

How To Observe the Sabbath Today

Fred Coulter—February 5, 2011

Today I'm going to talk a little bit about Sabbath observance. Let's see what God commands and then let's ask the question: How do we observe the Sabbath today? You can go to Exo. 16 and that tells you how to observe the Sabbath if you are in an exodus and you are in the wilderness and the only place you have to go is your tent. And you have no Bible. And all you have to eat is manna. And if you don't fix it right on Friday or if you keep it beyond the Sabbath day, you're going to be eating maggots and a stinky mess—right?

And what was the command? *'None of you shall go out of the door of your tent'*—right? So if we went back to Exo. 16 and said, 'Oh, here's how we're going to keep the Sabbath today.' No, we can get some principles from it. But let's go to Exo. 20 and let's read the command here. We're going to pick this apart a little bit and apply it today, and see how we are to do it.

Exodus 20:8: "**Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy.**" First of all, *you're to remember it.* Lots of times people, even though they're pretending they are keeping it, are forgetting it and they're not keeping it Holy. How do you keep it Holy today? We'll answer that question as we go along.

"Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates" (vs 9-10).

How here came on donkey back today? *Nobody!* Now let's understand something very important. Not all definitions of keeping the Sabbath in the Old Testament in a physical way necessarily apply to today. Now don't start thinking, 'Oh, oh, where are we going with this?' We're going to understand how to keep the Sabbath *spiritually* so when we gather together on the Sabbath the Spirit of God will be here with us and the Spirit of God in us will all connect together with God and His Word and learn. That's the whole purpose of Sabbath services today. We also have something that until about 500 years ago we didn't have. *That's the whole Bible!* So all the circumstances become more spiritual in how we keep the Sabbath.

Then He says, v 11: "For *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it." Sanctified means *made Holy*.

All right, we find in Deuteronomy 5 that it says we are to **keep** the Sabbath. Now we will talk about keeping the Sabbath and the degree of keeping the Sabbath and how you should do it, but there's one important aspect of the Sabbath here that he brings out which is different from what we have in Exo. 20.

Deuteronomy 5:12: "**Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it as the LORD your God has commanded you.** Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your livestock, nor your stranger within your gates, so that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you" (vs 12-14).

How many here have servants in their household? *You've got lots of them*—a stove, dishwasher—right?—*light switches, furnace.* You have lots of servants, but they are what? *They are all automated*—right? Can you rest your car? *If it's not running!* Is that resting it? Is it wrong to drive a car on the Sabbath here? How many walked here today? *Nobody!* You all came by car. I came 320 miles, but not today.

Here is a key thing we are to remember for the Sabbath that separates us from the rest of the world: "And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt..." (v 15). Now put in your margin there Rev. 11:8. Jerusalem today which is symbolic of the sin of the world is called what? *Sodom and Egypt*—right? So today we take 'that you were a slave in the land of Egypt' and can apply it spiritually this way:

- We were all slaves to the system of the world—correct? *Yes!*
- And slave to whom? *Satan the devil*—correct? *Yes!*
- Did God call us out? *Yes!*
- Did we have an exodus from the world? *Yes, but we still live in it!*
- How did that happen? *Through Jesus Christ,*
- Who is called what? *The Way, the Truth, and the Life!*
- Correct? *Yes!*

So now we are not just a community and organization of physical people with the name Israel, we are physical people with the Spirit of God and we are *spiritual* Israel, which includes all nations and

people. Lest we get lifted up in conceit and lest we get lifted up in spiritual pride, let us remember that if you count all Sabbath-keepers in the world there are about 20-million. That's why Christ is the Head of the Church. He knows where His people are.

That's why no corporate church—be it the Catholic Church, or be it a Church of God—say, 'We are the only true Church of God on earth.' Are you going to limit God? I just have to say, a lot of us have a lot of baggage still hanging in the back of our minds we need to get washed out with *the washing of the water by the Word*. (So be sure and listen to those sermons.) We have a lot of things and concepts of church and people still practicing them that become anchors in growth and overcoming.

How many have faithfully kept the Sabbath for years and years and years and decades? *Probably all of us*, we could raise both hands and all ten fingers. Have you ever gone to Sabbath services where it wasn't sanctified? Now what do I mean by that? *To where Sabbath services were centered around*

- *extolling a man*
- following corporate orders
- politics
- in-fighting among leaders and brethren.
 - ✓ How was your Sabbath? *Pretty rotten—wasn't it?*
 - ✓ How many times did you go home feeling miserable?
 - ✓ How many times did you wake up and say, 'Oh, I dread going to Sabbath, but it's a Holy convocation, so I'm going.'

