

Lesson 17
Colossians 2:16-17

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*** Start Recorder ***



Opening Prayer

Introduction

- In this next section of his letter to the Colossians, Paul denounces all forms of legalism, especially Judaizing (holding to the OT system of the Law), and Gnosticism (a false system of beliefs) by both of which men control people and lead them away from Christ. Paul explains “how” we have been set free from such false beliefs, worn out rituals, and useless constraints through Christ.
- Paul also introduces the subject of Christological typology as a way of explaining that much of the OT Law was no longer applicable post-cross. Typology is a literary device used in Scripture in which a future NT person, place, thing, or event (anti-type) is foreshadowed (prophesied) figuratively by one or more OT persons, places, things, or events (types). In the case of *Christological* typology, the *anti-type* is Christ, and the *types* are more prolific than any other type / anti-type relationship in Scripture. There are several reasons for the use of the type / anti-type relationship:
 - It demonstrates the supernatural nature of Scripture.
 - It demonstrates the supernatural authorship of Scripture.
 - It demonstrates the unity of the OT and NT as a package.
 - It demonstrates the validity of the message of Scripture.
- Consider the example of Isaac as a person used as a prophetic foretype of Christ in Genesis 22 - His father's name meant “Exalted Father” and later was changed to mean "Father of a Multitude" – Abram/Abraham. Isaac was not the first-born (Ishmael) but was the son of the promise and was given the title of only-begotten, Abraham took Isaac to offer him as a sacrifice to God on the same location God offered Jesus on the cross (Calvary on Mt. Moriah), there were two witnesses, father and son walked on in agreement up to the place of sacrifice, the son carried the wood for the sacrifice on his back, his father believed he would be raised from the dead, his father got him back on the third day, and afterward he took a Gentile bride.

Discussion: How are any of the following types of Christ?

- Person – Joseph: He was his father’s favorite son, he was rejected by his brethren, he was betrayed and sold for pieces of silver by his brother Judah (Gr. Judas), he wore a seamless tunic for which his brothers cast lots (coat of many colors), he was falsely accused and convicted of a crime he didn’t commit, he rose to the right hand of power, provided the bread of life, became the savior of the world, he forgave his brothers, and he saved all of Israel.
- Place – The Promised Land: Entering in one finds rest, life with God, and every provision for life, those who refused to enter the rest died outside the congregation, Hebrews 3 and 4 explain that rest is Christ. Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
- Thing – Noah’s Ark: a deliverer of God’s people, ordained by God as the only way to be saved, made of wood (must die to save), covered in “pitch” (He. - “kippur” = atonement), limited period to enter (grace), had to be “in” it when judgment came (we must be in Christ).
- Event – The Passover: Blemish-free male lamb, slaughtered as a substitutionary sacrifice, blood on lintel and doorposts covered and protected from God’s wrath, made the sign of the cross, no blood / no deliverance, bread = body and wine = blood of Christ, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29)

Read Co 2:16-23

Colossians 2:16 (NOTES)

- “Therefore” - That is, what follows is based upon all the aforementioned postulations a). the preeminence of Christ in the creation, b). the total sufficiency of Christ in the redemption, and c). the absolute headship of Christ over the church, each of which we have thoroughly examined in our prior studies together to this point.
- “no one is to act as your judge” – Now, Paul moves into new territory. What follows “Therefore” hereafter is a declaration of the believer’s freedom from two groups of people (Judaizers and Gnostics) and from two sets of religious beliefs and practices (OT Jewish Law and Gnosticism).

- First, Paul declares the believer's freedom from the Judaizers and broad sections of the OT Law (civil and ceremonial law, not the moral law - murder is still wrong). The Judaizers claimed Jesus as their Messiah, but continued to observe, and demanded other Christians continue to observe, and keep the OT Law, with its rituals (e.g. circumcision, washings/baptisms).
- The Judaizers demanded they be followed, but these laws were specifically rescinded in the NT because they had served their purpose. They either had found their fulfillment in Christ (His advent/coming completed them), or else they had served out their usefulness as object lessons in God's redemptive plan. I will explain in a moment.
- Second, Paul declares the believer's freedom from the Gnostics, those false teachers who had crept into the Church with their strange rituals, beliefs, and practices, such as angel worship, dualism between God and the universe (i.e. - belief in the evil of matter), denial of Christ's deity, and salvation through secret knowledge, etc.
- "food or drink" – This refers to the dietary laws. From a typological standpoint, the dietary laws demonstrated the concept of man's uncleanness before God, which could only be resolved through Christ who alone both makes us clean through His blood and also imparts to us His righteousness.
- Ac 11:5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, Ac 11:6 and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. Ac 11:7 I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' Ac 11:8 But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' Ac 11:9 But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.'
- "a festival" - The feasts of Moses, of which each was a type. There are seven feasts of Moses, excluding Hanukkah or the Feast of Dedication (of the temple after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated it)/Lights and the Feast of Purim/Lots (celebrating the salvation of the Jews in Esther).
- First three are both memorials and prophecies (symbolize first coming of Christ: the Passover Feast - salvation (positional); the Feast of Unleavened Bread - sanctification; and the Feast of First Fruits resurrection) are in the month of Nisan (the first month: Mar-Apr).

