

Did God Give Two Laws at Sinai?

by Bob Pulliam

The New Testament makes it clear that the Law of Moses was nailed to the cross. It may surprise some folks, but the Sabbatarian does not try to deny that fact. They know about Galatians 3:24-25, and already have their answer set up to defend the Sabbath against such attacks. Their defense?... They try to create a distinction between the phrases "Law of Moses" and "Law of God". They tell us that the Law of Moses was in fact nailed to the cross, and is no longer in effect. But the ten commandments, according to them, is actually the "Law of God". They contend that the ten commandments were not a part of the law that was nailed to the cross. The Law of the Lord is an eternal law that remains in effect to this day.

So they will conduct you on a guided tour of choice passages that refer to animal sacrifices and ceremonies as the "Law of Moses"; and other passages that refer to the ten commandments as the "Law of God". When they finish, it looks like they have a valid point. However, they have confined their study to passages that agree with their position. And with that, let me show you a few passages they do not consult as they study with you.

If the offerings and sacrifices of the law given at Sinai are called the "Law of Moses", then why do we read this:

"He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord." (II Chr 31:3)

Remember that the "Law of the Lord" is supposed to refer to the ten commandments as His eternal covenant. But here we have the burnt offerings referred to as being "written in the law of the Lord". So if the ten commandments were not nailed to the cross because they were the "Law of the Lord", then there would still be an obligation to offer burnt offerings. If not, why not?

Please note Luke's references to the law in the following text:

"And when the days of her purification according to **the law of Moses** were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in **the law of the Lord**, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in **the law of the Lord**, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of **the law**," (Lk 2:22-27)

Here we find Luke using the terms "the law"; "law of Moses"; and "law of the Lord" interchangeably. Surely this inspired author would not do that if they did not refer to the same thing. Verse twenty-four is especially interesting here. Notice that they went up to do what was commanded in the "law of the Lord"... And what was that?... "offer a sacrifice"!

In the first eighteen verses of Nehemiah eight, we are treated to a glimpse of the history lesson given to the Israelites after the return from captivity. In this section, our two phrases are never used in a distinguishable way to separate the ten commandments from the remainder of the law. In fact, verse eighteen speaks of the feast of booths and refers to it as being in "the Book of the Law of God".

The Greatest Commandment...

If you believed that the ten commandments was an eternal covenant for all mankind; where would you expect the greatest command of the law to be found? Surely it is in the eternal covenant, so it can be appreciated and obeyed by all! So, what is the greatest commandment?...

" 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, ' "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ' " (Mt 22:36-39)

The greatest commandment is found in Deuteronomy 6:5. Not in the ten commandments! It is in the section that would otherwise be called the "Law of Moses"! The second greatest is found in Leviticus 19:18. Again, this is not in the ten commandments!

The Covenant...

Here we should consider another distinction in terms that the Sabbatarian is fond of. In scripture, we find that the ten commandments are called "the covenant" (e.g. Ex 34:27f; Dt 4:13; 9:9-11). The Sabbatarian uses that term to attempt a distinction between law and covenant. They tell us that the law was nailed to the cross, but the covenant continues. If that is so, then we should have no trouble seeing that distinction in scripture. But a wonderful thing about scripture is it's power to refute lies about it. Take, for example, this little excerpt of scripture:

"who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious."

In this passage, something is clearly passing away, and something is remaining. There is the ministry of the Spirit (v8), which refers to the "new covenant" (v6). If there is a new "covenant", then an old one must be somewhere in the passage. The old is that which is spelled out as "written and engraved on stones" (v7). From verse eleven, we conclude that the old covenant was passing away, but that the new covenant remains (and is much more glorious). And isn't it strange that the new covenant nowhere commands the Sabbath?

Conclusion...

There is no difference between the terms "Law of Moses" and "Law of the Lord". This distinction is only created by the Sabbatarian to further a false doctrine.