

Colossians 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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;

Analysis

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. The "handwriting of ordinances" (cheirographon tois dogmasin, χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν) refers to written certificates of debt documenting unpaid obligations. Ancient debtors signed acknowledgments of debt; creditors held these until payment. Paul pictures the Mosaic Law as such certificate, documenting humanity's failure to fulfill covenant requirements, testifying against us before God's tribunal.

Christ "blotted out" (exaleipsas, ἐξάλειψας, literally "wiped away") this debt certificate and "took it out of the way" (ērken ek tou mesou, ἤρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου, "removed from the midst"), eliminating its legal force. Most dramatically, He "nailed it to his cross" (prosēlōsas auto tō staurō, προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ). When Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they unwittingly nailed our certificate of debt there—Christ paid what we owed, satisfying justice's demands.

Historical Context

Roman crucifixion typically posted the victim's crime above the cross (titulus). Pilate's inscription "King of the Jews" stated Jesus's supposed offense (John 19:19-22). Paul transforms this imagery: the real inscription was humanity's sin debt; Jesus paid it fully, canceling our obligation. This substitutionary atonement

doctrine—Christ bearing our penalty—stands central to biblical soteriology, differentiating Christianity from all works-based religious systems.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How vividly do you grasp that Christ literally bore your specific sins' penalty at Calvary?
2. What religious obligations or rules do you still feel bound by that Christ actually canceled?
3. How should Christ's complete payment affect your pursuit of holiness—does it promote license or gratitude-motivated obedience?

Interlinear Text

ἐξαλείψας	τὸ	καθ'	ἡμῶν	χειρόγραφον	τοῖς		
Blotting out	G3588	that was against	us	the handwriting	G3588		
G1813		G2596	G2257	G5498			
δόγμασιν	ὃ	ἦν	ὑπεναντίον	ἡμῖν	καὶ	αὐτὸ	ἔρκεν
of ordinances	which	was	contrary	to us	and	it	took
G1378	G3739	G2258	G5227	G2254	G2532	G846	G142
ἐκ	τοῦ	μέσου	προσηλώσας	αὐτὸ	τῷ	σταυρῷ·	
out of	G3588	the way	nailing	it	G3588	to his cross	
G1537		G3319	G4338	G846		G4716	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 44:22 (Parallel theme): I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Hebrews 7:18 (Parallel theme): For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

Hebrews 8:13 (Parallel theme): In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Isaiah 43:25 (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Colossians 2:20 (Parallel theme): Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

1 Peter 2:24 (Parallel theme): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Isaiah 57:14 (Parallel theme): And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

Acts 3:19 (Parallel theme): Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Psalms 51:1 (Parallel theme): Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Numbers 5:23 (Parallel theme): And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: