

Shalom Ori!

Today I want to deal with your questions on **Col. 2:14**. There is a lot of ink used in Messianic circles to explain the meaning of this passage written by a lot smarter people than I am, but I will give you the “easy” GG explanation. To do that let me take the verse more in context.

Col 2:11-23

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 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, 19 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. 20 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 -- 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 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. NKJV

First we should acknowledge that a lot of this passage is figurative. The circumcision is not physical circumcision, the burial was in the mikva/baptistry, and the Colossians were raised from the dead in faith...although they hadn't yet died physically. The Colossians were “dead” in their sin but are alive with Him because He has forgiven them their trespasses. That brings us to v. 14.

I like the way this verse reads in the NKJV. It says that Yeshua, “...wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us...” Torah, the handwritten requirements, shows people their sin and demands a payment for that sin. What we believe Yeshua has done is to take that payment, or penalty, and pay our “bill”. That is how He, “...wiped out... the requirements against us...” It seems like the text is saying that Yeshua nailed the *penalty* for our sins to the cross, not the Torah to the cross. That is the essence of what has been taught about Yeshua's ministry for 2000 years, that He made atonement, or restitution for our sins. After all, this is Paul writing who tells us in **Romans 7:12** that: **Therefore the Torah is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.** NKJV. As you can see Paul has a very high regard for the effectiveness and value of the Torah. The scriptures can't teach two conflicting concepts so our *understanding* of what one of the passages means, is what is at fault. The Romans 7 passage seems very straight forward so I would think that the Colossians passage is the one to re-examine. Let's look at the rest of the excerpt and see if my understanding works.

V.15 tells how Yeshua made a public spectacle and triumphed over...what? Yeshua triumphed over death which is the punishment for sin. He didn't triumph over the Torah, in fact He kept Torah. We know from **Matt. 5:17-19** that Yeshua expressly said He would not get rid of any part of the Torah, or the Prophets. **Col. 2:16** supports my understanding even more strongly. In verse 16 the Colossians are told to not be judged in food, drink, Shabbats, festivals, or New Moons. Shabbats and New Moons, (*Rosh Kodesh*), can be tied directly to Torah commands. The food and festivals mentioned are also probably the Torah commanded diet, (**Lev. 11/Deut. 14**) and festivals, (**Lev. 23/Deut 16**). Paul doesn't tell the readers of his letter to ignore those things, just not to be judged that someone else is observing thinks “better”. In our day and age “better” always seems to mean a harder more demanding regimen, even though the

scriptures are fairly easy to follow. Paul is assuming that they are observing Shabbat and he doesn't tell them not to bother, just not to be bothered by a more strict interpretation of what is and is not allowed on Shabbat. If the problem was Torah commanded events, like Shabbat, Paul could have said not to do them, instead he told them not to feel judged by others levels of observance.

The point that verse 16 is making is very important for you in your walk as a Messianic Jew. Traditional Christian writers are often VERY ignorant of the Jewish Oral Torah that we talked about in our first letter. Because of that ignorance they often mistake YHVH's Torah for the negative things that Yeshua and the Apostles fought against during their ministries. Yeshua's work never conflicted with God's word because Yeshua is one with the Father so He is in total agreement with the written text of the bible. The struggles I see in the NT between Yeshua and Jewish practice were issues derived from the TP not from Torah. Yeshua and the Apostles did practice many things from the TP but they seemed to keep it at a lower level than the actual scriptures. Found in the Oral Torah, (*Torah Pei*, TP), are many details of exactly what a person can and can't do on Shabbat as well as other rules. The rules given are good but...they aren't found in the actual scriptures, so I believe we are allowed, but not required to do them. Most people that I know who strictly follow the TP believe that the ordinances found in the TP are requirements and often judge those like myself who don't follow them as strictly as being in error. This is one of the issues Paul is dealing with in this passage, and it is an issue that resounds in Messianic Jewish ranks today. As far as observance goes, I personally follow more of the TP than many people, but when the TP comes in conflict with the real Torah, aka written Torah, the written Torah wins. Also I don't think it is sin to violate TP so if I choose to not practice TP it is a choice, not something I will be judged by YHVH for. (There are some more details on this issue in letter 4.)

Moving on through the passage we see that v. 17 reminds us that the feast, festivals, Shabbat, New Moons etc, (*moedim*), are a shadow of Messiah to come. Think about that for a moment. The festivals, Shabbat are a shadow of the Messiah to come? Why has mainstream Christianity confessed to love Jesus so strongly but abandoned the *Moedim*, which show us what He is like? Paul seems to be saying if you want to know about Messiah's next coming, look at the *moedim* in **Lev. 23** and you will get a picture, shadow, or hint. (This issue speaks to your question on end times that we'll get to soon!)

V. 18 mentions angel worship, false humility etc. Where in the Torah are we commanded to worship angels? Angel worship is not in the Torah which brings me to the point I have been making; the passage is not dealing with the abolition of Torah. Angel worship is a non-Torah practice that needs to be "...nailed to the cross..." just as Yeshua nailed all other repented of sin to the cross. If you or I are keeping/guarding the Torah and someone else has a more strict interpretation, we do not need to feel judged by them. We should listen to their reasons and if they have merit we can agree and change accordingly. However, if the reason is that the TP says so, that is a non-biblical reason. To elevate the TP to the level of the Torah is to add to the Torah which is expressly forbidden. **Deut 4:2** You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. NKJV. **Deut 12:32** "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. NKJV, **Prov 30:5-6** Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar. NKJV. **Rev 22:18-19** For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. NKJV. The TP is very ancient and has some tremendous practices in it. It is possible that some of it even dates to Moshe's day but...there is a reason that it wasn't written down and I believe whatever that reason may be the written Torah takes supremacy, simply because it was written and the other was not. The written Torah is the Torah that has been translated and disseminated to every part of the world and has been a blessing every where YHVH has sent it.

If I wanted to give you a short answer I would have jumped right to verse 22. Your question had ask/stated that the Law was nailed to the cross. You also said that you didn't think the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross just other stuff. How do you decide which parts of the Torah are like the Ten Commandments and still applicable, and which parts are voided by the cross? How do you reconcile Yeshua's statements in **Mt 5:17-19** with nullifying any part of the Torah? I don't think that there is any way to reconcile these two ideas, and from your letter I think you are also a little uncomfortable with the traditional ideas and teachings on the subject. Let's look at the short answer.

Verses 20-23 are again, **NOT talking about the bible**. They say specifically that they are dealing with "...doctrines of men..." not the scriptures. Since the Shabbat, festivals, diet, etc are not "doctrines of men" but teachings from the Bible, therefore they cannot be what is nailed to the tree. I have shown previously how what was nailed to the tree was the penalty for sin, not the Torah, which is the definition of sin. The final proofs come from the last verse of the excerpt which talks about, "...self imposed religion..." and, "...neglect of the body..." The only neglect of the body that is spoken of in the scriptures is to fast on Yom Kippur, one day a year. There is no "ascetic" idea found in the bible. The biblical tradition or religion is not self imposed but came down the mountain from YHVH. We may honestly disagree with exactly what was nailed to the cross of Calvary but we can be sure of one thing that wasn't on the cross: none of YHVH's words were nullified by the cross, and those words start with the Torah.

In future posting I will go on to talk about end times, hookeem/mishpateem, Two House, Noachide, and any other ideas that we have skipped over, I will fill in as we go.

Shalom friend, GG.