

Sunday or Sabbath Debate

Proposition:

"RESOLVED, the New Testament teaches that the first day of the week (Sunday) as a day of worship is enforced upon God's people in this age of the world."

Affirm:

John Lewis [Email](#)

(Christian)

Deny:

Samuele Bacchiocchi

(Seventh-day Adventist)

[Lewis' First Affirmative](#)

[Bacchiocchi's First Negative](#)

[Lewis' Second Affirmative](#)

[Bacchiocchi's Second Negative](#)

[Go to Historical website that proves Christians worshipped on Sunday](#)

Lewis' First Affirmative

I am very happy to be a part of this written discussion with Mr. Bacchiocchi on the seventh day/ first day of the week question. I have agreed to have this written debate in order to prepare Mr. Bacchiocchi and myself for our oral debate which will be conducted at some time in the future. I will make two affirmative presentations in defense of the first day of the week. Mr. Bacchiocchi will respond in the negative. Following this, Mr. Bacchiocchi will make two affirmative presentations in defense of the seventh day of the week. At that time I will respond twice in the negative.

The proposition I will affirm in this debate is as follows: "RESOLVED, the New Testament teaches that the first day of the week (Sunday) as a day of worship is enforced upon God's people in this age of the world." Allow me to briefly define the terms of my proposition. By "the New Testament" I mean specifically the time in which the New Testament era began. Jesus nailed the old law to the cross (Col. 2:14) and the New Testament was ushered in upon the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. Mr. Bacchiocchi will be wasting his time if he attempts to go outside the New Testament for proof of Sabbath day worship. He and I both agreed in the signing of our names that we would debate what the "New Testament teaches." By "teaches" I mean that the New Testament instructs us, whether by

example, implication or direct command.. By "the first day of the week" I mean the day which we commonly call "Sunday." By "as a day of worship" I mean that this is the day sanctioned by God for the church to come together in worship. This is not to say that the church cannot come together at other times. This simply means that the church is commanded (either by direct command, example, or implication) to come together upon the first day of the week for worship. I do not believe Sunday was ever a "Christian Sabbath" as some denominational preachers have taught. I do not contend that God "changed" the "Sabbath" from the seventh day to the first day. The first day was not a Sabbath day to begin with. It is simply the day of worship appointed by God. By "enforced" I mean that it is a part of God's will for us to do this. By "God's people" I mean those who have been converted to Christ. By "in this age of the world" I mean that the New Testament teaches that we today, and every follower of God since the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, is obligated to observe the first day of the week as a day of worship.

Allow me now to make very clear what the issue is NOT in this debate. 1. The issue is not whether Jesus observed the Sabbath. I agree that He did. However, He lived under the old law. 2. The issue is not whether Paul preached on the Sabbath. Showing that someone preached on a particular day does not prove that this is the day which God wants His people to assemble for worship. 3. The issue is not whether the Jews of Old Testament times observed the Sabbath. I agree that they did. The issue is whether the the New Testament tells us that WE should observe the Sabbath day in this era of Jesus Christ. 4. The issue is not whether we are under "law" today. I agree that Christians are under God's law. But *which* law are they under? I contend that Christians are under Christ's law, not the law of Moses in ANY sense whatsoever.

My first argument in defense of the first day of the week is found in 1 Cor. 16:1-2. We note here that the Corinthians were commanded to give upon the "first day of the week." (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The thrust of the Greek text indicates that literally Paul is saying "upon the first day of *every* week...." What reason could there be for giving such an instruction upon the first day of every week unless the first day was a day to be devoted to God? He may labor to give us another reason, but he won't find it in the Bible. Do you think if Mr. Bacchiocchi could find a passage which says that Christians were told to take a collection upon the Sabbath day that he would use it as an argument in proof of Sabbath day worship? You know that he would. Sam, please tell us if you would do this. The apostle Paul, however, tells Christians that they were to give upon the "first day of the week."

We must ask Mr. Bacchiocchi a few questions at this point. First, is giving to the church a religious service? Second, could giving be done on any day of the week? If yes, then why did Paul specifically give orders for it to be done on the "first day of the week"?

We should notice further that this command was an "order" of Paul. Paul had also given this same command to the churches of Galatia (16:1). This was not an isolated command only for the church at Corinth. Paul commanded "all that in every place who call upon the name of Jesus Christ" (1:2) that they should give upon the first day of the week. He further said that the things which he "wrote" were the commandments of God (1 Cor. 14:37). Does Sam *really* believe this?

Once again, suppose Dr. Bacchiocchi could find a New Testament passage which read like this: "Upon the seventh day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no collections when I come." He would present this as abundant proof in favor of Sabbath worship. And he would be right! But there is only one day in which the New Testament commands Christians to give, and that day is the "first day of the week." Sam, we want to ask you: Do you lay by in store upon the first day of every week? This is the *only* example we have from an inspired pen

(unless it be Ellen G. White!). Do follow these instructions?

Upon which day of the week do Sabbatarians give to their church? According to the Seventh-Day Adventist "church manual" it is done on the seventh day of the week (p. 108, 1951 edition). By what authority, Sam, does the Seventh Day church do this? Is there some passage I have overlooked which commands offerings to be made upon the seventh day? He knows that there is not. Yes, Mr. Bacchiocchi, we are commanded to give; but your group has missed it by six days! Your group gives upon the last day of the week; Paul said to give upon the "first day of the week."

Your own church manual says this: "The offering is a vital part of the worship hour." (p. 108). I agree. But get this good: If the offering is a part of the worship and if the offering took place upon the first day of the week, then worship also took place upon the first day of the week. That's very simple, isn't it? Which will he deny? Will he deny that the offering was made on the first day of the week, and thus deny the inspired pen of Paul? Or will he deny his own church manual? We wait eagerly to see.

I don't know what Mr. Bacchiocchi may say about this since I have not had the opportunity to examine his work on this subject. He may say that Paul is not discussing a public offering which took place when the church assembled. Some believe Paul is commanding a laying by in store which took place at home. I will deal with this extensively when (or if) he makes this argument. I will only say this at this time: Paul said he wanted them to give so that there would be no collections when he came. But if this is talking about laying by in store "at home" then there *would* be collections when Paul came because the offerings would of necessity need to be collected from people's homes. Paul is obviously talking about an offering which was collected in one central treasury.

In summary, Paul gave "orders" that a collection should be made upon the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Offerings are a part of worship itself. Since offerings are a part of worship and since offerings took place on the first day of the week, worship also is to take place on the first day of the week.

My proposition has been established. I invite any private comments from any readers. I also invite any and all Seventh-Day contenders to meet me in public debate on this vital subject. Mr. Bacchiocchi has graciously agreed to do so in the near future. I look forward to Sam's first negative reply.

