

1: Background on Colossians | www.enganchecubano.com

the Colossian hymn and later appears in Col. , a text that reaffirms and applies the hymnic statement to the church (p.). But the first statement on angelic powers.

Bkmrk The City of Colossae Colossae or Colosse was an ancient city in the Lycus River valley, about miles east of the great, cosmopolitan capital city of Ephesus, located in the Roman province of Asia, in present-day Turkey. Colossae was the smallest of three cities in the Lycus Valley -- along with Laodicea 12 miles west and Hierapolis 15 miles northwest. Each of these cities had Christian churches 4: Roman historian Tacitus mentions an earthquake that destroyed Laodicea in AD. Today, however, nothing remains of Colossae above ground. The tell acropolis or mound of the city has not been excavated, though the contour of an outdoor amphitheater is discernable on the site. The tell or acropolis of the Colossae has not been excavated. It appears darkened because the vegetation had been burned off recently. Photo copyright by HolyLandPhotos. The population of Colossae was probably quite diverse -- especially in light of the nearby highway. Proximity to the nearby highways ensured that the Colossians were exposed to the latest ideas, which then mixed together with other ideas. Thus the Christian church was subject to syncretism with other religious movements. Colossians is apparently written primarily to Gentile Christians. Rather, it was founded by Epaphras, whom Paul mentions in this letter 1: Paul had been preaching in the "big city" of Ephesus, about miles west of Colossae from 53 to 55 AD. His ministry was quite effective, first in the synagogue and later in the rented lecture hall of Tyrannus. Epaphras was undoubtedly one of these. Occasion of the Letter Paul is in prison "for the sake of the gospel" 4: No doubt, Epaphras has come to consult with Paul about the heresy that was causing problems in the Colossian church. So Paul writes a letter to the Colossians designed to expose and stop the heresy and to encourage the church in their new Christian faith. Authorship From earliest times through the mids, the Letter to the Colossians has been accepted at face value as from "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus" 1: Colossians is firmly established in the canon of the Christian church. The arguments positing a different author than Paul are extremely speculative and, frankly, create more problems than they purport to solve. I believe that an excellent case can be made that Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul himself. During which of his prison periods was the letter written? Various scholars have argued for his writing it during imprisonments at Ephesus c. Arguments for one place or another are based on the best fit of circumstances, companions present, visitors during imprisonment, the nature of the false teaching combated, the state of advance of Pauline theology, and an earthquake in AD that devastated Colossae. That makes the most sense to me. The particular heresy that Paul addresses in Colossae is difficult to pin down exactly. It has similarities -- and differences -- with doctrinal problems that Paul addresses in other churches. Just what is the "Colossian heresy"? As we read between the lines in 2: The heresy seems to have had these elements: A belief system, called a "hollow and deceptive philosophy" 2: Tradition-based, "depends on human tradition" 2: Elemental spiritual forces underlie the system 2: Food restrictions and Jewish "holy days" are involved 2: Ascetic disciplines are encouraged 2: Angel worship is central 2: Visionary experiences are touted 2: Pride characterizes the proponents 2: Losing connection with Christ is the result 2: Rule-keeping is urged 2: Most scholars agree on these points. Three more possible points are less certain. The vocabulary is found in both Gnosticism and Stoicism. Circumcision is advocated 2: The identity of the false teachers at Colossae has been widely debated. The major views tend to cluster around four explanations: Mystery religions have been argued by some as one of the sources of the heresy, but this is hard to pin down or prove. We would like to see a simple opponent, but movements are inevitably affected by the winds of thought swirling through the culture. Clinton Arnold argues for a syncretism or combination of Phrygian 19 folk belief, local folk Judaism, and Christianity. Colossians seems to have been written with two purposes in mind: Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, As a way to quell a rebellion in Phrygia and Lydia, Antiochus III ordered that Jewish families be relocated from Babylon where they had been exiled in the sixth century BC to the area of Phrygia, in the general area where Colossae is located. They were permitted to observe their own laws, given land, and exempted from taxation for 10 years. Clement of Rome, 1 Clement Ignatius, To the Ephesians c. Letter of

Barnabas Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5. Tertullian, *De Praescriptione*, c. Origen of Alexandria, *De Principiis* 1. Chadwick, "All Things to All Men," p. While possible, an Ephesian imprisonment is only hinted at in Scripture 1 Corinthians Listed by Moo, *Colossians*, pp. Oliphants, , pp. Phrygia is the name of the region in which Colossae is located. A single copy of this article is free. Do not put this on a website. See legal, copyright, and reprint information. We respect your privacy and never sell, rent, or loan our lists.

2: Worship of angels - Wikipedia

The result was a syncretism that kept them captive to the fear of evil spirits, dependent on the power of magic and amulets, and blind to the liberating power of the indwelling Christ, the supreme Creator.

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3: The Colossian syncretism (edition) | Open Library

*The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae [Clinton Arnold] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Our modern era is not unique in its fascination with angels and the spirit world.*

