

Discernment of Truth and Deceptions

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I have now been free of Sabbatarian theology for 15 years. During the course of that time, I have not only learned to refute the Sabbatarian position, but have learned the process necessary to discern proper beliefs from false beliefs and teachings, using proper methods of Biblical scholarship. To word this another way, there are proper methods one employs to determine the veracity of a theological claim, and there are methods commonly employed that result in deceptions and lies.

When I was being "indoctrinated" into Sabbatarian theology, I, like so many others, was led through a course of study, including a "Bible Correspondence Course" that led one down a rosy Sabbatarian path that was loaded with the methodology of deceptions. But, with no proper background in regards to the methods one uses to discern truth from error, it was not long before I was completely convinced the Sabbatarian position was the truth, and all other Christian churches and their teachings were therefore false and the fulfillment of prophesy concerning those who would preach Christ and deceive many.

As a good little Sabbatarian minion, I refused to so much as entertain the thought of examining any other contrary information, and dismissed any friend or foe who would even dare broach the subject with me. I had "proved" the "truth" of the Sabbath, and no one was going to dissuade me.

Deceived people are completely convinced their deceptions are true. They are conditioned to resist any and all evidence to the contrary by ignoring all evidence to the contrary. If someone should happen to expose them to any evidence to the contrary, it is viewed through the colored lenses of their belief, so that, they do not truly comprehend what is actually being related in any such evidence.

Even if one is successful at broaching the subject in question, such as the Sabbath, the conditioned response is to reply with a flood of "proofs" as though the overwhelming weight of proof texts and other rationales that appear to support the false belief and position result in being so insurmountable, that they feel they can safely ignore any one of their proofs that succumbs to "questionable" evidence to the contrary. This rapidly turns into a "merry-go-round" argument where eventually, you will find yourself back at the beginning, covering a particular issue and evidence all over again, seeing as the Sabbatarian ignored the particular evidence to the contrary when they dragged you off to yet another argument in an endless list of arguments, again designed to avoid being proven wrong.

What then needs to be addressed is the methodology; the criteria one uses as a means of determining truth from error.

It took several years of study before I recognized the underlying causes and effects behind deceptions, and the proper methods of understanding behind how one properly evaluates Scripture in order to discern between falsehoods and truths.

Before I introduce the proper method of evaluating Scripture in order to discern truths from falsehoods, I would like to touch on the methodology that is commonly used by Sabbatarian churches that results in falsehoods that had to be employed in order to establish and maintain a Sabbatarian theology.

Their beliefs are based on proof texts that are given the status of being absolutes. They are immovable, unalterable, and as such, are not open to debate or examination. All else theologically are judged in relation to these "self-evident" proofs.

Examples of these proof texts:

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

"I change not;" – Malachi 3:6 ("God does not change")

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." – Hebrews 13:8

"The sabbath was made for man," – Mark 2:27

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." – Romans 7:12

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." – Matthew 5:17-18

These and many other proof texts are the arsenal of the Sabbatarian. They are not open to debate. These are written on the stone tablets of their minds; immovable, unalterable absolutes beyond question or examination.

Among the proper methods of evaluating Scripture in order to discern between truth and error is this basic rule: Scripture is the "God-breathed" and Inspired Word of God. As such, no person has the right to alter Scripture or its application.

It is arrogant to believe that God was negligent when it came to Scripture. He did not leave things left unsaid or undone where anyone has to conclude that they have to change things in order to adjust for the whatever reason, such as the changing times and cultural norms. If we rationalize we have the right to alter Scripture and/or its application, then we open the door where anything goes, and any belief can be justified as a result. We do not have the right to alter what God has said, or how God's word is applied beyond the scope of how God directed His Word to be applied.

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. - Isaiah 66:2

There are Scriptural examples regarding how seriously God takes what He commands. Saul, the king of Israel, was rejected by God for interpreting for himself how to comply with what God had commanded him. Saul's rationalization for his disobedience was unacceptable. Why then would we believe God to be any less resolute regarding the rest of His Inspired Word?

