

Colossians 2:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Analysis

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. Paul warns against being defrauded (*katabrabeuetō*, καταβραβεύετω, literally "act as umpire against") by false teachers promoting "voluntary humility" (*thelotheriskeian kai thrēskeia*, θελοθηρησκεία, "self-imposed religion") and "worshipping of angels" (*thrēskeia tōn angelōn*, θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων).

"Intruding into those things which he hath not seen" (*ha heoraken embateuōn*, ἃ ἑώρακεν ἐμβατεύων) describes those claiming mystical visions or secret revelations. Despite appearing humble through asceticism and claiming unworthiness to approach God directly (hence angel mediators), such teachers are "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (*eikē physiomenos hypo tou noos tēs sarkos autou*, εἰκῇ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ)—arrogantly proud of false humility, creating spiritual elitism through mystical experiences.

Historical Context

Angel worship characterized various religious movements in Asia Minor. Jewish mysticism explored Merkabah visions ascending through angelic realms. Greek mystery religions featured divine intermediaries. The Colossian syncretism apparently combined these, teaching that angels mediated between transcendent

God and material world, requiring veneration. Paul demolishes such teaching: Christ is the exclusive mediator (1 Timothy 2:5); approaching God directly through Christ shows proper humility; seeking angelic intermediaries demonstrates pride disguised as humility.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What spiritual practices do you pursue thinking they display humility but might actually reflect pride in religious achievement?
2. How do you evaluate claims of special visions, revelations, or mystical experiences beyond Scripture?
3. Where might you overcomplicate approaching God, adding unnecessary intermediaries or techniques to simple faith in Christ?

Interlinear Text

μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβεύτω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ
no man **you** **Let** **a voluntary** **in** **humility**
G3367 G5209 G2603 G2309 G1722 G5012

καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἃ μὴ ἑώρακεν
and **worshipping** ^{G3588} **of angels** **those things which** **not** **he hath**
G2532 G2356 G32 G3739 G3361 G3708

ἐμβατεύων εἰκῇ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς
intruding into **vainly** **puffed up** **by** ^{G3588} **mind** ^{G3588} **fleshly**
G1687 G1500 G5448 G5259 G3563 G4561

αὐτοῦ
G846

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 2:8 (Parallel theme): 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.

Colossians 2:23 (Worship): Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

1 Timothy 1:7 (Parallel theme): Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

1 Timothy 4:1 (Parallel theme): Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Romans 1:25 (Worship): Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Matthew 24:24 (Parallel theme): For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Revelation 3:11 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

1 John 2:26 (Parallel theme): These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

Ephesians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.