

Let No Man Judge You

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In recent times, I have come across some people who have reinterpreted the passage in Colossians 2:13-17 to mean exactly the opposite of what Paul intended it to mean. According to the reinterpretation of the text, what Paul intended to tell the Colossians is:

“Do not let any man judge you for eating or drinking, or for keeping the feasts, or new moons or the Sabbath except the body of Christ”

In other words, Paul was encouraging the Colossian church to continue keeping the feasts, new moons and Sabbath.

But is this really what Paul meant? Does the context support such interpretation? What did Paul mean by the word “*Sabbatwn*”? And what does “*handwriting of ordinances*” really mean?

In order for us to correctly understand and interpret this passage, we have to stay true to the context. Let us begin with chapter one and work our way through to our questioned passage in Chapter 2.

Chapter one:

In chapter, one Paul says:

- We have redemption and forgiveness of sins in Christ (1:13).
- Everything finds its existence in Christ in whom all fullness dwell (1:16, 17)
- Through Christ the Gentiles have been reconciled to God and will be presented holy and unblamable, if they continue in the faith and be not moved from the hope of the gospel, which he says later on, is their hope of glory, namely, “Christ in you”, “*whom we preach*” he says “*that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*”. (1:20-28)

So their perfection is dependent upon them continuing in the faith and being grounded and settled and not moving away from the hope of the gospel, which is, believing in the indwelling of Christ who is the image of the invisible God (1:15) after whose image we are renewed when we are made new creatures (3:10)

So the message in chapter one is have faith and never depart from the hope of the Gospel, never doubt the indwelling of Christ for everything is found in Him, and if you have Him, you have all.

Chapter 2:

In verse one Paul says that he wants them to know “*what great conflict*” he has for them. The marginal reading says “*what great fear*”.

It is obvious Paul was worried about something in regards to this church and many others. He was worried that someone “*should beguile you with enticing words*” (2:4)

He really wanted the church to understand and acknowledge the mystery he spoke about, namely the fact that Christ is dwelling in them (2:2). This is their safety or anchor against the deceptions he is going to warn them about. It is rather obvious that the deception Paul is warning them about has to do with the way of salvation.

That is why he emphasized that their redemption and forgiveness of sin, their reconciliation to God and assurance of being presented holy is found in Christ and based on them continuing in the faith and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel Paul preaches, which is, Christ in you.

He admonishes them again to walk in Christ in the same way they received Him, that is by faith (2:6), and then warns them against the following deceptions (2:8):

Col 2:8 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.

1. Philosophy and vain deceit
2. After the traditions of men
3. After the rudiments of the world

I will only focus on the third deception “*rudiments of the world*”. This is the same phrase he used in his letter to the Galatians:

*Gal 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under **the elements of the world***

Contextually this refers to the “*tutors and governors*” (Galatians 4:2) which refers to “*schoolmaster*” (3:25) which in turn refers to “*the law*”.

The term “*elements of the world*” means “basic or elementary religious principles for the human race.” That is what the system of the law was. It was the basic or elementary religious teachings for the Jewish nation and all those who cared to join them, hence to the whole world. It taught them the way of salvation in simplistic rules, regulations and ordinances.

It is rather obvious that the Judaizers carried their false gospel to every church at that time. The Colossian church was no exception. It too had come under the Judaizers deceptions and hence Paul's letter to warn them.

He emphatically said, 'do not let any man take you away from Christ by deceiving you into accepting some vain philosophy, or traditions of men, or the works of the law. The only way to God is through Christ. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And since He is dwelling in you, you are complete in Him'

Notice what he focuses on next:

*Col 2:11 In whom also **ye are circumcised** with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*

Col 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

*Col 2:13 And you, being **dead in your sins** and the **uncircumcision of your flesh**, hath he quickened together with him, having **forgiven you all trespasses**;*

*Col 2:14 **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

He tells them "**ye are circumcised** with the circumcision made without hands".

