

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE HOLY DAYS & SABBATH

by Herman Hoeh

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[INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS DELETED]

And now, this evening, there are a number of things that we might like to discuss with respect to the Holy Days, with respect to the upcoming autumn festival. I thought that perhaps later in the evening we might have an opportunity to focus in some questions you might have not heretofore answered.

There are a number of ways in which one can analyze the question that has been presented to us this evening. I would start out by saying that we seldom realize that human beings are not as rational as we think ourselves to be. And therefore what convinces one person is not necessarily what convinces another. That "truth" may be quite logical and clear on the one hand, but because something has been taken for granted, accepted, that it seems untrue. Therefore we recognize that on any number of topics, and certainly on this one, there is always the tendency to be persuaded by one argument for one person, and another argument or presentation for another individual. And what seems especially convincing and helpful in the one case might seem not to be important in another. Perhaps it is better to understand that fact before we go any further, for the simple reason that what may seem important to the one who speaks or to myself might not necessarily be critical for you. And the same thing could be true if you were to explain it. What might seem significant to you, I might find, you know, I could take it or leave it—it doesn't convince me one way or another. So we need to be aware of this trait of human nature, whether we are defining why we are here, or whether we are defining why God chose to hallow particular periods of time.

There are a number of ways we can look at this problem. Probably each one who has spoken, whether in classrooms or in assemblies or in the Bible Studies on this subject, will have dealt with it in terms of his awareness of the general questions and his experience in the Church. I should like to give you an approach that might make you see it in a different light than you have before. I will give you my experience in why I came to the decision that I did with respect to the festivals that God has given his Church. The time element is not critical. It might have been your experience. Probably it would be impossible to repeat it today, by the very nature that the broadcast has been known far and wide and the overwhelming majority of you have had some contact, if you are younger, with the Church before you were held responsible for making a decision.

I first heard the broadcast in 1944. That's before some several of you were born. I already, prior to ever hearing Mr. Herbert Armstrong, had come to study and draw a conclusion on such questions as the Sabbath, who were the lost ten tribes, the Millennium, tithing, what is God, what is man, what is hell, and heaven. These questions I

came to a conclusion on before I ever heard the World Tomorrow broadcast. I think that this is also indicative of why so many, who were never faced with these questions or never thought of them before, suddenly wonder why, when some strange question comes from one direction or another, that they have not looked into it and they begin to question what they believe. Or as one minister told me, many people who are in God's Church suddenly come up with questions after being baptized, that some of us had to answer before we ever came to know of the Church of God. So, as you note, I left out one subject. The one thing I had not understood pertained to the annual festivals, as revealed to the Children of Israel—first of all, at the time that the Church was being formed (Exodus 12) and many related chapters throughout Old and New Testaments. I received a brochure from Mr. Armstrong pertaining to the Passover. Of course, I was not converted at the time, and it was one of those—what we would call—"Biblical subjects". It wasn't a subject that I had dealt with before, and it was something that I did not immediately understand. The other topics that I have discussed were commonly presented by Jehovah's Witnesses, or Mormons, or Seventh Day Adventists, or the British-Israel World Federation. They were discussed by any number of groups, and literature, and theologians also have discussed them at length. They tend to be questions of a general nature. But when it came to the question of the festivals, and I first read it, I found I was not able to understand it. And I think that we should realize perhaps there is a reason why, on the surface, what distinguishes this Work more definitely from any other group is not the Sabbath, which others share, not an understanding of the Millennium, which certainly, in significant ways, some others share, not an understanding of the identity of the lost tribes, or that man is not an immortal soul dwelling in a material body, or the question of tithing. Some may disagree and some agree.

But in the Christian world, what is very significant is our relationship to a series of annual occasions that God hallowed. They are, in a sense, related to the Church. And at this time I didn't know that there was a Church of God. When I did come in 1947 when the College first opened, I also had another surprise. Not only was there the Church of God, or the broadcast corporate name, the "Radio Church of God", I also learned that there were other churches called the Churches of God, and in parentheses there followed the expression, "Seventh Day", with headquarters in Stanbury, Missouri. And it was these Churches of God—I will use the term in the plural, because they tended to be rather independent in terms of local policy—they represented a period of a time earlier than Mr. Armstrong's ministry, and I learned that they didn't observe the festivals. And the Radio Church of God, which was the corporate name, or the Church of God, as we generally use that term, did.

Well, I had a chance to evaluate the subject, and I began to realize what most of us should know—and that is that the festivals were given to the Church. They were not presented, from any evidence we have in scripture, to an individual, such as Abel, or Enoch, or Noah, or for that matter, Abraham or Isaac or Jacob—individuals whom God dealt with and personally appeared to.

The festivals begin in Exodus chapter 12. And it was at the same time in the 12th chapter that we have the introduction of the congregation of Israel as a Church [small blank spot in tape] the first time in history—a body of people [small blank spot] organized for a specific purpose. I did not immediately accept the matter of the festivals—I am not of Jewish background. There were no Jews in the Church in that day of which we were conscious in terms of Jewish religion and culture. I did not have a background typical of those who are of the lost tribes of Israel. I had Jewish friends. Though I was a German, my Jewish friends respected me and I respected them—in high school during the Second World War period.

So I had to face the question when the festivals were presented, and I doubt that most of us ever looked at it quite this way. I had to face the question: Was I to become a Jew inwardly? That was and is the issue when the Holy Days are presented. Because there are those who can see other doctrines (on the Millennium, or on the Sabbath, or the Lost Tribes—you name it—tithing), some of these things are shared by other Christian groups. What is uniquely Jewish is a series of festivals, seven in number. And I realized what I doubt the majority even in God's Church do—that there is nothing more significant in the world as it is now structured than the fact that if we keep the festivals of God, we are most directly related to a Jewish practice.

[an interruption of 3 announcements deleted]

When I made up my mind on the question of the festivals after months here at College—and I didn't make it up in September or October, or November, or December, or January—it took some time, because to do this was to depart from what had been regarded as the broad Christian view. And it meant doing something that was so significantly Jewish that there was no question that this is an issue which denotes who are God's people, even more specifically than does the Sabbath itself (meaning the seventh day of the week).

I had a chance—in Oregon, during the time we sometimes worked there in the summer of 1949 and 1950—to visit two of the Churches of God Seventh Day in Eugene, Oregon, and in Jefferson, Oregon, and to meet those people, and I realized something very significant. Having ceased to observe the festivals, and I'll explain that in a moment, there were things in the plan of God that are revealed in the annual festivals that were unknown to the Church of God Seventh Day. There was a lack of cohesion. The churches were scattered, and they did not have the kind of unity that built this Work to the level [to] which it now is—that in a period of forty years, we have come to accomplish things that the Church of God Seventh Day had not

done in a century. And the festivals provided the link, both in terms of our spiritual and social fellowship on the one hand, and the meaning of the festivals on the other.

The more I evaluated what I saw in the Church of God Seventh Day, the more I was convinced that what they lacked was critically important. Now it did not occur to us at the time, but later we discovered that branches of the Church of God Seventh Day—for instance in Mexico—were still observing the festivals as late as the middle 1950's. And anyone who says the Church of God Seventh Day was not observing the festivals should take note of the variation in the customs in the Church. Or to assume that the Church of God did something that had never been done before in Church history, when Mr. Armstrong began teaching that the festivals are to be observed, this would be untrue.

There is a time in history where we can prove that there is a cessation of the festivals, as also of the Sabbaths, among those who separated themselves from the Churches of God over the centuries. The last basic record of the annual festivals that we have is mentioned in the Council of the Catholic Church of God, which is the official name of the Roman Catholic Church—takes us into the fifth century or the 400's. The last reference to the Sabbath Day in the Greek Orthodox Church takes us to approximately the 11th century—in terms of the traditional manner in which the Sabbath was observed. From time to time, wherever we may trace a reference to the Churches of God through history, no matter what the name (that is, a people doing the Work), we have some indication of the Sabbath being known, some indication of the festivals being observed. And sometimes we have a far greater zeal than at other times expressed in the Church—almost invariably linked to a full and understanding grasp of the Sabbath and the festivals. What I would like to do is point up one thing that we are normally not as aware of. It's one thing to say that the annual festivals are Jewish. It's another thing to say that the Jews have really kept them. To this day, the Jews are very divided on the subject. It might be of interest to you to note that every one of the major periods of time when the Church ... gathered in Judah, and sometimes Israel—but normally those in Israel who did seek God had to come to Judah—the congregations of the synagogue (translated later by the Greek word, "Church" that's come down into English—*Ecclesia*), you have an indication that the Jews as a whole had gotten away from observing the festivals at every major reform (if we use the term). Every major period of repentance, every major return to God, centered initially at a period of time that was one of the annual Holy Days. It was never recorded alone, that the children of Israel (you know) came back to God and really sought him—when we look at the history of the divided monarchy (which is the history of Israel separate and Judah separate) without recognizing the festivals are involved.

We are not told when the Children of Israel first ceased to observe the festivals. There is no major passing record in the book of Judges. We do, however, find an indication that the knowledge of the festivals was certainly extant in the days of Samuel, and David, and Solomon.

That is, there is no significant emphasis up to this time, except that the temple was dedicated at the Feast of Tabernacles—but, as with many things, it takes some centuries for a people or a nation to forget the primary things God has revealed. Now when there was a revolt in Israel, you remember that the fundamental thing that Jeroboam (who was the first king of the ten tribes of Israel) did was to officially alter one of the festivals that had hitherto been observed. He changed the Festival of Tabernacles from the seventh month to the eighth month. (1st Kings 12:32). You are all familiar with that. But I want you to recognize that the first fundamental act for collective worship that drew away the people, after a place had been appointed in the northern end of Israel and in the southern end of Israel, was to alter the festivals so that the children of Israel (the 10 tribes) would not have to go or be attracted to Jerusalem. That was the start, and Israel never returned or recovered from this error.

Now as we move to history, we have a number of records that you certainly would be aware of. If we were to take note of the story, for instance in Chronicles (the book of Chronicles, books 1 and 2, tend to parallel Kings, though some of the more religious matters are recorded specifically in Chronicles), there were very important events in the reigns of two specific kings. One, Hezekiah—one, Josiah. We are all aware of what is commonly called, “the reform of Hezekiah”. This reform of Hezekiah is linked, of course, to the story of the Passover found in 2 Chronicles chapter 30. In 2 Chronicles chapter 30 is the story of the Passover. And a remarkable festival this was, which you should read some time. I won’t take the time here because it’s a rather long and lengthy chapter. They observed the Passover and they observed the Days of Unleavened Bread. That is also recorded in chapter 30, verse 21. Now there was such great joy in Jerusalem, the like of which had not been since the time of Solomon, who was the son of David. This is recorded in verse 26.

So we certainly get the feeling of a drift away, and when the nation sought to turn back to God in the days of Hezekiah, under his leadership of course, you have a major focus on the festival of the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread—similarly, of course, in Josiah’s reign, after the nation had departed, in the days of both Amon and Manasseh, the kings of Judah. And here we have the record in 2 Chronicles chapter 35 that Josiah kept the Passover to God, and this was a very remarkable Passover also. This was done in his 18th year as he was maturing. And it was a very remarkable festival indeed. And we have a parallel account of that in the book of Kings. So we’ll turn back to the book of Kings in this case.

In chapter 23, after the reform (2 Kings chapter 23), after the reform in Judah, the King commanded all to keep the Passover. This is recorded in verses 21, 22, and 23. Later on, when the children of Israel returned to the land of Palestine following their captivity, we have a reference to the needs of gathering the community together, and in chapter 3 of the book of Ezra, is a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles. This is in chapter 3 and verse 4.

A parallel verse may be found in Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 12 and related areas in this same eighth chap-

ter. In verse 12 of chapter 8 of Nehemiah, I should say verse 2, excuse me, Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation (verse 2, chapter 8), and this was on the first day of the seventh month, which is the Feast of Trumpets which we have just observed this past Tuesday. Then they discovered what was required in the Law, and we discover that the Children of Israel then observed the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, beginning in verse 14. And so they observed it in the manner that was appropriate for that climate, and this had not been done even since the days of Joshua, we are told in the last part of chapter 8, verse 17. “For since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun, the children of Israel had not observed the festival in this manner”. They had observed the festival, but they had been rather negligent or careless in the responsibility. And we have here the interesting indication that when the nation returns to God—we are dealing with this aspect—it also returns to observe the festivals.

And I noted, that in the Church of God Seventh Day, that they had departed, many of them, from the knowledge of the calendar. They had departed from the knowledge of the festivals, and the degree to which they had departed was the degree to which they had not understood the plan of God. Now this might not ever be an experience you go through because you may never have lived at the time when the Church of God (or the Worldwide Church of God), and the Church of God Seventh Day, were very close in contact. In those days, it was not uncommon for the majority of members in the state of Oregon to have relatives in either of the congregations.

And if you want to know how the separation occurred, you should read the autobiography in the year fundamentally of 1938 when there was a severance—there was a decision reached—by the Church of God Seventh Day. It was not that Mr. Armstrong left. They terminated the relationship with the brethren in Eugene, with the brethren in Portland and Vancouver. And this Work began to grow apace following. Those of us who had been involved with the festivals during the later 1940’s after the College was founded certainly saw, without any question, that the character of this Work, the nature of what held the Church together, and what linked the brethren across the United States and later Canada, was the contact in the festivals, and that, of course, was the reason that God had given.

Now, in looking at this picture, I would draw attention that there are different points of view that we might have in approaching the problem. Thus, there are some of us in the Church today who would say, “If I could find the festivals recorded as having begun prior to the Old Covenant at Sinai, then that would convince me”. There are others who would say, “Whether it is recorded before the Old Covenant (as in Exodus 12, before the Old Covenant) or during the Old Covenant, I would want to have it repeated in the New. And unless it’s repeated in the New, I wouldn’t be convinced.” Some would say, “Well, if I found in the history of God’s people through time, that this was a characteristic of the Church—whenever the Church had drawn close to God, and God was using it to do the Work—that would be a very strong indication of how God leads the Church.”

I would draw attention to a fundamental factor that we are all aware of or should be. There was a Council in Acts chapter 15 (that's the record of it). You are all familiar where the question arose of circumcision and the Law of Moses. The law of Moses was a specific term referring to those functions of the Church and the nation that pertained to the temple, that pertained to many of the customs that separated the Jew from the Gentile in terms of washings. It involved, for that matter, even the legal right of the Church to enforce further restrictions if necessary. What is significant, and I would draw this to your attention—the question of circumcision was not dealt with by Jesus directly during his ministry. Nor was the question, for that matter, of the Sabbath, or the Holy Days. The Sabbath, I will discuss just briefly in a moment.

I would draw attention to the fact that Jesus himself, in speaking to the Jews, did not make an issue about circumcision. When the question came up of circumcision with respect to the Gentiles—who were essentially unrelated to the Jewish community—what is significant is, that it took a Church council, a council of the Church of God, to come to a conclusion pertaining to circumcision. Now circumcision appeared before Moses. It was of the fathers, and it came to the Children of Israel even as a token of the Covenant in the days of Abraham. It took a Church council to evaluate the question of circumcision. And the decision was, not what even most of us may have taken for granted prior to evaluating it carefully. The Council of the Church of God, as recorded in Acts 15, came to the conclusion that the question of circumcision for the Gentiles is that it is not a requirement for salvation. No decision was made at the council to alter the practice of circumcision in the Jewish community. The latter is what is normally overlooked.

Interestingly, if it took a Church council to evaluate something of the level of circumcision, which was not the original covenant God made with Abraham, but a token of it, how much more should it have taken a Church council to address the question of the Sabbath—or, the Holy Days, which were recorded in the Law as fundamental to the character and fabric of the Church and the nation that we call Israel. Yet there is not a single council called anywhere in the New Testament that brought into question for the Gentiles what they should do with respect to the Sabbath or the Holy Days. There was a question of circumcision and the laws that Moses gave with respect to the relationship to the temple, the priesthood. And there were certain things that unless Gentiles did, they had no right in the temple in Jerusalem and in dealing with the priesthood. Circumcision is specified. No reference in Acts chapter 15 is made to either Sabbath or Holy Days. I think that is more significant than most people have ever given credence. It would have taken no less than a Church council to have made any change in the Law, pertaining either to the festivals of God or (that's the annual), or the weekly—because it most certainly took the Council even to deal with the question of physical circumcision, which, after all, only pertained to male babies anyway.

Further, even in the Law of Moses, there were four requirements that were asked to be kept because the Law of Moses did involve the question of sacrifice, and neces-

sarily the manner of sacrifice that the Gentiles had been familiar with—like strangling an animal, or eating blood with the animal, or associating the sacrifice with an idol or a statue that either represented or was viewed as God, or involving sacrifice to idols with sexual promiscuity. These were all characteristics of the Gentile world. And so the Church even imposed those four points.

Now, in imposing those four points, we better think twice before we assume that the Sabbath, one of the Ten Commandments, has been set aside, when the other matters of the Law like not eating blood with an animal sacrifice was imposed. And that is, after all, a physical thing.

Now I am going through this because it is very important at this stage that we take a note (before this festival season coming up, which we're already in, in fact, again) of the significance of the decisions rendered in the book of Acts. Jesus, as I have mentioned before (some of these will be repetitive statements but it's very important), Jesus loosened the law pertaining to the Sabbath by his example, and by the words when he explained to the disciples what they could do. Let me explain the meaning of that in terms of the Ten Commandments. When the Ten Commandments at Sinai were presented to a nation of unconverted people, they were given in simple form both susceptible to general understanding, and susceptible to general administration. Some of the Law—let's say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery", didn't deal with the question of your attitude or intent but only act. The Commandment which said, "You shall not kill", it didn't deal with the question of hatred and animosity, but merely the deed that we call murder. The Sabbath, on the other hand, was not like those two. Those two laws that I have mentioned (those two points of the Law), had many loopholes that needed to be closed later. The Sabbath left no loophole, and was absolute because it said that neither you, nor your immediate relatives in your gate, nor those who work for you, are allowed to do any work. There is no exception. So, whereas, in the question of the Sabbath, Jesus loosened the "any" to allow for proper exception—such as when an ox falls in the ditch when mercy should be extended—when a man has been healed and he could take up his pad. In the same way, Jesus, of course, closed the loopholes when he stated the principles of the New Covenant and evaluated the attitude of hate and lust with respect to, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery". Jesus, in other words, is restating the Commandments in a fashion that clarifies their meaning, intent, and purpose.

Jesus nowhere set aside Saturday as a rest day and made it a work day. Nor does any act or council in the New Testament after the death and ascension of Jesus indicate that that was done.

When we look at the New Testament, we marvel how often the festivals are generally recorded. That is, we discover that, whereas in our Christian world today, which is thought to be Christian, we have such interesting references as to New Years on January 1, to the very strange Roman custom of passing out valentines—not once mentioned in the New Testament (in February, I think the 14th, as our normal calendar has it). And then we have what we call (and this will vary with the church congregation), we

have a period of Lent for some. We certainly have a Good Friday, we have an Easter Sunday. And then we come along with All Souls Day and All Saints Day that we commonly associate, of course, with a hallowed evening called Halloween, when we use strange witches brew, pumpkins cut up, broom sticks, masks. And then we have what is called, "Christmas". We have other festivals depending on the church's custom. None of these are stated in the New Testament. They are all substitutes, because even the Christian world is aware of the need of people to do things together as a group that binds them to a responsibility to which they are called. Now, who calls them and what their work is, is another question altogether.

We are called for a specific job revealed in the scripture. And what brings to our attention what that Work is, and what that message is, is in fact the festivals themselves. If we neglect to keep and to study and to put to practice in our lives these festivals, we will find that our spiritual state is no longer the same. It is significant, you see, that we have quite a number of individuals who have left the fellowship over the last three or more years. These are individuals who in general have ceased to observe the festivals that the Church had been observing. And, it has led to a situation where some have abandoned practically everything they understood. Others have abandoned part of it, but they have lost sight of a Work. There isn't a single one of those who have left our fellowship who has a participatory role in a Work that Christ has called the Church to perform—that is, in Matthew chapter 28 and stated elsewhere, to bring the Gospel to all the world for a witness, and to teach all nations, and to baptize them, to bring them to that place where they are endued with the Spirit of God. Now it should be obvious that we should have expected that people would drift from the festivals, and drift from the fellowship, because this is in fact how Christianity arose in the first place (Christianity, as we know it in history, as distinct from Christ's teaching). And there is a great deal of difference. The same book may be referred to in general, but what is derived from this book is an entirely different matter. I would draw your attention to the fact that the Church, when God first dealt with it as a carnal family of Jacob, was asked to observe a particular festival. The Church, when Jesus Christ endued it with his Spirit, was keeping a festival of God prior to the receipt of the Holy Spirit. That's in Acts chapter 2. They didn't receive the Holy Spirit and then start observing a festival called Pentecost. There are many, many people who are called Pentecostal Christians who think that Pentecost commemorates the coming of the Spirit, and was not observed before the Spirit came. Now of course there are some who know different and understand it better, who are people who may study the Bible a little more often.

We note that the Children of Israel in the days of Moses were already observing the Passover, because if they had not been, they would not have been passed over when the death angel struck the first born of Egypt. The significance there is that they were involved in a festival before their sins were passed over. The Church was asked to commemorate a Holy Day, as in Acts chapter 2, which would signify that if they were willing to obey and to

observe this festival, which was the end of spring—in this case they were the recipients of the Holy Spirit which is what ... [tape switches sides] as planned. You do not observe the Passover, but exclude the Days of Unleavened Bread and succeeding festivals. You don't observe the Day of Atonement and exclude the Feast of Tabernacles, which many in the Jewish communities around us do. That is, the Jewish children will be out on the Day of Atonement, but they will be in school during the Feast of Tabernacles, if they are the normal Reform community.

The significance is, and I have stated this before, that if you want to know the plan of God, you must come to that church to whom God reveals it. And he reveals these things fundamentally on the annual festivals—brings things to our attention we would not otherwise have thought of. And insofar as the ministry remains faithful to it, and if the people remain faithful in attending, then the understanding of the festival becomes clearer and clearer, and the role in the plan of God. There are some who might accept what is called the Passover, and neglect the rest (in the Christian world). Hence many groups, Bible students, the International Bible Student Fellowship, and others, the Jehovah's Witnesses, would regard the Passover as what they are doing, and they stop there and do not observe the rest of the festivals that God gave, and hence their understanding of the resurrection with respect to the Millennium is altogether erroneous. Their understanding of the second resurrection after the Millennium is erroneous. This is one of the great tragedies if you start and you stop along the way, and you don't have a full understanding of the plan. So for many, one of the important arguments will be that they are all linked together. They are all asked to be observed together. And there are clear references to the varied festivals, as in (you are familiar with), in 1st Corinthians 5:8 where there is certainly a reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the RSV—a verse that is otherwise in the Greek manuscripts in general circulation in the Greek community in Acts chapter 18:21; that is in the King James version, but is not in the RSV because some of the early Greek manuscripts in Egypt do not have that. So some prefer to go to Egypt for their learning. I think it is much wiser to stay with the Greek community with respect to that. And there is a festival that Paul mentions—and, of course, you are familiar with what we have said before in our literature—Pentecost. There's a reference in 1st Corinthians 16:8 as a point of time. Paul planned to stay in Ephesus till the day of Pentecost. These are all familiar things.

But what is significant is that you can look through the whole of the Bible, and you will not find Christian festivals anywhere substituted in the New Testament for the festivals that God gave. Now the broad majority of the Church of God perceives this: that you cannot avoid the fact that the festivals and the Sabbath are taken for granted in the behavior of the New Testament community even with respect to the Gentiles. So much so, that the Colossians, where the Jewish community was basically unknown, a basic Gentile community, was asked to stand for the practices that the New Testament apostles had brought to their attention, or that the evangelists had

brought to their attention. And they were asked to see that no man sat in judgment even pertaining to a festival, the Holy Days, the new moons, the Sabbaths—the new moons being important in terms of the Jewish calendar at that time, which is now a fixed calendar.

The Colossians would hardly have had a problem such as this if they had never been observing the festivals. But they were being judged by their brethren, their Gentile brethren—that is, the Greek peoples around them, their relatives, and Paul is addressing this very question, something they had not heard or understood before. And he brings up the fact that these festivals in this connection are shadows of things to come. Now this is an important thing because the Church of God Seventh Day falsely argued—and you can see their literature on this point—that because the festivals are shadows, that therefore they shouldn't be kept, but only when they become a reality. And that's why they thought they were observing the Passover—because Christ had died. What they forgot was, the Holy Spirit came and they were not keeping Pentecost. So the argument was fallacious. Now, in reality, it is far more important, if you want to reason with human reason, to observe something while it still foreshadows what has not yet taken place, in order that you keep your mind on what is yet to come. If the Jewish community had forgotten what was being foreshadowed by the festivals, they would have forgotten the plan. And the degree to which they got mixed up is the degree to which they, of course, have lost the knowledge—so that they are not really aware of what the Millennium is going to be like. They are not aware of what the period after the Millennium shall be like with respect to the second resurrection.

I have a letter in my briefcase written by a Jewish person who says that we exclude the Jews from the salvation that is through Christ, because you have to come through Christ, and the Jews do not. The answer of course is we don't exclude them. They are yet to come through Christ. And they are going to do it in the second resurrection, if they have lived and died.

The fact should be clear then. The festivals were given in the beginning in the book of Exodus to foreshadow things to come. And the ultimate reality is what Christ himself brings about—either directly himself when he offered himself as the Passover, or, less directly so, that is, when he even uses us to fulfill his word—because we're going to be used to impart the Holy Spirit, and we are being used to do that. We are being used to bring people out of sin, hence the Feast of Unleavened Bread which pictures putting away sin. We're going to be used in the World Tomorrow to bring the whole world back to God, in a sense fulfilling in part the Feast of Tabernacles, as also Christ himself most directly will be used, to bring the world to God so that the whole world may be reached. The festivals do foreshadow things to come. So does the Sabbath. The Church of God Seventh Day unfortunately forgot that the Sabbath foreshadows something as well as commemorates. And, if you are not to observe that which foreshadows, then they shouldn't be observing the Sabbath, by their kind of reasoning, which is very unfortunate. The fact is, the Sabbath is both a memorial and foreshadows something—a memo-

rial of creation week, and it foreshadows a thousand years following 6000 years, generally speaking, of human experience, because the plan of God is patterned after the week. God hasn't obligated himself to intervene suddenly at the end of 6000 years expressly. There is no such statement in scripture. It's an analogy. But the Sabbath peace in Hebrews 4 that we have (where, you know, the Jewish expression "Shabat Shalom"—Sabbath peace to you), that is to typify the peace in the World Tomorrow, when, for a thousand years, the world is to be at peace instead of war. Now if the Sabbath has those points, well, you can see also, so do the annual Holy Days. Let's note that even though Christ died to pay for the sins of the world, and that his death made it possible for God the Father to pass over our sins if we accept Christ in our stead to pay the penalty, but although that has been now fulfilled, and in a sense we commemorate the action that was then done (which has been the teaching of the Church), this does not deny the fact that in terms of the application of Christ's sacrifice, it has yet to be accomplished for the broad spectrum of humanity. The bulk of human beings—99% of all human beings—have never benefited by Christ's death yet, because they are in their sins. They have not been forgiven them. And therefore, there is coming a time even foreshadowed by the Passover, when God will pass over them.. And that hasn't happened yet.

In the same way, the world does lie in sin. And so the Days of Unleavened Bread still foreshadow the ultimate putting out of sin, which won't be accomplished until 7000 years have elapsed. Hence the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Now it does commemorate the fact that the Church and God's people through history have put out sin—not to mention, of course, the departure of Israel from Egypt, the type of sin.

But take Pentecost. Pentecost does now commemorate the giving of the Holy Spirit. It once foreshadowed the fact that the Holy Spirit would yet come. If it foreshadowed the coming of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, chapter 2, that was but a tiny fulfillment, because the Holy Spirit has never entered more than a fraction of humanity. The ultimate fulfillment of the Day of Pentecost is yet to come, because the Holy Spirit first came in the 31st year of the present era, only for a very few, and only has been imparted to a very few since. The ultimate fulfillment is what Joel speaks of, and that is what was quoted only in terms of the beginning of the pouring out of God's Spirit.

Now of course we know that the Feast of Trumpets pictures a time of war, a blowing of trumpets, of warning, and actual warfare that is the crisis at the close. The Feast of Trumpets pictures the crisis at the close, and the intervention of God to save humanity. We have yet to see that occur. What we need to know is that when a church forgets to observe the Feast of Trumpets, when people individually forget, they begin to forget what is foreshadowed by it. Hence the Jews will have far more awareness of Jesus Christ as their Messiah when he comes (read Zechariah chapter 12), that when the Messiah comes, they're going to be repenting—the men apart, and the women apart, which is the Jewish tradition—the house of David, the house of Judah, the Levites. The Christian world will think he's the

anti-Christ. The Jews, as a whole, observe the Feast of Trumpets. The Christian world does not. The Church of God Seventh Day, unfortunately, doesn't observe the Feast of Trumpets, as a whole. Individuals among them might, who have not yet contacted us one way or another around the world. They are going to be caught unawares. They will not discern the time, because they haven't discerned the importance of the festival.

The Day of Atonement, of course, pictures the putting away of the devil. That is what we are going to hear about next Thursday, based on the book of Leviticus in chapter 16 and parallel verses. And there we will discover very important information in terms of how the World Tomorrow is going to be governed. It won't be governed by spirits. It's going to be governed by the family of God. And the spirits who are now in control are going to be removed from that role.

This is what we understand. This will explain why there will never be in the Millennium a Soviet Union with leaders who think as they do, why there will never be a revival of the Fascist system in Europe, why there will never be a revival of any of the other great systems—because they're ultimately inspired by spirits, who think competitively, think in terms of war and competition and strife to have a battle. That's the devils world.

We observe the Day of Atonement, because it is a part of a whole series of festivals that were given. The book of Acts, when Paul was taking his journey to Rome, has a reference to "the fast" which is understood clearly in the Jewish community and by Christian scholars to refer to the Day of Atonement. Paul didn't speak of Halloween being past. He spoke of the fast being past. What is unique everywhere, is that the annual festivals are recorded as an experience through each year, something that you measured time by—I will see you at the festival—I will stay till a festival—and all the substitutes and counterfeits that have been imposed since are never once expressly alluded to in the New Testament, except that prophetically, of course, the world would get away from the truth and substitute fables.

And the world did, as Galatians 4:10 indicates, substituting the things that the Gentiles once had, that they should have laid aside forever, but they re-introduced the use of statues "to remind one" of God despite the commandment which forbids it (number 2). They reintroduced various customs—the Christmas time, or tide—the period that is called "Lent"—not seven days of Unleavened Bread, but forty days. And many had other days—they settled on forty. Then all the others have been added since. Galatians 4:10 is an indication of how, along with some of the customs of the Jews (thus the Samaritans, paralleled this kind of thinking) [they] had introduced the traditions of their past, along with some Jewish customs. And Galatians is the first indication of the trend in which we see an amalgamation of Judaism, an amalgamation of the practices of the Gentiles. And as time went on, instead of merely introducing some of the Greek practices, they began to introduce later the Germanic practices and the Latin practices. And they got away more and more from the Jewish practices, because fewer and fewer Jews were in contact with the churches

that had separated themselves from any fellowship with the Church of God.

And today, of course, the Christian world is essentially an amalgam of the varied traditions of the people who have been reached. You go to Latin America, and the Christian tradition is a mixture of Indian tradition and Catholicism from Europe. You go to northern Europe, and Protestant and Catholic customs will link and wed Celtic and Germanic practices that are found nowhere in Mexico or Italy or France. You go into Asia and India, you will find the same thing, whether in the Catholic or Protestant world. And it is a part of human nature to try to take the best of one's past customs, and call them by some Christian practice, and to hang on to some of the things that you have received, either from the Jewish or Christian traditions. These are tragedies, but they are laid out nevertheless as a part of the experience of the Christians in central Asia Minor where the Galatians were settled. We can expect today, that just as Christians in Galatia and elsewhere began to have different points of view, that we will find the same thing today. There are probably no small number of people who will be observing the festival only because it is the thing to do. And if strife enters into the Church on the matter, or individuals get concerned about it, or there's external pressure, and persecution is coming, you can expect that people will abandon it and reason the same as they will with respect to the Sabbath, ("but if we observe it, I might lose my job, and I have to feed my family"). And, of course, that is an evidence of a lack of faith. Faith is the matter of your confidence to trust God to see you through these problems.

Now in the book of Isaiah, even in the very first chapter, we have clear references to the fact that the Jewish people, and certainly the House of Israel (because Isaiah really is addressed to both, when you look the whole picture through)—they have either laid aside God's festivals (the House of Israel), or in some cases altered how they should be practiced. (And with respect to Pentecost, the Jewish community does observe Pentecost on a different day than it was originally given to the children of Israel). Now God shows, both there and in Hosea (and there are many different places, you might like to look in a concordance—under the word, "festival", or mostly "feast" or "feasts" and these are King James, based on Cruden's—it will help you find all the statements in the Old Testament) there is an interesting indication that there is coming a time, as in Lamentations, when God will even take away from us the truth that we have in observing his Sabbath and his festivals. And I'm using the word "us" here a little more broadly than just the Church, because it's going to affect the whole of the western world. It is a tragedy, and you can look in the book of Lamentations and elsewhere, that when God takes away the opportunity to observe his festivals peaceably, there will be people who will drift away. They will neglect. This is just to be expected.

And I think we might as well be forewarned, because there are people who under pressure around them, have no longer continued to observe the Sabbath. This is going to affect the festivals just as well, because people will use the reasoning about maintaining a job. And

so the issue in Revelation pertains to the job, that, if you observe certain of the worldly practices, then you can buy and sell and trade. And if you don't cooperate, you won't be able to buy, and sell, and trade. You won't have a job. And you will really have to trust God. That's what it's all about. Now we don't know yet whether it will involve a reform in the calendar—such as the adoption by the United Nations of the whole world, of what is called the world calendar—that will break the weekly cycle. This has not yet been something that has been approved, though most Latin American countries are in favor of it. Should that occur, it would be the most ready vehicle for the disruption of the weekly Sabbath. And I think that we will find a great many would compromise on that point, just because we tend to want to reason and we tend to want to justify not having to trust God when a crisis comes. This is human nature and we need to look in the mirror, and see what ancient Judah and Israel did.

Now in this connection also, I think that we're going to have to face the reality, that when the children of Israel come out of captivity, they are going to begin to observe what they have neglected all these centuries. And even some people who have been in the Church, in our fellowship at least, and who have compromised, are going to have to face what they haven't really been aware of as they should. When God brings the nations together again, as in Zechariah chapters 12, 13, and 14, and in particular chapter 14, he asks in no uncertain terms that even the Gentiles should observe the Feast of Tabernacles, not alone the Israelites. And above all, he focuses in on the Islamic country of Egypt. And he even points up that there is going to be force exerted until those people learn. And it is going to bring them to the knowledge of God.

Now if this is going to be required of the Gentiles in the future, we have the very broad and important principle: God asks you today, as a human being, to put into practice his Law now, so that you will learn the meaning and show that you are in fact willing to live in accordance with that Law and submit to it. And when you have allowed yourself to be governed by the Law of God, which does command our presence on this festival season, then God asks you (and not until then) to rule in his kingdom, and, in this case not merely voluntarily (because that's the way the world has now been for nearly 6000 years), but then it will be by force. There won't be any alternative. The Egyptians are going to be hemmed in by plague and drought until they have no other choice but to come up and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles as chapter 14 verse 19 says. Now I know there are those who reason that the Gentiles never have to do this during the so-called "church" period, or "dispensation", to use a term that we don't use.

It is very plain, all through the history of the New Testament, that we are asked, whether Jew or Gentile, whether the house of Israel, whether Scythian or barbarian, to be a Jew inwardly. And what makes one a Jew inwardly, above all, when we get down to it, is that we have the festivals of God as an intimate part of our spiritual fellowship with him, and our spiritual and social fellowship with the brethren. It links us together as a body. We discover that what is going to link the Gentile world with the house of

Israel and the house of Judah when Jesus Christ returns (and chapter 14 speaks of the time when he sets his foot on the Mount of Olives)—he is going to intervene at that very time, and reveal the knowledge of his festivals to the Gentiles, and they are going to learn. And for the first time, they are going to understand what lies ahead—a thousand years of peace, of prosperity, an opportunity to be begotten and ultimately to be born into the Kingdom of God. And this is something for the Gentile as well as for the Israelite. And if the Gentile is going to be asked to do this when Jesus Christ comes back and when he rules...? And remember the Millennium is not Jesus forcing the Jews to become like Gentiles, the Millennium is that time when Jesus requires the Gentiles to become Jews inwardly. And he requires the Jews to become Jews inwardly.

The world has got it turned upside down. The assumption is that Christ is ruling the Gentile world today through the Church, and that this is the day when we're all to live like Gentiles. And then Christ comes back (for those who think he does—there be others who don't even believe that). But they have the idea that then Christ is going to force the Jews to become like the Christian Gentiles, to abandon the Sabbath, to abandon the festivals, and to begin to do the very things the Gentiles have been doing all along (who were called Christians in this world, where they had amalgamated some biblical things with many of their heathen traditions). The Bible shows it's just the opposite, that when Christ comes back and we rule with him, we live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation chapter 20). We're going to see him because we will be like him. We're going to sit on (speaking collectively), on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. We're going to rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron, and break those nations that might rebel, as you smash a potter's vessel. We're going to rule over cities, like the mayors, until everybody begins to do the opposite of what people think the Millennium is going to be like. It's going to be a situation in which the Gentile, who has no knowledge of God's Holy Days, begins to observe them. And they're not to let any man judge them for doing that (and that's the message of Colossians 2:16) until they all learn to do it, just as the Gentiles who were converted began to learn these things when they entered the Christian Church in the New Testament time.

Now when we see this picture, it begins to be quite different. We won't be arguing about, "but, it isn't commanded in the New Testament", because in fact the New Testament is not a legal restatement of the Law. There are people who think that somehow, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Paul's epistles, the epistles of John, Peter, of course James and Jude and Revelation, contain a written statement as to what the New Covenant is like—that is, step by step, all the terms of the New Covenant are written down. There isn't any such thing. There isn't a single chapter anywhere in the New Testament that gives the point of the Law that is supposed to be written in our hearts and mind in the form of a covenant, because in fact, the covenant hasn't yet been written up. Jeremiah 31 says the covenant is yet to be made when Christ comes back, and he hasn't returned. Jesus addressed the question verbally [tape unclear] verbally he says, Don't expect to find (in what

we call the New Testament) a complete letter-of-the-Law restatement. He said, You go back and look to see what is in what we call the Hebrew Old Testament (we have it in English or whatever language we read), and you look at it. And you evaluate it. And you evaluate it in terms of the examples I have set. You close the loopholes, and you lift any burden. And Jesus explained in Matthew 5 how to close the loopholes—how to look in the mirror and see the Law more clearly than ever before, because you have the opportunity to have the Spirit of God so you can look at the Law of God, the Ten Commandments, the civil laws that God stated through Moses. And you can see their intent and purpose.

And Jesus says there are some of us who are going to be keeping and teaching even the least points. And there are some who are going to neglect the keeping and neglect the teaching of the least points. And they are going to be least in the Kingdom of God. The degree to which we become calloused and lay aside the Law of God is the degree to which responsibility will be very limited to us when we are born into the Kingdom of God. It will reflect, if you please, your natural spiritual inheritance.

The gift of God is eternal life. The spiritual power and understanding that you have when you are born into the Kingdom of God will depend on how much that spirit has grown in you through the Law of God being manifested in your life, not in the letter of the Law, but in the spirit and in the intent. So Jesus recognizes there are some who will be careless, who will even teach men to neglect the lesser points of the Law. Matthew chapter 5 lays out the approach that nowhere, except in such statements that no murderer, no liar, no adulterer, no drunkard, no (and then a whole series of other evils) shall inherit the Kingdom of God.... No one who is involved in that even inherits it. When we look at this picture, what we see is that the festivals are given in the Old Testament, the Sabbaths, other points of the Ten Commandments, other points of the civil law that was given to a civil nation, a church. And we are asked to look at all the laws in the Old Covenant, whether in the Book of the Law or on the tables of stone. And what was once on the tables of stone, what was once in the book recorded in the Old Testament, we are asked to have in us, by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God, Paul says, in addressing this question in 2nd Corinthians 3, is to write, not with ink, but with the Spirit—not with the finger of God on stone, but with the Spirit of God in us. And the part of the Law that was written in ink in the pages of the book, are the festivals. And the Gentiles were asked to keep them.

We're not asked to have all these things repeated in the New Testament. We're asked to look to the Old Testament to see what was once expected even of a nation without the Spirit of God. Then we should understand how much more is expected of us with the Spirit of God. We not only are to observe it by being here, and by doing those things that are either asked of us individually (as Unleavened Bread) or collectively (as gathering together or observing the Passover), we are asked to do these things, and more. We are asked to discern what they mean. That means to grasp the plan of God, and then to take that plan in all its clarity. Did you know that Jesus really said very lit-

tle...? He said the Kingdom of God is like to this or like to that. But our real understanding of the Kingdom of God comes from the fact that—in reading and looking at the plan of God, and seeing especially that the devil and his demons are going to be stripped of their authority (and this is commemorated next Thursday in the Day of Atonement)—that there is a greater understanding of the government of God, the plan of God, the Kingdom of God, today than there has been in recorded Church history—because the Church has more efficiently, more effectively, more lively, observed the festivals and examined their meaning than (as far as I know) in the last 17 or 18 centuries.

The world talks about the Millennium. You can pick up Jehovah Witness literature—the Adventist literature will talk about the thousand years. There is a people, unfortunately, though they keep the Sabbath, they think the world is going to be barren—and the devil will rule on earth while Christ sits in heaven and the Saints pore over the books. They did not observe the Feast of Tabernacles. They should have listened to Ellen G. White who told them to (and they haven't) in her own literature, in her own writing. Now, having forgotten the Festival, the Jehovah Witnesses are unable to discern that there is coming a second resurrection after the Millennium—and the Millennium is not going to be the place when everybody who has lived and died in ignorance in the past is coming up.

It is the Church of God, only, that has been given the privilege to perceive out of the book that we call the Bible, what the plan of God is for 7000-plus years. And the reason is that we have been willing to do what God asks us to do, to observe the festivals which foreshadow things to come. And the degree to which we still observe them is the degree to which we have perception as to what is to come before it happens. And those who neglect it, as in the Church of God Seventh Day, and other groups even if they observe the Sabbath, they are not aware of what stands at the door. They are not aware of the meaning of the government and the family of God—the family of God to replace the angels who rebelled.

In terms of ruling, Hebrews chapter 2—just to turn to that one verse for those few of you who are not aware—that the world whereof we speak is not going to be ruled by angels to whom the present world and the previous world have been in subjection (Hebrews 2:5). I think it is a privilege, today, that most of us have this opportunity without having to strive for it. I think we should pray for the continued safety because there will be an opportunity to observe this festival and to be continuously instructed to the coming of Christ, for those who are perfected (Revelation 12). Remember, the woman flees, and then there are the remnant of her seed, whom the devil goes to make war with. They are the ones who won't have peace. They are the ones who will have to give their lives for observing the festival. They'll have to give their lives for obeying God, and keeping the Sabbath. Men want to make a big issue of time, and God is going to allow it. Let's be thankful that we still have peace now. How long it will last remains to be seen.

We're coming to a crisis. Great leaders of this

world recognize that it's a critical year in terms of things—that they are unsolved—we're going to have problems build up that human beings won't be able to cope with. But all of that, of course, we could foresee, and do foresee, in the festival we observed this past Tuesday, which is the story of the crisis at the close, and we are now in part living in the early stages of it, in this atomic age.

I hope all of you, during this time will be able to read the many places in the Bible pertaining to the festivals, and that you'll begin to understand that if something is not repeated in the New Testament, it didn't have to be—it's already there in the Old. And you're asked to see it with spiritual eyes, and to understand what God's intent and purpose is, and to see it reflected, if you please, in the practice of the New Testament church—reflected, if you please, in the practice of the Church of God today—because the Church, that made it possible for most of you to receive the Spirit of God, is the Church that observes and hallows God's time as he asks us to. And you'd better give strong heed to the fact that that body which brought you into contact with Christ has been performing, not only what we have been asked to do in the Bible, but has been performing what others have not. And when the others failed, they also didn't bring you to the knowledge and the understanding that you have through this Work.

###END###