**Paul's Letter to the Colossians**

**"IF IT WALKS LIKE A DUCK”**

**Colossians 2:1-23**

**“Wanted: Dead *And* Alive”**

W

hen you were in school, how’d you do with True/False tests? Grab your pen, and let’s see if you’ve improved. Put a T or F by each statement. No cheating!

1. The Bible is the world's most shoplifted book.

2. Diamond is the hardest, naturally-occurring substance on earth.

3. Sherlock Holmes never said, “Elementary, my dear Watson.”

4. More than 1,000 languages are spoken in Africa.

5. The average man’s heart beats faster than a woman’s.

6. A one minute kiss can burn more than 100 calories.

7. Ernest Wright wrote a 50,000-word novel without using an “e.”

8. There was once an undersea post office in the Bahamas.

9. Pres. Lincoln's mom died after drinking tainted cow’s milk.

10. Celine Dion is one of fourteen children.

#### Mass (Media) Confusion

Oprah Winfrey … corporation, media monarch, career-maker, opinion-shaper, rags-to-riches icon. Every day in 2008 she’s devoting her XM Satellite radio show to teaching *A Course in Miracles* whose core beliefs include …..

•The “New-Age Christ” redefines God’s Son Jesus.

•Evil, sin and punishment for sin do not exist.

•Christ’s crucifixion is meaningless.

•God is in everything.

•There’s no absolute truth – truth is defined by our experiences.

•The name Jesus Christ can apply to any small-g god.

•God did not make our bodies.

•Life and death are mere illusions since we’ve never left heaven.

•Therefore, all wars, crimes, suffering have been imagined.

•All humans can evolve into a state of “Christhood.”

•All roads lead to heaven. (Wait! I thought we’re already there!?)

•Salvation comes from within you, not from any outside source.

The *Miracles’* workbook harrumphs, “This is a course in mind training and is dedicated to thought reversal. … Don’t judge these ideas -- just use them.” Well, it worked for NIKE. But something isn’t true because it sounds good, feels good, or is popular.

#### Paul’s Colossal Purpose

Colosse, in today’s midwestern Turkey, was a trade center and hotbed for heresies. So many there had taken Christ as their Savior, but Paul grieved that the gospel was under siege.

Combining parts of sundry religions and cults, false teachers were hyping the hoax that faith in Christ was not enough to have a secure relationship with God. Paul’s concern prompts him to write this letter to the Colossian faithful in 60-62 A.D. **Let’s read Colossians 2:1-23 (p. 444, The Message).**

#### United We Stand

#### Colossians 2:1-5

Paul prays that his readers will be united in love for Christ and for each other, grounded in God’s Word, relying on it to help them screen out religious charlatans.

In 1967 the BBC invited the Beatles to appear in the first “live” global telecast, and to write a song for the show, one readily understood in any language. Out of John Lennon’s soul came …

There's nothing you can do that can't be done.

Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.

Nothing you can say, but you can learn how to play the game. It's easy.

There's nothing you can make that can't be made.

No one you can save that can't be saved.

Nothing you can do, but you can learn how to be in time. It's easy.

There's nothing you can know that isn't known.

Nothing you can see that isn't shown.

Nowhere you can be that isn't where you're meant to be. It's easy.

All you need is love, all you need is love,

All you need is love, love … love is all you need.

All you need is love (all together now).

All you need is love (everybody).

All you need is (God’s\*) love … love is all you need.

(\*”How’d *that* word get in there????”)

Fortune hunters can squander lifetimes in quest of instant riches. But the most priceless knowledge is not hopelessly hidden in The Lost Dutchman Mine. It’s waiting to be discovered …. *in Christ* (Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 12:8). Colosse’s infiltrators were peddling misleading treasure maps, charted by faulty reasoning, wrapped in fine-sounding arguments (1 Corinthians 1:30). Paul’s advice: guard against anything that erodes God’s free gift of grace.

**DISCUSSION: How could knowing Christ and His teachings help us deal with religious scams?**

#### The First Time Ever You Saw His Face

#### Colossians 2:6-7

Continue in the same joy you experienced when you first came to Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6). Being “born again,” as Jesus put it, is not a matter of *doing* but of *believing*, time to let Christ be the core of all you are, think, say and do. And a thankful spirit will radiate from you like steam from a teakettle.

