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THE CHRISTIAN AND TIME-KEEPING IN COLOSSIANS 2:16 AND GALATIANS 4:10

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Traditionally, Col 2:16 and Gal 4:10 are understood as the negation of Christian observance of Jewish time-keeping schemes, including Sabbath observance. However, Troy Martin has recently proposed radical reinterpretations of these two verses, which are consistent with the continued Christian observance of the Jewish religious calendar.[1]

For Martin, the major problem with the traditional interpretations of Col 2:16 and Gal 4:10 is that each verse is understood in terms of the other, i.e., Gal 4:10 is read as confirmation that the evaluation of the Jewish calendrical list in Col 2:16 is negative, while Col 2:16 is read as confirmation that the calendar of Gal 4:10 is Jewish rather than pagan.[2] However, Martin argues that the critics of the Christian church in Colossae were probably not condemning the Colossians for failing to keep the Jewish calendar. Instead, they may have been condemning them for continuing to observe it.[3] Likewise, Martin contends that Paul is condemning pagan rather than Jewish observances in Gal 4:10.[4] The purpose of this article is to evaluate each claim in turn.

The Calendrical List of Colossians 2:16

In Col 2:16, the Colossians are enjoined to let no one judge them in eating and drinking, or in matters of a feast day, a new moon, or sabbaths. Martin admits that Col 2:16 is ambiguous as to whether the critics "condemn the Colossian Christians for engaging, not engaging, or engaging incorrectly in these practices."[5] However, he seeks to clarify the matter on the basis of v. 17.

Colossians 2:16, 17, is traditionally translated along the following lines:

[1]Troy Martin, "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal 4.10 and Col 2.16," *NTS* 42 (1996):105-119.

[2]Ibid., 107.

[3]Ibid., 111.

[4]Ibid., 111-119.

[5]Ibid., 107.

> Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων· ἅ ἐστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
>
> Let no one, therefore, judge you in drinking and in eating, or with respect to a feast, or a new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of the coming things, but the body [is] Christ's.

In such a translation, the expression τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ is clearly interpreted "as a nominal clause with an ellipsed ἐστίν . . . [connected] syntactically to the subordinate relative clause, ἅ ἐστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων."[6] However, Martin critiques this interpretation on two grounds. First, he suggests that the expression should end in the nominative ὁ Χριστὸς rather than in the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ, i.e., as "the body [is] Christ" rather than as "the body [is] Christ's."[7] Second, he argues that "δὲ is a coordinating conjunction that can connect only grammatical equivalents."[8] Accordingly, if these two clauses are connected, then "τὸ σῶμα . . . must be a predicate nominative with the relative pronoun ἅ as its subject," which leads to the nonsensical translation of Col 2:17: "which things are a shadow of things to come but which things are the body of Christ."[9] Martin, therefore, proposes that τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ should be construed with the independent clause at the beginning of v. 16, μὴ οὖν τις ὑμας κρινέτω.[10] He, then, suggests that Col 2:17 should be translated as "but (let everyone discern) the body of Christ," i.e., let everyone discern the body of Christ in the various practices listed in v. 16.[11] He concludes that these practices are probably those of the Colossian Christians rather than those of the opponents.[12]

Martin's innovative interpretation is syntactically feasible; however, he is unduly dismissive of the traditional interpretation. In view of the casual introduction of "head" and "body" in Col 2:19, and assuming that the author wishes to include the redeemed community in the foreshadowed reality, it makes sense for v. 17 to affirm that "the body

[6]Troy Martin, "'But Let Everyone Discern the Body of Christ' (Colossians 2:17)," *JBL* 114 (1995): 249.

[7]Ibid., 249, 250.

[8]Ibid., 251.

[9]Ibid.

[10]He notes a parallel construction in 1 Cor 10:24 and the movement from negative to positive nuances of κρίνω in Rom 14:13 (ibid., 252).

[11]Ibid., 252-254.

[12]Ibid., 255.

[the substance of the shadow] (is) Christ's (body) [the church]."[13] It is true that the conjunction δὲ is a coordinating conjunction. However, the equivalence required between coordinating clauses is that of their position within the hierarchy of the sentence, not that of their clause types. In Col 1:26, the independent clause, νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ ("but now it has been manifested to his holy ones"), is clearly coordinate with the preceding relative clause, τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν ("the mystery hidden from the ages and from the generations"), rather than with either of the nearest preceding independent clauses in v. 24. In Col 3:8, the independent clause, νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα ("but now you also kill all things"), stands in contrast to the relative clauses of v. 7, ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις ("in which you also walked then, when you lived in them"), rather than having any direct connection with the nearest preceding independent clause in v. 5. There is, therefore, no reason why, in Col 2:17, the expression τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ should not be translated as an independent clause ("but the body [is] Christ's"), which is coordinated with the relative clause ἅ ἐστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων ("which are a shadow of the coming things"), rather than as a nominal phrase connected to the nearest preceding independent clause of v. 16.

The question of the translation of Col 2:17 clearly cannot be settled on syntactical grounds alone. However, it can be settled by an examination of the semantics of the preceding nominal phrase in v. 17, σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων ("a shadow of the coming things"), in order to determine whether its use is pejorative or positive.

The clearest NT parallel to Col 2:17 is the reference in Heb 10:1, where the law is presented as "a shadow of the coming good things, not the very image of the things."[14] "Shadow" (σκιὰ) stands in the same relationship to "image" (εἰκών) in Heb 10:1 as it does to "body" (σῶμα) in Col 2:17.[15] In Heb 10:1, the shadow is clearly portrayed as inferior to the

[13]On the double *entendre* at work between the body as substance and the body as church, see N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, vol. 12, TNTC (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1986), 120,121; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 117.

[14]Σκιὰν . . . τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων. On the P^{46} reading καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα ("and the image"), rather than οὐκ αὐτὴν εἰκόνα ("not the very image"), see F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 225, n. 1.

[15]On the synonymous meaning of εἰκών and σῶμα as synonyms, see Lohse, 116. The use of "body" instead of "image" in Col 2:17 may be due to the special emphasis on the term in Colossians, discussed above (ibid., 117).

image or reality it represents.[16] Christians are not encouraged to continue observing the shadow. They are called to focus on the reality instead.[17]

Martin notes that, according to Col 2:17, the practices of v. 16 "*are* a shadow of things to come" (present tense). Thus, he argues that "the text affirms a present, albeit temporary, validity to the shadow."[18]

> The μελλοντα ["things to come"] could only be viewed as having already set in, either in whole or in part, if ἦν and not ἐστί were used previously, and thereby the notion of futurity were to be taken relatively, in reference to a state of things then already past.[19]

On the other hand, Heb 10:1 affirms that the law *is* "a shadow of good things to come,"[20] despite the fact that the Epistle to the Hebrews provides no argument for the continued validity of the shadow. The reason may be that in Hebrews the future is pictured as already present in the person of Christ.[21] Alternatively, Heb 10:1 may be parallel to Heb

[16]The earthly sanctuary is a shadow of Christ's better ministry (Heb 8:3-6). The sacrifices of the law never bring perfection but must be repeated continually from year to year (Heb 10:1-4, 11). The true sacrifice brings perfection and is not repeatable (vv. 12-18).

It has been denied that "the very image of the things" is equivalent to "the coming good things" in Heb 10:1 (John Brown, *Hebrews* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1961], 432). He states further: "I can nowhere find evidence that the phrase, 'image' or 'likeness' of a person or thing, ever signifies the person or thing itself. 'Shadow' and 'image' seem to me equally expressive of pictorial representations, though of different degrees of distinctness" (ibid., 433). However, Kuhli notes that the idea that the terms "σκιά and εἰκῶν probably distinguish the outer appearance from the essence of the thing itself . . . is supported by the change of meaning in εἰκῶν in Hellenistic Greek such that the concept is increasingly detached from the characterization of the 'true form' [RSV] and could represent a large range of nuances from 'copy' [Plotonius Enn. iv.7] to 'characteristic feature' and 'visible manifestation' [ibid., v. 8] to 'prototype' and 'original image' [Lucian Vit. Auct. 18]" (Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 1:390, s.v. "εἰκών, όνος, ἡ eikōn image, likeness, archetype."

[17]The author of Hebrews speaks of the first system of sacrifice and offering being set aside to establish the sacrifice of the body of Christ (10:8-10), while he speaks of the first covenant being made obsolete by the second covenant (8:13).

[18]Martin, "But Let Everyone Discern the Body of Christ," 249, n. 1; see also Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 356, 357.

[19]H.A.W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875), cited in Bacchiocchi, 387.

[20]The present participle ἔχων ("having") indicates contemporaneity with the main verb of the sentence, the present indicative δύναται ("can," not "could"). Notice also the use of a present indicative in the relative clause ἅς προσφέρουσιν ("which they are offering").

