

TWO TYPES OF ANTI-NOMIANISM

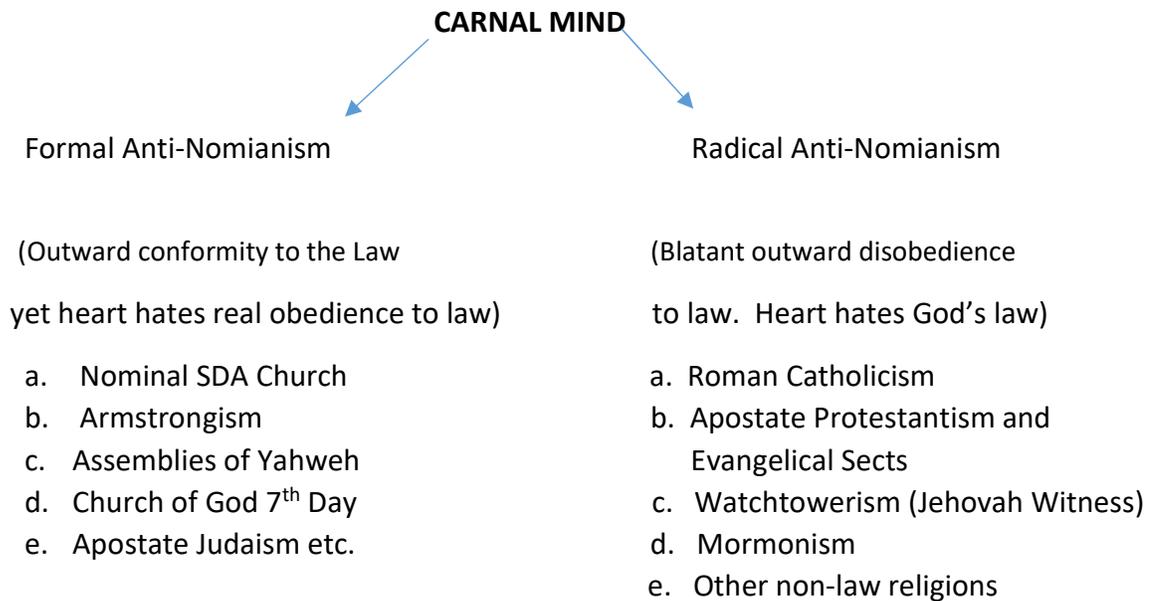
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There are many ways that Satan hides his hate for the Law of God so that it is not clearly seen. Thus he can deceive many in participation with his rebellion against the Law of God. We are looking at Anti-Nomianism.

What does this word mean? Simply Anti means against and Nomos is a Greek word which means law. Thus Anti-nomianism means against the Law of God. This phrase is used to explain the moral state of man who is an unconverted sinner; "because the Carnal Mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the Law of God, either indeed can be" (Rom 8:6). So the Carnal values which is the thinking of man, is foundationally anti-nomian and it is from this anti law spirit, comes all anti law actions. (Pro 4:23; Matt 7:21-23).

Now there are three types of anti-nomianism. The first one is the general aversion the irreligious have for the law of God or for things that are spiritual. However, the anti-nomianism that we are interested in is the other two which parades under the disguise of being religious. We are going to look at the two types of anti-nomianism that are called hypocrisy. Here are the terms given to identify them.

They are Formal Anti-Nomianism and Radical Anti-Nomianism. Before we explain these terms let us look at a brief history of Anti-Nomianism from the time of Christ to Apostolic times down to today.

There was a Sect that had a name called Pharisee, they were anti-nomian in a formal sense; this means that while they outwardly obey the moral law of the Ten Commandments, they did so to save themselves from sin, without any real dependence upon God. Therefore they were actually breaking the law spiritually speaking and will openly do so when policy makes it necessary. These people do so because they had the foundational anti-nomian element – the carnal mind. It is against this type of anti-nomianism which Paul spoke. See Rom 2:1,2,8-10,12,13, 17-27; Rom 3:9,19,20; Rom 4:13-15; Rom 9:31,32; Rom 10:1-4; 1Cor 9:19,20; Gal 2: 16,21; Gal 3: 2,3,5,10-12,18,19,21,24; Phil 3:4-6,9.

Then there was a group of so-called Christians by the name of Nicolaitanes – they believe that one is saved by Grace so they do not need to keep God’s law. Of them it is said “The Nicolaitanes were the Anti-nomians of the Asiatic Church. Nicolaitanes taught knowledge without practice.... Justification by faith without holiness. The Nicolaitanes use the grace of God as an excuse for the violation of God’s law – the moral law... When the binding nature of that commandment was emphasized it was lightly brushed aside with ‘we are not under law but under grace’, ‘we enjoy Christian liberty.’ The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was all too evident.” **Revelation Wonders Unfolded**, p 30, 31.

This teaching affected the early church and brought about the removal of the second commandment and the change of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week by the Roman Catholic Church.

When the Protestant Reformation started in 1517, not all the Reformers went back to the fullness of the original bible doctrine. The vast majority continued Sunday keeping and denied the necessity of keeping God’s law even unto this day. For example, let us read the words from this Protestant writer, “Righteousness which is of God speaks in a way diametrically opposite to man’s law obedience, of any sort whatsoever.” William R Newell, **Romans verse by verse** pg.93.

Here is another famous writer, “To be ‘under law’ is in practice to be ‘under sin’ not because law and sin are identical, but because law while forbidding sin, stimulates the very thing it forbids.” F. F Bruce, **New International Greek Testament Commentary on Galatians**, p. 181-187.

Thus it is clearly seen that Protestantism is against God’s law in all its skillful philosophy and even in their works. This is radical anti-nomianism. So formal anti-nomianism denies God’s law in heart while doing it to be saved and radical anti-nomianism denies God’s law in heart and in works, yet both claim to be Christians.

But **nowhere** in the Bible is **Grace** sets against Law. Nowhere is it being presented as delivering us from obedience to the Law of God. It delivers us from sin, which means we are made to keep the law (Rom 3:24, 28, 31). It is the human initiative use of the law as a means of salvation with God; that grace is set against (Rom 9:31, 32; Gal 2:16, 21).

The scriptures present the phrase “being dead to the Law” to mean being “dead to the condemnation of the law” (Rom 6:7, 14, 15; Rom 7:4-6; Gal 2:14), and we can understand the phrase to be additionally mean “being dead to the ceremonial law”, and “dead to the moral law as the initiator of salvation”. It is true that the works of the law cannot save, but by this phrase is meant (1) the commandments of men (Matt 15:9) (2) the works of the ceremonial law (Heb 10:2-11) (3) the hypocritical and self-initiatory works of the moral law (Rom 2:17-23; Rom 3:20).

The term “under the law” as used by Paul has three senses (1) under the necessity to keep the law (1Cor 9:21; Rom 7:1-3) (2) under the condemnation of the law (Rom 3:19; Rom 6:14; Gal 3:23; Gal 4:4,5; Gal 5:18) and (3) using the law as an initiative means of salvation (1Cor 9:20; Gal 4:21). However there is a sense in which the law saves us. It saves us not if we do it on our own strength, to do it to initiate our own salvation apart from God, but it saves us, if God through it (the law) makes us Legal.

Though legalism is a bad word for fallen Protestantism, in reality it is a good word, and it is a direct answer to anti-nomianism.

What is Legalism? As Paul R. Matlock quotes from John Fletcher. “...the word Legal from the Latin Legalis... means ‘agreeable to the law’”. The Four Justifications in John Fletcher’s Theology, pg. 64.

So if we ought to be saved, God (not ourselves) must make us legal or agreeable to the law. Now since we transgress in heart and in works (1Jn 3:4; Ps 58:2; Ps 66:18; Isa 59:6), Legalism the answer to anti-nomianism implies that **(1) the law must be given to our hearts and (2) the law must be obeyed in our works.**

The first work that God does is a work in our hearts (Matt 23:25, 26; Acts 8:22), He gives the law in our hearts (Heb 8:10; Ps 40:8; Rom 8:2, 4) and this causes us to do the works of the law (Rom 3:28, 31; John 14:15; Jam 1:25). This is legalism (Rev 14:12; Rev 12:17; Jam 2:17, 18). However we must continue to keep the law by faith which is sanctification and it is the basis of keeping the law of faith, that all our past sins will be blotting out (Jam 2:8-12; Rev 22:14).

So Legalism and anti-nomianism are set against each other in the bible. They are opposites. The Bible does not support anti-nomianism (Acts 2:28, 1Joh 3:4) but it wholeheartedly endorses legalism (Prov 28:4,19; Ps 19:7,8; Ps 119:1,86,142,151, 172; Matt 5:17-19; Matt 19:17-19; 1Cor 7:19; 1Jhn 5:2,3; Eccl 12:13,14).

AMEN