Bacchiocchi's First Negative

Dear John:

Thank you for inviting me to respond to your proposition that the New Testament enjoins Christians to observe Sunday as the new day of rest and worship. You wrote: "The New Testament teaches that we today, and every follower of God since the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, is obligated to observe the first day of the week as a day of worship."

For our dialogue to be meaningful, John, we both must resolve in our hearts to reexamine the Biblical and historical data with an open mind, willing to reconsider our view, if that should prove to be necessary. On my part I promise to do so and I hope you will do the same.

Recently I have been involved in a dialogue with thousands of former members and ministers of the Worldwide Church of God who have challenged me to reconsider my views on the ancient Feasts of Israel. I accepted their challenge and after a year of diligent study, I changed my views. I have come to

realize that though the sacrificial aspects of the annual Holy Days terminated at the Cross, their typological and eschatological function still remains and is relevant for us today. I cite this example simply to show that I am willing to reconsider my views, when I am convicted by the witness of the Scripture. I trust that you are willing to do the same. You have impressed me as a sincere student of the Word of God. This gives me reason to hope that you also, like many other clergymen, after having examined all the relevant Biblical and historical data, will come to accept the continuity, validity, and value of the Sabbath commandment for NT Christians.

After these introductory remarks, I will briefly respond to the two major propositions of your essay. Your first proposition is that "Christians are under Christ's law, not the law of Moses in ANY sense whatsoever." In your view the Sabbath commandment is part of the old law which was nailed to the cross. You wrote: "Jesus nailed the old law to the cross (Col. 2:14)." Your second proposition is that 1 Cor 16:1-3 supports Sundaykeeping in the New Testament, because Paul instructed the Corinthian believers to give their offering weekly on the first day of the week.

Christ Nailed To The Cross The Old Law Which Included The Sabbath

Your first proposition, John, is based on a faulty theological construct which sees the Cross as the line of demarcation between Judaism and Christianity. Like many others, you seem to believe that before the Cross there was Judaism, the law, and the Sabbath. After the Cross there is Christianity, grace, and Sundaykeeping. This theological construct is based on fantasy rather than facts. Recent research has shown that Christianity began as a continuation of Judaism and not as a radical break away from Judaism. The thousands of Jews who accepted Jesus of Nazareth as their expected Messiah, did not abandon the law in general and the Sabbath in particular. They simply became "BELIEVING JEWS" who are described by James (almost 30 years after the death of Jesus) as "all zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20). It is hard to believe that if they were zealous in the observance of the law, they would have pioneered the abandonment of the Sabbath commandment and the adoption of Sundaykeeping.

I would urge you, John, to read chapter 2 of my book THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT which is entitled "The Continuity between Judaism and Christianity." There you will find a lengthy discussion of this question. This is one of the three complimentary Sabbath books I mailed you last week. I would be glad to e-mail this chapter to anyone interested.

To support your view that the old law, which included the Sabbath, was nailed to the Cross, you refer to Col 2:14. What you are doing is nothing new. If you read the 30 pages appendix of my dissertation FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY, you will see that throughout the centuries this text has been used even by men like Luther and Calvin as a proof that Christ by His death abolished the law in general and the Sabbath in particular. In spite of its popularity, this interpretation of Col 2:14 has recently been rejected by practically all the scholars who have closely examined the passage. This is why I was urging you to read some of the scholarly literature produced even by Sundaykeeping scholars, before beginning this debate. It would have made unnecessary for me to discuss mistaken interpretations which have been largely put to rest. For the sake of brevity, I will share few paragraphs from pages 168-169 of my book THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT which I hope will help you to see the real meaning of Col 2:14.

COLOSSIANS 2:14. In spite of its antiquity and popularity, the view that Paul teaches in Col 2:14 that the law was nailed to the Cross, is totally unfounded for at least two reasons. First, because as E. Lohse points out in the THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, "in the

whole of the epistle the word law is not used at all. Not only that, but the whole significance of the law, which appears unavoidable for Paul when he presents his gospel, is completely absent."¹³ Second, this interpretation detracts from the immediate argument (v. 13) designed to prove the fulness of God's forgiveness. The wiping out of the moral and/or ceremonial law would hardly provide Christians with the divine assurance of forgiveness. Guilt is not removed by destroying law codes. The latter would only leave mankind without moral principles. What was nailed to the Cross was not the "law-nomos" but the cheirographon, a term which occurs only in Colossians 2:14. Its meaning has been clarified by its occurrence in apocalyptic literature where cheirographon is used to designate the "record-book of sin" or the certificate of sin-indebtedness but not the moral or ceremonial law.¹⁴

By this daring metaphor Paul affirms that through Christ, God has "cancelled," "set aside," "nailed to the cross" "the written record of our sins which because of the regulations was against us." The legal basis of the record of sins was "the binding statutes, regulations" (tois dogmasin) but what God destroyed on the Cross was not the legal ground (law) for our entanglement in sin, but the written record of our sins.

By destroying the evidence of our sins, God has also "disarmed the principalities and powers" (2:15) since it is no longer possible for them to accuse those who have been forgiven. There is no reason therefore for Christians to feel incomplete and to seek the help of inferior mediators, since Christ has provided complete redemption and forgiveness.

We conclude then that the document nailed to the cross is not the law in general or the Sabbath in particular, but rather the record of our sins. Any attempt to read into it a reference to the Sabbath or to any other Old Testament ordinance is an unwarranted and gratuitous fantasy.

The fundamental problem I see in your position, John, is that you create an unwarranted dichotomy between the Moses' law and Christ's law. You wrote: "I contend that Christians are under Christ's law, not the law of Moses in ANY sense whatsoever." Such statement implies that Christ gave moral laws that are radically different from the moral laws of Moses. If this were true, it would imply first that Moses himself, and not God, was the originator of the moral and ceremonial laws found in the Pentateuch. Second, that the laws of Moses were bad and consequently Christ had to replace them with better laws.

This view is discredited by the witness of both the OT and of Christ Himself. The OT consistently teaches us that it was God Himself who gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai both the Ten Commandments and the various ceremonials and civil laws. Similarly Christ taught that He had come not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17), that is, to reveal its fuller meaning. This He did by clarifying the divine intent of the Ten Commandments in general and of the Sabbath in particular.

This clarification was especially needed for the Sabbath commandment whose meaning and function has been obscured by over 1500 rabbinical regulations about its observance. This is why the Gospels report no less than seven Sabbath healing episodes, in addition to all the controversies generated by the unconventional way Christ observed the Sabbath. Through His Sabbath teaching and ministry Christ taught that the Sabbath is a day "to do good" (Matt 12:12), a day "to save life" (Mark 3:4), a day "to liberate" men and women from physical and spiritual bonds (Luke 13:12), a day to show mercy and not just religiosity (Matt 12:7).

Many scholars recognize that the unusual coverage given in the Gospels to the Sabbath teachings and ministry of Jesus, is indicative of the importance of Sabbathkeeping in the apostolic church. The

sayings of Jesus reflect the on-going debate between the church and the synagogue. Christians appealed to Christ's teachings to argue with the Jews that the Sabbath is not merely rules to obey, but people to love. You will find a lengthy discussion of the manner of Sabbathkeeping in the apostolic church in Chapter V of *THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT* which is entitled "Sabbathkeeping in the New Testament." Please read it.

Let us now turn to a brief examination of your interpretation of 1 Cor 16:2 where Paul says: "On the first day of every week each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come." You summarize your interpretation of this passage, saying: "Paul gave 'orders' that a collection should be made upon the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Offerings are a part of worship itself. Since offerings are a part of worship and since offerings took place on the first day of the week, worship also is to take place on the first day of the week."

I would urge you to read pages 90 to 101 of my dissertation *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY* where I discuss your argument at considerable length. For the sake of brevity I will simply point out the fallacies of your syllogism which runs like this:

Major premise: Offerings are a part of church worship

Minor premise: Paul ordered the Corinthians to take up their offering on the first day of the week,

Conclusion: Thus, the first day of the week was the regular day of worship.

The fundamental problem with your syllogism, John, is that it is based on faulty premises. In your major premise, you assume that offerings were a part of Sabbath worship in the OT and of Sunday worship in the NT. But nowhere does the Bible enjoin to take up collection during the Sabbath or Sunday religious service. On the contrary, Jewish tradition clearly forbade taking up collection on the Sabbath. No offerings were to be handled during the Sabbath worship at the synagogue. The offerings were brought to the Temple or collected from home to home during the week, and not on the Sabbath. For references see footnote 7 on page 91 of *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY*.

The problem with your minor premise is that you wrongly assume that Paul ordered the Corinthians to take up their offerings on the first day of the week during their church service. Please note that there is nothing in the text that suggests that the Corinthians met for church worship on the first day of the week. The laying aside of funds was to be done not publicly at church but privately and individually at home: "each one of you by himself-ekastos umon para eauto" (v.2). The money was to be "stored up-thesaurizon" in each individual house until the Apostle came for it.

If the Christian community was worshipping together on Sunday, it appears paradoxical that Paul should recommend laying aside at home one's gift. Why should Christians deposit their offering at home on Sunday, if on such a day they were gathering for worship at church? Should not the money have been brought to church on Sunday and deposited, to use your words, "in one central treasury"? The fact that Paul's fundraising plan calls to lay aside the money at home, strongly suggests that no worship gatherings took place on Sunday.

Why then did Paul recommend a first-day deposit plan? The answer is given by the Apostle himself: "so that contributions need not be made when I come" (v. 2). The purpose of the plan then is not to enhance Sunday worship by the offering of gifts, but to ensure a substantial and efficient collection upon Paul's arrival. Four characteristics can be identified in the plan. The offering was to be laid aside

PERIODICALLY ("on the first day of every week"), PERSONALLY ("each of you"), PRIVATELY ("by himself in store"), and PROPORTIONALLY ("as he may prosper").

Paul's mention of the first day of the week could be motivated by practical reasons. To wait until the end of the week or of the month to set aside one's contributions is contrary to sound budgetary practices, since by that time one may find himself with nothing left to give. On the other hand, if on the first day of the week, before planning any expenditure, one sets aside what he plans to give, the remaining funds will be so distributed to meet all the basic necessities.

Since no money was handled on the Sabbath by the Jews, it is possible that out of respect for the Sabbath Paul recommended to lay aside the offering privately at home right after the Sabbath, that is, on the the first day of the week.

Summing up, the text proposes a valuable weekly plan to ensure a substantial and orderly contribution on behalf of the poor in Jerusalem, but to extract more meaning from the text would distort it.

May I close, John, by inviting you to consider two important questions: 1). If your proposition that Sundaykeeping "is enforced upon God's people" in the NT were true, why is it that we have no commandment of Christ or of the apostles regarding a weekly Sunday or annual Easter Sunday celebration of the resurrection? This is all the more surprising since we have specific commands regarding baptism, the Lord's supper, and footwashing. If Jesus wanted the day of His resurrection to be memorialized, would He not have taken the opportunity when He rose to establish a memorial of His resurrection as He did at the Last Supper? Please note, John, that Biblical institutions like the Sabbath, baptism, the Lord's Supper, footwashing, all trace their origin to a divine act that established them. The ideal time for Christ to establish a memorial of His resurrection would have been the very Sunday of His resurrection. But all the utterances of the risen Savior are an invitation to work and not to rest and worship in honor of His resurrection. If you take time to study this question, John, you will discover that the resurrection in NT times was celebrated existentially and not liturgically.

2). If, as you seem to assume Paul was the pioneer and promoter of Sundaykeeping, why is it that there is no echo of any controversy between Paul and the Jerusalem brethren over his abandonment of the Sabbath? As you know there was plenty of controversy over circumcision but not over the Sabbath. Why? Are you suggesting that Paul was in perfect agreement with the Jerusalem brethren over the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday? If this is what you think, please read chapter V of my dissertation FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY entitled "Jerusalem and the origin of Sunday," before you prepare your reply.

My final recommendation to you, John, is to read the three volumes on the Sabbath before preparing your response. I signed off two weeks ago from the Internet and Compuserve so that I can work without distraction on my new book on the Fall Feasts of ancient Israel. I am willing to make an exception for you and to take precious time out of my research, if I see that you are making an earnest effort to study and understand the issues relating to the Sabbath/Sunday question. On the other hand, if I see that your interest is not to study the issues, but to recycled old arguments that have been largely discredited by recent research, then I will follow Jesus' advice as found in Matthew 7:6.

Thank you again for the opportunity granted me to dialogue with you. It is my fervent hope and prayer that as a result of our efforts some sincere souls will come to understand and experience more fully the Savior's peace and rest in their restless lives.

Christian regards

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.,

A NOTE: Feel free to contact me for copies of my Sabbath books which I would be glad to make available to you.

Lewis' Second Affirmative

I appreciate this second opportunity to affirm that the New Testament teaches that the first day of the week as a day of worship is enforced upon God's people in this age of the world. In the fifty to sixty debates I have read, attended or participated in, I have never heard the type of statement I heard from Mr. Bacchiocchi in his first reply. He said, "...if I see that your interest is not to study the issues, but to recycled old arguments that have been largely discredited by recent research, then I will follow Jesus' advice as found in Matthew 7:6." Correct me if I'm wrong Sam, but this statement says to me that you will choose not to respond if you consider my work as "recycled old arguments." In other words, Bacchiocchi might not respond. If I don't present arguments just the way he desires, he will consider me like as a "dog" (Mt. 7:6) and not give me what he says is holy. How convenient. I am truly amazed that a man with the credentials of Dr. Bacchiocchi would respond in such a fashion. Both Sam and I agreed by signing our names that we would have a public debate. We agreed through E-mail correspondence that this written debate would take place before our public debate. Now he says he might not respond if my arguments aren't up to his standards. I also might add that Sam's argument on 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 is nothing new to me. I have heard the same argument many times. I even anticipated it in my first affirmative. I have in my hand a written debate which was published in the year 1942. A.N. Dugger made the exact same argument as you did on 1 Corinthians 16. Is your argument, therefore, a recycled old argument since it has been made many times before? We wait patiently to see.

