

Col 2:18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility<sup>j</sup> and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.<sup>k</sup> Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

People who act religious, or act like they have a path from which they can work themselves to salvation can hold a particular appeal to some people – especially those that are overly self reliant and don't want to trust in the work of Christ for their salvation but want to be able to do something themselves.

One sect that fit this description very well that Jesus gave us a great deal of warning about is the pharisees.

Mt 23:13 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!<sup>z</sup> You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.<sup>102 a</sup>

Mt 23:15 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert,<sup>b</sup> and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell<sup>c</sup> as you are.

Mt 23:16 “Woe to you, blind guides!<sup>d</sup> You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’<sup>e</sup>

Mt 23:17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?<sup>f</sup>

Mt 23:18 You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.’

Mt 23:19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?<sup>g</sup>

Mt 23:20 Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

Mt 23:21 And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells<sup>h</sup> in it.

Mt 23:22 And he who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.<sup>i</sup>

Mt 23:23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth<sup>j</sup> of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.<sup>k</sup> You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Mt 23:24 You blind guides!<sup>l</sup> You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Mt 23:25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish,<sup>m</sup> but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.<sup>n</sup>

Mt 23:26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Mt 23:27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs,<sup>o</sup> which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean.

Mt 23:28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Mt 23:29 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets<sup>p</sup> and decorate the graves of the righteous.

Mt 23:30 And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’

Mt 23:31 So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.<sup>q</sup>

Mt 23:32 Fill up, then, the measure<sup>r</sup> of the sin of your forefathers!<sup>s</sup>

Mt 23:33 “You snakes! You brood of vipers!<sup>t</sup> How will you escape being condemned to hell?<sup>u</sup>

Mt 23:34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; <sup>v</sup> others you will flog in your synagogues <sup>w</sup> and pursue from town to town. <sup>x</sup>

Mt 23:35 And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel <sup>y</sup> to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, <sup>z</sup> whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. <sup>a</sup>

Mt 23:36 I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. <sup>b</sup>

Mt 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, <sup>c</sup> how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, <sup>d</sup> but you were not willing.

Mt 23:38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>e</sup>

Mt 23:39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

The pharisees tried to follow the law to the letter. They tried to make a show of following the law to the letter and in front of people. They neglected the more important aspects of the law though in a show of following the rules. They neglected mercy, justice, and faithfulness. They neglected love. Instead of serving others and helping others, this self religiousness worked to only look out for themselves. They couldn't accept Jesus as Messiah, and that they needed Him as the perfect paschal lamb to cover their sin and redeem them to our Holy God.

There are many modern analogs. Some of the modern religions people are led astray buy are works based as well. They are based on the practicer somehow through great self neglect and asceticism somehow being taught that they are improving their standing before God by their works – and not a function of the Cross or His grace. We know this is false teaching now, as it was in Colossae. Jesus tells us in John 14:6 that there is only one way to the Father:

Jn 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am <sup>d</sup> the way <sup>e</sup> and the truth <sup>f</sup> and the life. <sup>g</sup> No one comes to the Father except through me.

We know that we have salvation only by Jesus' accomplished work on the Cross.

In Colossae, it seemed to be taught that angels have a role as intermediaries between man and God. We know that this is also not true. Only by Christ's work on the cross, is the barrier removed and we can approach God confidently.

Eph 2:14 For he himself is our peace, <sup>l</sup> who has made the two one <sup>m</sup> and has destroyed the **barrier**, the dividing wall of hostility,

Eph 2:15 by abolishing in his flesh <sup>n</sup> the law with its commandments and regulations. <sup>o</sup> His purpose was to create in himself one <sup>p</sup> new man out of the two, thus making peace,

Eph 2:16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, <sup>q</sup> by which he put to death their hostility.

