

“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

Colossians 2:16-23

The Law given through Moses had been fulfilled and ‘nailed to the cross’ (Colossians 2:14). The ordinances of that law were no longer in effect, and are not in effect now. Read Hebrews 8-10 for more on the new covenant being the reality of the shadow of the law of Moses.

To follow the philosophies of the world holds no reward. But to follow Christ is to follow Him who gives life (John 4:13-14; 10:10). He is the head and He supplies all that is necessary for the body, the church. This blessing happens when the body holds fast to Christ Who is the head. When we hold fast to Christ, we demonstrate true humility and are as Samuel of old: “Speak Lord, your servant hears.” The hearing includes our actions (see James 1:18-25).

As disciples of Jesus we died to the old man of sin and now live the life of righteousness (Romans 6). As servants of righteousness we follow Jesus fully. Remember Who He is, looking back to the first chapter of this letter. In Him dwells all the fullness of the godhead, and His words are the words of God (John 16:13-15; 17:17). He has the words of life (John 6:63, 68). Those who follow the philosophies and teachings of men are following that which is empty. There is no eternal benefit to their way of life. This was also the conclusion of Solomon, that we are to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

It appears that the church at Colossae was troubled by the philosophies of the world. We must learn that the words given to the apostles and prophets of the first century are the words Jesus gave for our learning and obedience. They are the path to eternal life. Peter said that they provide all things for life and godliness and

Paul said they are able to make us complete (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Remember what God said through Isaiah: "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9). Let us always follow the thoughts and ways of God!

The text of Colossians chapter two is the foundation for the encouragement of chapter three (remember that it was originally a letter without chapter and verse divisions). In chapter three Paul urged them, and urges us, to seek the things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. We have a new life to live in Him.