

# Colossians 6 –

Greetings in the name of the supreme one, Jesus Christ. Thank you for joining us at Redemption Church. Greetings to all of our online viewers. We are coming to you live from beautiful Plano, Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt and I am blessed to present the word of God to you today.

We are in our 6<sup>th</sup> week studying the book of Colossians. Please turn with me in your Bibles and Bible Apps to Colossians 2.

## Colossians

While you are turning to the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Colossians I want to tell you thank you for your support of this Church. Because of your faithful giving we were able to bless the Apostolic Bible Church in Maykop, Russia. Please keep that Kingdom work in your prayers.

Can anyone remind me what the theme of the book of Colossians is?

## Christ is Supreme

Let's keep that theme in mind as we read. Let's begin with verse 15 of Colossians 2.

Colossians 2:15 (NIV2011) And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:16 (NIV2011) 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.

Colossians 2:17 (NIV2011) These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Let's clap our hands for the word of God.

## Outline

Jesus Supreme V 15

Hints to problems in Colossae V 16-23

Shadow vs Reality V 16-17

It is good to study the word of God. Sometimes we study topically. We pick a topic and look at a few verses throughout the Bible. This is a good way to gain some understanding on various topics. But for the last few weeks we have been going verse by verse through an entire book of the Bible. There is a lot to be gained this way.

We gain a better understanding of the context and we pick up on a theme within the writing. **If we correctly understand the theme and context of the writing, it will help us correctly interpret the scripture.**

As we said earlier... the theme thus far could be narrowed down to the words – Christ is Supreme.

## **Christ is Supreme**

If Paul is a good consistent writer, then this theme should continue. Our interpretation of scripture should remain inside this theme.

It is important to remember that these words we are reading are a one way conversation. **A good conversation should make sense and progress ideas.** The book of Colossians, and the entire Bible for that matter, is an example of good conversation... a sensible progression of a thematic idea.

Here is an example of bad conversation.

## **BAD CONVERSATION**

“Colossae, Christ is supreme. I pray that you would know Jesus better. The other day Timothy brought me a wonderful baked potato. In Christ you have access to all the mysteries of God...”

What didn't belong? The wonderful baked potato was not in the theme or progress of any idea. It didn't progress the conversation and by its addition actually detracts from the power of the conversation.

Now this letter to Colossae is not just any conversation... because we believe we are reading the unfailing & supernatural Word of God. **This Word of God is TRUTH and in every verse it is progressing the TRUTH of God.**

HOWEVER.. Sometimes mistakes are made in how we interpret this Word of Truth. Sometimes we interpret scripture incorrectly by not staying focused on the theme and progression of ideas. As we said, Scripture is good conversation, but sometimes we misinterpret scripture into bad conversation.

The theme of this book is the superiority, the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Everything should be read & understood through this theme. This is the Word of God, so it will hold to its proper message and theme, so if it

suddenly gets off course from the theme, it is because of our faulty interpretation.

There is a potential misinterpreted baked potato verse in our reading today. Look at verse 16. I want to be clear, I am not saying that Paul was wrong in saying this. I am also not saying that it was mistranslated into our English language. I am saying that this verse is often misunderstood by people who are ignoring the THEME OF Christ's supremacy.

Let's read it again...

Colossians 2:16 (NIV2011) 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.

If you go to Google and search "Colossians 2:16 meaning" you will find about 149,000 search results. And in those search results will be 2 prevalent view points on the same scripture.

**Viewpoint 1** – Colossians 2:16 tells us that you should NOT watch what you eat or drink, keep any of the Old Testament festivals, the Sabbath, or the Law of Moses in general. Anyone that tells you otherwise is deceived and not really a Christian.

**Viewpoint 2** – Colossians 2:16 tells us that you should watch what you eat or drink, keep the Old Testament festivals, the Sabbath, and the Law of Moses in general. Anyone that tells you otherwise is deceived not really a Christian.

Now I don't want you to freak out... We are going to clear things up... but first we need to sit in this awkwardness.

We have 1 scripture. 2 polar opposite viewpoints. What gives!?

No wonder Christianity has such a problem with denominationalism. We splinter over single verses like this. Some denominations form over the interpretation, or often MISINTERPRETATION of a single verse.

So which viewpoint is correct? Is Colossians 2:16 telling us WE SHOULD or WE SHOULDN'T.

"Which viewpoint is correct" is not actually the right question. The right question is "What did the writer mean? What were they trying to convey?"

The arguments of viewpoints take us down the trail of denominational infighting. Perhaps without even realizing it we super impose our bias upon the scripture. Interpreting through the lens of bias will not ever reveal the truth. So what lens should we look through in interpreting scripture?

# What lens should we look through in interpreting scripture?

We should not interpret according to denomination or any human traditions. Paul has been speaking this way in Chapter 2 already. (Colossians 2:8)

2 quick answers for this question.

## #1 Jesus Christ should be your lens.

John 5:39 (NIV2011) You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,

There is much scripture to back up this idea. The basic idea is this...

Jesus reveals all TRUTH because He is the way the TRUTH and the life. (John 14:6)

Jesus reveals God because He is the image of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15)

Jesus reveals the Word, because He is the Word. (John 1:1)

Your Bible says that God is love and that God loves us... but it is best seen through Jesus on the Cross loving us in a self-sacrificial way.

**Connect every scripture you read, to the Christ you have received.**

Make Jesus the lens of all scripture interpretation.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> answer is very similar...

## #2 The continued theme should be your lens.

What is the theme of that book of the Bible and how does it relate to this scripture? This requires you actually read your Bible and not just pick out random verses as proof text.

We have been saying that the theme of Colossians is Christ is supreme.

## Christ is Supreme

So how can we interpret Colossians 2:16 through the lens of Christ and the theme that Christ is supreme? Let's try...

*Let's try viewpoint one...*

Colossians 2:16 (NIV2011) 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.

Jesus Christ is supreme. So you need Christ... but you also need to make sure you DO NOT keep the Sabbath. You better not celebrate a religious festival because that would be bad. Jesus is Supreme. You need Jesus, plus you need to not do this other stuff...

That ought to remind you of the Baked Potato example earlier. It seems off topic. It is bad conversation that doesn't progress the theme.

*Let's try viewpoint two...*

Jesus Christ is supreme. So you need Christ... but you also need to make sure you DO keep the Sabbath. You better celebrate religious festivals because it would be bad if you didn't. Jesus is Supreme. You need Jesus, plus you need to do this other stuff...

It is an opposite viewpoint, yet it it similarly seems to be off the theme of the Supremacy of Christ.

I feel like both viewpoints incorrectly interpret what Paul was trying to say. These interpretations treat these verses like BAD CONVERSATION.

Remember the context! Paul just said in verse 15 that Jesus TRIUMPHED OVER THE POWERS BY THE CROSS. And then one sentence later they jump to a different theme entirely. They are saying that Jesus triumphed but make sure you don't do this... or Jesus triumphed but make sure you do this... Nothing is more important than the cross... except this over here... make sure you DO or DO NOT do this stuff... That is not good conversation. That is not how Scripture works. That is a tell-tell sign that someone is misinterpreting scripture.

**And in the case of twisting scripture, misunderstanding scripture, we often make it say the opposite of its original intent.**

The verse says DO NOT LET ANYONE JUDGE YOU... yet viewpoints 1 & 2 is all about judging people who DO or DON'T! Leave it to us humans to totally miss the point! Christians actually take a verse that says DO NOT LET ANYONE JUDGE YOU... we take that verse and judge everyone by it!?

Colossians 2:16 (NIV2011) 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.

The word "therefore" is sometimes thrown into translations to help fill the language gap. In order for a translation to make sense in another language

we sometimes have to massage the words and add a few filler words. Not in this case. The word “therefore” is actually in the Greek script. The Greek word for ‘therefore’ is “oun” (ü'n), and it is used 526 times in scripture. It is used always to clarify and solidify a previously made point.

The previous point is the Supreme Christ triumphed through the cross. You must carry the point of verse 15 into verse 16. This is way Paul says THEREFORE...

Because Christ has triumphed... Because He has disarmed the enemy...  
Because Jesus Christ is supreme... Do not let anyone judge you...

## **Paul hints at a problem in Colossae**

He doesn't come out and name this problem. There truth is that there is more than one problem present if we continue reading in the chapter. But for now let's investigate some clues to find a problem.

In verses 11 & 13 Paul mentions circumcision. This should remind you of Old Testament commandments that were kept by the Jews.

Then Paul mentions other Jewish traditions (and commands) in verse 16. Dietary restrictions, religious festivals, new moons & Sabbath days were all practiced by Jews.

Colossae was a diverse city. The majority of people in that city were not of Jewish decent, they were Gentiles.

There was a group of Jews in Scripture who would travel around and stir up strife and confusion among Gentiles. In Galatians 2 they are called a “circumcision group” who went to vastly Gentile city of Antioch to “force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs.”

Gentiles were being hit with a message that Jesus is not enough... you also need the Sabbath... you also need circumcision...

Paul never names this problem but these clues lead us believe the same might be happening in Colossae.

## **How do you solve this problem?**

Think about this for a moment. Does Paul tell the Gentiles to go ahead and adopt circumcision? Does Paul condemn those who are circumcised?

Actually “How do you solve the problem” is not the right question. Try this instead...

## **In light of the Supremacy of Christ, how do you solve this problem?**

Paul never leaves the theme of Christ's supremacy. So much of our denominational infighting tries to solve the problems by hurling scriptural grenades at each other... meanwhile straying far from the supremacy of Christ.

Because Jesus is supreme... you don't have to yell at each other with red faces.

Because Jesus is supreme... you don't solve the problem by sending everyone to hell who disagrees with you.

Because Jesus is supreme... the answer to our problem is Jesus.

Paul doesn't tell Jews to stop keeping the Sabbath...

Paul doesn't tell Gentiles to start keeping the Sabbath...

Instead Paul tells everyone under the banner of a triumphant Christ to NOT JUDGE EACH OTHER.

## **Don't judge each other over traditions**

Do Christians today need this message today? You bet we do.

At the heart of most of our denominational arguments is pride, and the need to prove ourselves correct. What if instead of trying to win the argument, we encouraged others to make Christ Supreme.

We could get in an argument over baptism. What is the correct way to baptize? We could reject and rebuke everyone that is not baptized like we were baptized... or we could encourage others, BECAUSE CHRIST IS SUPREME you can be baptized as Jesus was in scripture! You can be baptized just like He commanded his apostles to baptize.

We could argue over communion. How often should we take communion? Is it really blood and flesh? Who is allowed to take communion? We could reject and rebuke everyone that holds a different viewpoint... or we could encourage others, BECAUSE CHRIST IS SUPREME you can remember His body & His blood like He showed us in scripture.

We could argue about worship styles. Should we sing from a hymnal or projector? We could reject and rebuke... or we could declare CHRIST IS SUPREME...

We could argue tithing...

We could argue Sabbath...

We could argue speaking in tongues...

We could argue the rapture and the tribulation...

You can argue and actually be scripturally correct. You could actually win the argument... but end up in a bad conversation that no longer progresses the theme that Christ is Supreme. Our message is still that Christ is Supreme!

What is your message to the Homosexual debate and the LGBTQ crowd?  
Christ is Supreme?

What is your response to the Gun debate? Christ is Supreme?

What is your response to abortion rights? Christ is Supreme.

Instead of arguing to keep or to not keep a Jewish tradition, Paul continues to argue to make Christ Supreme.

If you keep all of the Old Testament law... that really is not the issue. MAKE CHRIST SUPREME!

If you don't keep them... that is not the issue. MAKE CHRIST SUPREME.

Google, what is the meaning of Colossians 2:16...? 149,000 results that argue the interpretation without paying any attention to the theme that Christ is supreme.

We often miss the point.

## **Missing the point**

Be careful that you don't miss the point Christian.

Colossians 2:17 (NIV2011) These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Paul takes a complex situation and simplifies it to where everyone can understand it.

Raise your hand if you have a shadow?



If I see your shadow does it mean you are nearby? Yes

If I see your shadow is that the same as seeing you? Is your shadow the clearest representation of you? No. I can't tell you are smiling or scowling by looking at your shadow... I would need to see your face for that information.

Can shadows be distorted and misleading? Depending on your position to light your shadow might make you look impossibly short or impossibly tall.

The shadow is never supposed to replace your body. The body is the reality. And in Paul's analogy – the reality is Christ.

## **Musician**

### **JESUS is the point**

If you are arguing over shadows instead of embracing the reality of Christ... you are missing the point.

You can come to church and miss the reality...

You can sing on the praise team or in the pew and miss the entire point...

You can preach the sermon and miss the point that Christ is supreme and what you really need...

You can open up your wallet and give and miss the point...

You can abstain from sin and miss the point...

You can serve your community and miss the point...

I wonder... are we missing the point?

We are about to spend some time talking to God. If you don't reach out to Jesus Christ... then you are missing the point. Don't settle for the shadow... embrace Jesus as reality.