

Epistle of Paul to the Colossians IV

(Chapter 2)

How Philosophy Leads Away from God

Fred R. Coulter

We are going to have to really put on our thinking caps. Some of these things that I cover today we'll have to go back and review it in the written material. Nevertheless, I think this is critically important. We have come to the most important chapter in understanding the problems that were confronting in the New Testament Church.

Colossians 2 is really a very difficult Scripture to understand, especially for those who have never really understood the New Testament. But, when we go through and understand it the way that God wants us to, we will see that it indeed is not that difficult to understand.

So before we begin, what I want to do is rehearse, just for the record, the *14 Rules of Bible Study*, because what you are going to see is that as we go through Col. 2 and handle perhaps the most difficult Scriptures in the New Testament—the hard to understand Scriptures—you will see that we are going to literally follow all of the *14 Rules of Bible Study*.

{These can be found in a number of publications, including the Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version and *The Christian Passover* book (truthofgod.org)}.

The Fourteen Rules of Bible Study:

1. Begin with Scriptures that are easy to understand

That is why we are at this point now in Col. 2, because we began with the easy to understand Scriptures, just like the Apostle Paul did in bringing out the importance of Christ. We are going to see the importance of Christ in relationship to what is contained in the second chapter of Colossians.

2. Let the Bible interpret and prove the Bible. Don't look for what you want to prove, look for what the Bible actually proves.
3. Understand the context, the verses before and after, the chapters before and after.

Does your understanding of a particular verse harmonize with the rest of the Bible? This is what we are going to do. In the second chapter, what we are going to see is that we have to understand the chapter before and then we will understand the chapter after. So chapter two is contingent upon chapter one and chapter three is contingent upon chapters one and two.

4. Understand the original language— Hebrew or Greek. Never try to establish dogmatic doctrines or teachings by using *Strong's Concordance*. It can be helpful at times but it is extremely limited.
5. Ask: What does the Scripture clearly say?
6. Ask: What does the Scripture not say?
7. Ask: Who was the book written to?
8. Ask: Who wrote it?
9. Ask: Who said it?
10. Understand the timeframe in history when the book was written.
11. Don't bring your personal assumptions or preconceived notions into your understanding or conclusions.
12. Base your study on Scriptural knowledge that you already understand. What do you understand up to this point?
13. Do not make conclusions based on partial facts or insufficient information or the opinions and speculations of others.
14. Opinions, regardless of how strongly you feel about them, don't necessarily count. Scripture must be your guide and standard.

Now, what I am going to do so that we can get a complete overview of Col. 2, I am going to read all the way through it in the *King James*. And then we will come back and we will look at two sections of difficult Scripture to understand it. Then we will come back and we will see how the overall chapter two was structured and what we can understand out of it.

Colossians 2:1 (*KJV*): “For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet, am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ” (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk you in Him: Rooted

and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 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. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (vs 6-12).

Verse 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; 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; *and* having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 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. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (vs 13-19).

Verse 20: “Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh” (vs 20-23).

The reason that I read it all the way through was so that we could get the flow of what Paul wrote about here in Col.2. What we are going to do is look at the two sections of difficult Scriptures first. Let’s come to Col. 2:13, because 13 and 14 are very, very difficult, because v 14 is commonly taught by the Protestants that this is the section of Scripture that says that God nailed the Ten Commandments to the cross; because it does say “...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...”

We are going to study this verse first and then we are going to see what it really is telling us and we are going to see very clearly that ***the laws and commandments of God were never nailed to the cross*** whatsoever, under any circumstances. Let’s understand some things here that we need to concerning the Laws of God and the grace of God, and understand who establishes righteousness and so forth. Rom. 6 is a tremendous verse, which defends the laws and commandments of God, and also defends grace.

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say?... [to the grace of God] ...Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?” What is sin? A very basic Scripture, and this is then how we understand, how we are able to come to a proper knowledge and understanding of Scripture. What is sin? *Sin is the transgression of the law (KJV)*.

1-John 3:4: “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.”

What does it say the wages of sin is? Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin *is* death...”

So, Paul then answers the question in v 2: “MAY IT NEVER BE!...” It is interesting in the Greek, it doesn’t mean *God forbid (KJV)*, it is even stronger than that. He says; “MAY IT NEVER BE!...” That is from the point of view and understanding that this is not even a consideration whatsoever, it’s not a matter of God preventing it by forbidding it, it is completely unthinkable!

