

YOU ARE  
COMPLETE  
in  
HIM.  
COLLOSSIANS 2:10, NKJV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

## Christ is the Substance

On what basis was the old covenant established? On what basis were the sacrifices instituted and the regulations for the people imposed? The old covenant was established on the basis of the priesthood of Moses, as contrasted with the new covenant's being established on the basis of the priesthood of Christ, as the writer of the epistle to the Hebrew Christians notes: "For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also" (Hebrews 7:12). Hence that which was established through Moses was replaced by that which is established through

Christ. The *law of Moses* was supplanted by the *faith of Christ*.

- **Trappings of the Law** — God used many instructions and regulations under the terms of the old covenant to establish His moral code and to separate His people Israel from the pagan influences of the world around them. But because the saints of the new covenant are governed by a different system of thought, the Colossians were instructed not to be persuaded to come back under the weak and elementary system of the Law. "Therefore let no one act as your judge," he exhorts the brethren, "in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day" (Colossians 2:16). The Christian was not to let anyone pressure him into being brought back into the system of clean and unclean foods or the libations of the old covenant. It was not necessary for him to observe the Passover, Pentecost, or the Feast of Booths. Gone was the requirement of keeping the feast of the new moon, or meeting in the synagogue on the Sabbath and doing no work. No one — not even the most hard-cased convert from the Pharisees — could pass honest judgment on the Christian for refusing to knuckle under to these seeming godly demands.

- **Shadow not substance** — The things of the law of Moses were physical types and foreshadows of the things of Christ and Christianity. The Sabbath, the new moon festival, the temple, and even the dietary regulations were "things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Colossians 2:17). The Old Covenant was a covenant for a physical people, with physical blessings for obedience and physical cursings for disobedience. Christ, however, is a spiritual High Priest of the order of Melchizedek, and the New Covenant is of necessity a spiritual covenant. People who are of "the flesh" gravitate toward physical things because they cannot perceive the value of spiritual things. Hence the various aspects of the Law — even today — have appeal for those who have not truly been born from above, as Jesus stated: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The dietary laws, the special feast days, the physical priesthood, all draw religiously interested people to them if they are operating in ignorance.

The substance, clearly, is Christ, particularly Christ in glory. The grand event of the temple was the offering of the high priest of Israel on the Day of Atonement; this stately prefigured the offering of Christ's own blood in heaven itself. The Passover pointed to the day of Christ's crucifixion as the ultimate Passover lamb. Pentecost, the Feast of the Beginning of the Harvest, set in motion the true harvest of the first souls as recorded in Acts chapter two. The Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Ingathering in the fall, was a type of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, wherein all the redeemed have been gathered as the angels finished the final reaping of the souls of men. The Sabbath foreshadowed the rest that comes from the peace of being reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Christ, and the dietary regulations of clean and unclean set a basis for discerning of moral and immoral behavior. The saint of the new covenant, then, is to focus on the glorified Christ, and not get pulled back into the things of the physical covenant.

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