"And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and

turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." – 1 Samuel 15:17-26

If we do not abide by the written Word of God, are we not rejecting God? Are we not being stubborn by not believing what God has inspired to be written? Are we not being rebellious?

Jesus berated the religious leaders of His time who altered Scripture and its application, by showing they had no right to keep the commandments of God according to their traditions. Yes, God is serious about His Word. We have no right to edit it.

"Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." – Matthew 15:2-9

Sabbatarians are taught (and believe) that they are keeping the commandments of God in accordance with Scripture, as contrasted with mainstream Christianity who they believe do not keep God's commandments at all. The fact of the matter is, Sabbatarians attempt to keep commandments of God that God did not command or require of them, and that these commandments they do attempt to keep, they keep in accordance with the dictates and traditions of men, and not God.

At the very end of the book of Revelation, God gives a warning to those who would think to add to the words of that book or take away from those words. Yes, God is very serious about His written Word.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." – Revelation 22:18-19

We are without excuse should we find ourselves altering Scripture or its application. Why then do people resort to altering Scripture and/or its application? There are a number of reasons.

1. People don't believe what God inspired to be written. It becomes an act of faithlessness. Faith in God means believing God.
2. The person who is altering Scripture and its application is a wolf in sheep's clothing who seeks power and control over others in order to "feed his own belly" at the expense of others.
3. People buy into the alterations of Scripture and its application as taught to them by others who in turn are deceived also.

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." –
2 Timothy 3:13

The process works this way:

A person is confronted by a passage of Scripture that they do not believe. They conclude that the error lies with Scripture; that the passage is perhaps a bad translation, or the true meaning is somehow obscured in semantics, or they conclude that the passage does not impart all the information relevant to the issue, and they see a need to “fill in the blanks.”

At this juncture, a person, in order to reconcile the conflict, resorts to the methods of "interpretation" that lead to deceptions and falsehoods. I call these the methods of deception, and they are many.

These include, and are not limited to the following:

Rationalizations, inferences, assumptions, accusations, unsupported claims, faulty drawn conclusions, eisegesis (proof texting; taking Scripture out of context), Replacement Theology (Substitution Theology), redefining words and terms, misquoting and misapplication of Scripture, and the use of logical fallacies.

The tools or methods of proper understanding and scholarship include the proper use of logic, proper use of one's critical thinking skills, and proper exegesis (understanding a passage of Scripture in context).

There are a number of useful rules one incorporates when it comes to critical thinking.

A belief can be stated as a claim, to which we examine the Scriptural evidence that supports or refutes the claim.

Is the claim of such a nature that it defies the ability to refute the claim?

This is a variation on what is commonly known as the falsifiability test. The claim cannot be worded in such a way that we cannot prove or verify the claim, and where there is no way to disprove the claim. A common example is a person who claims to have personal revelations from God. A deceiver would be unable to produce evidence to truly support his claim, and we would be unable to prove or provide evidence to disprove his claim. Such claims are useless when it comes to determining truths from lies, and as such, are better left rejected. We must ask ourselves if God would endorse this sort of thing, where we have no way to verify one's claim to divine guidance.

Is the claim logical?

Is there comprehensive evidence in Scripture to support the claim?

Oft times, those who are trying to support an erroneous belief will resort to flooding the issue with assumptions and rationalizations, as well as other claims in an attempt to shore up a belief that otherwise would succumb to the proper methods of examination. In other words, they attempt to make a flood of assumptions look like comprehensive Scriptural support.

Does the claim hold true for all circumstances affected by it?

An example of this would be the claim that being under the Law means under the penalty of the Law, that penalty being a death sentence. However, Scripture states Jesus was born under the Law (Galatians 4:4).

Given this claim, where being under the law is redefined, Jesus would have been born under condemnation. This we should all understand is not possible. It was transgressing the law that brought one under the condemnation of that law. Also, if there is no longer a penalty for not keeping the law, then Sabbatarians need to explain why they believe they can lose their salvation should they quit keeping the sabbath, seeing as this other belief of theirs states there is no penalty in relation to that law now. This then is an example of the cognitive dissonance that is commonly associated with having false

beliefs, for invariably, false beliefs conflict with truth or even other false beliefs.

