



## Colossians 2. <sup>13-19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; <sup>14</sup>blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; <sup>15</sup>and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. <sup>16</sup>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: <sup>17</sup>which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. <sup>18</sup>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, <sup>19</sup>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.

Paul is not very complimentary about the Law of Moses, a law under which he served for at least two or three decades. That law was, he says in this reading, “against us” and “contrary to us.” Though less militantly, Peter seems to agree with Paul, expressing his view that the Law was “a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.”<sup>1</sup> I always wonder if these two men felt this way before they encountered Jesus. I’ve often wondered if their liberating encounter with Jesus caused them to have such feelings or if it simply provided them the courage to speak it out loud. Either way, I, myself, have felt exactly as Peter and Paul in regard to my own inherited LDS religious law code. One can simply never satisfy it. It demands perfection.

All law codes do, of course. Take our common civic law codes. Suppose, for example, I am pulled over on the highway for driving 60 mph in a posted 30 mph stretch of road. I might try to explain to the officer that I was, in fact, a law-abiding citizen. I might do this by avowing that I had robbed no banks, had committed no arson or grand larceny, and had not murdered anyone. The officer will, nonetheless, cite me for breaking the speeding laws. By doing so, he will identify me as a lawbreaker, notwithstanding my record of 99% compliance.

This was the very point that Paul made in Galatians when he reminded his readers that the Law cursed, or pronounced, “guilty,” those who did not do everything the law demanded all of the time and that one could remain alive only through such 100% compliance.<sup>2</sup>

But the kingdom of God doesn’t actually operate on such exacting standards. Jesus came, in part, to reveal this message of hope. Jesus came to reveal a God who is much more nuanced than the Law of Moses was granted to be. He revealed a God in whom understanding and compassion and mercy dwell in abundance. He revealed a God who is forgiving.

Jesus also came to reveal the true nature of divine expectations. God’s expectations are not to be turned

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 15.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Galatians 3.<sup>10-12</sup>

into a kind of narcissistic acrobatic contest of ego perfection. Compliance to God's will is to be found in our attempts to be moved out of the same desires as Him whose "work and glory" was to advance the welfare and growth of others. Noncompliance to God involves behavior that harms others and stymies their advancement, not those that prick our too-oft too-sensitive, egotistical, and narcissistic conscience—things what we eat or drink, or what we do or don't do on a holy day or a new moon or a sabbath day, or a host of other shadowy forms of godliness. These things, as Paul says *are* mere shadows. They have little substance to them. As often as not they become false standards for self-righteousness.

We have Jesus to thank for taking them "out of the way, nailing... to his cross. Yet one more reason, of the many, to stand in awe at the foot of the cross and "view his death."<sup>3</sup>

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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<sup>3</sup> See Jacob 1.<sup>8</sup>