. 2) In Theology: a) the doctrine that salvation is gained through good works; b) the judging of conduct in terms of adherence to precise laws. (dictionary.com)

To determine whether our text is a condemnation of legalism, we have to answer the question, “Is Paul contrasting salvation *‘in Christ’* with the keeping of law?” The answer is, Yes and No. Paul is actually contrasting salvation *“in Christ”* with the keeping of laws **dictated by men!**

Nowhere in scripture did God excuse the Jew from obeying the law of Moses, while it was in effect. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for keeping some of the law zealously, while ignoring other weightier matters (cf. Matthew 23:23). *“These (paying tithes of mint, anise and cumin) you ought to have done, without leaving the others (weightier matters of justice mercy and faith) undone.”*

Now, however, some were seeking to bind a law that was no longer in effect, Christ *“having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”* (2:14). Because the law had been taken away, they were not to let anyone judge them regarding festivals or in food or drink, or the sabbath.

What was required of them? *“walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work”* (1:10). Give the *“preeminence”* to Christ as the head of the body (1:18). *“continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast”* (1:23). As Paul, *“striving according to His working which works in me mightily”* (1:29). Be steadfast in our faith (2:5). *“walk in Him”* (2:6). Abound *“in the faith, as you have been taught”* (2:7). Hold *“fast to the Head”* (2:19). *“seek those things which are above”* (3:1). *“put to death”* sin (3:5-9), and *“put on”* God ordained graces (3:12-15).

What was the false influence here? Being *“vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind”* (2:18). *“regulations... according to the commandments and doctrines of men”* (2:20-22). *“self-imposed religion, false humility, and*

neglect of the body” (2:23).

The evil influence here is not legalism (as defined previously). **It is following the dictates of men in religion** (cf. Matthew 7:21-23; 15:7-9). Whether it be regulations as in our context, or heeding false claims of liberty (cf. Jude; 2 Pet. 2), there is danger in listening to men rather than our Lord. **“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”** (3:17). – *Sound Teaching*, April 20th, 2019. ■

Baptism Comes Before Salvation

By David Padfield

There are five passages in the New Testament which mention both baptism and salvation in the same verse (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). In all of these passages, water baptism precedes the remission of sins. Do you know of a passage where the order is reversed?

Mark 16:16 contains two conditions for salvation: faith and baptism. It also contains the conditions for damnation: a lack of faith. If you want to know what you must do to be lost, it will tell you – all that is necessary is a lack of faith. If you want to know what to do to be saved from your past sins – it commands you to believe and be baptized.

In Acts 2:38 Peter told a group of believers to **“repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”** Our Baptist friends often focus on the word **“for”** in this passage and insist it means “because of,” even though it is never translated that way in any reputable translation of the Bible. We have to remind them that if baptism is “because of” the remission of sins, then so is repentance. Baptism and repentance are joined by the little word **“and.”** Whatever one is **“for”** the other is **“for.”**

After we are buried with Christ in baptism, we are raised to walk in a newness of life (Rom. 6:1-4). This new life comes after baptism in water. Many preachers want to **“bury”** the **“new man,”** since they claim the newness of life comes before our **“burial.”**

Three days after the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus, Ananias told Saul to **“arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins”** (Acts 22:16). Many preachers today claim Saul was saved three days before Ananias met him. Ananias must not have known it, for he told Saul how to **“wash away”** his sins. If Saul had been saved on the road as some preachers claim, he must have been the most miserable saved man in the Bible. Saul was blind and spent three days praying and fasting until Ananias arrived.

1 Peter 3:21 states **“baptism doth also now save us.”** However, baptism is not the only condition for the salvation of the alien sinner. Other requirements must be met, like faith, repentance and love. There is nothing “alone” that will save a sinner, not even faith (Jas. 2:24). – *Collegvue church of Christ Articles*, March 24, 2019. ■

“Acappella”

By Greg Gwin

The word “acappella” is defined by the dictionary as: “music without instrumental accompaniment.” It comes from a Latin word which literally means “as in the church.” Interestingly, the etymology (origin) of this word, proves that at the beginning of the church (and for many centuries thereafter), the music in worship was singing only, without instrumental accompaniment. – *Collegvue church of Christ Articles*, January 13, 2019. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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