Verse 2: “MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?”

So, if you are living in sin, you are *transgressing the Law*. What does the Bible teach us concerning the laws and commandments of God? Right here he tells us very clearly how we are to keep them:

Romans 7:6: “But now we have been released from the law... [that doesn’t mean from keeping it, but that means of the consequences of sin] ...because we have died *to that* in which we were held... [because ‘the wages of sin is death’] ...so that we might serve in newness of *the* spirit, and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter.... [Then Paul asks]: ...What then shall we say? *Is* the Law sin?...” (vs 6-7). If the Law were sin, then that is what would have to be nailed to the cross.

But Paul again says: “...MAY IT NEVER BE!... [then he goes on to explain something very, very important here]: ...But I had not known sin except through the Law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the Law said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, having grasped

an opportunity by the commandment... [because we know that by the Law is the knowledge of sin] ...worked out within me every *kind of lust...*" (vs 7-8).

In other words, he understood the gravity of sin, the origin of sin; that it *begins in the mind*. And later he shows that he understood the *law of sin and death*, which was in his members.

"...because apart from law, sin was dead" (v 8). In other words, there can be no sin without law.

Romans 4:15: "For the Law works out wrath; **because where no law is, there is no transgression.**" We will come to that in the conclusion, but just think on this for a minute: *If there is no Law, there is no sin, if there is no sin, then Christ died in vain because there are no sinners, so therefore, if He died for sin, then He died in vain!* That's taking their conclusion to the ultimate extreme. In no way is Paul saying that there is no Law, what he is saying, is *how the Law works*.

Romans 7:9: "For I was once alive without law; but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." How did Paul die? Did he die physically? *No!* If he did, he wouldn't be able to write this. ***He died spiritually!***

Verse 10: "And the commandment, which was meant to result in life, was found to be unto death for me; because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore, the Law is indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good" (vs 10-12).

Now let's look at a couple of other Scriptures here, showing how Paul died. This is how we all die. We die the death of Christ, conjoined together with Him, in baptism. This tells us very clearly why it is not possible to have a proper baptism with sprinkling. Did you ever try to bury a corpse by taking a little dust and sprinkling over the top of it? That is why we are put into the water, full immersion baptism. Another reason is that it is literally the closest thing we can come to that is death and still live. If we were literally held under the water we would die; we would drown. The use of water is also very important because it is symbolic of God's Holy Spirit, as we find in John 7.

- it also purifies
- it also cleanses
- it also then gives us the symbolic cleansing of our sins

and when we raise out of that watery grave, we are to walk in newness of life. So, let's find that right here:

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the dead* by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His resurrection*" (vs 1-5).

That is when we will be *truly born again*. I want you to remember v 6 in relationship to Col. 2:13-14.

Verse 6: "Knowing this, that **our old man was co-crucified with Him** in order that the body of sin might be destroyed... [What is to be destroyed? *Sin*, not righteousness. *Sin is the opposite of righteousness.*] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin"—which then is very clear that you should not be transgressing the commandments of God.

Verse 7: "Because the one who has died to sin... [that is through this *operation of baptism*, and that is how Paul died] ...has been justified from sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live** with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the dead*, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 6-11).

If something is nailed to a cross and dies, what is it that was nailed to the cross? Well, we'll find out here as we go along.

Verse 12: "Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof." That means, don't let sin have dominion over you as it had dominion over you before you were converted. Don't let sin rule and reign in your life. What are we to let rule and reign in our lives? ***Christ!*** Not sin! ***Christ!*** Let's see how he amplifies that:

Verse 13: "Likewise, do not yield your members... [the members of your body] ...as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the dead*, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not

under law, but under grace? MAY IT NEVER BE!” (vs 13-15).

That in itself is a difficult verse, but it really means this: *Because you are not under law for justification, but under grace for justification, therefore you are not to let sin reign in your mortal body.* You are not to continue in sin that grace may abound.

Verse 15 makes it very clear: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? MAY IT NEVER BE! Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (vs 15-16).

There is the whole overall picture concerning the commandments of God, concerning the laws of God, concerning sin, grace and righteousness.

Now let’s go ahead and look at some other Scriptures concerning *righteousness*; and we’ll find all of this in Psa. 119—which you might make note of is the Psalm, which shows the complete, converted attitude toward the laws and commandments of God. The whole Psalm is just an absolutely, wonderful Psalm. For your information, you come back to the first part of Psalm 119 and you will see at the top of each section that it lists every one of the letters of the Hebrew language, 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is *alpha* and then *beth*, *gimel*, *daleth*, all the way down through the rest of them there. Let’s just look at the first section here of Psa. 119 and then we will look at several other verses.

Psalm 119:1: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep His testimonies and who seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways. You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!” (vs 1-5).

You will notice here that nearly the same conflict existed in David with this Psalm that existed in Paul, when he said, ‘Oh, wretched man that I am, who is going to deliver me from the body of this death?’

Verse 6: “Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Your commandments. I will praise You with uprightness of heart when I have learned Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes; O forsake me not utterly” (vs 6-8).

We will see how this ties in with some of the words of Jesus, v 142: “Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your Law is the Truth.”

Verse 126: “It is time for the LORD to work, for they have made void Your Law. Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold. Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way” (vs 126-128).

That shows the whole overall attitude. We need to ask ourselves; do we also consider every precept of God? Regardless of whether it is a law or commandment, regardless of what it is:

- concerning His grace
- concerning His love
- concerning faith
- concerning what He has given us in the way of His Word and Truth
- concerning what He has given us in the way concerning His Spirit
- concerning what He has given us in the way concerning understanding

—that we consider all of these things right.

Verse 151: “You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are Truth.” We will put this together with a couple of other Scriptures.

Verse 160: “Your Word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever.”

Verse 172: “My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness. Let Your hand help me, for I have chosen Your precepts. I have longed for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight” (vs 172-174).

- since the commandments are Truth
- since the Law is Truth
- since all of His precepts are true from the beginning

this is how we are sanctified; we are not sanctified in law-breaking. So therefore, we can conclude that, since we are sanctified in righteousness and we cannot be living in sin, we are sanctified in Truth, and all of God’s ways are Truth and Truth endures forever. Therefore, ***the commandments of God could never have been nailed to the cross.*** We will reinforce this just a little bit more as we are going along.

John 17:17: “Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth.” What did Jesus say of Himself?

There are several things here that really contains a lot for us in our whole, overall approach; John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life...’” Jesus is *the Truth*. **If**:

- the Laws of God are true
- the commandments of God are true
- His Word is true
- all His precepts are true

and Jesus Christ Who is the Word of God personifies every bit of that:

- He is the Truth

then we certainly cannot do away with the commandments of God. God certainly is not going to nail them to a cross. No one went out there and took the two tablets of the Ten Commandments out of the Ark of the Covenant and ran over to the crucifixion stake or cross of Jesus and nailed it up there along with Him and said, ‘Hooray, we have nailed the Ten Commandments to the cross.’ That is a *carnal minded approach* to the Laws of God.

Again, we are going to review some very basic things that we already know. But we need to really reinforce it and understand it deeply.

Verse 15 “If you love Me, keep **the** commandments—**namely, My** commandments.” In the Greek this is most emphatic. ‘Your Word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever.’

Then He gives, v 17: “...the Spirit of Truth... [v 21]: “The one who has My commandments...” These are the words of Christ. These were His words the night before He was crucified. If He were going to nail—or have God the Father nail alongside with Him—the commandments of God, He would have told His disciples **that very night**, that when He died in the crucifixion, the commandments of God would also be nailed to that cross. *But He didn’t!*

Verse 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me... [An ongoing thing. Your love to God is reinforced and expressed by keeping the commandments of God.] ...and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.”

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word....’” We are not to just keep the commandments, we are to keep **all** the words that Jesus brought.

“...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words...” (vs 23-24). Think of that for a minute! We

have the commandments; we have the words; and now we have the sayings, whatever Jesus said. That makes it far more profound!

Now notice the next sentence, this is very important to understand because, if you ever are talking to someone who believes that the Ten Commandments have been nailed to the cross, go ahead and go through the things like I have here and then ask him: Do you follow God the Father? He will probably say: ‘Oh yes, indeed, I follow God the Father, that’s the One I want to follow.’ Do you follow Jesus Christ? ‘Oh yes that’s the One I want to follow.’ Then you go through John 14

Verse 24: ...and the Word... [the whole Message of Christ] ...that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.” That is something to think on! Every word that Christ spoke, every commandment that He gave **was Truth**, was righteousness from God the Father. So, if you believe those things, that they came from God the Father. Therefore, it gets back to the whole principle of your relationship with God that if you love Him, you will keep His commandments.