Is any evidence that appears to refute the claim addressed by the one making the claim using the proper methods of examination in order to show the claim is not truly refuted?

If one is putting forth claims and evidence regarding a particular belief and does not address apparent evidence to the contrary, then this person has stepped over the line regarding proper scholarship and into the realm of indoctrination.

When a false belief system is created, the methods of deception are employed, and the adherents of the false belief system are conditioned to abandon their critical thinking skills. They are not taught the proper methods of examining Scripture. They are given proof texts with conclusions that sound reasonable and true, and taught to regard them as unalterable and above question. It is all quite effective. The same methodology is commonly used in politics. Hitler was able to sway the entire population of Germany into following him to near national suicide.

As just mentioned, one of the side effects of using the methods of deception is the cognitive dissonance that results. This is where a person ends up believing two things that are impossible to be both true at the same time. For example, Sabbatarians interpret Matthew 5:17-18 to be a case of the old covenant Law remaining inviolate even down to jots and tittles; the strokes of the letters that make up the words of the Law. Yet much of the Law Sabbatarians do not even attempt to keep, and those points of Law they claim they do keep they alter way beyond jots and tittles. The tithing law is a good example of this. According to the Law, a tithe was a tenth of the increase of produce and/or livestock. No one was ever commanded to tithe on their wages. Nothing is said in the Law requiring people to tithe of their wages, and give it to ministers. The tithe was shared with the Levites, widows, orphans, and the poor, as well as used by the tithe owner for the festivals held in Jerusalem. That is the Law, down to jots and tittles. The sabbatarian ignores the cognitive dissonance, rationalizing a minister is entitled to support, and sees no other way to accomplish this.

Thus, Scripture and its application is altered, and the sabbatarian now believes that the law does change beyond jots and tittles after all. Tomorrow, should you ask him about Matthew 5:17-18 and the jots and tittles without bringing up the tithing issue, he will again claim the law indeed remains inviolate down to jots and tittles. The mind has an almost unlimited capacity for conflict of thought and belief. The deceived become slaves to their own deceptions.

Jesus stated that the truth shall make one free. Deceptions enslave and make you answerable to those who, through these deceptions, make you answerable to them. You end up believing the wolf in sheep's clothing has the power to remove your salvation by removing you from the "truths" they taught you and enforced upon you. By removing you from their "one and only true church" they condemn you to losing your salvation. They and their church are equated as being of God. To be separated from them is to be separated from God. They are the slaves of men.

People are taught to reject and ignore God's Word as God inspired it to be recorded, all the while believing they are in compliance with God's Word. No wonder then that Jesus remarked that the deceptions that would come along after Him would be so good that, if it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived.

We either learn what the proper methods of examining Scripture are and how to use them, or we are going to end up deceived even to the point of believing a false gospel. Is there salvation in believing a false gospel? I doubt it.

When it comes to the old covenant Law, even the Ten Commandments, the Word of God has God commanding the Israelites to keep that covenant Law. God did not command any other group to keep that covenant Law. To conclude Christians are bound to the Ten Commandments is to alter Scripture

and its application. The Ten Commandments applied to the Israelites who were a party to that covenant. No others, including Christians, are a party to that covenant. For those who believe all mankind are bound to the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath, even these observations of fact in this context is rejected in favor of their belief. To them, the idea of the Ten Commandments *not* applying to all mankind is anathema; an impossibility, and helps to demonstrate what is being discussed in this article.

To those with that mindset, somehow and in some way it *must* be shown all mankind is obligated to observe the Ten Commandments.

God was addressing the Israelites in regards to the Ten Commandments and Sabbath. God was not being careless. God was not suffering from some mental disorder, where He forgot to clearly mention all mankind were to follow the Ten Commandments. It was a covenant law; a contract. The parties, again, were God and the Israelites. This is a “hard” fact of Scripture that the sabbatarian attempts to overthrow and circumvent with proof texts and the other methods of deception.

