

# The Torah & The Apostolic Scriptures, part 6

## *“Is Colossians 2 about Food, Festivals, New Moon, and Sabbath Days?”*

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Refer to the last page: “How to Interpret Scripture”

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### Does Paul uphold the Torah in Colossians?

Your notes:

As we read Colossians 2:16-17, we see that Paul stated,

<sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Colossians 2:16-17

Unfortunately, many today believe that those ‘Jewish things’ are no longer valid; in their minds, these verses prove that the Old Testament Law is no longer applicable to Believers.

*But does this passage really say that?*

Paul’s intention could not be any clearer when he said, “therefore let no one pass judgment on you” regarding food, festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths.

Let us begin with **Paul’s interpretation of Scripture**, and then we’ll look at **the context of these verses**. At the end of this article, we will include **Paul’s interpretation** and sum up **the context of these verses**.

### Paul’s interpretation of Scripture

When Paul taught that:

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua]. <sup>2</sup> For the Torah [Law] of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] from the Torah [Law] of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

Paul is talking about the Torah (Law) of the Father: that the Spirit (Holy Spirit) of the Torah (Law) set us free from the Torah of sin and death!

<sup>3</sup> For God has done what the torah [Law], weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the Torah [Law] might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Holy Spirit). <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live

according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's Law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup>Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:3-8

Paul stated openly that in verses 3 and 4 when he said:

<sup>3</sup>For God has done what the (Torah) Law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:3-4

Notice that when Paul said that “the Torah [Law] was weakened by the flesh”, he was not suggesting that there was anything wrong with YHVH’s Torah, rather that the individual who walks in their flesh is in sin! The Torah (Law) is not the problem; it is the person who walks in sin that is the problem.

In verse 4, Paul continued

“in order that the righteous requirement of the Law [Torah] might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”. [Paul explained] “that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”. Romans 8:4

Notice Paul first states that those who walk in the flesh (sin) break the Torah (Law). Then, he explains that “the righteous requirement of the Torah (Law) **might** be fulfilled in us, [those] who actively walk not according to the flesh but who actively walk according to the Spirit [Holy Spirit].”

These verses explain what Yeshua overcame on the cross. He did not destroy the Torah (Law), but He overcame sin, so that we are enabled to walk in the Spirit (Holy Spirit) and keep and actively walk in His Torah.

And in Romans 8, verse 6, Paul stated that only the mind that is set on YHVH’s Torah (Law) can please God. Here Paul convincingly explained that we need YHVH’s Torah, for without His Torah (God’s perfect will) we cannot walk in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>6</sup>For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. Romans 8:6

In Romans 7:7, Paul proclaimed:

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? That the Law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the Law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” Romans 7:7

The Torah was accepted by all during the Second Temple Period; Yeshua lived during the Second Temple Period. Paul showed that he did not veer from that belief when he clarified that he would not have known YHVH's will regarding coveting without having been told by Torah. Thereby, Paul stated that the Torah was not sin.

A few verses later, he added:

<sup>12</sup> So the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. <sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. <sup>14</sup> For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. Romans 7:12-14

Paul declared that the Torah (Law) is holy, and the commandment of the Torah is holy and righteous and good, that is that only YHVH Himself is good. He points out that sin is our problem not Torah. He even called the Torah spiritual!

Paul told young Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15-17

<sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the Sacred Writings [the TaNaKh aka Old Testament], which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus). <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2Tim 4:15-17

He was reminding Timothy that from childhood he had known the sacred writings (TaNaKh) and especially the first five books the Torah. He told Timothy that these "Sacred Writings are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Messiah Yeshua".

Listen to this, "all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness". Note: Paul wrote this *before* the Apostolic Scriptures were canonized (Paul's words were not counted as Scriptures).

In verse 17 "that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work". 2Tim 4:17

The only Scripture from which Paul read was the Torah ... not his own writings! For Paul, the only Sacred Writings was the Torah.

## The context of these verses in Colossians 2

Examination of Colossians 2, verses 16-17, in its context reveals Yeshua's Word.

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Col 2:16-17

Paul could not be any clearer when he said, “therefore let no one pass judgment on you” about those Jewish things, especially, they are only a shadow. Unfortunately, many hold the belief that these ‘Jewish things’ are no longer applicable to Believers, which ‘proves’ the Old Testament Law is now superseded by the New Covenant!

It is very important to remember that ‘a text without a context is a pretext’. What this means is that it is critical to read a text in its own context and proof it in a larger text (the entire Word of God). Whenever someone attempts prove a point with only one Scripture without its context, he runs the risk of heresy.

## The Messiah’s Total Supremacy

In Colossians, chapter 1, Paul began by expounding on the attributes of the Messiah and His total supremacy!

Look at the context of the Scriptures below. Remember that Yeshua never changes - He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! We are repeatedly told that we are not to add nor subtract from His Words...His Words are absolute nourishment for every Torah-observant Messianic follower of Yeshua.

Slowly read and underline these words below; they are life changing.

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the Holy Ones (church). He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Col 1:15-20

Notice verse 23 of this same chapter, following the above declaration.

<sup>23</sup> “if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. Col 1:23

Paul starts with “if” which is a conditional conjunction. This conditional conjunction is followed by the emphatic “indeed” and “continue” (or “persist”). Paul is clarifying that “if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.” Paul tells us to be forthright in our actions and committed to Yeshua in every way.

The words with which Yeshua directed His disciples:

**4** But he answered, “It is written,” ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Matt 4:4 [Yeshua was quoting Deut 8:3: “that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord”.]

