

## Law and Disorder?

When Tammy and I first moved to Sarasota we were faced with something that we had never experienced before. There were many new things, lovebugs, breathing water instead of air, evening storms, hurricanes, but none of them were as bad as the newest threat to us.....It was called the Homeowners Association. We thought it was bad in the summer but then when snowbirds came down for the winter the rules, restrictions and vigilante enforcement was amped up in ways we could not have dreamt of. We had been in our new home less than one month and I was already planning on moving. Rules and restrictions can be burdensome. I have had people tell me that church is like that. They tell me that the rules, laws, and restrictions keep them away. They flee from the legalism that they see in the Scriptures and the manner in which those laws have been enforced by others. They planned to move away from church and have now stayed away. It breaks my heart because when God placed man in the Garden He only gave them one law. Then with sin in the world He gave the entire Old Testament just to prove that no one can follow those laws...and then when Jesus came...He told those in Christ that they only had two laws to follow. He came to set them free from the bondage of the Old Testament Laws, rituals and practices. That is what we are going to explore today.

We are studying the **Second C of Bible Study**....We have learned to see what is in the passage..the content...but now we are trying to understand the context. What did this passage mean to those who first read it? We must have a good understanding of what it meant to them before we decide if we can bring that truth forward to us. We are looking for timeless truths...gold nuggets...in the Scriptures.

Today as we open the next section of Colossians....Chapter 2 and we will cover verse 16 down to the end of verse 17...Yep two verses...and we aren't even going to get through it really.

Today we are going to be challenged to understand some things that don't make sense to us. We will see that in order to understand a few words in Colossians....we will explore verses in Acts, Luke, Deuteronomy Nehemiah, Isaiah, John, Matthew, 1 John, and Revelation.

I repeat often that **Scripture interprets Scripture**...that when we don't understand something, the answer is usually found in this book and not somewhere else.

When we interrogate the text...When we move from the content to what it means...we find ourselves asking questions...those questions more often than not come from the Holy Spirit as invitations to go exploring.

In order to study the Bible this way, we have to be willing to let the Holy Spirit reveal His lesson. We will see today...that one short phrase takes us out of the book of Colossians. If our focus is in one reading a chapter or getting through Colossians, we will miss the lesson. That is why those are Bible Reading Plans not Bible Study Plans. When you study the Bible you find yourself moving from one book to the next. Looking up one Scripture after another.

One of the things that I love about the Holy Spirit is that He always seems to show you things that you didn't expect to see. For instance, in our verse today we are going to start out thinking about Kosher diets...but the Holy Spirit is going to teach us about how we are to live under the new Covenant of Christ...I never expected to preach on that when I started this verse....

You never know what the lesson is going to be...You may know the Scripture you are going to study, but you don't know where He is going to take you....It is the ultimate adventure.

**Colossians 2:16 (ESV) 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.**

As seasoned observers we immediately see a connecting word....If we continue to look we see a command....and a list **of 4 things all in one verse.**

Then we move to context...what did this mean to them? We interrogate the text. We think about the political, geographical, theological, historical and cultural issues in the first audience. What was Paul telling them? Why was he telling them this? Why is he telling them this now? What exactly is he saying? Why did he choose to link this to what he just said? Why a command and not a recommendation? Why a list? Why this list? Why these 4 things? Why in this order? What is included in the list? What is excluded in the list? What do these four things have in common? How do they relate to the command? What tense are the verbs? We interrogate the text.

We know false teachers are coming....some of them are Jewish....and Paul addresses a list of Jewish things....feasts, Sabbath....

**Colossians 2:16–23 (ESV) 16 Therefore**

Notice the word Therefore....Based on what you know about yourself.....who you were....how you stand before God now...who you have become....your status and relationship with Christ....Therefore.....also based on what you know about Jesus.....who He truly is....all that He has created...all that He holds together....all that He did on the cross....all that His resurrection means to you....

