

What Was Nailed to the Cross In Colossians 2?

New Discovery Series

by Elder John VanDenburgh

Welcome to tape number seven of the New Discoveries from Old Manuscripts series. The purpose of this tape is to prepare us for a future confrontation over problems with Colossians 2 verses 14 through 17. Problems that are sure to come your way.

These are the main verses of Scripture used, by most denominations, to actually convince Christianity that the laws of God are no more: not only the Ten Commandments, but the entire Torah. In fact, it seems they make out the apostle Paul to be a little worse than the antichrist of Daniel 7. For the antichrist there, you know, just changed the laws. If someone changes something, well, perhaps someone will come later and change it back. But, they say Paul didn't change — no, he eliminated. That's a deeper problem.

The question is, do these verses really do away with God's laws? We must look to see. The verses in question... The first one is verse 14, where it reads:

“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.”

Verses 15 and 16:

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 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.”

Now, it's true that Sabbath days are a part of the Ten Commandments and come along every week. But, the drinks, the meats, the holy days, the new moons: these are not every week. They're listed among the statutes. The question is, does Paul do away with all of these things or do they remain as shadows of things yet to come? To prove or disprove the continuation of Heaven's commandments, statutes, and judgments, is a very necessary thing for us to investigate. So, we will investigate and we will look at the context to do it.

Actually, there were two group of folk: factions, as it were, in the church. First, the good loyal church members: many were recent converts. This is a group that Paul wants to encourage. The second group are the troublemakers. They're the ones that really had the upper hand and Paul wanted to put them down. The troublemakers are referred to as “any man” or “no man” in verses 4, 8 and 18.

Two Groups

1. Good loyal church members. Many were fairly recent converts. This is the group Paul wants to encourage.

2. The Trouble makers. They seemed to have the upper hand. This is the group Paul wants to put down.

Let's look at those verses so you can see the "no man," "any man" concept.

"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 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."

Verses 18:

"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."

Now, these "any man," "no man" characters are referred to as "principalities and powers" in verses 10 and 15. This gives the idea that these "any man," "no man" characters were men of authority. Notice how Paul dresses them down. They were men of:

"...philosophy, vain deceit, after the traditions of men, the rudiments of the world, not after Christ."

Verse 16 says they were:

"...judgmental, making the church subject to the ascetic ordinances of man such as 'touch not, taste not, handle not'..."

...in verses 20 and 21:

"... and following the commandments of men..." [Verse 22].

Now, you might wonder what an ascetic philosophy is. It's really a bootstrap religion, full of unnecessary self-denial to gain personal holiness. Paul is referring to their human ordinances when he says, "touch not, taste not, handle not." Now, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary certainly takes a dim view of these "no man," "any man" characters, for on page 204 it reads this way:

"These terms may refer to earthly rulers..."

Think of earthly rulers in those days: Pontifex Maximus, the Roman authority...

"...or to supernatural beings. In the light of false teachings..."

...among the Colossians:

“... there may be a reference here to the supposed angelic powers. In reality Christ did triumph over satan and his angels.”

In other words, this Commentary seems to indicate that these “no man,” “any man” principality characters were involved in demonology, evil angels. Now the 20th volume of the Pulpit Commentary on page 146 calls them:

“...censoring, bigoted, enemies of Christian liberty. Such men should be firmly opposed.”

So much for the bad side of the church: now what about the good side? What about the good group? Well, Paul built up their confidence with an outstanding use of idioms and metaphors. These are simply figures of speech. We use them commonly here but they don't always make sense to everyone.

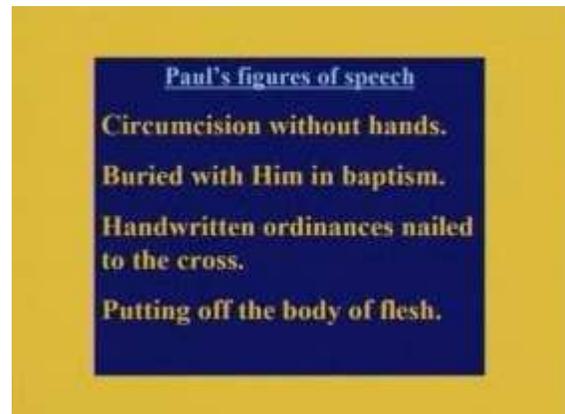
In other words, I might say a person's drowning in money, which might make a lot of sense to me, but someone over on the other side of the planet might not understand what I'm saying at all. Or, I might say this man is really rolling in dough. Well, to the fourth grader who's just been to the donut factory, that means something entirely different; but, to a person who understands the metaphors, the colloquialisms, just a part of the era. These figures of speech just sort of add a punch to the intended thought.

