

Dear Sanford,

Thank you for sending your book L CHAYM. Though I haven't read it completely through yet, I do find in a summary perusal many interesting topics giving a view of Judaism through an unique Adventist perspective. You asked me to review chapter 37 on the subject of "The Two Laws". I did read this particular chapter very carefully and so I would like to share with you some of my initial views concerning it.

The premise with which you begin in this chapter is that there are two laws presented in Scripture and that these are categorized as "moral" and "ceremonial". This perspective is the popular conception as understood by the majority of Christian Sabbatharians as especially championed by Seventh-day Adventists. However in our endeavors to attempt a dialog with our Jewish brethren about the law, I think it essential that we first appreciate the view of the law as presented in Judaism and that we compare that view with the view presented in your book to see if there is any commonality by which we can effect a meaningful dialog.

The first thing we need to realize is that the term "law" as understood in Judaism and as referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures is not used in the narrow sense as most Adventist use it. Most Adventist understand the term "law" primarily as a reference to the Ten Commandments. Not so in Judaism. The term "law" in the Hebrew Scriptures is translated from the Hebrew word "Torah" which broadly encompasses the totality of the Pentateuch.

Even a comparative analysis of how the word "law" is used in the Greek New Testament shows that it can often refer to any of the Mosaic code of 613 precepts including the Ten Commandments (see Mt 22:36 & Lu 10:26), the first section of the Hebrew Bible called the Pentateuch or the first five books (see Joh 1:45), the Prophets (see ICo 14:21, cf. Isa. Isa 28:1) and the Psalms or the last section of the Hebrew Bible (see Joh 10:34). From this we can see that the

term law is used indiscriminately to each of the three sections of the Hebrew Bible and in some cases the whole Hebrew Bible and never only in the narrow sense that Adventist refer to the law as the "Ten Commandments".

The second thing we need to realize is that the term "Ten Commandments" is really a misnomer. In every place in the Hebrew Scriptures in which the term "Ten Commandments" appears (Ex 34:28, De 4:13 and De 10:4 note marginal reference) the Hebrew word from which the word commandments is translated is "dabar" which literally means "word" or "words". So that instead of being translated the "Ten Commandments"

"eser dabar" literally translated should be the "Ten Words". This is the common reference of the sages of Judaism to the Decalogue. This is where we get the Latin term for the Ten Commandments "Decalogue". "Deca" is the Latin prefix for "Ten" and "logue" the Latin suffix for "Word", thus we have Decalogue or "Ten Words."

This is important to establish the third thing we need to realize in understanding the Biblical or Judaic categories of the law (Torah) as "commandments, statutes and judgments" or "mitzvot, chuqim and mishpatim". The Hebrew word for "commandments" "mitzvot" does not refer to the "Ten Commandments (or "Words" - "dabar"). In other words the "Ten Commandments" from a

Biblical perspective is not seen as a separate category of law referred to in the phrase "commandments, statutes and judgments" as we shall later see.

These three points are fundamental to understanding the concept of "law" as it is understood in Judaism which as we can see is really the Biblical view. This stands in stark contrast to the popular Christian or Adventist view of the law as presented in L CHAYIM. Your book presents a view of the law that is totally foreign to Judaism. In fact not only is it not understood in Judaism but it is totally unbiblical. The view of the law as two monolithic divisions of law called "moral law" and "ceremonial law" is no where to be found in Scriptures. To this many Biblical scholars, even Adventist Biblical scholars are forced to agree (see Ministry article "Nailed to the Cross", May 1997).

Adventist theology of the law states that there are two laws, the "moral law" which is the "ten commandments" and the "ceremonial law" which is basically everything outside of the ten commandments. There are various "proof texts" that have been traditionally used to support this theological view (Eph. 2:14& 15, Col, 2:14-17, Gal. 3:19 and Heb. 7:12,16,18 &19) which we will briefly review later. To what then do we owe this theological concept of "The Two Laws" "moral and ceremonial" from?

How we as Adventists came to actually "inherit" this "traditional" understanding of the law is very important to establish. When attempting to undertake a dialogue or a debate, it is very important to establish the definition of terms that will be used in such a debate. If I am engaging you in

a debate and if I can establish that I have the power of definition of the terms used in the debate, then what I have done is enlisted you to your own defeat. By you allowing me to have the power of definition over the terms used in our debate, I have insured your defeat. You have conceded to my definition of the terms.

This is what we as Sabbatarians have unwittingly done in the use of the terms "moral law" and "ceremonial law" We have been using terms that already have been defined and used by anti-Judaic medieval theologians. These two terms are actually theological terms whose original purpose was to do away with the Sabbath and are actual modifications of the Judaic or Biblical view of the law first proposed by the foremost theologian of the Catholic church St. Thomas Aquinas in his masterful thesis Summa Theologica. We will come to find when debating with the evangelicals over the law, our use of the terms "moral law" and "ceremonial law" or our "two laws" theology is a veritable "Achilles heel" to our Sabbatarian theology that seeks to save the Sabbath over the evangelical view of the law that does away with it.

In Summa Theologica, Aquinas acknowledges the Judaic or Biblical view of the law as three categories of commandments, statutes and judgments. Not only this, but he adopts the Judaic view of the Ten Commandments as fitting within these three categories.

Commandments 1 & 2 are "commandments" or "mitzvot. Commandments 3,4 & 5 are "statutes" or "chuqim" and commandments 6 -10 are "judgments" or "mishpatim". The significant point to be observed here is that Aquinas agrees with Judaism, in that commandment 4, the Sabbath command is categorized as a "statute". This particular point is critical.

In Judaism, the "ten words" are seen to be an index to the whole Torah. Every precept of the Torah is an exhaustive enumeration of each of the ten words. Each one of the rest of the 603 precepts in

the Torah subscribe to one of the ten words of the Decalogue. To this St. Thomas Aquinas shows in his Summa Theologica, in fact as I studied Summa Theologica, it became apparent to me that St. Thomas Aquinas drank deeply of the theological fountain of Judaism. >From this we can see as Judaism teaches and as the Scriptures themselves show that from the fourth commandment comes all the precepts having to do with holy time including the feast days delineated in Lev.23 which the chapter begins with the Sabbath as the preeminent feast day par excellence and under it the subscription of the other holy days. The from the fifth commandment come all the precepts having to do with respect for authority and the authority of judges and elders. From the sixth commandment all the laws of war, from the seventh commandment all the sex laws and the laws of human relationships, including marriage and divorce and so on.

But in commenting on the moral imperative of these laws in nature, Aquinas argues forcibly for each of the Ten Commandments including the fourth. This is where we derive the concept of the Ten Commandments as "moral" or the "moral law." From whence then do we come by the term "ceremonial law"? The term "ceremonial" derives from the Latin term for "statute." In the Latin Vulgate, the Bible of St Thomas Aquinas, "commandments, statutes and judgments" the three categories of the Torah and of the Ten Words themselves are rendered, "precepta, ceremoniae, et judicia". So for Aquinas the fourth commandment is a "ceremoniae" or a ceremonial precept by its very nature. However he says it is "moral" with respect to the command "to rest" but it is "ceremonial" with respect to the time or the day of rest.

Clearly this is a interpretation that seeks to justify and to substantiate what is nothing but an ANTI-JUDAIC view of the Sabbath.

So then by definition the Sabbath is a ceremonial precept or a "statute." As Sabbatarians we ignorantly and unwittingly shoot ourselves in the foot every time we say the ceremonial law is nailed to the cross or is "abolished" as we vainly seek to new model or redefine the terms of the debate. You cannot nail the feast days to the cross without nailing the Sabbath any more than you can have your cake and eat it too.

It is this theology of the law, or the Sabbatarian "two laws" theory that we impose on the proof texts (Eph. 2:14 & 15, Col, 2:14-17, Gal. 3:19 and Heb. 7:12,16,18 &19) that are used to substantiate it. This "two law" theory cannot be sustained by the exegetical examination of these texts.

In the examination of those proof texts used to substantiate the "two laws" theology, we will come to find that the anti-Judaic bias that comes through in the KJV translation of these texts invite such an anti-Judaic view as first proposed by Aquinas that does away with the Sabbath and the Sabbatarian view that does away with the feast days, for the very same texts that are used to do

away with the Sabbath (the law) is the very same texts we use to do away with the festivals. In so doing we think to save the Sabbath by the "two laws" theology which has its very origin in the anti-Judaism of St. Thomas Aquinas.

In the examination of the Colossians 2:14-17 text, we find that this text is THE proof text of proof texts that define: 1) the evangelical teaching of the law being nailed to the cross and 2) the Sabbatarian teaching of the "ceremonial law" in the form of the festivals being nailed to the cross. Both evangelicals and Sabbatarians understand "handwriting of ordinances" as a reference to either

the law or some portion of it. Without going into the merits of which interpretation is correct, we will find that the issue is moot as both interpretations are wrong since they are both based upon an anti-Judaic hermeneutic.

First the word for "law" in Greek "nomos" is never once mentioned in the whole book of Colossians. Second the word "ordinances" is from the Greek word "dogma", a word never used in connection with the law of G-d in either the Septuagint (LXX) the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible or the Greek (New) Testament. The word "dogma" translated "ordinances" in fact does not appear at all in the canonical books of the LXX. There is nothing in Scripture that can link this word to the law of God or the Mosaic ordinances at all. Third the word "handwriting" has nothing to do with the "mosaic ordinances or the law written by Moses in a book. In fact the word from which "handwriting" is translated "cheirographaton" is found nowhere else in any of the Greek translations of the Bible. This word is found elsewhere in Greek literature as something in which an Angel is writing down in a "cheirographaton" the sins of man.

"Handwriting of ordinances" is a term that has nothing to do with the law as the evangelicals allege or some part of the law as Sabbatarians allege. It is found to be a legal metaphor of for a document of indebtedness, in this case our indebtedness to sin. It is our debt to sin (death) that was against us and contrary to us, not the law. It is taken "out of the way" or out of the "middle", again a metaphorical expression of where the "chierographon" legally stood before the judge, for the "middle" was the position of the accusing witness in the ancient court of law. The document on which our sins are recorded, or our debt to sin is recorded is taken out from the position of "accuser" and is itself "nailed to the cross" another legal metaphor alluding to the way debts were anciently canceled by the driving of a nail through them, similar to how canceled bills or checks are impaled or spiked through on a "nail like" spindle file. So instead of the law being nailed to the cross, it is our sins that are nailed to the cross.

The phrase "holyday, new moon, or the Sabbath days" is a tautological expression referring to the three classes of sabbaths; yearly sabbaths, monthly sabbaths and weekly sabbaths. There are a number of ways to prove that the term "Sabbath days" is a reference to the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Of all the nineteen occurrences of the term "Sabbath days" in the Greek (New) Testament, each and every one specifically refers to the weekly Sabbath except for the last mention of the term in Colossians 2:16 which according to the SDABC means "ceremonial Sabbaths." How can it be that Colossians 2:16 is the lone exception? This flies in the face of the linguistics and grammatical expression of the text. The term "Sabbath days" is translated from the Greek "sabbaton." This word is NEVER used alone as an expression meaning a festival sabbath in the LXX or the Greek Testament. How can it be that Colossians 2:16 is the lone exception? What is more is that the word "days" is in italics, which when removed renders the text naked to the truth that the phrase "holyday, new moon, or the Sabbath" is very clearly referring to the three classes of sabbaths culminating in the weekly Sabbath, (see The Law of Colosians,).

Next The Law in Ephesian.

In my next submission on the Ephesians proof text, we will discuss "the enmity" that was abolished. Is the Torah this enmity? But I would like to have your comments on what has been discussed thus far before we continue this dialogue.

Baruch Hashem, Dr. Sidney Davis
"Proclaiming The Sabbath More Fully"