Think about everything that you know to be true....Paul has just reminded them that they shared in Christ's death and resurrection through baptism....How they have been circumcised without hands....He has told them to remember everything because a test is coming....because false teachers are coming....A tsunami of lies is headed your way...remember from last week...Philosophy, Empty deceit, elemental spirits, human tradition...not according to Christ....Because of all of that Paul says...Therefore.....

**Colossians 2:16–23 (ESV) 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.**

The connector....therefore...then the command....Let no one....what? pass judgment on you....let me stop right here for a moment.

I have heard believers pull this verse out of context to challenge church discipline and accountability. This verse does not say to never let anyone pass judgment on you.....I know you know that because you recognized that this command is tied to a specific list.

As believers in Christ, we are to help one another...love one another and part of love is helping each other see what we are blind to. We are commanded to judge one another in love, to remove the plank from our eye first, and to do so with a heart to help each other with grace, mercy and love.

We are told to not judge those who don't know Jesus. But this verse has nothing to do with church discipline...How do we know that? This command is qualified and limited by a list..We are not to let people pass judgment on us in these four areas.

Let no one pass judgment on you.....1) In questions of food and drink 2) with regard to a festival 3) with regard to a new moon and 4) with regard to a Sabbath. It is not an exhaustive list....but for this audience in this time...Paul listed 4 things that God impressed upon him. What do these 4 things have in common? Why this list now? Why these specific things?

Well, these are teachings of the Jewish people.....specifically the Jewish Mystics....What you eat and drink....sticking to Jewish kosher laws....what you do with the Jewish festivals.....the celebration of the New Moon by Jews every month...and the role of the Sabbath....these things...according to the Mystic Jews unlock the magic of God. The mystics claimed that there were secret messages locked away in these things....revelations that came to those who practiced them...These are the combinations that make God do what we want Him to do. Jewish Mysticism is very prominent in the Messianic Churches of today. They place a high value on the Jewishness of Christian actions....Elevating the Jewish experience over the relationship with Christ.

This is a teaching that concerns Paul. Elevating the Jewish rituals above the grace and freedom that comes simply through faith in Jesus.

The question that Paul is choosing to address is this one...Now that Jesus has come...what do we do with the Jewish practices, laws, and temple services?

Jews prided themselves on strict adherence to dietary restrictions. Kosher foods, specific food restrictions given to them by God in the wilderness....and other restrictions they had placed on themselves in God's name. The Book of Deuteronomy and Leviticus are full of these regulations.

The Jews had been imprisoned in slavery by the Egyptians for over 400 years. That is over 100 years older than the USA. Imagine if from the beginning of our country we were slaves. Every day every decision was made for us....where to be, what to eat, what we can do with our bodies...we..our parents and all the generations before us for 400 years had never made a single decision in freedom.

Then God set them free....All of the sudden they had the freedom to do anything....But God wanted to bring forth a Messiah from the Jewish People....They needed to remain a nation of God's People. He had a lot to teach them...He needed to protect them physically and spiritually. He knew because of their sin nature...that they would face all kinds of temptations. He knew that they might hurt themselves physically by what they chose to do or eat. They would hurt themselves spiritually as well.

So God gave His people His laws....that included almost every thing that you could think of. All focused on how to remain Spiritually clean...This eventually required the sacrifice of clean animals whose blood covered them...We covered this in detail in our series on God's Home...the Tabernacle. So since the Exodus, the Jews had been given very strict laws to follow. Laws that kept them in a right relationship with God. Laws that covered every aspect of life.

Laws given by God for one reason...His people...His bloodline of the Messiah....every one of them was separated from Him because of the sin nature into which they were born.

So these dietary laws, celebration of the feasts, observing God's commands regarding the new moon, and the honoring of the Sabbath...were important observances for Jews to obey.