Let’s see some other verses that also reinforce this; and we will see what the Apostle John wrote concerning these things. This is why you need to understand the difficult Scriptures with those that are easy to understand.

1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him... [so there are certain things that we are supposed to know and understand] ...if we keep His commandments.” There it is. ***Our status with knowing God is contingent upon keeping His commandments!***

So, any Protestant needs to be asked, ‘Do you know the Lord?’ That is one of their favorite sayings. They come up to you and say, ‘Brother, do you know the Lord?’ This is how we know the Lord because, if anyone says he knows Him, *it is only going to be contingent upon keeping His commandments!*

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth...” —which is:

- the Word of God
- Christ in him
- the commandments of God
- the statutes of God
- the judgments of God
- the grace of God

“...is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we

are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked” (vs 4-6).

Did Jesus ever transgress one of the commandments of God? *NO!* In fact, one of the first teachings of Jesus Christ, as we know He clearly said, ‘Don’t even think about it, don’t even let it enter into your mind that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets’ (Matt. 5:17)—He didn’t! He came to fulfill!

1-John 5:17: “All unrighteousness is sin...”—very clear, without a doubt.

Let’s consider the following, and then we will go back and understand Col. 2:13-14:

1. If the laws and commandments of God were only until Christ and they were nailed to the cross at the crucifixion, then there would not have been any sin, because ***the laws and commandments of God define what sin is.*** If they were abolished, there is no sin. Where there is no law, there is no sin. If the laws and commandments of God were truly nailed to the cross at the crucifixion of Christ there would be no sin.
2. Consequently, if there has been no sin since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ then there are no sinners; hence sinners are not sinners and there is no need for repentance nor forgiveness of sin.

So, what the Protestants have done in this, they have actually boxed themselves into a corner where they have no solution. Because they have just trotted through the Bible and picked out a very difficult Scripture and have made outrageous, lying claims about it, which are not true.

3. Furthermore, if there have been no sinners since the death of Jesus Christ—because the laws and commandments of God, which defines sin have been abolished—then no one has need of a Savior. You don’t need a Savior. And because no Savior is needed, Jesus Christ’s perfect life and death were in vain.

So, that is how you take the *illogic* of human reasoning and bring it to its ultimate conclusion and show that that is folly.

There are a couple of other Scriptures, which are important for us to know, which are these:

- 1) Not everyone that says to Me, Lord, Lord is going to enter into the Kingdom of

Heaven, but the one who is doing the will of My Father.

Then we know the verses after that says that when they make various claims about using the name of Jesus, about casting out demons, about doing many wonderful works, He is going to tell them:

- 2) I never knew you, depart from Me, you that work iniquity or lawlessness.

Then He also said in Matthew 25:41: “Then shall He also say to those on *the* left, ‘Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Let’s go back and understand what is the true meaning of Colossians 2:13-14. If you have a difficult Scripture you look at the verses before and after.

Colossians 2:11: “In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision... [*spiritual* circumcision of the heart and mind] ...not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”

You are putting off sin. You are not getting rid of the commandments of God, you are getting rid of the sin, because you have transgressed the commandments of God and now you need ‘the circumcision of Christ,’ which is of the heart. How is that done?

Verse 12: “having been buried with Him in baptism... [we already saw what it meant to be baptized in Christ in the watery grave] ...by which you have also been raised with *Him*... [as though resurrected from the dead] ... through the inner working of God... [you now believe] ...Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins... [for the wages of sin is death] ...and in the uncircumcision of your flesh...” (vs 12-13).

Eph. 2 ties right in with it, when it talks about you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he is talking about their spiritual condition before God, prior to baptism.

Ephesians 2:1 (KJV): “And you *has* He quickened...”—to be made alive spiritually.

(FV): “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past... [before their calling and conversion] ...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even

as the rest of the world. But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, has made us alive together with Christ. (For you have been saved by grace.)” (vs 1-5).

