

Preserving Christian Liberty
Colossians 2:16, 17
by Bob DeWaay
Gospel of Grace Fellowship
March 15, 2015

False Teachers Pronounce Judgment

Colossians 2:16a (HCSB)
Therefore, **don't let anyone judge** you . . .

- “not . . . Judge” is imperative in the Greek
- This was likely already happening
- “Therefore” refers to Colossians 2:14, 15 about cancelled debt and disarmed demons
- We are commanded not to allow false teachers to take away our liberty in Christ

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17 2

Food, Religious Festivals and Sabbath

Colossians 2:16 (HCSB)
Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to **food** and drink or in the matter of a **festival** or a new moon or a **Sabbath** day

- In Colossians these rules are tied to the *stoicheia*
- These rules are Jewish with a likely syncretistic element
- “The philosophy” of Colossians 2:8 is the source of this legalistic teaching

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17 3

We Have the Substance in Messiah

Colossians 2:17 (HCSB)

These are a **shadow** of what was to come; the **substance** is the Messiah.

- O.T. laws are the shadow
- We cannot be judged by the shadow now that the substance has come
- We have the body of truth and salvation in Messiah
- The new moon is mentioned in Isaiah 1:14 – if we reject Christ, holy days are worse than useless

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17

4

Implications and Applications

- Obedience to Christ means rejecting human law-givers
- Jesus cancelled food laws
- Failure to come to Christ is Sabbath breaking
- Shadows cannot be the basis for new covenant faith and life

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17

5

God Has Granted Christian Liberty

Galatians 2:4 (NASB)

But it was because of the **false brethren** secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to **spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus**, in order to bring us into bondage.

- Human law-givers scoff at the idea of Christian liberty
- We must obey God rather than men
- False teachers arrogate to themselves a role that is only valid for Christ and His apostles

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17

6

Jesus Cancelled Food Laws

Mark 7:18b, 19 (NASB)

“Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

- The issue is not what is or is not “healthy”
- Food laws create false separation
- Jesus’ teaching was confirmed and applied in Acts

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17

7

Only Christ Provides True Sabbath Rest

Matthew 11:28, 19 (NASB)

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

- See Hebrews 4:1, 2
- Hebrews 4:9
- Romans 14, 5, 6

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17

8

From the Shadow to the Reality

Hebrews 10:1, 2 (NASB)

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

- See Hebrews 10:21, 22

Preserving Christian Liberty: Colossians 2:16, 17

9

Jesus Is the Mediator of the New Covenant

Hebrews 8:4, 5a,6 (NASB)

Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; **who serve a copy and shadow** of the heavenly things, . . . But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as **He is also the mediator of a better covenant**, which has been enacted on better promises.

- Old covenant law is the shadow

Luther Defines and Defends Christian Liberty

Martin Luther:

“Who has given you the power to forbid what God has not forbidden? What reason is there for your sacrilege in framing up great sins where God has not considered them such? Are you not indeed a murderer of souls who sets himself above us in God’s place and takes away our Christian liberty and subordinates consciences to himself?”

-From Church and Ministry II; Luther’s works vol. 40, 150.

“Against the Heavenly Prophets”