What as is at issue is the sufficiency of Christ as proclaimed through the Gospel. In this article we shall examine the issue from the Book of Colossians and the first century religious world in Asian minor, and thereby identify the nature of the Colossian heresy. This will give us the tools we need to apply the Scriptures to current issues. What is clear is that Paul is emphasizing the sufficiency of Christ. We will examine these later. These words are not often used in the New Testament and we shall have to look at evidence for the meaning of these words to understand the issues. Thankfully, recent research has shed much light on the meaning of these terms and the situation in Colossae. Much of the popular folk religion of the day was focused on this. Previous interpretations of the Colossian heresy centered about Jewish Mysticism or Gnosticism. Neither Gnosticism nor Judaism can explain all of the terminology in Colossians 2. Some of it is Jewish and other parts of it distinctly pagan. What Arnold shows is that Jews and Pagans believed in popular folk religion that crossed over the traditional boundaries of major religions. Astrology provides a good illustration of how something like this is practiced in our day. Persons with varying religious backgrounds consult horoscopes, and take them seriously. His evidence has convinced me. What ties this folk religion together is the felt need to be freed from influence of the hostile forces. The source of the false teaching is twofold: As long as the teachings keep the Colossian Christians from their confidence in the sufficiency of Christ and the efficacy of His finished work on the cross, they play into the hands of the evil forces they are hoping to defeat. F F Bruce describes it like this: They function as masters and overlords of unredeemed humanity working through various means "including the Jewish law and pagan religions" to hold their subjects in bondage. The forces of darkness are all too willing to have themselves be the object of such battles "they may even inspire the means and techniques. They evidently like all the attention in as much as it keeps our attention off of Christ and what He has done, once for all. Arnold devotes an entire chapter to analyzing how this word was used in local mystery cults near Colossae. The term denoted the second stage of a mystery initiation where the properly prepared devotee entered to see mysteries. What Arnold does is pull together numerous examples to reinforce this and provide a clearer picture of the claims of the elite visionaries against whom Paul warns. The person who went through the initiation usually had a visionary experience. The initiation thus served as the basis of the knowledge and authority for the opponents to judge the Colossians "those in the faction had been initiated, seen the visions, and learned from them. This mystery rite may have signified the beginning of a new and victorious life experience for the initiate in relationship to the hostile powers "the chains of fate had been broken and a new power for warding off hostile spirits had been received. However, since it had meant so much to them, and it was widely believed that those few elite who experienced this had received immunity from the dire fate that had previously been in the hands of thestoicheia, it is likely that they held onto their elite status after embracing Christianity. There were even Jewish sources of this, where local Judaism had been mixed with ideas garnered from the surrounding pagans. The spiritual elitists who had these visionary experiences were portraying themselves as the ones who could lead the Colossians into freedom. Paul claimed that they were actually trying to carry the Christians of Colossae off as plunder! The first we have already mentioned: Lets make this very clear. The hostile powers no longer held the Colossian Christians in captivity. Because when they put their trust in Christ, Christians had been transferred out of the authority of darkness Colossians 1: However, there is still a battle. The hostile powers inspire a false teaching that is believed by false teachers. These teachers tempt Christians to integrate pagan practices and traditions to their faith in order to find freedom from the hostile powers. The vain deceit is their claim to special status. Their biggest lie is the claim that what Christ has already done is insufficient. These were their previous state of death in sin verse 13 and their subjection to the powers of darkness verse Christ had canceled out their debt before God verse 14 and defeated the principalities and powers verse In spite of all that, the spiritual elitists in

Colossae insisted that the faith of the Colossian Christians was defective and lacking. So they wanted to set themselves up as judges. Paul warns that we do not let them do it! The would-be judges wanted to tell the Colossian Christians how to eat, what religious festivals to keep, and evidently demanded Sabbath keeping. Here we see both pagan and Jewish elements. As we saw earlier, the pagan mystery rites had to be kept on the new moon. The food issue could be Jewish or pagan. Jews did not have rules about beverages, so that was likely a pagan stipulation. Interestingly, In spite of this clear injunction to not allow anyone to be sit as judge in regard to Sabbath, there are many groups today who do just that! They try to use semantic sophistry to convince us that this passage is not talking about Sabbath. Do not listen to them. However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. Any denial of the sufficiency of Christ or adding to the finished work of Christ is seen by Paul as a return to enslavement. The spiritual elitists delight in judging others. They claim to know how to find freedom and suggest to regenerate Christians that they are not really free. They were promoting their experiences and the means to receive them to the Colossian Christians. There were Jewish sects who claimed to have the secret to experiencing angelic worship, like that of the angels. Some of them include Jewish and pagan names in the same text. Here is part of Arnolds summary: The texts also are a good illustration of the religious syncretism of the time. Arnold presents a very compelling argument for his view. The would-be spiritual elitists denied that being in Christ was all that was necessary. This may seem odd, unless you consider millions of Roman Catholics whose church has not allowed them to know that they can be truly complete in Christ by faith , who routinely call upon intermediaries such as Mary and various saints, to give help that they fear has not been provided by Christ. It is not hard to imagine that Christians who lived in the syncretistic culture of first century Asia Minor could believe in angelic intermediaries when Jews and pagans alike had similar teachings. The elitist judges take people away from that which only and truly can keep them, the finished work of Christ. The head and body analogy shows that Christian growth is not based on the work of intermediaries, be they human or angelic. The entire body receives everything needed directly from Christ. Evidently the errorists had lowered Christ to a level of one of the intermediaries, who could possibly help them, but not directly or completely. Much more was necessary and the elitists alone supposedly knew the secrets. Paul says they are not holding onto the head. Conclusion Clinton Arnold summarizes the situation: They advocated the invocation of angels for protection from the hostile powers. They appear to have overemphasized the transcendence of God and underemphasized the exalted position of Christ, functionally viewing him as a mediator, perhaps on the same level as angels. Jesus existed before the powers, he in fact created them, he defeated the hostile powers on the cross, and he will intervene in the future and bring about a universal peace in heaven as well as on earth. There are various versions of the Colossian heresy popular today. These shall be the subject of our next article. May the Lord preserve each of us by His grace so richly provided in Christ. Hendrickson, ; reprint, Minneapolis: GrandRapids, , is the most comprehensive work that also cites many previous works on the topic. Lenski sees Judaizers as behind it.

4: Colossian Heresy Part 1

Flemming: The Gospel and Syncretism to the Colossian syncretism make efforts to be more specific in describing its 12origin and character tentative at best.

This epistle is generally dated to the period of CE, and is commonly thought to have been written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome. In recent years, many scholars have concluded that the internal evidence within the epistle indicates an early form of Gnosticism was the culprit in Colosse. In order to grasp some of the points Paul makes in his letter, a rudimentary understanding of the basic tenets of Gnosticism is required. The term "Gnostic" comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means knowledge. Gnosticism was a complex religious philosophy which taught that salvation could only be achieved through secret knowledge. Although there were many different types of Gnosticism, they had several common features. The following may be regarded as the chief points in the Gnostic systems: Some of these ideas are more obvious in one and some of them in another of the Gnostic systems. Paul alludes to several Gnostic doctrines and restrictions in his epistle, in addition to specifically listing some of their teachings at the end of chapter two. He identifies himself and his companion Timothy, and then names the Church he is writing to Colosse. Colosse was situated close to the River Lycus, about 15 miles southeast of Laodicea and a little over miles east of Ephesus, in what is now Turkey. But they had heard of their faith and love from Epaphras, who ministered to the Colossians. Paul states that he and Timothy have been praying for the Colossians, asking God to fill them with knowledge, that they may be fruitful in every good work. In verses 9 and 10, the word "knowledge" comes from the Greek word *epignosis*. Of this word, Kenneth S. The word is an advance upon *gnosis* knowledge in that it denotes a larger and more thorough knowledge. It is a knowledge which grasps and penetrates into an object. It was a favorite word of the Gnostics who used it to designate the superior knowledge which they claimed as their exclusive possession. Paul prays that all the saints might become possessors of this knowledge, indicating that it was open for all to appropriate, not a secret mystery into which only a favored few could be initiated. The implication is that the knowledge of the Gnostics was neither true nor full. The Gnostics denied that the Messiah had come in the flesh. They taught that one did not need the atoning sacrifice of his blood for salvation, because he had never really lived as a human being. Rather, the Gnostics emphasized that salvation could be attained only through the secret knowledge that Christ had given his disciples. The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary Eerdmans states: Many Gnostics traced their teaching back to him and the secret teaching he purportedly revealed after the resurrection. Gnostic christologies offer a savior without the incarnation a Christ-spirit who gives knowledge instead of calling for faith. Regarding the Gnostic belief about the composition of the Godhead, Eerdmans says, "Between God and matter lie a host of spiritual powers, collectively termed the fullness *pleroma* of God. From its lowest rank comes the creator, a demiurge identified with the Old Testament Yahweh. Fallen spiritual powers, often linked with astral referents, now rule the world" p. The Gnostics believed that angels were emanations from the Most High God. They were all imperfect, with the highest and most ancient of them being more ethereal and inviolate than those in the next level down, and so on through the ranks. To discredit this Gnostic teaching on the "fullness of the Godhead," Paul specifically states in verse 15 that Christ is the "firstborn of every creature," thereby establishing his preeminence in the order of creation. Yet in verse 16, Paul says that the entire creation, both material and spiritual, was accomplished by God through Christ. This would place Christ, the instrument of creation, second only to God the Father in the spiritual order. Obviously, this teaching contradicted the Gnostic view of the spiritual hierarchy. In verse 18, Paul again emphasizes that Christ is the "beginning" Gr. This is the same word found in Revelation 3: An understanding of the Gnostic view of the "fullness of the Godhead" will aid in ascertaining why Paul brings up this concept several times in his letter to the Colossians. Of the "pleroma," ISBE states: How, then, does it come to exist at all? What is the source of its imperfections and evils? Of these aeons there is a gradation so numerous that at length the lowest of them is almost wholly corporeal, the spiritual element having been gradually diminished or eliminated until at last the world of mankind and of matter is reached, the abode of evil. In this way the gulf is bridged between God and mankind. The highest

