

## Colossians 2:16 introduction – <https://www.colossians2-16.com>

Never have I heard a scripture like Colossians 2:16 get interpreted in so many different ways and it almost always has something to do with the relevance of the Sabbath or the Ten Commandments or both. But I have also seen it used to the opposite extremes where some Christians say that Colossians 2:16 is why we must still observe the various holydays and new moon festivals associated with the ceremonial law.

So what was Paul saying to the Colossians? Was he telling them all the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross and they no longer have to love God with all their heart, mind and soul and love their neighbour as themselves? Or is Paul saying that the Seventh Day Sabbath has been nailed to the cross? This is the day God blessed and sanctified, the day that He told us to “remember to keep it Holy”, that one day a week that we are supposed to rest in Him by spending quality time with Him, family and other Christians. Is it now only nine Commandments? Doesn't God tell us in Isaiah 58:13-14 that we are to call His Sabbath a delight and that it is a love Commandment like the other nine?

And now to the other end of the scale, there are others who believe Paul is saying not to let anyone sit in judgment on you if you choose to keep the various ceremonial holydays that pointed forward to the work that Jesus did on the cross for us through His death and resurrection. Could this be the truth? The final point for Colossians 2:16 is, some say Paul is also pointing out that we can eat and drink any food we desire, including the foods that God said were unclean (unhealthy) such as pork? So what is the real truth?

### Colossians 2:14 by translation

In order that we can understand [Colossians 2:16](#), we need to understand what Paul is saying two verses earlier in verse 14. [Colossians 2:14](#) reads, “*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;*” So what exactly was nailed to the cross? The King James Bible is essential in understanding these verses as they have translated this passage very accurately. If you try to study this passage using other translations, you will only end up coming to the wrong conclusion or no conclusion or just confusion.

The keywords to understanding this verse are, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances.” The Greek word for blotting is “exaleipho”, pronounced “ex-al-i'-fo”. Strong's dictionary gives the definition; “to smear out, that is, obliterate (erase tears, figuratively pardon sin): - blot out, wipe away.” The next keyword in this verse is “handwriting” and the Greek word is “cheirographon”, pronounced “khi-rog'-raf-on” and the definition is, “something **handwritten** (“chirograph”), that is, a *manuscript* (specifically a legal *document* or *bond* (figuratively)): - **handwriting**.” And the last and final very important word we need to look at is “ordinances”, Greek word is “dogma”, pronounced “dog'-mah” and the definition is “a **law** (civil, **ceremonial** or ecclesiastical): - decree, **ordinance**.”

Did you note that last one? It means “a law”, and what type of law? The two words we should be very familiar with now are “ceremonial” i.e., “Ceremonial law” and “ordinances” which comprise all the things contained within the Ceremonial law. Having established it is the Ceremonial law, there is no way one can say that the Ceremonial law is the Moral law. The moral law is the [Ten Commandments](#) and is a law of love and the law we will be judged by. [James 2:11-12](#) “*For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*” And [1 John 3:4](#) tells us that sin is transgression of the moral law, “*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*”

## The two methods for making atonement for sin

When the Israelite sinned, what did he do to make atonement for his sin? He obeyed the law of sacrifices, the ceremonial law. When he broke law number 1 the moral law, he had to obey law number 2, the law of sacrifices to receive forgiveness for his sin. What do we do today if we sin? We genuinely repent of our sin and ask Jesus for forgiveness, which by faith and the grace of God our sin is remembered no more. Jesus permanently put an end to the ceremonial, sacrificial system when He cried out, *"It is finished"* and bowed His head and died. An unseen hand tore the temple curtain from top to bottom signifying the end to the Ceremonial system once and for all. As Paul puts it, Jesus *"...took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."* [Colossians 2:14](#).

Jesus did not nail love to the cross; He nailed the law the Israelites had to obey to make atonement for their sin up until the time that He took the place of that law by being that one and perfect sacrifice for all time. [Hebrews 10:8-10](#) says, *"Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin you wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the (ceremonial) law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do your will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

The ordinances are symbolic of the whole plan of salvation. Once this has been properly presented it should not be difficult to understand. There is no way this passage could ever be referring to [the Ten Commandments](#). If it were the Ten Commandments, then they would be the Moral law and the Sacrificial law and that would nullify the whole plan of salvation into meaningless nonsense. It is an absolute impossibility for the moral law to be both laws, it can only be the law of love that it is.

## Unclean foods or sacrificial offerings?

Having covered [Colossians 2:14](#), let's move onto [Colossians 2:16](#). It reads, *"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:"* Modern translations, that I should point out come from a different and less reliable source of manuscripts than the King James Bible, translate the first part of this verse to, *"do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink."* The remainder of this verse refers to holydays, new moon festivals and Sabbath days, which are all part of the ordinances of the ceremonial law. So apart from the issue of meat and drink or food and drink, the whole passage refers to the ordinances. Therefore the context of the passage is just that, the ceremonial law with the exception of *"meat and drink"*.

Why would Paul be talking about unclean food while talking about the sanctuary system? And where are unclean drinks spoken of in the Bible? There are strong drinks and unclean containers but never specifically unclean food and drink. So could Paul be speaking of something that had *"meat and drink"* in regards to the sanctuary system? There are in fact *"meat and drink offerings"* in the sanctuary system and they are referred to constantly in the Old Testament when speaking of making atonement for ones sin in regards to the ceremonial law. [Ezekiel 45:17](#) is one of the clearest verses that gives insight here. It reads, *"and it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel."*

[Colossians 2:14-16](#) *"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; [sin]... 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink [offerings], or in respect of an holy day [feast], or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:"* Parentheses are added.

Here we have the perfect parallel to [Colossians 2:16](#) that clearly states *"meat and drink offerings"* that were definitely part of the ceremonial law, which involved these offerings in the

feasts and new moons and ceremonial holyday sabbaths (plural). There were many ceremonial sabbaths such as Passover, feast of weeks and the Day of Atonement just to name a few.

Who wrote the book of Hebrews? Maybe Paul also wrote this book. While the author of Hebrews talks about the sanctuary system in regards to atonement for our sins, we also find “*meats and drinks*” referred to and the context is definitely not about unclean foods. Have a close look at the following passage and you decide if the context of this passage is about unclean foods or sin. [Hebrews 9:8-12](#) “*The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in **meats** and **drinks**, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*”

If we take Paul’s reference to “*meats and drinks*” as “*meat and drink offerings*”, then the whole passage revolving around Colossians 2:16 comes into perfect context. Paul would then be making full reference to the ordinances of the ceremonial law. It is unquestionably clear what fits together like a jigsaw puzzle with all the pieces fitting jointly perfectly here, and it is not [unclean food](#) and drinks.

### **What did Paul mean by a Shadow of things to come?**

In any case, “*meat and drink offerings*” is not the most important issue here. It is whether or not Paul is telling us that we do or don’t have to obey the moral law, and this point is unmistakable. Colossians 2:14-17 as you have now seen can only be referring to the ordinances as so clearly stated by Paul. [Colossians 2:17](#) says, “*Which are a shadow of things to come...*” These various holydays were a “shadow” of something to come. What were they a shadow of? Passover was a shadow of Jesus’ crucifixion. Jesus became our true Passover Lamb. [Leviticus 23:5](#) says, “*In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S Passover.*” And the feast the day after was a shadow of the time Jesus spent in the grave. [Leviticus 23:6](#) “*And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days you must eat unleavened bread.*”

The Feast of weeks, which occurred fifty days after Passover, was a shadow of Pentecost, which of course was fifty days after Jesus was crucified. [Leviticus 23:15-16](#) “*And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: 16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall you number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.*” There are many other shadows but I don’t believe it is necessary to give any further explanations, it should now be clear.

### **Colossians 2:16 by Albert Barnes Commentary**

This is what “Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible” says in regards to Colossians 2:16 about a “*shadow of things to come.*”

“**Colossians 2:16 - Or of the Sabbath days** - Greek, “*of the Sabbaths.*” *The word Sabbath in the Old Testament is applied not only to the seventh day, but to all the days of holy rest that were observed by the Hebrews, and particularly to the beginning and close of their great festivals. There is, doubtless, reference to those days in this place, since the word is used in the plural number, and the apostle does not refer particularly to the Sabbath properly so called. There is no evidence from this passage that he would teach that there was no obligation to observe any holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the Ten Commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number - “the Sabbath,” it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant*

*to teach that that Commandment had ceased to be binding, and that a Sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in the plural number, and the connection, show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not to the moral law, or the Ten Commandments. No part of the moral law - no one of the Ten Commandments could be spoken of as "a shadow of good things to come." These Commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation."*

### **Do we still have to keep the ceremonial sabbaths?**

The answer to this question for those reading this should now be clear but some believe they still have to keep these holydays. This was the whole point of what Paul was telling the Colossians. But did Paul mean don't let anyone judge you for keeping them or for not keeping them? Since Paul is telling the Colossians in verse fourteen that it, "*was against us, and was contrary to us*", then how could Paul be saying don't let anyone judge you for keeping them? If Paul told the Colossians that it was against them, then without doubt he was saying don't let anyone judge you for not keeping them. The ordinances were a temporary system that pointed to the work that Jesus did on the cross, and when God tore the temple curtain from top to bottom He showed this system was forever abolished.

The Israelites had been keeping this law of bondage for hundreds of years and it was hard for them to break the habit as you could well imagine. Paul also found himself having to explain the same thing to the Galatians in [Galatians 4:9-10](#). It reads, "*But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days, and months, and times, and years.*"

The "*days, and months, and times, and years*" were of course all the various holydays and monthly new moon festivals and the yearly Day of Atonement etc. Paul clearly refers to this law as bondage, which it was. The Ten Commandments on the other hand is the perfect law of liberty and freedom. [James 1:25](#) "*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*"

### **The two unfulfilled holydays**

The two feast days "Trumpets" and "Tabernacles" have not actually yet been fulfilled so why do they no longer have to be observed? Even though these days that have not yet met their literal fulfilment, Paul tells us beyond all doubt that all the ordinances were ended at the cross. [Colossians 2:14](#) reads, "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nailed it to his cross**,*" If any of these days were still to continue Paul would not leave us in the dark and would say so, but the verse unmistakably specifies that all were nailed to the cross with no exceptions.

The simple answer is the feasts before the cross had a literal application where after the cross they took on a spiritual application. There is no easy way to explain this without going into great detail and there are many examples which could and probably should be given but this would become very involved and lengthy so I will give one example. The Bible actually speaks of two Israels. Before the cross we had a literal Israel while after the cross we have a spiritual Israel.

Paul wrote, "*They are not all Israel, which are of Israel*" [Romans 9:6](#). What does this text mean? Those "*of Israel*" refer to people belonging to the literal Jewish nation but just because people are "*of Israel*," or Jewish, doesn't necessarily mean they are truly Israel indeed.

Paul said there is an "*Israel according to the flesh*" (1 Corinthians 10:18) and an "*Israel of God*" (Galatians 6:14-16) centered in Jesus Christ. The "*Israelites ... according to the flesh*" (Romans 9:3-4) refer to literal Jews who can trace their blood line back to Abraham but who do not as yet believe in Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Paul wrote, "*They which are the children of the flesh,*

these are not the children of God.” Romans 9:8. Thus this group although it has a wonderful religious heritage is made up largely of people who spiritually “are not the children of God.”

In the New Testament sense, “the children of God,” applies only to those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord (John 1:12). “The Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) refers to a composite group made up of both Jews and non-Jews who believe in the Crucified one, have died to self and been born again (see verses 14-15). This group is called “the Israel of God” because it is God centered, being made up of people who have a genuine experience with the Lord. Sadly, the majority of Middle East Israelis today don’t fit this description.

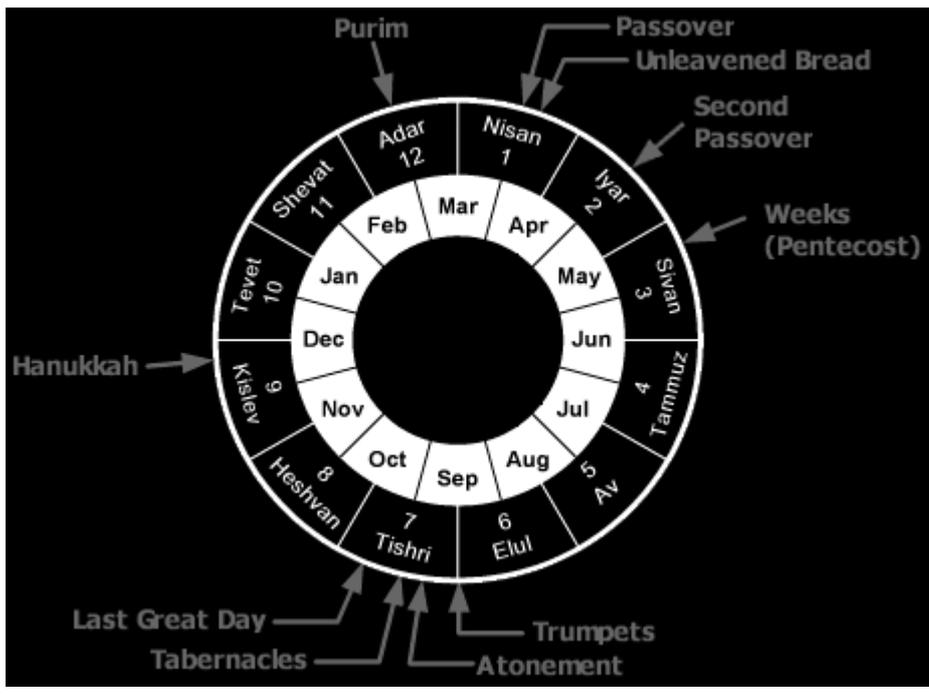
Writing to non-Jews, or Gentiles, Paul wrote, “And if you belong to Christ, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” Galatians 3:28-29. This passage teaches that a Gentile, if he “belongs to Christ,” is mystically injected into “Abraham’s seed,” which according to Isaiah 41:8 is Israel. In Galatians six, Paul summarized his doctrine by saying that anyone, circumcised or uncircumcised, who becomes a “new creature” through faith in Jesus, is now part of “the Israel of God”, verses 14-16. See also Romans 2:28-29. Thus before the cross we had a literal Israel but now those that are Christ’s after the cross are a spiritual Israel.

**Scriptures Used to Support Keeping the Feasts**

The minority that still insist we should be keeping the various feasts use many scriptural references to support their practice, however, most of them are references to times that were before their fulfilment and the cross. Keep in mind that if you feel a particular scripture is not perfectly clear, we can still be sure by the fact that Paul and the Bible never contradicts himself or itself.

There is no mistaking that Paul informs the Colossians that the ordinances were contrary to them and against them. Paul found that many were still keeping the feasts and had to teach them that these feasts were bondage and were nailed to the cross. As we covered earlier in Galatians 4:9-10, we saw the same situation as with the Colossians and Paul again had to explain that these ordinances were fulfilled. After Israel had been keeping these feasts for so many hundreds of years and almost by habit, it took a while with Paul’s guidance to show that this was no longer required.

**Main Feast days and times**



**Passover** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:4-5](#)

Matthew 26:2, 17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 2:41-42; Luke 22:1, 7-20; John 2:13, 23; John 6:4; John 13:1-30 - These scriptures are before the cross and this feast was fulfilled literally at the cross.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29 - In this passage, Paul speaks of communion which was first instituted on Passover as this was the perfect opportunity before His death. 1 Corinthians 11:26 says "**FOR AS OFTEN** [as often as you choose] as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come." The death of Christ replaced Passover as He became our Passover. See also [Wednesday crucifixion theory](#).

**Feast of Unleavened Bread** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:6-8](#)

Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 2:41-42; Luke 22:1, 7 - These scriptures are before the cross and this feast was also literally and spiritually fulfilled at the cross.

Acts 20:6 - Reads, "*after the days of unleavened bread*" with no reference to it actually being kept.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 - When you look at the context of this passage, you can see that Paul is not speaking literally of keeping the feast, but is symbolically saying that Christians should continually keep themselves free from the defilement of sin. That is, "old leaven" should be kept purged from his soul. Paul is using this symbolic example to show that in the same way a little leaven leavens a whole mass of dough, so just one sin or sinner can send a corrupting influence through the whole church.

**Feast of Pentecost** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:15-21](#)

Acts 2:1-21 - This is Pentecost itself and is where this feast met its literal fulfilment.

Acts 20:16 - Paul says "*if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.*" Paul was certainly not going to keep the day after saying keeping these days were against us, contrary to us, bondage and were nailed to the cross. Many others were still keeping these days which Paul used to his advantage to preach the Gospel and this was the perfect opportunity to correct those that did not yet understand they no longer needed to keep these days as he did with the Galatians and Colossians.

1 Corinthians 16:8 - Paul says "*But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.*" As we already know, this feast was being unnecessarily kept as seen by Paul's letters and he would correct all on the day.

