


Colossians 2:11-23¹

Verses 8-10

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

 ¹¹and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹²having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.


1. In JESUS we were “circumcised”.
2. We were buried in JESUS in baptism.
3. We were raised with JESUS.

Romans 8:9

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,
if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

 ¹³When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

4. When you were in sin and without covenant:
 - a. JESUS made us alive together with Him.
 - b. JESUS forgave all of our transgressions (past, present, and future).


 ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

5. JESUS canceled the debt we owed.
6. JESUS took away the accusations against us (the law which accused us) by nailing them to a cross.

Paul says that this bond was not only against us, but contrary to us. Vincent says: "He has just said which was against us; which stood to our debt, binding us legally. This phrase enlarges on that idea, emphasizing the hostile character of the bond, as a hindrance. Compare Romans 4:15, 5:20, 1 Corinthians 15:56; Galatians 3:23. 'Law is against us, because it comes like a taskmaster, bidding us do, but neither putting the inclination into our hearts nor the power in our hands. And law is against us, because the revelation of unfulfilled duty is the accusation of the defaulter, and a revelation to him of his guilt. And law is against us, because it comes with threatenings and foretastes of penalty and pain. Thus, as standard, accuser, and avenger it is against us' (Maclaren)."-Wuest

¹ Unless otherwise noted, Bible verses are from the NKJV or NASB
© C. D. Hildebrand

"Took out of the way" is in the Greek, literally, "took out of the midst." Our Lord nailed it to the Cross. Again Vincent is helpful: "The law with its decrees was abolished in Christ's death, as if crucified with Him. It was no longer in the midst, in the foreground, as a debtor's obligation is perpetually before him, embarrassing his whole life." -Wuest

 ¹⁵When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

7. JESUS disarmed Satan and demons.

a. Too many believers today are attempting to disarm a disarmed foe.

8. JESUS made a public display of them so that we do not have to be afraid of them.

Hebrews 2:14-15

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

9. JESUS triumphed over them.

Jesus not only conquered Satan and his forces but He spoiled them. He stripped them of all their power and authority. He also made an exhibit of them. That's what the Greek word that was translated "shew" means. The phrase "triumphing over" came from the Greek word THRIAMBEUO, which means, "to make an acclamatory procession, i.e. (figuratively) to conquer or (by Hebraism) to give victory."

This Greek word was from a base that described what the Romans called "a triumphant procession" (Robertson's Word Pictures--the only other time this Greek word was used in the N.T. was 2Co 2:14). This is where the Romans would take a conquered king or general and strip him naked, tie him to a horse or chariot, cut off his big toes and thumbs, and have a victory parade. This was to show all the Roman citizens that the one who had been a threat would never cause them any more trouble. If this man had any power, he would never allow such a parade. He couldn't hold a sword anymore or do anything but hobble.

This is what God did with the devil. He totally spoiled him, and Satan is void of any power or authority to oppress us anymore. But the problem is that much of the body of Christ has missed the parade. They don't know Satan has been defeated. The church is the agent of Satan's intimidation. We must show them this parade through the pages of the Bible so they will not live in fear of a defeated foe. -AWLC

 ¹⁶Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—

10. “The allusions which follow (vv. 16-19) are to the practical and theoretical forms of the Colossian error, as in vv. 9-15; excessive ritualism, asceticism, and angelic mediation.”

Vincent Word Studies in the New Testament.

a. **These errors still exist in the church today.**

i. **Excessive ritualism:** Excessive devotion to religious law and ritual²

ii. **Asceticism:** Practicing strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline¹

iii. **Angelic mediation:** The false idea that God is still speaking to man through the mediation of angels instead of through His Son (Heb. 1)

11. **Because of all Paul has written above, especially that we are:**

- 1) **not** under the Law **nor** its consequences but under HIS AUTHORITY (Col.2:13-14), and because
- 2) HE IS GOD above all principalities and powers, thus making us
- 3) free from the devil (Col.2:15)...NO ONE is allowed to act as our judge in regard to our relationship to God (or “Christian” laws).
 - a. For these reasons don’t receive anyone’s judgment against you.
 - i. This shows that we are to willfully REJECT anyone’s judgment against us as to our right-standing with God and our relationship with Him.
 - b. What we eat and drink is no one’s business but God’s.

1 Timothy 4:1-5

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Romans 14:1-4,6b

For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. ³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴ Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. ^{6b} He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.


c. We do NOT have to observe Jewish or other festivals or Sabbaths.

Romans 14:5

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.

d. We are not to allow anyone to condemn us for what we eat or don’t eat, and yet we are to lovingly consider others as to what we eat and drink around those who are weak (Romans 12:7-23).

² Webster’s

 **17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.**

12. All the sacrifices, the feasts, the tabernacle structure, the high priestly garb, etc. are all MERE shadows of the true reality we have in Christ.
13. “Christian” laws and traditions not only distort the shadows of the Law which pointed to Christ, but also deny the reality of Christ. All religion adds the “ifs, ands, or buts” to DEMAND that you improve (or maintain) your relationship with God. The truth is you already have the substance the perfection which is in Christ. Jesus is the “real thing”, not a mere shadow.
14. The Old Covenant law was never meant to be permanent.

