

# “JESUS vs Legalism”

## Colossians 2:11-17

*Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes*

- "Consider the story of **Hans the tailor**. Because of his reputation, an influential entrepreneur visiting the city ordered a tailor-made suit. But when he came to pick up his suit, the customer found that one sleeve twisted that way and the other this way; one shoulder bulged out and the other caved in. He pulled and managed to make his body fit. As he returned home on the bus, another passenger noticed his odd appearance and asked if Hans the tailor had the suit. Receiving an affirmative reply, the man remarked, "Amazing! I knew that Hans was a good tailor, but I had no idea he could make a suit fit so perfectly someone as deformed as you." - **Often that is just what we do in the church. We get some idea of what the Christian faith should look like: then we push and shove people in to the most grotesque configurations until they fit wonderfully! That is death. It is a wooden legalism which destroys the soul.**
- "I am in earnest about forsaking 'the world' and following Christ. But I am puzzled about worldly things. What is it I must forsake?" a young man asks. "Colored clothes, for one thing. Get rid of everything in your wardrobe that is not white. Stop sleeping on a soft pillow. Sell your musical instruments and don't eat any more white bread. You cannot, if you are sincere about obeying Christ, take warm baths or shave your beard. To shave is to lie against Him who created us, to attempt to improve on His Work." - **Does this answer sound absurd? It is the answer given in the most celebrated Christian schools of the second century!**

**ESP** - "También en El ustedes fueron **circuncidados** con una circuncisión no hecha por manos, al quitar el cuerpo de la carne mediante la circuncisión de Cristo;

12habiendo sido sepultados con El en el **bautismo**, en el **también han resucitado** con El por la fe en la acción del poder de Dios, que Lo resucitó de entre los muertos.

13Y cuando ustedes estaban muertos en (por causa de) sus delitos y en la incircuncisión de su carne, Dios les dio vida juntamente con Cristo, habiéndonos **perdonado todos los delitos**,

14habiendo cancelado el documento de deuda que consistía en decretos

contra nosotros y que nos era adverso, y lo ha quitado de en medio, clavándolo en la cruz.

15Y habiendo despojado a (habiéndose desecho de) los poderes y autoridades, hizo de ellos un espectáculo público, triunfando sobre ellos por medio de El.

Advertencias contra Mandamientos de Hombres

16Por tanto, **que nadie se constituya en juez de ustedes** (nadie los juzgue) con respecto a comida o bebida, o en cuanto a día de fiesta, o luna nueva, o día de reposo,

17cosas que sólo son sombra de lo que ha de venir, pero el cuerpo pertenece a Cristo."

**NKJV** - "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, **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. 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**, 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. **Having disarmed principalities and powers**, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

**So let no one judge you** in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."

I. Spiritual **TRANSFORMATION** from Jesus:

- **Circumcision** - "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,.."

What is **circumcision**?

What does circumcision *mean*?

*When* was I circumcised in Christ?

What should *my life* look like, now that I've had a "spiritual circumcision"?

" ...by **putting off** the body of the sins of the flesh..."

- **Baptism** - "...**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."

What is baptism?

What does baptism mean?

When was I baptism in Christ?

What should my life look like now that I've had a "spiritual baptism"?

- **Regeneration** - "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him..."

"And you, being **dead**..."

Before we knew Christ, we were physically alive in the world, but we were spiritually dead to God.

"..He has made **alive**..."

After we knew Christ, we were spiritually alive to God, but are now dead to the world and its sinful practices.

- **Redemption** - "...having forgiven you all trespasses, 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. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."

"..having **forgiven** you **all** trespasses.." -

"forgiven" - Greek word "charizomai" the verb form of "grace"

We have been "graced" and "beautified" by Christ's forgiveness!

"..having wiped out **the handwriting** of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us."

This describes the Roman "titulus" describing the criminals charges or debts that had to be paid for. Ours, full of sin, was nailed to the Cross of Christ - and paid in full! (Jn 19:30)

"Having **disarmed** principalities and powers, He made **a public spectacle** of them, triumphing over them in it."

This describes the Roman military victory parade, in which the victorious conquering general led a procession of his own troops followed by the conquered enemy prisoners, and the captured treasures of war. It was a public spectacle to bring honor to the victorious general, and

also to shame his defeated enemies.

II. Practical **APPLICATION** for Jesus:

- **Liberation** - "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."

- "So let no one **judge you**.."

*in food or in drink  
regarding a festival  
a new moon  
sabbaths*

In contrast to the two commands of Christ, the Pharisees had developed a system of **613 laws**, **365** negative commands and **248** positive laws...By the time Christ came it had produced a heartless, cold, and arrogant brand of righteousness.

**Mark 7:1-8, 14-23 NLT** - "One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the **Jewish ritual of hand washing** before eating. (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands,\* as required by their **ancient traditions**. Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands\* in water. **This is but one of many traditions they have clung to**—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.\*) So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow **our age-old tradition?** They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony."

Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. **Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.**'"

For you **ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition....**" Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand. **It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.**"

Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used. "Don't

you understand either?" he asked. "Can't you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? Food doesn't go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer." (By saying this, **he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God's eyes.**) And then he added, "**It is what comes from inside that defiles you.** For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. **All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.**"

**As such, Legalism & Ritualism contain at least 10 tragic flaws:**

- (1) **Legalism** says new laws need to be continually invented for new situations.
- (2) **Legalism** says accountability to God is replaced by accountability to men.
- (3) **Legalism** replaces and substitutes Gods Eternal Word, for man's flawed and twisted opinions.
- (4) **Legalism** creates a judgmental & prideful spirit.
- (5) **Legalism** confuses personal preferences with divine law.
- (6) **Legalism** produces inconsistencies in people.
- (7) **Legalism** creates a false standard of righteousness.
- (8) **Legalism** becomes a burden to people.
- (9) **Legalism** is strictly external and mechanical.
- (10) **Legalism** was completely rejected by Christ.

"If moral behavior were simply following rules, we could program a computer to be moral." - **Samuel Ginder**, Washington Post

"I have found, in my own spiritual life, that the more rules I lay down for myself, the more sins I commit. The habit of regular morning and evening prayer is one which is indispensable to a believer's life, but the prescribing of the length of prayer, and the constrained remembrance of so many persons and subjects, may gender unto bondage, and strangle prayer rather than assist it." -

**C.H. Spurgeon**

"..which are a shadow of things to come.."

Passover

Pentecost/Firstfruits

Tabernacle

Ark of the Covenant

Ark of Noah

Sabbath

Jn 5:39 ; Ps 40:7 ; Luke 24

"..the **substance** is of Christ."

Jesus is the Reality, the Body, the True Substance  
foreshadowed in the Old Testament!!

• **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

Do you understand the **RADICAL TRANSFORMATION** that took place spiritually in your life when you were saved by Christ?

Are the spiritual truths of circumcision, baptism, regeneration, and redemption **REAL** in your life?

Are you truly walking in the **POWER** of the new life you have in Christ? Have you received Jesus power to throw off old sins, carnal habits, and wicked attitudes? Or do you still love your sin and make allowances for it?

Are you allowing anyone to judge and **CONDEMN** you with Legalism?

Are you yourself in **BONDAGE** to human rituals, man made rules, and external regulations, thinking it will increase your position /favor with God??