Well, here are a few of Paul's figures of speech that we're going to be looking at in this chapter: first, circumcision without hands; second, buried with Him in baptism; third, handwritten ordinances nailed to the cross; and, finally, putting off the flesh — if you can imagine that. These are all metaphors with meaning.

So, let's look at them a little more closely. The first one, in verse 11, is circumcision without hands. Notice the Scripture:

“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.”

Now, that might sound a little bit confusing to you; but, it really isn't. Let's look at it this way. When the alcoholic accepts Christ, and he wants to live the better life and he's really serious accepting his body now as the temple of the Holy Spirit, he may suffer some pretty severe withdrawals. But, he'd rather suffer his withdrawals and move ahead in Christian character. Circumcision without hands indeed.



When the incest-prone individual refuses to destroy the innocence of a child ever again, oh that may be quite different from what his body is telling him to do; but, he is steadfast in loyalty until it hurts. Circumcision without hands.

And when the fornicator will walk away from the backseat of a car, when otherwise all the signals are go, and walk away from the peer pressure, from everything, the whole set up, and say, “No!” Hey, that hurts. That’s circumcision without hands.

When the homosexual will sacrifice his feelings, rather than frustrate God’s design, that’s what it is.

These people had gone through the circumcision without hands, as though it were cut to the blood, and they were going to stand for Christ. You know, circumcision without hands also illustrates something else — a zero tolerance for sin. Why do I say that? Because when the flesh is cut off, there’s no story of it ever being sewn back on. When we walk away from sin, we’re to leave it.

Now, the second figure of speech is from verse 12 and it’s called buried with Him in baptism. Well, let’s read the text.

“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.”

Well, what does it mean they were buried with him in baptism? That was totally impossible. They couldn’t have been baptized with Christ. Some of the very people in that church hadn’t even been born yet when Christ was baptized — obviously, a figure of speech. He was referring to the fact that, by faith, they knew Christ was involved in their baptism the same as He’s involved in yours.

You see, Heaven recognizes baptism as a washing away of one’s sins: an important step in salvation. At one time the apostle Paul was told to arise, be baptized, and wash away thy sins. These people among the Colossians had done that. Paul’s figures of speech tactfully confirm the Colossians willingness to drop sin at any cost and also they were willing to have all past transgressions washed away in the spiritual presence of Christ.

Friends, these were good people. He was definitely giving them assurance and self-esteem as first-class citizens of the church.

Now, notice verse 14. This is our third one:

“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.”

Now, you and I know that our Heavenly Father does not arbitrarily give contrary things to stand against His children. We don’t serve a contrary God that does contrary things.

So, what is Paul talking about? In their language, “handwritten ordinances” is pronounced “*cheirographon tois dogmasin*.” Hey, can you say that? Think of Cairo, Egypt if you want to and graphon for graphics, “*cheirographon tois dogmasin*” — everybody knows what a dogma is. But, since this phrase only appears once in Scripture, we can safely assume it has nothing to do with building a doctrine; but, people do use this very phrase to build a doctrine upon.

In fact, they use it, really, to justify transgression: claiming that “*cheirographon tois dogmasin*” nails all of God’s laws, including the Torah, to the cross — saying, instead of that, we’re saved by grace. Well, they’re half right. We are saved by grace. So was Noah, by the way: according to Scripture. In fact, I don’t know of anyone who ever was saved in any other way: clear from the days of Adam. But, that does not do away with the responsibility of a born-again Christian.

Blotting out the handwritten record of our sins that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

On the other hand, there are scholars who say this phrase, “*cheirographon tois dogmasin*,” refers to the transferal of sin from our lives. In fact, they say the verse should more correctly read this way: “...blotting out the handwriting of our sins that was against us...” Thus, the text might read, “...blotting out the handwritten record of our sins that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

Oh, friends, this is at least consistent with the rest of the gospel, isn’t it? In this case, Paul is simply continuing to establish the spiritual value of the young Gentile church. And, by the way, nailing the record of a person’s sins to the cross is similar to its type, in the Old Testament sanctuary services, where people sacrificed animals and the blood was taken and transferred to the altar of sacrifice where the blood was applied to the altar.

I want you to notice how certain Bible versions kind of go along with this thought. As an example, in the Jewish New Testament it’s written: “He wiped out the bill of charges.” Yes, that’s not the law that defines them, that’s the bill of charges against them.

You see, the big thing with an accused person in court is not the law of the land but the fact that he’s been charged with breaking it. It’s the charges that he wants removed. Even the criminal has sense enough to know that the law’s not going to be removed. He just hopes his charges are removed.

“He wiped out the bill of charges against us, because of the regulations it stood as a testimony against us; but He removed it by nailing it to the execution stake.”