They were God's covenant people...and God had rules for them to follow...ways that they could still have a relationship with Him while they were still in their sin nature...through the sacrifice of innocent animals and their observance of God's Commands.

Now remember that we live on the other side of the cross and resurrection of Jesus...and so did the Colossians. Jesus was the final sacrifice that allowed all of us to come to the Father...to enter the Holy of Holies...covered spiritually in the sacrificial blood of Jesus that cleanses us from our sins and sets us free from the bondage of the law. We live under a new covenant...a covenant brought to us in Jesus.

The Old Covenant earned our place in relationship with God through observance of the Law and the temporary covering of the sacrificial blood of innocent pure animals. The New Covenant offers that relationship permanently through faith in the sacrificial blood of Jesus as Messiah.

So a key issue facing the early church in the first century was simply this...Do we still need to follow the Old Covenant Laws of the Jewish people if we are not Jewish but believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah who came for the Gentiles as well.

Every letter in the New Testament deals with this tension in one form or the other. Jews saying that you had to be Jewish...translated circumcised and observing the laws...and Gentiles wanting to embrace Jesus but with not experience in the Jewish laws and customs.

The Jews were very concerned that if they allowed Gentiles (pagans) access to Jesus without requiring their Jewish conversion..that they might bring in all kinds of pagan ideas, thoughts and practices into the early church of Jesus...and they did.

The Gentiles who believed in Jesus as the Messiah couldn't see why they should follow Jewish customs and laws if doing so caused them to miss the Messiah. If the Jews rejected Jesus....why would they become one?

All of this is part of the context of this letter. What did it mean to them? By understanding the context of this letter, we gain a perspective to understand all the other letters in the New Testament. This issue faced every new church that mixed Gentiles and Jews. Also remember that the farther that you got from Jerusalem, the higher the percentage of Gentiles in the new church of Jesus.

God knew that this issue would face the Christians...so He began to prepare the leaders....Peter was the leader of the church in Jerusalem. He preached the good news of Jesus as the Messiah....The Jewish Messiah for Jewish People...He focused on getting Jewish people who had rejected Jesus to see their mistake, to repent and to receive Him as Messiah.

Jesus had told them...

Matthew 28:16–20 (ESV) 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This is where we often insert our 21st century understanding into the context. We see this as a clear command from Jesus to take the message to the Gentiles all over the world. But there was no way those who first heard these words thought that.

Here is what they heard....Go find all the Jewish people who have scattered across the world...God find the 10 lost tribes and their descendents. Go around the world telling the Jewish people...those that were dispersed from Jerusalem, to Samaria and beyond...Find the Jews who are scattered and make disciples....It would never have crossed their minds even in their craziest moment that Jesus wanted them to invite Pagan Gentiles into a relationship with Him.

Remember context is always first...what did it mean to them before it meant something to us?

So Peter is in Jerusalem leading the early church of Jesus...calling Jewish people...to their Jewish Messiah...wanting to make Jewish Disciples....and to fulfill the destiny of God's chosen people...the Jewish People...Those who were descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

So while Peter is focusing on the Jews....God is raising up Saul/Paul to be prepared to reach the Gentiles....God planned to save the world...but the disciples were convinced that it was the Jewish world that God would save.

God would have to do something pretty dramatic to make sure that Peter and the other Jewish disciples would understand His desire to save everyone.

Peter was in Joppa a coastal city....west of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean.

Acts 10:10–16 (ESV) 10 And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance 11 and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” 14 But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” 16 This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

God had specifically warned the Jewish people to avoid eating unclean animals....It was a command.

