

Beware Lest Any Man Spoil You

**By Mark Mayberry
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Introduction

Colossians 2:8-10 ... 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (KJV)

Colossians 2:8-10 ... 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. (NKJ)

Colossians 2:8-10 ... 8 Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: 9 for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, 10 and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power: (ASV)

Colossians 2:8-10 ... 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; (NASB95)

Beware/See to It

Thomas defines βλέπω [blepō] as “to look (at)” [991].

BDAG say it means “(1) to perceive with the eye, see; (2) to have the faculty of sight, be able to see, in contrast to being blind; (3) to take in the sight of something, look at, observe; (4) to pay esp. close attention to something, notice, mark; (5) be ready to learn about something that is needed or is hazardous, watch, look to, beware of; (6) to process information by giving thought, direct one’s attention to something, consider, note; (7) to develop awareness of something, perceive, feel; (8) to be oriented in a particular direction, looking to, in the direction of, facing.”

This is a danger warning! If we see a man waving a red flag on the highway, it is an indication that we need to slow down, find out what the danger is, avoid it, and proceed with caution. This is a call to constant watchfulness and vigilance. The Bible repeatedly warns us to “Beware!” (Matt. 16:6; Luke 12:15; Phil. 3:2-3; Heb. 3:12).

Matthew 16:6 ... 6 And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (NASB95)

Luke 12:15 ... 15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." (NASB95)

Philippians 3:2-3 ... 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, (NASB95)

Hebrews 3:12 ... 12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. (NASB95)

Lest Anyone Cheat You/That No One Takes You Captive

Thomas defines συλαγωγέω [sulagōgeō] as a compound of *sulaō* [to plunder] and *agō* [to lead, bring, carry], meaning "to carry off as spoil" [4812].

BDAG say it means "to gain control of by carrying off as booty, make captive of, rob... in imagery of carrying someone away from the truth into the slavery of error."

This word occurs 1x in the NT (Col. 2:8).

*Colossians 2:8 ... 8 See to it that no one *takes you *captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (NASB95)*

It is related to the idea of "spoils of war." We are engaged in a war with Satan (Eph. 6:11-12; 1 Pet. 5:8). Our adversary and his followers are cunning and crafty (2 Cor. 11:1-3, 12-15). If we are not careful we will be lead away captive (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Ephesians 6:11-12 ... 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (NASB95)

1 Peter 5:8 ... 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 11:1-3 ... 1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 11:12-15 ... 12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds. (NASB95)

2 Timothy 2:24-26 ... 24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (NASB95)

Through Philosophy

Thomas defines φιλοσοφία [philosophia] as from *philosophos* [a philosopher], meaning “the love or pursuit of wisdom” [5385].

BDAG say it refers to “philosophy, in our literature only in one passage and in a pejorative sense, of erroneous teaching.”

This word occurs 1x in the NT (Col. 2:8).

*Colossians 2:8 ... 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through ***philosophy** and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (NASB95)*

Philosophy refers to the love of knowledge and pursuit of wisdom. In one sense, this is entirely in accord with the spirit and teaching of Christ. However, in the New Testament age “philosophy” had come to refer to elaborate systems of human reasoning and speculation that exalts itself against God (Acts 17:16-21). Human philosophy (such as humanism, materialism, communism, the New Age Movement, etc.) is devoid of real truth and offers no hope (1 Cor. 1:18-31; 1 Tim. 6:20). Philosophy leads men away from the light of God’s inspired word into the darkness of human speculation. The philosopher is like a blind man in a dark cellar at midnight trying to catch a black cat that is not there!

Acts 17:16-21 ... 16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. 17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. 18 And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? 20 “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.” 21 (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there

used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)
(NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 ... 18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.” 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (NASB95)

1 Timothy 6:20 ... 20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—
(NASB95)

Empty Deceit/Empty Deception

The Greek word κενός [kenos], here translated “empty,” “(1) pertains to being without something material, empty; (2) pertains to being devoid of intellectual, moral, or spiritual value, empty, figurative extension of meaning 1; (3) pertains to being without purpose or result, in vain” [BDAG].

The Greek word ἀπάτη [apatē], here translated “deceit” refers to “(1) deception, deceitfulness; (2) esp. pleasure, pleasantness that involves one in sin” [BDAG].

