

Rise Up And Build

"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

April 4, 2021

What Does Colossians Mean To Us?

In answering the question posed in the title about a book that so prominently warns against the lure of Philosophy (Colossians 2:8), I want to say a few words about postmodernism, the prevailing “*ism*” of our day. According to this vain philosophy, the teacher is no longer the transmitter of information. Instead, he simply acts as a facilitator to the learner who, in turn, constructs his own knowledge. Accordingly, who are we to say that any particular view of history, be it western or eastern, is the correct view? In fact, according to postmodernism, every view is equally valid. Anything is “*the truth*,” if one thinks it is. This means that you and I can read the same book and come to different positions about what the author is saying, while both positions are considered equally valid. No longer interested in what the author really meant, “What this means **to me**...” is the only thing that matters to postmodernism. Shifting the focus of meaning from the author to the reader means there are presently 5 billion little gods here on earth, with each one deciding for himself what is right or wrong. Clearly postmodernism is the Serpent’s lie turned to seed (cf. Genesis 3:4-5).

In a postmodern America, our collective tolerance for everything demands that we never question the propositions of another’s religious point of view. Consequently, all those religions that were previously marginalized, viz, those of non-western cultures, are now given a rather loud voice in the multi-cultural curriculum of postmodern America. There is, of course, one exception. Any religion arrogant enough to claim it knows “*The truth*” immediately becomes the object of everyone else’s censure. Paganism, therefore, has come full cycle. Consequently, all gods are equally valid except the one who claims to be God with a capital “G.” All philosophies are true except the one philosophy that calls into question others. Every worldview is acceptable except the one that claims to be the only correct view. All religions are permissible except the one that claims to be “*the way, the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6).

Because they did not believe in the little “g” gods of the Roman Pantheon, the

early Christians were branded and executed as “Atheists.” In postmodern America, New Testament Christians are rapidly becoming the new Atheists. As we write, Christians are being viewed as dangerous bigots whose voices must be silenced in the public square. Bible-based morality is scorned and berated for its intolerance. How long will it be before that which is censured publicly will also be censured privately? Only God knows. Nevertheless, the inference is as clear as it is necessary. Currently, major tenets of the Christian faith are being criminalized by the government. In direct contradiction to the Bible, homosexuality is lauded as healthy, while an aversion to such is labled “Homophobia.” Practically any discrimination against a homosexual is against the law. Presently, certain religiously oriented discrimination is still tolerated, but for how long? Any discrimination against a woman based on her gender is against the law. Again, certain religiously oriented discrimination is tolerated, but for how long? The list does not stop here, but these are enough to make our point. If the present trend to make Christians the new Atheists is not reversed, then our grandchildren will be both persecuted and prosecuted for their faith. Not only can it happen, but without repentance, it will happen.

The church today is exactly where it was at the beginning — right in the middle of pagan culture. Like its Founder before her, the church is light in the midst of darkness (cf. John 1:4-5; Matthew 4:12-17; 5:14-16). As believers in “*the word of the truth of the gospel*” (Colossians 1:5), Christians are being “*filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*” (Colossians 1:9). Consequently, we know there is a truth that is true whether it is believed or not, and it is this truth —we’ll call it “True Truth” —that is the standard for judging the rightness or wrongness of any person, organization, church, society, culture or nation.

As Christians, we give our wholehearted allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Divine Logos, or Word, made flesh, Who was the “*image of the invisible God*” (Colossians 1:15), in Whom dwelt the “*fulness of the Godhead bodily*” (Colossians 2:9), and who was, in fact “True Truth” incarnate (John 1:14; 14:6). Consequently, we know that every “*philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ*” (Colossians 2:8) comes under His judgment (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). When we comprehend this truth and, in turn, live it out in our lives, we change everyone and everything around us. This is not just my opinion, it’s what God says in His word (Matthew 13:33).

The book of Colossians tells us the Law of Moses, as great as it was, has been superseded by the religion of Christ (cf. Colossians 2:11-17). It tells us that angels — even though they are great and wonderful creatures “*sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation*” (Hebrews 1:14) — are not to be worshipped, no matter what the Roman Catholic Church or New Age gurus might say about them (cf. Colossians 2:18-19). Finally, the book tells us that asceticism, despite its false claims of wisdom and humility, is of no real value against the “*indulgences of the flesh*” (Colossians 2:23). As Paul says, and as we now know deep down in our hearts, the only answer to the imperfection that so easily besets us is that completeness that only comes in connection with Jesus Christ (cf. Colossians 1:28; 4:12).

With that knowledge firmly entrenched in our minds, let us demonstrate to a lost and dying world what it means to live in connection with Christ. Let us be the kind of husbands, wives, children, fathers, mothers, employers, and employees that Jesus expects us to be (cf. Colossians 3:18-4:1), allowing “the word of Christ (to) dwell in (us) richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16). Let us “*walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time*” (Colossians 3:5), and let our “*speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that (we) may know how (we) ought to answer each one*” (Colossians 3:6). This, brothers, and sisters, is what the book of Colossians means to us.