And you get there and it was totally unprofitable. As a matter of fact, you may have gone to church with a good attitude and came home with a rotten attitude. Did that ever happen to you?

I remember sitting over here in the auditorium in Pasadena and I was doing a little survey because of all of the politics going on, all of the in-fighting going on. And everyone who wants to repeat Pasadena is going to repeat all the intrigue and hatred and everything that went on there because of the sins. So, that's not the model to follow. But I remember sitting there and here was this man, he gave a sermonette. I thought, let's see how many times he mentions the leader and how many times he mentions Jesus Christ. Well, I forget what it was with the sermonette, but then the guy for the sermon started. So I said, 'Okay, I'm going to do a tally.' You know, do tick marks—one, two, three, four, five. One, two, three, four, five. So I put over here the leader, put up his initials. Put over here Jesus Christ. So I did tick marks, tick marks. This is when

they were trying to politically contain the church together. Because by all means, you must keep the church together so you that you can have the money coming in. Isn't that right? Isn't that the purpose of the church? *Wrong!* By means, you must even lie and call all the brethren dumb sheep, if they find out about the truth of the philandering of the evangelist.

So I'm sitting there listening to this man, one of the approved. You didn't speak in that auditorium unless you were approved. So put a tick mark for Jesus Christ and ten for the leader. Tick mark for Jesus Christ and fifteen for the leader. Believe this or not. In an hour and a half he mentioned Jesus Christ 10 or 11 times and the leader 111 times! Now how is that for a Holy Sabbath? *Really rotten—wasn't it?*

So you kept the command to assemble together, but of what profit was it for you? *Not very much!* And you go back through all the dark days that were going on there and how many fights between brethren and ministers and husbands and wives and false doctrine, and everything just under a black cloud. Remember those days? Now that's happening in the Protestant churches today. People are leaving in droves. They don't know where to go.

Leviticus 23:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "*Concerning* the appointed Feasts of the LORD... [The Sabbath is an appointed Feast of God every week.] ...which you shall proclaim *to be* Holy convocations... [Holy convocations means *a Holy assembly*. We'll talk about that in a little bit so that you understand that a Holy convocation can be very small in number. And a Holy convocation does not necessarily mean that you go to a synagogue or a church building.] ...even these are My appointed Feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings" (vs 1-3). Then it talks about the appointed Feasts in their seasons.

Now let me just say this. We'll do a little sidebar on the calendar here for just a few minutes, so be patient. How many here have gone through all the calendar material that we have? Four videos and a stack of information. Huh? *Nobody!* There are many problems with Sabbath-keeping and new moon observation and things like this. That's causing a great deal of confusion among Churches of God and even Seventh Day Adventists who keep the Holy Days, as one of the elders who was here last time I was here brought up. So we'll try and answer that.

Now, I'm also going to tell you this. Be prepared to really get your thinking cap on; be prepared to really, really know. And all those who

are in the helpers' class, as we call it, I'm going to make that an assignment for everyone of you to do. It's going to take you some time to go through it. But I will give you just a little review. When the sundial went back ten degrees during the days of Hezekiah, that got all calendars off everywhere. How many have seen on the History Channel this Greek apparatus with all the gears, tells about the movement of the planet, the movement of the sun. They even had it where they had some things that would compensate for the variation in the moon. The moon goes fast and goes slow. The earth goes fast and goes slow. The orbit of the earth is not exactly perfect.

Some believe that we originally started out with 360 days, twelve months of thirty days and everything was just fine. But then we had the Flood—didn't we? Then we know, through the evidence of Velikovsky, close encounters with Mars.

So the last time that the earth had a major astronomical event was during the days of Hezekiah. That threw all the calendars off. How do we get from 360 days to 365-1/4 days? *Well, because of astronomical events!* And someone did some calculation on it and said that the earth had to slide out of its orbit by 1.4 degrees in order for the sundial to go back 10 degrees.

Now we have five days added to the solar year? The key thing is this: ***God never loses a second!*** He had to re-reveal to the priests how to calculate the Holy Day calendar. It has always been by calculation. Yes, there has been observation, but only if it agrees with the calculation. Now we have it in the material that we will send to you a whole book on how to calculate it. If you know how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide, you can calculate.