Many things in this life are deceitful: riches (Matt. 13:22; Mark 4:19), lusts (Eph. 4:22), unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:10), sin (Heb. 3:13), and self (2 Pet. 2:13). False teachers are particularly deceitful. They do not come wearing a sign which says “I am a minister of Satan. I’m here to rob you of your soul.” Instead, they are as wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29-30). False teachers conceal their own barrenness. However, if you test them by the word of God, they will be found empty (Eph. 4:14-15; 1 John 4:1).

Matthew 13:22 ... 22 “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (NASB95)

Mark 4:19 ... 19 but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (NASB95)

Ephesians 4:22 ... 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 2:10 ... 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (NASB95)

Hebrews 3:13 ... 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (NASB95)

2 Peter 2:13 ... 13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, (NASB95)

Matthew 7:15 ... 15 “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (NASB95)

Acts 20:29-30 ... 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (NASB95)

Ephesians 4:14-15 ... 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, (NASB95)

1 John 4:1 ... 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (NASB95)

According To The Tradition Of Men

Thomas defines παράδοσις [paradosis] as from *paradidōmi* [to hand over], meaning “a handing down or over, a tradition” [3862].

BDAG say this word, which literally signifies a “handing down/over,” means “(1) handing over of someone to authorities, surrender, arrest; (2) the content of instruction that has been handed down, tradition, of teachings, commandments, narratives et al.”

This word occurs 14x in the NT (Matt. 15:2, 3, 6; Mark 7:3, 5, 8, 9, 13; 1 Cor. 11:2; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6).

*Matthew 15:2 ... 2 “Why do Your disciples ***break the *tradition** of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” (NASB95)*

*Matthew 15:3 ... 3 And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your ***tradition**?” (NASB95)*

*Matthew 15:6 ... 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your ***tradition**. (NASB95)*

*Mark 7:3 ... 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the ***traditions** of the elders; (NASB95)*

*Mark 7:5 ... 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the ***tradition** of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?” (NASB95)*

*Mark 7:8 ... 8 “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the ***tradition** of men.” (NASB95)*

*Mark 7:9 ... 9 He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your ***tradition**. (NASB95)*

*Mark 7:13 ... 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your ***tradition** which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.” (NASB95)*

*1 Corinthians 11:2 ... 2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the ***traditions**, just as I delivered them to you. (NASB95)*

*Galatians 1:14 ... 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral ***traditions**. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 2:8 ... 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the ***tradition** of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (NASB95)*

*2 Thessalonians 2:15 ... 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the ***traditions** which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. (NASB95)*

*2 Thessalonians 3:6 ... 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the ***tradition** which you received from us. (NASB95)*

Thomas defines παραδίδομι [paradidōmi] as a compound of *para* [from beside, by the side of, beside] and *didōmi* [to give] meaning “to hand over, to give or deliver over, to betray” [3860].

BDAG say it means “(1) to convey something in which one has a relatively strong personal interest, hand over, give (over), deliver, entrust; (2) to entrust for care or preservation, give over,

commend, commit; (3) to pass on to another what one knows, of oral or written tradition, hand down, pass on, transmit, relate, teach; (4) to make it possible for something to happen, allow, permit.”

Several occurrences of this root word are also relevant (Luke 1:1-4; Rom. 6:16-18; 1 Cor. 11:2; 15:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:20-21; Jude 3).

*Luke 1:1-4 ... 1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as they were ***handed *down** to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (NASB95)*

*Romans 6:16-18 ... 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were ***committed**, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (NASB95)*

*1 Corinthians 11:2 ... 2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I ***delivered** them to you. (NASB95)*

*1 Corinthians 15:3-5 ... 3 For I ***delivered** to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (NASB95)*

*2 Peter 2:20-21 ... 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment ***handed** on to them. (NASB95)*

*Jude 3 ... 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all ***handed *down** to the saints. (NASB95)*

Tradition basically refers to “that which is handed down.” There is nothing inherently wrong with traditions per se. It all depends on their source: Are they from God or man? Tradition is good if it comes from the right place (1 Cor. 11:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; 3:6).