Why is Paul bringing circumcision into his argument now? Because circumcision was the apex of "*the rudiments of the world*" or the system of the law (Old covenant). This proves that the Judaizers had reached the church at Colossi and have been infecting the believers with their false gospel of works. They have been trying to bring them "*under the law*" as was the case in the Galatian church.

Therefore, the problem at Colossi was twofold. The believers were being drawn into one of two ways:

1. After the "*Philosophy*" and "*traditions of men*" (this could refer to pagan rituals that came down through generations which later on in the chapter he points out as worshiping of angels (2:18), hence him pointing out that Jesus is the head of all the angels)
2. *After the rudiments of the world* (this refers to the legalistic Jewish converts who were teaching that unless ye are circumcised and keep the Law of Moses you will not be saved. Paul uses the same terminology "*rudiments of the world*" in the book of Galatians to refer to the law in the context of it being a false way of salvation (Galatians 4:3,9). In this context, Paul corrects this deception by telling them that they have received the real and true circumcision in Christ Jesus. Otherwise, why is Paul bringing in the circumcision in here?

With this background we come to our questioned text:

*Col 2:13 And you, being **dead** in your **sins** and the **uncircumcision** of your flesh, hath he **quicken**ed together with him, having **forgiven you all trespasses**;*

*Col 2:14 **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

Notice how he points out two problems these ex-gentiles or ex-pagans had. He says in verse 13 “*and you*” gentiles “*being dead in your **sins** and the **uncircumcision** of your flesh*”

These gentiles had two problems that alienated them from God.

1. Sins
2. Un-circumcision

Because of their sins and uncircumcision of the flesh, they were considered “*dead*”. However, after stating their two problems he gives them the true solution that is found in Christ. He says: though you were dead in your sins and uncircumcision, yet “*hath he quickened together with him*”. In Christ, you are made alive. Your problems has been dealt with.

However, the question is: How did Jesus deal with the two problems they have?

By:

1. *Forgiving you all trespasses* (this deals with the first problem of “sins”)
2. *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way.* (This deals with the second problem that separated Jews from Gentiles. Up until the cross, there was a difference between both. Unless a gentile is circumcised, he will not be accepted among God’s people. However, after the cross, God has made both of them one in Christ Jesus. The gentile no longer needs to be circumcised. In other words, God has abolished a requirement or an ordinance that was in place before. He did so by taking “*out of the way*” or away the “*handwriting of ordinances*” that was “*against us*” (us in here is referring to enmity between Jews and Gentiles), which was “*contrary to us*” or stood as an adversary between us (Jews and Gentiles)

The handwriting of ordinance at the time of the cross became a yoke of bondage. In Acts 15 when the apostles were discussing what to teach the Gentile converts, Peter said:

*Act 15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a **yoke** upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*

Paul, referring to the system of the law, said:

*Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the **yoke of bondage**.*

The “*handwriting of ordinances*” not only was separating the Jews and Gentiles, but it had also become a yoke of bondage in light of their misapplication of it and the glory of the gospel of Christ.

If the “*handwriting of ordinances*” refers to our record of sins as some interpret it to be, then where is the solution for their “*uncircumcision of the flesh*”?

We must keep in mind that circumcision was a requirement, or a decree, that God instituted in the Mosaic law. No man could change or take it away. The Jews knew that and were using it to bring Christians back under the Old Covenant. That is why I believe Paul had to state in no uncertain terms that these decrees and laws which separated between Jews and Gentiles were nailed to the cross with Jesus.

In this context he goes on to say:

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

*Col 2:17 **Which are a shadow** of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

“*Therefore*” or based on what I said “*let no man judge you inetc*”

What did Paul say that had to do with the shadows he mentioned namely (meat, drink, feasts...etc)?

Based on the point he just made in verse 14, that is, because Jesus had taken away these hand written laws that separated between us (Jews and Gentiles), do not fall for the Judaizers deception and follow the “*rudiments of the world*”.