Because the earth, the moon, the sun, and the heavenly bodies associated with keeping time have all been functioning at different rates and different speeds and different times, you have to base everything on an average. So the calculated Hebrew calendar does that. God gave this to the priests.

Verse 4: "These are the appointed Feasts of the LORD, Holy convocations which you... [to the Levites] ...shall proclaim in their appointed seasons." God gave it to the priests and the Levites. They would determine and calculate when it would be and you can read that in all the material that we send out to you. We have the whole book, *Sanctification of the New Moon* by Maimonides. You've got everything in there. They knew clear back then, the 5,000 permutations or misnomers of the moon. They had all that figured out. They were to proclaim it.

It came on down through the priesthood, even though there was corruption within the

priesthood. God preserved that information. Came down to the time of Jesus Christ, there were two schools—Hillel and Shammai. Hillel was the head of the calendar court. He was called a Nasi. He was a priest. He was head of the calendar court. And we can prove that everything that was done during the days of Jesus was done according to the calculated Hebrew calendar, because the Passover that He was crucified on was by calculation with two postponements. That was the appointed season.

A little more on the calendar and then we'll move on. When the temple was destroyed, a whole school of priests moved up to Tiberius and that's where they preserved the knowledge of the calendar, as well as other things. That's where they also started writing what later became the Mishnah and later the Talmud. What they did, they wrote down everything that was going on at the temple, because they didn't know when they would be able to get back to the temple or not. So they were writing that down.

Later because of persecution they moved over to Jebnah, which is on the coast, right near where Tel Aviv is. If you read in the book of Haggai you find that God said the remnant of the Jews would be on the coast. And the Jews in Tel Aviv and the area right near there, Haifa and so forth, have had relative peace because that's where they should be. They should not be in the West Bank and that's why they have so much trouble there.

When they moved to Jebnah in the year 354_{A.D.}, Hillel II who was the grandson of Hillel I, great-great-great grandson. He released to the world the knowledge of how to calculate the Hebrew calendar to the world. People come along and say, 'Oh, he invented the calendar in 354_{A.D.}' *Not true!* There was so much persecution against the Jews and against the Christians that he was afraid that that knowledge would be lost, so he revealed it to the world. And that's what you'll get in the calendar calculation book that we will send you.

If you want an easy way to figure it, we have online the calculated Hebrew calendar. You put in the year and voila, up come all the Holy Days including the Passover. We paid Alan Ruth \$8,000 to develop that program. We have the best calculated digital Hebrew calendar program, in the world, right on our CBCG.org website.

Since the priests were to proclaim it, the only proclamation for the Holy Days is the calculated Hebrew calendar, which came from the priests—period! No other man is authorized to view the moon or to devise a calendar because he is not a priest. God never gave the responsibility of creating a new calendar to the New Testament Church.

So everyone who says, 'Well, I'm going to view it. Let's watch for the new moon.' You must be an expert in it, because to truly see the new moon you must be in a particular place in Jerusalem at a particular time and it is only visible between ten and fifteen minutes right after sundown. And if you miss it but see it the next day, you're already a day off and God never loses a day.

Now one final thing concerning the calendar, because it's important, having to do with the Holy Days. You've heard of the 19-year time cycle. Why is there a 19-year time cycle? Two reasons:

1. There's a 19-year time cycle for the sun
2. There's a 19-year time cycle for the moon

They coincide within one hour and few minutes every 19 years. So every 19 years that hour and some odd minutes is accumulated until you get a whole day. That is called a postponement.

Is that not what we have on the Roman calendar today? Every fourth year we add a day—correct? *Yes!* Why do we do that? *Because if we didn't, we'd lose a quarter of a day every year!* So that's why in the 1500s Pope Gregory said, 'Okay, we've lost ten days on the Julian calendar up to today.' So what they did, they took in October and they said, 'We are going to add ten days to the calendar.' You can take any day, but I think they did it on the fourth of October. The next day was the fifteenth.

All those who don't believe in postponements still follow along with the Gregorian calendar, which is the one we have today—correct? And it was postponed ten days and every four years it's postponed one day. Postponements are synchronizing adjustments to keep everything in time. Otherwise you wouldn't proclaim them in their seasons.

Let's talk about some other aspects of the Sabbath. Let's come to the book of Nehemiah. Let's see some things here that are very important. Because there are a lot of people who feel as though we should follow Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 13:14: "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for the offices of it. In those days I saw in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath... [How big is Judah? *Very small area!* How big is Jerusalem? *A very small city!* Keep that in mind.] ...and bringing in sacks of grain, and loading donkeys and also wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I admonished *them* on the day in which they sold food. And men of Tyre dwelt therein, who brought fish and all kinds of goods, and

sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem. And I contended with the nobles of Judah and said to them, 'What evil thing *is* this that you do and defile the Sabbath day?' (vs 14-17).

Now let's look at the setting that we have in Jerusalem. Let's ask some questions. They didn't have to travel anywhere to keep Sabbath—did they? I don't know how many synagogues there were in Jerusalem, but they had the temple plus some synagogues all within walking distance—correct? *Yes!* Did they have any of the circumstances we have today in coming to church? *No!* In this case they were bringing the world to themselves—correct? Today, we what? *We live in the world and gather together!* Complete opposite—right? So then he shut the gates and put guards up there, the Levites, made sure that there was no more buying and selling in Jerusalem.

With that in mind, let's come to Mark 2:23, and let's see what happened during the days of Jesus. "Now it came to pass that He went through the grain fields..." So Jesus was walking through the grain fields on the Sabbath. Did Jesus stay in Jerusalem and do nothing on the Sabbath? *No!* Circumstances were even a little different then—correct? They had synagogues in Galilee. They had synagogues in various parts of Judea as well. So here He's walking. According to Exo. 16 He shouldn't even have been outside the door of His house—right? Because what does it say, Exo.16? '*Don't go out of the door or your tent.*'

The Greek here, which in the latest paperback version we have it as plural: "...grain fields on the Sabbaths... [So this shows a repeated thing that He was doing on the Sabbaths.] ...and as His disciples made *their way through the fields*, they were picking *and eating* the grain.... [What does it say in the Old Testament? *You're to keep the Sabbath in harvest time—right? Yes, indeed!*] ...Then the Pharisees said to Him, 'Look at them! Why are they doing that which is not lawful on the Sabbath?'" (vs 23-24).

What were they doing? *They were picking the grains, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them.* I don't know how much they were picking, but by time you get twelve disciples, and it doesn't say whether Jesus ate or not, does it? *By time you get twelve disciples doing all of that, you're stripping quite a few heads of grain—right?* Now notice how He answered them, because there's a time, when because of the circumstances and because of how we are, we can add today, just like in His day, that there are some things from the Old Testament which have to be re-judged according to the need.

"And He said to them, 'Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry and in need of

food, he and those with him? How *in the days of* Abiathar the high priest, he entered into the house of God and he ate the showbread, which it is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and he also gave *it* to those who were with him?” (vs 25-26).

What was happening? *They were running from Saul!* They were all sweaty! They were all hungry! How many have ever seen the loaves of showbread? *There was a big loaf that was put there every Sabbath!* They put new bread at noon on the Sabbath when the new course of priests would come in and the loaf of bread is about like this. There was a special tray, which had six shelves on each side, and each loaf was for one of the twelve tribes. And the priests were to eat that. That was Holy to the Lord.

Remember what happened when Uzziah went in to offer incense? *He was struck with leprosy*, because he was presuming to be a priest when he was not. Here the circumstances are different. Now notice what Jesus says and let's analyze the circumstances that they had.

“And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath; Therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath’” (vs 27-28). What was the purpose of the Sabbath made for man?

- to rest
- to remember that you came out of Egypt as slaves
- to worship the Lord
- to assemble together
- for us in the New Testament church to grow in grace and knowledge and be educated in how we become the sons and daughters of God to be kings and priests at the resurrection.

Is that not correct? *Yes!*

Matthew 12:1: “At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath day; and His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck the heads of grain and to eat *them*. But after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to Him, ‘Behold, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on *the* Sabbath. But He said to them, ‘Have you not read what David did when he himself and those with him were hungry? How he went into the house of God and he ate the loaves of showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but for the priests only? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?’” (vs 1-5). They worked.

- Have you ever done butchery?
- Have you ever slaughtered some animals, cut them up?

- How about if you do it all day long?

Verse 7: “Now if you had known what this *means*, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.” What is Jesus saying here? He’s saying there are times when the letter of the law—to serve a physical and spiritual purpose—you do not ‘strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.’

Let’s apply this to what we do when we’re traveling. We meet here in this room. It applies to a Feast day or wherever you are.