- The last three are also both memorials and prophecies (symbolize the second coming of Christ: Rosh Hashannah or New Year/Feast of Trumpets - Christ's return; Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement redemption (practical); and Succoth or the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths - the New Jerusalem/eternity) are in the month of Tishri (the seventh month: Sept-Oct).
- One is between them (Pentecost or Feast of Weeks - the Church age). Thus far, each of the fulfillments of these feasts actually occurs at their celebrations (ex. - the birth of the Church occurs at Pentecost, Christ is crucified during Passover, etc.). All prophecy is ultimately about Christ.
- "a new moon" - The Jewish civil calendar. Nu 29:6, 2Ki 4:23, Ne 10:33, Ps 81:3, Isa 1:13, 66:23, Eze 46:1, Am 8:5, 1Sa 20
- "or a Sabbath day" - Sabbaths in the OT, of course, reserved the 7th day of the week, Saturday (in contradistinction to Sunday, which is the first day of the week), for inactivity and spiritual reflection. Sabbaths were not days set aside to recuperate from strenuous labor or stressful work. God rested on the 7th day of creation, but not to recuperate. He requires no recuperation or restoration because He loses nothing and is injured by nothing as a results of His actions. Rather, He rested in the sense of a musical rest, no motion or action for a period of time.
- The OT Law had commanded sabbath days (the 7th day), sabbath days after a sabbath of/7 weeks (50th day - Pentecost), and even sabbath years after a sabbath of/7 weeks of years (50th year - Jubilee Year). The Jubilee Year was the year on the Jewish calendar every 50 that offered three benefits: all land returned to its original owner, all debts were forgiven, and all slaves went free.
- When a Jew recognized that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah and he placed his faith and trust in Jesus, that Jew was considered to have rested or ceased from his labors in the law, the sacrificial system, etc. to make himself acceptable to God. The Jew finds his rest in Christ - he enters that rest by being in Christ. This is why the sabbath rest is a type of Christ, and entering into the Promised Land by the Jews at the Exodus was a symbolic trust in the Messiah of whom the Promised Land is also a type.

- It is no sin to observe or reject the dietary laws (Ac 10:9-16, 34-35), the Jewish feasts, the Sabbath (He 3:7 - 4:11), circumcision, or any other part of the OT law. It is, however, a sin to view such activities as necessary to please God or gain His acceptance, or to judge another for doing or not doing them (1Co 8:12), or trying to control or lead people astray by imposing (1Ti 4:1-5) such requirements on them. This is the point of Paul's argument. Ac 10:9-16, 34-35, He 3:7-4:11, 1Co 8:12, 1Ti 4:1-5

Colossians 2:17 (NOTES)

- When the sun arises, "the shadows flee" (Song 2:17). "When the substance came, the shadows fled." (Matthew Henry). The OT system of the civil and ceremonial law, even the very lives and circumstances of the major OT characters, even the numbers and place names used in the OT point to Christ. Rom 5:14, Heb 8:5, 10:1, 7, 11:9-10, Ps 40:7
- Ro 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.
- Heb 8:5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned [by God] when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE, "He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."
- Heb 10:1 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.

Discussion: How does an understanding types as referred to by Paul here in this passage help us in our daily lives? How was it intended to help the Colossians?

- It teaches us about our salvation.
- It shows that God's redemptive plan remains unchanged from the beginning.
- It gives us confidence in the veracity of the Scriptures.
- It prevents us from considering or trusting other so-called holy books.
- It protects us from being controlled by others through false teaching.
- It gives us hope that unfulfilled types (Resurrection & Return) will come about.

Application: Were there any new concepts you picked up today? Is there anything you're having trouble accepting in these doctrines? Did anything stand out that may prompt you to do further study? Do you feel confident that you can explain the doctrines of deity and trinity to your family, other believers, nonbelievers?

Closing Benediction: Jude 1:24-25 *"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen."*