

Don't Get Cheated!

by Wayne Goff

In Colossians 2:8, Paul wrote: *"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."*

The **warning** is just as appropriate today as we see many *religious*, or *spiritual* bodies and leaders in the world today. You can be cheated by the deception of following after men and their man-made philosophies, traditions, and rudimentary experiences.

In Judaism, stress was placed on ritual law-keeping, ascetic self-denial, and material observances which never came from God, but were corrupted as Jewish people turned God's law into human tradition (Matt. 15:9).

Gentile observances of various mystic groups and cults also emphasized self-denial as a means to "greater spiritual awareness." Paul says that such things are *"not according to Christ"* (v. 8). Paul says that in Christ *"dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him,..."* (vv. 9-10).

For example, consider the practice of yoga. Many American students would consider yoga to be non-religious. But at the same time, an "ancient text" widely used in yoga classes today presents a moral code for yogis to follow and "outlines the path toward a mystical state of enlightenment known as **samadhi**, or union with the Divine" (www.yogajournal.com). Such religious practices are worthless in connecting with the Divine because God is not a part of it!

Such mystic disciplines like gnosticism, humanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Transcendentalism, New Age, etc. are the very kinds of things which Paul had in mind in Colossians 2:8. Everything you need to go from earth to heaven and to be "spiritual" is found in Christ, the gospel, and the God of the Bible (2 Pet. 1:3). There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). Having been saved by Jesus, look no further!

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