Keep in mind the Judaizers were teaching that ‘*ye must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved*’ Acts 15: 1,5. The law of Moses included all these things mentioned in Verse 16 (*in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days*). In reply to this deception, Paul said:

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

- “*in meat, or in drink*” this refers to the meat and drink offering which Paul spoke about in Hebrews 9 saying that it was required of the people up till the cross:

Heb 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

*Heb 9:10 Which stood only in **meats and drinks**, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, **imposed on them until the time of reformation.***

These “meat or drink” offering that were performed on various dates one of which was the feasts (Leviticus 23:37), were a shadow (Colossians 2:17) that found it’s fulfillment in Christ. They pointed to Christ’s sacrifice and ministry

- *Holyday*: meaning feast days which were a shadow that met it’s fulfillment in Christ. They also pointed to Christ’s sacrifice and ministry.
- *The new moon*: literal means the beginning of the month (Numbers 10:10). It is a shadow that points to the monthly worship in heaven:

*Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit **every month**: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

- *Sabbath*: This is referring to the ceremonial Sabbaths (Leviticus 16:31, 23:24, 32, 39)

Some have argued that the word “sabbath” in this verse must be referring to the weekly Sabbath because the Greek word *Sabbaton* for Sabbath here has been translated in every other reference in the New Testament to mean the Lord's Sabbath. So according to the “only use” reasoning, consistency forces us to translate it as weekly Sabbath in this text as well.

Firstly, not every time the word *Sabbaton* is used in the New Testament has it been translated to mean Sabbath. It has been translated 9 times to mean “week”. The verse below contains both translations:

*Mat 28:1 In the end of the **sabbath**,^{G4521} as it began to dawn toward the first day of the **week**,^{G4521} came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

Moreover, “*Sabbaton*” is the only Greek word used in the New Testament to refer to “Sabbath” and “week”. There is no other Greek word used to refer to any type of Sabbath or week. The point I am trying to make is this: had there been found another Greek word in the New Testament used to refer to a ceremonial Sabbath then there would have been a valid case for “only use of the word” reasoning. But since this is the only Greek word used for Sabbath and Week, then the “only use” reasoning does not stand.

The Greek word *Sabbaton* (G4521) translated *sabbath* means a rest day or a holy day, which the ceremonial Sabbaths and the Lord's Sabbath both are, hence using the same Greek word. The Septuagint which is the Greek Old Testament also proves this as the same Greek word *Sabbaton* (G4521) which has been translated to mean weekly Sabbath is used for the Day of Atonement which is not a weekly Sabbath:

*Lev 16:31 It shall be a **sabbath of rest** unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.*

sabbata sabbatwn anapausiV auth estai umin kai tapeinwsete taV yucaV umwn nomimon aiwnion

*Lev.23:32 It shall be unto you a **sabbath of rest**, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.*

sabbata sabbatwn estai umin kai tapeinwsete taV yucaV umwn apo enathV tou mhnoV apo esperaV ewV esperaV sabbatieite ta sabbata umwn

Furthermore, the type of Sabbath under consideration is shown by the phrase “*which are a shadow of things to come*” (Col 2:17). The weekly Sabbath is not a shadow but a memorial of an event at the beginning of earth’s history (Gen 2:2-3; Exo 20:8-11). Hence, the “*Sabbaton*” in Colossians 2:16 which Paul declares to be a shadow pointing to Christ cannot refer to the weekly Sabbath of the fourth commandment, but must point to the ceremonial rest days that reached their fulfilment in Christ.

Hence the argument that the Sabbath of Colossians 2:16 is the weekly Sabbath can be easily proven to be false by:

1. Context
2. The fact that the weekly Sabbath is not a Shadow
3. The Septuagint use of the word Sabbatwn
4. The lack of any other Greek word in the New Testament to mean Sabbath whether weekly or ceremonial. Had there been another word used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer to the Ceremonial Sabbath, then there would have been a case.

As far as the writer is concerned, the argument that the Sabbath in Colossians 2:16 is the weekly Sabbath is nothing but a fallacy used by the enemy of souls to keep people away from the weekly Sabbath or to bring them into bondage to the works of the law.

The phrase “*which are a shadow*” in verse 17 is the key to understand Colossians 2:16. All the things Paul listed in Verse 16 are shadows or types. They all met their fulfilment in Christ who is the body. Notice the text:

Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

A shadow has no substance in and of itself. It is cast by something substantial, or by a body. These Jewish ceremonies are shadows cast by heavenly realities found in Christ who is the body to which these shadows are pointing.

Keep in mind Paul's purpose and mission. He was trying to warn the Colossians against false teachings one of which was "*except 'ye must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved'*" which is going back to the "*rudiments of the world*" that included all these things he mentioned in Verse 16.

Hence he was saying. Look all these things that you are hearing about "*are a shadow of things to come*" but the reality of it, or "*the body is of Christ*". Paul's argument removes the ground from beneath the feet of the Judaizing false teachers of his day.

They advocated a return to Jewish ceremonial requirements and the apostle Paul meets their arguments by emphasizing that the shadows have served their function. Now that Christ the reality has come, we have moved from the age of symbols and types, to the age of antitypes. We no longer need to keep those things that pointed to the reality we are living in. They all have been nailed to the cross.

In other words, Paul was saying: 'do not let these legalistic Jews judge or condemn you for not offering meat and drink offerings, or for not keeping the feasts (holy days), new moons and ceremonial Sabbath. All these things have been nailed to the cross because they are a shadow of things to come, but the reality or the body is Christ. (Hebrews 8:5, 10:1)

Paul brings out the same point in his letters to the Ephesians and Galatians. In fact, Paul wrote his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians at the same time (in prison) and sent them by the same person (Tychicus). It is interesting to note how they contain many similar thoughts

Notice what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 2:

*Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in **trespasses and sins**;
Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath **quickened us together with Christ**,
(by grace ye are saved;)*

He tells them that they were dead in their sins. Then he goes on to say how because of God's love they are saved by grace through faith (2:4-10). In other words, they receive the forgiveness of sin by faith in His blood.

Then he goes on to say:

*Eph 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called **Uncircumcision** by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*

Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

He reminds them how they were gentiles, uncircumcised in the flesh, without Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. In effect, it is the same two problems he mentioned to the Colossian church:

1. Sins
2. Uncircumcision.

In his letter to the Colossians the solution was:

*Col 2:13 And you, being **dead in your sins and the uncircumcision** of your flesh, hath he **quickened together with him**, having **forgiven you all trespasses**;*

*Col 2:14 **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nailing it to his cross**;*

In other words, God has raised you up with Christ, forgiven you your sins, and blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that separated between Jews and Gentiles.

And in his letter to the Ephesians the solution was:

*Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in **trespasses and sins**;*

*Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath **quickened us together with Christ**, (by grace ye are saved;)*

*Eph 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called **Uncircumcision** by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

*Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath **broken down the middle wall of partition** between us;*

*Eph 2:15 Having **abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances**; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

In other words the solution was that God has raised you together with Christ, forgiven you your sins (2:4-6), and broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. He abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances that separated between Jews and Gentiles.

He points out that there was a middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles that separated them and was considered “*the enmity*” or rather placed enmity between them. He calls it the enmity, the wall of partition, and he also calls it “*the law of commandments contained in ordinances*”. This he abolished in His flesh on the cross.

Notice the thing that was abolished in His flesh on the cross was not separating between God and man, rather it was separating between Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, this definitely cannot be sin. It is clearly “*the law of commandments in ordinances*” which was highlighted by the circumcision of the flesh.

Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Eph 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Because of what Christ did, namely forgiven them their sins and abolishing that which separated between the gentiles and God’s people, Paul concludes that they are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens.