Let’s go back to Colossians 2:13—and I am using the *King James*, so we can understand it in the *King James* and I am doing this, lest someone says, ‘Well the only way you understand it is by reading your *Amplified Translation*.’ The *Amplified Translation* is an amplification that has been made *after* the understanding.

Colossians 2:13 (KJV): “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.... [v 14 keys on vs 12 & 13]: ...Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us” (vs 13-14). Here is where they say that He ‘blotted out’ those ordinances of God—but this is not so.

The handwriting of ordinances were not written by the hand of God, they were written by the *hand of men*. And these handwritings of ordinances were in a sense what could be called the *note of debt, which a sinner has before God*. The *note of debt* or *the record of our debt* of our sins has been **blotted out**. Those ordinances and the sins were caused by *the commandments of men!*

He gives us the answer right in the chapter. We are talking about being dead in Christ, dead from the rudiments of the world. So, vs 12 & 13 connect directly with:

Verse 20: “Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world, why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*? *They say*, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’ The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (vs 20-22).

So, the handwriting of ordinances, which is symbolic of our sins that we committed, were actually caused by following the pagan religion, which they were adhering to through philosophy. So, their very way of life *caused* the handwriting of ordinances or the *note of our debt*, which was caused by obeying the doctrines and the commandments and ordinances of men.

Verse 14, again: “He has blotted out the note of debt against us...” Sin is against us! The commandments of God are *never* against us. The commandments of God are there to define what sin

is so we may repent of it, that we may change, that we may turn, that we may go the other way.

“...with the decrees of our sins, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross” (v 14). What was Christ on that cross? *He represented sin, the sin offering of God!*

We will see that clearly defined for us, 2-Corinthians 5:21: “For He made Him [Christ] Who knew no sin to be sin for us...” That’s a tremendous thing to contemplate, brethren. That the righteous God, Holy and perfectly righteous, took upon Himself the human sinful nature, and yet, lived perfectly in the flesh, overcoming human nature, so that when He was nailed to the cross, **He represented us!** He represented sin because He took upon Him all the sins of the whole world.

“...Who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him” (v 21).

Now let’s go to 1-Peter, the second chapter, a very important and profound verse. When we understand what was nailed to the cross, literally there were two things nailed to the cross:

1. Jesus Christ
2. A sign, which was written, which said that He was the King of the Jews

Nothing else was nailed to the cross. The Ten Commandments weren’t nailed to the cross. The statutes and judgments of God were not nailed to the cross. **All sin was nailed to the cross**. It includes all the sins that men do, which are caused by their own self-righteousness and their own religions, pagan or otherwise. It includes the sins of every thought of every human individual, which causes them to sin, because Jesus Christ had in His body the *law of sin and death* so that He could carry our sins to that cross.

1-Peter 2:21: “For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us... [He was sin for us; He suffered for us.] ...leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps; Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; *when* suffering, He threatened not, but committed *Himself* to Him Who judges righteously; **Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree...**” (vs 21-23).

Now *that* also constituted the handwriting of ordinances, which was contrary to us because it was the *note of the debt* of our sins. Didn’t Jesus Christ say that everyone is going to give an account of even every idle word that he speaks? Everyone is going to give an account of himself before God? *Yes!* We

need to have our old self, our old sins, our entire life, as it were—which constitutes sins—nailed to the cross with Christ; and that’s why we have baptism.

Verse 24: “Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree, so that we, being dead to sins... [the same thing that Paul wrote, same thing that John wrote] ...may live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed.”

Col. 2:13-14 does not, in any way, mean that the commandments of God were nailed to the cross. The only two things nailed to the cross were:

1. Jesus Christ, Who represented the sins of all mankind, collectively and individually, as applied upon repentance and baptism.
2. The sign which said; ‘This is the King of the Jews.’

Colossians 2:15 (KJV): “*And having spoiled principalities and powers... [that is of Satan, of the kings of the earth and of the demons] ...He made a show of them openly... [in other words, this was done publicly; and you might even say notoriously; and as the Apostle Paul said, it was not done in a corner] ...triumphing over them.... [that is the principalities, Satan, the powers, the kings of the earth] ...in it*”—which then is the crucifixion.

Now we are ready to understand Colossians 2:16 (FV): “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the Body of Christ” (vs 16-17).

Let’s begin with the very basic understanding here, and let’s first of all ask what it **does not say**. Let’s look at that first sentence again.

