

Jonathan Edwards' Notes on Ephesians 2:15 from the Blank Bible

1. Christ abolished in his flesh the law of commandments by destroying or abolishing his flesh in his crucifixion (Col. 1:22), and that three ways. 1. Those ordinances were as it were the flesh of Christ mystical. They are called carnal ordinances. The carnality of the church consisted in them. They were ordinances fitted for Christ mystical in the flesh, or for the church in its carnal state. So Christ himself, while in the flesh, was subject to those ordinances; but when he died, and his flesh was abolished, he ceased to be subject to those carnal ordinances, for he ceased to be in a carnal state, but rose to a spiritual state. And it was fit that the church should have communion with her head in this, that Christ mystical should be as Christ personal, that that also should cease any longer to be in a carnal state, but should rise with Christ to a spiritual state, where there is no such use of carnal ordinances. It was not fit that Christ's mystical body should remain in a carnal state after Christ's flesh was abolished, and he was risen from the dead to a spiritual state. It was fit that whole Christ should be in a spiritual state after that, both head and members, both his real and mystical body.

2. The church did as it were die in Christ. He that was the head of the church, and represented the church before God, died; and therefore the law since that has no more dominion over the church, for the law has dominion over the church no longer than while he liveth. Christ, while he lived, was under the law; but when he died, he was free from the law. When he rose again, he was no longer subject to the ceremonial law, for he rose to a spiritual life, and to live in another world. The ceremonial law is made only for the inhabitants of this world. So neither was the church that died and rose in him. Thus Christ abolished the law of commandments in his flesh through death. See Rom. 7, at the beginning. See also Col. 2:20.

3. Christ by his death abolished guilt, and held forth to the world a⁹ proper and complete atonement and full satisfaction for sin, which made that old legal dispensation no longer proper or meet to be kept up in the church; but a dispensation of greater liberty was suitable to succeed this. The legal way in which God treated his church had its ground very much in the concealment of the proper atonement for sin, or its being but very obscurely revealed. Therefore they were kept under a yoke of bondage. The church, while a minor, differed nothing from a servant, but was under tutors and governors; and they received a spirit of bondage unto fear [Rom. 8:15]. Their sacrifices and legal purifications were to renew and keep up a sense of guilt; and therefore all fell, of course, when once Christ crucified, the great sacrifice and perfect atonement of guilt, was revealed. The end of the ceremonial law was to cause that all might stand self-condemned, and be shut up to the grace that should afterwards be revealed. Thus Christ blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, that was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14).¹

¹ Edwards, J. (2006). *The "Blank Bible": Part 1 & Part 2*. (S. J. Stein & H. S. Stout, Eds.) (Vol. 24, pp. 1098–1099). New Haven; London: Yale University Press.