So the Sabbatarian belief that all are required to keep the Ten Commandments is an example of faithlessness and rebellion, as covered earlier, for the Sabbatarian does not believe God only commanded that Law to be kept only by the Israelites.

In order to circumvent the Word of God, the methods of deception are brought into play. Claims are made that defy falsification:

"The Ten Commandments is the eternal law of God."

"The Ten Commandments are God's law of love."

Claims are made that are rationalizations, sometimes couched in an accusation:

"If the Ten Commandments were not applicable to all, then people would be free to murder, commit adultery, steal, etc. without fear of divine retribution."

Proof texts are employed:

"We establish the law" – Rom 3:31

"The law is holy, just, and good" – Rom 7:12

"Sin is the transgression of the law" – I John 3:4

All this and more in order to overcome the most basic rule of understanding Scripture: that we have no right to alter Scripture and its application, seeing as it IS the Word of God. The “hard facts” of Scripture are made to succumb to the methods of deception.

God and the Israelites were the parties to the old covenant Law. Regardless of how you "chop up" the old covenant Law (redefining words and concepts), even claiming the Ten Commandments to be a separate covenant, it can still be demonstrated the parties to that covenant Law were God and the Israelites and no others. There was a provision in the old covenant for those not born of Israel to enter into that covenant relationship with God through circumcision. Were Gentile Christians required to undergo circumcision? No. Were they required to keep the Law? Not according to Acts 15.

I could easily go through all the proof texts employed by Sabbatarians, and show the flaws, but it isn't necessary. This has been done in other articles. Some of these can be accessed at the www.truthorfables.com website. Regardless, it becomes an exercise in futility, for no matter how well you expose the proof texts for what they are, and that they do not actually support the erroneous belief,

they will produce yet another, and another proof text or rationale to support their flawed beliefs. They seek only to validate their beliefs, and if the hard facts of Scripture suffer as a result, so be it.

Either you believe what God has inspired to be written as written, or you do not. If you do not, then you demonstrate your faithlessness. You demonstrate your rebellion. All the proof texts in the world cannot save you.

Did God command non-Israelites to keep the Ten Commandments? No.

"Yea, but..."

Did God command non-Israelites to keep the Sabbath? No.

"Yea, but..."

When it came to the Sabbath and the Israelites, God was specific and detailed in His instructions regarding the Israelites keeping the Sabbath.

When the New Covenant was being instituted, not a peep came from Christ or the apostles regarding Gentile (non-Israelite) Christians keeping the Sabbath. What do Sabbatarians think then? Was it just an oversight on God's part? The rationalizations fly in flocks.

What was the nature of the old covenant?

It was a legal contract between God and the Israelites.

It was also seen as a marriage contract between God and the Israelites.

It was also treated as a testament, put in force through the shed blood of substitute animals.

Can someone, not a party to a covenant, be held to the conditions of said covenant? No.

Would God deal with us illegally, holding us to the conditions of a covenant we are not a party to? No.

If God wanted Christians to keep the Sabbath, He would have made such a command in the New Covenant. God is not going to violate His covenants, and we need to understand the nature of covenants.

What is the nature of the New Covenant?

It is a contract between God and those God has given His Spirit to, as foretold in Scripture. Like the old covenant, it appeared to be a covenant between God and Israel also, but as the old covenant had a provision that allowed those not of Israel to enter into that covenant through circumcision, Gentiles were "granted repentance unto life" by being given God's Holy Spirit also, as a result of their belief in the gospel. Their "circumcision" was performed by God, and it was a spiritual circumcision of the heart.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: — Colossians 2:10-11

The law of the New Covenant; the conditions, revolve around faith and love. It is about being led by the Holy Spirit, and not a written code of law. (Rom 3:27; II Cor 3; Rom 7:6)

Whereas the old covenant was essentially a contractual agreement, where God made promises that were

conditional, based on the performance of the Israelites, and punishments (penalty clauses) should they fail to fulfill the conditions of said covenant, the new covenant is treated more like a marriage covenant, with unconditional promises. God (Christ) trusts and loves this wife. The wife trusts and loves the husband. Christ did not need to put "pre-nups" in this marriage for the purpose of exposing a treacherous and cheating, adulterous wife like He did with Israel.

