

Wednesday

March 4

What was nailed to the cross:

1. Our sins - animals lamb

2. old man crucified -circumcision

3. ceremonial laws -salvation by works

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

Read Colossians 2:16-19. What Jewish-Christian practices are highlighted here by Paul?

"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."

Colossians 2:16-19 KJV

To this day, scholars do not agree on
exactly what the issues were that Paul was
addressing here. What we can be sure of is that
Paul's epistle itself provides quite a bit of
information on what seems to have been a Jewish-
Christian divisive influence on this
predominantly Gentile church (Col. 2:13). That
is, the Jewish believers were pushing things
that were not necessary for the members to
follow.

Clearly Colossians 2:16 lists a number of
regular Jewish practices that were apparently
continued among some Jewish converts to

Christianity. But even the elements in
Colossians 2:18 fit the same context. Jesus
criticized pretensions to humility among the
religious leaders (for example, Matt. 6:1, 5, 7,
16). From the scrolls of Qumran, we learn that
angels featured prominently in some Jewish
conceptions of worship. So, the problems that
Paul was confronting in Colossae were most
likely similar to those he confronted elsewhere.

Since Colossians 2:16 is so often
misunderstood, it is important to consider it in
greater detail. Notice these points:

Paul's use of "therefore" (ESV) signals
that this is a conclusion drawn from what he has
already said. Previously, the need for literal
circumcision was dismissed because it is the
inward change of the heart that matters (Col.
2:11-15).

"Food and drink" refer to the meal and drink offerings that the Israelites brought to the temple.

The specification of "a festival or a new moon or sabbaths" (Col. 2:16, NKJV) apparently alludes to Hosea 2:11, where the same sequence of ceremonial days are referred to, which includes ceremonial sabbaths (see, for example, Lev. 23:11, 24, 32).

"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts."

Hosea 2:11 KJV

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation."

Leviticus 23:24 KJV

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath." Leviticus 23:32 KJV

Crucial to our understanding of this verse is Paul's own interpretation: that these "are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Col. 2:17, NKJV). These ceremonial days, like the sacrifices, pointed to the work of Christ (see 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Cor. 15:23).

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:"

1 Corinthians 5:7 KJV

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Corinthians 15:23 KJV

The seventh-day Sabbath, in contrast, was instituted in Eden, before sin, and long before

the ceremonial sacrifices of the sanctuary were adopted; therefore, it was not a shadow to be done away with after the cross.

Although the seventh-day Sabbath is not at issue here, how might you apply Paul's counsel about not passing judgment on others?

HEB 10

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

Hebrews 10:1-4 KJV

