

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message One : The Urgent Need for Our Culture to Be Replaced by the All-inclusive, Extensive Christ

I. Overview:

The book of Colossians was written because the church in Colossae had been pervaded with culture, and the saints had been distracted from Christ by culture. In Colossians the authority of darkness refers especially to the good aspects of culture and of our natural being. Man's loss of God forced man to invent human culture, the main elements of which were cities for existence, cattle-raising for making a living, music for enjoyment, and weapons for defense. Such a culture, which was without God and was united with Satan, became a model representing all human cultures throughout the ages and signifying that these cultures are without God and have followed Satan and are united with Satan. Culture is a great frustration to experiencing Christ; unconsciously and subconsciously, we are frustrated by culture from the experience and enjoyment of Christ. Christ as the all-inclusive, extensive One is versus culture and should replace our culture with Himself. In this book Paul presents a vision of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ to impress us with the fact that this Christ should replace our culture.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the culture in the book of Colossians.

The culture in the region of Colossae included Hebrew religion, Greek philosophy, asceticism, mysticism, and Gnosticism. In Colossians 3:11 Paul says that in the new man there is no Greek or Jew, no circumcision or uncircumcision, no barbarian or Scythian. Circumcision and uncircumcision refer to religion, whereas barbarian and Scythian refer to culture.

B. Explain the main point in the Epistle of Colossians.

The main point in the Epistle of Colossians is the fact that in the eyes of God nothing counts except Christ. The enemy of God utilizes culture to replace Christ. This is offensive to God. If Satan cannot corrupt us with evil things, God knows that he will try to use the good aspects of culture to replace Christ. We shall realize that the background of the book of Colossians exactly corresponds to today's situation.

Day 2 —

A. What does the authority of darkness refer to in Colossians?

In Colossians the authority of darkness refers to the good aspects of culture and of our character, disposition, and natural being. The authority of darkness includes our virtues, religion, philosophy, observances, ordinances, principles, and ethical standards. God has delivered us out of all this and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, where we live under a heavenly rule and restriction.

B. Why do we say that anything without Christ is in darkness?

For example, we may still be under the authority of darkness in our married life. When a brother is exchanging words with his wife, both he and his wife are in darkness. Because they are in darkness, they accuse and blame each other. Our experience testifies that whenever we live, walk, and behave in the self, we are in darkness.

Day 3 —

A. How was the culture without God produced?

Cain left the presence of God and went his own way. The first thing he did was to build a city. He produced a culture without God. Human culture developed because humanity had lost God. Originally, God, the Creator of man, was everything to man. However, when man lost God, he lost everything. Because of this, man had to invent something.

B. Why do we say that Jubal invented music to make people joyful?

Jubal invented harps and pipes. In fact, the very name Jubal means "a joyful sound" or "music." Music is a type of amusement which makes people joyful. Why does man need such amusement? Because he has lost God as his joy. God is man's true enjoyment. We do not even need to watch television, for we have a heavenly television.

Day 4 —

A. What kind way did Cain take and what is his ending?

Because Cain refused to take God's way of redemption and chose to go the way of death, he lost God and all the blessings that come from God. When man lost God and all that God was to him, the human culture was formed. In such a godless culture man indulged in lusts and took many wives. Moreover, man became lawless, godless, murderous, and violent.

B. Explain the human culture of being without God with its intrinsic factor.

The intrinsic factor of the human culture was the instigation and incitement of Satan, God's enemy, within the man who departed from God. At the time of man's fall, Satan, the evil one, injected himself into man and embodied himself in sin to dwell in man's flesh. This was like an evil seed that was sown into man, being developed again. Eventually, it destroyed the entire human race.

Day 5 —

A. How does Satan utilize human culture to oppose God's kingdom?

The primary elements of human culture are religion, politics, and the family life. Human culture is the best invention of mankind. However, we have to realize that Satan in a subtle way utilizes human culture to oppose God's kingdom. Culture has become the stronghold of Satan. Satan maintains a hold on human culture, utilizing it as his kingdom. We need a revelation of this fact.

B. State the family of man today also opposes God's kingdom.

Referring to the family in Matthew 10:21, the Lord spoke about fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and other family relations. Not all of your relatives will be in favor of the kingdom. If you read the Lord's word carefully, you will see that the kingdom people should be the persecuted ones, not the persecuting ones. We must pray for the opposers and the persecutors. We must love them and pray that they will become the same as we are.

Day 6 —

A. Expound in His salvation God saves us from everything which replaces Christ.

In His salvation God saves us not only from sin, judgment, the lake of fire, the world, and the self; He also saves us from everything which replaces Christ, including our culture. Because culture replaces Christ in a practical way in our daily living, it is hateful in the eyes of God.

B. Explain Christ revealed in the book of Colossians.

The book of Colossians was written in order to reveal the extensive, all-inclusive Christ who deals with our culture and even replaces our culture. Christ is our new moon, feast, and Sabbath. Since Christ is ever the same and since He is the reality of every day of the week to us, every day is the same. Christ is the meaning and purpose of life.

III. Conclusion:

Culture is the highest product of human history and civilization. If it were not for the revelation of God's Word, we, just like the rest of the world, regard culture as a very positive and highly noble thing. What Paul says in Colossians is that "the authority of darkness" is what culture brings in to replace all Christ is in everything and oppose anything related to God and Christ. It is the means which Satan in a subtle way utilizes to control and dominate people. Today culture has become Satan's stronghold. How we need the Christ in Colossians as the all-inclusive, extensive One. God, in His salvation, not only saves us from sin, judgment, the world, and the self; He also saves us from every cultural thing which replaces Christ.