- Do we pay for the room? *Of course!*
- Does the hotel require their personnel to be here to manage and watch the property and take care of it? *Yes!*
- Whose servant are they? *The hotel’s!*
- Do they do this when we don’t meet here? *Of course, they do!*

Now when we meet here, are we like in Jerusalem, a small little city where we can all walk? *No! A lot of us have to drive!* When I come down we have all-day services and we have them serve us a lunch. Has God cursed us because of that? *No, He’s blessed us!* Why? *Because this comes into the category of the showbread!*

Now someone would say, ‘Well, we need to get a hall where we can have potlucks.’ All right, that’s fine. Who’s going to do all the work then? Because the work has to be done—correct? Who’s making people in the Church work? *People in the Church!*

So from this we have made the judgment. Now if someone is otherwise minded and they think they should not do as we do here, then that is your personal preference. But know this, it doesn’t make us more sinners, nor those who don’t eat on the Sabbath in circumstances like this, more righteous. It’s a needful area that God blesses, because of the circumstances.

All right, now let’s reverse it. What if you’re meeting at home? *You have no need to eat out—correct?* You’re at home. Now, what if you’re the only one at home? How can you keep a Holy convocation? (especially for new people):

1. They don’t know where a church or congregation is.
 2. You can’t easily get there, you’ve got to drive.
- Can you still keep the Sabbath at home? *That’s the whole basis of Church at Home— isn’t it? Of course, you can!*
 - What if you’re alone? *You pray and ask God to bless your study, to bless your day!*
 - And who is there?

- What did Jesus say? ‘*Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst.*’
- If it’s you, God the Father and Jesus Christ, how many is that?

(go to the next track)

- So can we have a Sabbath at home alone? *Yes, but you’re not alone!*
- Do you miss being with brethren? *Yes!*
- Are you still in a Holy convocation with you and God the Father and Jesus Christ at home? *Yes!*
- What if two families get together? *Same thing applies!*

We meet here every other Sabbath.

- Are we going against the Holy convocation area of the Sabbath by doing only every other Sabbath?
- Why do we go every other Sabbath? *It’s simply because not everyone can come every Sabbath!*

Maybe there will be a time when there will be enough people where we can meet every Sabbath. That will be fine. But still, in meeting every Sabbath not everyone can come every Sabbath—correct?

- Are the ones who meet every Sabbath more righteous than the ones who don’t meet every Sabbath?
- What is the quality of your Sabbath?
- Is it spiritual?
- Are you learning the Word of God?
- What is it?

We pay for the room and we pay for the food. Everything’s all arranged ahead of time. I think God is more pleased to see us gather together on the Sabbath, since we’re so scattered, and be able to have a meal together and fellowship together, rather than say we’re going to go by Neh. 13. You can’t go by Neh. 13, because you’re not in Jerusalem and you’re not there in the same circumstances.

If you are in your home, you can go by Neh. 13—right? *Yes!* If a salesman comes to the door, you spray him with mace—psst! *NO!* We are living *in* the world, not *of* the world. We are called out of the world and the circumstances are different than if you’re in Jerusalem where the whole city keeps the Sabbath. The temple is there; the synagogues are there; you don’t have to drive; you don’t have to get on a donkey and go someplace. Besides, the donkey’s supposed to rest, too.

Now let’s ask another question: What if you have to drive and you have to go on a toll road? Where I go up to Fairfield I have to cross a bridge. Used to be \$2.00, now it’s \$5.00. Am I sinning if I give him a \$5.00 bill? Or would I be sinning if I

neglected the flock and say, ‘I can’t come up here because I have to pay the toll.’ *Well, come up on Friday.* I used to come up on Friday, but there’s so many things to do that I can’t come up on Friday anymore. But then, if I come up on Friday to avoid paying the toll on the bridge, I have to what? *Get a motel! Yes!* And I have to what? *Go buy some food!*

That’s why Jesus said He desires mercy, not sacrifice! So you have to make the judgment on it. There is Rom. 14, we are not make the Sabbath a burden. We are not to judge our brothers concerning eating and drinking, another point said. The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking.

Let’s come to 1-Corinthians 8, and let’s see the circumstances that Paul was confronted with. And this follows right along the line with, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ 1-Corinthians 8:1: “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.... [Always keep that in mind. See God wants mercy. God wants love.] ...But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. So then, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols... (vs 1-4)

What was this? *They lived where they had pagan temples*, by former pagan people who are now members of the Church of God. What did you have? *You had the temple of Zeus, the temple of Diana, the temple of Apollos!* You had incense altars and everything like that. All the meat that they bought was sacrificed to the gods. So some people said, ‘Well, we’re just going to just going to be vegetarians.’ And that was most of the problem of Rom. 14. Others said, ‘Idol doesn’t mean anything. It’s dumb, it’s stupid, there’s nothing in it.

“So then, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we understand that an idol in *the* world *is* nothing, and that *there is* no other God except one. For indeed, even if there are *those* which are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are many gods and many lords.” (vs 4-5). Like Hinduism: they have 400-thousand gods and goddesses. You can’t even go out and step on an ant, you kill one of your lost relatives. You can’t kill they this cow though its pooping right in your house.

“Still, to us *there is* one God the Father, from Whom *are* all things, and we *are* in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom *are* all things, and we *are* by Him. However, not all have this knowledge. But some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled” (vs 6-7). We don’t have that problem—do we? *No! We don’t have it today!* That was a real problem. And

then he said, ‘What if someone sees you sitting in the idol’s temple eating?’ You could even go there and buy it cooked ready to go. That was their McDonald’s—Apollo’s McDonald’s. And a church member comes by and says, ‘Oh! Guess what I saw.

I saw so-and-so over at the idol’s temple eating. He’s condemned.’ *No, he’s not condemned, because he knows an idol is nothing.* Can an idol contaminate food? *No!* But there’s a crossover point if you get involved in the religious services.

Let’s see what Paul wrote concerning this, 1-Corinthians 10:14: “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to those who are wise; you judge what I say? (vs 14-15). So we have to make judgments—don’t we? *Yes, we do!* We have to judge righteous judgments—don’t we? Whatever is to serve the brethren, to edify the brethren, and as long as we are yielding to God, led by His Spirit, we convoke together with God’s Spirit, God blesses us in what we are doing with that. Same way if you had church at home.

Now, we are going to have new people coming and as Harry ran surveys for the Church in the past, when they started to get on the mailing list, it took what, two years before they started—between two and three years. There are going to be new people coming in, brand new people. They’re going to have different hang ups than you have. What we need to do is shed all the hang-ups that we’ve had from our previous Church of God association.

Some things were good; some things were not good. But we have to be able to realize when new people come, there are going to be difficulties involved. You can’t be so sensitive that when new people come, we say, ‘Oh, they’re disturbing us and we don’t have the love we used to have,’ and all of that sort of thing. Help them to learn the love of God so you keep the love of God.

Verse 16: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not *the* fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not *the* fellowship of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one body and one bread, because we are all partakers of the bread” (vs 16-17). Who is Christ—right? Didn’t He say, ‘Break this bread. This is My body.’ And the church is the body of Christ? *Yes, indeed!*

“Consider Israel according to *the* flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?... [of course!] ...What then am I saying? That an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to an idol is anything?” (vs 18-19). *Of course not,* he said *no!* However, don’t cross the line and get involved in their religious services.

Verse 20: “But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God;

and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons. You cannot partake of *the* table of the Lord, and *the* table of demons” (vs 20-21). You can’t do that.

That’s why having the Passover in the right way, according to the Truth of what is taught is of paramount importance. And as you’ll find out when you read the third edition of *The Christian Passover* book, what is the one central thing that Satan wants to get? *He wants to get you separated from God.* How can he do that? *There are various distractions and pleasures in the world.* That’s one way. But to really do it, is to *confuse the issue concerning the Christian Passover*—when it’s to be taken, how it’s to be taken. That’s why we have that 500-page book, *The Christian Passover.*

It covers more than the Passover, but it’s important to understand that is the renewal of the covenant. And if you don’t partake of the Passover in the manner that is worthy according to the way that Jesus has instructed, then you can take the first step going out from God. That’s why it’s important. We are in a covenant relationship with God that is bound by our covenant baptism.

Baptism is not a ritual to get into a church. Baptism is a covenant pledge that you make to God because God’s covenant pledge was that Christ died for you. What are you going to do for God? What does God require of you? *If Christ died, you die!* How do you die? *Baptism, conjoined to His death!* ***That is your covenant pledge to God.***

It also says this: If you do not fulfill the agreement of the New Covenant with the Spirit of God in faith and hope and love and growing in grace and knowledge, that you are going to die. *That symbolic death in the watery grave of baptism is your pledge to God: I will be faithful to the end.* And He says, ‘I will give you eternal life and resurrect you.’