The first day not a day of 'rest'

Sam said, "Thank you for inviting me to respond to your proposition that the New Testament enjoins Christians to observe Sunday as the new day of rest and worship." Mr. Bacchiocchi must not have read me first affirmative very closely. He says my proposition includes the first day as a "day of rest...." I never said the first day of the week was a day of rest. In fact, in my introductory statements I specifically said: "I do not believe Sunday was ever a 'Christian Sabbath' as some denominational preachers have taught. I do not contend that God 'changed' the 'Sabbath' from the seventh day to the first day. The first day was not a Sabbath day to begin with." The first day of the week is not a "new day of rest" or a "new Sabbath." It is simply a day given to us by God on which to worship Him.

Let's Keep The Story Straight

Sam also talks about the time he must spend in preparation for his new book. He says he has signed off the Internet. But "I am willing to make an exception for you and to take precious time out of my research," says he. Bacchiocchi acts as if he is doing me a favor. But who was it that decided we should have this written debate before our public debate? It was Samuele Bacchiocchi. And now he will have me to know that he is willing to make an exception for me! Let's be sure to keep the story straight.

Colossians 2:14

Mr. Bacchiocchi thinks I introduced Colossians 2:14 as an argument in defense of the first day of the week. No I did not. I merely mentioned Colossians 2:14 in defining the terms of my proposition. I thought Sam had debated enough to know that it is customary and honorable to precisely define the terms of the proposition in the first affirmative and that this section is not used as proof of the proposition itself. I was not using Colossians 2:14 as an argument. This is proven by the fact that when I came to 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 I said, "My *first* argument....." Nevertheless, I will briefly respond to his analysis of Colossians 2:14.

Dr. B believes Colossians 2:14 does not speak of the law being nailed to the cross. Instead he says it refers to the "written record of our sins." He offers two items of proof. First, he says the word "law" nor its concept is found in Colossians. True, the word "law" is not mentioned specifically in Colossians; but both the immediate and remote context indicate that Paul is discussing the Mosaic law itself in Colossians 2:14. Even Sam admits that the "Colossian heresy" was a mixture of both "Hellenistic and Jewish elements." (The Sabbath in the New Testament, p. 109). You cannot have it both ways, Sam! Paul mentions "circumcision" and "uncircumcision" (Col. 2:11-13). That's sound like law of Moses language to me. He mentions "festivals" "new moons" and "sabbaths." (2:16) which are a "shadow of things to come." (2:17). "Shadow" is used two other times in a figurative sense in the book of Hebrews. In both of these cases it makes reference to the law of Moses (Heb. 8:5; 10:1). Therefore, the immediate context of Colossians 2:14 indicates that Paul is discussing the law of Moses being nailed to the cross.

The remote context also indicates that Colossians 2:14 speaks of the law of Moses being nailed to the cross. Paul speaks of something being nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). In Ephesians 2:15 that which was "abolished in his flesh" was the "law of commandments" which clearly refers to the law of Moses (cf. Rom. 7:8-13). Here in Ephesians 2:15 the law of Moses is referred to as "ordinances" which is the same word used in Colossians 2:14. Context clearly indicates that Paul is not discussing merely the penalty of the law, but the law itself being nailed to the cross.

Bacchiocchi's second argument that this does not speak of the law being nailed to the cross is: "this interpretation detracts from the immediate argument (V13) designed to prove the fullness of God's forgiveness." Actually, the theme of this section is that Christians "are complete in him" (2:10). Jesus is all that is needed. People need not go back to the law of Moses because Christ, the fullness of the Godhead, has nailed it to the cross. Christ is everything! Therefore, why do we allow people to tell us we should observe festivals, new moons, or sabbaths.

Are Christ's Laws 'Radically Different'?

When I contend that we are under Christ's law and not the law of Moses in any sense, Bacchiocchi says "such [a] statement implies that Christ gave moral laws that are radically different from the moral laws of Moses." No it does not. I think you know better than this. The island of Jamaica at one time was under the rule of Great Britain. Their laws forbid murder, theft, etc. Jamaica is no longer under British Rule. Are we to assume, Sam, that because Jamaica is no longer under British Rule that Jamaica's moral laws (murder, theft, etc.) are "radically different" from those of Great Britain? Just because we are no longer under the law of Moses does not mean Christ's moral laws are radically different.

Matthew 5:17

Bacchiocchi mentions Matthew 5:17. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The key to understanding this is found in verse 18: The law would not pass "till all be fulfilled." I'm sure you are familiar with the word "till." It means that the law of Moses would last "up until" the time of its fulfillment. Bacchiocchi says "fulfill" means "to reveal its fuller meaning." Let's assume that it does mean that. Did Christ reveal (i.e. fulfil) the "fuller meaning" of the law when He was on the earth, Sam? If so, then it has passed away because Jesus said the law would last only "till all be fulfilled"!

Christianity a 'continuation' of Judaism?

Sam says, "Recent research has shown that Christianity began as a continuation of Judaism and not as a radical break away from Judaism." I do understand that Jews were still Jews by nationality even after the church was established. However, the Record is very clear that Christianity was not a mere continuation of Judaism. Jeremiah 31:31-32 says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that 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 that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt;...." God said He would make a "new" covenant that was "not according to" the one made with their fathers when He brought them "out of the land of Egypt." Which covenant was it that God made with Israel when He led them out of Egypt? I invite you to read 1 Kings 8:9: "There was nothing in the ark save the *two tables of stone,* which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, *when they came out of the land of Egypt.*" Sam agrees that the "two tables of stone" refers to the Ten Commandments. But this was the covenant which was made when they came out of the land of Egypt. And Jeremiah says that the new covenant would be "not according" to this one! Hebrews 8:7-13 clearly shows that Jeremiah 31:31ff had been fulfilled in the first century. Verse 13 says that the old covenant (which refers to the Ten Commandments as we've seen) was made "obsolete." (NKJV).

Unusual Coverage Of Sabbath In Gospel Accounts

One more point Sam made before finally getting to my argument was that the unusual coverage given to the Sabbath in the gospels "is indicative of the importance of Sabbathkeeping in the apostolic church." May I remind you that you are in the negative and we are not at this time focussing on the Sabbath. You will have ample opportunity to do that when you take the affirmative. Just because something is mentioned many times throughout the gospel accounts does not prove the apostolic church practiced such. This reasoning first came from the liberals who reject even the inspiration of the Bible. These liberals believe the writers of the gospel accounts were merely writers who were "theologically motivated" to write the things they did. On several occasions temple worship and sacrifice are mentioned. Do you contend that we must conduct our worship in the temple according to temple regulations complete with sacrifice of animals?

1 Corinthians 16

Unanswered Questions

If Dr. Bacchiocchi spent as much time dealing specifically with my arguments as he did with promoting his books, we might have a good debate. Dr. B. mentioned his books no less than eight

times in his first reply. Yet he very rarely specifically addressed my first affirmative paper. Let me urge you, Sam, to quit the "cut and paste" method of debating where you have obviously just taken portions of your books and copied them word for word in this debate. That's not debating. In case you don't know, the job of the negative writer is to respond **directly** to the arguments, questions, and points made by the affirmative writer. This you have not done. Notice the specific questions and arguments I made throughout my paper that you did not even attempt to answer:

1. What reason could there be for giving such an instruction upon the first day of every week unless the first day was a day to be devoted to God?
2. Is giving to the church a religious service?
3. Could giving be done on any day of the week? If yes, then why did Paul specifically give orders for it to be done on the "first day of the week"?
4. Suppose you could find a passage which read like this: "Upon the seventh day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no collections when I come." Would you present this as abundant proof in defense of seventh day worship?
5. Do you lay by in store upon the first day of every week?
6. Upon which day of the week do Sabbatarians give to their church?
7. By what authority does the Seventh Day church give upon the seventh day of the week?
8. I pointed out that Paul had given "orders" not only to the church at Corinth but also to the Galatian churches. Further, the book of 1 Corinthians was a book to all Christians (1:2).
9. Your own church manual says that the collection is a vital part of "worship." Yet you do not have one ounce of authority for this form of worship to be done on the seventh day of the week.
10. I anticipated your response on 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 being simply a collection which you say takes place at home. I specifically said, "Paul said he wanted them to give so that there would be no collections when he came. But if this is talking about laying by in store 'at home' then there **would** be collections when Paul came because the offerings would of necessity need to be collected from people's homes." Yet you passed by this in silence. You need to deal with this, Sam.

1 Corinthians 16:

Silent Sam

Let us now deal specifically with his response (his book in condensed form) on 1 Corinthians 16. I will not merely deal in generalities as Sam has done. I promise to deal specifically with what he said. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 Paul gave orders to the churches in Galatia and Corinth that upon the first day of every week Christians were to lay by in store in order that there would be no collections when Paul came to take this collection to Jerusalem. The point at issue is whether Paul is describing a setting aside to be done at home or in a corporate worship assembly. If Paul is discussing a worship assembly then my proposition is established since this would prove that Christians came together upon the first day of every week.

I asked Mr. Bacchiocchi a very simple question which he failed to notice. Silence on your part, Sam, does not answer the argument. Please answer this: If you were to find a passage which said "upon the seventh day of every week, let every one of you lay by him in store" would you use this as proof for seventh-day worship? Seventh Day Adventists would love it if such a passage could be found. You know how I know this? Because they use several passages from the book of Acts which only mention that Paul preached on the Sabbath. If these Acts passages are offered as proof for Sabbath observance, then certainly one which said, "Upon the seventh day of the week" would be used. Friends, this is the

only day on which the Bible mentions the setting aside of money. I mentioned that the Seventh-Day Church manual says that offerings are to be made on the Sabbath. By what authority, Sam, does your church take up collections upon the seventh day? This is another question you passed over in utter silence.

Another point which Dr. B overlooked is my question regarding whether giving was a religious service. Is giving (whether at home or in the worship of the church) a religious service? If it is, then please show us where you get your authority to do this on the seventh day. If giving is not a religious service then please explain how your authoritative church manual says that giving is a "vital part of the worship" (p. 108).

I point out again that Paul gave "orders" both to the churches of Galatia and the church at Corinth (16:1). But note: Bacchiocchi said, "why then did Paul *recommend* a first-day deposit plan?" (emphasis mine). Bacchiocchi says Paul merely recommended a first day plan; Paul says he ordered them to do it. "Order" is defined as an "order, direct, command." (Baur, Arndt, & Gingrich, 2nd edition, 189). Do you follow this command, Sam? These were instructions given to "all that in every place who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:2). The things which Paul wrote were the commandments of God (14:37). Yet Sam says they were mere "recommendation."

1 Corinthians 16:

Sam's Worn Out 'Recycled' Argument

Sam spouts the old worn out recycled argument that Paul is merely describing something which took place privately at home. He believes *ekastos humon par eauto* means "privately and individually at home." We wonder where Sam got "at home" out of this text since it literally reads "everyone of you all by himself." To suggest anything more than this is to read into the text. I would like to point out that *ekastos humon* is used in Acts 2:38. The text literally reads, "Repent and be baptized *each of you all*" Peter certainly is describing something which is private and individual in nature. No one can be baptized for me. But he certainly didn't mean I can only be baptized "privately and individually at home." Further, just because giving was to be done "by himself" does not imply that it of necessity must be at home. I partake of the Lord's Supper "by myself" (*ekastos*, 1 Cor. 11:21). But this doesn't mean I do it at home all alone. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that this should be done when the church comes together (1 Cor. 11:17ff). In the same way, Paul is simply pointing out that giving is a very personal matter. Giving is something I do for myself. No one can do it for me.

Why did Paul give instructions for a first day deposit plan? Sam says, "To wait until the end of the week or of the month to set aside one's contributions is contrary to sound budgetary practices...." This is mere speculation. You admit in your own book that there is no proof that people of ancient times were paid on the first day of the week (From Sabbath To Sunday, p. 100). Even if some were paid upon the first day of the week, certainly all of them were not. Paul's instructions were something which applied to EVERY person in EVERY church. Since everyone was not paid on the first day of the week, these instructions could not apply to EVERY person in EVERY church. These would be "sound budgetary practices" only if you were paid upon the first day of the week. But what if you were paid on the fourth day of the week? In this case you couldn't plan your budget on the first day since you wouldn't get paid till the fourth day. Do you see all the speculation you get yourself into when you accept Dr. B's view?

Paul is describing "the first day of the week" as something which applies to EVERY person in

EVERY church. Bacchiocchi's view might apply to SOME people in SOME churches, but it certainly couldn't apply to EVERY person in EVERY church. The only way the first day of every week could apply to EVERY person in EVERY church would be because Paul knew that this was the day when EVERY person in EVERY church assembled together to worship God!

My Answers To His Questions

Though Sam did not answer my questions, I will answer his. He asked, "If your proposition that Sundaykeeping 'is enforced upon God's people' in the NT were true, why is it that we have no commandment of Christ or of the apostles regarding a weekly Sunday or annual Easter Sunday celebration of the resurrection?" First, I do not contend an "Easter Sunday celebration" as many denominations do. But I will answer your question first by asking you one: If your proposition of Sabbath keeping by the church is enforced upon God's people is true, why is it that we have no example where the church ever assembled on the Sabbath for worship? If there is one, please bring it forth. You know as well as I do that the Bible teaches by direct command, example, and implication. You try to put God in a box when you demand a direct statement for first day observance. You don't allow God to teach us by example.

Second Question to me: "If, as you seem to assume Paul was the pioneer and promoter of Sundaykeeping, why is it that there is no echo of any controversy between Paul and the Jerusalem brethren over his abandonment of the Sabbath?" I do contend that there was some controversy over the abandonment of the Sabbath by Jews (Col. 2:14-16). But even if we don't read of any, your argument is based upon silence.

1 Corinthians 16

More Proof Of My Proposition

I emphasized in my first affirmative that Paul desired that there "be no collections" when he came (1 Cor. 16:2). Listen to what Dr. Bacchiocchi said: "The purpose of the plan then is not to enhance Sunday worship ... but to ensure a substantial and efficient *collection* UPON PAUL'S arrival." (emphasis mine). Sam contends that Paul gave these instructions so that when he came an efficient "collection" could be taken. Mr. Bacchiocchi, did you not read what Paul said? He ordered them to lay by in store so that there would be NO collections when he came; you say he ordered them to do this so there WOULD be a collection when he came. Friends, read his quote above once again and let it soak in.

I emphasize again that if 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 is giving instructions to lay by in store at home, then there *would* be collections when Paul came because the offerings would need to be collected from the people's homes. Since Paul wants there to be "no collections" he obviously is talking about an offering collected into one central treasury. Silence on your part, Sam, does not answer the argument. This is the point he cannot and will not overcome.

The very word "collection" is further proof that Paul is talking about money collected in one central fund. First, we notice that *logeia* ("collection") is used in reference to the collection of many individuals throughout ancient writings. From the Qxyrhynchus Papyri we learn that *logeia* is used in the sense of "an extraordinary tax." (II, 239, 8). Taxes, of course, are a "collection," into one central fund, not of each person privately at home. We also learn from Ostraka that a collection was taken for the official services of the cult of Isis (II, 413, 63 A.D.). The Sylloge Inscription (1st cent. A.D.) talks

about a "vessel which was gilded ..., for the collection and procession of the gods" which has reference "to a procession at which the spectators were expected to contribute money" (Deissmann in TDNT, 4:282). So *logeia* was used in its everyday sense in reference to a collection which each individual contributed. Paul, therefore, is commanding the Corinthians to "collect" their money into one central fund. This would necessitate that they come together. This proves that first century Christians came together upon the first day of the week to make offerings. The Seventh Day Church manual admits that the offering is "a vital part of the worship" (p. 108).

On the word *thesaurizon* ("storing up") Sam says this refers to "each individual house until the Apostle came for it." But here too we have abundant proof in defense of a central treasury. First, we have the example from Malachi 3:10. The text says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house." "Storehouse" is here defined as "to store, lay up" (verb form) or "treasure, treasury, storehouse" (noun form) (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, 1:68). This is an exact parallel to the meaning of Paul's usage in 1 Corinthians 16:1-3. The Jews of Malachi's time were to "store up" in a "treasury." Yet this wasn't a storing up which occurred at home. Instead, it was collected in one central location (i.e. God's house, the Temple). Our Greek word, noun form, was also used quite frequently to refer to "temple treasury, a temple storehouse for offerings ... Thasauros are temple offerings, sacrificial and guilt offerings, or thank offerings..." Heron of Alexandria even mentions "collection boxes with an automatic contrivance to pay the entrance of money (TDNT, 3:136). It looks like there is abundant evidence in support of a central collection under discussion. Paul said there should be no collections when he came. This must have been money cast into a central treasury; otherwise there would have been collections when he came. This proves that the church came together on the first day of the every week to lay by in store into one central treasury.

Having done this, we have once again proven first day worship. The Seventh-Day manual describes giving as a "vital part of the worship" (p. 108). But giving took place upon the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:1-3). If giving is worship and giving took place on the first day of the week, then worship took place on the first day of the week. My proposition has been established.

2 Corinthians 8-9 and 1 Corinthians 16 speak of the same collection. Bacchiocchi even admits this in his books. However, the Adventist manual which lays out the "policy and practice" (p. 19) of this denomination uses 2 Corinthians 8-9 in proof of regular contributions to the church (p. 34, 181) which is considered to be a "vital part of the worship" (p. 108). But if the offering of 2 Corinthians 8-9 and 1 Corinthians 16 are the same offering and if the offering of 2 Corinthians 8-9 refers to worship, then the offering of 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 also refers to worship! But this day of worship is said to take place on the first day of EVERY week. "Your own mouth [the Seventh-Day Church Manual] has testified against thee" (2 Sam. 1:16).

I invite you to read my friends last reply. He will respond in the negative to this affirmative. After that he will begin his first affirmative in defense of the seventh day of the week.

John T. Lewis

Bacchiocchi's Second Negative

Dear John:

Thank you for the time you have taken to respond to my analysis of your first affirmation that the New Testament enjoins Sundaykeeping as the new day of worship. Before addressing some of your

arguments about Col 2:14-17, I would like to make a general observation. First of all call me by my first name "Sam," so that you do not have to misspell my last name so many times. Everybody calls me "Sam." that is much easier. On my part I will continue to call you by your first name "John."

In reading your lengthy response, I get the impression that you are very concerned about the technicalities of the debate. Let me state at the outset that I am not interested in debating with you for the sake of winning a debate. Such an endeavor can only boost egos, while antagonizing participants and spectators.

Biblical truths are not defined by majority vote of who won or lost a public debate, but by a painstaking study of the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. My concern, John, is to engage you in a responsible analysis of those Biblical texts and historical documents that have been traditionally used to support the apostolic origin of Sundaykeeping. What this means is that if the discussion of a particular text or document requires several exchanges, we must be prepared to take the time needed to do justice to the discussion.

A second suggestion is that we open the discussion to all interested parties. Several have complained that it is not fair for us to post our discussion on various news organizations, without giving readers the opportunity to interact with us. These organization are interactive and we need to respect they way they operate.

Another suggestion, John, is for you to send me any material that you have produced on the Sabbath/Sunday question. On my part I have sent you a complimentary set of my three books on the Sabbath. If both of us have on hand the studies that we have produced on the relevant Biblical and/or historical material related to the Sabbath/Sunday question, then we can save much time and space by concentrating on the analysis of the methodology used to reach certain conclusions. As you know, John, the credibility of any research, whether scientific or Biblical, is largely determined by the validity of its methodology. It is this kind of critical analysis of our respective methodologies that can greatly benefit those who are reading our exchanges. I do hope to receive soon from you some of your material so that I can submit my analysis of the methods you have used to reach your conclusions.

