



Introduction

- The People of Colossae:
 1. Indigenous Greek and Phrygian settlers
 2. Two thousand Jewish families had been planted in Lydia and Phrygia under Antiochus III in the 2nd century B.C. (Josephus, *Ant* 12. 147-153).
- Purpose
 1. To express personal interest in the church
 2. To warn against reverting to their old pagan ways
 3. To refute the false teaching threatening the church

Terms Needing To Be Defined

- Three phrases need to be defined in order to understand the heresy threatening Colossae.

1. Colossians 2:8, 20 *stoiceia* (Stoichia) = "Elementary Principles"
 - (a) Elementary instruction (2+2=4)
 - (b) Physical elements (wind, fire, rain, etc.)
 - (c) Spirit beings who rule over the elements

2. What Was The Colossian Heresy?

<p><u>Col 2:18 NASB</u>: Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self abasement and the worship of angels, <u>taking his stand</u> on visions he has seen...</p> <p>a' ebraken <u>epibateuwn</u></p> <p>Col 2:18</p>	<p><u>Col 2:18 Arnold's</u>: Let no one condemn you by insisting on ascetic practices and invoking angels because he "<u>entered</u> the things he had seen..." [i.e. he based his knowledge/authority on visionary experiences he received during the final stage of his mystery initiation].</p>
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What Was The Colossian Heresy?

“It appears that the practice of invoking angels at Colossae does not have as much to do with matters of ultimate spiritual significance as it does with the issues of day to day life. As with the veneration of angels in Judaism of magic and incantations, the Colossians practice involved a diminution of one's relationship to Yahweh (and now Christ) in favor of a manipulative relationship with His angels....The greater implication is with Christology where it appears that Christ is either neglected in favor of calling upon angels or is regarded on the same level as the angels...” (Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism*, 102).

The Importance of Solos Christos

Christianity	False Religions
Revelation: Objective Word	Subjective Experience
Focus: Salvation (Ultimate)	Favor here and now
Faith: Cognitive/Positional	Mystical/Experiential
Object: Christ Alone	Christ + Angels + ...

❖Paul warns against belief in a different Jesus and a different gospel! 2nd Cor 11:4; Gal 1:8

Colossians Speaks Today

- **Leif Hansen:** Now, a more—what's the word to use?—a more conservative Christian, whatever—someone who believes in the literal ontological divinity of Christ would have an argument and say, well yes, but this was, this was more central because it was actually God, literally, demonstrating that kind of love. However, someone, a more liberal Christian, who might think that Jesus was perfectly imaging God's love, or totally inspired by God's love but not literally God—To be honest, that's the direction I am leaning more myself these days. We would have a hard time saying what makes Jesus' life and example of living love to the death more unique than any other.
- **McLaren:** Right. If I understand what you're saying. These are important subjects. I understand you're saying: Look, we could look at Ghandi's life as an example of self sacrificial love or Martin Luther King Junior's life. There would be a lot of people we could look at. And so wouldn't it be better to just talk about Jesus as one among many, rather than lift Him up as some extraordinary example. Because by doing that we create, we perpetuate this Christian elitism and exclusivism....

The Apostle Paul's Battle Plan

1. Paul demonstrates the absolute superiority, lordship, and deity of Jesus Christ. No longer will the Colossians have to fear rogue spirits and angels.
2. Paul stresses the status of believers as being people who are joint heirs with Christ who reigns over all demonic powers.

Flow Of Colossians

Colossians 1:13 -14 For He (Father) rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- I. Col.1:15-23 The Supremacy of Christ
- II. Col. 1:24-2:7 The Ministry of Paul
- III. Col. 2:8-23 Warning Against Error
- IV. Col. 3:1-4:6 Appeal for Christian Living
- V. Col. 4:7-18 Conclusion