Satan is wanting to stop you from attaining that! The central thrust is going to be against the Christian Passover, the way Jesus taught us to take it. That’s why we have so many different variations in the world. You’ve got the Lord’s Supper in the morning. Never could figure out how that could be. You take it every Sunday if you’re a Catholic and especially a priest. You know, you have mass at six, at seven, at eight, at nine, ten o’clock you have high mass. You get out the incense and you do all these things that you do. But what do they do with the mass? They have so perverted it that they claim that the priest has the power to command Christ to come down into that sun wafer offered to an idol in the temple of the sun on Sunday and say that the priest who command Christ to put His presence in there.

I tell you this: *Christ obeys no man!* And what they are doing, he is crucifying Christ every time they go through it. So that's the central thing. Likewise, with the Sabbath. We'll get back here to Sabbath-keeping. Let's come back to Isaiah 56, and let's see how we are to conduct ourselves. Here is the attitude and this is a spiritual attitude. So in the weeks that we don't meet, have a good Sabbath at home. Maybe get your children together. Spend some time with them. Spend some time really teaching them the Word of God. That might help your family a whole lot. Would that not be a good Holy convocation at home? *Yes, indeed!*

Maybe several families could get together. *Fine!* In that circumstance, you're still going to eat, but you don't need to go out because you're right at home—right? You can take care of that. Here's what God wants us to do.

How do we profane the Sabbath? *By doing things of the world, thinking the way the world thinks!*

- Can you turn off television one day? *Yes!*
- Can you stop the music one day except music that glorifies God? *Yes!*
- Can your children learn to sit down and understand the Bible? *Yes!*
- Are you capable of teaching them? *Yes!*

—especially through the Proverbs. Talk about what they go through at school. I think more and more you ought to have home schooling. That's a lot of work.

As a matter of fact, that would be my suggestion to end the problems at school. Shut all schools down, have all mothers stay home, teach the children at home on the Internet. Use the school's facilities for community activities only. Retire most of the teachers. Keep a number of them for tutors and you can eliminate what? Hundreds of millions and billions of dollars—right? You would solve a lot of crime—wouldn't you? *Because they would be at home, not out with gangs—right?*

Isaiah 56:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.... [This is a prophecy of the New Testament.] ...Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it; and keeps his hand from doing any evil'" (vs 1-2). Profaning means to *secularize*, if you could put it that way.

"And do not let the son of the stranger, who has joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, 'The LORD has utterly separated me from His people.' And do not let the eunuch say, 'Behold, I *am* a dry tree.' For thus says the LORD, 'To the eunuchs who

keep My Sabbaths... [plural] ...and choose things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant; Even to them will I give within My house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off'" (vs 3-5). That's talking about the resurrection.

This also tells us what? *The purpose of the Sabbath is to be preparing for the resurrection—correct? If we*

- grow in grace
- grow in knowledge
- grow in righteousness
- grow in all of these things

—that's what the Sabbath is for. Then he says: "Also the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant'" (v 6). And that is the New Covenant. That's what we've done.

So what we need to do is this: In keeping the Sabbath we keep it Holy. How? *By shutting off the world as much as we can!* If you have to drive here, you have to drive through the world. So what do you do? *You pray for protection—right? Yes!* You go home, you pray for protection—right? *Yes!*

You ever been in a wreck and you know that God spared you from it? Years ago when I was writing the first edition of the Passover book, I rolled my car over going at 75 mph on Hwy 5, because I was doing something stupid trying to block out the sun and the left front tire went over the edge of the highway and rolled over. I don't relive the experience, but I remember it and learned a lesson. *Don't do stupid things while you're driving, Fred.* And I know just about the spot where it is, so whenever I go down and go home I remember, *Don't do anything stupid.*

When it rolled over and I didn't have my seat belt on, it rolled over one whole time, clear around, and I'm thinking, Ooooh, no! Landed right side up, blew out two tires. The roof was all bent, the windshield had cracked and the back windshield was out and it was all dusty. I opened the door of the car, got out and stood up. I had a little knick on my forehead because of the rear view mirror.