aeons approximate closely the divine nature, so spiritual are they and so free from matter. These form the highest hierarchy of angels, and these with many other grades of angelic hosts are to be worshiped. It is not through the hierarchy of angels aeons that Christians are reconciled to God, but rather through His son, Yeshua the Messiah. Again he is contrasting the false Gnostic beliefs about Christ not actually coming in the flesh with the truth of the gospel, which shows that the Messiah did live on earth as a human. In the religious cults of the Graeco-Roman world, this word literally referred to a religious secret that was confided only to the initiated, a secret rite. By his use of *mysterion*, Paul is emphasizing that the teaching the Colossians had received about Christ was the true revealing of the long-hidden mystery of God. Conversely, Paul implies that the mystery the Gnostics wished to reveal to them was false. When Paul calls himself a "minister" Gr. However, in Greek *diakonos* really only means "one who renders service," or "a servant. The different translations of this word from Greek into English come more from the traditional hierarchical view of church government than from the actual meaning of the word itself. NKJV The second chapter begins with Paul telling the Colossians that although he had not been to their city, he was aware that they were having problems and was concerned about them. Verse 2, which emphasizes knowledge Gr. The Greek word *apokruphoi*, which is translated "hidden" in verse 3, literally means "a hidden thing, a secret. Evidently, the Gnostic teachers had not yet made any significant headway in the community of believers. Before Paul begins his rebuttal of the Gnostics, he exhorts the Colossians in verses 6 and 7 to remain faithful to the teachings initially brought to them. NRSV Paul gets to the heart of the problem in verse 8. He warns the Colossians of the devious philosophy the Gnostics were promoting and labels their doctrines the traditions of men see Matt. The Greek phrase *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*, translated as "the elemental spirits of the universe" above, has been interpreted in several ways. Most commentators hold this to be the case. Gentiles served these demonic spirits as gods. Jews, though knowing the one true God, were sometimes led astray by demonic spirits. Clearly, this "philosophy" Paul refers to in verse 8 was contrary to Christ, being derived from human tradition and demonic influence. In verse 10, he uses a related Greek word for "fullness" *pepleromenoi* to show the Colossians that they have no need of anything other than Christ. In the last half of verse 10, Paul clearly states that Christ is above all spiritual rulers and powers cf. Therefore, there is no reason for the Colossians to worship angels Col. Yet an objective look at the context of this statement does not indicate that Paul was combating false teachers who wished to have the Gentile Colossians physically circumcised. Rather, he was using the symbolism of spiritual circumcision and baptism to illustrate to the Colossians how they had come to fullness in Christ Col. In verse 10, Paul stated that the Colossians had been made complete in Christ "in him". Paul uses *kai* in verse 11 to reinforce and connect this statement with his assertion about spiritual circumcision. The same usage of *kai* is also found in verse He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. NRSV Paul states in verse 13 that the Colossians had previously been considered "dead" because they were uncircumcised i. Taken as a whole, verses 11 through 14 emphasize the redemption the Colossians had through the Messiah. The abolishment of the Law would not make humans sinless, because sin was in the world before the Law was given Rom. So what is Paul saying in verse 14? The term "handwriting of requirements" comes from the Greek phrase *cheirographon tois dogmasin*. In recent years scholars have found where the word *cheirographon* was used by other writers in the same time period to refer to a signed bill of indebtedness. Such bonds were handwritten by the debtor so they could not be disputed later on. Friberg defines *cheirographon* as "strictly, a handwritten document; in legal matters a promissory note, a record of indebtedness, bond; figuratively] in CO 2. NKJV In verse 15, Paul says that Christ, through his sacrifice, has disarmed the spiritual principalities and powers that rule over this world for more information on these spiritual rulers, see my article " The Heavenly Divine Council ". He tells the Colossians not to let anyone including the Gnostics judge them in eating or drinking, or in the observance of festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths. This passage is widely misunderstood because most scholars begin with the assumption that the Sabbath, new moons, and Holy Days mentioned in verse 16 are among the false teachings Paul is combating. They assume that the Gentile Colossians were not keeping these days, but the heretics who are usually labeled "Jewish Gnostics" were trying to force them to observe them. Two points discredit this theory. First, Paul calls the Gnostic teachings the "tradition of men" Col. Regardless of how Paul felt about the observances he lists in verse 16, being a Pharisee trained in the Law Acts Yet

asceticism is the opposite of feasting. Instead, you elevate asceticism by criticizing the way someone is keeping a feast, or by condemning the fact that they are celebrating a feast at all. For the Gnostics to be judging the Colossians regarding the manner of observance of the Sabbath, new moons, and Holy Days, they obviously had to be keeping them! The phrase "in food or in drink" does not accurately convey the meaning of the original text. The Greek reads "en brosei kai en posei" and refers to the acts of eating and drinking. The strict Gnostics were substituting an ascetic philosophy Col. They were evidently quick to find fault with anyone who did not follow their teaching of denying oneself food and drink. The text shows that the Gnostic teachers were also condemning the Colossian Christians for their observance of the Sabbath, new moons, and Holy Days. For the Jews the Sabbath was anything but a day of fast or of mourning. Even the strictest Jewish sects objected to fasting on the Sabbath.

5: What Was the Colossian Heresy? - Here a little, there a little - Commentary

The result was a syncretism that kept them captive to the fear of evil spirits, dependent on the power of magic and amulets, and blind to the liberating power of the indwelling Christ, the supreme Creator and Lord of all spiritual principalities and powers.

Sheppard published an inscription from near Kotiaion related to Holiness and Justice, personifications honoured, or worshipped, in areas of Phrygia and Lydia. In , Clinton E. Arnold argued for the general importance of angels in Asia Minor as a common folk practice in this region. He suggested that pagans were invoking the names of angels for protection following Jewish influences. Malay also published a second inscription, dated CE, confirming the existence of associations devoted to the vine from nearby Katakekaumene in Cappadocia , now in the Manisa Museum. Angels in Judaism The Hebrew Bible strictly prohibits worship of idols made in the likeness of anything in heaven, according to the first commandment found in Exodus For this reason actual "worship" of angels is not documented in Judaism beyond the following: In pre-exilic Judaism the term the Host of Heaven has primarily pagan associations, the stars, or gods of the zodiac, unconnected with angels, as illustrated by the prohibition in Deuteronomy 4: This is consistent with rabbinical era teaching. In Intertestamental Judaism, worship of angels is not found, but a developed angelology , angelic hierarchies , and the invocation of angels is found. For example, the Maccabean fighters invoked the unnamed angel that earlier in the days of Hezekiah had destroyed the army of Sennacherib. After this the Kabbalah takes the same position as regards conjuration found concerning the conjuration and abjuration of demons in magical works such as the Testament of Solomon. Rabbi Ishmael, in a Midrash of time of Hadrian Mek. Yitro 10 prohibits worship of the likeness of angels of the ofanim and cherubim. One can theorize that the worship of angels was occurring in Ancient Israel, hence a law was made to prohibit this activity. This leaves open the possibility that what Paul meant was not actually Christians who bowed down and literally worshipped angels, but a wider range of uses perhaps including: In the Latin Vulgate this had been rendered *et religione angelorum*, and this was rendered "religioun of aungelis" by Wycliffe. Toward the end of the Book of Revelation , John of Patmos begins to worship an angel. The angel rebukes him, telling him to worship God instead see Revelation Angelici[edit] The Angelici were a heretical sect of the 3rd century. Augustine supposes them thus called from their yielding an extravagant worship of angels. However Augustine provides no evidence for this charge and Epiphanius derives their name from the belief that God created the world through the angels. Gnosticism[edit] While falling short of actual worship of angels 3rd century Gnosticism developed heavily ideas concerning the archons. Celsus repeats the charge of worship of angels against Aristides. These are agents of a single god, which are worshipped in its stead.