[21]Thus, the subjection of "the world to come" (τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν) to humanity is said to have already begun in the exaltation of Jesus (Heb 2:5-9), while believers are said to have already tasted "the powers of the age to come" (δυνάμις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος,

9:9, which speaks of "the present time, according to which [Levitical] gifts and sacrifices *are* being offered,"[22] not because of any desire to affirm the continued validity of the Levitical system, but as a hypothetical concession to the opponents for the sake of argument.[23] Whichever view is adopted, there is no reason to believe that the situation should be any different with the use of the present tense in Col 2:17.

To summarize, Martin's proposed translation of the clause τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ in Col 2:17, "but [let everyone discern] the body of Christ," has as much syntactical validity as the traditional translation, "but the body [is] Christ's." However, a comparative study of Col 2:17 and Heb 10:1 shows that in Col 2:16 the phrase σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων ("a shadow of things to come") is pejorative, a fact that decidedly favors the traditional translation. The evidence is thus against Martin's proposal that the practices of Col 2:16 are those of the Colossian Christians rather than those of the opponents. While these practices may have had validity at one time, this validity has ended with the advent of Christ.

On the other hand, it is not necessary to interpret Col 2:16, 17 as opposition to any sort of calendrical observance. If Col 2:16 does refer to the practices of the opponents, it does not necessarily follow that the Colossians do not have positive counterparts. Desmond Ford notes that the apostle "is not opposed to all eating and drinking, although he says in 2:16, 'Let no one judge you in eating and drinking.'"[24] He then suggests: "Neither is he [the author of Colossians] against all Sabbath-keeping."[25] Another interpreter points out that when the elements of the calendar in Col 2:16 are listed sequentially in the OT, special sacrificial offerings prescribed for the sacred times are in view rather than the days themselves.[26] It is beyond the scope of this article to explore the implications of these suggestions in detail. However, Mark 2:27 seems to point to a NT tradition in which the Sabbath is seen as a universal

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Heb 6:5) and to have already approached "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ, Heb 12:22), the city "that is to come" (τὴν μέλλουσαν, Heb 13:14).

[22]τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται.

[23]John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter*, vol. 12, Calvin's Commentaries, trans. William B. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 118.

[24]Desmond Ford, *The Forgotten Day* (Newcastle, CA: Desmond Ford, 1981), 106.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Paul Giem, "Sabbatōn in Col 2:16," *AUSS* 19 (1981): 206-208.

creation ordinance.[27] To the extent that the author of Colossians himself may have seen the Sabbath as predating sacrifice and offering, there would appear to be no basis for seeing Col 2:16 as a rejection of Sabbath-keeping in its entirety.

The Calendrical List of Galatians 4:10

Martin concedes that, in and of itself, the calendrical list of Gal 4:10—ἡμέρας καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς("days and months and seasons and years") "can be either pagan or Jewish."[28] However, he argues that the immediate context of the verse is decisive:

> In 4.8, Paul mentions the former pagan life of the Galatian Christians. In 4.9, he asks them how they can desire their former life again. He then proposes their observance of the time-keeping scheme in 4.10 as a demonstrative proof of their reversion to their old life. . . . Considering only the immediate context of Gal. 4.10, the list must be understood as a pagan temporal scheme.[29]

Although Martin does not acknowledge them, there are precedents for this view.[30] His special contribution is not the view itself, but the way that he proposes to harmonize it with the focus on submission to circumcision and the law in the rest of Galatians. For him, the Galatians do accept circumcision as an essential element of the Christian gospel, but they do not agree to submit to it. Instead, they revert to their former paganism.[31]

In favor of this proposal, Martin argues that it resolves the tensions between "some important passages [that] indicate the Galatians have already exchanged Paul's circumcision-free gospel for the opposition's other gospel (Gal 1.6. 3.1-5; 5.7)" and other passages that indicate the Galatians have not yet been circumcised, e.g., Gal 5:1, 10.[32] However, the use of the present tense μετατίθεσθε ("you are turning away") in Gal 1:6

[27]Gerhard F. Hasel, "Sabbath," *ABD* (1992), 5:855.

[28]Martin, "Time-keeping Schemes," 112.

[29]Ibid., 112-113.

[30]While he rejects the view that the Galatian Christians have returned to their former pagan lifestyles, Martin Luther claims that "almost all doctors have interpreted this place as concerning the astrological days of the Chaldeans" (*A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, rev. trans., [London: James Clarke, 1953], 392). More recently, R. A. Cole comments that "it is not necessary . . . to see any Jewish influence in these Galatians; in all forms of paganism there is some form of 'casting horoscopes,' with consequent 'lucky' and 'unlucky' days" (*The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC [London: Tyndale, 1969], 119).