Below is a comparison between the two letters pertaining to this point

Ephesians	Colossians
2 problems (sin and uncircumcision)	2 problems (sin and uncircumcision)
Forgiveness of sin	Forgiveness of sin
Abolished in his flesh	Blotting out
Enmity	Against us, contrary to us
Law of commandments in ordinances	Handwriting of ordinances
“...by the cross, having by it slain the enmity” Darby Vs 16	Nailing it to his cross

As you can see, the similarities are striking. If we are to take the “*handwriting of ordinances*” in Colossians to be referring to our sins then what are we to do with the “*law of commandments contained in ordinances*” in Ephesians? Remember Paul used similar terminology to refer to the same thing which if we combine both text we can define it as “*the handwritten law of commandments in ordinances*”

In both letters Paul was combating and warning against the false gospel taught by the Judaizers.

With this in mind, I cannot help but think of what Paul wrote to the Galatians:

Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

In these verses Paul was talking about when faith came, or when this new system of faith came, where we are no longer under a school master. Contextually he links this timing with “*there is neither Jew nor Greek....ye are all one in Christ*”

In other words, before this system of faith came, there was a difference between a Jew and a Greek, but now, under this new system, there is no difference. This thought harks back to what we read in Colossians and Ephesians how that at the cross something was abolished which took away the wall of partition.

The forgiveness of sin does not take away the difference between a Jew and a Gentile. One is circumcised and follows many rites and rituals, while the other isn't. Whatever it was that made the difference between them had to be taken away in order to say “*there is neither Jew nor Greek...*” Paul refers to the thing taken away as “*Handwriting of ordinances*” and “*Law of commandments contained in ordinances*”.

It definitely is not referring to the record of sin, rather to the set of laws and rules to which “*meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days*” belong to.

His point in Colossians 2:13-17 is this:

“You, Gentiles, who have been dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh must understand that in Christ, God has fixed all your problems. You are complete in Him. In Christ God forgave you your sins, and through His life and ministry, all these ordinances which were types and shadows met their fulfilment. Those shadows that

separated between us (Jews and Gentiles) are taken out of the way through the Cross of Christ. Hence, both problems that kept you apart from the house of God have been dealt with in Christ.

Because of this, ‘do not let these legalistic Jews judge you for not offering meat and drink offerings, or for not keeping the feasts, new moons and ceremonial Sabbaths. All these things have been nailed to the cross because they are a shadow of things to come, but the reality or the body is Christ.

Remember, you are complete in Him. You have the reality, do not fall for their false gospel of shadows and types.”

Having studied the issue from the bible alone, it is interesting to note that the founders of the SDA church, including the prophet (EGW), agree with our conclusion. Here is but a small sample of the many statements that could be found:

*There is a law which was abolished, which Christ "took out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Paul calls it "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." This ceremonial law, given by God through Moses, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be binding upon the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings and services were to be abolished. Paul and the other apostles laboured to show this, and resolutely withstood those Judaizing teachers who declared that Christians ought **to observe the ceremonial law**. {BEcho, April 16, 1894 par. 2}*

Lest the prophet’s words be twisted, I will share a short comment on them. Notice how she says “This *ceremonial law*, given by God through Moses, with its sacrifices and ordinances”. The ceremonial law is not limited to the sacrifices and ordinances. The ceremonial law, with its sacrifices. So the ceremonial law that was abolished contains much more than sacrifices.

Also notice how she makes the same point Paul made in Colossians. Just like Paul said that these “meats and drinks, feasts, new moons and Sabbaths” are a shadow which was “nailed to the cross” because they met the body which is Christ, so does EGW. She says that “*this Ceremonial law... was to be binding upon the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.*”

Since I am anticipating that feast keepers will point out EGW’s words “*Then all the sacrificial offerings and services were to be abolished*” to say that only the sacrificial offerings were abolished, I will say what about circumcision? It is not a part of the sacrificial offerings? Also read the very next sentence. She is talking about the

ceremonial law which earlier in the paragraph she said “This *ceremonial law*, with its sacrifices and ordinances”. Again, the ceremonial law is more than sacrifices and ordinances, it has sacrifices and ordinances in it, but it also has statutes, judgments and so forth.