All disciples of Yeshua need to follow every Word of YHVH’s Written Word. Notice that Yeshua, in the Apostolic Scriptures, said that “it is written” meaning that these Words are not “common” words, rather they come from the Father!

In Colossians 2:4

**4** I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. Col 2:4

Here Paul is warning them to watch out for man mad heresies of all kinds. That is,

**6** “Therefore, as you received Messiah Yeshua the Lord, so walk in him, **7** rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving”. Col 2:6-7

Paul warned us not to be deluded with questionable arguments of another way or a secret insight to eternal life. He was not questioning the validity of the Torah, rather he was advocating the power of the Torah (Yeshua’s Word) and the ultimate authority!

In the same chapter, verse 13, Paul is talking about all of the great things that that the all-consuming God Yeshua had accomplished and provided for His Disciples on the cross. Paul said:

**13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.” Col 2:13-15

When reading the context of Colossians, we clearly see that Paul was talking about Yeshua’s having forgiven our trespasses (sins) and canceled our past record of debt (sins) that stood against us with its

legal demands (the curse of the Torah, for breaking YHVH's Commands). He set our past sins aside, nailing it to the Cross.

And in verse 14, the context continues, for Paul is talking about the forgiveness of sin, and that sin was nailed to the cross...not the Torah. It was not implied nor inferred that the Torah was set aside! Verse 15 says that Yeshua disarmed the rulers and authorities (Satan and his cohorts) and put them to open shame, by His triumphing over them. Paul makes it clear that Yeshua was the overcomer of the universe, for He destroyed the works of the devil (sin). When we walk according to the Torah, we are free from the sin (curse) of the Torah.

Let us return to our primary Scripture, Colossians 2:16-17. Paul stated:

<sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

When looking at the context, we understand that when Paul said, "therefore let no one pass judgment on you", he was not calling these (festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths) 'Jewish things,' but God ordained.

## Paul's interpretation of Scripture and Colossians 2:16-17 in context

Colossians 2:16 starts off with "therefore (this refers to the earlier statement about what Yeshua has done for us) let no one pass judgment on you in questions of <sup>1</sup>food and drink, or with regard to a <sup>2</sup> festival or a <sup>3</sup> new moon or a <sup>4</sup> Sabbath. The accusation that these are Jewish mystical or ancient items is not accurate, they are Yeshua memorials. Yeshua instructed us to keep them, according to the Scriptures.

In Col 2:16-17, there is no mention of legalism nor false man-made traditions of vain philosophy. We can see from examining Scripture, as a whole, the point was NOT that these were irrelevant for today as some would suggest, but there were YHVH's instructions.

<sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to the Messiah." Col 2:17

What does it mean that "these are a shadow of things to come"? They are memorials to come. Yeshua emphatically declared that He wants His disciples to keep His memorials here on earth; they are His memorials, not man-made.

<sup>18</sup>Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, Col 2:18

Now we shall read this same passage from the Amplified

<sup>18</sup>Let no one defraud you of your prize [your freedom in Christ and your salvation] by insisting on mock humility and the worship of angels, going into detail about *visions* [he claims] he has seen [to justify his authority], puffed up [in conceit] by his unspiritual mind, Amplified 2:18

Continuing with Colossians 2:19 in the English Standard Version:

<sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the head [of the body, Jesus Christ], from whom the entire body, supplied and knit together by its joints and ligaments, grows with the growth [that can come only] from God. Col 2:19

## Context

The only Scripture from which Paul read was the Torah ... not his own writings (& he wrote the majority of the Apostolic Scriptures)! For Paul, the only Sacred Writings was the Torah.

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## “How to Interpret Scripture”

*Three things to always apply when studying Scripture:*

1. *Contextually* – study Scripture within the context of the entire Bible.
  2. *Literally* – read Scripture literally – what do the words actually mean.
  3. *Historically* – understand Scripture within its historical/chronological context.
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*The character of Yeshua according to His Word:*

1. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, & forever,” [Heb 13:8; Malachi 3:6]
  2. “God is not a man that He should lie,” [Num 23:19; Heb 6:18]
  3. Do not add or subtract from the Scriptures, [Deut 4:2; Rev 22:18-19]
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## *Key Scriptures to Interpret the Bible*

Matt 28:18-20 – this is after His resurrection.

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:6-8 – after Yeshua’s resurrection, He spoke to His disciples about the restoration of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my

witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

John 3:36 – the book of John stated that obedience is key to eternal life:

<sup>36</sup>Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

1John 2:3-6 - the Apostle John asked, “Do you really know God?”:

<sup>3</sup>And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup>but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup>whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. [Note: Yeshua perfectly kept the Torah; likewise, we also need to &, thereby, stop sinning.]

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## Timeline

Pre-30AD - <i>Rabbinic tradition</i>	30AD – <i>Resurrection / Pentecost</i>	40AD – <i>Peter’s vision &amp; Cornelius (Acts 10)</i>	50AD – <i>Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)</i>	325AD – <i>Council of Nicaea</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Oral Law</li> <li>○ Customs of Moses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outpouring of the Holy Spirit to <u>Jews only</u> who came up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10 years after Pentecost</li> <li>○ Outpouring of Holy Spirit on <u>Gentiles only</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10 years after Acts 10</li> <li>○ Jerusalem Council – discussion about Gentiles’ salvation &amp; circumcision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under the auspices of Constantine</li> <li>○ Only Gentile bishops were allowed – Jews could not attend</li> </ul>