In this initial response I will examine your analysis of Colossians 2:14 consists of only three paragraphs. I am sure that these few paragraphs do not reflect your best scholarship. I wish I could have a longer study of yours. At this point I can only respond to what you have posted.

Lewis' Arguments About Colossians 2:14

I submitted two reasons why the "handwritten document-cheirographon" that was nailed to the Cross (Col 2:14), is not the law in general or the Sabbath in particular. First, the word law-nomos, which is fundamental to Paul's discussion of salvation, does not occur a single time in the whole epistle of Colossians. Second, this interpretation detracts from the immediate context (v.13) which deals with God's forgiveness and not with His law.

You responded to my arguments saying: "True, the word "law" is not mentioned specifically in Colossians; but both the immediate and remote context indicate that Paul is discussing the Mosaic law itself in Colossians 2:14. Even Sam admits that the "Colossian heresy" was a mixture of both "Hellenistic and Jewish elements." (The Sabbath in the New Testament, p. 109). You cannot have it both ways, Sam! Paul mentions "circumcision" and "uncircumcision" (Col. 2:11-13). That's sound like law of Moses language to me. He mentions "festivals" "new moons" and "sabbaths." (2:16) which are

a "shadow of things to come." (2:17). "Shadow" is used two other times in a figurative sense in the book of Hebrews. In both of these cases it makes reference to the law of Moses (Heb. 8:5; 10:1). Therefore, the immediate context of Colossians 2:14 indicates that Paul is discussing the law of Moses being nailed to the cross."

I will devote the rest of my two parts response to an analysis of this paragraph. Let me briefly point out four major fallacies in your argument.

(1) The Colossian heresy is the overall context of the epistle and not the immediate context. By immediate we mean what immediately precedes and follow the text and not the overall discussion. The latter is the broader context. Your argument that the handwritten document nailed to the cross is the Mosaic law, because the immediate context is the Colossian heresy which contained Jewish elements, is unwarranted. The immediate context, as we shall see, is God's forgiveness. Whatever Jewish elements there were in the Colossian heresy, they are part of the large context, and consequently they are not determinative for the meaning of "cheirographon-handwritten document."

(2) Circumcision and uncircumcision are indeed mentioned in the immediate context (vv. 11-13), but metaphorically to illustrate the work of Christ in the life of the Colossians, and not literally to negate the validity of the law. The discussion is not about the law in general or the circumcision in particular, but about what Christ has done for believers in forgiving and cleansing their sins. To illustrate the extent of God's forgiveness, Paul uses two metaphors. First, the metaphor of the circumcision and then that of the record book of sins. Through the metaphor of the circumcision Paul illustrates the experience of "putting off of the body of flesh" by being buried with Christ in baptism and risen with Him to a new life (vv. 11-12). He mentions also the "uncircumcision" as a metaphor of their previous sinful condition, namely, "dead in trespasses and uncircumcision of the flesh" (v. 13). This allegorical use of circumcision/uncircumcision sounds to you John "like law of Moses language," but it does not sound to me like a condemnation of the law of Moses. If anything what the metaphor condemns is not circumcision but uncircumcision.

What you fail to see, John, is the connection between verses 13 and 14. Note that verse 13 closes with the affirmation "having forgiven us all our trespasses." Verse 14 builds upon verse 13 by explaining and expanding the extent of God's forgiveness. The verse opens with the aorist participle *exaleithas* "having cancelled," which is intended to tell us by what means Christ forgave our sins. This Christ did by nailing to the cross, not the ceremonial law as some Adventists still believe, nor the whole law of Moses, as you John believe, but the cheirographon, a term which occurs only in Colossians 2:14.

As I told you in my previous response, the meaning of cheirographon has been clarified by its occurrence in apocalyptic literature where it is used to designate the "record-book of sin" or the certificate of sin-indebtedness but not the moral or ceremonial law. By this daring metaphor Paul affirms that through Christ, God has "cancelled," "set aside," "nailed to the cross," not the law of Moses as you believe John, but "the written record of our sins which because of the regulations was against us."

John, please note what Prof. D. R. De Lacey has written on this text. He is one of the seven contributors to the symposium *FROM SABBATH TO THE LORD'S DAY*, produced by seven American and British scholars who worked together on a doctoral project at Cambridge University, in England. The symposium, which is largely a response to my research, is edited by D. A. Carson and was published by Zondervan in 1982. This book is regarded by far the most scholarly defence of Sundaykeeping in recent times. If you take time to read this 440 pages research, you will be surprised

to find out among other things, that, contrary to what you think John, these scholars conclude that first-day Sunday observance "cannot be easily understood as a phenomenon of the apostolic age or of apostolic authority at all" (pp.135-136).

Regarding Col 2: 14 Prof. De Lacey wrote: "Bacchiocchi lays great stress on the fact that the term *nomos* [law] is entirely absent from Colossians, and although his own interpretation at times fails to convince, he is **SURELY RIGHT IN HIS CONCLUSION THAT THIS PASSAGE CANNOT BE INTERPRETED AS STATING THAT THE MOSAIC LAW ITSELF WAS 'WIPE OUT' IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST**" (p. 173, upper case supplied). John, I like to dialogue with scholars like Prof. De Lacey because, though they do not always agree with me, they tend to be open minded and are willing to accept what makes sense to them.

(3) Your argument that Paul's reference to "'festivals' 'new moons' and 'sabbaths' (2:16) which are a 'shadow of things to come.' (2:17) . . . indicates that Paul is discussing the law of Moses being nailed to the cross," reflects a fundamental misinterpretation of this text that has been perpetrated throughout Christian history. The statement "Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you . . ." has been traditionally interpreted as a Pauline condemnation of the five mentioned practices: eating, drinking, feasts, new moons and Sabbaths. This popular interpretation, which you accept, is totally wrong because in this passage Paul is warning the Colossians not against the observances of these practices as such, but against "anyone" (tis) who passes judgment on how to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times.

Note should be taken of the fact that the judge who passes judgment is not Paul but Colossian false teachers who impose "regulations" (2:20) on how to observe these practices in order to achieve "rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body" (2:23).

I would urge you again John to read the symposium **FROM SABBATH TO THE LORD'S DAY**. Regarding Col 2:16, Prof. De Lacey rightly comments: "the judge is likely to be a man of ascetic tendencies who objects to the Colossians' eating and drinking. The most natural way of taking the rest of the passage is not that he also imposes a ritual of feast days, but rather that he objects to certain elements of such observation" (p. 182). Presumably the "judge" wanted the community to observe these practices in a more ascetic way ("severity to the body"-2:23, 21), to put it crudely, he wanted the Colossian believers to do less feasting and more fasting.

By warning against the right of the false teachers to "pass judgment" on how to observe festivals, Paul is challenging not the validity of the festivals as such but the authority of the false teachers to "judge," that is, to legislate on the manner of their observance. The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text is expressing not a condemnation but an approbation of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping. To put it differently, what Paul is condemning is not the practices per se, but the perversion promoted by the false teachers.

