



A new creation focus through Colossians ...

## Captivating Forces

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul had a serious warning for the brethren. They were "no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Ephesians 4:14). The fact that there are so many such warnings in the sacred scriptures for the saints of God indicates that the danger of being sucked in by all sorts of deception lurks around the next corner. The prince of the power of the air not only works inside the minds of men, but he is aided by the unrighteous' selfish desires —

desires so strong that they will engage in trickery and all out deception to pull people of out the light of Christ's revelation into the darkness of their own thinking and philosophies.

- ◆ **Be on the alert** — Satan is described as being on the prowl; he is probing the minds of Christians to discover a weakness of which he can take advantage. Because he is subtle, he often will attempt to blindside the saint and pull him into a false perspective without the disciple of Christ being as aware as he should be as to what is happening. "See to it that no one takes you captive," intones Paul, "through philosophy and empty deception" (Colossians 2:8). One of the ways the world works is to elevate some intelligent or clever philosopher like Aristotle, then parade his works and thinking as the "latest and greatest" ideas to ever come to this planet. This creates a well-orchestrated flow of public opinion in the direction of those ideas with the result that they are generally accepted as the *status quo*. Saints of God are seriously cautioned not to be taken in or taken captive by such prevailing popularities, but to compare them against the world-view and underlying tenor of the word of God.

- ◆ **Traditions of men** — All societies and cultures have their traditions; some are positive, some are harmless, and some are totally contrary to the directives of the God's sacred word. But, because they are so ingrained, the children of God can be unaware of the destructive effects of traditions which their relatives hold dear. And the Lord does not want His disciples to be held captive "according to the traditions of men." The exordium thus comes: "Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Family and societal traditions honestly have to be examined in the light of God's word, and those which run counter to its tenor and teachings must be discarded.

- ◆ **Elementary principles of this world** — "There is a way which seems right to a man," said the sage Solomon, "but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 16:25). Mankind has had a wide variety of ways though which they think they will enter a positive afterlife. Ranging from "being a good person," to suicide bombing, from being a priest to a being a human sacrifice, from pretending to maintain a good conscience or pretending to maintain some standard of law, all these are "elementary principles of the world" and do not accomplish in any way the redemption of man's soul. Pressures in societies are often very strong, although totally off base, and the Christian is warned against being pulled into these types of thinking.

But the apostles and the entire word of God are clear that the philosophies of the world, the tradition of men, the elementary principles of worldly thinking can take the unwary saint captive. The focus instead is to be "according to Christ," the awesome Christ of glory, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." In the face of these treasures from Christ, all the so-called learning and wisdom of the universities wither and blow away as the fluffy powder that they truly are. The "great philosophers" of the ages are calmly swept into the dustbin of eternity as nonsense, and the laws and regulations of men perish in the final collapse of this age. There is therefore no reason for the Christian to be taken captive by any of these.

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