1. The first sentence does not say that a believer does not have to obey these things. It doesn’t say that we don’t have to observe these things; *not in any way*.
2. It doesn’t say that these were abolished and no longer are required to be observed.

What does it say? The first sentence says, v 16: “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you...” What does it mean to let no man judge you? *Simple, just what it says!* When someone judges you, they are judging your behavior. If they are judging your behavior, you are doing it. What is most important here in understanding this is that we have a whole congregation that was not Jewish. Colossi and the Colossians were all Gentiles.

Colossians 1:27—Paul was making “...known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Colossians 2:13: “For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh...” If these people, being former pagan converts, and as we are going to see, bothered by their former philosophical, religious teachers, they were the ones who were judging them because they were keeping the things that Paul listed here.

Verse 16, you kind of lose an emphasis here in the *King James*: “Let no man therefore judge you...” But the *therefore* in the Greek is most emphatic and really should be

(FV): “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the Body of Christ” (vs 16-17).

One way of understanding that is this: That you are to not let any man—those not within the Church—judge you concerning your observing of these things, but the Body of Christ, which is the Church. That is a correct understanding, but it is amplified even more than that when we understand the whole thing.

What we have is this: We have, clearly told us that in eating, which is in meat or in drinking, which is in drink or in respect of a Holy Day or of the new moon or of the Sabbath ‘which are a shadow of things to come.’ These foreshadow what God is doing as compared to the philosophical traditions of men and the commandments of men; and those were the ones who were judging what they were doing.

Now let’s go to the *Amplified Translation* of it and then we will come back and we will see the whole structure of Col. 2 and how importantly this fits in.

Colossians 2:16—in the light of all that has been written up to this point: “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you... [calling you into account, or assuming censorial power over you] ...in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths”—plural, Sabbaths, not Sabbath days. That is all right for a translation, that is correct, but Sabbaths showing that it is in the plural on an on-going basis.

Verse 17: “Which are a foreshadow... [they foretell] ...of the things that are coming, but... [actually a foretaste of the coming events in God’s plan, but the meaning and reality of observing these things is found]: ...in the Body of Christ” (vs 16-17)—which is the Church.

- Do you not, in your experience, understand more what God is doing by keeping these things, which foreshadow

and portray what God is working out in His plan? *Yes!*

- Did we not, at the Feast of Tabernacles, feel that so tremendously and understand it even more? *Yes!*
- Do we not even understand the sacrifice of Jesus Christ even more every year when we keep the Passover? *Yes!*
- Do we not respect and love God, when we follow His laws concerning health, clean and unclean meats; and of course, in drinking that either we drink in moderation vs those who drink not at all or we don't drink to excess vs those who are drunkard? And some people call us into account of that.

In other words, since no man is to judge us, **who is to judge us?** *Jesus Christ, the Word of God.* Even the Apostle Paul says, 'I judge no man.' Why, because we are all going to come before the judgment seat of God.

Now let's go back and let's look at how the whole chapter of Col. 2 is put together and it's really something! When you get into these things and understand them, it is really quite fantastic! Now we're going to see that there is a pattern in which these things have been written. So, you might put this A & B:

- 'A' has to do with the things of God
- 'B' has to do with the things of men

We will continue in the *Favorite Version*:

A: Having to do with God. Colossians 2:2: "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of **the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ**; in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vs 2-3).

Notice what that is telling us: "...**the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ...**"—then which is the full comprehension and understanding of God's plan. Everything that there is to know about God and about eternal life is found in *the Father and Christ*. Notice what is absolutely explicitly missing here.

Can you guess what it is? ***There is no reference to the Holy Spirit as a person!*** Now, ***if*** the Holy Spirit were part of the mystery of God, and ***if*** the Apostle Paul truly taught the trinity, and the Holy Spirit as being a person, then he should have put it here. Its absence is profoundly strong in showing that the pagan doctrine of the trinity ***is not true***, because we are going to be talking about philosophy, as we will see in v 8.

B: Referring to men: what men do or what men say or what they want to do or what they want to say or how they are coming to you in a religious sense.

Verse 4: "Now, this I say so that no one may **deceive** you by persuasive speech"—*to deceive and with enticing or persuasive words*; and as we could say *blessedly true sounding lies*. Because there are blessedly true sounding lies but they are lies. So, he's warning against men again.