Hebrews 8:1-7

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. ⁴ For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵ who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” ⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

Hebrews 10:1-4

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³ But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

15. Some have foolishly said things such as, “When God saw that the Old Covenant wasn’t working, He came up with another.” This is ridiculous. The Old Covenant was never intended to be the last. It did EXACTLY what God designed it to do: To shadow Christ’s priesthood and to lead us as a tutor/school master to Christ.

Galatians 3:23-25

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

- a. We are NO LONGER UNDER THE LAW.

1 Timothy 1:8-


11

But we know that

the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for

sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

- i. Christians are “righteous”, stand justified before God by faith in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).
- ii. Non-believers are “unrighteous” because they do not believe.


 **18** *Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,*

16. The Amplified puts verse 18 this way: *Let no one defraud you by acting as an umpire and declaring you unworthy and disqualifying you for the prize, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions [he claims] he has seen, vainly puffed up by his sensuous notions and inflated by his unspiritual thoughts and fleshly conceit.*

17. In the verses 16-17 Paul is primarily addressing the false teachings of the Judaizers, now he switches his focus to Gnosticism and Asceticism (the practice of seeking “angelic visions” or strict “spiritual disciplines”).
- a. He has spent considerable space declaring who Jesus is, God Himself.
 - b. Why would anyone lower themselves to worshipping angels and supposed visions? These things only serve to puff someone up.
 - c. Why, after having received Jesus by grace through faith, would we then think we can get closer to him through fasting and other spiritual disciplines (Gal. 3:3)?
 - d. These teachers were **WITHIN THE CHURCH** in Colosse and they are in the church today. “Vainly puffed up”, these use “spiritual gifts” such as dreams, visions, prophecies, to defraud us of what is ours already. They intimidate and bully and control others (after all if they are getting dreams and visions and hearing the voice of God, better than you, they must be a little or a lot closer to God than you). They are attempting to defraud you of YOUR prize, your completeness and perfection in Christ. They do this by implying:
 - i. That they know God more than you
 - ii. That they are somehow closer to God than you
 - iii. That they can hear God’s voice better than you
 - iv. That they are more anointed than you
 - v. That they have more authority than you
 - vi. That they have more power than you
 - vii. That they have contact with angels, even have angels they call by name, and obvious you don’t
 - viii. That they’ve been caught up into the heaven’s portals, and they doubt you have
 - ix. That they can speak to you from God, even to the point of directing your life
 - e. Of course, they claim all of these things come to them because they have “pressed into God” to get them (unlike you).

- f. Gnostic teachers today (and of course, they don't call themselves "Gnostic") can easily take advantage of believers and defraud them (especially young believers who have no discernment and older believers who still believe this life is entirely up to their efforts). Obviously, if you don't have what they have, and they are the only ones who can give "it" to you, then you must submit to them or sign up for conferences, schools, seminars, etcetera to "get" what they have. Even if you do attend, you will not, of course, ever reach their heights, but at least you'll be a little "closer". Usually this is where the asceticism comes in because of course, the best way to become "spiritual" is to fast and pray, etc.
- g. **DON'T LET THESE PEOPLE DEFRAUD, BEGUILLE, FOOL YOU!!!³ DON'T BE INTIMIDATED OR BULLIED BY THEM. YOU ARE AS CLOSE TO GOD AS YOU CAN BE, DEARLY LOVED, ANOINTED, AND CAPABLE OF HEARING FROM HIM ALL DAY LONG.**
- i. Don't allow yourself to be puffed up by these people either. This often happens. They will say they see a "special anointing of God" upon you, or exalt you (and their "ministry" to you) because God has used you. Watch out for the use of flattery.
 - ii. False teachers often attempt to connect themselves to true ministries. They will compliment the true to make it look like they are in agreement and to gain credence.
 - iii. They might also make hefty contributions into ministries they want to subdue or silence, sort of like hush money!⁴
- h. While dreams and visions and prophecies can be given by God (Acts 2:17-18) if they are used to harm the body through intimidation, and puffing people up, they must be brought into order, and given NO value. Let NO MAN control you or defraud you.

- Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.
- Any dream or vision will line up perfectly with the gospel of the grace of God.
- No supposed dream, vision, or prophecy should be taken to have equal value as the written word of God.
- They will NOT deny who you are and what you have in Him.
- They will not tell you something different than what God is telling you personally.

 **19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.**


18. You grow with a growth which is from God, He began a good work in you and He will finish it. Good growth comes from having a good foundation, the foundation of Grace, the Gospel, knowing you are righteous, knowing you are loved by God.

³ If Paul were writing to the church today, he would loudly decry the junk that is going on in the name of Jesus.

⁴ We are NOT making this up.


19. When people seek after angels and visions they cease to seek after Jesus. We need to stay connected to the head and not be defrauded by those who claim to have personal angels and have visions.

20. We already have the best and the highest...Jesus Himself.

 *20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?*

21. We died in Christ to the elementary principles of the world. Why would we lower ourselves to laws and traditions, asceticism, and mysticism?

22. We have already died. There is no longer an old nature. We no longer have to crucify ourselves or die continuously (Col.3:3).

 *23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.*

23. Following laws is nothing more than SELF-righteousness.

- a. They appear to be wise.
- b. They have a self-made religion.
- c. They abase themselves.
- d. They severely treat the body.

24. None of this is of any value to keep them from indulging the flesh.

25. ALL religion and law is of NO VALUE against the flesh.