Eph 2:17 He came and preached peace <sup>r</sup> to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>s</sup>

Eph 2:18 For through him we both have access <sup>t</sup> to the Father <sup>u</sup> by one Spirit. <sup>v</sup>

Eph 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, <sup>w</sup> but fellow citizens <sup>x</sup> with God's people and members of God's household, <sup>y</sup>

Eph 2:20 built <sup>z</sup> on the foundation <sup>a</sup> of the apostles and prophets, <sup>b</sup> with Christ Jesus himself <sup>c</sup> as the chief cornerstone. <sup>d</sup>

Eph 2:21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple <sup>e</sup> in the Lord.

Eph 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

It looks from historical commentaries such as Theodoret that there was a very common practice in the Lycus valley of praying to angels, and not to God. This commentary was from about 360 AD. We don't know exactly what the form of this heresy was in Colossae. But, from Paul's teaching against it, we suspect that it was some form of worship of some entities other than God – maybe even going into an “inner circle” type of club or temple where this worship occurred. Paul pretty sternly corrects them back to Christ alone.

Col 2:19 He has lost connection with the Head, <sup>l</sup> from whom the whole body, <sup>m</sup> supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. <sup>n</sup>

Paul again uses the analogy of a body for the church. Just as a part of the body that no longer has a head cannot function, so a member of the church that is outside of Christ cannot function as well. Only through the support, nourishment, and guidance that comes from being in Christ, does the body grow. Again, Paul proclaims the supremacy of Christ and directs the Colossae members who had gone astray back to Christ alone.

Col 2:20 Since you died with Christ <sup>o</sup> to the basic principles of this world, <sup>p</sup> why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: <sup>q</sup>

Col 2:21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”?

2Co 4:10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, <sup>d</sup> so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>e</sup>

2Co 4:11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, <sup>f</sup> so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

2Co 4:12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. <sup>g</sup>

2Co 4:13 It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” <sup>5h</sup> With that same spirit of faith <sup>i</sup> we also believe and therefore speak,

2Co 4:14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead <sup>j</sup> will also raise us with Jesus <sup>k</sup> and present us with you in his presence. <sup>l</sup>

2Co 4:15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving <sup>m</sup> to overflow to the glory of God.

2Co 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. <sup>n</sup> Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly <sup>o</sup> we are being renewed <sup>p</sup> day by day.

2Co 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>q</sup>

2Co 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. <sup>r</sup> For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Paul's whole presentation of the Gospel is based on receiving it by faith. Paul was the pharisee's pharisee – he did everything possible to follow the law to the letter. But, we know that this did not lead him to holiness. Instead, it was faith in Christ by which he was justified, and by which we are justified – not anything we can do ourselves no matter how appealing

that is to us to try.

Ro 3:21 But now a righteousness from God,<sup>b</sup> apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.<sup>c</sup>

Ro 3:22 This righteousness from God<sup>d</sup> comes through faith<sup>e</sup> in Jesus Christ<sup>f</sup> to all who believe.<sup>g</sup> There is no difference,<sup>h</sup>

Ro 3:23 for all have sinned<sup>i</sup> and fall short of the glory of God,

Ro 3:24 and **are justified**<sup>j</sup> freely by his grace<sup>k</sup> through the redemption<sup>l</sup> that came by Christ Jesus.

Ro 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement,<sup>16m</sup> through faith in his blood.<sup>n</sup> He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished<sup>o</sup> —

Ro 3:26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Ro 3:27 Where, then, is boasting?<sup>p</sup> It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.

Ro 3:28 For we maintain that a man **is justified** by faith apart from observing the law.

Paul makes a similar point in the letter to the Romans:

Ro 6:1 What shall we say, then?<sup>y</sup> Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?<sup>z</sup>

Ro 6:2 By no means! We **died** to sin;<sup>a</sup> how can we live in it any longer?