Now, when you tie that in with v 16: "Therefore, do not allow anyone..." Then men were trying to **deceive** them out of keeping the things in v 16.

"...so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech" (v 4).

Let's read those in the ***Amplified Version***, Colossians 2:1: "Because I want you to know and understand what a great burden I have for you, and for those in Laodicea also, even as many as have not had the opportunity to see me face-to-face, and have not personally known me; that their hearts and minds may be encouraged, being united, knit together and interwoven in godly, divine love; and that this may expand into all spiritual riches and abundant blessings of the full assurance of understanding, which is the foundation and which also expands into the knowledge and comprehension of the revelation of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, the Savior; in Whom are embodied all (yes, He truly is the personification of all) the treasures, the riches and the wealth of spiritual wisdom and comprehension, and the knowledge and understanding [of God]. And these things I am saying, in order that no one may ever entice you with beguiling and deceitful words by persuasive and superficially logical speeches" (vs 1-4).

Okay, so I amplified it to also make it relevant as to what is happening when people are confronted with the problems and difficulties of men.

Now let's come back to the *Favorite Version*, Colossians 2:5: "For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet, I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

That is just a spiritual way of saying that with the Spirit of God, with your joy and steadfastness, with the report that he heard back there in v 1 that he was with them spiritually.

A: Pertaining to God, to Christ and His way: v 6: "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus

the Lord, be walking in Him..." We are going to see that vs v 8.

Verse 7: "Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in **the** faith, exactly **as you were taught**, abounding in it with thanksgiving." Notice what he stresses here. Let's put that together with vs 2-3 about all the treasures being hid in Christ and God the Father.

So therefore, v 6: "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him." How are we to walk? *To walk as we saw there in 1-John 2:4-6: 'even as He walked.'* When it talks about *walk*, it means *be conducting your life*, as you are *living*, as you are *walking the path of life*, "...in Him [Christ]."

Now who are we to be rooted and grounded in? Verse 7: 'Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith...' [not by some half-cocked ideas, not by theories, not by deceit of men, but] ...exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

'B'—vs 4 & 8 tie together; v 8: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive **through philosophy and vain deceit...**" From *all the riches of Christ, from walking in Christ, from being rooted and established and built up in Christ*. And 'to spoil' means *to hunt you down as a man hunts down an animal to kill*.

There we have philosophy, we have had some great encounters with philosophy. And few people realize that philosophy really is the pagan religion of this world; the whole structure and order of how men think. The whole basis of our civilization, is based upon the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, which he calls "...vain deceit..."—*empty, futile*, that this kind of enticing through philosophy and lying with persuasive words is "...vain deceit..."

"...according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world... [which then are according to the demonic spirits of this world] ...**and not according to Christ**" (v 8). So this is really a very powerful warning! "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive..."

Amplified Version—let's see how I have brought out the meaning of it here, v 6: "In the light of this, as you have received and acknowledged Jesus Christ, the Lord and Master, be walking, conducting and regulating your life in and through Him; Having been rooted, grounded and founded in Him, and are now being spiritually built up and edified (for the development of Christian character; in and through Him)... [because the rest of the Bible

teaches that.] ...and for you to be strengthened, established and confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding and progressing more and more in this faith with thanksgiving and joyful gratitude. Be alert and be on guard, lest there be anyone seeking to make a prey of you (hunting you down, so as to carry you away from the truth, to destroy you spiritually) by the means of philosophy and false teachings, which are empty deceits and tricky deceptions, according to the elemental (demonic) spirits of the world and society, and not according to Christ"(vs 6-8).

What I want you to do when reading and studying this, there is this comparison continually going on through Col. 2. He just gave a tremendous and great warning. Let's analyze this again:

- vs 2-3 reaffirm our fullness in Christ; then he gives a warning
- v 4: "...lest any man beguile you with enticing words."
- vs 6-7, showing our fullness and completeness in Christ, to follow what we have been taught
- v 8: "...beware lest any man spoil you.'

Verses 9-10—this is really tremendously important because we come all the way from v 9 all the way again down to v 16 where it again talks about men.

Verse 9, he says: "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily..." Why is that an important statement? *Because philosophy and the religions of this world say that you must progress through various stages of enlightenment*; and, of course, based on this philosophy we have everything that we have such as in Masonry, in religious orders and so forth, that you progress by rank and enlightenment.