[31]Martin, "Time-keeping Schemes," 113.

[32]Ibid., 114.

suggests an ongoing but incomplete process. Paul's incredulous questioning in Gal 3:3-5 also suggests an incomplete process, especially in v. 4, where he qualifies his question, "Have you suffered so in vain?" (τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῇ;) with the forlorn expression of hope, "If [it were] indeed in vain" (εἴ γε καὶ εἰκῇ). The use in v. 5 of the present participles, ἐπιχορηγῶν ("one who supplies") and ἐνεργῶν ("one who works") is a further indication that the apostasy of the Galatians is not complete. In Gal 5:7, the infinitive phrase μὴ πείθεσθαι ("not to obey") may indicate purpose rather than result. There is no indication here that the opponents have fully accomplished their purpose. Martin gives no attention to evidence that the Galatians may not have begun observing the calendar list of Gal 4:10.[33] Even so, it would hardly be surprising for the Galatians' opponents to begin with the cultic calendar before moving on to the subject of circumcision,[34] notwithstanding the fact that the Galatians ultimately "remain shut out (Gal 4.17) unless they take the necessary step of circumcision."[35]

The major problem with Martin's proposal is that he seems to have devised it *ad hoc* in order to harmonize Gal 4:8-10 with the book as a whole without systematically examining how well it actually fits the evidence in the epistle itself. When a systematic examination is made, five major problems with the proposal emerge.

First, the turn from the true gospel by the Galatian Christians is as much practical as it is theoretical. It is not a mere rejection of doctrine, for Paul tells them that it is a turning away "from the one who called you in the grace of Christ" (ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ, Gal 1:6). The turn "to another gospel" (εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον) is likely to be just as practical. In other words, it is not a matter of the Galatians concluding that circumcision is a part of the Christian gospel, then deciding that they must reject Christianity in order to avoid circumcision. They are seriously contemplating embracing the Judaizers' gospel for themselves.

Second, in Gal 3:2 Paul expects the Galatians to affirm their *initial* reception of the Spirit "by hearing with faith" (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως), even if they now plan to be perfected through the flesh (v. 3). If the Galatians have returned to paganism, it would be expected that they would deny they had

[33]See Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 299; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 217.

[34]Ernest de Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 233.

[35]Martin, "Time-keeping Schemes," 113.

ever received the Spirit at all. Their danger is clearly more subtle. Just as the Judaizers have done, so they too will accept their reality of initial justification by faith in Christ, but then rebuild what they have destroyed (Gal 2:16, 18).

Third, Martin may doubt the prospect of Gentiles being willingly circumcised, but the Judaizers seem to have been convinced that just such a practice might be possible. Their zeal for the Galatians might not have stemmed from pure motives, but there is no doubt that they expected it to be reciprocated (Gal 4:17), while Paul's distress over the Galatians' lack of zeal for the gospel in his absence suggests that he also believed the Judaizers' expectations were being met (Gal 4:12-18). There is no hint that anyone expected the Galatians to reject both the Judaizers and Paul.

Fourth, that some of the Galatians are seriously contemplating circumcision is evident from the fact that in Gal 4:21 Paul uses the second person verbs λέγετε and ἀκούετε ("tell" and "hear") to address "those who desire to be under law" (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι), for Paul never addresses the opponents as his readers, only the Galatians themselves.

Fifth, the Galatians are told that their persuasion to disobey the truth does not come "from the one who called you" (οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντας ὑμᾶς; Gal 5:8). They are warned that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (μικρά ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ, Gal 5:9). Both statements would be profoundly disturbing admonitions to people who believe that their legalism is bringing them closer to the Christian God, but pointless truisms to those who have openly adopted paganism.

Of course, it is one thing to criticize Martin's proposed harmonization of the immediate and broader contexts of Gal 4:10. It is another to advance a more convincing hypothesis. Martin rightly rejects the suggestion that a Jewish-pagan syncretism is in view,[36] for while evidence of a syncretistic opposition can be found throughout Colossians, there is no clear supporting evidence of syncretism in Galatians. However, a possibility that Martin has overlooked is that in Gal 4:8-10 Paul is intentionally identifying the Galatians' practice of the Jewish calendar as the spiritual equivalent of the paganism that they have left behind.[37]

At first sight, this identification appears to be a Marcionite equation. However, it must be remembered that when Paul speaks of "law" and

[36]Ibid., 106, n. 6.

