

‘COLOSSAL SAVIOR!’
(Our Great God & Savior, The Lord Jesus Christ)
Studies in Colossians

‘Rabbit Trails’

Have you ever chased a rabbit or watched a dog chase a rabbit? The trail left behind the pursuer is here, there, back and forth, all over the place, and leading nowhere in the end. All that’s left at the end of the chase is an exhausted, worn-out, frustrated ‘chaser’ with nothing at all to show for it except some calories burned and new wisdom to never do that again! In Lewis Carrol’s fable ‘*Alice In Wonderland*’ curious Alice chases a rabbit down a *rabbit hole* into a bizarre, dream-like land that is weird, sometimes scary, and seemingly impossible to escape.

In religion, many similarities in every single group, cult, or organization exist: many Alices chasing some curious meandering philosophy, theory or *brain storm*. But God’s Word is a clear, simple, ‘*straight and narrow path*’ that leads to life for all who stay *on track* with Bible truth, instead of going astray with *rabbit trail* theology into some soul-bending *rabbit-hole* philosophy or religious fantasy.

Knowing God through Christ and the Holy Scriptures leads toward what Jesus called ‘*the straight and narrow path*’ that leads to life eternal (**Matthew 7:13-14**). Sadly, most people (*even quite a few Christians*) have such *spiritual attention deficit* problems that they are easily led down religious *rabbit trails* away from God and the Bible. Then, once their foolish curiosity plunges them down the *rabbit hole* of the enemy, they rarely escape the bewildering maze of murky belief and bizarre practices now ensnaring them (**2 Peter 2:1-3**). In these *rabbit holes*, there are lots of entertaining, but bogus, religious characters: grinning Cheshire cat clergy, mad-hatter healers, usurping ‘queen of heart’ dictators, mystic caterpillar gurus, ‘mock turtle’ teachers and a many ‘mad as the March hare’ ministers. As with the characters in Carrol’s fantasy, false teachers and preachers only obscure God’s truth with *Merry Unbirthday* ministries, smoke and mirrors theology, or their *crazy croquet* ritual games that only end in tragedy for the fools who play. Those who have fallen into a religious *rabbit hole* won’t find their way out and eventually, like poor Alice, fall into an even deeper spiritual quagmire ruled by a ruthless, scary monster--the Jabberwock (Carrol’s sequel).

The horror of it all is that when it comes to spiritual things, this is no make-believe story! People who go astray into religion that isn’t biblical, Christ-centered, and discipleship focused eventually die and go down, down, down not into Wonderland, but the eternal hinterland of lost souls called *hell* to await their transfer into the Lake of Fire (**Jude 12-23**).

Born-again Christians have no need to go after religious *rabbit trails*. If what a teacher, preacher, religion or denomination says is theologically complicated, obscure about Christ, weak about living holy lifestyles, and full of cultural and/or traditional additives, believers need to run the other way, staying on the straight and narrow way that is an onward and upward venture toward God, Christ, and heaven (**Proverbs 15:24**), not down the dark hole of complication, confusion, and condemnation (**Proverbs 4:14**). No need for an imaginary unbiblical Wonderland religion; we are headed toward the heavenly homeland (**Psalms 16:11**). Learning and preparing for that demands our full attention.

~PtL

‘Treasuring Christ! – The Ultimate Adventure’
(Focusing on Christ, not chasing religious ‘rabbit trails’)
Colossians 2:11-23

Some ‘Deep Truths’ about Christ

(So, you thought receiving Jesus was so simple...)

*“**In (Christ) you were also** circumcised with the **circumcision made without hands**, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, **buried with Him in baptism** in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He has made alive together with Him**, having wiped out the **handwriting of ordinances that was against us** which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having **nailed it to the cross**. Having **disarmed principalities and powers**, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”* **2:11-15**

In bold print above are 5 things pertaining to one’s salvation. Each one helps you appreciate and love what Jesus did even more. Discuss each one for a few minutes each and share how just talking about them deepens your understanding of Christ and the salvation He has given you.

- **How does this ‘deeper understanding’ of salvation and the Savior surpass what all cults, other religions or Christian denominationalism emphasize?**
- **Learning these sorts of things is what church is supposed to be about (*Ephesians 4:11-16*).**
- **Why do you think most people today don’t want this as primary emphasis in church?**

Some ‘Detours’ from Knowing Christ

(So, you thought ‘flirting’ with other religious was no big deal...)

*“**So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ**. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from Whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.”*
2:16-19

- **Name some modern day religious groups that teach the above ‘doctrinal detours’ (also vs 21-23).**
- **What will be the consequences for those who chose these groups over a biblical church ministry?**
- **What are you to do about such groups? (*Other verses to support your position?*)**

***Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world**, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations – ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things in-deed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”* **2:20-23**

- **Why do you think there is such appeal to people regarding false religious systems and cults?**
- **Why should truly born-again believers not be attracted or curious about unbiblical religious things?**
- **What can you say to ‘professing Christians’ leaning toward involvement with a heretical group?**