**DISCUSSION: What does it look like to walk with Christ in the same way as when you first met Him?**

#### Jesus Is Not A Time-Share

#### Colossians 2:8-10

Anything not 100% in sync with Jesus’ words, recorded in the Bible, fails God’s “true/false.” Jesus’ throne is not zoned multi-family. He’s all God, and doesn’t job-share (Acts 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; James 1:26; 1 John 4:1-6).

**DISCUSSION: What small-g gods tend to take too much of our allegiance? How do we deal with them?**

#### Try This On For Circumcise

#### Colossians 2:11-17

The moment you give your life to Jesus, you’re “spiritually circumcised.” God removes the eternal penalty of your sin (Ephesians 1:7 and 2:11; Galatians 6:15; Romans 2:29; John 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17). In that miraculous rebirth God raises you from being spiritually *dead* to being spiritually *alive* (Ephesians 2:1-6).

No one has any right to intimidate Christ’s friends into slavishly keeping religious dietary regs, holy days or other presumed tests of piety or commitment to Jesus (Leviticus 11 and 17; Deuteronomy 14; 1 Timothy 4:1). Even if you *could* cowboy up to perfection, then your righteous standing before God would be due to *your* performance, not to God’s generosity (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**DISCUSSION: Where did the notion of working to win God’s favor come from? Why is it so hard to shake?**

#### No Interpreters, Flacks Or Pimps Need Apply

#### Colossians 2:18-19

“Biblically baseless” sums up the view that anything physical, our bodies included, is evil. Equally unfounded is the worship of angels (Exodus 20:3-4; Revelation 22:8-9). Heresies always demand an unacceptable Bible make-over.

Christ’s completeness has been credited to each believer’s spiritual account (Romans 8:2; Galatians 3;25; Hebrews 7:12)! Blessed by that, why even sniff at spiritual rabbit trails?

#### Gnostic Nonsense

#### Colossians 2:20-23

Christ’s follower is no longer sin’s hand puppet, so blow off this nonsense – this legalistic, ritualistic, iffy status with God. Religious hoop-jumping is not an Olympic sport yet; it leaves a nagging feeling of failure; and it doesn’t impress God because walking with Christ is not about rule-keeping. It’s about knowing Him intimately as your closest, wisest, most reliable Friend (Romans 4:1-16).

Now Paul shines his Truthlight on asceticism -- the idea that the body is evil, it’s to be treated like an enemy, to be the object of self-torture. Not so, says the Bible. Fact is, God calls the Christian’s body “the temple” where His Holy Spirit currently hangs His holy hat (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:19; Romans 8:5-17; Galatians 5:22-23). **Let’s read John 15:26-16:15 (p. 232, The Message.)**

#### Averting A Colossal Crash

Beguiling voices say your life belongs to you, and that answers to life’s great questions come from within you, not from an “Outside Source.” But your life is *not* yours; you didn’t *create* it. Each breath is a *gift* -- a lifelong, *legitimate* course in miracles.

What the Bible calls "eternal" life begins now, not after you die. Jesus alone can give you that life. Refuse it, and the Bible says your end will be endless torment, without God and goodness, in a flaming darkness the Bible calls hell. If He made you, loves you unconditionally, and if your destiny is in Jesus’ nail-scarred hands, then wouldn’t He be the most important Person you’ll ever meet?

Jesus’ friend John wrote of Him, " God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life, but he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (John 5:24; 1 John 5:11-12). What will *you* do with Jesus?

He wants to hear from your heart, “Dear God, I get it. You sacrificed Your only Son to pay the penalty to forgive my sins now and forever. This is the biggest deal of my life, and I’m signing on right now. Please come on in and take the wheel of my life, and teach me to be the man You want me to be. I’m all Yours. Amen.”

(Only statement #6 is False. The rest are True.)

His Deal

February 5 & 19, 2008

www.HisDeal.org

george@HisDeal.org

Copyright © 2019. George Toles. All Rights Reserved.