Jewish New Testament

The New American Standard Bible kind of brings that thought even clearer where it says:

“Having cancelled out the certificate of death.”

Wow, “*cheirographon tois dogmasin!*” ...canceling out the certificate of debt. Now, think of a credit card situation as an example and you build up some debts on it and someone comes along and cancels the debts. Well, that doesn't destroy the card and it certainly doesn't destroy the company behind it. Can you see the point?

Paul is telling these folk that the written record of their sins against them, against heaven's ordinances, have been removed from them and that would be a beautiful thing to tell this young church. They were not to consider themselves second class citizens, at all, but competent to handle their own church affairs without the “any man,” “no man” overbearing interference at all.

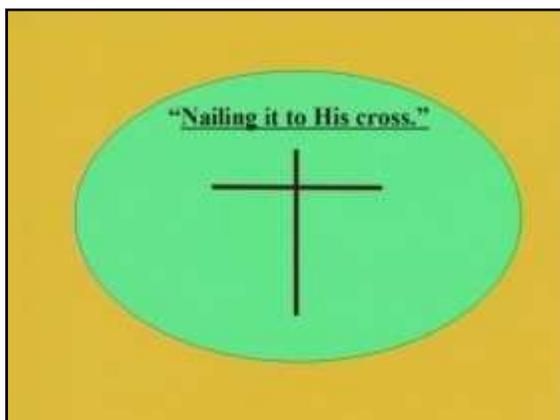
In other words, they had circumcised away their will to sin. They had been baptized and their sinful records could no longer be held against them. They had been transferred to the cross. Now, doesn't that make sense?

There's one more Greek word, I would like to share with you, and that word is “*mesos*.” This is the word that's translated “way” in the text. Let's read the text:

“...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.”

Now, the word “way” is very descriptive of the fact. Think about it. The written record of our sins is taken out of the way! The word “*mesos*” really, in Strong's Greek interpretation, has four possible meanings: middle, midst, in between, and way. So, the sins are purged from the “middle” of our hearts. They are removed from the “midst” of our lives. They are no longer left “in between” us and our heavenly Father. In all respects the written record has been taken out of the “way.” You see, the whole text makes sense. It makes a lot more sense than thinking Paul was worse than the antichrist: recorded back in Daniel 7:25.

As the Colossians read Paul's letter, you can just see a sparkle getting into their eye and a smile getting onto their faces. They were becoming very encouraged. They were beginning to realize they were God's people. Once again, a picture of this process was seen every time an animal was slain in the Old Testament sanctuary. The blood of that animal was transferred to the altar of sacrifice: symbolically removed from the sinner. Don't you see it? The same thing here.



The next phrase we want to look at, regarding metaphor, is “nailing it to His cross.” Now, Paul puts the proverbial “nail in the coffin” when he adds the phrase “nailing it to His cross.” No, there was nothing literally nailed there except, of course, our Saviour and a sign over His head saying who He was and where He was from. Nailing it to His cross is another figure of speech.

Actually, I understand that this was an ancient way of canceling debts. If a person borrowed money, he would sign a note usually written on parchment,

papyrus or cloth or something, whatever, and on that parchment was written how much money was borrowed, what the interest would be on it, and when it should be paid back: when it would come due.

Now, later, when it did come due, and the person brought the money back with the interest, the owner of the parchment would take a nail or an awl and drive a hole through it meaning cancelled debt. The parchment could not be held against anybody any more.

We might liken it to purchasing a ticket to a concert today. Once you go into the foyer, and the usher punches a hole in it, it's thereafter worthless.

Therefore, with these church members' position before God confirmed, they could be confident to run their church affairs without the overbearing influence of ascetic bullies. Now, with assurance, he tells them something very positive. But, they're ready for it by now. Verse 16 and 17, watch this:

"Let no man..."

...no ascetic bully:

"...therefore judge you..."

...church member:

"... in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days;"

Friends, I would tell you the same thing. Don't allow yourself to be harassed by any man who would set up himself as judge in such matters. The end of the verse says:

"Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

Let's look at the last part of this verse, for an example. Do you notice the italicized "is" near the end of the text? The fact that it is italicized means the word "is" as added to the text about 1500 years after Paul wrote it.

Evidently the translators thought it was an improvement to put the word "is" in there, as some still do, I'm sure — some students still do. But Paul didn't write it that way. He only wrote "the body of Christ." He didn't write "the body *is* of Christ."

Now, all Bible students recognize what the body of Christ is and certainly the Colossians did because he mentioned it several times in their gospel. The body of Christ was a reference to the church itself.

