

**Introduction:** Verse 16 begins with "therefore," signaling an undeniable truth—one that demands attention. Why look elsewhere when Christ has already provided everything? He has transformed His followers through a spiritual circumcision—not of flesh, but of the heart. Through faith in Him, believers have been made alive, freed from the debt of sin, and victorious over every power that once ruled them.

- I. **You are no longer bound by human judgment regarding religious practices that Christ has fulfilled. 16,17 (legalism)**  
*<sup>16</sup> Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*
  - A. **Jesus makes clear how this is idolatry (placing human tradition above God's Word.** Mark 7:6-8 'You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.'

What do you do to prepare, or come into the presence of God? How do we enter the temple? They focused on external rituals and traditions, such as the washing of hands, cups, pots, and other items, rather than the true essence of worship and obedience to God. But Jesus is God. "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority." Col. 2:9,10

- B. **They make a checklist** (they keep score)

Example: Rich young ruler – "What good deed must I do to have eternal life?" Mt.19:16...all these I have kept. What do I still lack?

- C. **Paul says: Why return to slavery?**

<sup>9</sup>But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? <sup>10</sup>You observe days and months and seasons and years! <sup>11</sup>I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

- II. **Don't be misled by human efforts to create false humility and spiritual superiority through human experiences beyond knowing Christ. 18,19 (mysticism)**  
*<sup>18</sup> Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions,<sup>[d]</sup> puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, <sup>19</sup> and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*

Mysticism= Mysticism refers to the belief that individuals can achieve a direct, personal connection with the divine or spiritual realm through experiences beyond ordinary human understanding. This often involves practices such as meditation, prayer, and contemplation to attain a heightened state of spiritual awareness or enlightenment.<sup>1</sup>

- A. **Believed they could draw near to God by setting their minds on visions and veneration of angels.**

-Not direct worship, but very **close veneration** and functional **intermediary roles**.

-Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, referred to angels as **Logoi (words/reasons)** of God, mediating between God and creation. -He sometimes blurred the lines between **angels and divine attributes**, reflecting **Greek philosophical influence**.

- The **Book of Revelation** shows John being told by an angel: "Do not do that! I am a fellow servant... Worship God!" (Revelation 22:8–9)
- Suggests that **angel veneration** was real enough that it needed correction.

The Church emphasized that **only God is to be worshipped**, even as it retained belief in **angels as messengers and servants**

<sup>11</sup> Wikipedia

**B. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.**

They proclaim to be humble, yet their very words say otherwise. They are instead puffed up. If you make a show of your spirituality then you are probably not spiritual. Our focus should be on Christ, the Head and the Body of Christ (fellow believers) to keep us from this error.

**III. You are free (dead) to all these self-made religious practices. 20-23 (Ascetism)**

*<sup>20</sup> If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—<sup>21</sup> “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”<sup>22</sup> (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?<sup>23</sup> These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.*

**Ascetism** = A lifestyle characterized by abstinence from various forms of worldly pleasures, often with the aim of pursuing spiritual goals. Ascetics may practice self-discipline and self-denial, avoiding indulgence in food, drink, and other physical comforts to achieve a higher state of spiritual purity or enlightenment.<sup>2</sup>

- Self-denial of food and drink
- Have appearance of wisdom
- **Severe treatment of the body (neglect, abuse)**

Asceticism in first-century Israel manifested in several religious and cultural expressions, especially among Jewish sects reacting to the religious, social, and political climate of the time.

**Conclusion:** Simply checking boxes won't grant you entry to heaven. You cannot self-regenerate. Ephesians 2:8–9[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (ESV) For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.

How do you keep faithful to the gospel, to the truth, and not be influenced by false, man-made religion?

To have faith in Christ alone means we have received the Bible alone as our source of authority to know the one true God. We receive salvation, the forgiveness of our sins in Him alone. There are **not** many ways **only one** way to be right with God.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid