

Look Up

Colossians 2:16—3:4

1) Adding something to Jesus? (2:16-23)

"So you believe in Christ. That's great. But if you really want to be spiritual, you need something more..."

a) Jewish traditions (2:16-17)

- *"You need Old Testament holy days and festivals and food laws and..."*
- But these are not needed. For what was the (ceremonial) Law of God for Israel in the Old Testament, has now become only Jewish tradition. Not needed now that Christ has fulfilled the law.

b) Angelic visions (2:18-19)

- *"I hear and see angels! They speak to me! Let me tell you their message."*
- This distraction from Christ is spiritual decapitation (2:19!). Angels are mere servants of Christ, not the main attraction. See Hebrews 1:6.

c) Self-made legalism (2:20-23)

- *"Do not taste, do not touch!"*
- Self-abasement. It might sound good, but it's self-made religion. (2:23) It's not from Jesus.

2) Look up! To Christ (3:1-3:4)

Look up to the ascended Christ! Don't be trapped by this world.

Consider what is before and after this paragraph (3:1-3:4):

- Before: the problem is self-made religion and human tradition
- After: the problem is self-indulgent worldliness
- The common thread? This world has taken you captive. (2:8, 20; 3:5)
 - To truly live in this world we need *more* than this world.
 - "Christ, who is your life..." (3:4)

Applications for today

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Read Colossians 2:16—3:4.
2. Consider the things that could be "added" to Christ in 2:16-2:23.
 - a. Why do they all fail? Consider Colossians 2:9, for instance.
 - b. What is something that people unwisely add to Christ today?
3. Why does the ascension matter? We know why the cross matters, but why does the exalted Christ matter according to Paul? Consider Col 3:1-4 carefully.
 - a. How can you apply this to your life?