

Don't follow man-made laws.

Study on Colossians 2:8-23

This is a study of this section of Colossians to help us see the biblical context properly.

Verses are quoted from the NKJV.

Verse 8

Shaul (Paul) says we can be cheated through philosophy and traditions of men. We can even be cheated out of eternal life! Man-made laws are deceitful because we think these worldly acts and traditions are going to make us right with God, but they don't. Yeshua taught us that we should identify them as traditions; they are not commanded by God and He also taught that some of them keep us from observing God's commandments (that's the context of Matthew 15:9). Remember we are adding context to help us understand this section of scripture.

"8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

We understand so far:

* Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.

Yeshua said in Matthew 15:9 NKJV, "And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

(These summaries are a short synopsis only.)

Verses 9-10

This next section goes on to explain why we have been made free from these man-made traditions. It says that Yeshua is God and we are completed by Him (**and not** these man-made rules – implied by context). Since God rules all with power, we are not subject to these extra rules **just as Yeshua taught us**.

"9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

We understand so far:

* Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.

* We are completed by the Messiah and not in man-made tradition.

Verses 11-12

We are Yeshua's holy set apart people (the circumcision made without hands – which we should understand as the giving of the Holy Spirit – he is calling it the circumcision of the Messiah) and we put off sinful behaviors with the help of the Holy Spirit. Notice it says we have a responsibility to do this. When we were water baptized, this was symbolic of putting off the old nature and living a new life – this is living by faith, doing what we are commanded to do, and living with the help of the Holy Spirit. We are raised to a new life just like Yeshua was raised from the dead and by implication, we have hope in being raised from the dead through the Messiah.

"11 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."

We understand so far:

- * Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.
- * We are completed by the Messiah and not in man-made tradition.
- * We are Yeshua's holy set apart people through the Holy Spirit and not by man-made tradition.

Verses 13-14

We were dead in our shortcomings and sin, and we did not have the spiritual circumcision of the Holy Spirit. The Messiah has made all of us alive, a new people (a new person), made us His own (together with Him) and has given us forgiveness from all sin (probably implied is the unnecessary forgiveness for not keeping man-made tradition). It was Yeshua that wiped out the man-made handwritten commandments that were actually against us (for example, not being allowed to heal people and set them free on Shabbat – the Torah says we are to help animals on Shabbat so why not people; Deuteronomy 22:4).

"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."

We understand so far:

- * Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.
- * We are completed by the Messiah and not in man-made tradition.
- * We are Yeshua's holy set apart people through the Holy Spirit and not by man-made tradition.
- * We receive forgiveness by Yeshua. It is unnecessary to ask for forgiveness for not keeping man-made tradition.

Verses 15-17

Since Yeshua is over all (verse 9-10) He has taken away the powers of the devil over us (probably also meaning including these people who claim power over us with man-made laws). He had publicly cast out devil spirits and triumphed over them. (So, who are we going to listen to? These man-made rules or Yeshua?). Don't let anyone judge you with man-made rules about food or drink, man-made rules regarding God's festivals, the new moon (the beginning of the month) or man-made rules concerning the Sabbath.

People are going make up their own rules. Constantine changed Shabbat; **it is a man-made law**. This was the shadow of things to come:

"On March 7, 321, however, Roman Emperor Constantine I issued a civil decree making Sunday a day of rest from labor, stating: All judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun. ."

Also, what the Messiah has given us is more important – the Messiah is the substance.

"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."

We understand so far:

- * Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.
- * We are completed by the Messiah and not in man-made tradition.
- * We are Yeshua's holy set apart people through the Holy Spirit and not by man-made tradition.
- * We receive forgiveness by Yeshua. It is unnecessary to ask for forgiveness for not keeping man-made tradition.
- * These man-made traditions have no power over us. Don't allow anymore to judge us regarding man-made laws added to God's commanded food laws, feasts, new moons, or Sabbath days of rest. What the Messiah has done for us is more important than man-made laws.

Verses 18-19

We are cheated out of God's reward for following man's ideas such as false humility and worshipping angels. We can get all excited about things that men make up and teach as though they are true. Hold onto to the one we should be following (the Head, Yeshua). It is through Him that the body of believers receives its necessary means of growth from God (be woven together like the parts of a body and implied – not filled with man-made stories and doctrines).

"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."

We understand so far:

- * Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.
- * We are completed by the Messiah and not in man-made tradition.
- * We are Yeshua's holy set apart people through the Holy Spirit and not by man-made tradition.
- * We receive forgiveness by Yeshua. It is unnecessary to ask for forgiveness for not keeping man-made tradition.
- * These man-made traditions have no power over us. Don't allow anymore to judge us regarding man-made laws added to God's commanded food laws, feasts, new moons, or Sabbath days of rest. What the Messiah has done for us is more important than man-made laws.
- * Don't be cheated of your heavenly reward by things that men make up. They make us slaves to man-made worldly ideas and commandments (instead "hold fast" to what the Messiah taught us).

Verses 20-23

When we were baptized it was symbolic for dying to worldly made-up things, so why do we want to go back and be a slave (be "subject") to these things. Don't do it; they are worthless (perishable temporary man-made ideas). They may seem to be good ideas. They are man-made imposed religion, false humility, and asceticism (denying of self), and are of no value; they do not in fact help us to stay away from the sinful desire of our flesh.

"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.**"

We understand so far:

- * Beware of man-made philosophies and traditions. That's what the Messiah taught us.
- * We are completed by the Messiah and not in man-made tradition.
- * We are Yeshua's holy set apart people through the Holy Spirit and not by man-made tradition.
- * We receive forgiveness by Yeshua. It is unnecessary to ask for forgiveness for not keeping man-made tradition.
- * These man-made traditions have no power over us. Don't allow anymore to judge us regarding man-made laws added to God's commanded food laws, feasts, new moons, or Sabbath days of rest. What the Messiah has done for us is more important than man-made laws.
- * Don't be cheated of your heavenly reward by things that men make up. They make us slaves to man-made worldly ideas and commandments (instead "hold fast" to what the Messiah taught us).
- * Don't be a slave to things that will come to nothing. They may look okay, but they are not God's commandments and of "no value" against our fleshy desires.

(Again, these summaries are a short synopsis only.)

What is the context about?

- * "Philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men." Verse 8
- * "Which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men." Verse 22.
- * They are, "self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body." Verse 23.
- * These made up laws and traditions of men are of, **"no value"** against fleshy desires. Verse 23.

Notice how Shaul concludes his Jewish drash with a typically strong last point. Made up laws and traditions are not God's commandments and of, **"NO VALUE."**

Finally

I am sorry to say that some take Colossians chapter 2 out of context and come up with their own man-made doctrine. That is the exact thing these passages are telling us **NOT TO DO.**

That's what we have when we ignore the cultural context. We wouldn't take a persons words out of context, so why do we do it with the Bible? Most of the time, people take the Bible out of context to support our own man-made doctrine. Shaul is making the point that inappropriate made-up laws and traditions are not the commandments of God and are of "no value" against fleshy desires. Do we want made up religion? I don't. As we can see, modern Bible teachings often completely turn around what Shaul intended.

What were some of the made-up laws and traditions Shaul is talking about? They were about "food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths;" from verse 16. So, verse 16 actually has **nothing to do with not keeping** the Sabbath, God's feasts, or the food laws like so many teach. It's a rebuttal of man-made laws and traditions that were not commanded by God.

The Jewish Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) also came to set us free from the man-made laws and man-made doctrines of our present day. Please give this some sincere thought. Applying the Jewish biblical context is important.