Actually, it's not a reference to the body of Christ being hung on the cross (as some would have you believe.) No, it's the church's condition because that's Paul's subject. The subject is the body of Christ and the two elements within it. Let's read this text:

"Let no man judge you ... but the body of Christ."

You see, Paul actually explained what the body of Christ was three times in this short book to the Colossians. How can anybody miss it? Notice:

"He is the head of the body; the church." Colossians 1:18

"For His body's sake, which is the church." Colossians 1:24

"Ye are called in one body." Colossians 3:15

And speaking of the Corinthians, he said:

"For the body is not one member but many." I Corinthians 12:14

So, only the church body has the privilege of judging its members. It's not saying the body "is" of Christ, referring to Christ on the cross; it's talking about the body of believers to whom he's talking.

"Let no man judge you ... but the body of Christ."

Paul was clearly letting them know that they were qualified church body and only they had the right to judge one another in these issues. Actually, Christ gave the same concept of judgment to the church in Matthew 18:15-17.

Matthew 18:15-17

1. Tell his faults between thee and him alone.
2. Take with thee one or two more.
3. Tell it to the church.
4. Let him be as an heathen man and a publican.

I think you probably all remember the story. The idea is if one person has a fault against another, "...tell ... his fault between thee and him alone." And if that doesn't work, "then take with thee two or three more," so you have a couple witnesses and everything's "established." But if that still doesn't work, then "tell it [to] the church." And if he won't "hear the church, [then] let him be ... as a heathen man and [as] a publican." So, you can see the judgment given to the church in some of these items.

Paul did actually the same thing in I Corinthians 5:11-13:

"Do ye not judge them which are therein..."

He's speaking "therein" the church:

"Therefore put away that wicked person!"

In other words, there was a person in the church that was breaking the statutes and commandments that are listed there on the screen. And Paul is saying the church has the right to disfellowship that individual.

Now, one of the problems, that led to the demise of our friends in the Worldwide Church of God, is the various interpretations of this phrase "*cheirographon tois dogmasin.*" You see, for years religious leaders have thought that these things nail all the law, the Torah, everything else to the cross; rather than simply the records of our sins against those things.

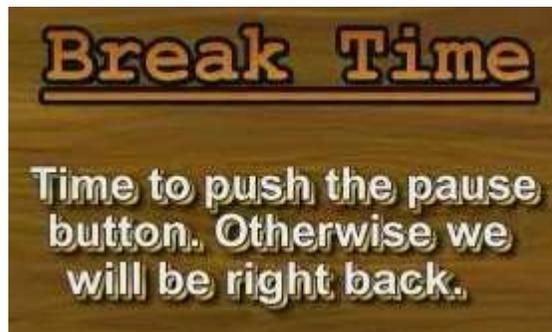


A few years ago the World Wide Church Of God bought into that view and lost. Perhaps — perhaps satan has set a trap for other Sabbath-keeping organizations, as well, including Seventh-day Adventist. If the trap's already worked for one body of believers, why wouldn't it work for another body of believers? So, before continuing on, let's look closely at two more foreign words: so you'll understand these texts quite thoroughly. The understanding of these words will prove very helpful to us as we go on. The words are "*nomos*" and "*dogmasin.*"

You know, one might ask if Paul was doing away with God's laws, why didn't he use words that were obvious? In other words, the word "*nomos*" occurs 197 times, in the New Testament, referring to laws, statutes, and things like that — 197 times! That's the man word for commandments. But it doesn't appear once in Colossians chapter 2. In fact, the truth is, it doesn't appear in the book of Colossians at all. Obviously it is not laws that are primary interest to the apostle.

The word I want to refer you to now is "*dogmasin.*" In the Greek translation of the Old Testament the word "*dogma*" is not found in the entire Torah. Now, remember, Paul was a Jew and had been a Pharisee. He knew the right words to use. He knew the terminology. Friends, to do away with God's laws is akin to the work of the antichrist. Paul's not going to do that. In fact, if he were bold enough to remove the laws of God, surely he would have used the more obvious terminology of the day to do so; instead of colloquialism that's used only once in the entire Scripture in the book of Colossians.

Well, before we get into more pertinent concepts that have to be addressed, I think we better take a break. And I know I've been going pretty fast, quite rapidly, but the Bible is so full of things that are often missed that I just crowd them in. I used to do three or four tapes on this subject, now, nine tapes; because there is so much and each tape is just power-packed full of information. So, I won't feel bad if you back up and start over at break time; but it is now break time and we will be right back to continue the second half of this lecture.



Well, welcome back! Just before break I mentioned that there were more pertinent concepts in these verses of Colossians 2 that we really have to address. I want you to notice, once again, the problems over which this young church was being harassed. Notice verse 16 and 17:

“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.”

