

JESUS >

A STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

March 7, 2021

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JESUS > JUSTICE

“Jesus is the Lord of Justice”

COLOSSIANS 2:16-23

FALSE TEACHING TAKES SOMETHING GOOD AND BENDS IT IN A FALSE DIRECTION

1. LEGALISM TAKES THE DESIRE TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND BENDS IT TO JUDGMENTALISM. COLOSSIANS 2:16-17

2. MYSTICISM TAKES THE DESIRE TO CONNECT WITH GOD AND BENDS IT TO PRIDE. COLOSSIANS 2:18-19

3. ASCETICISM TAKES THE DESIRE TO BE DISCIPLINED AND BENDS IT TO BONDAGE. COLOSSIANS 2:20-23

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL JUSTICE:

1. COMMUNITY: THE RIGHTEOUS ARE WILLING TO DISADVANTAGE THEMSELVES TO ADVANTAGE THE COMMUNITY.

DEUTERONOMY 24:17-22

2. FAIRNESS: EVERYONE MUST BE TREATED EQUALLY AND WITH DIGNITY.

LEVITICUS 24:22, ISAIAH 33:15, LEVITICUS 19:13

3. CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY: I AM SOMETIMES RESPONSIBLE FOR AND INVOLVED IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SINS.

DANIEL 9, 2 SAMUEL 21, NUMBERS 16, 1 SAMUEL 15:2, DEUTERONOMY 23:3-4

- CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY.
- CORPORATE PARTICIPATION.
- INSTITUTIONALIZED SIN.

JOSHUA 7, EXODUS 20:5-6, LEVITICUS 19:15, JEREMIAH 22:13, JAMES 5:4

4. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY: I AM FINALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MY SINS, BUT NOT FOR ALL MY OUTCOMES.

- MY OUTCOMES - PROVERBS 6:6, PROVERBS 23:21, PROVERBS 13:23, EXODUS 22:21-27
- MY SINS - EZEKIEL 18, DEUTERONOMY 24:16

5. ADVOCACY: WE MUST HAVE SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THE POOR AND THE MARGINALIZED.

ISAIAH 1:17, PSALM 41:1, PROVERBS 31:8-9, JEREMIAH 22:3, ZECHARIAH 7:9-10

FOUR SECULAR JUSTICE THEORIES

1. LIBERTARIAN - “FREEDOM” A JUST SOCIETY PROMOTES INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

- THIS VIEW DENIES THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN.
- THIS VIEW’S UNDERSTANDING OF ABSOLUTE RIGHTS OVER PROPERTY AND OVER SELF DOES NOT SQUARE WITH THE BIBLE’S VIEW OF CREATION.

2. LIBERAL - “FAIRNESS” - A JUST SOCIETY PROMOTES FAIRNESS FOR ALL.

- IF JUSTICE IS JUST HONORING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS AND THERE ARE NO HIGHER MORAL ABSOLUTES, HOW CAN WE DECIDE MATTERS WHEN RIGHTS/CLAIMS CONFLICT AND CONTRADICT AS THEY OFTEN DO?
- THE INSISTENCE THAT RELIGIOUS VIEWS STAY OUT OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE IS HYPOCRITICAL.

3. UTILITARIAN - “HAPPINESS” - A JUST SOCIETY MAXIMIZES THE GREATEST HAPPINESS FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER.

- WITHOUT A DOCTRINE OF CREATION, THIS VIEW DOES NOT HONOR INDIVIDUALS AS HAVING A DIGNITY THAT MUST NOT BE VIOLATED.
- WITHOUT A DOCTRINE OF SIN, IT NAIVELY ASSUMES THAT WHAT WILL MAKE THE MAJORITY HAPPY CAN’T BE SOMETHING EVIL.

4. POSTMODERN - “POWER” - A JUST SOCIETY SUBVERTS THE POWER OF DOMINANT GROUPS IN FAVOR OF THE OPPRESSED.

- IT IS DEEPLY INCOHERENT.
- IT DENIES OUR COMMON SINFULNESS.
- IT MAKES FORGIVENESS, PEACE, AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GROUPS IMPOSSIBLE.
- IT IS PRONE TO DOMINATION.

COMPARING BIBLICAL JUSTICE TO THE ALTERNATIVES

1. ONLY BIBLICAL JUSTICE ADDRESSES ALL THE CONCERNS OF JUSTICE FOUND ACROSS THE FRAGMENTED ALTERNATE VIEWS.

2. BIBLICAL JUSTICE HAS BUILT-IN SAFEGUARDS AGAINST DOMINATION.

3. ONLY BIBLICAL JUSTICE OFFERS A RADICALLY SUBVERSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF POWER. (Tim Keller)

This Study Guide will help you go deeper throughout the week with daily scripture reading and questions for your own personal reflection and application. It is also designed to be used for discussion with your family, friends and Life Group.

THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Day 1	Colossians 2:16-23
Day 2	Colossians 2:16-17
Day 3	Colossians 2:18-19
Day 4	Colossians 2:20-22
Day 5	Colossians 2:23

DAILY READING JOURNAL

Whether you are reading Colossians for the first time, or have studied it numerous times, we have designed a journal to help you grow in your daily Bible reading. The journal uses the SOAP method, a simple yet powerful tool, to help guide you into deeper understanding and application of the Bible.

OPEN UP

When you were growing up, what was your response to rules? Were you a rule follower, rebel, or something in between?

UNDERSTANDING COLOSSIANS

“Therefore” (2:16) links this section with what has gone before. All of our understanding of 2:16-23—a list of “do nots”—ought to be founded on the previous list of what Christ has done, is doing, and will continue to do on behalf of His people. *By what you eat or drink (2:16)*. Since Jewish regulations did not include laws about beverages, this refers to more stringent rules of self-denial that were being practiced or imposed. *Religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day (2:16)*. The Law of Moses commanded these for Jews, but they were not obligatory for Christians. Jesus fulfilled the meaning of these and inaugurated a new covenant with new celebrations.

LET NO ONE VERSES 2:16-19

Since we cannot control whether someone judges us, what does Paul mean by “do not let anyone judge you” (2:16)?

What are some of the external religious practices that tend to get imposed or advocated by Christians today? Would you say they have a foundation in Christ? Why or why not?

How does Paul describe people who push their ideas of asceticism, severe spiritual self-discipline, or the worship of angels (2:18-19)?

Verse 19 makes it clear that Jesus supports and holds us together, and it's God that causes us to grow? How have you experienced this kind of growth individually, in a group, or in the church?

DON'T SUBMIT VERSES 2:20-23

In what ways have you observed or experienced Christian culture adding requirements to salvation? How does this twist the gospel into something it's not?

Do you tend to be more rigid (legalistic) or free in your personal faith (2:20-22)?

How do these regulations have an "appearance of wisdom" (2:23)?

How is your attitude different when you do something out of love for Jesus versus doing something out of obligation?

APPLICATION

How could you live in a way that reflects you've died to the things of the world this week? What worldly standards of spiritual success do you need to let go of?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Sit down with a trusted Christian friend or family member this week. Share ways you have been trying to "be a good Christian" out of obligation versus living out of love for Jesus.