

# NAILED TO THE CROSS—COL. 2:14

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## [The Seed of Abraham](#)

Colossians 2:14 offers a theological insight of Paul's, that the Church uses to nullify the Law, but in actuality what Paul writes does not support the Church's anti-Mosaic Law stance. Here are two translations with the verse, one from the New King James Version and the second from the New American Standard Bible:

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, *having forgiven you all trespasses*, having wiped out the *handwriting of requirements* that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross.” (NKJV Colossians 2:13-14)

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out *the certificate of debt* consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross. (NASB Col. 2:13-14)

The Church teaches that Mosaic Law was ‘nailed to the Cross’ upon Christ’s death, but the Greek word for ‘the handwriting of requirements’ that was nailed to the Cross is *kairo'grafone*. It has nothing to do with the Law of Moses, but literally is a *written record of one's financial indebtedness*. Paul uses it in a spiritual way to speak of our record of sins, our sin indebtedness against God and man that would accuse us before God. Yeshua (Jesus of Nazareth) took that, our sins, upon Himself<sup>1</sup> that we might stand before the God of Israel in His righteousness. It was this record of our sins that was nailed to the Cross.

Very telling is the fact that the Greek word for Law, *nomas*, is never once mentioned in the whole letter. If the Apostle had meant that the Law was nailed to the Cross he certainly was negligent in writing about it.

In ancient Greece, a man who was owed money by one who didn't pay him, stood in the middle or midst of the courtroom, between the judge and the accused, and he presented to the judge his written record of the debtor's financial indebtedness, in Greek, the *kairo'grafone*.<sup>2</sup> That's ‘the handwriting of requirements’

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<sup>1</sup> “But He was pierced through for our rebellion and He was crushed for our guilt. The chastisement (punishment) for our peace (with God) was upon Him, and by His stripes *we are healed*. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and Yahveh has laid upon Him (the Messiah) the guilt of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:5-7 my translation)

<sup>2</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, [From Sabbath to Sunday](#) (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), p. 205f. This is the definitive work on the issue of Sabbath vs. Sunday.

Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Accordance Bible Software): “χειρόγραφον...a hand-written document, specif. a certificate of indebtedness, account, record of debts (so plainly Test of Job 11:11...the account that stood against us Col 2:14.”

Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, n.p. (Accordance Bible Software): “χειρόγραφον; cheirografon...a handwriting; what one has written with his own hand (Polybius 30, 8, 4; Dionysius Halicarnassus 5, 8; others); specifically, a note of hand, or writing in which one acknowledges that money has either been deposited with him or lent to him by another, to be returned at an appointed time...metaphorically, applied in Col. 2:14...to the Mosaic law, which shews men to be chargeable with offences for which they must pay the penalty.”

Johannes Louw and Eugene A. Nida, editors, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic*

that the NKJV speaks of, and the ‘certificate of debt’ that the NASB has. Christians have projected their own interpretation and bias against Mosaic Law unto Col. 2:14.

Paul uses *kairo’grafone* to illustrate that our written record of our *sin indebtedness* to God was nailed to the Cross.<sup>3</sup> Samuel Bacchiocchi writes,

“Most commentators interpret the *cheirographon* either as the ‘certificate of indebtedness,’ resulting from our transgressions, or a “book containing the record of sin,” used for the condemnation of mankind. Both renderings, which are substantially similar, can be supported from rabbinic and apocalyptic literature.”<sup>4</sup>

Isn’t that why Yeshua died? Wasn’t He crucified to pay the penalty of our sins? (Is. 53:5) We could not pay for them, but our sins have now been wiped out by His death—not God’s holy Law (see Rom. 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14; 1st Cor. 7:17-19; Rev. 12:17). Our sins have been blotted out before God in His Record Book of our sins, and the Accuser, Satan, has no legal right to accuse us because Yeshua has taken our sins and our punishment (torture and death) upon Himself and we have been fully forgiven.

The record or Book of our sins was nailed to the Cross (Ex. 32:32-33; Rev. 20:12), not the holy Law of God (cf. Psalm 119; Mt. 5:17-19). The Law is made up of all the commandments, as Yeshua defines them, not just the Ten, and it is for every Christian.<sup>5</sup> As seen from the previous verse (Col. 2:13), we have been *forgiven* of our sins (trespasses against God and man), and what was against us, the *kairo’grafone* (our sin indebtedness) has been ‘wiped out’ (NKJV) or ‘cancelled’ (NASB). Verse 14 is still part of v. 13, as the comma shows us. It’s two verses, but one thought, Paul is teaching that our sins were nailed to the Cross. God’s holy and righteous Law isn’t even mentioned in the Letter to the Colossians, and so, it’s not the Law that was nailed to the Cross.<sup>6</sup>

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*Domains*, vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), p. 33.40. “χειρόγραφον...a handwritten statement, especially a record of financial accounts...but perhaps with emphasis upon the handwritten nature of the document—‘account, record of debts...he cancelled the record of our debts,’ Col 2:14.”

<sup>3</sup> Bacchiocchi, [From Sabbath to Sunday](#), p. 205, note 19), Charles Masson, “holds that ‘one must admit with Schlatter, Dibelius, Lohmeyer, and Percy that the ‘chirograph’ is a certificate acknowledging the debt resulting from our transgressions. The image derives from a rabbinic concept: God—or his angels—record in the books the report of the good and evil actions of men. To this very day, in the prayer ‘Avinu Malkenu,’ prayer for the ten penitential days that begins the (Jewish) New Year, the Jews say: ‘On account of Thy great mercy, erase all the documents that accuse us’ (Dibelius, Lohmeyer, p. 116, n. 1, Str. Billerbeck).” Historically this view was held by Origen, *In Genesim homilia* 13, PG 12, 235; Augustine (quotes Chrysostom) *Contra Julianum* 1, 6, 26, PL 44, 658; *Super Epistola ad Colossenses* 2, lectio III. G. R. Beasley-Murray, “The Second Chapter of Colossians,” *Review and Expositor* 70 (1973): 471: “The ‘bond’ is an I.O.U., a signed statement of indebtedness; if it applies to the Jew through his acceptance of the Law, it also applies to the Gentile who recognizes his obligation to what he knows of the will of God. It means, in the picturesque paraphrase of Moule, ‘I owe obedience to God’s will, signed Mankind.’” The study of the usage of *cheirographon* in Jewish and Jewish-Christian sources has helped to clarify that the term was used to describe the “celestial book” where sins are recorded. The first inkling of this interpretation came over fifty years ago when P. Batiffol published *Les Odes de Salomon*, 1911, pp. 81-85. J. Daniélou found confirmation for Batiffol’s suggestion in the Gospel of Truth. A. J. Banstra (p. 203, note 14; PDF), pp. 159, reaffirms that the *cheirographon* must be a book in which sins are recorded.” See also Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; 139:16; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:8, 12, 15; 21:27; 22:18-19.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> For more on how Mosaic can still be in effect for all Christians, see [Law 102, Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church](#), [Hebrews and the Change of the Law](#), [Law 102, No Longer Under the Law?](#), [Romans 14 and the Dietary Laws](#), [Ten Ways Yeshua Fulfilled The Law](#), [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#), [The Two Triangles of the NT](#), [A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law](#), and [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#).

<sup>6</sup> Revised on Jan. 16, 2020.