

Creeds

Colossians 2:18-23

Introduction: In this passage Paul asks the Colossians an excellent question. *“Why... do you subject yourselves to regulations... according to the commandments and doctrines of men?”* He further states that these rules appear to be wise in religion but they have NO VALUE.

We are going to talk about these self imposed religious rules that Paul is questioning. In religious circles today, we call them creeds. Yet, it is not just creeds that have no value but any self imposed religious regulations.

I. What is a creed?

A. Webster - “a brief authoritative formula of religious belief; a set of fundamental beliefs.”

B. A creed is what men write down as rules for a religious group to follow. The rules contained in the creed are what make the group distinct from all others. Creeds are what define denominations.

C. Sometimes these rules are original (additions) and sometimes these rules supersede (transgress) the Holy Scriptures.

D. Creeds are the same thing as by laws are to a business; as charters are to local governing bodies; as the constitution is to this nation. They are sets of rules that apply only to a particular group of people.

E. Some people would argue that the Bible is a creed. Perhaps by definition that is true; however, please note who wrote the creed we call the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17). People say they believe this verse but in practice they do not.

1. God wrote it!
2. It is complete!
3. It is infallible!

II. Pharisees were good at self imposed religious regulations.

A. To prevent people from sinning in numerous ways under the Old Law, the Jewish elders established rules or as they called them traditions (creeds). These traditions carried the weight of commands.

B. Jesus condemned such rules that men create (Mark 7:1-9; Matt. 15:2).

1. By following creeds of men, Jesus said that makes them hypocrites because they honor God but follow their own rules.

2. By following creeds of men, Jesus said it makes their worship to God worthless (vain) because they lay aside God’s commands for their own.

3. All denominations today do the very same thing the Pharisees were doing that Jesus condemns. They make and follow their own rules before they will follow God's commands!

C. It is not amazing that the Pharisees were offended (Matt. 15:12-14). Jesus makes two points:

1. Any church which God has not established will be destroyed. He established His church (Matt. 16:18) in AD 33. He did not establish any denomination or community churches (just research the organization's beginnings).

2. Let them have their creeds, as the blind following the blind, they will all lose their souls in the end. Unless you are a member of the Church Jesus established (the Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16)), you will be destroyed at the judgement day.

III. Establishing our own rules or creeds will get us on the fast track to hell.

A. Angels are even prohibited from making their own regulations (Gal. 1:8).

B. If people can't respect Christ and keep his doctrine, we must reject them (2 John 9-11).

IV. Illustrations of present day creeds.

A. Faith only (James 2:24) [chart]

B. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21; Mark 16:16) [chart]

C. Church membership (Acts 2:47) [chart]

D. The Methodist's General Conference [chart]; results in permitting sin [chart on homosexuality]

Conclusion: Do you want to be cheated of your heavenly reward? Just follow any one of over 2000 creeds promoted by denominations today. Paul said, "Let no one cheat you of your reward" (Col. 2:18). How can you be cheated? By listening and obeying creeds, rules and regulations of men! Those rules might sound wise, but if God didn't reveal them in scripture, they can only result in the loss of your soul. Are you a member of a denomination or community church? If you want to repent from following their creeds, we would be glad to baptize you into the Lord's church which is subject only to God's Holy Scriptures.