It is noteworthy that even Prof. De Lacey reaches a similar conclusion, in spite of his view that Paul did not expect Gentile converts to observe the Sabbath. He writes: "Here again (Col 2:16), then, it seems that **PAUL COULD HAPPILY COUNTENANCE SABBATHKEEPING . . .** Here again we have an echo of Paul's attitude to the law in his more positive moments. . . . However, we interpret the situation, Paul's statement 'Let no one pass judgement on you,' indicates that no stringent regulations are to be laid down over the use of festivals" (pp.182-183, upper case supplied).

Isn't it surprising, John, that this text which has been traditionally cited as the deathknell of

Sabbathkeeping in the NT, now is regarded by Sundaykeeping scholars as reflecting a Pauline approbation of Sabbathkeeping. This is why I accepted to dialogue with you, John, hoping that you also will show the same openmindedness. I have seen scholars abandoning traditional interpretations, when confronted with facts that had been ignored or overlooked. I have reasons to believe that the same will be true in your case, if you take time to read with an open mind this research material.

In the light of these observations, Paul's references to festivals, new moons and Sabbaths, can hardly interpreted as the nailing of the law of Moses to the cross, because Paul is not condemning these practices, but the regulations about their observance imposed by the Colossians heretics. **A PRECEPT IS NOT NULLIFIED BY THE CONDEMNATION OF ITS PERVERSION.**

(4) You interpret Col 2:17 "these are the shadow of what is to come" in the light of Heb 8:5 and 10:1 and conclude that "In both of these cases it makes reference to the law of Moses" which was nailed to the cross. Your interpretation ignores the two different contexts. In Hebrews (8:5 and 10:1) the term "shadow-skia" is used to establish a vertical correspondence between the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary, the earthly serving being a "shadow" and "type" of the heavenly. In Col 2:17, however, the antecedent of "shadow" is not altogether clear. The text reads: "These are the shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col 2:17). To what does the relative pronoun "these" (ha in Greek) refer? Does it refer to the five practices mentioned in the previous verse or to the "regulations" (dogmata) regarding these practices promoted by the false teachers?

In my dissertation FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY I argued for the former, suggesting that Paul places dietary practices and the observance of days "in their proper perspective with Christ by means of the contrast 'shadow-body.'" Additional reflection has caused me to change my mind and to agree with Prof. E. Lohse that the relative pronoun "these" refers not to the five mentioned-practices as such, but rather to the "regulations" regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers (A Commentary on the epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, Philadelphia, 1971, p. 116.)

This conclusion is supported by two considerations. First, in verse 16, Paul is not warning against the merits or demerits of the Mosaic law regarding food and festivals, but against the "regulations" regarding these practices advocated by the false teachers. Thus, it is more plausible to take "the regulations" rather than the actual practices as the antecedent of "these."

Second, in the verses that immediately follow, Paul continues his warning against the deceptive teachings, saying, for example, "Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement . . ." (2:18); "Why do you submit to regulations, 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch'" (2:20-21)?

Since what precedes and what follows that relative pronoun "these" deals with the "regulations" of the Colossian "philosophy," we conclude that it is the latter that Paul describes as "a shadow of what is to come" (2:17).

Presumably the proponents of the Colossian "philosophy" maintained that their "regulations" represented a copy which enabled the believer to have access to the reality ("fulness" 2:9). In such a case, Paul is turning their argument on its head by saying that their regulations "are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (2:17). By emphasizing that Christ is the "body" and the "head" (2:17, 19), Paul indicates that any "shadow" cast by the regulations has no significant value.

In the light of the above indications, I conclude that what Paul calls a "shadow" is not the Mosaic law

or the Sabbath but the deceptive teachings of the Colossian "philosophy" which promoted dietary practices and the observance of sacred times as auxiliary aids to salvation.

You will notice John, that this two segments reply deal with only one paragraph of your four parts response. What this means is that it will take me several weeks, if not months, to deal responsibly with all your arguments. At this point I am wondering if it is worth my time and effort. Much depends on your response. If I see that you appreciate my effort to help you see issues from a broader scholarly perspective, I will be glad to take time to continue this dialogue when I return from overseas. On the other hand, if I see that all my efforts are in vain, then there is no point for me to continue the dialogue because it would be a waste of time.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that you will read this response and the three books I have sent you, with an open and receptive mind. On my part I promise to do the same. If you submit some compelling documents or arguments, I am prepared to reconsider my views.

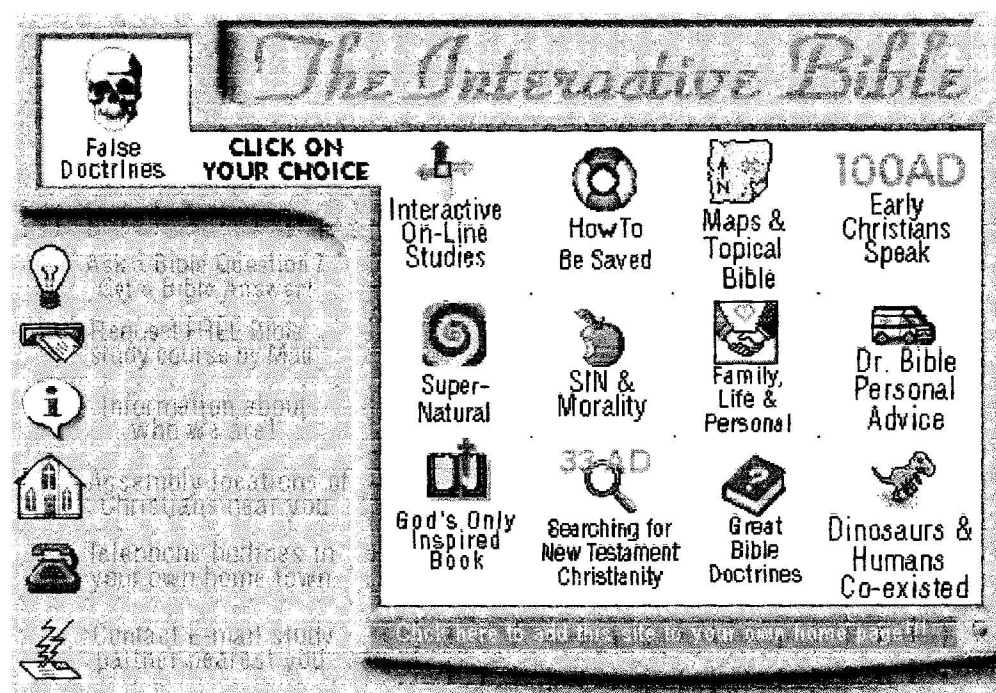
I shall be waiting to hear from you. May the Lord continue to richly bless your life and ministry with His wisdom and grace.

Christian regards

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.,

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