

# THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

By Keith Greer

Paul's letter to the saints in Colosse is a powerful epistle. The key theme of this book is the pre-eminence of Christ.

"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." {Colossians 1: 18}

Surely everyone understands that Christ is first in all things. Right? Wrong! Sadly, some in Colosse were trying to "devalue" Christ. How? By spreading heresies. While many tried to narrow the "**Colossian Heresy**" to Gnosticism, that was not the only problem. Please allow me to explain.

**JUDAISM.** In Colosse there was an element of the Jews within the city. Many were still trying to bind the Law of Moses upon the Gentile converts. "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." {Colossians 2:16, 17} According to verse fourteen, the law was 'nailed to the cross'.

**PHILOSOPHY.** The influence of the Greek philosophers was also taking a toll. This type of teaching was simply putting men's wisdom against God's wisdom. Christians were compelled to seek the "hidden wisdom in deeper knowledge". Listen to the words of Paul.

"In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." {Colossians 2:3}

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world., and not according to Christ." {Colossians 2:8} What wisdom is greater than God's wisdom? Man's thinking can never equal that of God's. He is the creator, we are the created!

**ASCETICISM.** This was a two-fold concept. Basically that the body was evil. One group taught self-deprivation to the body. This would cause one to glorify God. The other, over indulgence. Since the body cannot harm the spirit, it would not matter if one went to excess. One can certainly understand why the latter group was much more popular!

"Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world., why, as though living in the world., do you subject yourselves to regulations; Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men?" {Colossians 2:20-22}

**GNOSTICISM.** This involved here is the basic concept that the spirit is good and all matter is evil. This made it an impossibility for Christ to dwell in man. Yet, the scriptures plainly teach He did! John 1: 14; Matthew 1:18-23.

**WORSHIPPING OF ANGELS.** Since the law was given through angelic beings, they then must control the line of communication between God and man. So it was thought to cultivate their good will by paying homage to them. Many in Colosse believed the arch angel Michael to be guardian over the city. "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." {Colossians 2:18} Hebrews has a few things to say about this way of thinking.

"For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You'? And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son'? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'" {Hebrews 1:5,6}

"And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." {Colossians · 1:11} Jesus the Christ is the head of the body, the church! He is also the Savior of that body, Ephesians 5:23. God is only to be worshipped as the apostle John found out in the book of Revelation, Revelation 19:10; 22:9. \*\*\*