

Paul Refutes Mysticism and Asceticism

Colossians 2:18-23

Intro: Paul continues his refutation of the false teachers at Colossae by defending the Colossians against the *perversions of mysticism* (2:18-19) and *asceticism* (2:20-23). The false teachers were supplanting the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, the One who supplies spiritual growth.

III. Paul's Defense Against Mysticism and Asceticism 2:18-23

A. Paul's Defense Against Mysticism 2:18-19

1. Charge to believers (v. 18a)

“Don't be robbed of your spiritual rewards in Christ!”

2. Characteristics of mysticism (v. 18b-19a)

a) *self-abasement—resulting in a false humility*
Christ!

b) *worship of angels—intermediate spirits*

c) *mystical insights—claiming supernatural visions*

d) *based on prideful self-exaltation*

e) *not holding fast to the Head, Jesus Christ*

3. Correction (v. 19)

a. *“Hold fast to the head, Jesus Christ.” There are no shortcuts to true spiritual maturity!*

b. *“Grow in love, devotion, and service to the body of Christ” = fellow believers.*

B. Paul's Defense Against Asceticism 2:20-23

1. Charge to believers (v. 20)

“Since you have died with Christ ... , don't submit to worldly man-made decrees.”

2. Characteristics of asceticism (vv. 20-23)

a. *demanding strict obedience to man-made decrees (vv. 20-22)*

b. *disciplined the body, self-abasement and severe treatment of the flesh (v. 23)*

c. *devoid of power over fleshly indulgences (v. 23)*

3. Correction (v. 23; cf. 3:1-4)

Memory verse: Col. 2:9 *“For in Him all the fulness of deity dwells in bodily form.”*



We are complete in

Rest in Christ and the grace of God that has delivered you from fleshly indulgences.