Now, the parenthetical statement tells us of things over which the evil principalities and powers were judging this church. That is “in meat or in drink or in respect of a holyday day or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days.” Apparently, it was over these things that the young church was being judged by indiscriminate men. The truth is, indiscriminate men still do judge us for these things. I’m glad all men don’t.

Now, here’s the problem for Christianity in general. This idea of including meats, drinks, holy days, new moons, Sabbath days in the phrase “*cheirophon tois dogmasin*,” thinking that it refers to the laws of Christ, people therefore think he’s nailing all these things to the cross; when it was simply these things that they were being judged over. What a shame!

The truth is, most Seventh-day Adventist are agreeing with them; except they exclude the Seventh-day Sabbath — and they do that claiming that the “Sabbath days,” at the end of the text, refer only to the Annual Sabbaths; and not to the Seventh-day Sabbath. The problem is, if our people continue to believe that Paul is nailing laws to the cross (and the Christian world can persuade that the Sabbath days at the end of the text is the Seventh-day Sabbath), there is going to be a whole lot of questioning going on in the Seventh-day Adventist fellowships.

Now, this problem can be avoided by recognizing that Paul’s figures of speech is not nailing anything to the cross except what belongs there: the written record of our sins to be washed by the blood — and that, of course, metaphorically. Now, let’s examine the phrase in question carefully. Let’s be together on this thing.

“Holy days, new moons and Sabbath days...” Once again, if the Christian world can prove that “Sabbath days” refers to the Seventh-day Sabbath (and, at the same time, most of our brothers and sisters continue to believe that Paul is nailing these things to the cross), we will find

ourselves immersed in a lot of uncomfortable hot water. It will simply mean the Sabbath was nailed to the cross, as well.

Now, you may wonder how they're going to try to do this. And I'm going to show you four ways that they are going to use against us on this subject. That is, if we continue to say it's not the Seventh-day Sabbath at the end of the text; because, they are going to prove to us that it is. And this is how they're going to try to do it.



Here's the first point: "Sabbath days." First, they will show that the simple two-word phrase, even though part of it is supplied, is referred to in eight other New Testament Scriptures and, each time it's referred to, "Sabbath days" refers to the Seventh-day Sabbath. And, so, they're simply going to ask, "If 'Sabbath days' refers to the Seventh-day Sabbath in every other text of the New Testament, how can you Seventh-day Adventists say that it doesn't refer to Seventh-day Sabbath here?"

Now, I want to give you an example of the text they use, Matthew 12:5:

"Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?"

Now, this is the text we use to show that a ministry must be done on the Seventh-day Sabbath. And notice verse 10:

"And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? That they might accuse him."

This is a text that we use to show that it is perfectly all right to heal at our hospitals and whatever on the Seventh-day Sabbath because Sabbath days refers to the Seventh-day Sabbath and he was healing.

Notice Matthew 12:12 and then we will look up Mark 3:4:

"How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."

And those that keep the Seventh-day Sabbath use this verse to show that it's perfectly logical to do good acts, merciful acts on the Sabbath day — the Seventh-day Sabbath.

But in Mark 3:4:

“And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.”

And then again in Luke 4:31 and Luke 6:2:

“And came down to Capernaum a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days.”

Here’s the Luke 6:2 one:

“And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days?”

You see, these texts all refer to the Seventh-day Sabbath. Notice these next two, Luke 6:9 and Acts 17:2:

“Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?”

You remember one time the disciples were going to the corn field plucking a little corn as they went along to eat? This is in that reference. And in Acts 17:2, it says:

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.”

This is a text that we use to show that the Seventh-day Sabbath is a good time for worship.

I want you to remember something about the Sabbath, it’s a memorial of creation, no question about that, but it also points like a shadow forward to our eternal rest in heaven; as registered in Hebrews 4:1-5. In other words, the shadow points both ways in spite of what some textbooks might say. Its ultimate fulfillment is recorded by the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 66:23:

“Where from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before Me.”

And he’s saying that in reference to the new heavens and the new earth.

You see, dear friend, the only way to eliminate a shadow of a tree is to cut down the tree. The Sabbath is one tree that will never be destroyed. It is solid and it’s shadow remains, both backwards to creation and forward to recreation.

The Second Point

**To prove “sabbath days”
means Seventh-day Sabbath**

The second point, let’s take a close look at Sabbath days: “...holy days, new moons and Sabbath days.” Now, they point out the word “days” there and show that it’s in italics. In other words, the text would simply say, what we’ve always known, that the word “days” is not originally in the text. In fact, the word “days” was added about 1500 years after Paul wrote it. The text would simply say, “...holy days, new moons or Sabbaths.” Sabbaths there is used the same as it is back in Exodus 31:33:

“Ye shall keep My Sabbaths.”