Part of the philosophy of this also, which we find today very evident, that Jesus Christ was just a prophet, He was not Divine, He was not of God and He was like Mohammed, He was like Buddha or He was like the one we have today Lord Matria, or He was like the Dalai Lama of the Buddhist religion today, because all of these men through philosophy have progressed to what they consider the eighth level of divinity. And the only way you can come to complete divinity through their philosophical structure is to reach the ninth level.

So, Paul was saying here, **no!** Christ is the fullness of the Godhead, which means Divinity, bodily, the full Divine bodily manifestation of God.

Verse 10: "And you are complete in Him... [which means that you do not need philosophy because your completeness is in Christ] ...which is

the Head of all principality and power.... [you do not have to worry about these demonic spirits and rudiments of the world because Christ is over all of them] ...In Whom [Christ] you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.”

Rom. 2—I want to point out that we have no conflict between the circumcision/uncircumcision in the book of Colossians as we do in Ephesians and in Romans. The Apostle Paul brings out some really important things here:

Romans 2:25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* Law; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the* Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.” To the Jews, who were punctilious in their circumcision, this was just really a fist in the face. It was absolutely unthinkable for anyone who was a Jew to call another Jew *uncircumcised*. This is horrendous! This is anti-Semitic! This is really a powerful statement.

Then he does this, v 26: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with *the* letter and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of *the* Law?” (vs 26-27). Those are pretty powerful words! Now you know:

- why the Jews were after Paul
- why they wanted to kill him
- why they wanted to destroy him
- why they wanted to stop the Gospel

Then he makes this profound statement, v 28: “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit and not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 28-29).

When he is talking to the Gentiles back here in Col. 2, when he says that they were dead, that they had the circumcision made without hands in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. That is, brethren, ***the circumcision of the heart***. This was even known in the Old Testament, this was also a prophecy, a command of God. We realize that what Paul was teaching was founded in the Scriptures before he began teaching it, and it was amplified and expanded by Jesus Christ. We find this tied right together with how our lives need to be with Christ.

Deuteronomy 10:12: “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways...”

What I want you to understand, as we are reading this, brethren, is how this is almost identical to what we find in the New Testament, because the Word of God is consistent throughout, from one end of the Bible to the other.

“...and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good?” (vs 12-13).

All the laws and commandments of God were for our good and ***are for our good***. It is the breaking of them, the transgressing of them, which is not for our good.

Verse 14: “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today” (vs 14-15). It is the same with us in being called into the Church today:

- God *called* us!
- God *loved* us!
- God *delighted* in us!
- God *brought us to repentance!*
- God *brought us to baptism!*
- God *gave us His Holy Spirit!*

Here is the spiritual circumcision, which is done through Christ, v 16: “Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked.” So, this is the circumcision ‘made without hands,’ which is the circumcision of Christ, which is the putting away of the body of the sins of the flesh, ***because that takes away the power and control of sin to rule in our lives.***

We still have to fight *the law of sin and death*, that is true, without a doubt; no question of that. But ***it is God’s Spirit, which convicts us of the sin and of the difficulties and to lead us to repentance!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible. in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scripture References:

- 1) Colossians 2:1-23
- 2) Romans 6:1
- 3) 1 John 3:4
- 4) Romans 6:23, 2
- 5) Romans 7:6-8
- 6) Romans 4:15
- 7) Romans 7:9-12

- 8) Romans 6:1-16
- 9) Psalm 119:1-8, 142, 126-128, 151, 160, 172-174
- 10) John 17:17
- 11) John 14:6, 15, 17, 21, 23-24
- 12) 1 John 2:3-6
- 13) 1 John 5:17
- 14) Matthew 25:41
- 15) Colossians 2:11-13
- 16) Ephesians 2:1-5
- 17) Colossians 2:13-14, 20, 14
- 18) 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 19) 1 Peter 2:21-24
- 20) Colossians 2:15-17
- 21) Colossians 1:27
- 22) Colossians 2:13, 16-17, 2-10
- 23) Romans 2:25-29
- 24) Deuteronomy 10:12-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 7
- Matthew 5:17-18

Also referenced:

- **Booklet:** *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians, An Inspirational Study; A New Expanded-Amplified Translation* by Fred R. Coulter
- **Book:** *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

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