The first thing I said was, 'Oh, God, thank you for saving me from my stupidity.' But God protected me. What they did, they wanted to tow the car clear down to Bakersfield. I said, 'Oh, no, I'll never get home from there.' So the highway patrolman told the tow truck, because he wanted to have some money towing the truck, and he says, 'Go ahead and see if the tires will hold the bead.' So he

put the air in the tires—yes—start the car and he says, ‘Well, go up here about 20 miles and check in and redo these tires because there may be some sand in there and there may be some air going out.

I looked like I had been dumped on with a flour sack and so they had cell phones at that time and as soon as the highway patrolman came, someone said, ‘Well, do you want to call home?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ So I gave him the number, he called home and I said, ‘Mom, I’ll be a little late. I had an accident with the car. I rolled it over, I’m okay. Bye.’

So I drove up, got the car taken care of. When I got home, we had a patio above the garage, so here I’m coming in my little diesel Isuzu. Everything was all out of whack and the body was twisted. Dust from the wreck that had got in the back of the car was blowing all over and it was so cold coming over the mountain that I had a pillow back there and the window here was broken so the wind was coming in, so I had to have the pillow here.

When I finally came up, Dolores was up on the balcony looking down and the kids were there. I got out and stood up and all she could do was laugh, because I looked like I was Scrooge from the movie, Ebenezer Scrooge. ***So God takes care of us in it!***

Let’s come over here to Isaiah 58:13: “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath... [That means from doing your own thing.] *...from* doing your own desires on My Holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight... [So it is a delight and that means on the Sabbath, by all means, you need to pray.] ...the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own* words.” Learn the words of Christ.

“Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it” (v 14). So it gives us the whole purpose of what we are to do. That’s what we need to focus in on, on the Sabbath.

- If there are things we need to do, like drive to assemble—*that’s fine!*
- Gather together a couple of families—*that’s fine!*
- Be alone and only Christ and you and the Father are there—*that’s fine!*
- Get together where we have a meeting like we have here—*that’s fine!*
- Have a meal like we have here—*that’s not against God!*

Do we lose God’s Spirit, we go in there and eat in there? *No, we don’t!* God has blessed us with it.

We’ve done this for how long? I think only once or twice they’ve tried to slip in some shrimp or some ham on us, but we took care of that.

So I hope this helps you understand that there are many different ways to keep the Sabbath as long as you keep it, but you also have to adjust to the circumstances in your life and the circumstances of other people when they are involved.

Now, when we come together, let’s come together—do this: *Leave your hang ups at home, if you haven’t gotten your hang ups washed away by the washing of the water by the Word.* And let’s meet in love, in acceptance, not judging, not criticizing. If someone has a problem and you see the problem, what did John tell us to do? *Pray—pray for the individual!* You don’t sit there and criticize and condemn him. You want someone to criticize you and condemn you? *No!* Same way.

- we meet in *love*
- we meet in *understanding*
- we meet in *thanksgiving*

We meet and we ask Christ and God the Father to be here so that with Their Spirit and with Their Word we are fed the Word of God. We have something that we can grow in grace and knowledge with.

So keep all of that in mind and I hope that helps us with it. We could go through some other things, but we won’t. But I’m sure the Apostle Paul traveled on the Sabbath. How long did it take him to get to Rome? *A year and a half!* So his circumstances were different, so ours are different. But that doesn’t mean, like some people say—I remember one man saying, ‘Well, I have no trouble going out and shopping for groceries on the Sabbath.’ And I said, ‘Well, I do.’ But if I’m travelling a long distance and things like that, if I eat along the way—I’ve taken lunch with me, too. I’ve done both; we could do both.

But then I find that God doesn’t condemn me in it. He doesn’t condemn you in it. But if we go ahead and then make it something, then where the meal and just being together eating becomes the central part of Sabbath services, then we’re getting into the area where then we are not using the Sabbath for our spiritual benefit.

I hope that helps answer a lot of questions. Maybe it created a whole lot more—whatever. If it did, we’ll bring them up and we’ll discuss those.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 20:8-11
- 2) Deuteronomy 5:12-15
- 3) Leviticus 23:1-4
- 4) Nehemiah 13:14-17

- 5) Mark 2:23-28
- 6) Matthew 12:1-5, 7
- 7) 1-Corinthians 8:1-7
- 8) 1-Corinthians 10:14-21
- 9) Isaiah 56:1-6
- 10) Isaiah 58:13-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 16
- Revelation 11:8
- Romans 14

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Washing of the Water by the Word*

Videos and Accompanying Material: *Calculated Hebrew Calendar*

Books:

- *Sanctification of the New Moon* by Maimonides
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

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