Here is another statement by EGW:

“The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ “took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” Colossians 2:14.” (PP 365)

Again, same point brought out in the above statement. The ceremonial system not only pointed to the sacrifice of Christ, but also to Christ Himself and to His priesthood. The sacrifices pointed to His sacrifice. What about the other two things? The feasts pointed to more than His Sacrifice, it pointed to His priesthood and ministry as well. They are a part of the law that was nailed to the cross.

We conclude, therefore, that the "handwriting of ordinances," which was nailed to the cross of Christ, was the Levitical law. The ceremonies were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, and when that sacrifice was actually made on the cross, the types at the same time ceased. {April 22, 1886 E J Waggoner, SITI 247.1- 3}

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Here we have holy days, new moons, and the Sabbath days, which are shadows of things in the work of Christ. This shows that Paul has reference to the ceremonial ordinances which were introduced after the fall and the promise of the Messiah. The twenty-third chapter of Leviticus contains a record of the appointment of these Sabbath days. It will be noticed that they are all connected with meats and drinks (see verse 27); and, further, that they are entirely distinct from the Sabbath of the Lord (verse 38). In the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day of the week, there is nothing shadowy,-which prefigures Christ,-because it was given in Eden when man was first created, and when there was no need of a sacrifice being made. In the text in Colossians Paul has not the slightest reference to the Sabbath of the Lord. In the preceding verse he has stated that the law of types and shadows had been nailed to the cross; since it consisted only of shadows, it necessarily ceased when the substance came; and therefore Paul says

that no one need be judged for the performance or nonperformance of its provisions.” (February 17, 1887, E.J. Waggoner, SITI 103.22-23)

Another of the proofs alleged for the abrogation of the Decalogue, and consequently of the Sabbath, is Colossians ii,14-17. "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." By "the hand-writing of ordinances," is most evidently meant the ceremonial law - not the Decalogue, or the moral law. This is never characterized as "the hand-writing of ordinances." Therefore, the "blotting out," "taking away," and "nailing to the cross," spoken of, have no reference to this law, but to the Mosaic ritual. {1851 JW, BISA 16.1, 2}

“When the ceremonial law was nailed to the cross, all the Jewish festivals ceased to exist; for they were ordained by it; but the abrogation of that law could only take away those rites which it had appended to the Sabbath, leaving the original institution precisely as it came at first from its author.” (J.N. Andrews, History of the Sabbath, Chapter 8 P.54)

“The feast days, new moons and ceremonial sabbaths which as shadows were to cease at the cross, God declared that he would take away.” (Uriah Smith, The Biblical Institute, p. 139)

Solomon said: *“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 1:9*

The same mistake the Judaizers did is being done today. Notice the following statement:

*“In the days of the apostles the most foolish heresies were presented as truth. History has been and will be repeated. There will always be those who, though apparently conscientious, **will grasp at the shadow**, preferring it to the substance. They take error in the place of truth, because error is clothed with a new garment, which they think covers something wonderful. But let the covering be removed, and nothingness appears.” (RH Feb. 5, 1901)*

That is exactly what is being done today. People are holding to shadows instead of the reality. They are holding to *“days, and months, and times, and years”*, tassel wearing, beard growing and shofar blowing. All these things are but distractions that will with time draw people away from Christ. The Jews walked this path before and history testifies how they placed their trust in these outward shows and end up rejecting Christ.

May our Lord reveal Himself more fully to those who are stuck in these shadows and types.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this confusion, Paul's words come piercing through the history:

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;.... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Colossians 2: 14, 16, 17

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