6: Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Colossians. JesusWalk Bible Study Series

Paul's claim is that Christ is the Creator and sustainer of all, that He is above all powers, that in Him is all the fulness of deity, and that in Him the Colossian Christians had been made complete (see Colossians ,10 and the Christ Hymn of Colossians). The would-be spiritual elitists denied that being in Christ was all that was.

The word syncretism does not appear in the KJV, but the subject of syncretism is certainly addressed and condemned in the Scriptures. From a Biblical perspective, syncretism is the blending together of Yahweh worship with pagan worship. A perfect example of syncretism is the worship of the Samaritans. When the Samaritan woman asked Yeshua a question about the difference between the worship of the Jews and Samaritans, He responded with this: We know what we worship: What was wrong with the worship of the Samaritans? To answer this question, we have to go to 2 Kings 17 and read about the origin of the Samaritans. King David and King Solomon both ruled over a united, twelve-tribe monarchy. After the death of Solomon, the ten northern tribes seceded from the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and made Samaria their capital. The ten northern tribes sinned greatly against the Lord. Their punishment was exile: Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel [the ten tribes] away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" 2Ki. These were the people who later became known as the Samaritans. The Samaritans told the king of Assyria that they did not know how the God of this land wanted to be worshipped. So the king sent an Israelite priest to "teach them the manner of the God of the land," and this priest "taught them how they should fear Yahweh" vs. The Samaritans then began to worship Yahweh. However, they mixed their worship of Yahweh with the worship of their old pagan gods: Yahweh had made it clear in Deuteronomy chapter 12 that He does not want worship which is patterned after the worship of pagan gods. Rather, He said, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: The unnamed priest who instructed the Samaritans apparently neglected to tell the Samaritans that Yahweh rejects syncretistic worship. Or, if the priest did tell them, they chose to ignore those instructions. In either case, the Samaritans ended up with a flawed system of syncretistic worship. They erroneously believed that their system of worship was every bit as legitimate as that of the Jews. When the Jews returned from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, the Samaritans came to them and said, "Let us build with you: The Samaritans resented being shunned this way, and so opposed and harassed the Jews in their efforts to rebuild Jerusalem. About years later, at the time of the Messiah, the Jews and the Samaritans were still not getting along with each other, which explains why the Samaritan woman was surprised when Yeshua asked her for a drink. For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" Jn. It was to this Samaritan woman that Yeshua spoke about the need for true worshippers to worship "in spirit and in truth. True worship is a blend of spirit and truth. Syncretistic worship is a blend of paganism and truth. The subtle danger of syncretistic worship lies in its claim to be worshipping the true God, Yahweh. When the Israelites brought idols and idolatrous practices into the Temple, they did not think of their actions as an abandonment of Yahweh. They thought of it as just supplementing their worship with customs borrowed from heathen idol worship. Even the golden calf at Mount Sinai was not regarded as a substitute god to replace Yahweh; rather, it was regarded as a symbolic representation of Yahweh. Syncretism made its way into the Messianic faith quite early. Certain statements in the Epistles show that it was starting even before the Apostles died. Paul scolded the Galatians for turning back to the weak and beggarly elements which put them in bondage to the observance of times. Syncretism was also occurring among the saints at Colosse. This is obvious from Colossians chapter 2. Here too it is clear from the context that Paul was not referring to the commandments of God written in the Torah; rather, he was talking about unhealthy bondage to man-made traditions, commandments, and philosophies. Pagan customs were adapted and modified for use in Christian worship. Much that exists in Christianity today is nothing more than white-washed, baptized paganism. This is especially obvious in the Roman Catholic Church, which freely admits that many of its extra-Biblical traditions were borrowed from pagan idol worship. Anyone who doubts

this can read Catholic Customs and Traditions: This book, written by a Catholic and primarily for Catholics, is a brief but comprehensive overview of the customs of Roman Catholicism. Throughout the book, the author freely admits that many Catholic customs were borrowed from paganism. This title [Sun-day] comes from pre-Christian worship of the sun" pg. After Constantine "became the benefactor and protector of Christianity," the writer states, "pagan cultural features of sun-symbolism were no longer threatening. They could be freely absorbed by the church. The church, with its Nativity date of December 25 already in place, did precisely this" pg. Teutonic and Scandinavian peoples worshipped trees and decorated houses and barns with evergreens at the new year to scare away demons" pg. This practice, marking an important moment in life, was borrowed from pagan mystery cults" pg. These eggs were a symbol of fertility Rabbits are part of pre-Christian fertility symbolism because of their reputation to reproduce rapidly" pg. This festival came under the patronage of Juno, the goddess of marriage Valentine replaced the pagan goddess Juno as a patron of love" pg. Samaritanism and Roman Catholicism are not the only systems of worship guilty of syncretism. Syncretism exists in Protestantism, too. It can even be found in Judaism. God is a Spirit: Reprinted from "Gates of Eden," July-August , page 8. Write to Gates of Eden, P. Box , East Peoria, IL,

7: THE COLOSSIANS HERESYâ€™PART 1 : Apprising Ministries

The Colossian Syncretism offers groundbreaking evidence on the true nature of the problem that the Apostle Paul opposed so vehemently. Drawing upon little-known angel inscriptions, magical texts, and archeological evidence from Asia Minor, the author argues that the Colossians tried to combine Paul's teachings about Christ with local pagan and.