1 Corinthians 11:1-2 ... 1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. 2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 ... 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 3:6 ... 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. (NASB95)

However, traditions of men are additions to God's law that will bring us into bondage. Exalting human ideas above the ways of God, they set aside God's commandments (Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).

Matthew 15:1-9 ... 1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.' 5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' " (NASB95)

Mark 7:1-13 ... 1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" 6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 7 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' 8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." 9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10 "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death'; 11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that." (NASB95)

According To The Basic Principles Of The World/According To The Elementary Principles Of The World

Thomas defines στοιχεῖον [stoicheion] as from the same as stoicheō [to be in rows, fig. to walk by rule], meaning “one of a row, hence a letter (of the alphabet), by ext. the elements (of knowledge)” [4747].

BDAG say it refers to “(1) basic components of something, elements; (a) of substances underlying the natural world, the basic elements from which everything in the world is made and of which it is composed; (b) of basic components of celestial constellations, heavenly bodies; (c) of things that constitute the foundation of learning, fundamental principles; (2) transcendent powers that are in control over events in this world, elements, elemental spirits.”

This word occurs 7x in the NT (Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20; Heb. 5:12; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12).

*Galatians 4:3 ... 3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the ***elemental *things** of the world. (NASB95)*

*Galatians 4:9 ... 9 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? (NASB95)*

*Colossians 2:8 ... 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the ***elementary *principles** of the world, rather than according to Christ. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 2:20 ... 20 If you have died with Christ to the ***elementary *principles** of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 5:12 ... 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the ***elementary *principles** of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (NASB95)*

*2 Peter 3:10 ... 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the ***elements** will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (NASB95)*

*2 Peter 3:12 ... 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the ***elements** will melt with intense heat! (NASB95)*

In summary, this word refers to basic components, building-blocks, foundational elements, and fundamental principles, such as the physical elements of nature; the rudiments of music (*do-re-me-fa-so-la-te-do*), the letters of the alphabet and their associated sounds (*a-e-i-o-u*), etc. Biblically speaking, it is used of:

- The Rudiments of Nature (2 Pet. 3:10, 12)

*2 Peter 3:3-13 ... 3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the ***elements** will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the ***elements** will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. (NASB95)*

The Rudiments of the Law (Gal. 4:3, 9)

*Galatians 4:1-11 ... 1 Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the ***elemental *things** of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. 8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. 9 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? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. (NASB95)*

- The Rudiments of the World (Col. 2:8, 20)

*Colossians 2:8-10 ... 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the ***elementary *principles** of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; (NASB95)*

*Colossians 2:20-23 ... 20 If you have died with Christ to the ***elementary *principles** of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. (NASB95)*

The Rudiments of the Gospel (Heb. 5:12)

*Hebrews 5:11-6:3 ... 11 Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the ***elementary *principles** of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. 1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do, if God permits. (NASB95)*

In this context, it refers to the base things of the world that appeal to carnal minds (1 John 2:15-17). Satan’s appeal remains the same: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 4:1-11).

1 John 2:15-17 ... 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB95)

Genesis 3:1-6 ... 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” 2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ” 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! 5 “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (NASB95)

Matthew 4:1-11 ... 1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” 4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall

not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ ” 5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’ ” 7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’ ” 11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. (NASB95)

So often gimmicks and worldly enticements are used by churches to increase their numbers: entertainment, food, large membership, beautiful building, etc. Only the gospel will draw people to Jesus (John 6:44-45; Rom. 1:16-17). If you draw with something else, you will draw people to something else!

John 6:44-45 ... 44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (NASB95)

Romans 1:16-17 ... 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” (NASB95)

Conclusion

These things are not authorized by Christ. They take men away from the Lord and weaken their trust in Him as the all-sufficient Savior. Any teaching that does not harmonize with divine revelation is false. In Christ you have all that you need. We find completeness in him. Do not allow yourself to be carried away with any teaching that is not according to Christ.

Let us beware of being led astray by the error of men. Hold to the gospel of Christ with unwavering loyalty, for this is the only sure and safe path (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:16; 2 John 9-11; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Matthew 28:18-20 ... 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (NASB95)

Colossians 3:16 ... 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (NASB95)

2 John 9-11 ... 9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; 11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds. (NASB95)

1 Peter 4:11 ... 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NASB95)