

Sabbath Refutations

By Wm. Hohmann

wmhohmann@peoplepc.com

Sabbatarians have produced a plethora of explanations and rationales in an attempt to convince people they are required to observe the sabbath. What is lacking in all these rationales is a definitive statement in Scripture stating that Christians *are* to keep the sabbath. There is no “thus saith the Lord” in this regard. According to the Sabbatarian position, we are supposed to just assume God requires this of Christians; that God was therefore careless in spelling this out for Christians, despite the examples in Scripture where God is always quite specific and careful as to what he wanted various people to do at various times.

The one question I have posed to Sabbatarians that they all refuse to answer is this: How can a person be required to keep the conditions of a covenant they were never a party to? It's like insisting my neighbor make payments to my finance company for the car I covenanted with them for. Yet this is indeed the result of the Sabbatarian logic. Christians were not commanded to keep the sabbath; Israelites were.

Seeing as the answer destroys their position in regards to the codified law, they seek elsewhere for an explanation to justify their belief. It is nothing more than an exercise where a belief goes looking for Scriptural support.

One must also stop and ask themselves how false beliefs are perpetrated and propagated. Seeing as there is never a “thus saith the Lord” for such teachings, one must resort to assumptions, rationalizations, and inferences. If one examines the explanations used to justify sabbath keeping, it is all too apparent these methods are being employed.

The crux of the matter boils down to this in the end: Does one need to keep the sabbath in order to be saved, or maintain their salvation status with God? Many a Sabbatarian will state that it is by grace apart from law they are saved, but turn around and claim one puts their salvation at risk should they sin habitually, and they define one of these sins as not keeping the sabbath. So they do indeed claim one has to keep the sabbath in order to be saved, disguising this belief in semantics.

With that said, following are the arguments put forth by Sabbatarians in an attempt to have people conclude they are required to keep and observe the sabbath.

One last observation. Sabbatarians, in putting forth their “proofs” Christians are required to keep the sabbath, insist their critics address each and every rationalization they put forth, and even then, they will not admit they are wrong. As long as they can come up with just one more rationalization, the game continues. But when it comes to their refutation of your evidence to the contrary, they feel no obligation to examine all your refutations and evidence to the contrary. All they feel they must do is repudiate just one issue, and they have repudiated all. And it doesn't matter whether they are right or wrong. All they need do is convince themselves, regardless of the evidence. One can't help but see the parallel between the religious leaders of Jesus' time and their devotion to the law and the sabbath, and the conditions extant today among Sabbatarians.

Claim: The Sabbath was instituted at creation, therefore, all mankind is required to observe the sabbath.

This claim is put forth for one reason only; the sabbath command is located within the confines of the old covenant made between God and Israel only, when they left Egypt and arrived at Sinai and the

giving of the law. Seeing as only Israel was commanded to keep the sabbath, this construct is absolutely necessary, or realistically, all arguments for keeping the sabbath fail. Seeing then that this belief is so pivotal, Sabbatarians blind themselves to the actual statements regarding the seventh day at creation located in Genesis.

What does the Genesis account reveal?

Gen 2:2 - 3 (NIV) ²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

It was God who rested upon completion of that creation. He blessed and sanctified that seventh day wherein he rested. The narrative does not say God sanctified and blessed every seventh day, nor does the narrative say God invoked this rest **for** Adam and Eve. They did not work; God worked. Adam and Eve were created the day before. To claim they were to rest from their labors the day after they were created, and had not worked to begin with does not enter the mind of the Sabbatarian. This belief is not subjected to any critical thinking or proper Biblical scholarship. What it says is not near as important as what they think it says, where they read into the text what is not there.

It should also be noted that this day shows having no end to it. God is still “resting” from that work, and the author of Hebrews mentions that it is this rest of God's that Christians can enter into while it is still called, “To day” and it is a rest entered into through faith. Israel, who had the weekly sabbath, did not enter into God's rest due to their faithlessness. Therefore, to equate the rest of God on that seventh day with the recurring seventh day sabbath is unscriptural. See Heb 4.

Sabbatarians are quick to point out the wording of the command found in Exodus:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. –Exodus 20:8-11

A reference is made to God's rest at the end of the creation week, and the Israelites are commanded to keep each sabbath holy by not performing any work on that day. In this respect, the sabbath is a memorial. To the sabbatarian, it is a memorial of the day. To God, it is a memorial of His creation, and a reminder to the Israelites it was He who created all things; it points to Him as the Creator God.

This sabbath-rest requirement is reiterated in Deuteronomy 5, where the reference is made to their being freed from the slavery of Egypt. We should not examine one narrative at the expense of the other. Their remembering the day was to be in relation to the God who created all things and rested on that original seventh day, and the God who freed them from the slavery of Egypt. Israel soon forgot their God, but by the time Jesus walked the earth, they had remembered the sabbath to the exclusion of their God. The sabbath itself became their entire focus even as it does with Sabbatarians.

Their rationale is that, seeing as the original seventh day is referenced, it is assumed this sabbath rest had existed from creation. There are a number of problems with this drawn out conclusion.

First, there is no internal evidence of anyone prior to Israel at Sinai keeping the sabbath. Second, if all mankind had been commanded to keep the sabbath, the statement in this law including strangers (non Israelites) who are within their gates as those required to rest shows that those who were not within their

gates were exempt. If the sabbath command had been in force from creation, required of all mankind, that requirement would make no sense whatsoever. Some may conclude through reaching logic, that the stranger within the gates would otherwise work on the sabbath, and if Gentiles were not supposed to keep the sabbath, then even these would not have been required to comply with the sabbath, but the context does not support this fanciful conclusion. One's animals were not to work either. Did their animals derive some spiritual benefit by not working on the sabbath? This prohibition was to insure that the Israelites were not working by proxy through the foreigners who dwelt among them, or their animals.

The weekly sabbath was therefore a type of the rest God enjoys; a shadow of God's rest. Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 bear this out. Israel entered into the weekly sabbath, but could not enter into God's rest; the rest Christians enter into through faith; the faith Israel was lacking.

Claim: The Ten Commandments are Moral Law, and apply to all

The cute twist here is that the people who are insisting the ten commandments be kept, especially the sabbath, are in turn the ones who are defining this law as moral law.

First off, the Bible makes no distinctions between laws which are moral, and which are ceremonial, sacrificial, civil, etc. We may well perceive various laws falling into specific categories, but the categories themselves are not their own criteria. Whether we perceive a law to be moral or ceremonial, it is still a part of the law that even James declares if one violated even one point of that law, they were guilty of all, regardless of categories.

Secondly, how would we truly define a moral law? Would it not be a point of law where to violate it were immoral? Would there ever be a justification for transgressing such a law?

We would agree that murder is immoral, thus the prohibition against murder is a morally based law. There could never be justification for committing murder, which is an act born of hatred. There could never be justification for committing adultery. But can this claim be true of the sabbath commandment? No, for there are numerous exceptions extant in Scripture regarding the sabbath. If a person violated the sabbath in order to do good, there is no harmed party, but rather the exact opposite. The law is "fulfilled" as opposed to merely being kept. In moral law, there is always a harmed party.

By claiming the ten commandments therefore are moral law, the sabbath command sneaks in under the radar.

Claims: The Ten Commandments are a Separate Covenant

The Sabbath is a Separate Covenant

This rationale is so lacking in believability, it shouldn't need to be refuted. It should be self-evidently false if one but has a rudimentary understanding of Scripture.

The ten commandments are the core of the old covenant. The entirety of the old covenant was written by Moses in what was called, "the book of the law." It was the book of the law that was sprinkled with blood, as well as the people, in the codification and institution (ratification) of the old covenant.

Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto

you. — Hebrews 9:18-20

Whenever Jesus Christ refers to the law, he includes the ten commandments along with all the rest of the commands given in the old testament books of the law. Examples of this are given later in this article.

Suffice it to say for now that this construct is necessary in the Sabbatarian theology, seeing as it can easily be demonstrated that some points of law obviously are not required of Christians, and some points of law are impossible to comply with.

Claim: The Sabbath was to be a perpetual, never ending covenant

Support for this claim is thus:

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. — Exodus 31:16

There are two problems with this conclusion for keeping the sabbath for ever.

1. This is still in regards to the covenant being between God and Israel. No other parties could come into the covenant with its conditions unless they underwent circumcision and became as one born in the land. Gentile Christians were not required to undergo circumcision, nor were they required to keep the law. This was established at the council at Jerusalem as related in Acts chapter 15.
2. This perpetuity was in relation to Israel's generations. Normally, a covenant ends upon the death of either party to a covenant. Paul uses the marriage covenant to explain this in Romans chapter 7. As such, the covenant would have ended upon the death of the last person who was present at the ratification of that covenant. This clause extended the covenant out to the children of Israel that were yet to be born, where the act of circumcision brought the males under the covenant; under the law. (Females, being part of the household of a father or husband were under the law from that perspective)

To place this in proper perspective, circumcision was to be a perpetual covenant also:

He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
— Genesis 17:13

Are Christians considered the children of Abraham? Yes. Are Christians required to undergo circumcision? No.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
— Galatians 3:7

Claim: The Ten Commandments were written by the very finger of God in stone, which demonstrated their permanence.

First off, if being written in stone was for the purpose of demonstrating their permanence, then where are the stone tablets today? What do we have today? That which was written down by the hand of Moses on parchment, velum, etc. (i.e. surfaces we would consider to hardly be permanent). And even though the Ten were at first written down by God's own hand, what then of the rest of the law that was dictated to Moses by God, from His own mouth? Is what God spoke somehow of less importance than what He wrote?

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.
—Exodus 25:22

Claim: James taught the law in James chapter 2. To break one point of the law is to be guilty of all of it.

Notice the reference to the law was in regards to the whole law:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.
— James 2:10

What is the whole law? Exactly what it says; the entire law, with all 613 points or requirements. This included circumcision to sacrifices. So if James was teaching the law as claimed, then he was teaching all Christians were guilty of the law, and under a death penalty.

But the context does not support the belief James was teaching the law. James was using the law as an example as to how the law of Liberty worked in the life of a Christian when it came to love and showing partiality. If one demonstrated partiality even once in regards to one person, law was violated, and the Christian was guilty of transgressing the law of Liberty. You cannot show love to some, and not others. A Christian is to demonstrate love for even an enemy. That Sabbatarians believe James was validating the law demonstrates the blindness they have, seeing they overlook the context so readily here in this example.