**Feast of Trumpets** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:23-25](#)

Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 11:15 - These verses refer to the sound of the trumpet blown with the second coming of Christ and are incorrectly linked to the blowing of trumpets which was done just before the Day of Atonement.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary says: "*the blowing of trumpets represented the preaching of the gospel, by which men are called to repent of sin, and to accept the salvation of Christ, which was signified by the day of atonement. Also it invited to rejoice in God, and become strangers and pilgrims on earth, which was denoted by the feast of Tabernacles, observed in the same month. At the beginning of the year, they were called by this sound of trumpet to shake off spiritual drowsiness, to search and try their ways, and to amend them. The day of atonement was the ninth day after this; thus they were awakened to prepare for that day, by sincere and serious repentance, that it might indeed be to them a day of atonement. The humbling of our souls for sin, and the making our peace with God, is work that requires the whole man, and the closest application of mind. On that day God spake peace to his people, and to his saints; therefore they must lay aside all their worldly business, that they might the more clearly hear that voice of joy and gladness.*"

**Day of Atonement** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:26-32](#)

Acts 27:9 - This feast met its literal fulfilment when the sanctuary was cleansed as shown in Daniel 8:14. See Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary above on the blowing of trumpets.

### **Feast of Tabernacles** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:33-44](#)

John 7:1-2, 8, 10, and 14 - These scriptures are all before the cross and so are not relevant. This is one feast that has not yet met its literal fulfillment but was still nailed to the cross and now only has a spiritual application.

Acts 18:21 - Every commentary I studied agree that this is actually referring to Pentecost that has met its literal fulfillment. "Jamieson, Fausset & Brown" commentary quotes the following: "*I must ... keep this feast - probably Pentecost, presenting a noble opportunity of preaching the Gospel.*" "Adam Clarke's" Commentary on the Bible: "*I must ... keep this feast - Most likely the Passover, at which he wished to attend for the purpose of seeing many of his friends, and having the most favorable opportunity to preach the Gospel to thousands who would attend at Jerusalem on that occasion.*"

### **Last Great Day** - Found in the Old Testament: [Leviticus 23:36](#)

John 7:37-38 - This passage is before the cross and so is not relevant. This is part of the Feast of Tabernacles and so likewise has also not met its literal fulfillment but was still nailed to the cross.

### **The confusion of Galatians 4:9-10 and Colossians 2:16**

[Galatians 4:9-10](#) like Colossians 2:16 has also been abused in both ways as part of Satan's plan to keep people confused but most importantly, away from one of the Commandments of God. Some have concluded that since the Sabbath of the Lord is a day and Galatians 4:9-10 uses the word day, and Paul speaks of bondage, then the fourth Commandment must be bondage and done away with.

As shown earlier, the Ten Commandments are the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25), and Galatians 4:9-10 speaks of bondage which the "Law of Moses" (ordinances) was. It had ceremonial feast Days, Monthly new moon festivals and Yearly ceremonial sabbaths that all ended at the cross. Not so with the Ten Commandments which are to last as long as Heaven and Earth (Matthew 5:17-19.) Compare this passage with Colossians 2:14-16 that Paul also wrote.

[Galatians 4:9-10](#) "*But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days, and months, and times, and years.*"

[Colossians 2:14-16](#) "*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; ... 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink [offerings], or in respect of an holy day [Holy days], or of the new moon [months], or of the Sabbath days: [years eg; Passover sabbath etc.]*" Parentheses are added.

There is no doubt that the Greek word for "ordinances" means the ceremonial law or the Law of Moses. Strong's definition is "*a law (civil, ceremonial or ecclesiastical): - decree, ordinance.*"

Part two of the **Thayer Dictionary** sheds even more light.

"2) *The rules and requirements of the Law of Moses; carrying a suggestion of severity and of threatened judgment.*"

The "Law of Moses" is also called the "Mosaic Law", the "Book of the Law" and as we have seen by the definition given by the KJV Bible in Colossians 2:14, the "Ordinances." There is no doubt that the Book of the Law (ordinances) is not the Ten Commandment law and that Paul has said we no longer need to observe the feast holydays that were associated with these ordinances as some teach in ignorance. This was the whole problem that Paul was addressing as some Jews were still doing this.

The proponents teaching we still need to keep the feast days say that these days, months and years in Galatians 4:9-10 are pagan feast days and not the "Law of Moses." If one continues

reading chapter 4, we find Paul leaves no chance of misunderstanding the bondage he is referring to as he compares the two Covenants made at Sinai. One Covenant was the Ten Commandments [*the Perfect law of Liberty - freedom*] which represented the free woman, while the other Covenant was the “Law of Moses” which is represented the bond woman. So unless God made a Covenant with Moses on pagan feasts days, (obviously not) then the bondage referred to by Paul is the “Law of Moses.”

**Galatians 4:21-26** *“Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”*

For further confirmation on what Law Paul is referring to in verse 21 above, note the following from the late famous theologian Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.S.A., (1762-1832).

**“Galatians 4:21 - Ye that desire to be under the law** - *Ye who desire to incorporate the Mosaic institutions with Christianity, and thus bring yourselves into bondage to circumcision, and a great variety of oppressive rites.*

**Do ye not hear the law?** - *Do ye not understand what is written in the Pentateuch relative to Abraham and his children. It is evident that the word law is used in two senses in this verse. It first means the Mosaic institutions; secondly, the Pentateuch, where the history is recorded to which the apostle refers.”*

Select for detailed information on [what is the law in Galatians](#).

### **Is it a sin to still keep the various ceremonial sabbaths?**

So Paul definitely refers to the ceremonial law as a law of bondage, but is it a sin to still keep these obsolete holydays if we want to? It certainly would be if one were to still sacrifice animals as this would deny the work of Jesus on the cross. This is what Paul said to the Romans in [Romans 14:5-6](#) *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he does not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”*

When you study the whole of Romans chapters 14 and 15, it becomes clear that several misunderstandings existed between Jewish and Gentile Christians in relation to certain customs which were sacredly observed by one but disregarded by the other. The primary subject of dispute was concerning meats and days. Some converted Jews retaining respect for the Law of Moses abstained from certain meats and still observed the ceremonial holydays while the converted Gentile understood that Christianity put him under no such obligation or regard to these ordinances.

It also appears that mutual and heartless judgments existed among them and that brotherly love and reciprocal tolerance did not always prevail. Paul exhorts that in such things no longer essential to Christianity, that even though both parties had a different way of thinking they might and probably do still have an honest and serious regard for God. Paul further explains they should not therefore let different sentiments hinder Christian fellowship and love, but they should mutually refrain and withhold and make allowance for each other and especially not carry their Gospel liberty so far as to prejudice a weak brother or a Jewish Christian. So here Paul tells the Romans not to judge a weak brother and if he still feels he needs to keep any of the holydays unto the Lord then let him do so.

It is not a sin to desire to be obedient to God, and even if Seventh day Sabbath keepers do not have to keep the Seventh day Sabbath any longer they are also not in any trouble for doing so. They are just trying to obey God because they love Him. However, if the Sabbath is eternal in nature as are the other nine Commandments, and those that know the truth choose the way of denial and excuses, they most certainly could be in trouble. If you are ever not sure, "then do the safe thing."

### **Colossians 2:16 passage summary**

Paul tells us in Colossians 2:14-17 that the ceremonial law was nailed to the cross and we do not need to observe these various holydays, many of which were sabbaths, and monthly new moon festivals. This system pointed forward to Christ and the work He did on the cross through His death and resurrection. Paul also called it a law of bondage and said it was against us and contrary to us but he also clearly told us not to sit in judgment of anyone who feels need to still keep those days.

This should also be a lesson to those who constantly condemn those who know they *should* still be keeping the fourth Commandment being the Lord's Sabbath that He wrote in stone. To do so is not Christ like love and dangerous to do so. If Paul says don't judge your brother for keeping a temporary law that pointed forward to Christ, then how much more should those that believe it is now only nine Commandments not judge those who understand that the Bible reveals it is still Ten Commandments. Especially when Jesus says in [Matthew 5:18-19](#), "*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*"

Those who enjoy keeping God's Seventh day Sabbath also know that if you break one Commandment you are guilty of all. [James 2:8-12](#) "*If you fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, You shall love your neighbour as thyself, you do well: 9 But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*"

But as for those temporary ceremonial sabbaths, keep them if that is what you really feel you need to do. But to teach keeping the feasts is compulsory is serious error and would make you a Judaizing teacher. Paul and our Lord made it quite clear that these ceremonial holy days ended at the cross, and it denies the work of Jesus on the cross. So if you love the Lord, then it is not something you really want to do. For even more detailed information on Colossians 2:16 and keeping the feasts, see [Colossians 2:16 and the ordinances and the feasts](#).