What as is at issue is the sufficiency of Christ as proclaimed through the Gospel. In this article we shall examine the issue from the Book of Colossians and the first century religious world in Asian minor, and thereby identify the nature of the Colossian heresy. This will give us the tools we need to apply the Scriptures to current issues. What is clear is that Paul is emphasizing the sufficiency of Christ. The stoicheia of Colossians 2: We will examine these later. These words are not often used in the New Testament and we shall have to look at evidence for the meaning of these words to understand the issues. Thankfully, recent research has shed much light on the meaning of these terms and the situation in Colossae. Determining the meaning of this term is essential since it is used twice in Colossians 2 verse 8 and verse 10. The problem is that the term stoicheia has a broad range of meanings. He wrote an entire chapter on the subject of the stoicheia. He concludes that the stoicheia are evil, hostile powers. Much of the popular folk religion of the day was focused on this. Previous interpretations of the Colossian heresy centered about Jewish Mysticism or Gnosticism. Neither Gnosticism nor Judaism can explain all of the terminology in Colossians 2. Some of it is Jewish and other parts of it distinctly pagan. What Arnold shows is that Jews and Pagans believed in popular folk religion that crossed over the traditional boundaries of major religions. Astrology provides a good illustration of how something like this is practiced in our day. Persons with varying religious backgrounds consult horoscopes, and take them seriously. What Arnold showed through his research was that, for example, Jewish angelic names can be found on pagan amulets, being invoked to help the pagan avert the influence of the stoicheia. His evidence has convinced me. What ties this folk religion together is the felt need to be freed from influence of the hostile forces. The stoicheia are evil, personal, spirit beings and they can be the source of a teaching. The source of the false teaching is twofold: As long as the teachings keep the Colossian Christians from their confidence in the sufficiency of Christ and the efficacy of His finished work on the cross, they play into the hands of the evil forces they are hoping to defeat. The stoicheia elemental principles no longer are a threat to those who are crucified with Christ. F F Bruce describes it like this: Arnold nicely summarizes the issues raised in Colossians 2: For Paul the stoicheia were an integral part of the present evil age. They function as masters and overlords of unredeemed humanity working through various means â€™ including the Jewish law and pagan religions â€™ to hold their subjects in bondage. The forces of darkness are all too willing to have themselves be the object of such battles â€™ they may even inspire the means and techniques. They evidently like all the attention in as much as it keeps our attention off of Christ and what He has done, once for all. The word is embateuein and it is found in Colossians 2: Arnold devotes an entire chapter to analyzing how this word was used in local mystery cults near Colossae. The term denoted the second stage of a mystery initiation where the properly prepared devotee entered to see mysteries. What Arnold does is pull together numerous examples to reinforce this and provide a clearer picture of the claims of the elite visionaries against whom Paul warns. The person who went through the initiation usually had a visionary experience. The initiation thus served as the basis of the knowledge and authority for the opponents to judge the Colossians â€™ those in the faction had been initiated, seen the visions, and learned from them. This mystery rite may have signified the beginning of a new and victorious life experience for the initiate in relationship to the hostile powers â€™ the chains of fate had been broken and a new power for warding off hostile spirits had been received. However, since it had meant so much to them, and it was widely believed that those few elite who experienced this had received immunity from the dire fate that had previously been in the hands of the stoicheia, it is likely that they held onto their elite status after embracing Christianity. Such individuals had gone through rigorous initiation rites, including things very much like the list of rules in Colossians 2. The term embateuein in Colossians 2: There were even Jewish sources of this, where local Judaism had been mixed with ideas garnered from the surrounding pagans. The spiritual elitists who had these visionary experiences were

portraying themselves as the ones who could lead the Colossians into freedom. Paul claimed that they were actually trying to carry the Christians of Colossae off as plunder! Three Warnings about Spiritual Elitism With this background information, we can now better understand the three warnings in Colossians 2 about opponents to the sufficiency of Christ. The first we have already mentioned: Ironically, they play on the idea that the Colossian Christians needed to fear the stoicheia and needed their help to escape. Lets make this very clear. The hostile powers no longer held the Colossian Christians in captivity. Because when they put their trust in Christ, Christians had been transferred out of the authority of darkness Colossians 1: However, there is still a battle. Now that the stoicheia have lost their previous captives to Christ, they have a new plan. The hostile powers inspire a false teaching that is believed by false teachers. These elitist teachers tell the Colossians that they are not really free from the stoicheia. These teachers tempt Christians to integrate pagan practices and traditions to their faith in order to find freedom from the hostile powers. The spiritual elitists play into the hands of the very stoicheia they claim to have the key to defeating. The vain deceit is their claim to special status. Their biggest lie is the claim that what Christ has already done is insufficient. The second warning is found in Colossians 2: These were their previous state of death in sin verse 13 and their subjection to the powers of darkness verse Christ had canceled out their debt before God verse 14 and defeated the principalities and powers verse In spite of all that, the spiritual elitists in Colossae insisted that the faith of the Colossian Christians was defective and lacking. So they wanted to set themselves up as judges. Paul warns that we do not let them do it! The would-be judges wanted to tell the Colossian Christians how to eat, what religious festivals to keep, and evidently demanded Sabbath keeping. Here we see both pagan and Jewish elements. As we saw earlier, the pagan mystery rites had to be kept on the new moon. The food issue could be Jewish or pagan. Jews did not have rules about beverages, so that was likely a pagan stipulation. Interestingly, In spite of this clear injunction to not allow anyone to be sit as judge in regard to Sabbath, there are many groups today who do just that! They try to use semantic sophistry to convince us that this passage is not talking about Sabbath. Do not listen to them. In Galatians Paul gives a similar teaching, and mentions the stoicheia in doing so: However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain Galatians 4: To return to religious practices of their previous lives, whether they be pagan or Jewish, is tantamount to returning to the domination of the stoicheia. Any denial of the sufficiency of Christ or adding to the finished work of Christ is seen by Paul as a return to enslavement. The spiritual elitists delight in judging others. They claim to know how to find freedom and suggest to regenerate Christians that they are not really free. The third warning is found in Colossians 2: The would-be elitists in Colossae claimed special spiritual experiences which gave them supposed freedom from the stoicheia. They were promoting their experiences and the means to receive them to the Colossian Christians. There were Jewish sects who claimed to have the secret to experiencing angelic worship, like that of the angels. Some of them include Jewish and pagan names in the same text. Here is part of Arnolds summary: The texts also are a good illustration of the religious syncretism of the time. Arnold presents a very compelling argument for his view. The would-be spiritual elitists denied that being in Christ was all that was necessary. They claimed that the stoicheia still had power over the ordinary Christians in Colossae and that their knowledge and experiences held the key to freedom. This may seem odd, unless you consider millions of Roman Catholics whose church has not allowed them to know that they can be truly complete in Christ by faith , who routinely call upon intermediaries such as Mary and various saints, to give help that they fear has not been provided by Christ. It is not hard to imagine that Christians who lived in the syncretistic culture of first century Asia Minor could believe in angelic intermediaries when Jews and pagans alike had similar teachings. The elitist judges take people away from that which only and truly can keep them, the finished work of Christ. The head and body analogy shows that Christian growth is not based on the work of intermediaries, be they human or angelic. The entire body receives everything needed directly from Christ. The whole view of life as being a huge gulf between them and God, filled with stoicheia, angels, fate, principalities and powers, was pressed upon the Colossians all

