

## THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

### II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

#### G. Nurture In Focusing On Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Contrary To Legalism (Colossians 2:11-17)

##### I. Introduction

- A. John Calvin wrote: "(W)e must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the law . . ." (Calvin, Commenting on a Harmony of the Evangelists, trans. By Wm. Pringle, 1949, v. 1, p. 277 as cited in Seventh Day Adventists Believe . . .," 1989, p. 246) and Seventh Day Adventists claim that though Christ "nailed the ceremonial laws to the cross" (Ibid., p. 254, 244), ending their authority over us, He "established that of the Ten Commandments" so that we must keep the Law's Saturday Sabbath, Ibid., p. 244.
- B. However, to nurture Christian believers who faced legalism in the first century A. D., Paul in Colossians 2:11-17 exposed this error, claiming that Christ on the cross ended the jurisdiction of the *entire* law for the believer:

##### II. Nurture In Focusing On Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Contrary To Legalism, Col. 2:11-17.

- A. Paul announced to His Colossian believing readers that they had been circumcised with a "putting off" (*apekdysei*) made without hands, a spiritual, positional circumcision at salvation that put off the sinful nature through Christ's death on the cross, Colossians 2:11; Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 677.
- B. This spiritual circumcision occurred when the believer was spiritually buried with Christ in spiritual, positional baptism (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13) and raised up positionally unto new life, Ibid.; Colossians 2:12.
- C. Where the believer had been positionally dead in his sins and spiritual uncircumcision of the sinful nature, God had made him alive together with Christ, having forgiven him all trespasses, Colossians 2:13.
- D. This forgiveness occurred in God's having canceled the written code of the Mosaic Law that had condemned him in that the Law as it could only expose his sin, condemning him, Colossians 2:14a; Romans 3:19-20. Christ removed that written code's charge against the believer, nailing it to the cross, Colossians 2:14b.
- E. Thus, "(b)y fulfilling the demands of the Law, Christ disarmed the demonic powers and authorities (cf. 1:16; 2:10), triumphing over them (cf. 2 Cor. 2:14)," Ibid., p. 678; Colossians 2:15.
- F. Accordingly, the believer is now positionally dead to the Law (Romans 7:4, 6), so that he is no longer to allow anyone, including the heretics at Colossae that plagued Paul's original readers, to judge them with respect to food or drink or in respect to a holydays, a new moon or "Sabbaths," Col. 2:16. [The word "*days*" after "Sabbath" in the KJV is italicized as "*days*" is **not** in the Greek N. T. text, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 698.]
- G. Seventh Day Adventists claim the word "Sabbath" in Colossians thus refers to the Sabbath **years** of the "**ceremonial**" *part* of the Mosaic Law, that Paul taught we were no longer under the **ceremonial** part of the Law, but that we are *still* under the **rule** of the **Ten Commandments**, and **must keep the Sabbath day**, Ibid., Seventh Day Adventists Believe . . ., p. 244. However, the Scriptures **counter** this claim (as follows):
1. Scripture never makes a distinction between alleged moral and ceremonial laws, Ibid., B. K. C., N. T.
  2. In **each** of the Old Testament directives on the Sabbath **year** observances, in Exodus 23:10-11, Leviticus 25:1-7, 20-23; 26:34-35, 43 and 2 Chronicles 36:21, there is **NO** reference to **either holydays** or to **new moons** that **Paul** mentions **together with** the "**Sabbath**" in **Colossians 2:16**, indicating it was very **unlikely** that he meant exclusively Sabbath **years** when he wrote the word "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16.
  3. However, throughout the Old Testament, the reference to Sabbaths, new moons and feasts **together** as Paul alludes to them in Colossians 2:16 often acts "to sum up religious observances" in general, and the word "Sabbaths" in such Old Testament passages always mean Sabbath **days!** (Z. P. E. B., v. Four, p. 417)
  4. Thus, Paul meant Sabbath **days** in Colossians 2:16, so we are no longer under the Ten Commandments, and his naming Sabbath days here in connection with feast days and new moons in typical Hebrew fashion to allude to religious rituals in general shows he taught the believer was free from the **entire** Law!
- H. Accordingly, since the Law was a shadow of the things to come that are in Christ, and since the believer is no longer under the jurisdiction of **any part** of the Mosaic Law, he has a standing in Christ His Savior that counters all efforts by legalists who try to push any part of the Law upon him as to its jurisdiction, Col. 2:17.

***Lesson:*** *Christ's death positionally so fulfilled God's righteous demands and removed the charges of the Law against him that the believer is both dead to the Law and free from ALL of its rule to walk in newness of life.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we believe in Christ to be free from the condemnation of the Law. (2) Then, may we live in newness of life in Christ totally free in conscience and practice from ALL the authority of the Mosaic Law itself.*