

July 12, 2010

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses
2821 Route 22
Patterson, NY 12563

Dear Anonymous Jehovah's Witnesses Representative,

This is in response to your answer (coded ECH-ECY June 28, 2010) to my letter (dated 05/24/2010), in which I responded to your anti-sabbatarian article in the February 1, 2010 issue of *The Watchtower* magazine. I hope this suffices to give you proper reference.

I feel it is too bad that your organization seems to care a great deal about our Creator's name, yet your authors prefer to remain nameless, even when responding to inquiries. It conveys a lack of personal touch, giving your answers a more generic appearance, which contributes to my not being very impressed with your organization. Scripturally-speaking, it is an exception (not the norm) for writers to *not* identify themselves.

Based on the many arguments that I presented which you did not address in your response, it appears that you may have skimmed through just enough of my initial letter to know that my response was directed at the arguments presented in your article titled "Should You Keep the Weekly Sabbath?" then you proceeded with a standard response that you offer to all inquiries pertaining to Sabbath observance. You did not directly address any of the arguments that I presented, so I must regard your "answer" as a non-response. Of course, you did compose 2.1 pages of "answer," so I will address your letter of June 28th with this reply. I realize I may neglect to comment on something that you feel merits commentary, so please let me know if I overlook anything.

What Does a Bikini-Clad Jehovah's Witness Have to Do With Sabbath Observers Trying to Enforce Their Religious Views on Others?

In the second paragraph of your response, you wrote the following:

It is not clear to us how, as you suggest, there is a parallel between the actions of a bikini-clad alleged Witness of Jehovah protesting a purely personal matter and sabbath observers endeavoring to enforce their religious views on others.

I reply: Well, conversely, in your article, it is not clear to me how there is a parallel between radical groups trying to enforce Sabbath observance and the Biblical question of whether or not the fourth commandment still applies today. Would you please explain *that* parallel? You didn't explain it in either your article or in your response to my inquiry.

Please allow me to illustrate: I do not support violence against gay people, but does that mean I support a "gay agenda"? In the same way, I do not support violence against non-Sabbathkeepers, but should that mean I support teaching that the fourth commandment was "taken away"?

On an even more radical level, I am personally opposed to abortion. Does this mean I must support violence against abortion clinics? Please answer this question.

Let's face it: Your decision to present *radical sabbathkeepers* in the introduction of your article was clearly done so as to "introduce" your readers to a bunch of idiots. It's a subliminal ploy designed to poison the readers' minds against the notion of sabbathkeeping before they even get to the argument. While I believe you and I recognize this journalistic technique, I doubt if many within your flock do, and that's why it works so well, which is why you used it. It was a clever "smoke screen," if you will. You know this is true, but you should also know it was unfair. I would expect a retraction and apology in an upcoming issue of *The Watchtower*.

If I were to support abortion while also supporting your subliminal ploy, I would write an article containing an introduction aimed at drawing everyone's attention to the radical extremists who bomb abortion clinics and shoot doctors who perform abortions. That is the approach that you used in writing the article, and it was wrong of you to do so. Are you willing to do the right thing and print an apology to conscientious sabbathkeepers who would *never* dream of enforcing their beliefs on anyone?

As I conclude this section, I would like to reiterate what I told you in my first letter:

Nevertheless, while I may agree with her [the bikini-clad Jehovah's Witness] concern, this does not mean I agree with her methods of attempting to resolve the matter. Does this mean I believe all Jehovah's Witnesses behave in the same irrational manner when it comes to exercising their rights? Not at all. In the same way, while I agree with the Fiji Sabbathkeepers' view that their nation should embrace observance of the weekly Sabbath, this does not mean I agree with their method of attempting to achieve their desired result, nor should all Sabbathkeepers be lumped together in this manner. In other words, you weren't "playing fair."

So you see, not only do I not support depicting Sabbathkeepers everywhere as being overly-zealous (half-baked) all because of a few radical groups, but I would not support myself depicting Jehovah's Witnesses in the same light just because of a few zany Jehovah's Witnesses out there. Do you see my point?

For the record, I am NOT a Seventh-Day Adventist. I do not claim membership in any organized "religion." I gather, based on your deliberate singling out "Seventh-Day Adventists" in the one newspaper article, that you somehow associated me with that group of believers.

I do not own a gun, nor have I ever been involved in any form of violence. Yet, you went to great lengths to associate folks like me with those who *have* exhibited violence. Do you not have feelings? How can you be so hurtful as to do such a thing? You claim to be such a caring organization, and indeed, you expended a great deal of time and energy into pointing that out to me in your letter. Yet, you think *nothing* of lumping *all* Sabbathkeepers into the same mold as the extremists described in your article.

You mentioned, "We will pass your comments along to those who are responsible for the content of what we publish." *Is that all you're going to do?* Again, the propaganda you presented was unfair by any Scriptural standard. I would expect more than the passive assurance that you will convey my comments to "those who are responsible."

What Does “We Are Delivered From the Law” Mean?

In answer to the question, “Does [God] *still* require His people to observe the weekly Sabbath?” you wrote the following:

Regarding what Christ taught the first Christians about God’s Law, the Bible states at Romans 7:6: “**But now we are delivered from the law** ... that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Bible quotations from *King James Version*.) From what “law” were Christians “delivered”? In the ext verse (7), the inspired writer goes on to quote as an example one of the Ten Commandments—“Thou shalt not covet.” **This clearly shows what he meant by “the law”—the entire law that came through Moses—obviously including the Ten Commandments, since Paul used one of them to illustrate “the law” that Christians were delivered from.**

We are well-accustomed to folks bringing up Romans 7:4-6 in an attempt to discredit Sabbath observance, and, in your case, the entire law. I believe the best way to *really* understand what the Apostle Paul was attempting to convey is to read the entire chapter (in fact, the preceding chapters as well) in full context. I believe you need to use great caution when citing isolated verses as you do. In so doing, there is great danger of quoting verses out of proper context. Nevertheless, in order to accommodate answering your argument, I will only cite verses 4-6:

⁴ Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Messiah, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for the Almighty.

⁵ While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

⁶ But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

In examining these verses, I can see how someone could read them outside of the context in which they are written and conclude that we no longer need to observe the Torah. Certainly, if we have “died to the law that we may belong to another,” this sounds like we have broken off the relationship with the Torah. Not only that, but the Apostle Paul further explains that we have been *discharged* (or as the KJV renders it, “delivered”) from the law! This seems plain enough ... on the surface. However, if we read the entire chapter in context ... in fact, if we read both chapter seven *and* chapter six together in full context, it becomes apparent that the Apostle Paul did *not* intend for his readers to believe we are no longer required to obey the Almighty’s law as found in His Torah.

To begin with, we can see right away in verse one of chapter seven that the Apostle Paul never intended anyone to believe the law is no longer binding upon believers. He plainly states that the law is binding upon a person *for as long as he lives!*

¹ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

I recommend checking your pulse right now to make sure you are still alive. If you are, then according to the Apostle Paul, the law has “dominion” (*Gr.* κυριεύω, to rule) over you!

Of course, I realize that those who are opposed to Sabbathkeeping usually respond by saying, “But don’t you understand? If you keep reading that passage, it says we *died* to the law, so now we’re married to *another* ... to Yeshua the Messiah! We’re no longer in bondage to the law!”

If you are such a person who would claim that you are now married to Yeshua, then please allow me to introduce you to a few things that your new husband expects of you:

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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.

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 question becomes, “Did Yeshua mean what He said?” If He didn’t come to destroy the law, then why do those of your persuasion (who allegedly claim Him as their Savior) teach that He “took away” the law? Isn’t “taking away the law” the same as destroying it? The same results are achieved either way! Of course, you also teach that when Yeshua “fulfilled the law,” this means (in your estimation) that He “brought it to an end.” If this is so, then *righteousness* was “brought to an end” when Yeshua was baptized, for when John the Baptist tried to prevent Yeshua from being baptized, Yeshua replied, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”¹ Somehow, I don’t believe Yeshua brought righteousness to an end when He was baptized, nor do I believe He brought the law to an end when He was impaled.

It is also worth noting that if Yeshua’s *death* brought an end to the law, then it appears He didn’t know in advance that this would be the end result of what was to happen at Calvary. You see, at one point in His earthly ministry, in describing a future event involving the destruction of Jerusalem, Yeshua admonished His disciples to pray that they would not have to flee on the Sabbath day.² *Why would He advise His disciples to not flee on the weekly Sabbath if the Sabbath would, by that time, be “done away”?* This is yet another difficult question that Jehovah’s Witnesses do not seem willing to touch – one more example of tough questions that you folks seem to avoid like the plague!

Back to Romans 7: If you claim you died to the law and are now married to Yeshua, then the Yeshua I have just introduced to you is the Yeshua you are married to: This is the same Yeshua who not only obeyed Torah, but taught His *followers* to obey it as well. In fact, we would do well to hearken to the words He spoke in Matthew 19:17: “**If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments**” (another verse you folks tend to avoid). This is the Man to whom you claim to be married, then. If you think He did away with the law, then I think you need to get to know Him a little better.

¹ *Cf.*, Matthew 3:15. The Greek word translated “fulfil” in this verse (, #4137 in *Strong’s*) is the same Greek word used to translate the word “fulfilled” in Matthew 5:17.

² *Cf.*, Matthew 24:20.

In Romans chapter seven, we read that the law has dominion over us as long as we are alive. However, we're about to read that we have indeed *died to the law!* What we need to understand is, "What does the Apostle Paul *mean* by 'dying to the law'?" Does he mean the law has been "taken away"? *Absolutely not!* But don't take my word for it! I realize you wouldn't do that anyway, but I just want to reinforce that it is not just me, but the Apostle Paul as well who conveys that the law has *not* been "taken away." We've already read verse one of Romans 7, but let's read it again, plus the next few verses, to get a good handle on what the Apostle Paul is trying to convey:

¹ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

² Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.

³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

⁴ Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Messiah, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for the Almighty.

The above passage requires more than just a superficial skimming to understand what the Apostle Paul intended for his readers to understand, and there are a few things we need to establish right away as we examine what he wrote. First of all, nowhere does the Apostle Paul state that the law has died! The law is very much alive! The first question we need to answer, then, is, "*Who died?*"

The answer is, *we* are the ones who died! Not only did we die, but Paul states that we have "*died to the law.*" Since we are the ones who died, and since the law is still very much alive, what does all this mean? The answer may elude us if we only read the immediate context of Romans chapter seven. However, if we do a little rewinding, taking us back to chapter six, I believe the Apostle Paul's intended meaning becomes clear. If we refer back to the opening portion of chapter six, we read that when we were baptized, we were buried into Yeshua Messiah's *death*. Our "old man of sin" died, and we symbolically buried that old man at baptism, but then we were *raised* a new creation. We symbolically destroyed the body of sin when we buried that old man, then when we raised a new creation, a new creature was born, "that henceforth we should not serve sin." In other words, once we are raised a new creation, we stop transgressing Yahweh's law! We have renounced our former ways, and have officially made our pledge to Yahweh to live our lives *His way* from now on! This is the gist of what the Apostle Paul explained to his Roman readers in the first portion of chapter six. Let's read that entire portion, so as to ensure that we don't miss anything:

¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Yeshua Messiah were baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Messiah was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we be dead with Messiah, we believe that we shall also live with Him:

⁹ Knowing that Messiah being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.

¹⁰ For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto the Almighty.

¹¹ Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto the Almighty through Yeshua Messiah our Master.

¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

As we delve into understanding what exactly the Apostle Paul means by “dying to the law,” we need to simultaneously grasp what he means in verse two of chapter six when he says *we are dead to sin*. The answer is, we died to sin when our old man of sin died. We buried that dead body in the watery grave of baptism, that from here on we should not be sinning, i.e., breaking Yahweh’s laws. As we work our way through the remainder of chapter six, we read that we are now servants of righteousness and now that we are made free from sin, we have become servants to the Almighty. In fact, the chapter ends with the admonition that the wages of sin is *death*, but the gift of the Almighty is eternal life (v. 23).

In chapter seven, the Apostle Paul expounds more fully on the groundwork he laid in chapter six. He begins by stating the obvious: The law only has “dominion” over a man as long as he lives (v. 1). Some folks believe this means that as soon as we “died with Messiah,” the law is no longer binding upon us. In fact, this is how some translators translate this passage. Notice how the *Living Bible* translates Romans 7:4:

⁴ Your “husband,” your master, used to be the Jewish law; but you “died,” as it were, with Christ on the cross; and since you are “dead,” you are no longer “married to the law,” and it has no more control over you.

As you can see, the translator of the above text obviously believes that those who belong to Messiah are not subject to the Almighty’s law. Jehovah’s Witnesses, along with normative Christianity, teach that this is precisely what Romans 7:4 means.

I must reiterate that we cannot understand what the Apostle Paul meant in Romans chapter seven unless we at least understand what he meant in *chapter six*. However, those who quote isolated verses out of context will not do this (of course, this also includes nominal churchianity). Since this is the approach you used, I question as to whether or not I can reach you with the suggestion of how important it is to read verses in proper context. I sense that you’ve already pre-determined how you will interpret Romans 7:6-7 without opting to try reading everything in proper context.

In Romans 6:9, Paul speaks of Yeshua's immortality now that He has been resurrected, saying, “Death no longer has dominion over Him.” During the period that Yeshua was a flesh-and-blood human being, He could die, and He did die on the stake. Now, however, death no longer has any power over Him because He is an immortal Spirit Being.

In verse 14, Paul uses *the same word* (Gr. *kurieuo*, to rule) to describe our relationship with sin. “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” Here he shows how our past sins have been forgiven, and we have access to the Messiah’s atoning grace for forgiveness of future sins. Therefore, sin no longer has the power to condemn us to death.

Throughout Romans 6 and 7, the Greek word translated “dominion” is *kurieuo*, meaning “exercise lordship over.” Paul uses this term in the context of having power over something. In Romans 6:9 and 14, he states that death and sin no longer have power to harm us or to cause any adverse effect in our lives.

I am hopeful that this helps you to better understand Paul's meaning in Romans 7:1. In this verse, Paul explains how the law has “power” over a human being only while he lives. He means the law has power to condemn us as a sinner and, consequently, condemn us to death only as long as we are alive. Once we have died, the penalty for sin has been paid, and the law has no more power to condemn us.

In verses 2 and 3, Paul continues to discuss our relationship to the law and begins to draw the analogy from a human relationship, marriage, which illustrates the points that he was making in chapter six. He explains how a woman is bound by the law to her husband for as long as he is alive. However, marriage is “till death do us part.” Death breaks the marriage bond. Therefore, if the wife marries another man while her first husband is still alive, the law has the power, the authority, to condemn her as an adulteress. However, if her husband dies, the marriage bond is broken, and if she remarries, the law cannot condemn her as an adulteress. I hope you understand how this concept works.

As you plainly agree (as stated in your letter), the law to which Paul is referring in these verses is clearly the Ten Commandments. The seventh commandment is the law forbidding adultery. Here, contrary to your premature conclusion, Paul plainly states that this law against adultery is *binding* on believers! How can the law be binding and *not binding* at the same time? It defies all logic! Is this the way you want to guide others? *Are you sure about that?*

In verse 4, Paul explains the marriage analogy and how this relationship of a woman to her husband bears upon our relationship to the law and the Messiah. “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ.” Just as the woman in his example cannot be condemned by the law as an adulteress if her first husband dies, so we cannot be condemned by the law because our “old man of sin” has died.

In other words, we have become dead in the eyes of the law!

We need to remember that death had dominion (*kurieuo*) over Yeshua until His resurrection. Now death has no more dominion over Him. Before our conversion, sin had dominion (*kurieuo*) over us. Once we were confronted with our sinful nature and of the death penalty that awaited us, thankfully we learned of our Heavenly Father’s grace towards us through His Son Yeshua, who died in our place, shedding His own blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Our body of sin was then symbolically put to death. As Paul put it in Romans 7:9, “I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” The law reveals our sin. Until we know what the law is, we don’t fathom what sin is. It is only when we learn what it is the Almighty expects of His children that we grasp the gravity of the consequences. We then [hopefully] understand that, in the eyes of the law, that body of sin is as good as ***dead!***

At the time of our baptism, the old man of sin was put to death and buried in a watery grave (Romans 6:4). Because Yeshua died in our stead, and we have been buried with Him in baptism, the law regards us

as having died. Therefore, the penalty for sin (Romans 6:23) has been paid, and the law no longer has power to condemn us to death for our sins.

That “old man of sin” to whom we *were* married should now be dead, for the wages of sin is *death* (Romans 6:23). Once that “old man” was put to death, the law forbidding us to commit adultery no longer had *dominion* over us. We were made lawfully free to marry again (and I choose the true bridegroom, Yeshua). The law of adultery is still in effect, but it didn’t apply anymore (at that point in time) because the one to whom we *had* been married is no longer alive. From my perspective, Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that it’s okay to resurrect the dead man!

Paul continues in verse 4, “. . . that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to the Almighty.” In the analogy of the woman and her husbands, the first husband is the old man of sin to whom we *were* “married” prior to conversion. After the old man of sin died at baptism, we were then free to marry Yeshua. Just as He died and was resurrected, so our old man of sin has died, and we have been raised out of the watery grave of baptism a new man, empowered to bear righteous fruit in service to our Heavenly Father. Again, from my perspective, Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that it’s okay to resurrect the dead man—just as Yeshua was resurrected.

In verse 5, Paul explains how that *before we were converted*, our sinful natures brought us under the death penalty. He shows that the carnal, sinful mind is so hostile toward the Almighty (Romans 8:7) that knowledge of His commandments actually stirs a desire in an unconverted person to commit even greater sins.

Finally, presuming you understand what “converted” means, Paul gives the conclusion of the matter in the verse that you offered as a “one-liner,” isolated text, which I feel you took completely *out of context*. The verse I’m referring to is Romans 7, verse 6. When we put everything that Paul has already written together, we should properly see what he means. We have now been delivered from the power of the law. The law no longer has authority to condemn us to death because our old man of sin has died, and the Messiah has paid the penalty for sin in our stead. Now that the Almighty has given those who obey Him His Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32), we now “serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” In other words, we now keep not just the letter of the law, but we also keep the Almighty’s laws in their full spiritual intent and purpose as Yeshua magnified them throughout His ministry.

So we see that, far from being abolished, our Heavenly Father’s Law is now even *more* binding on true believers. Because of the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah, our sins have all been forgiven, and we *should* now live transformed lives in which we keep our Creator’s laws of love through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

At baptism, we should have indeed *died* in the eyes of the law, and our “life is [or *should be*] hidden with Messiah in the Almighty” (Colossians 3:3). As we grow and overcome, our Heavenly Father’s laws should become written on our hearts and minds until we finally are born into the Kingdom, where we will keep His laws of love perfectly for all eternity!

The Apostle Paul’s marriage illustration doesn’t contradict the example he followed . . . *the Messiah’s example* . . ., which is the same example Paul testified that he set for others (I Cor. 11:1). We cannot be servants of sin, i.e., of *breaking our Creator’s laws* . . . including the fourth commandment . . . and simultaneously be servants of righteousness. Once we come to grips with our sinful lifestyle and the penalty that awaits us when we continue with that lifestyle, we learn of the Almighty’s grace extended through His Son Yeshua, Whose perfect life qualified Him as the perfect sacrifice that atones for our sins.

