

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Colossians 2:6-15

Sunday, February 10, 2013

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How can the study of philosophy or human traditions be harmful? How can the study of philosophy or human traditions be helpful?

As one who has a graduate degree in philosophy, and who was led away from Bible-believing Christianity through the study of philosophy (even though I was raised to believe the Bible), I know that the study of philosophy can be harmful. My study of philosophy was harmful until someone else who had studied philosophy helped answer my questions from an understanding that the Bible is true in all that it affirms. The study of philosophy and mere human traditions will never bring mental, moral, or spiritual happiness or satisfaction, for apart from believing in the Bible as the word of God, something will always be missing in a person's life. So, this dissatisfaction can either lead someone back to or to the Bible as the truth of God that one can trust, or it will lead someone to continuing to study philosophy or give up seeking the truth.

2. What are some differences between trusting in philosophy and trusting in the Scriptures?

Trusting in philosophy is trusting in the ideas of mere human beings. Trusting the ideas of mere human beings that are contrary to the teachings of the Bible will lead to sorrow and unhappiness. Trusting in the Scriptures, the Bible, is trusting in God's word to us, but a person must always be careful not to believe or follow teachings that claim to be from the Bible, but are misinterpretations of the Bible. Believers must pray for the Holy Spirit to help them and lead them into all the truth and protect them from errors.

3. How might the “elemental spirits of the universe” mislead someone or take someone captive?

The “elemental spirits of the universe” are demons that sometimes claim to be “spirit guides.” Isaiah wrote: “An oracle concerning Egypt. See, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart

of the Egyptians will melt within them. I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians, and they will fight, one against the other, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom; the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out, and I will confound their plans; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead and the ghosts and the familiar spirits" (Isaiah 19:1-3). Jesus and His disciples cast out evil spirits: "That evening they brought to him [Jesus] many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick" and "Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 8:16 and Matthew 10:1). When an elemental spirit possesses someone, they make them captives and they will mislead them and mislead those who believe them. Only the power of Jesus can free someone who is indwelt and captive to an evil spirit.

4. What are some of the ways that Jesus Christ is different from someone indwelt by an elemental spirit of the universe?

Jesus Christ was fully indwelt by all the fullness of God. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus acted in accordance with the Scriptures and fulfilled the Scriptures. Jesus always did the will of God, His Father and our Father (as believers in Jesus Christ). Those indwelt by elemental spirits are held captive and led away from God and what the Bible teaches. Someone who is indwelt by an elemental spirit does not become God or God-like.

5. As Christians, what are some of the ways that we should live differently from those who are not Christians?

Jesus Christ is our Lord and we obey Him as our Lord. We live in Him, surrounded by Him and His Spirit and His principles, so He can direct all we do and give us the power to obey God as we pray and trust in Him. We grow spiritually, mentally, and morally as His followers. We love God and others. We abound in thanksgiving to God. We do not want to follow those emotional desires (the flesh) that seek to lead us into sin and disobedience of the word of God, the Scriptures; rather, we want to follow Jesus Christ in everything. We know that God has forgiven our sins and trespasses and has given us the hope of everlasting life.