Deuteronomy 14:3–20 (ESV) 3 “You shall not eat any abomination. 4 These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5 the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. 6 Every animal that parts the hoof and has the hoof cloven in two and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. 7 Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cloven you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, are unclean for you. 8 And the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. 9 “Of all that are in the waters you may eat these: whatever has fins and scales you may eat. 10 And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you. 11 “You may eat all clean birds. 12 But these are the ones that you shall not eat: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, 13 the kite, the falcon of any kind; 14 every raven of any kind; 15 the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind; 16 the little owl and the short-eared owl, the barn owl 17 and the tawny owl, the carrion vulture and the cormorant, 18 the stork, the heron of any kind; the hoopoe and the bat. 19 And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. 20 All clean winged things you may eat.

Animals that fed off of dead things were unclean....catfish...eagle, falcon, vulture...cormorant...insects...Scavengers, bottom feeders....all unclean...

Acts 10:17–20 (ESV) 17 Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate 18 and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. 19 And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

Now consider the context. imagine that you are Peter. Bring all of that context to this moment. You denied Jesus three times...you know what that disappointment feels like..You have spent your whole life observing Jewish dietary laws...Believing that doing so honored God...and you had witnessed Jesus observing these same dietary laws....and now you have a vision that you know is from God...and it is repeated three times. But it seems to directly contradict God's word in Scripture. He was definitely inwardly perplexed as to what the vision might mean.....

No doubt Peter was racing through Scripture and experiences with Jesus in his mind...perhaps remembering the words of Jesus...

Matthew 15:10–11 (ESV) 10 And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person."

Peter had no clue what Jesus meant at that time....How do we know?

Matthew 15:15 (ESV) 15 But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us."

Matthew 15:16–20 (ESV) 16 And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

So what do we do here? Well remember that Scripture interprets Scripture. We need to go to other verses to see if God answers this dilemma. Remember, God is not wrong....our understanding is not yet full.

What God has made clean...do not call common...That is interesting. Clean in the Bible really speaks to holiness. We are key observers...the verb here is past tense. God has made these animals clean. From a study of the world made we know this is the same word used to describe those cleansed from leprosy and other diseases. It does not say God originally made them or created them as clean...the words here mean that they were unclean and God cleansed them...it is past tense and it is a completed act.

Interrogate the text...When did that happen? These animals were not clean for the Jewish wanderers with Moses....They have been clearly considered as unclean for thousands of years...they were unclean for Moses, they were unclean for Saul, David, Solomon, all the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah....why are they clean now? What happened? When did it happen?

They were unclean all those years and now God reveals that He has made them clean. The Jewish laws were in place to point to the coming Messiah who would fulfill them. He would be the final sacrifice...the Lamb of God...He would take away the sins of the World...He would bring meaning and ultimate understanding of what these practices mean.

Matthew 5:17–18 (ESV) 17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

So we are still searching the Scriptures trying to understand what's for dinner. What God had made clean.....

When God first created all the animals and man...He looked at His creation and said...It was very good. He didn't say...It was very good except for those unclean animals...All of creation was very good. Animals created by God and named by Adam were not inherently unclean...or unholy. All of creation reflected the creativity and majesty of God. Everything was in perfect relationship with Him. Man was created in His image...given free will...but everything else reflected him....every tree, plant, planet, star, sky, ocean, mountain...it all was made through Him and for Him. He holds it all together....On day 6 God said it is ALL very good.

We know looking forward that a day is coming when there will be a new heaven and a new earth....We have a description of that....

Revelation 21:1–5 (ESV) 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Isaiah gave us a prophecy about life on this new heaven and new earth...

Isaiah 11:1–9 (ESV) 1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. 6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

In the new heaven and new earth...all of creation lives in harmony....no snakebites, no bear attacks, no mosquito bites...all of creation shall be in harmony with one another....no disease, no death, no scavenging, no survival of the fittest...The lion playing with the lamb.

Ok so as we allow Scripture to help us understand Scripture....we are still trying to answer when did animals become unclean and when did God make the clean? Remember that clean really speaks to holiness...worthy of God.

Let me pause here for a moment...You may be wondering...ok...but you have a degree in theology...I don't know how to put together all these verses....You are jumping from Colossians...to Acts...to Genesis...to Revelation...How am I to do that....

Yes welcome Holy Spirit....It is the Holy Spirit that connects the dots...brings to your mind Scriptures that you have not remembered....As you prayerfully interrogate the Text.....He brings to your mind...the connectors....that is the incredible experience of study....Jesus promised us that the Helper..The Holy Spirit would guide us in these moments.....

John 14:25–26 (ESV) 25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

1 John 2:26–27 (ESV) 26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. 27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

So as we abide in these texts...as we interrogate the text...seeing the content...seeking the context....we are reminded that the animals that were unclean....were unclean because they were scavengers....they survived on dead things...God is about life...Death is from man.

So everything was very good and then it was not....God declared animals unclean....then prior to this moment in Acts...God has made them clean again...

There is a prerequisite for Scavengers....something must die. They become unclean by consuming death and dead things....Death exists in creation for only one reason....Man's Rebellion...man's sin ushered in death...not just to man but in all of creation.

All of creation experiences the impact of the fall of man. How do we know this? Scripture interprets Scripture.

Romans 8:18–23 (ESV) 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

All of creation suffered because of Adam and Eve's Sin. They were given dominion over all things...except each other...so when they fell they took everything with them....that is why in the future we need a New Heaven and A New Earth...just like we need a new Spiritual life..and a new body....Everything will be new...not just cleansed from Sin.



Now do you remember when I said that sometimes you come to a passage where you know you just don't know. I want to share with you a passage that reminds me that I have a finite brain and don't understand all that God reveals. After the flood, God gave commands to Noah and his family...Something very odd is included in this passage.

Genesis 9:1–6 (ESV) 1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6 “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

For your lifeblood I will require a reckoning. I will require a reckoning for the life of man. God tells Noah I will require a settling of accounts of the blood shed and the life of another man. But do you see it?

Every beast I will require it....and from Man...What?

Animals have to answer to God for lifeblood eaten or shed? He requires from them a reckoning?

I have been trying to figure that one out for over 20 years. I have no idea what that means. I know what it can't mean...It can't mean that animals have the same standing as man...that is clearly not in Scripture...I know that we cannot dismiss the link between man...sin..Jesus and restoration for all created things....but animals giving an account to God? God deals with creatures who do not possess free will differently than He deals with us. We know that He is concerned about all of His creatures...even the smallest sparrow. Yet all of creation has been affected by the Genesis curse. Animals have become violent and the world has become a competitive place where life must be clung to and death is inevitable for all creatures.

Remember that when we don't understand Scripture...the problem is not with the Scripture..it is with our understanding and what the Holy Spirit has not yet revealed to us...He sets the curriculum not us...we have to be comfortable with that.

Colossians 2:16–17 (ESV) 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Our very next verse...tells us that these practices were but a shadow of the real deal...The Substance the meaning the ultimate fulfillment is in Christ the Messiah.

The key to understanding the relationship between the Christian and the Law including dietary laws.... is knowing that the Old Testament law was given to the nation of Israel, not to Christians. It was given to the Jewish People....for specific purposes...some just for them...others for us.....Some of the laws were to reveal to the Israelites how to obey and please God (the Ten Commandments, for example). Some of the laws were to show the Israelites how to worship God and atone for sin (the sacrificial system).

Some of the laws were intended to make the Israelites distinct from other nations (the food and clothing rules). None of the Old Testament law is binding on Christians today. When Jesus died on the cross, He put an end to the Old Testament law not because He abolished it....but because He completed it...He fulfilled it. The laws, rituals, feasts, all pointed to the coming Messiah and He has arrived in all His glory.

Jesus brought a New Covenant....He brought us a new law to follow.

Matthew 22:37–40 (ESV) 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Now, this does not mean the Old Testament law is irrelevant today. Many of the commands in the Old Testament law fall into the categories of “loving God” and “loving your neighbor.” The Old Testament law can be a good guidepost for knowing how to love God and knowing what goes into loving your neighbor. At the same time, to say that the Old Testament law applies to Christians today is incorrect.