Since the penalty for sin is death, our Heavenly Father’s grace allowed us to symbolically put our “old man of sin” to death, lawfully freeing us to marry the “man of righteousness”—that He would henceforth be our Master. We buried that “old man” in the watery grave of baptism, where we pledged ourselves to our new Master. Having Yeshua as our Master doesn’t change any laws or put us above obedience to any of the Almighty’s laws. If anything, we are more accountable for our obedience now than we ever were before, for now we are supposed to be *example-setters*! We should show ourselves to be servants of righteousness! The Apostle Paul proceeds to affirm in Romans chapter seven that he has the utmost regard for Yahweh’s law:

¹² Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

The above is yet *another* verse that Jehovah’s Witnesses omit from their articles. I don’t wonder why – it’s already clear: It defies an antinomian agenda.

The Apostle Paul concludes this chapter with a clear affirmation that, in spite of his battle with his carnal nature, he serves the law of Yahweh:

²⁵ I thank the Almighty through Yeshua Messiah our Master. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of the Almighty; but with the flesh the law of sin.

In the very next chapter the Apostle Paul expounds on the fact that we must win the battle against the carnal mind because the carnal mind is *enmity* against the Almighty, and as such it does not allow itself to be subject to His law:

⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

⁷ Because the carnal mind is **enmity** against the Almighty: for **it is not subject to the law of the Almighty, neither indeed can be.**

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please the Almighty.

What kind of a “mind” do you have, if I may ask? If we must fight the carnal mind, which is not subject to our Heavenly Father’s law, then we must pursue being *spiritually minded*, which must of necessity be subject to His law. Paul understood this! So should we!

As you can see, when we quote isolated texts of Scripture, we can get away with pat answers in semi-brief letters. I highly doubt that you will read this letter, but I felt I had to take the time to demonstrate the dangers of taking verses out of context, which is what you did with Romans 7:6-7.

Ephesians 2:14-15 – Is This “Abolished” Law the Same One That Paul Says Is “By No Means” Abolished in Romans 3:31?

Continuing with your letter, you wrote the following:

At Ephesians 2:14, 15, Paul reaffirms this, saying that the “law of commandments” is what Christ “abolished”: “For [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Similarly, Colossians 2:14-17 adds that Christ “[blotted] out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way ... 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*.”

It is precisely within the above commentary that I immediately knew you could not have completely read my previous letter to you, especially since I devoted a special section to addressing both Ephesians 2:14-15 and Colossians 2:14-17! It is regrettable that you did not read my first commentary on those verses. This way, you could have composed a response to my commentary instead of merely repeating the same basic premise that was already incorporated into the “Should You Keep the Weekly Sabbath?” article. This leaves me to write, “My response to the above commentary is the same response that I initially sent you!”

I will once again ask you if the law that you believe was “abolished” in Ephesians 2:14-15 is the same law that Paul says was “by no means” abolished in Romans 3:31. Can you answer that?

Does 2 Corinthians 3:3 Prove the Weekly Sabbath Was “Taken Away”?

You continue your attempt to defend your position by producing a verse (once again taken out of context) that even non-Sabbathkeeping scholars agree has no bearing on whether or not the law was abolished. Here is what you wrote:

So Christians would now obey the lofty *principles* of the Law—“not [written on] tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” (2 Corinthians 3:3) As noted above, a “newness of spirit” now motivated them instead of just obeying a set of rules written on stone—“the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 7:6) Consistently, as noted above, the part of the Law that sets forth the Ten Commandments, which were written on stone tablets, is included at 2 Corinthians 3:1-11, where it speaks of these in verse 7 as “the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,” which “was to be done away.” And what was “engraven in stones” included the Sabbath law.

I reply: Your first concern should be why the Apostle Paul never *mentioned* the word “Sabbath” in the passage that you cite. Certainly, the expectation for new converts, including Jews would be “SHOCK AND AWE” — if it was clear that Paul meant the Sabbath was no longer to be observed! Can you imagine a Jew who had kept the Sabbath all his life suddenly being expected to “just understand” that the Messiah had “nailed it to the stake”? With this backdrop, you really need to explain why the Apostle Paul didn’t even *mention* the word “Sabbath” in his letter to the Corinthians.

This is especially cause for concern when you consider the fact that he observed the Sabbath with the Corinthian believers for a year and a half (Acts 18:1-11). You can be assured that if there was an expectation of understanding that the Sabbath was “taken away,” specific questions about that specific day of the week would be asked, and they would need to be answered!

Your second concern should be answering the questions I asked in my previous letter to you as to what the Apostle Paul “didn’t mean.” You ignored that aspect in your reply, presumably out of convenience for yourself (since they would be difficult to disprove).

Third, as I mentioned in the introduction to this section, even certain non-Sabbatarian commentators agree that this passage does not validate the belief that the Ten Commandments were “done away.” For example, here is what 19th century commentators Jamieson, Fausset & Brown had to say regarding this passage:

He reverts here again to the contrast between the law on “tables of stone,” and that “written by the Spirit on fleshly tables of the heart” vs. 3. **not of the letter**—joined with “ministers”; ministers not of *the mere literal precept*, in which the old law, as then understood, consisted; “but of the Spirit,” i.e., *the spiritual holiness* which lay under the old law, and which the new covenant brings to light (Matt. 5:17-48) with new *motives* added, and a new *power* of obedience imparted, viz., the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:6). Even in *writing the letter* of the New Testament, Paul and the other sacred writers were ministers *not of the letter, but of the spirit*. No piety of spirit could exempt a man from the yoke of the letter of each legal ordinance under the Old Testament; for God had appointed this as the way in which He chose a devout Jew to express his state of mind towards God. Christianity, on the other hand, makes the spirit of our outward observances everything, and the letter a secondary consideration (John 4:24). **Still the moral law of the ten commandments, being written by the finger of God, is as obligatory now as ever**; but put more on the Gospel spirit of “love,” than on the letter of a servile obedience, and in a deeper and fuller spirituality (Matt. 5:17-48; Rom. 13:9). No literal precepts could fully comprehend the wide range of holiness which LOVE, the work of the Holy Spirit, under the Gospel suggests to the believer’s heart instinctively from the word understood in its deep spirituality.³

As you can see, your *opinion* that 2 Corinthians chapter 3 validates the abolishment of the Sabbath does not meet the agreement of all your fellow non-Sabbathkeepers. In other words, these verses may be interpreted in more than one way – even by those who agree that the fourth commandment is no longer in effect. *You* see an abolishment of the Law, whereas others, such as myself, see a radiant glory in the New Covenant that will never fade, unlike the glory that faded from the giving of the Law at Sinai. *The glory faded and ended! The law didn’t!*

Somehow, some way, you need to explain how the Apostle Paul can write in one place that he “by no means” abolishes the law, then in another (in your estimation) he writes that it *is* abolished after all. You make no effort to reconcile these contradictions, opting instead to just produce more texts that you feel are supportive of your doctrinal stand.

³ Jamieson, Fausset & Brown’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, Robert Jamieson, D.D., Professor of Theology, Aberdeen, Scotland, A. R. Fausset, A.M., St. Cuthbert’s, York, England, David Brown, D.D., St. Paul’s, Glasgow, Scotland, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1961 (originally published in 1871), pp. 1,235-36.

Does Showing Love for Neighbors Every Day of the Week = Sabbath Observance?

On page 2 of your letter, you attempt to establish the point that you somehow keep the Sabbath (in principle at least) every day. Here's what you wrote:

On the other hand, it is important that the principles behind the Mosaic Law, including the Ten Commandments, are observed every day by Christians—not just one specific day—having in mind that “he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, ... is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself ... therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:8-11) We endeavor to show love for our neighbors every day of the week by using whatever time is available, including weekends, to share the Bible's message with people. In this way, as Paul also explains, “we which have believed do enter into [God's] rest.”—Hebrews 4:3 and entire chapter.

I reply: Three points: **(1)**, If you obeyed the fourth commandment, you would rest from your weekly labors on a specific day each and every week. I believe careful research will validate that this day is the day commonly known as “Saturday.” For you to imply that you “enter into the Almighty's rest” in accordance with this principle is a misrepresentation of the truth. You are in essence attempting to change the rules without the authority to do so (and Yeshua certainly gave you no such authorization, although I'm sure you believe otherwise).

Your “Sabbath observance” reminds me of those who pilfer towels from hotel rooms, yet don't really look at it as “stealing,” since they paid for the hotel room. You seem to believe that you can redefine Sabbath observance, even if it would mean working at one's place of employment on that day.

(2), It is wonderful that you work at showing love for your neighbor – I've never suggested that you folks do otherwise – but you need to remember that the first of the two “greatest commandments” is to *love our Heavenly Father* with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. All of our being. Does Sabbath observance fit in there anywhere? Not according to you. According to Yeshua, it does (Matt. 19:17, 24:20, et al).

In view of the above, I can confidently state that **(3)** you do NOT enter into our Heavenly Father's rest, which, according to Hebrews 4:4, is the *seventh day*, not the day you folks observe. My wife and I eagerly anticipate the fulfillment of the Sabbath in the Kingdom. For now, we only get a taste of it once a week, and we love it!

The additional information that you included in your response, such as the copies from *Insight on the Scriptures*, does not add any weight to your argument. It avoids the “tough questions” and fails to reconcile the verses that you feel support abolishment of the law with the verses where the Apostle Paul clearly upholds the law. At the same time, I commend the author for at least recognizing that there are no NT passages validating Sunday observance. That is a rare admission for a Sunday-keeping organization such as yourself to make!

In the fourth paragraph of the second page of your letter, you ask, “Is Sabbath observance the way one can tell which is the true religion?” May I ask why you felt it necessary to ask that question? Where in my letter did I do so much as *hint* that Sabbath observance is an indicator of the “true religion”???

The answer: YOU PRESUME THAT WE BELIEVE THIS WAY, EVEN THOUGH I SAID NO SUCH THING. Sorry about the “all caps,” but you have to understand how frustrating it is to be misjudged by others as you have done here.

I didn't respond to your article in order to point you to the “true religion”! I responded to your article because I disagree with the points that you made in it! I am a truth seeker, not someone claiming to be a member of the “true assembly,” which I know you folks like to do!

The rest of your letter primarily consists of boasting about what a wonderful organization you feel the Jehovah's Witnesses is, how Jehovah's Witnesses (as opposed to “churches”) won't “slaughter their brothers’—or anyone else, for that matter.” Well, I am impressed that we agree with each other on that point, but are we *really* supposed to boasting about our “good works”???

I actually have no issues *personally* with the Jehovah's Witnesses we've met. They have all been nice, though somewhat smug in the belief that they're in the “true assembly” or whatever term they use to describe your organization. I believe we need to be very careful about believing that “we're the only ones with truth.”

You close your letter with this remark:

We trust the above comments and enclosures will be of help to you in understanding some of the Scriptural reasons why Jehovah's Witnesses view the Sabbath as we do and feel confident that their worship is pleasing to God.

I reply: Well, no, when you use isolated verses that may be interpreted in more than one way—and I'm referring to being interpreted in more than one way by scholars who share your view that the Sabbath was “taken away”—you do not succeed in persuading folks like me.

You also either skimmed right over or completely ignored my previous commentaries on the likes of Ephesians 2:14-15 and Colossians 2:14-17, not to mention my demonstrations of what the Apostle Paul *didn't* mean.

What you'll need to do is demonstrate the flaws in the reasoning that I presented in my first letter to you, presuming you can find those flaws. I try to open to other interpretations, but when your answers turn out to be repetitions of what I feel I have already refuted, I get the impression that you're not *really* into studying this subject on anything more than a very superficial level.

In the love of YHWH through Yeshua the Messiah,

Larry Acheson