

After the Exodus, The Details

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality however, is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:16-17)

Our journey of freedom has started with Christ. By His bloodshed on the cross, He purchased His people and paid their debts to their jailers. The true Exodus from the prison of sin and death was announced from the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave declared His triumph over all the world’s power and authority. And from there, what are we now? While we put our faith and trust in Christ we become new men and women, free. Jesus has already broken our yoke of slavery, enabling our bowed and heavily laden backs to now stand straight by the cross. And, we are to lift our heads to see what is in front and what is above us. So, let us retire from our old identity and get rid of the old suit! Let us lay down the heavy load on our backs, for we are indeed in a new life.

From the above passage, Paul in His letter to the Colossians was speaking with the new Christian believers who before were Jews belonging to the land of Judea, who were either their previous belief was Jewish Judaism or they might not be previously Jewish but were under the power of Judaism. In brief, they were Christians but they were still belonging to history known to be a legendary culture and tradition. Identically, as new believers, we belong to a previous religion of this world or we have some behaviour that are still under the shadow of these religions, like observing outward things consciously or unconsciously believing they are the way for holiness. Some practices were imposed over the Colossian Christian community and those were burdens to them, and as well, such things are also burdens for us. What Paul wrote to the Colossians is considerable to us today. **“Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you:**

1) Eat or drink: In the Old Testament, God instructed the Hebrew nation about the clean food and about the unclean one that they should refrain from. Animals like camel, coney, pig, water creature without fins and scales, birds like vulture, eagle, raven, etc. should not be taken as food because they are unclean. But, Jesus Himself clearly stated that **“What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean’, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean’.” (Matthew 15:11)** Apostle Paul is fully convinced that, **“no food is unclean in itself.” (Romans 14:14)** Any food and drink received with prayer and thanksgiving is made clean by the blood of Jesus and they are beneficial for the physical body, with the exception of the food or drink like wine that make you lose your mind and set you on evil.

2) Or with regard to religious festival: The Jewish people according to Levitical law were to observe certain feasts proclaimed as sacred assemblies like the feast of weeks, the feasts of trumpets, and the feast of tabernacle. All these feasts and many others had essence that the

people of God should observe and always remember, not only for certain times, days, or seasons in the year, **but to keep in mind and to tell their children and their children’s children the meaning of every celebration or feast.** But, exactly what happened, the people remembered the day for celebration but they forgot the purpose and the meaning behind. The same story is certainly happening with us. When we were still in the world religions we were told to follow certain days in the calendar for feasts and celebrations. We rejoiced in certain time and seasons but then after, our happiness would fade and slow down. We used to observe months, the beginning of the moon, certain time to fast, certain time to break, certain time to pray. But, these calendar bondages were already broken by Christ. Today, we continuously rejoice and celebrate because, first, our joy for eternal life is our moment to moment momentum in this life, and second, the death of Jesus on the cross has abrogated the legal demands to observe the calendar schedules but has preserved the essence and the meaning behind all feasts and celebrations.

3) Or the Sabbath: One of the Ten Commandments is, **“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it Holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work.” (Deuteronomy 5:12-14)** But, Paul spoke in his letter to the Colossians about the above saying, **“These are a shadow of the things that were to come.”** The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. After six days of creation God rested on the seventh day. **“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s tests from His own work, just as God did for His.” (Hebrews 4:9-10)** To enter God’s rest is to enter Eternal life. And to enter into eternal life is to rest from your own work. You may gain everything by your own work, but you will never gain eternal life by your own good work. **“You cannot work for eternal life, it is God’s work and not your work.” For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no-one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)** So, the Sabbath is the eternal life and to enter it you need God’s grace and faith but not your work.

My Dear and Beloved: Whoever you are, I want to tell you that God is accessible to everyone through Christ Jesus. And whatever your previous belief or religion you are enlightened today about some of the things that you should forget and keep aside from your past, because as Paul said **“The reality however is found in Christ.”** Therefore, it is worthy to remember that: *“The cross of Jesus is not nails fixing a flesh of human who is hanged on two pieces of wood, but the cross is the means to make us free from heavy and old regulations that burden us. The cross of Jesus bridges us to eternal life.”*

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to follow and serve you and tell others about your goodness and faithfulness. Help me Lord to come out from all traditions and worthless human practices, this is my prayer in Jesus name. Amen.*