EXPOSING ERROR:
A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS

BRIEF BACKGROUND TO COLOSSIAN'S PROBLEM

1. The real problem was not division within, apostasy or another distinct system of belief BUT the attempts to combine Christian beliefs with other forms of belief.

2. Gnosticism (Gnosis - Knowledge: Salvation by knowledge, not faith) is the name applied to forms of beliefs which attempt to combine oriented theosophy, Greek philosophy with Christian doctrine. Many of its main ideas existed before Christianity but it saw many valuable elements that could be worked into their scheme of thought.

3. They view God as good but matter as evil,so they set forth that a series of aeons, angels or spirits that came between God and matter. One aeon came fron another until they got far enough from God to become contaminated and thus evil came into existence.

4. TWO MAIN VIEWS OF GNOSTICISM:

   (1) DOEETIC: (Denied humanity) Denied actually humanity of Jesus. He had only a phantom body and was totally aeon: His body was an illusion. He just took on human form to reveal himself to the sense nature. He was not born nor did He die.

   (2) CERINTHIANISM:(Denied deity) The man Jesus had His natural human life, while the aeon Christ came upon him at his baptism in the form of a dove and left him at the cross. (This seems to be the main one)

5. THREE DISCERNABLE ELEMENTS

   (1) RITUATICS: (2:11- 14, 16, 17) Emphasis upon observance of days, seasons and obedience to religious regulations.

   (2) ASCETIC: (2:20-23) Achiev a higher spiritual plateau by inflicting bodily restriction so they put severe regulations as to food and drink, since they regarded body as evil.
   Licentious: Attitude of supreme indifference , in that soul was supreme were not concerned about body so sinned openly.

   (3) MYSTIC: (Dethrone Christ, not denied) Claims from visions and revelations and the worship of angels.

6. The best way to meed error is to emphasize truth. At least 2/3 of the epistle contains little if any hints to the error as negations are of little real value. Controversy wins few converts. We see Paul magnifying Jesus Christ.

7. ALL THESE APPEAR IN MODERN WORLD & CHURCH.

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EXPOSING ERROR
(A Study of Colossians)

I. THE WISE INTRODUCTION 1:1-8

1. Salutation (1:1-2)

   A. Senders of the letter: Paul and Timothy (1:1)

   B. Recipients of the letter: Saints at Colossae (1:2a)

   C. Greetings: Grace and Peace (1:2b)

2. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)

   A. For the cardinal virtues of the Christian life present in their lives (1:3-5a) Paul never fails to recognize areas of faithfulness.

      1. Faith in Christ Jesus (1:4a)

      2. Love for all the saints (1:4b)

      3. Hope laid up in heaven (1:5a)

   B. The gospel is the source of this hope and these virtues (1:5b-8) a gospel that:

      1. Bears fruit and grows (1:6)

      2. Is communicated by ministers of Christ (1:7)

      3. Is the medium of love in the Spirit (1:8)

II. THE UNDERSTANDING PRAYER 1:9-14

1. That they may know the will of God (1:9)

2. That they may lead a worthy life (1:10a)

3. That they may bear fruit (1:10b)

4. That they may increase in the knowledge of God (1:10c)

5. That they may be strengthened so as to endure and persevere in the Christian life joyfully (1:11)

6. That they may be grateful for (1:12-14)

   A. Their inheritance (1:12b)

   B. Their deliverance (1:13a)

   C. Their place in the kingdom (1:13b)

   D. Their forgiveness (1:14)

III. THE PRIMACY OF CHRIST 1:15-23
The person and work of Christ as opposed to the concept of angelic mediators.

1. In creation (1:15-17)

   A. He is the image of the invisible God (1:15a)

   B. He is the rightful heir (1:15b)

   C. He is the agent in creation (1:16a)

   D. He is the goal of creation (1:16a)

   E. He is pre-eminent in relation to the created order (1:17a)

   F. He is the coherent principle of the created order (1:17b)

2. In Redemption (1:18-23)

   A. He is the head of the church (1:18a)

   B. He is the initiator of salvation (1:18b)

   C. He is the pioneer in resurrection (1:18c)

   D. He is the fullness of the Godhead (1:19)

   E. He is the medium of reconciliation for the entire created order (1:20)

   F. He restores the estranged by his incarnation and death (1:21-22a)

   G. He presents the Christian perfect before God as the goal of this reconciling work (1:22b)

   H. This salvation is available to all who continue in dependence on God (1:23)

IV. THE LIFE OF PAUL HIS MINISTER: 1:24-2:7
Important in exposing error

1. Who completes the sufferings of Christ (1:24)

2. Who is minister of the church (1:25a)

3. Who has the ministry of the Word: Sharing God's open secret - Christ living in the Gentile Christian the hope of glory.