their lives. Evidently the errorists had lowered Christ to a level of one of the intermediaries, who could possibly help them, but not directly or completely.

8: Syncretism: A Blending of Paganism and Truth

The Colossian Syncretism can perhaps best be situated against the backdrop of the ongoing controversy surrounding Colossians-not merely in relation to such general introductory issues as authorship, authenticity, original addressees, or.

Background on Colossians Introductory Remarks Because of the rising tide of human philosophies confronting us today, no New Testament book speaks with more relevancy than does the epistle to the Colossians. Not only do we live in an atomic and space age, but in the most technologically advanced age of all time. As in the past, this is a day where, duped by the age-old lie of Satan, man still continues to believe in himself and his ability to solve his problems apart from God as He is revealed in Scripture. Through one avenue or another, man continues to offer his own manmade solutions for the ills of society whether in the form of secular humanism or religious syncretism. But it appears many are becoming discontented over the futility of materialism and somewhat dissatisfied with the idea that life is but a cosmic accident. As a result, many are turning to the New Age movement that has been growing by leaps and bounds. But at the center of this movement is a religious syncretism that rejects the biblical revelation of God as revealed in Christ. According to this movement, Christ is only one of many religious leaders or influences that man may turn to because there are other ways that are equally valid. Increasingly our generation wants to take religion out of the realm of rational discourse and relegate it to the area of personal preferences and opinions. If there are thirty-one flavors of ice cream, why can we not have similar variety in religions? The gods of the New Age Movement are always tolerant of sexual preferences, feminism, and hedonistic pleasures at almost any cost. In order to have a meaningful faith, it must agree with our deeply held beliefs. What works for you might not work for me. But let us not miss the fact that this movement has its source in the occult though hidden under new names and in Eastern religions that go all the way back to the beginnings of history with the fall of man. The New Age movement is not new; it is the most recent repeat of the second oldest religion, the spirituality of the serpent. Its impulse is foreign to none of us. The appeal is ancient indeed; its rudiments were seductively sold to our first parents in the garden. Human pride was tickled, and it jumped. Monism is the belief that all is one, that everything is interrelated, interdependent, and interpenetrating. It promotes the hideous idea that humanity, nature, and God are not separate from each other, but are one. Out of this naturally comes another idea. Since all is one and all is God, we too are gods. The goal of the New Age movement is to awaken us to the god who sleeps within us, to teach us to live like the gods we are. As will be shown, the heresy confronting the Colossians had certain similarities to the New Age movement of our day. It is a cosmic book, presenting the cosmic Christ: One of my former and beloved Greek professors at Dallas Seminary, Dr. Lewis Johnson, had the following excellent summary of the importance of this epistle. With the sudden and startling intrusion of the space age and its astrophysics, nuclear power, missiles and rockets, the church of Jesus Christ has been forced to relate its Lord and Master to the ultimate frontiers. Colossians, which presents Him as the architect and sustainer of the universe, as well as the reconciler of all things, both earthly and heavenly, provides the church with the material it may and must use. Suddenly the epistle to the little flock in the declining city has become perhaps the most contemporary book in the New Testament library. The usefulness of Colossians, however, is not a recent phenomenon. The Christology and the ethics of the letter are important for all time. It has always furnished a proper antidote to humanly devised schemes of salvation. We need no extra mediators, or taboos, or ascetics. To piece out the gospel with the rags and tatters of alien cults is not to enrich but to corrupt it. It was one of three cities located in the Lycus Valley Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea that formed an important trade route, a virtual meeting point between east and west. Colossae was about ten miles from Laodicea and thirteen miles from Hierapolis. At one time Colossae had been a large and populous city, but when Paul wrote to the Colossian church, it had become just a small town in contrast to its nearest neighbors, Hierapolis and Laodicea. From the New Testament record, these two neighboring cities appear to also have contained a congregation of believers cf. Philemon 2 with Col. He obviously thought it important enough to lay it on the heart of the apostle Paul. Significantly, the letter to this small group of believers became one of the letters of the canon of the New Testament and one of the most important because

