

Colossians 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

Analysis

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. Paul transitions from positive declaration (Christ's sufficiency) to negative warning (heretical danger). "Beguile" (paralogizetai, παραλογίζεται) means deceive through false reasoning, using logic that appears sound but rests on faulty premises. "Enticing words" (pithanologia, πιθανολογία) refers to persuasive rhetoric, convincing speech that appeals to human reason and emotion.

False teachers don't appear obviously evil; they sound reasonable, sophisticated, even spiritual. Their appeal lies precisely in appearing more advanced than simple gospel preaching. Paul warns that persuasive presentation doesn't validate content—eloquence and logic can package error attractively. Believers must evaluate teaching by conformity to apostolic truth, not rhetorical skill or philosophical sophistication.

Historical Context

First-century Greco-Roman culture highly valued rhetoric and philosophical argumentation. Sophists made careers crafting persuasive speeches regardless of truth content. Mystery religions used elaborate ritual and mysterious symbolism to appear profound. Against such cultural backdrop, simple gospel proclamation seemed unsophisticated. Paul anticipates that Colossian believers might be tempted by more 'advanced' teaching clothed in intellectual respectability.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you evaluate teaching—by how persuasive and impressive it sounds, or by Scripture conformity?
2. What contemporary teachings use sophisticated language to make error sound respectable?
3. Have you been swayed by enticing words that contradicted Scripture but sounded intellectually credible?

Interlinear Text

Τοῦτο	δὲ	λέγω	ἵνα	μη	τις	ὑμᾶς	παραλογίζεται	ἐν
this	And	I say	G2443	G3361	any man	you	should beguile	with
G5124	G1161	G3004			G5100	G5209	G3884	G1722

πιθανολογία

enticing words

G4086

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

1 John 4:1 (Parallel theme): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Mark 13:22 (Parallel theme): For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24:4 (Parallel theme): And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

2 John 1:7 (Parallel theme): For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Revelation 20:8 (Parallel theme): And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Acts 20:30 (Parallel theme): Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

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

2 Timothy 3:13 (Parallel theme): But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

2 Timothy 2:16 (Parallel theme): But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.