[37]See Witherington, 297, 298; G. Findlay, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 2d. ed., Expositor's Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), 264, 265; George S. Duncan, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955), 136; Otto Schmoller, "The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians," in *Galatians-Hebrews*, Lange's Commentary, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 105, 106; E. Huxtable, "Galatians," in *Galatians-Colossians*, Pulpit Commentary, vol. 20 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 235.

"the works of the law," his focus in Galatians is on the legalism of the Judaizers, rather than on the prophetic religion of the OT.[38] For example, the refusal to share in table fellowship with Gentiles is a clear characteristic of the law religion of the Judaizers (Gal 2:11-13). However, it is not commanded by the OT.[39] In fact, the NT elsewhere rejects this halakhah on the basis of the Pentateuch itself.[40] Likewise, the Sinai covenant was not originally a covenant of slavery (Exod 20:2); that is a later understanding (Gal 4:25).

Due weight must be given to the polemical use of irony in Galatians.[41] The Judaizers are said to prove themselves transgressors of the law in the very act of promoting the law (Gal 2:18); they might think that they are keeping the whole law, but they are not (Gal 6:13). Their lawkeeping produces the works of the flesh, not the fruit of the spirit (Gal 6:16-20).[42] It is, thus, consistent with the tone of the letter that the time-keeping of the Judaizers actually causes them to lose their distinctiveness from the pagans (Gal 4:8-11).

How is it possible, then, to maintain a calendar observance that is in keeping with the prophetic religion of the OT? Paul clearly argues for the historical relativity of the law instituted 430 years after the Abrahamic

[38]William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, rev. ed., Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 37.

[39]George Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia*, 2d. ed., SNTS Monograph Series, no. 35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xix-xx, citing Esth 5.4ff.; 7.1ff.; Dan 1.8-16.

[40]Acts 10:15 has traditionally been interpreted as teaching the abolition of the distinctions between clean and unclean foods. However, this interpretation fails to recognize the subtle difference between the adjectives κοινός ("common") and ἀκάθαρτος ("unclean") in Acts 10:14; 11:9. The latter term refers to inherently unclean animals, and the former term to clean animals defiled by association with unclean animals. See Colin House, "Defilement by Association: Some Insights from the Usage of κοινός/κοινόω in Acts 10 and 11," *AUSS* 21 (1983): 146-149. In the Pentateuch it is only the corpse of an unclean animal that defiles a clean animal, not an unclean animal itself while it is still alive (Lev 11.24). Accordingly, the command in Acts 10:15, "What God has cleansed, do not call common" ("Α ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοίνου) does not contradict the Pentateuch, but is directly based upon it. The implication is clear: association with Gentiles will no more defile the Jew than the unclean animal will defile the clean, not because Lev 17 has been abrogated, but because it still stands (ibid., 153).

[41]It has been strongly argued that the new covenant of Jer 31:31-34 is simply the Sinai covenant fulfilled. Wilber B. Wallis, "Irony in Jeremiah's Prophecy of a New Covenant," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12 (1969): 107. In other words, the new covenant is objectively the same as the old covenant, but new to Jeremiah's listeners because they have no experiential knowledge of its longstanding terms (ibid., 108). Wallis significantly notes the same irony at work in Gal 4:21-31(ibid., 109); see also William Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians*, NTC (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1968), 157.

[42]Howard, 12-17.

covenant (Gal 3:15-17). It is, therefore, unlikely that he would have advocated the wholesale Christian adoption of the pentateuchal calendar. However, to the extent that he may have seen the Sabbath as a creation ordinance predating the Abrahamic covenant, there would appear to be no basis for reading Gal 4:10 as a rejection of all Sabbath-keeping.

Conclusion

Martin has argued that in Col 2:16, the critics probably condemned the Colossians for continuing to observe the Jewish calendar, rather than for setting it aside. On the other hand, he argues that, in Gal 4:10, Paul does not condemn the Galatians for adopting a Jewish calendar, but for embracing a pagan calendar instead. However, the evidence surveyed in this article suggests that the practices of Col 2:16 are those of the critics, which are evaluated negatively by the author, and that Gal 4:10 identifies the Galatian Christians' particular practice of the Jewish calendar as the spiritual equivalent of the paganism that they had left behind. Nevertheless, neither text should be read as a wholesale rejection of the entire Jewish calendar. For example, Mark 2:27 seems to point to a NT tradition in which the Sabbath is seen as a universal creation ordinance to the extent that this tradition may have been assumed in Colossians and Galatians. There would appear to be no basis for seeing it as abrogated in these epistles.