Ro 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized<sup>b</sup> into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Ro 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death<sup>c</sup> in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead<sup>d</sup> through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.<sup>e</sup>

Ro 6:5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.<sup>f</sup>

Ro 6:6 For we know that our old self<sup>g</sup> was crucified with him<sup>h</sup> so that the body of sin<sup>i</sup> might be done away with,<sup>24</sup> that we should no longer be slaves to sin<sup>j</sup> —

Ro 6:7 because anyone who **has died** has been freed from sin.<sup>k</sup>

Ro 6:8 Now if **we died** with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.<sup>l</sup>

Ro 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead,<sup>m</sup> he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.<sup>n</sup>

Ro 6:10 The death **he died**, **he died** to sin<sup>o</sup> once for all;<sup>p</sup> but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Ro 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin<sup>q</sup> but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Ro 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign<sup>r</sup> in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Ro 6:13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness,<sup>s</sup> but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.<sup>t</sup>

Ro 6:14 For sin shall not be your master,<sup>u</sup> because you are not under law,<sup>v</sup> but under grace.<sup>w</sup>

Ro 7:1 Do you not know, brothers<sup>q</sup> —for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?

Ro 7:2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.<sup>r</sup>

Ro 7:3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress.<sup>s</sup> But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

Ro 7:4 So, my brothers, you also **died** to the law<sup>t</sup> through the body of Christ,<sup>u</sup> that you might belong to another,<sup>v</sup> to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

Ro 7:5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature,<sup>26 w</sup> the sinful passions aroused by the law<sup>x</sup> were at work in our bodies,<sup>y</sup> so that we bore fruit for death.<sup>z</sup>

Ro 7:6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law<sup>a</sup> so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

If Christ's death severed our dependence on sin, didn't it also sever our dependence to any principalities and rulers that we may have had in our old lives when we were under the law. They should have no power over us now. All of this was part of our flesh.

*The Holy Bible, New International Version.* Pradis CD-ROM:Ro 8:1.

Ro 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation<sup>g</sup> for those who are in Christ Jesus,<sup>29 h</sup>

Ro 8:2 because through Christ Jesus<sup>i</sup> the law of the Spirit of life<sup>j</sup> set me free<sup>k</sup> from the law of sin<sup>l</sup> and death.

Ro 8:3 For what the law was powerless<sup>m</sup> to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature,<sup>30 n</sup> God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man<sup>o</sup> to be a sin offering.<sup>31 p</sup> And so he condemned sin in sinful man,<sup>32</sup>

Ro 8:4 in order that the righteous requirements<sup>q</sup> of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.<sup>r</sup>

Ro 8:5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires;<sup>s</sup> but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.<sup>t</sup>

Ro 8:6 The mind of sinful man<sup>33</sup> is death,<sup>u</sup> but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life<sup>v</sup> and peace;

Ro 8:7 the sinful mind<sup>34</sup> is hostile to God.<sup>w</sup> It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Ro 8:8 Those controlled by the sinful nature<sup>x</sup> cannot please God.

Ro 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature<sup>y</sup> but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.<sup>z</sup> And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,<sup>a</sup> he does not belong to Christ.

Ro 8:10 But if Christ is in you,<sup>b</sup> your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Ro 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead<sup>c</sup> is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies<sup>d</sup> through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Ro 8:12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.<sup>e</sup>

Ro 8:13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die;<sup>f</sup> but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body,<sup>g</sup> you will live,<sup>h</sup>

Ro 8:14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God<sup>i</sup> are sons of God.<sup>j</sup>

Ro 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit<sup>k</sup> that makes you a slave again to fear,<sup>l</sup> but you received the Spirit of sonship.<sup>35</sup> And by him we cry, "*Abba*,<sup>36</sup> Father."<sup>m</sup>

Ro 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit<sup>n</sup> that we are God's children.<sup>o</sup>

Ro 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs<sup>p</sup> —heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings<sup>q</sup> in order that we may also share in his glory.<sup>r</sup>

Col 2:22 These are all destined to perish<sup>r</sup> with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings.<sup>s</sup>

We need to be sure to take an eternal perspective on everything. Everything on earth now is temporary, and will decay. Christ is eternal, and through Him we have eternal life and need to remember that and not over value the things of this world.

Col 2:23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility<sup>t</sup> and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Asceticism can be very attractive. It can make people look enlightened, or like they have some superior knowledge or tradition. But, it is only a system that exalts the self, and doesn't look out for others. And, it can also cause focus on sin, rather than focus on grace. We know that only Christ saves.