“Sabbaths,” being a continuum, they come along every week; forever.

The third point is consistency of expression. And you wonder what I’m talking about; but, instead of just using the two words Sabbath days, we’re going to use the whole phrase — “...holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths.” It will be shown that Paul is using the same type of phraseology as other Bible writers did throughout the Scriptures: Holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths; the whole phrase. It’s not original with Paul.

Let’s go back to Ezekiel 45 and verse 17. Here it says:

The Third Point

**To prove “sabbath days”
means Seventh-day Sabbath**

Consistency of expression

Holy days, New Moons, and the Sabbaths

“And it shall be the prince’s part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the Sabbaths.”

That’s the same triad that Paul uses in Colossians 2. And you can ask any Jew you happen to meet, regarding this text, “feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths,” they’ll tell you the feasts days are annual, the new moons are monthly, and the above Sabbaths are weekly.

Let’s look at Hosea 2:11 and then Nehemiah 10:33 so we can see these same phrases again. In Hosea 2 it says:

“I will also cause all her mirth to cease...”

Whose mirth? ...well, Jerusalem’s mirth. In other words, Jerusalem has been worshipping idols. He’s going to take her happiness away.

“I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.”

Now, speaking of this text in the 4th volume of the SDA Bible Commentary, it says the text does not imply “the abolition of the Sabbath or of any religious service for that matter.” So, why then do we say it’s an abolition of the Sabbath in Colossians 2?

I like this one in Nehemiah because it mentions the Sabbath first.

“For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the Sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.”

So, what do we have here, folk? We have Sabbaths, new moons and feasts or feasts and new moons and Sabbaths; annual, monthly, weekly. There are more than half a dozen references to this same phrase, “feast days, new moons, and Sabbaths” in the Scriptures. And what are they going to ask us? They are going to say, “If everywhere else, in all these other places, the feasts, the new moons and the Sabbaths refer to annual, monthly, weekly, how do we say that in Colossians 2 they don’t?” It’s going to be pretty hard to stand up under that, folk.

Colossians 2:

“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 Sabbaths.”

I want you to notice this next quote by an important individual; someone that I admire. Some Seventh-day Adventist scholars agree that the 7th day Sabbath is at the conclusion of the triad in Colossians 2. It’s not just coming in, out of the air, from me:

“...When Paul here refers to ‘Sabbaths,’ if he meant the ceremonial Sabbaths, he was needlessly repeating himself.”

In other words, why say “feast days, new moons and feast days.” That wouldn’t make any sense. Dr. Richardson wrote:

“In that case, Paul would be making a statement neither logical nor likely.”

Now, in this case, the Greek seems to go along with Dr. Richardson’s conclusion for Strong’s Concordance comes up with some interesting things on it. The Greek for “holy day,” at the beginning of the triad, is “*heh-or-tay*” — in Greek. It’s translated 27 times in the New Testament. 26 of those times it is simply translated “feast;” as in the Feast of Passover. Only

once is it translated as “holy day” and that’s in Colossians 2. Obviously, “feast” fits very well there.

On the other hand, the Greek for “Sabbath days,” at the end of the triad, in Colossians, according to Strong’s, is “*Sabbaton*, a day of weekly repose.” That’s a direct quote from Strong’s — “*Sabbaton*, a day of weekly repose.” The same as it is everywhere else as we’ve quoted it in the Scriptures.

So, really, the triad is the “feast days, the new moons, and the Seventh-day Sabbaths.” What I’m trying to say, is, it doesn’t matter; because, they are not being nailed to the cross anyway. None of it is. The written transgression against these things is what’s being nailed to the cross.

Now, here’s the problem. When religious intolerance comes and the opposition proves that Sabbath days refers to the Seventh-day Sabbath, and we keep thinking that it doesn’t and that they are all nailed to the cross, then capitulation to the other side will become an attractive alternative; because, many members still think that Paul has indeed nailed Sabbath days to the cross, with the new moons and the holy days; which he really hasn’t done at all.

Now, just for a moment, let’s look at the Sabbaths at the end of the text in our unique traditional way. Let’s say that it’s not a Seventh-day Sabbath. I think very clearly that it is and enough of our scholars know that it is, as well, but let’s just say that it isn’t. We shall soon see we’ll still be in trouble. In other words, if we pretend that the word Sabbaths at the end of the text is simply referring to his feast days, then what is the first feast day given by the Almighty?

Let’s go to Leviticus 23 and see. Here we go:

“And the Lord spake to Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel; and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.”

In other words, if we ignore the Old Testament primary usages of the phrase, if we ignore all the things that we learned, and still try to say that this is not a Seventh-day Sabbath but a feast or if



we say it is a Seventh-day Sabbath, either way we’re in trouble. We’re shooting ourselves in the foot because the Sabbath is a feast day. No, Paul is not nailing all the feast days to the cross.