The Ten Commandments were essentially a summary of the entire Old Testament law. Nine of the Ten Commandments are clearly repeated in the New Testament (all except the command to observe the Sabbath day). Obviously, if we are loving God, we will not be worshiping false gods or bowing down before idols. If we are loving our neighbors, we will not be murdering them, lying to them, committing adultery against them, or coveting what belongs to them. The purpose of the Old Testament law is to convict people of our inability to keep the law and point us to our need for Jesus Christ as Savior

Galatians 3:23–29 (ESV) 23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

The Old Testament law was never intended by God to be the universal law for all people for all of time. We are to love God and love our neighbors. If we obey those two commands faithfully, we will be upholding all that God requires of us.

Hebrews 10:1 (ESV) 1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

John 1:17–18 (ESV) 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:14 (ESV) 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

1 John 5:3 (ESV) 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

Galatians 4:3–5 (ESV) 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Paul is warning those at Colossae.....You are no longer under the Law....Those laws were written for Jewish People before Jesus came as Messiah. They were shadows but He is the real deal. Now that He has come these laws have no hold on you. He came to set you free from them.

The whole point of the laws of the Old Testament was to show you that you could never measure up. That you can never obey all the Laws. They were to show the Jewish people how to live...they helped separate the Jewish people from the Pagan nations...They helped maintain the lineage of the Messiah.

But because of your faith in Jesus you have been set free from the bondage of Laws and human performance. You now walk in the assurance of God's grace through faith in Christ.

False Jewish Teachers are coming. They are going to try to tie you down once again with burdens of obeying dietary rules. They are going to try to convince you that you obtain special knowledge through the observance of these laws....Paul warns them...Don't fall for this!

Jewish rituals and laws should mean nothing to you now...You are Christians. You have been set free in Christ. It is time to live like it. If observing the Old Testament laws made you righteous with God...then Jesus would not have come.

You don't need to be Jewish....You don't need to be Pagan...You need to start acting like Christians. Don't fall for these Jewish Mystics or Jewish Orthodox teachers. They have nothing to offer you....You are set free in Christ.

Paul wrote to the Galatians on this point.....He is frustrated with them....He addresses to them the same message that He addresses with the Colossians, but he is nicer to the Colossians because I think he has never met them....Those in Galatia he knows well.

Galatians 1:6–7 (ESV) 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 3:1–3 (ESV) 1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Galatians 3:23–29 (ESV) 23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Galatians 5:1–6 (ESV) 1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no

advantage to you. 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. 4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. 5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

Galatians 5:7–8 (ESV) 7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you.

Paul Is trying his very best to implore those who are in Christ to begin to live like it. You have been set free....why do you still burden yourself with rules and regulations? The Old Testament Laws were not written to most of you.

You are all one in Christ...there is no Jew and no Greek....Just Christians....

It would be like Tammy and I moving away from the HOA and then having them come to our new neighborhood. We get a knock on the door and it is our old Homeowners Association welcoming us to the neighborhood. Then giving us their rules and restrictions.....Telling us that we are out of compliance and giving us 30 days to powerspray the drive and repaint the numbers on our mailbox...which is by the way...6 inches too high....

Remember who you are....You should never be deceived by those who try to place Jewish Laws, Rituals, Feasts and Sabbaths upon you. If you want to remain Jewish by faith, you haven't fully embraced the Messiah. If you are in Christ....Paul tells the Colossians and us...live like it...

That is what it means to be Free in Christ. Know who you really are....Know whose you are...Don't let anyone tell you otherwise....False teachers are everywhere trying to hold you in bondage to all kinds of ideas...Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind and soul....and then love others as yourself. Everything else comes from those two...He whom Jesus sets free is free indeed. Let's Pray