of what it teaches us regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ. For the most part, the inhabitants of the area were Gentiles, but there was a considerable quantity of Jews among them. Apparently the wool business was particularly attractive to them cf. Furthermore, they enjoyed the gay life of Hierapolis. External Evidence Regarding the external evidence, S. There is no historical evidence that the Pauline authorship of Colossians was ever suspect in the early church. The letter was included among the Paulines in the Chester Beatty codex 46, and there is no textual evidence that it ever circulated under the name of any other person. While the available evidence is somewhat scanty, that which we possess argues for the authenticity of the writing. The problem of different vocabulary: Paul was dealing with a special brand of heresy that required in some cases a different vocabulary. Why should we try to restrict an author to his usual vocabulary under all situations. The apostle chose his vocabulary in order to deal effectively with his opponents by showing how their religious terms and ideas could only be true in Christ. The problem of the theology of Colossians: The idea of Christ as creator and as the fullness of God is too advanced for Paul, at least at this time. We find such ideas in the gospel of John, but that is thirty to forty years later. Barclay responds to this by saying: First, Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ. In Colosse a new situation met Paul, and out of these unsearchable riches Paul drew new answers to meet it. In I Corinthians 8: In that phrase is the essence of all that Paul says in Colossians. It has also been said that the author of Colossians subordinates the soteriological to the cosmological Francis W. But the two categories are not parallel. Paul does not subordinate, he extends. He advanced, but he advanced while still abiding in the doctrine of Christ cf. One can sympathize with the remark of McNeile: It is revelatory of a deep basic lack of harmony with the mind of Paul to restrict the immense genius of the man. Stewart has put it this way: The problem of the Gnostic thought in Colossians: It has been advocated that the nature of the heresy facing the Colossians with its Gnostic bent could not have existed until much later. However, scholars have discovered incipient features of Gnosticism present even in pre-Christian movements. There is nothing in Colossians which cannot be explained by longstanding Gnostic tendencies in ancient thought, although it is true that the systematization of Gnosticism came later. The Church at Colossae 1. Nevertheless, it was a product of his ministry and beautifully illustrates his commitment to impart his vision of reaching others with the powerful message of the gospel. That this is so is illustrated in the following ways. First, Paul spent three years ministering the word in Ephesus from the lecture room of the School of Tyrannus. It was during this time all of Asia heard the Word cf. Ephesus had three great attractions that brought people into the city from all parts of Asia. It was a seaport town, a center of commerce, and, with the temple of Diana, it was also a center for idol worship. Second, while on a visit to Ephesus, a young man from Colossae named Epaphras evidently heard the gospel from Paul and was converted. It appears that he was not only saved, but that he was trained and prepared by Paul to go back and plant a church in his hometown of Colossae 1: The story of the establishment of the church at Colossae illustrates an important truth. Nor does He need elaborate buildings and extensive organizations. It was essentially a church made up of Gentile believers. Though there was a large Jewish population in the Lycus Valley, the Colossian epistle suggests that the membership of the church was primarily Gentile: It was a church facing serious doctrinal and practical problems. This teaching sought to undermine the person and work of Christ and the sufficiency of the salvation believers have in Him. More will be discussed regarding the nature of the heresy. Epaphras traveled to Rome to visit Paul during his first Roman imprisonment where he was under house arrest. While he brought some good news regarding the Colossian assembly 1: Paul wrote, therefore, to counter this false teaching and sends this epistle to the Colossians by the hand of Tychicus 4: In the meantime Epaphras stayed with the apostle, perhaps because he was forced to because of his own imprisonment Philemon 23, cf. What was this heresy like? What was the church of Colossae up against? The Nature of the False Teaching Scholars are divided concerning the exact identity of the heresy that faced the Colossians since Paul does not identify the heresy or spell out its exact tenets. It also seems clear that Paul borrowed certain catchwords and phrases used by the heretical teachers. Some of these Paul filled with biblical content and used them against the heresy itself showing that in reality such ideas can only be found in Jesus Christ because of who He is His person and what He has accomplished His work. Other terms he strongly rejected and totally denounced. Some illustrations are mystery 1:

9: Clinton E. Arnold - Wikipedia

what was the colossian heresy? The first half of Paul's letter to the Colossians, especially the second chapter, is an effort to combat false teachings that were being promoted to the Church there. This epistle is generally dated to the period of CE, and is commonly thought to have been written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome.

Reel 105. September 15-30, 1851 Kerber, L. K. Daughters of Columbia: educating women for the Republic, 1787-1805. The new Don Quixote . Hammond Barnhart dictionary of science Philadelphia address on African Americans and religion by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Courthouse magic : educational vice becomes legal virtue Glow/candles/oth Sty The crisis of American labour Beauty of America 17 Contemporary Christian Christmas Hits Volume 2 (Ready-to-Play) Psychology (Cloth), Study Guide Focus on Research Prayer and Praying Men Carlo the noble dog, an exhibition of true heroism Challenging Math Puzzles 3.4. Remote phase control of radio station WWVL. R. L. Fey, J. B. Milton, and A. H. Morgan 308 An essay on Junius and his letters Accidental Courage Them and us? : rebuilding the ruins in Liverpool The Works Manual, Version 8 Introduction to maintenance management The x-files (1993-2002) Calculus transcendentals 8th edition james stewart Waiting for Tansen. XML document management server (XDMS) The Da Vinci Code Russian Edition Riddles For Children Topics in the economics of aging The Cult of Kashaknisha Production planning and control in apparel industry Queen Alexandras Royal Army Nursing Corps Bass Arpeggio Finder A father as he should be Design your fashion portfolio steven faerm Religion in the Pacific era Momaya Annual Review 2006 The missionary outlook in the light of the war. Report of the Special Committee on Prisons Calcified root canal management Kegley charles w controversies in international relations theory Biology teachers treasury of unit plans.