The fourth point I want you to notice, the fourth point the opposition can bring up, has to do with the tense of the phrase. Modern translations change the tense from what the King James or the Douay or Geneva, some of these other Bibles used, they change it from “these things are shadows of things to come” to “these things were

shadows of things to come.”

Well, let’s look at this. Colossians 2:16, 17:

“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...”

...**not** were:

“...a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

Going back to King James and Geneva, or even the Douay version (as I mentioned), the text all read these are shadows of things to come. So, you are just going to have to decide which Bibles you want to believe. Some of them say they were, some of them say they are. Some of them put them in the past tense, some of them put them in the present tense and looking to the future.

Now, you might wonder why I prefer the King James here. Why? Because it agrees with the other Scriptures. It makes it clear they are shadows of things to come.

All right, let’s take a look. Are they shadows? Yes, they are. The greatest fulfillment of Pentecost will be in the sounding of the loud cry, the final preaching of the gospel to the world. Pentecost, the greatest fulfillment, is ahead of us. That’s one of the feasts.

Another one if the Feast of Tabernacles. It points to the final ingathering of souls and the destruction of the wicked — according to Patriarchs and Prophets page 541. Not only points to the past but it points toward the future.

Day of Atonement, well, from Paul’s day, 1844 was certainly in the future, he wouldn’t put that in a were position, they are shadows of things to come in his day. Well, they still are shadows of things to come because the final fulfillment of the Day of Atonement is not here yet, Satan, the scapegoat hasn’t been put out.

New moons and Sabbaths, what about them? Do they point to the future? Notice:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”

Yes, they are shadows of things to come. Even the Passover points toward the great Passover we will enjoy with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. Luke 22:15 and 16 is the promise of that.

Once again, the only way to remove these shadows is to remove the tree. If you don’t remove the tree, the shadows remain. Depends which side the sun is which way the shadow goes, so

every time you see a new moon, and every time we enjoy a Sabbath, we are experiencing things to come. Paul made no mistake regarding the tense; they are shadows of things to come.

Now, in the final analysis, our old traditional view of Colossians 2 can get us into trouble, set us up for a fall pretty well the same as it did with the World Wide Church of God; along with the other texts that they use. The text we have covered already in Ephesians 2 and Galatians 4.

Our own view is not really a healthy view and it's indeed dangerous. Actually, the only ordinances fulfilled at the cross were the multiple ordinances that contained all of those commandments regarding the sacrificial system — and that's exactly what Daniel predicted would be done away with and Paul would agree.

Remember Daniel said in the midst of the week the “sacrifice and oblation” would cease. He didn't say all these other things would cease and neither did the apostle Paul.

Did you know that Ellen White once wrote that some day many of our brighter lights will go out? Brighter lights? That's leadership. A lot of us have had a part in leadership. My, that's almost scary. But when she says the brighter lights will go out, she doesn't say they will go out of the church, she just says they're not going to shine with truth anymore. That's the idea. When that happens, these falling stars that no longer have the whole light are going to drag a lot of church members with them and they won't have the light anyway. They'll start talking about every other part of the gospel but the Sabbath will scarcely be mentioned, the commandments will hardly be mentioned, these things will hardly be mentioned; because, the light has grown dim in their hearts.

To do this, these falling stars will have to substantiate their new theology on Scripture and it's very likely that Colossians 2 will be that Scripture — or at least one of the Scriptures they will certainly use. There is coming a day when these preachers will actually be supporting Sunday and ignoring the Sabbath just as they did back in the days of Nehemiah.

Notice what Ellen White says in Review and Herald, page 405, March 18, 1884. Quote:

“The Lord has a controversy with His people in these last days. In this controversy men in responsible positions will take a course directly opposite to that pursued by Nehemiah. They will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath themselves, but they will try to keep it from others by burying it beneath the rubbish and custom of tradition. In churches, and in large gatherings, in the open air, ministers will urge upon the people the necessity of keeping the first day of the week.”

Now, she puts this in a last day context. Other churches have been doing this for years; but this church? No, this church hasn't been doing that. I have tried very hard to put this quotation that I just read and apply it to other churches and denominations other than mine, but I can't do that; because, the context has to do with members, our church members, businessmen, ministers, and so on.

No, folk, there are changes coming and if you haven't seen the slip, if you haven't seen the changes and things, friends, perhaps you've been sleeping too long. Oh, I don't mean they're all changing because we still have a lot of loyal, wonderful people around; but, there are many changes, a real shift in direction it seems.