4. Who possesses an unfailing resource for his ministry in Christ who infuses power into his life.(1:29)

5. Who ministers even to those whom he does not know personally: Colossians and Laodiceans cases in point (2:2, 5a)

6. Who sees as the result of his ministry ordered and faithful congregations like that at Colossae (2:5b)

7. Who has as the goal of his ministry the development of mature Christians (1:28)

   a. Optimism (2:2a)

   b. Unity (2:2b)

   c. Wealth in the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, in the knowledge of Christ (2:2c-3)

   d. Not easily deceived (2:4)

   e. Living in Christ (2:6)

   f. Founded on Christ (2:7a)

   g. Stability (2:7b)

   h. Abundant gratitude (2:7c)

V. THE INADEQUACY OF THE FALSE DOCTRINES AND PHILOSOPHIES ADVOCATED BY SOME: 2:8-23

1. An inadequate basis of authority (2:8,18)

   a. Human tradition (2:8b)

   b. Visions (2:18b)

   c. Esoteric doctrines (2:18c)

2. An inadequate theology (2:8,18)

   a. Belief in the existence of elemental spirits, apparently as mediating agents (2:8c)

   b. The worship of angels (2:18a)

3. An inadequate concept of the role of ritual in faith (2:11,16-17)

   a. Circumcision (2:11)

   b. Restrictions of food and drink (2:16a)

   c. Observance of special days (2:16b)

4. The inadequacy of asceticism (2:20b-23)

   a. Asceticism makes the material the measure of the spiritual life (2:22)

   b. Asceticism appeals to man's pride, but it is an inadequate solution to the material (2:23)

VI. THE ADEQUACY OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST 2:8-3:4

1. He is the source of the message (2:8d)

2. In Him dwells the whole fullness of deity bodily (2:9)

3. In Him the Christian has fullness of life (2:10a)

4. He is the head of all rule and authority (2:10b)

5. In Him the Christian experiences the circumcision not made with hands (2:11)

6. In Him the Christian dies and is raised from the dead (2:12-13a)

7. In Him the Christian is forgiven, the debt is fully cancelled (2:13b-14)

8. He has triumphed completely over the principalities and powers (2:15)

9. He is the substance of which ritual observances are but the shadow (2:17)

10. He is the head from whom the whole body receives its nourishment and growth (2:19)

11. In Him the Christian has died to the elemental spirits (2:20)

12. He has given the Christian a new aim in life: The things above (3:1-2)

13. He is the source (security?) of the Christian's life (3:3-4)

VII. TWO FOLD MANIFESTATIONS OF OLD LIFE: 3:5-9

1. Impure affections(3:5-7) Move from acts to motives. They are personal and relate to passions.

   a. Immorality

   b. Impurity

   c. Passion

   d. Evil desire

   e. Covetousness

   f. The penalty of these things once so characteristic of the believer's life is the wrath of God (3:6-7)

2. Lack of Love:(3:8-9) Moves from motives to actions. Social and relates to speech.

   a. Anger

   b. Wrath

   c. Malice

   d. Slander

   e. Foul talk

   f. Lying

VIII. EXPRESSIONS AND BENEFITS OF THE NEW LIFE: 3:10-17

1. The expression

   a. Constantly renewed mind 3:10b

   b. Disappearance of distinction based on race or culture

   c. Compassion

   d. Kindness

e. Lowliness

f. Meekness

g. Patience, forbearance

h. Forgiveness like that of the Lord

i. Love

2. Benefits derived: 3:15-17

a. Peace is to reign (3:15a)

b. Gratitude is to be the rule (3:15b)

c. The Word is to abide (3:16a)

d. Teaching and admonition are a constant duty (3:16b)

e. Singing is a dominant attitude (3:16c)

f. Everything is to be done for the glory of God (3:17)

IX. THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY 3:18-4:1

1. Responsibility of wife to the husband (3:18) Submission

2. Responsibility of husband to the wives:

a. Love the wives (3:19a)

b. Don't be harsh with them (3:19b)

3. Responsibility of children to the parents (3:20 Obedience

4. Responsibility of parents to the children (3:21) Don't over correct

5. Responsibility of employee to the employers(3:22-26)

a. Obey in everything conscientuously (3:22)

b. Accept every task as a service to the Lord because that is what it is (3:23,24b)

c. The Christian will be rewarded by Christ (3:24a)

d. Wrongdoing is penalized impartially (3:25)

6. Responsibility of employer to the employees 4:1
   Be just and fair because there is a heavenly Master

7. Responsibility of Christians to prayer 4:2-4

   a. Perserverance (4:2a)

   b. Alertness (4:2b)

   c. Thanksgiving (4:2c)

   d. Intercession: Paul a case in point (4:3-4)

      (1) That he may have an open door for proclamation (4:3)

      (2) That he may speak with clarity (4:4)

8. Responsibility of Christians to witness 4:5-6

   a. Walk in wisdom to those without(4:5)

   b. Taking advantage of the opportunities (4:5b)

   c. Attractiveness in speech (4:6a)

   d. Discerning and perceptive response (4:6b)

X. THE APOSTLE'S COMPANIONS AND MESSAGE. 4:7-18

1. Commendations of messengers (4:7-9)

   a. Tychicus 4:7-8

   b. Onesimus 4:9

   c. They will inform and encourage

2. Greetings from friends 4:10-14

   A. Aristarchus (4:10)

   B. Marcus) (4:10)

   c. Justus (4:11)

   d. Epaphras(4:12-13)

   e. Luke (4:14)

   f. Demas (4:14)

3. Personal message 4:15-18

   a. Use of letter (4:15-16)

   b. Warning to Archipaus (4:17)

   c. Request "Remember my bond"(4:18)