The church is the bride of Christ. Those under the old covenant were faithless and seen by God as being a treacherous wife, whom God divorced (Isaiah 50:1). Those were the people of the old covenant, letter of the Law. Jesus' death on the cross finalized the break with Israel and the old covenant. Paul explains this in Romans 7. Christ was now freed through death from the old covenant with the old treacherous wife and free to marry the new bride; the church; a faithful wife.

The gospel relationship.

The gospel is a message of salvation through faith in Christ.

Those who do not believe the gospel as stated, resort to the aforementioned process in order to make the gospel acceptable to them. They apply the same methodology to the gospel as they do anything else in Scripture they do not believe as stated. Sabbatarian legalists add the Law and Sabbath keeping to the gospel.

They deny this, of course, because they do not believe they are really altering the gospel. They claim they believe in salvation through faith in Christ. One need only ask them what happens to their salvation should they quit keeping the Sabbath, for example.

They "tweak" the gospel in order to make it acceptable to themselves. Again, the gospel as stated, to them, is seen as having left out some details that are found elsewhere in Scripture. If "sin is the transgression of the law," citing I John 3:4, and no sinner will attain to salvation, loosely citing 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, then it is a simple matter to conclude one cannot be sinning by breaking the old covenant law and still attain to salvation.

This conclusion, innocent as it may appear, falsifies the gospel, and succeeds in bringing Christians back under the bondage old covenant Law, and everything that goes with it, including being once again under sin and condemnation. Paul warns Christians against this in places like Galatians 5:1.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. — Galatians 5:1

Plain and simple declarations made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are cast aside:

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."
— Romans 6:14

But if you *are* under the Law, sin has dominion. Ever listen carefully to the arguments that you are not under the Law, yet still obligated to keep it, and that, should you transgress it, you come back under the penalty of the Law, and you sin and could lose your salvation? Talk about redefining words and terms! Talk about cognitive dissonance!

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." — Galatians 5:18

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

The Faith has been revealed. The Law is history. The Christian in possession of the Holy Spirit is complete in Christ, and there is no need to be under the Law that was for the faithless and spiritually immature; for it is the immature, the children, who need a schoolmaster. God's Holy Spirit is sufficient.

What then of all the proof texts and rationalizations that have been used to try and prove Christians must keep the Law and Sabbath?

They can all be explained. They have all been explained. But, explaining them to someone who believes they must keep the Law and Sabbath is a waste of one's time, for they are, as stated before, the anchor Scriptures the unwary and deceived rely on so heavily.

It is those who are beginning to see the truth of the gospel, and the lies of legalism and Sabbatarianism that benefit from the explanations that show the fallacies of the proof texts used to support legalism and Sabbatarianism. This article is for them.

To those of the legalistic and Sabbatarian persuasion who may have read this far, who rely so heavily on their "proofs" of Scripture that you believe back your beliefs, I once again point out that there is no Scripture where God/Christ commands Christians to keep the Law and the Sabbath. No one has the right to alter Scripture or its application. But that's what you must do in order to believe as you do. You must resort to all these methods of deception in order to make your case; a case so flimsy that, should you find yourself in a court of law, being tried for a crime you did not commit, where the prosecutor uses these methods as "evidence" against you, you would be screaming foul at the top of your lungs.

Salvation is for the faithful; those who believe the gospel as stated in God's Word. Salvation is for those who believe God for what God has said, and not what people think God said. Salvation is for the humble who would not dare alter Scripture; God's Word.

Salvation is not for those who feel free to rationalize around Scripture, making Scripture over to their preconceived beliefs, making God over into their own image; an act of rebellion and faithlessness.