

*All That Matters*  
**Lesson 6—Released**  
**Colossians 2:16-23**

**I. A Mere Shadow (v. 16-17)**

(Shadow, reflection, copy)  
Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism.

“Therefore” – because Christ has canceled our debt and disarmed the rulers and authorities, we are set free. Christ has brought the Kingdom of Heaven to earth – “Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it” (Matthew 5:17).

“Christians are members of the ‘age to come’ for which Israel had been waiting. But ‘when the perfect is come, the partial is abolished’ (1 Corinthians 13:10): or, as he puts it here, *these are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ*” (N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, Logos).

“The old covenant observances pointed to a future reality that was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Hebrews 10:1). Hence, Christians are no longer under the Mosaic covenant (cf. Romans 6:14-15; 7:1-6; 2 Corinthians 3:4-18; Galatians 3:15-4:7). Christians are no longer obligated to observe OT dietary laws (‘food and drink’) or festivals, holidays, and special days (‘a festival....new moon....Sabbath,’ Colossians 2:16), for what these things foreshadowed has been fulfilled in Christ” (English Standard Version Study Bible, p. 2297).

Hebrews 9:11-26; 10:1-10 & 14

The Tabernacle, the sacrifices and the feasts were all a shadow or picture of Christ. Now that Christ has come, the law has been fulfilled and we have seen the manifestation of God among us (Matthew 5:17).

In the Old Testament, the people could not approach the Lord without sacrifice. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement to make atonement for the sins of the people. He had to fast, wash and dress just as prescribed by the law to not be consumed by God’s holiness. He wore a turban with a gold plate on the front that said, “Set apart as Holy to the Lord” (Exodus 28:36).

Jesus is the propitiation for our sin and has made us the very righteousness of God in Him. What we could not approach, the very Holy Presence of God, without being consumed, now dwells within us without destroying us.

## II. Christ Plus Nothing (v. 18-19)

“This self-inflation and pride in private religious experiences comes of not maintaining contact with the head. Every part of the body will function properly so long as it is under the control of the head;” (E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *The International Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, p. 251).

“If you would live in victory over the circumstances, great and small, that come to you each day ... .. and if you want God's life and power to well up from the depths of your being ... .. then you must refuse to be dominated by the seen and the felt... You must look steadfastly through the visible, until the invisible opens up to you” (Amy Carmichael. *I Come Quietly to Meet You: An Intimate Journey in God's Presence* (Kindle Locations 151-153). Kindle Edition).

Growth comes from Christ alone!

## III. You Died with Christ (v. 20-23)

We cannot defeat the flesh with the flesh. The flesh is overcome by the Spirit.

“The imposition of prohibitions from without can do nothing to create a new nature within” (E.K. Simpson and F.F. Bruce, *The International Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, p. 254).

The “outward” interpretation of spiritual formation, emphasizing specific acts as it does, will merely increase “the ‘righteousness’ of the scribe and Pharisee.” It will not, as we must, “go beyond it” (Matthew 5:20, PAR) to achieve genuine transformation of who I am through and through—Christ’s man or woman, living richly in His Kingdom (Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (p. 23). The Navigators. Kindle Edition).

A God Box –

“Get a box, write down your problems, pray about them, and put them inside. I get that doing this may feel a little strange at first, but there is just something about the symbolism and the action of placing your problems in the box, giving them to God. And then, if you choose to worry, having to take them back out and confess your struggle to Him” (Groeschel, Craig. *Winning the War in Your Mind* (p. 186). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).

When my love for Christ surpasses my love for self, sin loses its hold. My problem is not lack of restraint of the flesh but disordered loves. Jesus must be preeminent!

“MY FATHER, AS IF I am the only one in your universe right now ... as if you are all that matters in mine.... Forgive me the days I thought that meeting with you was ‘insignificant’ compared with all I had to do. I come quietly to meet you, Father ... needing to be loved ... and needing to love you” (Amy Carmichael. *I Come Quietly to Meet You: An Intimate Journey in God's Presence* (Kindle Locations 100-102). Kindle Edition).