It'll get worse, too. I want you to notice Review and Herald 4/19/1898:

"The warning here given as to what the disciples would have to meet at the hands of [the other churches] is a warning to us also..."

Is that what it says? Oh, no:

"... the hands of their fellow men is a warning to us also. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted' Christ said, 'and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another.' These words will be fulfilled."

Members, fellow men, part of the fellowship? That's the way it was. That's the way she says it will be.

Friends, I don't think this will happen just because of a loss of religious freedom. I think it's coming about because of incorrectly interpreted Scriptures and that they will be used against us to wake us all up to the fact that we have been on the wrong trail.

So, to be helpful, I'm going to paraphrase Colossians chapter 2 using the solid Biblical information that you have now received. Notice:

"Praise Him for blotting out the handwritten record of our sins that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross."

Amen. You see, it's not God that is contrary nor His laws that are contrary, it's only we that have been contrary. It's what we have done that needs to be corrected. It's the record of our contrariness that has been taken away and transferred to the cross. Can't you be grateful for that? I'm sure the Colossians were.

"So let no man therefore judge you, brothers and sisters, fellow saints, in meat or in drink."

I think that's referring to the ordinances.

“Or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come; but the body of Christ.”

What a beautiful picture. What strength. What authority. What confidence Paul gave to that struggling church, letting them know that they were on the right track; and they didn't have to pay attention to these big shot authorities who were trying to run them down for the very concepts of their own religion.

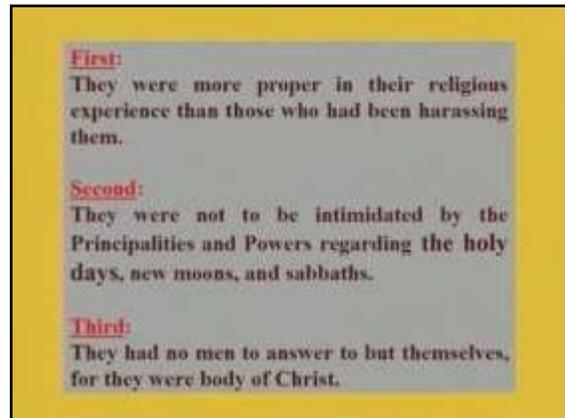
What strength, what authority, what confidence the knowledge of all of these things will give to the 144,000, understanding these verses. They will not be deceived away from their challenge, in 1T333; to teach the commandments and the statutes and the judgments across the land.

Ellen White lets us know very clearly that those who will be translated will be teaching the commandments, the statutes and the judgments. Paul did not take away the commandments, the statutes and the judgments.

When it comes to the Colossians, please note that first they were more proper in their religious experience than those who had been harassing them. Take that to heart, please.

Second, they were not to be intimidated by the principalities and powers regarding the holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths. They were to continue in the religion the way they were.

Third, they had no men to answer to but themselves, for they indeed made up the body of Christ, the same as you do.



Paul did let them know that they had one head over them and the head was not the body of puffed up men teaching the ordinances and traditions of men. Oh, no. He let them know from the very beginning who their head was and there's only one, Colossians 1:18. Read it with me. Speaking of Christ it says:

“And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.”

Yes, Christ is the head of the church. Not the “no man,” “any man” ascetic characters and the bullies. Oh, no. Not those of high authority, whether it be Roman authority, government authority, or whatever it is, oh, no. It's the simply believing Christian who keeps the commandments of God and has Christ as his personal Savior, this is the church, and they have the rights of the church.

In conclusion, let me add one powerful thought. Nothing extra should be nailed to the cross that might minimize what the cross was really all about. The great atoning sacrifice, accomplished by our wonderful Saviour two thousand years ago.

Friends, what is talked about here is the handling of the sin problem. What is talked about in Colossians is one group of high and mighties being put down and the other group of beautiful submissive church members being elevated to the place where they can have confidence to run their church.

Oh, friends, aren't you glad that the sin problem has been taken care of at the cross? Aren't you glad that you can have confidence that your sins can be forgiven; have been forgiven; will be forgiven? Oh, friends, are you walking with Christ? Don't let all this hogwash new theology try to tell you that your loyalty is not important in God's sight. Your loyalty is a response to His love and what He has done to you. Remain loyal; be faithful; keep His commandments; study His statutes; walk closer to Christ; and you will be among that great group at the end time who win a great multitude of people teaching the commandments, the statutes and the judgments. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for Your kindness to us, the openness and the clarity of the Scriptures that help us to bask in the authority of heaven, to recognize that our God is the God we serve and we will serve Him, for we ask this pleasure and this greatness in Thy Name, amen.

Bible Explorations Inc.
P.O. Box 10965
Terra Bella Ca. 93270
Toll Free Order # 877 475-1318