Claim: Christianity reinstates the other 9 commandments so why is the sabbath the exception?

Christianity does not reinstate the other 9 commandments. The other 9 may well be referenced as teaching aids; examples. This does not validate them as being binding on Christians. For instance, there is no need to tell a Christian who has God's Spirit in them to avoid worshiping idols. Christians know who their God is, and are not about to abandon God who now dwells in them in favor of a false god.

Naaman the Syrian is an interesting example in this regard. He came to understand that there is no god in all the earth besides the God of Israel. But he was concerned regarding his going into a pagan temple and bowing before an idol in the company of his king. To not do so would have been an affront to his king, so he brings this up to Elisha who tells him to go in peace. Naaman knew it was a false god he would be bowing to, and there was no danger of him believing otherwise. The commandment, addressed to Israel was in place because they very easily would have abandoned God in favor of false gods and idols, and often did. Let us remember the example of Naaman is one of faith; something the Israelites were always lacking.

But the Sabbatarian insists that to claim the ten are not binding on Christians is to claim that a Christian could commit murder with impunity, seeing as there is no law against it. This is an attempt to prove something through an accusation, and totally overlooks the Spirit of the law regarding love. Do Christians go about committing murder because they believe they are not held to the law that prohibits murder?

Seeing therefore that these same 9 commandments can be shown to be obsolete in like regard when it comes to Christians, how can the sabbath, using the Sabbatarian's own logic, be the exception?

Claim: The sabbath was instituted at creation. The seven day cycle of the week evidences the fact

there was a day of rest God entered into. God blessed and sanctified the sabbath at that time.

The rationale sounds convincing. But let's remember all false doctrines are going to sound convincing.

This is but a twist on the earlier rationale regarding the sabbath commandment being instituted at creation. Again, the importance of establishing the sabbath commandment as being from the beginning is of paramount importance.

God indeed entered into rest on the seventh day of creation. It should further be noted that it was THAT particular seventh day that was blessed and sanctified. There is no internal evidence to suggest God blessed and sanctified EVERY seventh day, or that Adam and Eve entered into this rest or were even commanded to do so. Again, nothing in the narrative indicates God rested the next seventh day, or any seventh day thereafter. On the contrary, God had and does work on the sabbath, as witnessed by the manna Israel gathered on the sixth day that did not spoil on the seventh. God worked on the sabbath, preventing the manna from spoiling. Also we have the statement of Jesus regarding the Father working on the sabbath, as well as Jesus! (John 5:17)

It is an interesting aside to note that hard-core Sabbatarians refuse to see the truth of this. They are completely convinced in their own minds that God indeed set apart every seventh day at that time. This is how desperate Sabbatarians are to hold to their belief, despite all the evidence to the contrary. The sabbath is what makes them unique and sets them apart from what they believe to be false Christianity. Take away the sabbath, and they no longer have this distinction. They become indistinguishable from other Christians of whom they deny their Christianity. There must therefore be a distinguishing characteristic, and the sabbath serves this purpose perfectly, in their minds. What they don't want to think about is that there are many Sabbatarian churches with vastly differing theologies. So which one then becomes the "true" church and the "true" faith?

It should be noted that the seventh day of creation shows having no end. The authors of Psalms and Hebrews reflect on this, indicating that God is still in that day of rest.

Claim: The Sabbath was made for man

When Jesus said 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27), did he actually mean 'The Sabbath was made for the Jew'? If that isn't what he meant, then, what sort of excuse must antinomianists resort to when they present their flawed thinking about the purely Sinaitic nature of the Sabbath?

The usual claim of many antinomianists such as yourself is that the Sabbath was freshly invented in Sinai. If that had been the case, the prior existence of the week would go biblically unexplained. On the other hand, if the Sabbath had been an Edenic ordinance, as Gen. 2:2 intimates, and as other Jewish literature consistently shows, then the existence of pre-Mosaic weeks is easily explained.

The flawed thinking here is in the assumptions being made regarding the sabbath. Exodus 20 indeed cites the rest of God He entered into when His work was finished as a type of this sabbath they were being given. It does not say, and neither does it follow, that God rested every seventh day, or that he enjoined this rest on Adam and Eve. It was God's work, and not Adam and Eve's work. Israel is given the sabbath as a day of rest from their work, as well as being a reminder of the God who not only created all things, but also the God who freed them from the slavery of Egypt, giving them rest from that slave labor-work. They in turn soon forgot the very God the sabbath was to remind them of, and by the time we get to the life of Jesus, they were totally focused on the day to the exclusion of God. The day became an end in itself, hence Jesus' statement about the sabbath being made for man, and not the other way around. But to take this statement and apply it to all mankind is eisegetical in nature. This interpretation

has no Biblical support, as we find no commandment anywhere in Scripture where God commanded all mankind to keep the day. To the contrary, the evidence is Israel only being required to keep the day, through a covenant, and as a sign of that covenant relationship between God and Israel. If the sabbath were indeed required of all mankind, then the sabbath could not possibly be this sign between the two parties of that covenant!

As far as the understanding of the weekly cycle being seven days and being dependent upon understanding the sabbath command, that is quite a stretch of logic also. Our “understanding” of the seven day week is adequately explained there in Genesis. We don't need to be a party to a sabbath day rest to know and understand this. Whether we have a 7 day week with no commanded rest on the seventh day or with a commanded rest, the cycle remains unaffected either way.

Sabbatarian groups that insist Christians should also keep all of the Holy Days in Scripture make a similar claim regarding the plan of God down through time, and that one can only understand God's plan by keeping those Holy Days.

Gentile converts to Christianity managed just fine without having to understand the weekly cycle in regards to the sabbath any more than they needed to understand the plan of God. All they needed to understand and believe was the gospel.

The subject in context concerns how the religious leaders had, through their rigid interpretation of Scripture, made points of law such as the sabbath a burden upon the people beyond the scope of the intent of the law. In the case of the sabbath commandment, “man” as a result ended up serving the sabbath instead of the intent of the sabbath serving the “man.” The “man” in this context was the man to whom it was given, for the sabbath was not given to all mankind. The eisegetical conclusion that the sabbath therefore was given to, and required of all mankind, finds no supporting evidence in Scripture. For this conclusion to be even remotely true, there would need to be a command found in Scripture to support the claim. Such Scriptural support is blatantly missing. To repeat for clarity, if the sabbath were made for all mankind, there would have been a command for all mankind to keep it. We would not have to resort to speculation and assumption and rationalization in order to determine this.

Regardless, the die-hard Sabbatarian rejects this explanation in favor of a conclusion that is so obviously eisegetically derived. “Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up!”

Ministries that support the notion Jesus is claiming the sabbath was made for all mankind do so by claiming the sabbath was instituted at creation, using one lie to support another. If Jesus were indeed making such a claim, this would have been pleasing news to the Pharisees he was dealing with. Rather, he was narrowing the scope of the sabbath, whereas they had expanded it, and he had every right to narrow its application, seeing as he declared himself lord of the sabbath.

What needs to be understood regarding the context is that they and the people were serving the law instead of the law being of service to them. As such, this was a form of idolatry. You are the servant of the one you serve, and they had made themselves servants of the law to such an extent that they chose the law over Christ when it came to the man healed of blindness from birth, seeing as Jesus performed this miracle on a sabbath.

One last observation. To the Sabbatarian, those who don't believe in keeping the sabbath, or any of the law in the letter are labeled, “antinomian.” The Spirit of the law, apparently, is viewed as being no law at all.

Colossians 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but

the body is of Christ.

Probably no other passage of Scripture has been subjected to more “interpretation” than this one in order to get it to say what it does not say. The interpretations run the gamut from claiming this is referring to Christians who keep and observe these things, and that they are not to let those who do not observe them judge them who do, to claiming this is talking about the sacrifices associated with these days (what with the reference to meat and drink “offerings”) as well as insisting this only applies to “ceremonial” laws, as though Scripture and the old covenant made such distinctions. Yet even Dr. Bacchiocchi, the famed SDA scholar now admits this is referring to the weekly sabbath command.

As usual, these creative interpretations ignore the context. Verse ten mentions that the Christian is complete in Christ. To insist therefore a Christian must keep these things referred to as “shadows” is to claim the Christian is not complete in Christ; that these things, such as the sabbath, must be added to the Christian equation.

We must also look at what a shadow is, and understand this in the context. Meats, drinks, holydays, new moons, and sabbaths are shadows. The “body” is of Christ, or as some translations put it, the body is Christ.

A shadow is a (dark) “reflection” of something that has substance. A shadow is without substance. These things therefore are representations of Christ that have no substance; no “body.” That which has substance that these things represented is Christ. He is the one who has substance. He is what was to come, and he did indeed come. Many Sabbatarians at this point resort to claiming these “are shadows of what is yet to come” in an effort to justify the continued observance of these shadows, claiming we are required to do so until what is yet to come has indeed come; Jesus Christ, the second time!

The Sabbatarian is not concerned that this interpretation conflicts with other teachings they hold dear, for the cognitive dissonance associated with all these things is of no concern to them. It is whatever is at hand at the moment that is of concern, and the use of whatever rationalization is available to make the point at the moment. But think about it for a moment. What do these Sabbatarians teach when Christ returns? Do they teach that these things indeed then pass away when the real substance, Jesus Christ walks the earth once again? Not on your life. They teach the sabbath will be kept during the Millennial rule of Christ when he returns.

One last claim we will examine regarding this passage, and that is the claim that it is the sacrifices associated with these “holy days” of which the sabbath is so listed in Leviticus 23 that are shadows, and not the days themselves.

But these days did foreshadow Christ! Christ is our Passover, and no longer the day or the sacrifice. The feast associated with Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread take on a Spiritual understanding in relation to Christ where one now “eats” of the bread of sincerity and truth, and no longer the physical bread. Christ is our Passover, and no longer the lamb. Christ is the Lamb of God; the substance, and not the lamb that represented Him at Passover. In John chapter six Jesus goes so far as to claim that one must eat his flesh and drink his blood for eternal life! Can we see the Passover parallel?

Trumpets now herald the soon coming return of Christ. The feast of Tabernacles is no longer us dwelling in a temporary dwelling, but rather now dwelling with Christ Himself in His rest.

Prophecies, sacrifices, days, etc. all point to Christ.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. — John 5:39

Claim: **Matthew 5:17-19 shows the law continues in force, even down to jots and tittles, therefore the sabbath commandment remains.**

If this interpretation were true, one wonders how Paul could write about Christians being sons of promise as opposed to the children of Hagar who are in the bondage of the old covenant in Galatians chapter 4.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 5:17-19

There are several issues that need to be examined regarding this passage of scripture.

1. How we are to understand “fulfil” and “fulfilled” in verses 17 and 18.
2. What “these” commandments are.
3. The implications of what happens when heaven and earth pass.
4. What Jesus meant by “till all be fulfilled” and not necessarily what Sabbatarians believe it means.
5. What is meant by “law” in context. Is it the legalities of the law, or more, such as the rest of the old testament, including prophecies.

Fulfil: Gr. Pleroo To make replete, i.e. (Lit.) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow), or (fig.) to furnish (or imbue, diffuse, influence), satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction), etc.: — accomplish, x after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply. (fr. Strongs Concordance)

Other passages using Pleroo

Matthew 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to **fulfil** all righteousness. Then he suffered him. [satisfy, execute]

Philippians 2:2 **Fulfil** ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. [satisfy, furnish, supply]

Colossians 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to **fulfil** the word of God; [satisfy, execute, fully preach, supply]

Colossians 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou **fulfil** it. [accomplish; fully preach]

2 Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and **fulfil** all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: [supply]

As one can see, the contextual use of the word does not support the “fill to the full” interpretation put forth by those who claim it is the law being filled up to the full, instead of the fulfillment of prophecies, uttered by the prophets found in the law and the prophets and in the writings, such as Psalms. To

conclude it is the law itself being “filled to the full” contradicts other claims regarding the law being “perfect” and “eternal” as well as ignoring the contrast statement in regards to “destroy” and also refutes the context concerning the usage of the wording used in the past tense in verse 18 (till all be fulfilled) as though this doesn’t mean all events that were yet to occur.

Destroy: fr. Strongs # 2647 kataluo: to loosen down (disintegrate), i.e. (by impl.) to demolish (lit. or fig.); spec. [comp. 2646 dissolution] to halt for the night: - destroy, dissolve, be guest, lodge, come to naught, overthrow, throw down.

Are laws enunciated, codified, listed, given, in the prophets? No. Therefore you cannot potentially do away with law where there is no law.

Are there prophesies in what is commonly termed, “the law”? Yes.

Is “law” ever used in context to mean more than the legalities of the law, such as the entirety of the old testament? Yes.

Those who hold to the first position insist that, seeing as the prophets are not mentioned again in verse 18, he is not talking about what might be in the prophets (prophesies); the context of verse 17 is to be ignored. No explanation is ever given for ignoring the context. The conclusion is purely eisogetical; not only through ignoring the immediate context, but all other sources commonly used in exegetical practice.

They also quote in support of this view Isaiah 42:21:

The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

No doubt Jesus magnified the law, putting forth the intent of the law and the Spirit of the law, but then, when was the law dishonorable? Prior to this magnification. And could this magnification of the law be a case of bringing out the spirit of the law, where the letter is no longer applicable? In other words, the intent, and not the action that follows intent is what is important when being judged by God. It is also of interest to note the context of Isaiah 42 in that the people are described as being blind and deaf to what God declares.

Luke 16:16-17 also appears to support the view of filling the law to the full:

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Like anything else, the context needs to be carefully examined.

Can the legality of the law “fail”? That is to say, does it have the potential to fail? Also, do prophesies have the potential to fail, prophesies found in the law?

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.
— 1 Corinthians 13:8

Paul is making a contrast statement. He is declaring charity (love) can never fail. These other things that are perceived as not being able to fail or vanish away would go before love could fail or vanish away. It

is his way of saying love and these things will endure, especially love. Or does the reader claim now that prophecies will fail, people will stop talking, and knowledge can vanish?

If however we attempt to claim that this is speaking of the legalities of the law, some problems arise. If it is only discussing the legalities of the law, then the first part of the sentence would mean that since John, the law is no longer extant. Just like elsewhere, the law can mean much more than the legalities of the law; it can be referring to the entirety of the old testament. Seeing as the passage in Matthew 5:17-19 starts off citing the law and the prophets, that is what is being discussed in context; not the legalities of the law. To claim this validates the Sabbatarian's position on Mt. 5:17-19 is the same as saying A proves B and B proves A. It does not stand to critical thinking.

What happens then when heaven and earth pass away? The law passes away? This goes contrary to the theology of those that uphold the law in this context, for the law is seen as “eternal” and therefore could not pass away. But if one insists on the interpretation that it is the legalities of the law itself that is being discussed in this passage, there is no other conclusion. When heaven and earth pass away, replaced by the new heavens and earth, the law lapses. To use the argument of those that hold to the letter of the law for Christians, it would be alright then to murder; it would be alright to covet what others have or their positions in the kingdom of God. People could worship false gods, and on and on.

It is impossible to conclude that this “fulfilled” has to do with filling the law to the full. It would be like saying, “As soon as the law is filled to the full, it ends; it goes the way of the Dodo. When it is filled up, it gets emptied out. It is “destroyed”.

Jesus and Law

We also must determine whether the ten commandments are what Jesus refers to when he says “the law” or much more. In other words, when Jesus uses the term “law”, what is the context we find Jesus using law?

By examining those scriptures in the gospels, we should be able to determine what Jesus means by the context where he addresses “the law.”

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
— Matthew 22:35-40

In this example, Jesus affirms these commandments are in the law. Seeing as these two are the greatest, any other commandments must be viewed as lesser in importance. Also, these commandments are outside the 10, so we could conclude here that when Jesus refers to “the law”, he includes commandments outside the 10. But let us not be hasty. Let us examine more examples.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. — Matthew 23:23

From here, we have a reinforcement that commandments in “the law” include those outside the ten commandments, and includes the command to tithe and includes judgment, mercy, and faith as being commands in “the law.”

If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? — John 7:23

In this passage, Jesus brings out that he claims circumcision is in the law; it is a commandment in the law.

What then can we conclude regarding the passage in question if the passage is referring to the legalities of the law instead of prophecies in the law and prophets? We would be forced to conclude that the entirety of the law remains inviolate, including such things as circumcision, sacrifices — all 613 points of law found in the old covenant. To Jesus Christ, the law is a unified whole, and cannot be chopped up into artificial categories of moral, ceremonial, sacrificial, etc. which divisions are man-made and designed to get around the fact all the legalities of the law stand or fall together, for even as James points out:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.
— James 2:10

I must also point out that here in James chapter two, he is not validating law-keeping for Christians, but rather is using the O.T. law as an example to show how the law of Liberty; the Law of Christ applies in regard to love and partiality. If you fail to have love for even one person, you are guilty of trespassing this law of love.

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. — Matthew 19:16-19

In this example, where this man asks of Jesus what he must do for eternal life, Jesus tells him he must keep the commandments. When asked which, Jesus lists several of the ten commandments, and includes “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” This last command is not a part of the ten commandments, but it is part of what Jesus called the greatest commandments.

We can conclude that when Jesus refers to “the law” he is referencing much more than the ten commandments, which commandments included circumcision, tithing and stoning one found guilty of adultery. In the N.T. scriptures, written by the apostles and Luke, the law is treated in this fashion also; the ten commandments, the greatest laws of love; all the ordinances, sacrifices— everything commanded in the law from circumcision to sacrifices. Paul even includes in his dealings with the law, not muzzling the ox that treads out the grain, applying it to those who preach the gospel, claiming it isn’t about oxen (the letter of the law) but rather to them.

We must also examine how Jesus used the terminology concerning “the law and the prophets” and any variation on this theme.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that **all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.** — Luke 24:44

This passage tends to lend weight to the claim that it is the prophecies concerning Jesus that are to be fulfilled prophetically, and not a case of filling the law to the full, seeing as Jesus references this in the

context of “these are the words which I spake to you” and the narrative in Matthew 5 -7 are those things he spoke to them, his disciples.

It must also be noted that Jesus declares, “that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

Notice he says “all things”.

The argument put forth by those who insist on the law being what is fulfilled claim that Jesus did not fulfill “all things” prophetically, therefore they reject the interpretation of “fulfilled” being prophecies. But here we have Jesus saying all things were to be fulfilled by him prophetically, found in the law and prophets and psalms. So Jesus’ understanding of “all things” differs from the “all things” determined by the pro-law crowd. If therefore Jesus declares he fulfilled “all things” and others claim he did not, who are we to believe? Jesus. He fulfilled “all things” regarding the opening of salvation to mankind. The reconciliation of mankind with God is the main theme of all Scripture. Jesus accomplished what he came to do. The way to salvation is now open to those who believe; have faith in Him. Not faith in Him and faith in the law. The law was what people were kept under until this redemptive work was done.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. — Galatians 3:23-25

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. —Romans 10:4

I myself used to use the argument that one did not abandon that which he learned from the schoolmaster. But this is not talking about a teacher. This is talking about a paidagogos; one who accompanies the child around, including when the child goes to teachers, and was permitted to even punish the child should he misbehave. When the child came of age (in this analogy, becomes a Christian) the paidagogos is dismissed. His services are no longer required. The person is now mature — in Christ. The Holy Spirit becomes the person’s guide now.

Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and **all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.** — Luke 18:31

After this, Jesus knowing that **all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled**, saith, I thirst. — John 19:28

When we come back to the concept of Jesus upholding the legalities of the law down to jots and tittles, we must look at this:

They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. — John 8:4-7

Jesus does not dispute that stoning is in the law. But which is more important to him? Stoning the woman in accordance with the command in the law, or extending mercy, which Jesus said was also of

the law?

In any event, the law is quite specific in this case. The law required those who are caught in adultery to be stoned to death, and for good reason.

And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. — Leviticus 20:10

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. — Deuteronomy 22:22

To neglect this commandment was to invite further disaster on Israel. The command was absolute; it was something that was to be done and not neglected. The law did not allow for mercy in this instance. Mercy would result in others being emboldened to commit the same sin or worse, thereby causing Israel to slide even further into sin.

Those that hold to the law (in the letter) overlook this example. What needs to be pointed out is that Jesus did not come at that time to condemn, but to save. If Jesus had come to uphold the legalities of the law, then Jesus would have done so, and condemned to death the very ones he was trying to save. Ultimately, who wants to see mankind condemned? The devil. Those that hold to the letter of the law unwittingly are siding with condemnation and the devil, and not Christ.

Now let's re-examine Matthew 5: 17-18 in this light:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

As we have examined so far, Jesus did come to fulfil the law and the prophets prophetically concerning Him in regards to the work begun at the creation of man concerning man. There are yet some other things to be fulfilled prophetically escatologically, culminating with the new heaven and earth. This does not conflict with the passage above, but actually agrees with it when one sees that two events are discussed above, and not one.

Those things in the law and the prophets will all come to pass; nothing shall be left undone. When all is done, all is fulfilled.

When Jesus states in verse 17 that he came to fulfil, he does not declare in that sentence and context that he came the first time to fulfil everything that culminates in the heaven and earth passing, but rather to fulfill everything he came to fulfill at that time. In due time, all will be fulfilled; then passes earth and heaven, instead of when He came the first time. He makes the distinction in the two verses, and legalists today blur the distinction.

This may still be confusing, so I will paraphrase the passage:

Do not think I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I didn't come to destroy them, but to fulfill them [those things in the law and prophets]. - [Next thought] - For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, [nothing] not one jot or tittle shall in any wise pass from the law [be left undone] till all is fulfilled.

The Sabbatarian is so fixed on reading this passage through legalistic eyes that it is nearly impossible to see the flow here as it exists.

“I am not come to destroy [undo, overthrow] the law OR THE PROPHETS, but to fulfill [them accordingly]. LIKEWISE, EVERYTHING in the law, down to the most minute detail, will be accomplished as foretold before the end of this world (age).

No doubt, even after this much effort, many Sabbatharians will still refuse to see this passage in this light. I suppose what this really means is that they do not believe God will accomplish all things according to his plan – He's too busy trying to fill up to the full a law right up to the end of the world.

Mt. 5:19 and “these” commandments.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

One would assume that, if Jesus were referring to the ten commandments, or any commandments in the law, he would have said “the” commandments. Here, he speaks of “these” commandments, but did not specifically address any particular commandments leading up to this point. However, he does address specific commandments *from* this point. He addresses his commandments to his followers, and in doing so, actually alters commandments found in the law way beyond jots and tittles.

The law allowed a man to divorce his wife for a variety of petty reasons. All one had to do was give the wife a bill of divorce. Jesus declares that this is wrong; it was not so in the beginning, and that anyone who marries a divorced woman under these circumstances, other than cases of sexual immorality, commits adultery. (See Mt. 19) If this was all about the law not being altered down to jots and tittles, Jesus just contradicted himself on a grand scale.

The law talks about performing one's oaths to God, yet Jesus commands people not to swear at all.

The law commanded a tooth for a tooth; stripe for stripe, etc. but Jesus declares to behave in just the opposite manner.

The main point that comes out in context here is found in Mt. 5:20

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The righteousness the scribes and Pharisees had was the righteousness found in the law. It comes out in the rest of Scripture following the gospels that a Christian's righteousness is not found in the law, but in Christ Himself.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. — Galatians 2:21

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: — Philippians 3:9

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which

followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.
Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.
— Romans 9:30-32

“These” commandments are the commandments Jesus talks about from that point forward: He is not talking about “the law and the prophets” as previously addressed in verses 17 and 18.

If however we take this understanding of Matthew 5:19 to be the commandments found in the law, we are also forced to agree that if one does not practice circumcision, and does not teach circumcision, whether it is the least commandment or not, that one will be in the kingdom of God, but in a diminished status. One needs to ask the Sabbatarian legalist how one can be lawless in the first place yet still end up in the kingdom of God, seeing as there are Scriptures that say such people will not be in the kingdom of God.

This also brings about an interesting conclusion. The apostle Paul did not teach circumcision. In fact, he taught the very opposite. He taught Gentiles not to be circumcised, and that if they did, they had fallen from grace.

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. — Galatians 5:2-4

Paul, who took the gospel to the then known world, did not teach circumcision, and even commanded against it, contrary to the law. He was stoned; shipwrecked, beaten, and finally killed because of the faith he preached. But he will be among the least in the kingdom of God if we accept the view that Jesus in verse 19 was talking about the commandments in the law.

Likewise those that today teach tithing, do so by altering the law way beyond jots and tittles. In the law, tithes were assessed on the increase of produce and livestock, some of which was given to the *Levites. Now, the teachers of the law insist tithes be assessed on wages, contrary to the law, and that the tithes be paid to them; also contrary to the law. This law that is claimed not to be altered even down to the stroke of a letter of the law, has been corrupted so that a man should tithe on his wages, and not as the law commands.

The law commands tithes of the increase of one’s produce and livestock, and that it not be paid to a minister of Jesus Christ, but to the Levites. These who teach tithing have altered much more than jots and tittles, and taught men to do so likewise.

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. — Luke 16:16-17

Either you see that Matthew 5:17-19 is talking about prophesies and that they were fulfilled without fail, or you stand condemned by your own beliefs.

* There is some controversy as to how the tithe was to be used. Some believe all the tithe was given to the Levites; others that the tithe was divided among the Levites, widows and fatherless, as well as some of the tithe being used by the individual as food for feasting during the annual festivals. There is also a belief that there were three separate tithes to be used in three ways; this idea popping up with the post exilic Rabbis. This actually creates quite a problem when you consider that three tithes means 30% which is no longer a tithe in the strict sense.

The law and the prophets were until John, and not after. From John forward, the kingdom of God is preached. The law does not fail in this context. The “law” spoke of He who was to come, and spoke of the gospel; the kingdom of God, if you will, for it says in Hebrews:

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. — Hebrews 4:2

So either this is all about the gospel and the prophecies concerning Jesus and the gospel being fulfilled “by the book” where “the law” cannot fail in that context, or you stand in that category of those who pervert the law, such as tithing, and condemn the apostle Paul as well.

Claim: Gentile Christians were required to keep points of law that applied to them as mentioned in Acts 15. As a comparison of the apostolic decree of Acts 15 and Leviticus 17 and 18 shows, the Gentiles were only required to abide by those portions of the Mosaic Law that explicitly involved them.

No. Leviticus 17 and 18 address those Gentiles who dwelled among the Israelites in Israel. And the prohibition against fornication? Lev. 18 addresses those close of kin, a neighbour, a woman in her period, homosexuality and bestiality. It does not address fornication in relation to a woman one was not married to, and therefore does not meet the conditions of this claim. Regardless, the chapter is addressing those of Israel, and relates these things are the abominations committed by people's of other nations.

Chapter 17 addresses both Israelites and strangers (Gentiles), and in no case do we see these strangers being required to abstain from animals that were strangled or abstain from eating food that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. Israel however was commanded not to sacrifice to idols, or eat meats where the blood was still within, not having been drained out, as well as the Gentiles who lived among them. So it stretches credulity to the breaking point to believe that the apostles in Jerusalem at the conference would in one breath declare Gentiles were free of keeping the law (of Moses), it being declared that to teach them otherwise was a subversion of their souls, and then in the next breath conclude these prohibitions were placed upon them BECAUSE they were prohibited in Leviticus, which is part of the very law they just declared Gentiles did not have to comply with, and on top of that, apply to the Gentiles points of law here that the Gentiles were excluded from!

Look carefully at what they were told:

But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. — Acts 15:20

As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. — Acts 21:25

What was this "thing" they were not to observe in Acts 21:25?

Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. — Acts 21:24

The law.

Now, in Leviticus 17, both Israelites and the stranger who lived in the land were required to abstain from

the blood of animals.

Were Gentiles commanded to abstain from eating what was sacrificed to idols in Leviticus 17? No.

Were Israelites or Gentiles prohibited from eating an animal that was strangled? No.

So we must ask ourselves, what dynamics were different between Leviticus 17, 18 and Acts 15?

The answer is table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles within AND WITHOUT the land of Israel.

Leviticus 17 addresses "the strangers which sojourn among you" and NOT Gentiles who lived outside of Israel!

For the most part, we are now discussing Gentiles in their lands where Jews were "sojourning among them!" And we are to believe now that these Jews had the right to impose any part of their law upon these Gentiles, contrary to the law, in the Gentile's own countries?

What is so conveniently overlooked by the "letter of the law" crowd is that Christianity, among other things, is about not offending your Christian brother.

So if a Gentile Christian set down to eat with his Jewish Christian brother, and the Gentile started chowing down on meat with blood in it, or meat that had been sacrificed to an idol, how would this act affect his Jewish Christian brother? Would it be offensive? Of course!

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. — 1 Corinthians 8:4-13

If Paul can say that eating something sacrificed to an idol is nothing after the council of Acts 15 declared that the Gentiles were not to do so BECAUSE IT IS IN THE LAW then what was Paul doing? No, these things were not prohibited because we find some of them in the law, but because these things, with the exception of fornication, would be offensive to their Jewish Brethren in their table fellowship.

In regards to the prohibition against fornication, if it were a matter of also being in the law, and the Gentiles were being taught to keep the law (contrary to everything written in Acts and elsewhere) then there would have been no need for them to have even mentioned it! So why was it mentioned? Because some had erroneously concluded that due to their Christian liberty, they were free to indulge the flesh. Paul, in writing to the predominantly Gentile churches addresses this issue regarding Christian liberty and indulging the flesh; living for the flesh.

What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
— 1 Corinthians 6:16-20

Claim: To claim Christians are freed from the law or the sabbath is to advocate antinomianism.

This is an attempt to prove something through an accusation. It implies the Spirit of the law is no law at all; it is lawlessness. Only those who are so hung up on the letter of the law find themselves blinded to the Spirit of the law, having no comprehension of the Spirit and Spiritual things. This is true blindness.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. — John 9:39

Those who were the religious leaders of the day were big on the law and the sabbath. What was their fate in this regard? They were blinded to the Spiritual realities revealed in Christ. What held true then holds true today.

Claim: It is a law of God

The Sabbath command was part of the law given to anc. Israel by covenant. In this law one finds the commands to practice circumcision and sacrifices. If we are to accept the argument that, because the Sabbath is a law of God, then we must accept the argument that we would be required to observe the rest of the law of God given to Israel.

It is also interesting to note that Jesus refers to the law as Moses having given it to the people. If it were such a big issue that the law was “God’s law” then you would expect Jesus to have treated it that way.

“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?” — John 7:19

This proof relies on assumption in order to go from it being a law of God to God commanding it’s observance by all people.

Claim: The Sabbath is a Sign Identifying God's People

The rationale here is that, seeing as Christians are now “God’s People” they are to be keeping the Sabbath. This practice of transference is common with Sabbatarians. That which was addressed to and applied to Israel magically and mysteriously is now assigned to Christians. Christians, who have God’s Spirit and are to live by the spirit are suddenly and mysteriously now required to keep the physical Sabbath required of Israelites who did not have God’s Spirit and were required to live by the law in the letter. The Sabbath as a sign was to be between God and Israel; not God and any other group or people.

Evidence to the contrary:

Jesus declared that the sign of true Christians would be that they would have love for one another. (John 13:35)

Counter-example:

If the Sabbath truly is the sign between God and Christians, it would therefore be impossible for false Christians to keep the Sabbath day command, else they would be Christians solely on their keeping the Sabbath. There could be no tares among the wheat.

Claim: Abraham Kept the Sabbath

This claim is so intellectually dishonest it should be obvious to all who examine it. As evidence to support the claim, Sabbatarians quote Genesis 26:5:

“Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

It is an assumption to believe that the commandments, etc. that Abraham had are the same commandments and laws (covenant) made with Israel, which is refuted by Deut. 5:3 (evidence to the contrary). Missing in this argument is a plain statement that Abraham kept the Sabbath or God commanding him to keep the Sabbath. It is pure speculation. The conclusion does not hold up to critical thinking. There is no comprehensive evidence; there is evidence to the contrary.

Claim: The Sabbath Belongs to God

The rationale being that, seeing as it is God's Sabbath, all mankind is required to keep it as a day of rest. It is a faulty conclusion based upon the premise that, because it belongs to God, it must be required of all mankind. But it is not put forth in this regard. “It is a Sabbath ‘unto’ the LORD, for example. Jesus also refers to the law as “their” law in the book of John, not “His” law.

Again, if we use this rationale, we would be required to keep all the law since it was all God's law.

Claim: Breaking the sabbath results in a death penalty

Again it is an assumption to apply the Sabbath to all people's and therefore insist all peoples are under a death penalty for having not kept it. Where this concept falls flat on its face as far as Christians are concerned is the example in scripture where Jesus' disciples go through a field on a Sabbath day, picking grain and eating it. Sabbatarians are quick to claim that they did not break the Sabbath, but that it was a violation of the added restrictions placed on the Sabbath by the post-exilic Rabbis, which is a total fabrication. If it was a sin to go out and try to gather manna on a Sabbath, thereby incurring the death penalty, then it would be a sin to go out and try to gather anything else for the same purpose. A man who gathered sticks on a Sabbath was put to death, for example.

Even Jesus does not deny they broke the Sabbath, but rather makes a claim that they were blameless even as David was blameless for eating the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat.

The Sabbatarian blinds himself to this obvious fact though, for to admit the truth of the matter is to destroy the Sabbatarian theology. Jesus' disciples did break the Sabbath, and by the Sabbatarians thinking and theology, they would have to concur they were worthy of being put to death.

Even John says Jesus “broke the Sabbath” but the Sabbatarian rejects this notion, for otherwise the Sabbatarian would have to agree that there was justification in putting Jesus to death. The Sabbatarian doesn't want to come across as consenting to the death of Christ though, so this example is ignored or explained away with their particular spin, claiming Jesus didn't really break the Sabbath. John says Jesus did; Sabbatarians say He didn't. I'll defer to John and the word of God.

To claim the death penalty applies to Christians who have faith that Jesus is their Lord and Savior, but

do not keep the Sabbath is to subordinate faith to the Sabbath command. One's faith is counted as nothing. It makes a liar out of the Gospel. This "proof" also serves to instill fear in the one who is not sure and is in doubt.

Claim: Sabbath Breakers are under a Curse

One of Israel who broke the Sabbath, or any of the law, was under a curse. Transference is at play here.

Evidence to the contrary:

Paul brings out that if one believes they have to keep the law, such as circumcision— the person becomes obligated to keep all the law, and in the process falls from grace along with coming under the curse of the law, seeing as no one is capable of truly keeping the law without transgressing it eventually. The one who lives by the law is automatically under a curse and death penalty.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: — Galatians 3:10-13

It is written that Christ came to remove our sins. The Sabbatarian seeks to bring Christians back under sin and condemnation by insisting they keep the law. It is a return to "Egypt". It is an attempt to return the Christian's sins. It is an attempt to separate the Christian once again from God.

Claim: God changes not. He is the same today, yesterday, and forever. (Heb. 13:8)

The conclusion being God does not change laws or covenants. This is easy to dispel when you take the argument and apply it to circumcision and the sacrifices.

Claim: God's Laws are Eternal

Eternal means always having existed and always will exist. This is not true of the law given to Israel. It had a beginning, even as the earth had a beginning. The Sabbath is dependent upon physical things; sunsets for example. If there were no earth, there could be no Sabbath.

Counter-example:

Again the argument is refuted when you apply the idea to all the law. Is circumcision eternal? Are sacrifices eternal? Paul claims, regarding these things, that there is a change in the law. (Hebrews 7:12)

Claim: The Sabbath Will Be Kept in the Kingdom

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. — Isaiah 66:22-23

It may well be a natural assumption to think this is validating Sabbath observance, but such is not the case. From one new moon to another is to say the same as from month to month. From one Sabbath to another is to say from week to week. The Sabbath is referenced as a weekly point of time, and not

presented as a command.

It is also a prophesy for the future, at which time there may well be another covenant with “all flesh” to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest. That there may be a Sabbath day rest commanded in the future does not validate there is one today. Indeed, it would tend to indicate there is no Sabbath command today.

Claim: **"Keep the Commandments"**

The argument put forth for this proof is found in Mt. 19:17 where a young rich man asks Jesus what he had to do to have eternal life. Jesus informs him he is to keep the commandments. On the surface, this appears to be the answer to the question, but it is not. The rich man declares he has done this from his youth. Jesus then says to him that he wanted him to divest himself of his wealth and follow Him. The man refuses, and the conclusion of the matter in discussion with His disciples was that hardly could a rich man enter into life. Yet this man kept the commandments!

Seeing as Sabbatarians tend to take a phrase like this and imply a great deal more to it, one needs to look at the rest of the context. When the man asks Jesus, “which commandments” Jesus enumerates a few, and adds one that is not with the ten. What is of interest and importance is that Jesus did not mention the Sabbath. If we wanted to take this literally, then it would only be those that Jesus enumerated in answering the wealthy young man. In other words, if we were to ask Jesus which commandments we needed to keep and he answered us in the same manner, why would we think to add to what He said to us? Is this however a “proof through silence” as some have claimed? Well, that would mean that Jesus was remiss in answering the man truthfully. Jesus “forgot” to mention the Sabbath command as necessary for eternal life. In making the accusation this is an argument through silence, the Sabbatarian is reading something into the text that is not there, even as they read into the text of Genesis chapter 2 that it was the weekly seventh day being sanctified; not that particular “day” only God rested in.

Regarding the law of commandments and their application to Christians, it is amply mentioned in N.T. scriptures that Christians keep the spirit of the law, and not the letter, such as the Sabbath, circumcision, and sacrifices. Only when this concept is applied to the Sabbath do Sabbatarians cry foul, and claim those Christians are practicing lawlessness!

Claim: **Jesus' Custom**

This rationale states that seeing as it was Jesus' custom to go into synagogues on the Sabbath, we should be following His lead in this regard... keeping the Sabbath.

But Jesus was born a Jew, and was under the law. So, from a “legalistic” sense, one could claim He was required to keep the law, hence the Sabbath. What then makes this interesting then is the use of the word, custom.

It was not his “custom” to keep the Sabbath, it was his “custom” to go into synagogues so as to preach. Using the Sabbatarians logic here, we too should be going into synagogues on Sabbath days and preach to Jews also.

Claim: **Paul's Example**

Paul's example is similar to the custom of Jesus. Paul would go into synagogues on the Sabbath for the purpose of preaching to Jews and devout Gentiles that would be assembled there on that day. If Paul tried to do so on any other day, who would he preach to? It also needs to be pointed out that a custom is a behavior of habit and not due to a command.

Claim: **Doers of the Law**

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom.2:13).

From this the conclusion is made that justification comes through doing or keeping the law. What people overlook is what Paul was ultimately getting at; no one was a doer of the law.

There are ample examples in scripture to prove this conclusion regarding justification through law as false.

Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

In Romans chapter two, Paul is contrasting two laws: One law that leads to death, and another law that leads to life; one written (the letter, v. 27) and one written in the heart (i.e. spiritual law) and this is the law Paul is talking about in verse 13.

Sabbatarians have blocked their minds to this obvious contrast of laws in Paul's writings, insisting that Paul is only talking about one, which in their theology must be the letter of the law.

The very next verse helps impart understanding to verse 13: For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

Is this saying they; the Gentiles must be doers of "the law"? No.

Did Gentiles by nature have the Sabbath? No.

Claim: The Law is Holy, Just, and Good

The assumption being, seeing as the law is holy, just and good, we should therefore be keeping it. This quote from Romans 7:12 is pulled out of context. It ignores the immediate context regarding the

law's function. This law Paul thought led to life actually led to death. (v. 10) Verse 13: Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The law did exactly what it was designed to do; make sin exceedingly sinful.

To better put this concept of the law being “holy, just and good” in its proper perspective, one needs to examine how Paul treated the law elsewhere. II Corinthians 3:6-11:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

The law of the letter was a “glorious” law, but its glory was fading, and had no glory when compared to the glory of the spirit of the law. In the same way, the law was holy, just and good, but it still does not compare to that which replaces it.

Claim: The Law Defines Sin, and Christians are not free to sin.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" — (I John 3:4).

Sabbatarians love this particular translation of I John 3:4, along with lifting it out of context.

The phrase, “transgresseth also the law” and “the transgression of the law” is derived from one Greek word, “anomia”, commonly rendered elsewhere in scripture as “iniquity”. Some passages and some translations here render it as “lawlessness”. To pull “the transgression of the law” from the single word, “anomia” is quite a stretch.

The way the Greek renders this literally into English is, “Whosoever sins commits iniquity, and sin is iniquity.”

Counter-example:

It was (and is) possible to keep the law, yet be iniquitous. For example, one could refrain from murder, yet have hatred for someone. Hatred is on par with iniquity. Jesus declares that those who hated Him without a cause sinned. (John 15:25)

The context goes on to declare it is those who practice sin who are of the devil. Do Christians practice sin as a matter of daily habit? Does the letter of the law define what sin is for Christians? No. Does N.T. scripture define what sin is for Christians? Yes.

To know to do good and not do it is sin. (James 4:17)

To show partiality regarding our love is sin. (James 2)
Whatever is not of faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

All unrighteousness is sin: (1 John 5:17)

What the Sabbatarian does not want to hear or consider is this:

The law is not of faith. (Galatians 3:12)

Seeing as the law is not of faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin, trying to live by the letter of the law, such as keeping the Sabbath for a Christian, is sin.

Claim: God's Law is Spiritual

As proof, the Sabbatarian quotes Romans 7:14: "For we know that the law is spiritual:"

But there is more to this than the Sabbatarian wishes to see, for the rest of the verse declares: "but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Was Paul "carnal, sold under sin"? Paul again is describing two laws, or two aspects to the law: one law dealing with the mind that is "spiritual" and another law of sin that condemns. Romans 8:2 declares that we are freed from the law that condemns one of sin, bringing about death.

Which law then is spiritual? The law that convicts one of sin, resulting in death, or the law of the mind; the law of the Spirit of Christ?

It should also be noted that the law of the letter, given to Israel is "spiritual" seeing as it was from God, but it is still a law given to Israel through a covenant. God created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but it still is not a good idea to partake of it.

Claim: Faith Does Not Abolish the Law

Romans 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Again it is a matter of understanding how Paul is using "law". Paul's detractors claimed he was doing away with law in the manner that it would be alright to sin, such as murder, so that God's grace could abound even more, for example. Those insistent on the letter of the law were, as Sabbatharians do today, trying to define their opponents beliefs. Paul is not condoning lawlessness. Paul upholds the law, but it is the spirit of the law, which comes out over and over in Romans.

The Sabbatarian wants us to believe those that don't hold to the law and the Sabbath are teaching anarchy and an antinomian view, and such is not the case.

As far as the old covenant law being "established" it is eternally established as the law Jesus was sent to satisfy in regards to the justice of that law.

Claim: A Sabbath Rest Remains

Hebrews 4:9: There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Some translations say, "there remains a keeping of a Sabbath for the people of God" or words to that effect.

A number of Sabbatarians have abandoned using this as a proof because it so easily falls to a simple analysis. Some Sabbatarians still use this though, having added a new spin to it.

It comes out in chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews that the author is writing about two rests or Sabbaths, and not one. The new spin is that the other Sabbath; the spiritual one, is one people do not enter into until the coming millennium. (God's rest)

This spin falls flat on its face when you read the narrative and see that ancient Israel had the opportunity to enter into this particular rest, but were unable to because of their lack of faith.

Another spin is to claim it was not just a lack of faith that resulted in their not entering into this rest, but their disobedience. But it was their lacking in faith that led to disobedience; the one leads to the other. They are not "side by side". Why bring this up? Because the Sabbatarian tries to make the connection that it is faith AND obedience to the law that results in our salvation and not faith alone.

The plain words of both Jesus and the apostles support this when talking about salvation; that it is those who believe; have faith in Jesus Christ who shall be saved, and never those who have faith and obey the law.

Even though the Sabbatarian now recognizes two Sabbaths are referred to here in Hebrews 3 and 4, he is still blind to one being physical and the other spiritual, and that Christians observe the spirit of the law, and not the letter.

The Greek word here for Sabbath is "sabbatismos" and not "sabbaton" which denotes the weekly physical Sabbath. Sabbatismos denotes action; the action of entering into this rest of God's. It is a spiritual rest found in Christ. Colossians chapter 2 calls the Sabbath a shadow; and Jesus Christ as being the reality. The shadow has no substance; it is a reflection. Why then practice that which has no substance? There is the sabbath, then there is God's rest. The two are not the same.

Claim: The End-time Saints keep the commandments

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The assumption is that the commandments of God for Christians are the same commandments given to Israel; the ten commandments. This is refuted in Hebrews 8:8-9:

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Sabbatarians are quick to try and take the focus off of the Christian covenant being different to Israel's covenant by claiming the fault here was with the people. This is just smoke and mirrors, designed to distract one from the relevant facts. There is a new covenant and it is not like the old.

It is a covenant that deals with the spirit of the law, and not the letter.

Claim: Cain sinned by murdering Able. It was obviously a sin to murder, so the law must have

been extant from the beginning.

This is one of the more recent additions to the never ending list of rationales used to bolster the law and the sabbath.

It is stated that God had respect for Abel's sacrifices, but not Cain's. Speculation abounds as to why, the most commonly held reason being the nature of Cain's sacrifices. But we find a clue in the words and teachings of Jesus:

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. — Matthew 5:22-24

The reason Cain's sacrifices were unacceptable was because of Cain's relationship with his brother. One need only look at the context of the narrative in order to see this.

Cain hated his brother, and as a result, he killed him. Where did the real problem lie then; with the hatred or with the actual commission of the murder? The fact his sacrifices were unacceptable tells us his hatred was the determining factor. "Law" was irrelevant.

This claim by the Sabbatarian insists that we require a written code in order for us to determine right from wrong, as if to say that if Cain did not have a law he was under telling him not to murder, he might have thought it was perfectly alright to take his brother's life. This is one of the most far reaching rationalizations I have heard to date.

It should be apparent by now that these proofs are nothing more than a flood of assumptions, disguised to look like comprehensive evidence. But to the Sabbatarian, who has undergone the indoctrination regarding the sabbath along with the fear and phobia induction that accompanies it, it is nearly impossible for them to allow themselves to see the truth of the matter.

Following therefore are proofs the sabbath commandment is not binding in Christianity.

Proof # 1: The Sabbath command is found within the confines of the covenant between God and the ancient nation of Israel. That covenant was between those two parties, and no others can become a part of that covenant unless they are circumcised and become a part of the nation of Israel. It was adequately demonstrated in scripture that Christians are not required to become Israelites first (Acts 15), then Christians. Therefore it is impossible for Christians to be held to the Sabbath, seeing as they are not a party to that first covenant. To bind Christians to any precept of that covenant is to violate that covenant. It is an "illegal" or lawless act.

Where Sabbatarians make a fatal flaw in their arguments is in the unspoken assumption that somehow, this covenant between God and ancient Israel is transferred or reassigned to Christians. This is legally impossible.

The refutations I have seen regarding this first proof have been bizarre. In order to show the reader the lack of rational debate over the issue, I include here a response by one Sabbatarian (Bob Theil) along with an explanation as to why his critique does not work.

Regarding 'proof' 1, he seems to forget that Christians are spiritual Israelites which

negates the latter half of his argument--his premise is also false (please see the article Were the Ten Commandments in Effect Before Mount Sinai).

Nowhere in scripture are Christians called spiritual Israelites. Even if Christians were so called, Mr. Theil does not explain how this would make Christians bound to the Sabbath command. There is no offering of evidence to support the claim; just a matter-of-fact declaration this is so. If one were to become a part of that covenant, it could only be done through circumcision in the flesh. Christians are not required to do this. Mr Theil does an end run around the law in order to justify keeping some of the law.

As far as declaring the premise false, he claims the Ten Commandments were in effect prior to the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, which is nothing more than using one false teaching to prove another false teaching. It was through this “tangled web” of ‘proofs’ so many are deceived into following Sabbatarian legalism. This ‘proof’ is addressed later in the article, but Mr. Theil fails to mention this in his one point critique. He does not wish his readers to examine the article themselves, so he does them the favor of telling them the rest of the article is faulty; don’t waste your time; don’t prove this all for yourself; take his word for it.

Suffice it to say that the other 'proofs' and the counter-arguments he raises are also not correct. For example his first 'counter-argument' is (which he also calls proofs), "Here then are a list of proofs used commonly by Sabbatarian groups and their refutations. Proof # 1 -- Sabbath Began at Creation The rationalization used here is that God sanctified the seventh day. What is overlooked is that it was this specific seventh day that was sanctified, not the weekly seventh day that was sanctified. The Sabbatarian overlooks this "minor" detail."

I am afraid William has overlooked the 'minor detail' that Exodus 20:8 states that God wanted people to Remember the Sabbath day and then cited God's resting on that Sabbath as the primary reason why others should as well. Perhaps he feels this is only a coincidence.

Exodus 20:8 does not say God wanted “people” as if to imply all people were to remember the Sabbath day. God was addressing Israel. God was commanding them, and not all people to keep the Sabbath, using the example of God resting on the seventh day of creation. I am afraid what Bob overlooked is the rendering of this command in Deuteronomy 5 where no mention of this rest of creation is made, but rather that they were slaves in Egypt, and because of God saving them from this slavery they are to remember the Sabbath command also.

Both renderings need to be taken together to get the understanding of what is happening. In both instances, it is Israel being addressed and not all mankind. It was Israel that was a slave in Egypt, not all people. What is so hard to understand here for the Sabbatarian is that assumptions are not proofs.

Furthermore, regarding his other first proof, William seems to forget that all the ten commandments were in effect before Mount Sinai, that Jesus kept and taught the Ten Commandments, and that so did Paul and the other New Testament writers.

He now repeats himself, as though it were a new thought, but this is a common practice, repetition in the hopes the claim will be believed without proof. Bundled with this is the declaration that Jesus taught the Ten Commandments, as well as Paul and the other NT writers. Links to articles ‘proving’ these claims are given, again as though these claims were self-evident. The reader is invited by Mr. Theil to link to these proofs, but admonished to ignore this particular article.

“Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain...”

Instead of bothering to critique the entire article, demonstrating where each point is wrong, he takes a pot-shot at a small part— offers no evidence it are wrong, then insists one need only read the articles proving the Sabbath and law are binding. There's the Sabbatarian biblical scholarship for you.

This covenant had the two parties to it: Israel and God. Like any other covenant or contract, no other parties can enter into a contract once it has been put in force. The only method permitted by the covenant for those not born of Israel to become a participant of this covenant was to be circumcised. Then and only then could one not born of Israel be as one born of Israel. It was amply brought out in N.T. scripture that Christians are not required to be circumcised, ergo they are not brought under the conditions of, or made a part of that covenant containing the Sabbath. In essence, those that insist Christians are required to keep the law, such as the Sabbath, violate the law in attempting to comply with the law!

Sabbatarians have rarely confronted the covenant concept head on, but rather have worked around it, concentrating on points or aspects of this covenant all the while holding to the assumption they apply to all Christians or all peoples everywhere for all time. For example, this covenant between God and Israel had a provision within it that extended the conditions of the covenant to those born later of Israel, even though those that were born later were not a party to the covenant. (Exodus 31:13)

Normally, a covenant (contract) is neither inheritable or assignable. In order to make the covenant binding on the offspring of Israel, this condition was necessary in order to extend the conditions of the covenant out to those who would later be born of Israel. Those that would claim this “forever” clause applies to Christians make another assumption; that God was careless in neglecting to clearly state in scripture Christians are required to keep this aspect of the law, the Sabbath.

Scriptural evidence supports the conclusion that the Christian covenant is not like the covenant made with Israel, therefore it can be concluded that the Sabbath requirement would have to be reiterated in the Christian covenant or specifically addressed in the New Testament.

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. — Hebrews 8:8-9

Sabbatarians try to obfuscate the obvious here by claiming the problem was with the people, and not the covenant, in order to make a case for Christians keeping the first covenant even though this example of scripture plainly states the new covenant is not like the one with Israel that contains the Sabbath.

In order to disprove this conclusion of Sabbatarians, two counter-examples exist:

1. The literal rendering of the Greek does not support the conclusion the fault rested solely with the people. The literal Greek says, “For finding fault, He says to them...”
2. The counter-example regarding the first covenant being faultless:

In Matthew 19:7-8:

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

The old covenant allowed an easy divorce because of the hardness of their hearts. This concession of the law demonstrates it was not a perfect law or covenant. Those who hold to the old covenant being perfect, eternal, etc. fail to subject their claims to critical analysis in this regard. The Sermon on the Mount evidence also brings this out where Jesus points out where the law; the first covenant was lacking. The pattern is one of Jesus declaring, “the law said thus, but I say unto you this”.

In the attempt to claim the fault lay with the people, the Sabbatarian overlooks the previous verse:

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.— Hebrews 8:7

To sum up this proof then: The Sabbath, along with the rest of the law is not applicable to Christians because Christians were never a party to that covenant; neither do they become Israelites in order to become Christians. Christians are bound directly to Christ, and not to Christ via the law and the Sabbath. — (Romans 7:4)

When one claims Christians are to keep the Sabbath, they unwittingly declare God to be a liar, seeing as they claim Christians are a party to the covenant command when they are not.

Some will claim it is the law that defines sin for Christians, citing I John 3:4, however this will be addressed in the “Refutation of Sabbath Proofs” section.

Proof #2: The Sabbath command can only work from one geographical location.

There are locations on the earth, such as the polar regions, where there is no consistent setting and rising of the sun approximately every 24 hours. In these areas, it is impossible to have the Sabbath be applicable, unless one insists people “rest” for several months while not working.

Another problem arises when you try to determine when the Sabbath day begins and ends based upon one’s location in relation to Israel. If one travels east from Israel to the United States, then one would be keeping the Sabbath on what is Friday. If one travels west from Israel to the United States, then they would be keeping the Sabbath on Saturday. Different Sabbatarian groups have addressed the issue by making their own determinations of when to keep the Sabbath, despite the biblical instructions regarding sunsets being the determining factor. Some even go so far as to insist the Sabbath is to be kept when the Sabbath is occurring in Israel, despite one’s location. This then becomes a case of keeping the Sabbath through consensus and not by command.

I would point out here that there is convincing evidence that days did not originally begin at sunset, but that this was a later construct of post-exilic Rabbis. Regardless, the “day” still shifts to a day earlier for one traveling east instead of west from Israel when traveling to the new world.

The problem becomes even more severe if one circumnavigates the earth more than one time in any one direction. Travel around the earth twice, ending up back in Israel, one would be keeping the Sabbath two days off from when everyone else is keeping the Sabbath.

This particular problem is rarely addressed by Sabbatarian groups, mainly because they do not wish to cover a problem that has the potential of people examining their beliefs in a critical manner. Their power and control is based upon people’s blind faith in their leadership. To cover a subject in a manner that requires people to think in order to understand is counter-productive.

Proof #3: Christians are not bound to the letter of the law, but to the spirit only. Christians are “dead” to the law.

Most all Sabbatarian groups understand they are not bound to the letter of the law when it comes to circumcision and sacrifices. In a manner never explained though, this concept is not carried over to the Sabbath command, even though the evidence to the contrary is extant.

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. — Romans 7:6

Sabbatarians create all kinds of constructs in order to circumvent plain statements in scripture such as this. A common practice is to insert the word “only” between “not” and “in” so as to make it read:

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not only in the oldness of the letter.

The justification for doing this is through the use of circular reasoning: They believe first and foremost that the Sabbath IS required of Christians, therefore the scriptures are interpreted to comply with this presumption. Therefore this passage requires “modification” seeing as the translation is “misleading” due to how languages change over time, the “true” meaning having been lost or misconstrued. But there is no such loss over time or through translation, and the context only supports the rendering as it stands. The apostle Paul begins in chapter 7 with an analogy in order to understand how and why the law (which includes the Sabbath command) does not apply to Christians. The analogy is the law or covenant of marriage. As long as two married people are alive, they are bound in marriage. As soon as one dies, neither is held as under the marriage covenant. The survivor is free to remarry, for example.

Paul then explains where he is going with this; Christians are no longer bound to the law because they “died” to the law. They, if they were Jews (or Israelites for that matter) are no longer answerable to the first covenant seeing as they had died. One who has died cannot be held to a previous contract or covenant.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. — Romans 7:4

What the Sabbatarian cannot understand here in Romans chapter 7 is that a Christian becomes “dead” to the law in order to now be “bound” or married to Christ, in order to bring forth fruit unto God. When one is bound to the law, the fruit produced is a fruit that results in death. By insisting on adherence to the law, even the Sabbath, is to claim Christians are married to both the law and to Christ— an impossibility. One can only be bound to one or the other; not both. This would be a case of spiritual adultery and spiritual idolatry. A Christian can only be bound to one: Christ. If one claiming to be Christian believes they are bound to the law, they make the de-facto declaration that they have to keep the law (and the Sabbath) for the sake of their salvation, which is in contrast to the declaration of Jesus and the apostles that it is through faith in Him and only Him we have our salvation. A Christian’s salvation is not dependent on both Jesus and the law— spiritual idolatry. The law cannot save anyone. The law could only condemn.

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.
— Romans 4:15

Proof #4: Requiring Christians to keep the Sabbath is to subordinate faith with the physical.

Faith becomes negated. Faith is rejected in favor of the letter of the law, which Paul declares, “The law is not of faith...” — Galatians 3:12

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. —Galatians 5:4

The Sabbatarian rejects this concept, claiming that he does not keep the Sabbath for the sake of justification. He will claim that he is saved because of grace and not the law concerning the Sabbath. But the Sabbatarian is just arguing semantics. He believes he must keep the Sabbath in order to maintain his justification. If one believes they must keep the law to not sin, then it is a prima-facia admission regarding justification through law. No one will be justified through the law:

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. — Acts 13:39

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. — Romans 3:20

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
— Romans 3:28

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. — Galatians 2:16

These last three scriptures make an important point, easily overlooked: it is the “deeds” or “works” of the law wherein lies the problem. The Sabbatarian attempts to blur the deeds of the law with the entirety of the law in order to make a case for those who do not believe they have to keep the Sabbath as advocating lawlessness or anarchy. The deeds/works of the law are those points of the law that require action on the part of the one under the law: Sabbath keeping, circumcision, sacrifices, for example. Other points of the law require no action, such as “you shall not murder”. No action is required in order to comply.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. — Galatians 3:11

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.
— Galatians 3:24-25

Living by faith is to live in the belief of Jesus as your Lord and Savior. The law requires no faith to comply with it. Complying with a law does not prove one to be a good person. It only demonstrates the person has not broken the law. It imparts no righteousness or justification at all. For example: If the speed limit law is 55 and you never go over 55, the state isn’t going to congratulate you and present you with some reward at the end of your life for never exceeding the speed limit. You did that which was required of you. Those that think keeping a “work” of the law such as the Sabbath believe there is some reward for doing this, when in actuality they set themselves up for condemnation should they ever transgress it, seeing as they have decided to live by the law and not according to faith in and of Christ.

To sum this up. If one has faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, but another comes along and declares

they must keep the law in order to be saved; or “maintain” their salvation, this makes the declaration that faith is insufficient in and of itself. God’s Spirit within a man is an insufficient guide; faith is not enough. Faith becomes subordinated to something physical, in this case the Sabbath.

Proof #5: The Proof of the Gospel. The statements in the scriptures regarding salvation being solely dependent upon faith in and the faith of Jesus. No statements exist that make the declaration of the works of the law affecting one’s salvation, such as adherence to the Sabbath command. To insist people keep the sabbath is to preach a false gospel, and falsify the true Gospel.

There exists comprehensive evidence to support this claim.

Psalms 62:2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

Psalms 62:6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

Psalms 78:22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

Isaiah 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid:

Luke 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins...

Acts 4:11-12 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Ephesians 1:10-14: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

2 Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey

him;

The Sabbatarian, as a matter of habit, would conclude here that to obey Him is to keep the commandments. Yet Jesus' commands to His apostles and those who became Christians does not support this assumption. Jesus' commands were not the law; were not the ten commandments. It is an assumption without supporting evidence.

1 Peter 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Luke 8:12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

By what method could the devil take this word out of someone's heart? By convincing the hearer it is not true. How can the devil convince one the gospel is not true? By convincing the one that other things are necessary and required for salvation. All the devil need do is divide the one's attention between belief and something else, such as the law or the Sabbath, and the devil has succeeded. Divide and conquer is a great truism.

Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Acts 11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

This is from the narrative concerning the conversion of Cornelius and his household. The words they heard led to their salvation, along with the earnest which was receiving the Holy Spirit. They were told that it is Jesus Christ in whom we have our salvation to those who believe (have faith) in Him. Cornelius' was given God's Spirit without the requirement of the law; any of it. Sabbatharians assume he did keep the law and the Sabbath (seeing as they believe this first and foremost, therefore everything must comply with their pre-conceived assumptions) but it is utterly impossible. Cornelius was a high ranking official in the Roman army. He would have been "on call" 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day, every year. Later, Peter and Paul explain to the rest of the church the receipt of the Holy Spirit by Gentiles who were not and did not keep the law. If they were keeping the law already, as Sabbatharians insist, then the debates that followed would not have occurred.

Acts 16:30-31 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Did Luke accidentally omit law keeping or Sabbath keeping? No. Luke was writing those things that were of importance to the early church. He was not being careless.

Romans 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Romans 9:33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

1 Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

If ever there was a subject with sufficient scriptural support, this is it; that it is belief only in Jesus as the Savior that results in one's salvation.

Why then do so many believe there is more to it than belief/faith? It's too easy for them. It defies their sense of "logic" in that they cannot perceive how one can attain salvation without adherence to the law. They conclude, erroneously, that Christians "can't be trusted to behave on their own" therefore they need the law to guide their lives, and not faith in Jesus Christ to guide their lives. Their ego's demand there be action on their part so that they can boast to themselves and others that it was by their good "works" or behavior that led to their salvation, and not only faith in Jesus Christ.

Sabbatarians brag in the Sabbath. "We keep God's Sabbath and you do not. We are God's chosen people and you are not. You are false Christians. Your faith in God's Christ Jesus is nothing because you don't keep the Sabbath." It not only is a point of bragging, but a condemnation to others, claiming one's faith in Jesus as Savior is not valid because they do not keep the Sabbath, or other points of law. Faith is subordinated to law keeping. Can the spiritual truly be subordinated to the physical? Absolutely not. The physical can only be subordinated to the spiritual.

Concerning this brag or boast in the Sabbath:

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Romans 3:27

There is no boasting in the law, such as the Sabbath, because one's righteousness and salvation are not dependent upon the law. It is dependent upon faith and faith only. The law, and the Sabbath, have no bearing because it is not relevant to faith in Christ.

The whole point of Acts 15 was whether Gentiles had to be circumcised AND keep the law of Moses, which includes the Sabbath command. It was adequately concluded they did not need to do these things; they were sanctified by faith.

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the

Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. — Acts 15:7-10

The Sabbatarian insists on putting Sinai before the exodus from Egypt. Israel received their “salvation” by being removed from Egypt. The law came later.

The common denominator is faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. In no scripture do we find a formula that it is faith AND the keeping of the Sabbath or any of the law that results in salvation. To the contrary, the examples in Acts 11 regarding the conversion of Cornelius and his household and Acts 15 demonstrate their receiving of God’s Spirit was without the requirement to keep any of the law, let alone the Sabbath.

Those who insisted on Gentiles keeping the law were viewed by the apostles in Acts 15 of subverting the souls of those Gentiles for making their claim.

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: — Acts 15:24

The practice of insisting the law affects one’s salvation is to add law keeping to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is a deception, to add to the Gospel. Yet many have done just this, beginning with the apostolic era.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Galatians — 3:1-3

The law dealt with “the flesh”. The Spirit deals with the spiritual. The truth has to do with faith only. To add the law is to not obey the truth; it demonstrates a lack of faith which is no faith at all.

Some Sabbatarians go so far as to redefine faith as being impossible without keeping the law; that faith without this “obedience” is not faith; that faith leads to obedience. Yet the passages of scripture just cited show that faith is belief from the heart; not faith based in action.

Proof #6: The other party to the first covenant, the LORD (who later became Jesus) died, thus ending that covenant.

Sabbatarians have always been quick to point out that it was Jesus Christ who was the God of the Old Testament, using this as an argument (proof) for Christians keeping the law and Sabbath:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. — 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

What this understanding does though is force another conclusion. Jesus died on the cross, therefore, as in any contract or covenant between two parties, the death of either party ends a covenant, such as the marriage covenant example brought out by the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7.

So even though there may well be Israelites alive throughout the world, it is irrelevant regarding this covenant. The one party of the covenant, now known as Jesus the Christ, who was the God of Israel, died.

It is interesting to note that in the prophets of Israel, God was depicted as a husband to Israel:

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. — Isaiah 54:5

Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. — Jeremiah 3:20

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: — Jeremiah 31:32

The Sabbatarian claims Christians are bound to the law and the Sabbath. To word it another way, the Sabbatarian believes Christians are bound to the conditions of a “marriage covenant” where the mate has died.

In the narrative where some religious leaders (who did not believe in the resurrection) ask Jesus a question about a woman who marries several brothers who each died in turn, then inquire as to which one she is married to in the resurrection; Jesus declares first that they erred, not knowing the scriptures, and that, after the resurrection, one was still no longer bound to a prior mate, but rather in that spiritual realm, there is no such thing as marriage in that regard.

In the same manner, the Sabbatarian does not know the scriptures either, for they believe Christians are bound to the “old” husband Israel was bound to; the husband who died.

God would now be viewed as being adulterous otherwise, as his bride is now the church, and not Israel.

Proof #7: New Testament Evidence.

There is no command within the confines of the New Testament enjoining the Sabbath on Christians. Sabbatharians present what is called an “argument through silence”: The belief that, seeing as there was a debate over circumcision, there would have been a debate just as evident over the Sabbath if the Sabbath were brought into question.

First of all, this line of rationale lacks rationale. Proof through silence is no proof at all. On the contrary, the New Testament scriptures do address the issue of the Sabbath, and the way the issue of the Sabbath is discussed does not sit favorably with the Sabbatarian. This condition then of believing there is a proof or evidence through silence is not surprising when you consider that spiritual blindness and deafness is a trademark of those who cannot accept the truth of a matter.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. — Colossians 2:16-17

Even Sabbatarians have admitted that the sabbath days mentioned here refer to the weekly sabbath, seeing as the pattern here is similar to other usages in this regard: holyday(s) which are annual, new moons, which refer to monthly, and sabbath days referring to weekly. These things listed above are regarded as shadows, and even the Sabbatarian understands Christians are not required to participate in shadows of the reality which is Jesus Christ. The loophole they believe they have found here is in the phrase, “a shadow of things to come.”

In believing the sabbath day to be a shadow “of things to come” the argument is made that the sabbath is not yet a shadow that has seen its fulfillment in Christ.

This idea ignores the whole concept of what the sabbath was. It was designed to not only look back as a memorial of creation and the liberation of Israel out of bondage, but to also look forward, not only to Christ, but the rest found in Him and the eventual liberation of all mankind. Some of this is yet to come.

Christ’s sacrifice, of which the Old Testament sacrifices were a shadow of, extends out to all of mankind, past, present, and future. If we accept the argument put forth above regarding the sabbath, then we would have to be forced to accept the same argument relating to sacrifices.

One needs to understand what a shadow is. It is a reflection without substance. It is dimensionally lacking. It is an “image” of something else which does have substance and is real; solid; of substance. A shadow has no substance. What then has substance, seeing as the Sabbath is but a shadow? Jesus Christ.

So there is an option here; choose the shadow lacking reality and substance, or choose Christ who has substance and is the reality. But all too many think they can choose both. But to choose the shadow is to choose a crutch whereas to walk in the spirit through faith is to truly walk.

Another thing here that the Sabbatarian cannot accept is actually quite obvious, if one is but willing to entertain the possibility. If the Sabbath and other points of the law were not enjoined on Gentile Christians, and the conference in Acts 15 only supports this, then you can imagine that then, even as today, there would be those that would insist Gentile Christians should keep the sabbath and other points of law, such as food and drink regulations, tithing, etc.

The whole purpose of the counsel of Acts 15 was whether Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, wherein lies the sabbath command. The conclusion of the counsel was no, they did not.

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: — Acts 15:24

The self-imposed blindness of the Sabbatarian sees only the circumcision argument here, and not the rest of the law, especially the sabbath command.

It was self appointed Jews that went around behind Paul’s back, telling Gentile converts they had to keep the law, hence what Paul wrote to the Galatians, calling them foolish. They were sanctified through their faith; they received the Spirit of God because of their faith, law keeping had nothing to do with it. There was nothing to be gained by keeping the law. On the contrary, they put their faith in jeopardy because of it.

Another relevant scripture regarding the sabbath is found in Hebrews 3 and 4, where two sabbaths are discussed; the weekly, physical sabbath, which sabbath Israel partook of, and the spiritual sabbath that they could not enter because of their unbelief. This is the sabbath Christians enter into. This is the sabbath that they could not enter into because of their lack of faith; the faith Christians are to have that is

not reliant on the law. Christ is our sabbath, and as such, we would no longer find it necessary to partake of the shadow when we have the reality, Jesus Christ.

One day above another:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.

—Romans 14:5-6

The Sabbatarian would have us believe Paul is not referring to Sabbaths. In other words, Paul wasn't smart enough to realize that people might construe he WAS talking about Sabbaths and holy days. Critical thinking would have us ask not only would Paul have overlooked this, which is highly unlikely, but that this does indeed support the evidence that Christians were not required to observe Sabbaths. To conclude otherwise is to conclude Paul did make a mistake here. If the Sabbath were indeed required, then we would have expected Paul to have addressed this so that people would not misconstrue the Sabbath issue. But it is not addressed, and Paul does talk about those who esteem a day, so besides the Sabbath, what day would Christians possibly be esteeming above the rest?

Proof # 8: The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: — Exodus 31:17

It was a sign to set them apart from the rest of the nations; all other people. If all people are to keep the Sabbath, then it could not possibly be a sign between God and Israel.

When reading the scriptures, one needs to keep in mind that the covenants relate to Israel, and that Gentiles in the N.T. era are seen as having been grafted in during this era of Grace and Faith. Gentiles are pictured as being called now; this time of the Gentiles, in order to make Israel jealous. Their circumcision is not a physical one, but a spiritual one; a circumcision not made with hands. The physical was a type of the spiritual, just as the Sabbath is a type of the spiritual.

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. — Romans 10:19-21

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.
— Romans 11:11

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. — Romans 9:30-33

The Gentiles, who did not have the law, achieved what the Jews could not do with the law;

righteousness without law; righteousness based on faith; not law. Righteousness based upon that “stumblingblock” Jesus Christ, who said salvation was found in Him, and not the law. The Jews couldn’t comprehend salvation and righteousness apart from the law. The same holds true for many today.