

To Eat Out On The Sabbath Or Not

Fred R. Coulter—May 26, 2011

To eat out or not eat out on the Sabbath—that is the question. This is the third year in a row at the conference that we have covered this and it's because there has been a persistent difficulty in understanding about what we should do in our age and the way that the world is today in relationship to keeping the Sabbath; and it sort of runs in cycles. Here we are at the conference and we're at the Hilton Hotel here in Florence, Kentucky, and we rent the rooms, we buy our meals, everything is taken care of here. But also we have a double Sabbath meeting, morning and afternoon services, and we have a meal in between which, of course, is paid for by the Church and paid for in advance.

And yet, in the years past we have had those who when they come, they feel as though that they can come to the Sabbath service meeting in the morning and in the afternoon, but they can't eat lunch in between because that would be buying and selling.

Are we sinning if we eat out on the Sabbath or when we have these regional meetings? There are going to be about 120 brethren come, some of them from 250 miles away. They don't have a chance to fellowship with brethren. They don't have a chance to meet together. When we have these regional-type meetings, is it a sin to have a meal prepared for us and we eat it on the Sabbath? We can fellowship with one another. We can see brethren we haven't seen for a long time and it makes for a wonderful day.

Let's go back and let's review Sabbath-keeping in the Bible. First of all, we'll go to the Old Testament; then we'll go to the New Testament. Let's come back here to Exodus 16 and let's see how they kept the Sabbath there. Let's understand something that's very important for us to realize, which is this. They didn't have any Bibles then. They had just been rescued by God out of Egypt and led into the Wilderness of Sin where they kept the Sabbath. There was a Sabbath message for them. That was the beginning of understanding about manna and then also that God sent them quail after the Sabbath.

Let's see what we are to do, let's see how these things are to be done and let's see what it says concerning the Sabbath and how that they were not to go out on the Sabbath Day. Their situation was entirely different than ours. They were on the way to the 'promised land'. God was right there with them, and their Sabbath keeping was far different than what we do today, because as we will see, they were

told not to go even out of their tents on the Sabbath Day.

Let's pick it up where they were told about the manna to gather it day-by-day and if they kept it over it would breed worms and stink and rot, but on the sixth day, now the command was different. So the sixth day is the day of preparation. And, of course, we're going to see their day of preparation was much different even after they got into the "promised land" than our day of preparation that we have today.

Exodus 16:22: "And it came to pass, on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said to them, 'This *is that* which the LORD has said, "Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil what you will boil. And that which remains over, lay up for yourselves to be kept until the *next morning*'" (vs 22-23).

So, God performed another miracle. The first miracle was that if you tried to keep it over, it would breed worms and stink. The second miracle was that when they kept it over for the Sabbath, it didn't breed worms and stink, but they were able to eat it.

"And they laid it up until the *next morning* as Moses said. And it did not stink; neither was there any worm in it. And Moses said, 'Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD. Today you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.' And it came to pass *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day in order to gather, but they did not find *any*. And the LORD said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See, because the LORD has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you the bread of two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place. Do not let any one go out of his place on the seventh day.' So the people rested on the seventh day" (vs 24-30).

- Were these special circumstances for them? *Yes, indeed!*
- They were out in the wilderness, could they plow and plant? *No!*
- Could they eat their cattle, could they eat their goats? *No!*

The few that were there were reserved for sacrifice. So indeed, these are special circumstances.

Are we provided with manna today? *Of course not, we're not!*

- we have to *work*
- we have to *provide*
- we have to *prepare*

If you want to strictly go back and keep the Sabbath exactly like they have back here in Exo. 16, you're not even to go out of your house on the Sabbath, not go out of your tent.

It's obvious that we cannot keep the Sabbath today as they did there. And, of course, this is much different than what it was after God created Adam and Eve; they kept the Sabbath together in the Garden of Eden. God was right there to teach them, and the Sabbath was a day of fellowship with God. Obviously the circumstances there are different than they were here in Exo. 16, and after they sinned and were cast out of the Garden, they couldn't go into the Garden.

About the only thing we can derive as to what they were doing on the Sabbath then, they would come to the entrance of the Garden of Eden. They would meet with God and as Abel did, he would offer an offering according to the instructions of God.

We also know that the whole world between that time and the time of Noah became so sinful hardly anyone was keeping the Sabbath, much like it is today. As Jesus said, 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.' Likewise in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were eating, they were drinking, they were giving in marriage, carrying on business and plowing and planting, and do all of those things. They weren't keeping the Sabbath.

And you have also the situation that perhaps the only one who was keeping the Sabbath were the few patriarchs who were still alive at that time and it said that Methuselah died the year of the Flood, very likely that that happened. But other than that, Noah and his family were the only ones who were keeping the Sabbath. So we have no record of how to do it there.

A little later in the book of Exodus we have God giving the command for the Sabbath Day. Exodus 20:8: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy... [Let's understand something very important. God doesn't tell us in specific detail how to keep it Holy. He gives part of it.] ...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; 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" (vs 8-11).

We have some other things that tell us a little later about how they kept the Sabbath and we'll see how that is. Here we have the general guidelines, but another thing that is important for us to understand is: ***We have to make judgments on how we are going to keep the Sabbath.***

When they were a nation and the temple was in Jerusalem, what would happen, the sixth day the whole nation would prepare—correct? When they were keeping the Sabbath. *Yes!* But were they always keeping the Sabbath? *No!* Did God have to correct them for not keeping the Sabbath? *Yes, indeed!* And we find some of these things here that are important for us to understand. Let's see what God told them, because the people were breaking the Sabbath. They were not remembering the Sabbath. Let's see what they were doing, and doing right at the temple of God.

Jeremiah 7:2; here's what God told Jeremiah to say. "Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this Word, and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.' Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place'" (vs 2-3).

They were sinning so grievously in every other way, and we'll see what those sins were here, that God was warning them if they didn't repent they were going into captivity. Let's understand, if you realize about the Holy Land, it's a very small place today. As a matter of fact, with the exchange between Netanyahu and Barack Hussein Obama, Netanyahu had to give the President a geography lesson that if they went back to the borders of 1967, Israel would be only six miles wide.

From Hollister to Gilroy, it's twelve miles, so it's half way there and that's all the wider the land is. The old city of Jerusalem was very small and the temple was not a large building. So, the circumstances there, when they were in the land, were completely different than what they are today.

Let's see what God says here, v 4: "Do not trust in lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these.'" As long as whatever you did in the temple, if you did it, it was blessed by God and that's why they felt that they could put idols in there as Manasseh did and set up things to other gods right in the temple. And here later in Jer. 7 they were making cakes to the queen of heaven.

You read in Ezek. 8, they were worshiping the sun to the east. So they weren't keeping the Sabbath. They weren't keeping the laws of God, not much different than we have in the world today.

God says, v 5: “For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; *If* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your hurt” (vs 5-6). Now notice, these are all capital sins—are they not? *Yes, indeed!* And He had to tell them that right at the temple, because they were completely turning their back on God.

Verse 7: “Then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever. Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know; And them come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations?’” (vs 7-10).

It’s very interesting. He doesn’t mention Sabbath-keeping here. He will a little later, as we will see, in Jer. 17, but notice, are not these greater transgressions? *Yes, indeed!* He says, v 11: “‘Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it,’ says the LORD.” They were trusting in the physical building. They weren’t trusting in God. Remember, these people did not have the Holy Spirit, but they could have kept these things in the letter of the law, if they would have.

Let’s come to Jeremiah 17; here he had to go speak to them now concerning the Sabbath and the Sabbath was also very important. Also in breaking it the way that they were breaking it, was a capital sin. Jeremiah 17:19: “Thus the LORD said to me, ‘Go and stand in the gates of the children of the people... [These were the gates of Jerusalem where they had people coming in and out. They had trade and traffic coming in and out. There were many gates, and this one particular gate]: ...by which the kings of Judah come in, and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem.’” He had to go stand in all the gates of Jerusalem and give this message.

“And say to them, ‘Hear the Word of the LORD, kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the people of Jerusalem who enter in by these gates! Thus says the LORD, “Take heed to yourselves, and carry no burden on the Sabbath Day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem. Nor carry out a burden from your houses on the Sabbath Day, nor do any work, but keep the Sabbath Day Holy, as I commanded your fathers”’” (vs 20-22).

They were conducting regular business. What should have happened, they should have shut the city down on the Sabbath Day. We’ll see later

that Ezra and Nehemiah did that very thing. But again, let’s understand—they were in the Holy Land, they were in Jerusalem. Our circumstances are different, because we’re scattered in all of the world. And our circumstances today, don’t you think, are different?

Remember the prophecy of our day today? What did God tell Daniel? *At the time of the end many shall go to and fro!* Is that happening? *Yes!* Even here at the conference, how did we get here? We either drove or we flew in planes. Flying in planes, the truth is, whenever we take off we go into heaven—isn’t that correct? *Whenever we land, we come from heaven*—isn’t that true? So, we go to heaven and come back. I don’t know how we could explain that to people who lived in this time—do you? Wonder what they would call the airplane. We know they called God’s plane a cherubim, but I don’t know what they would call it today, if they saw it.

Verse 23: “‘But they did not obey, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, so that they might not hear nor receive instruction.... [God goes on and says, He makes it clear:] ...And it shall be, if you diligently hearken to Me,’ says the LORD, ‘to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath Day, but keep the Sabbath Day Holy, to do no work in it; Then kings and rulers sitting on the throne of David shall enter into the gates of this city, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their rulers in chariots and on horses, they, and their rulers, the men of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem. And this city shall remain forever’” (vs 23-25).

God gave them the ultimatum. *Yes*, the Sabbath Day was important. *Yes*, Sabbath breaking was certainly great sin against God, but what were they actually doing? *It was total neglect of God!* So let’s see the ultimatum that God gave.

Verse 27: “‘But if you will not hearken to me to keep the Sabbath Day Holy, and not to carry a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day; then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it will not be put out.’” We can see from history, that’s exactly what happened—right? *Yes, indeed!* They were taken off into captivity! What did God say of the land when they were gone? *‘The land shall keep its Sabbaths for 70 years,’* because they didn’t keep the land Sabbath. They didn’t keep the Jubilee. They weren’t keeping any of God’s commandments at all.

I dare say that in the Churches of God today there are more people—and in the world just considering the Sabbath—there are more people keeping the Sabbath today than at any time in history. We need to understand that, too.

Let's see some things here, let's see what happened after they came back from captivity, and let's see how they were conducting themselves. Let's come to Nehemiah 13 and let's see what we have here concerning again Sabbath-keeping, Sabbath-breaking, and what they were doing. Then we will also see how then, they kept the Holy Days and the Sabbath. At this time we will see the things completely changed, because most of the Jews were in captivity and only compared to all of those that went into captivity, maybe 100,000 people came back. That was about it. There were not very many people there in the area of Judea.

Here's what happened here, and here's what Nehemiah found. They were again sinning. They were intermarrying with the people of the land. They weren't bringing the tithes and offerings into the house of God. The gates weren't finished, none of those things were done, and they were breaking the Sabbath just as if it was an ordinary day.

Nehemiah 13:15: "In those days I saw in Judah *some* treading winepresses on the Sabbath... [Have you ever treaded grapes in a wine rack? That's quite a work!] ...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... [Not only that, they were buying and selling.] ...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..." (vs 15-17)—Nehemiah says.

We see another place where he got angry at and just slugged them in the face because they weren't willing to obey God and separate from their heathen wives. There had to be a clean line down of Judah down to the time of Christ and likewise with the priesthood.

Verse 17: "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? Did not your fathers do this, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel by defiling the Sabbath.' And it came to pass when the evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut and that they should not be opened until after the Sabbath...." (vs 17-19).

In order to enforce this, what did he have to do? Verse 19: "...And I set *some* of my servants at the gates, so that there should be no burden brought in on the Sabbath Day. And the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods stayed the night outside Jerusalem once or twice. And I warned them and

said to them, 'Why do you stay around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will lay hands on you.' From that time on they did not come any more on the Sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath Day...." (vs 19-22).

So, they had to set guards over the gates. They had to enforce it upon the people by closing the gates and putting the Levites there. Then he ends this section by saying, v 22: "...Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy." Then it shows how he saw them intermarrying and he struck some of them, beat them up, and so forth.

We find that during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah how the Sabbath was kept—changed. It changed from just being a temple-worship. It changed from that to the synagogue system. Now the synagogue system was a precursor of the Church of God services and we will see a little later what Jesus did on the Sabbath Day. Jesus was active and teaching and being the Lord God of the Old Testament Who also inspired this that Ezra did, and how he taught and what he did, and so forth.

Nehemiah 8:1: "And all the people gathered themselves as one man into the street before the Water Gate.... [this was in Jerusalem] ...And they spoke to Ezra the scribe... [who was also a priest] ...to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.... [That's the Feast of Trumpets—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...And he read from it in the open square in front of the Water Gate from daybreak until noon in front of the men and the women, and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law" (vs 1-3).

Now we have direct teaching to the people, v 4: "And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose.... [Then it lists all the Levites who were there with him and they also read and made these things clear.] ...And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people. And when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, 'Amen. Amen,' lifting up their hands...." (vs 4-6). Almost like church services today: everybody's there, have an opening prayer, everybody says 'Amen,' they're teaching with the Word of God.

Verse 8: “And they read distinctly from the Book of the Law of God. And they expounded the meaning and caused *them* to understand the reading.” There we have how services were held then. Now notice what they did, because this was a time of revival. This was a time of really getting things in order. And we’re going to see that from history, and I’ve got it written in the commentaries in the front of the Bible here, how the Old Testament was canonized.

Verse 9, they said: “...‘This day is Holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep,’ for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.” They were repenting. So, they said, ‘Don’t be grieved, this is a Holy Day.’

Verse 12: “And all the people went to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to celebrate with great joy, because they had understood the words which had been declared to them.”

Then the second day they read even more, v 14: “And they found written in the law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the Feast of the seventh month.” Then the word went out, ‘Come and keep the Feast of Tabernacles.’ So they went out and built the booths and everything like that. So they kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

What Ezra and what is called the Great Synagogue or the Great Assembly, which was the collection of 120 priests and Levites, they were able to put together the whole Old Testament in what we call canonization. The canonization of the Old Testament and what Ezra and the Great Synagogue did was very important because we find in Ezra and Nehemiah the intermarriage of the priests with the people of the land.

Just north of Judah and Jerusalem there was the district under the Persian Empire of Samaria. In each one of these districts you had, Samaria was a district and then you had Judea, which was a district, and under the supervision of the Persian Empire. They gave a great deal of autonomy to each of these districts, provided that they kept orderly and did what the Persian Empire wanted them to do.

When some of the priests would not repent and put away their foreign wives, they went north to Samaria, because the governor of Samaria, Sanballat, said, ‘If you come up here, you can build a temple just like the one in Jerusalem.’ When they went up there they took the scrolls of the Law of Moses, the first five books. At that time it was written in cursive on scrolls. This presented a great challenge to Ezra and Nehemiah and the structure of the Bible and the preservation of the Jewish people. Remember, the majority of the Jews were still scattered into the empire. Now they would have the

possibility of another Jewish-like religion coming out of Samaria which would be totally corrupt.

What they did and what Ezra decided to do to distinguish the authentic Scriptures of God, they canonized the Old Testament and re-wrote it in block, instead of script—block-type writing. Then they did something else that was very important. After they had canonized the whole Old Testament with the exception that later the Great Synagogue added the prophecy of Malachi and made one slight adjustment to one genealogy, all of this was done under the auspices of the priest Ezra and the Great Synagogue with the inspiration of God to have an official Scripture that would counteract everything that they would do in Samaria.

They distinguished the Scriptures with the block letters. Then they made copies and sent copies to every synagogue in the empire, because now this whole thing of the law and teaching and synagogue services was changed by Ezra and Nehemiah to keep the Jews in the Diaspora, or those who were still scattered within the empire called the Diaspora, in order to keep them from apostatizing and becoming pagans.

So they also set this up. They set up the structure of how the synagogues were to be handled. They were to be handled much like we read there in Neh. 8. You would have opening of services, you have reading of the law. And what Ezra did, he created what is called the ‘triennial cycle’ of reading in the synagogues and at the temple. So, this was universal for all Jews everywhere. They would have the reading of The Law. They would have the reading from the Psalms or Writings and they would have readings from the Prophets. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. And it was on such a schedule, also interspersed with the Holy Days, that they would go through the whole Old Testament in three years. That’s why it’s called the triennial cycle. Then after three years they would go back and repeat it. This is how we come to keeping the Sabbath Holy by teaching.

- no longer staying in a tent
- no longer just confined to your home
- no longer going down to the temple

I suppose they even had some synagogues there in Jerusalem as well as the temple service, but now every Sabbath was to be strictly kept by those observant Jews.

They also had special music by what is called a cantor. He would sing a solo, generally from the Psalms, and then you would have things where they would have other speakers come in and they would speak. Just to show you how the synagogue service worked, let’s come to the New Testament and see what Jesus did.

Jesus was teaching all of the time. Now the understanding of God comes by hearing the Word, and by hearing comes faith, and reading the Word and Jesus said, ‘The words that I speak to you they are spirit and they are life.’ And He was the One Who inspired Ezra to set up the whole synagogue system. He was the One Who inspired Ezra to bring the triennial cycle of the reading of the Scriptures.

Let’s come to Luke 4, and let’s see what Jesus did. He followed that very thing. And as a matter of fact, we’re going to see that this was an astounding time when He came there on the Sabbath Day, because that Sabbath Day was actually the Day of Pentecost.

Luke 4:14; this is after Jesus’ temptation by Satan the devil: “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee; and word about Him went out into the entire country around. And He taught in their synagogues, *and* was glorified by all” (vs 14-15). **He taught!** Let’s see how He taught; let’s also see what else that He did.

Verse 16: “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and stood up to read.... [Just like Ezra had laid out. There were certain Scriptures to read.] ...And there was given Him *the* book of the prophet Isaiah; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written” (vs 16-17). Jesus is going to tell them about Himself. Now remember:

- Jesus was the God of the Old Testament before He became Jesus Christ
- He is the One Who was the Creator
- He is the One Who made the Sabbath
- He is the One Who made the Sabbath Holy.

And obviously everything that He did on the Sabbath Day was good, and right, and proper—correct? *Yes, indeed!* And did He teach His disciples the right things to do? *Yes, He did*, and that becomes important.

Verse 18, He says: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me...* [He’s here speaking in the synagogue to these people and they knew that this was Jesus Who was brought up in Nazareth, and as a boy would come to the synagogue every Sabbath Day. And when the Holy Days came they would go up to Jerusalem, as we find in Luke 2.] ...He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to *the* captives and recovery of sight to *the* blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed, To proclaim *the* acceptable year of *the* Lord” (vs 18-19).

Wow! This was astonishing, because apparently this particular section of Scripture was to be read on the Day of Atonement, rather than on Pentecost. So He read it here on Pentecost. We’ll just briefly mention this: Pentecost is much like a mini-Jubilee—seven weeks, seven Sabbath, fiftieth day. Much like seven years, land rest, times seven—forty-nine years, plus the next year is a Jubilee.

Verse 20: “And after rolling up the scroll *and* delivering *it* to the attendant, He sat down; and the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them, ‘**Today, this scripture is being fulfilled in your ears.**’.... [Notice their response]: ...And all bore witness to Him and were amazed at the words of grace that were coming out of His mouth; and they said, ‘Is not this the son of Joseph?’ And He said to them, ‘Surely, you will say this parable to Me: “Physician, heal Yourself! Whatever we have heard being done in Capernaum, do also here in Your *own* country.”’ But He said, ‘Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his *own* country’” (vs 20-24).

They were all mad, got angry at Him, virtually chased Him out of the synagogue. They were going to throw Him over the edge of the mountain on which the city was built, but He escaped out of their hands.

Now notice what He did after He left there, v 31: “Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath Days.... [This is every Sabbath Day He was teaching. He was probably going from synagogue to synagogue on the Sabbath Day if they were close enough.] ...And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority” (vs 31-32).

Then He cast out demons, and so forth. Let’s see that He also healed on the Sabbath, which is very important to understand. Let’s see how they responded. Let’s see how the scribes and Pharisees were, and see how Jesus also healed on the Sabbath. A lot of these things were astonishing to those in His day, because He was doing things that they wouldn’t even consider doing on the Sabbath Day.

If you’ve never read the *Code of Jewish Law*, you need to read some of the things there that they have concerning the Jewish interpretation of the letter of the law of how to keep the Sabbath. And there you’ll find many, many burdensome things. Some of them funny, some of them silly, some of them are just unreal as what they expected on the Sabbath Day. They were very little different in the day of Jesus than what you read in the *Code of Jewish Law* today. We have some of those in an appendix in the book by Philip Neal, *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?*

Notice what Jesus did when He came into the synagogue, Mark 3:1: “And again He went into the synagogue, and a man who had a withered hand was there. And they were watching Him *to see* if He would heal on the Sabbath... [He was going around and healing all those who came to Him: Multitudes were healed, they all followed Him, great crowds, great multitudes. Everywhere Jesus went He was teaching. They wanted to see if He would heal on the Sabbath:] ...in order that they might accuse Him” (vs 1-2).

“Then He said to the man who had the withered hand, ‘Stand up here in the center.’... [that’s where they generally spoke so that all could hear] ...And He said to them, ‘Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbaths, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?’ But they were silent. And after looking around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as sound as the other.... [notice the reaction of the Pharisees]: ...Then the Pharisees left *and* immediately took counsel with the Herodians against Him *as to* how they might destroy Him” (vs 3-6). So He left there and the disciples followed, and so forth.

(go to the next track)

Let’s see how the Apostle Paul did, because he went into the synagogues. Remember how we said that the synagogue system was set up so there would be the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the Scriptures, and this is the system that the Apostle Paul found. This is how the Church has come to what we know as *teaching services*. Today with the Holy Spirit in us, our worship of God is not conducted in any public ritual. Our worship of God is directly to Him in a relationship with Him. We have the Spirit of God, and we’re not to just read certain Scriptures on certain Sabbaths, we’re to have the laws of God written in our hearts and in our minds—are we not?

Also we are told in this day that we’re not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. So we’re going to see how things changed. The reason that they changed was this: now no longer were Sabbath services just combined to the synagogues in and around Judea or at the temple or in the synagogues scattered out in the Diaspora. At this time they were scattered all through the Roman Empire, because Rome succeeded Greece and Greece had succeeded Persia, so Rome succeeded. So all the synagogues were there and they were still following what Ezra and Nehemiah had set out of reading the Law, the Prophets, the Writings, and teaching. We find this is what the Apostle Paul did.

Acts 13:14: “Now after passing through from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia; and

they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day *and* sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue said to them, ‘Men, brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, speak’” (vs 14-15). Well, you know wherever Paul went, when he was asked to speak, it almost turned out to be a riot—right? *Yes!*

Verse 13: “Then Paul stood up and, after beckoning with his hand, said, ‘Men, Israelites, and those who fear God, listen *to me*.’ Those who fear God were the circumcised Gentiles who were called proselytes and they were allowed to come into the synagogue in the back section of the synagogue, because the synagogue was broken down into three sections.

1. for men
2. for women
3. for proselytes

Paul continued speaking here: “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers...” (v 17). Then he rehearses everything concerning the exodus and then Saul, David,

Verse 24: “After John had first preached, before His coming, *the* baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling *his* course, he said, ‘Whom do you suppose *that* I am? I am not *He*; but behold, *there is* one Who comes after me, of Whom I am not worthy to loose the sandals of His feet.’ Men, brethren, sons of *the* race of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the message of this salvation was sent.... [He’s going to start talking about things about the New Covenant.] ...For those who were dwelling in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets who are read every Sabbath, have themselves fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*. And though no one found any cause *worthy* of death, they begged Pilate to execute Him” (vs 24-28).

Then he talks about His death and His resurrection, how He was raised up, and to confirm these things concerning being the Son of God, concerning not seeing any corruption (vs 29-37).

Verse 38: “Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this man *the* remission of sins is preached to you. And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (vs 38-39).

That was quite a statement to them. That was hard for the Jews to take, because they understood the rituals at the temple for justification. They understood the works of law that Judaism had for justification. But now to have justification and

forgiveness of all things for those who believe, this was a tremendous thing. So he gave them a warning. Let's follow this through and see what happens, because this is important to understand that the very pattern of how the synagogue was structured was carried over and modified just a little bit within the Churches of God. We're also going to learn something else about Sabbath-keeping and Gentiles and grace.

Paul warned them, v 40: "Take heed, therefore, lest that which is spoken in the Prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work that you will in no way believe, *even* if one declares it to you.'.... [Notice what happened. This is also important for us to realize concerning grace and Sabbath-keeping]: ...And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated *him* that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath" (vs 40-42).

Here's a very good important place to always remember concerning Sunday-keeping. A lot of people believe that Paul did away with the Sabbath and instituted Sunday-keeping. That's not so, because here is a perfect opportunity for Paul dealing with Gentiles to tell them about Sunday-keeping.

But notice what he did, v 42: "...the Gentiles entreated him that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath. Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* following Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.... [The grace of God and Sabbath-keeping go hand in hand!] ...And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God" (vs 42-44). So, the synagogue and the setting up of services for church services has its origin going clear back to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Now, let's talk about our day today. Let's talk about some things that are important for us to understand. We're to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every one—correct? *Yes, indeed!* Is the world keeping the Sabbath Day? *No, it's not!* Do we have congregations and fellowship groups that we go to? *Yes, we do!* We'll talk about travel here in just a little bit, but let's understand that Jesus and the disciples were the ones who set in motion—and Jesus was the one to lead it—that they would go from synagogue to synagogue on the Sabbath Day.

Let's come to Mark 2 and let's see a very important Scripture here, which tells us something that we need to do and we will look at it, and we will analyze it, and we will think about it. As one man

said, he said, 'Show me one place in the Bible where it says you can go out on the Sabbath and buy a meal.' Well, the Truth is the Bible doesn't say that in the New Testament, nor in the Old Testament.

How are we going to come to some understanding on this? Some people think never eat out on the Sabbath. And other people believe, 'Well, we can eat out anytime we want to on the Sabbath.' So let's find out what we should do and it is a judgment to be made. Let's come here to Matthew 16, and let's see something about the fact that we have to make judgments based upon the *spirit of the law*. We are living *in* the world, though we're not *of* the world. Let's understand something very important here concerning this: ***the preaching of the Gospel becomes one of the most important things that we can do.*** We need to realize that. That's the first thing we need to do.

Let's see what Jesus told Peter, because this tells us that there are certain things that we have to make judgments on, but it has to be based upon what was already established in heaven. We can see when Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah that that was already established in heaven, because He was the Messiah—correct? *Yes!*

After Peter declared that Jesus was the Christ. Matthew 16:17: "And Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father, Who *is* in heaven.'" There are certain things that we need to understand which can only from God. No one can understand that Jesus is the Christ unless God opens their minds. Now they might have a knowledge of it today, because Jesus has been preached so much, but most of them don't understand it as it is in the Bible.

Jesus continues here, v 18: "And I say also you, that you are Peter... [Which the Greek there is 'petros,' meaning *little stone*.] ...but upon this Rock... ['Petra,' meaning Himself] ...I will build My church, and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it." We have to go into all the world; just think of all the different societies in the world today. Just think of the fact that there are billions of Bibles out there in thousands of languages for the New Testament and hundreds of languages, over 400, approaching 500 languages of the whole Bible.

And indeed, God is giving Himself a fantastic witness through His Word, and not only that but also through preaching. That is the primary importance of things going out today. But notice what He tells them because it's not as simple as sitting in Jerusalem and looking at the law.

Verse 19: "And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you may bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven;

and whatever you may loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven.” This shows that when judgments are made, you can’t create a new thing out of old cloth. For example, like the Catholics do. ‘Well, here’s a pagan practice and all we have to do is just change the name of it and we’ll worship God with that.’ *No!* That has already been condemned in heaven and on earth.

The judgments to be made are judgments concerning things, which then are secondary to preaching the Gospel, secondary to keeping the Sabbath. And there are certain needs that we have in this modern era and even in the time, let’s say modern era. A lot of people say, ‘Well, back in Biblical days...’ Well, let me tell you something, we’re living in Biblical days today—are we not? Do we not go to the prophecies and say this is happening today. If it’s in the Bible, are we living in Biblical days? *Yes, we are!* Jesus was living in Biblical days—wasn’t He, because of the prophecy that He was coming and proclaiming the Gospel and all of those things—right? So here’s what happened.

- We have to look at this.
- We have to analyze it.
- We have to use the Spirit of Truth.
- We have to use Scriptural knowledge.
- We have to make a judgment concerning this.

Jesus made a judgment here. And if Jesus made a judgment here, that is bound in heaven—isn’t it? Making a judgment, if it’s something to loose, it’s loosed in heaven—isn’t it?

Mark 2:23: “Now, it came to pass that He went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as His disciples made *their way through the fields*, they were picking *and eating* the grain.” How many disciples were there? We’re not told, maybe there was 12, 20, 30, sometimes a lot of disciples followed Him. Remember, He sent out 70 disciples in addition to sending out the 12 apostles to go on special missions of healing the sick, raising the dead, and preaching the Gospel. The Pharisees saw this. They were doing this Sabbath after Sabbath. This was not a one-time occurrence, doing the things on the Sabbaths that were not lawful to do.

“Then the Pharisees said to Him, ‘Look *at them!* Why are they doing that which is not lawful on the Sabbath?’” (v 24). And sure enough apparently they were picking so much and eating it, rubbing it in their hands, and having a meal. But they said it was unlawful because it was harvesting. And sure enough back in Exo. 34 it says you shall keep the Sabbath in sowing time and in harvest time, plowing time. Notice what Jesus answered. He didn’t say, ‘You’re right, they shouldn’t be doing it.’

“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). They didn’t answer that.

Was not Jesus the Son of David? *Yes, indeed!* Notice how He finished this, how He answered them. “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man...’” (v 27).

- What was the Sabbath made for?
- Just resting and staying in tents?
 - *Yes, in the days of the exodus!*
- Was the Sabbath made for worshipping God?
 - *Yes, at the temple when the temple or tabernacle was up and running!*
- Was the Sabbath made for man so that in the synagogues on the Sabbath Day they would read the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms?
 - *Yes, it was!*

“...and not man for the Sabbath” (v 27).

That is, man is not to do his own things on the Sabbath Day, but now they were doing something on the Sabbath Day which the law had forbidden. And we’re going to see that Jesus was loosing that and He was binding the fact that they could eat on the Sabbath Day. Notice, they didn’t pack a lunch. There were times when they were carrying food with them and here at this time they didn’t have any.

So Jesus said, v 28: “Therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” Some people say, ‘Well, that’s kind of a stretch.’ Let’s see how He bound this and with what authority He did so.

- Did Jesus in commanding them to go into the world know that they would go into the world and they would be traveling?
- Did He know that there would be times that they would be traveling like the Apostle Paul did and it was the Day of Atonement and he was on a ship? *Yes, indeed!*
- Did He know that there would be times that they would be traveling and they would be on a boat? *Yes, He did!*
- Did He know that there would be times when they would be eating when it was on the Sabbath Day and it wasn’t just in the strict configuration of having a meal prepared before the Sabbath to eat? *Yes, He did.*

Let’s come to Matthew 12, and let’s see something that’s interesting for us to realize. This is

a parallel account of Mark 2. 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*’” (vs 1-2).

The Greek there is ‘Sabbaths,’ so they were doing this Sabbath after Sabbath. Walking through the grain fields was very easy to do, because they didn’t have a lot of roads like we have today. They had a lot of paths and they had some roads and those were very narrow. So, in order to walk through the grain fields, they were probably walking along a path and they were plucking the grain.

Someone would say, ‘Well, they were just gleaning the corners of the field.’ Well, it doesn’t say that this was after the harvest, because gleaning only comes after the harvest. This was apparently before the harvest, otherwise you wouldn’t be able to eat the grains the way they were eating because they would be too hard.

Then we find a repeat of what we read concerning David, v 3: “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 lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but for the priests only?... [Notice He adds something else which then becomes very important for us to realize.] ...Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbaths... [This is repeated over and over and over again every Sabbath.] ...**the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?**’” (vs 3-5).

A lot of work on the Sabbath—right? You have the offering of the offerings. You have the sprinkling of the blood. You have the roasting of the peace offerings, the thank offerings, the sin offerings, the daily offerings. All of those are there—right? *Yes!* And that’s a lot of work. Have you ever picked up a wave offering of a shoulder of a beef? That’s a pretty heavy thing to pick up and wave. That’s a lot of work and it says ‘and are guiltless.’ Not only did they profane the Sabbath, they profaned the temple on the Sabbath Day to carry out ***doing the work of God!*** True? *Yes, indeed!*

But notice what He says here, v 6: “But I say to you, **there is one here Who is greater than the temple.**” *That’s Jesus!* What the disciples were doing then was bound in heaven because Jesus made the decision as God manifested in the flesh—correct? *Yes, He did!*

“Now, if you had known what this *means*, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless” (vs 6-7). The disciples

were guiltless in eating out on the Sabbath by doing something that was technically not lawful, that is plucking the grains and eating them.

Notice also He says they were guiltless. Then He established it by saying this, v 8: “‘For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath Day.’” Those are three powerful Scriptures there when you put it together.

Let’s talk about now how we are at the conference. We come into the hotel, we check in, the rooms are taken care of. As a matter of fact, they’re paid for and we didn’t bring a bag of gold or silver to pay; we brought a credit card. Everyone who comes in here has to come into the hotel; these people are hired by the hotel. Whatever we pay, pays for their wages—is that not true? We’re in the hotel and what do they do everyday? They come and clean up the room and make our beds. That’s part of what we pay for—isn’t that correct? Do they not also do it on the Sabbath Day? *Yes, they do!* Our meeting here on the Sabbath Day, we rent the room.

Now, we’re stuck with a problem: If you’re going to try and strictly keep the Sabbath according to no buying, no selling, no working, then technically we should not ever have any of these kind of meeting because when we have these meetings we have to pay for the room—correct? And remember the Apostle Paul had rented facilities for three years in Ephesus—did he not? *Yes, he did!* They have to have attendants there, so that they can watch over the room, take care of what needs to be done in the room, because their insurance requires that they do so as well as their boss.

In doing so, who are they serving? *Us!* But who are they working for? *Their boss!* What is a person going to do who doesn’t believe that they should eat a meal on the Sabbath with such things as the meeting that we’re going to have here with 120 brethren? Well, I know some who would come into the services in the morning and then go out and sit in their car after services. I don’t know if they had a lunch or whatever they did out there. Then they would come back in for services in the afternoon because they didn’t believe in eating out on the Sabbath.

Well, if that’s the case, then you shouldn’t really stay in a hotel on the Sabbath. If you’re not going to stay in a hotel on the Sabbath, and you’re five hundred miles from home, are you going to bring a pup tent and set it up out on the lawn? And then the manager would come out there and say, ‘No, you can’t set up a pup tent out here on the lawn.’

As they were leaving the morning services to go out and sit in their car in the afternoon, what happened? They had to walk by the clerks who were

there working—right? Did they object to that? *No!* They didn't object to that. But nevertheless, it's the same category.

All right, someone would suggest, 'To solve that problem, we should bring in our own food.' Okay. Where are we going to get the food, how are we going to prepare for it, and how are we going to bring it in? 'Well, have the brethren come and do it.' Would the hotel allow the brethren to do it? They don't allow you to bring in any food at the hotel. You must buy the food from them.

We can make the decision based upon the things that we find here in Matt. 12 and Mark 2 and Matt. 28 by going into all the world. But when we have these regional-type meetings or like when I travel down to Southern California, that we have a meal in between services, that that is perfectly allowable and we are, as Jesus said, *guiltless*.

- Is not the assembling together the higher standard? *Yes, indeed!* Is not
- fellowshiping with brethren when we're so scattered, of a higher standard? *Yes, it is!*
- Are those people working there anyway, even if we had no meal? *Absolutely they are!*

When we have the meal there, we can fellowship with each other. And by the way, that's paid for with a credit card, and we pay for all of that in advance. Are we really going out and hiring them to wait on us, or is that a lesser thing compared to Sabbath services and fellowshiping together, so on those occasions that perfectly all right to do?

Let's think about it this way: If you have Sabbath in your home, you have no need to eat out—correct? *No, you don't!* If you have a couple of other families come together and you hold services together in your home, you can bring your own food. That's fine, no problem. You have no need to eat out on the Sabbath. You're not traveling great distance. You're right in your own town. You're right in your own home.

You go to the other extreme and there are those people who eat out every Sabbath. That's not looking at the circumstances and when it would be okay to eat out on the Sabbath. That should not be allowed either. But on those occasions where there's extended travel with brethren, there is nothing wrong with eating out on the Sabbath, especially when we're all scattered the way we are today.

I want to look at something here that could even more important for us to understand. Let's see what the Apostle Paul allowed back here in Corinth. Let's come to 1-Corinthians 8; let's see what he allowed. There are some people today would not

even allow this, but notice what the situation was. This had to do with things sacrificed to an idol. Notice where they sat and ate it! This was probably not on the Sabbath Day, but nevertheless it was sacrificed to an idol. Was it to Zeus, was it to Diana, was it to Cybele?

1-Corinthians 8:1: "Now, concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 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" (vs 1-3). So he's saying loving God is the most important thing.

Verse 4: "So then, concerning, the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we understand... [So here's understanding. Here is a judgment that Paul made.] ...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, 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 4-7).

We need to understand this, v 8: "But meat does not commend us to God; for we do not have any *spiritual* advantage if we eat, nor do we come short *spiritually* if we do not eat." And that can be applied to eating out on the Sabbath. If we have the meetings where the brethren drive and extended travel and come together, we don't have a spiritual advantage if we don't eat. We don't have a spiritual advantage if we do eat. Are we there to love God and love the brethren? That becomes the question.

But Paul says, v 9: "But beware, lest this freedom of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you, who have knowledge, sitting to eat in a idol-temple... [Think about that! I don't know how to quite answer that, but that's what Paul gave the judgment that was allowed, but he gave the warning:] ...will not his weak conscience be emboldened so as to cause him to eat things sacrificed to idols?" (vs 9-10).

If you are spiritually strong and you know that an idol is nothing, and an animal sacrificed to that idol cannot be contaminated by it, then it's perfectly all right to eat. Later over in 1-Corinthians 10:19 Paul made it very clear: "What then am I saying? That an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to an idol is anything? 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.... [There is where to draw the line. And he also says, now when you get down to the nitty-gritty]: ...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 19-21). That’s a whole lot more spiritually involved than eating out on the Sabbath when we have meals provided for us, when we have meetings such as we do, when brethren travel great distances to get together, and especially when I am there. So we need to consider that.’

Let’s also take another thing from the Apostle Paul concerning the problem that they had with those who were meat-eaters and those who were vegetarians. Most of those who did not want to eat anything that was sacrificed to an idol became a vegetarian; if someone wants to do that, that’s fine. But even today we still have the controversy between meat eaters and vegetarians.

Paul says neither one of you condemn the other. Let’s understand that. This becomes important for us to realize, Romans 14:10: “Now then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Same thing here. If you have in conscience that you cannot eat out on the Sabbath, ever anyplace, under any circumstances, then by all means don’t do it.

And those who eat out on those occasions, don’t judge the one who doesn’t. And the one who doesn’t, don’t judge the one who does. “...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ because it is written, “For *as* I live,” says the Lord, “every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then, each one of us shall give account of himself to God.... [We need to understand that, brethren.] ...Therefore, we should no longer judge one another, but judge this instead: Do not put an occasion of stumbling or a cause of offense before your brother” (vs 10-13).

So today, in the day and age when we’re traveling to and fro, traveling hundreds of miles to get to Sabbath services, when we have meetings like that it’s perfectly all right to eat out. On some occasions, everyone knows ahead of time, and it’s a building where you can bring food and have a potluck, we’ll do that. That’s perfectly fine.

Verse 14: “I understand and am persuaded by *the* Lord Jesus that nothing is common of itself, except to the one who regards anything to be common—to that one *it is* common.... [We can put eating out on the Sabbath in the occasions that I’ve spoken of in that category then.] ...But if, because of meat, your brother is offended, you are no longer walking according to love. With your meat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died” (vs 14-15).

So we’re not to flaunt this in someone’s face, either way.

Verse 16: “Therefore, do not let your good be evil spoken of.” Is it not good that we fellowship together? Is it not good that we can spend time together? *Yes, it is!* Is it not good that we can all be there to learn of God’s way, since the Sabbath is a time of teaching and instruction? *Yes, it is!* That is good. Let’s take it one step further.

- What are the fruits of those meetings?
- Are the brethren inspired?
- Do they draw closer to God?
- Do they help us love one another?
- Do they help us appreciate one another?

But, of course! There is no condemnation before God in that.

Now, if and when there can be a time, as I explained, where you can everyone bring the food and have a potluck, that’s perfectly fine, done on those occasions—and I’ve been to those, too—there’s no need to eat out. But on occasions where we have to rent a larger hall and it has to be in a hotel, then eating a meal there is perfectly fine. It’s a matter of proper judgment and balance that we’re talking about here.

Verse 17: “For the kingdom of God is not *a matter of* eating and drinking...” *No!*

- We’re here to learn how to become kings and rulers!
- We are here to grow in grace and knowledge!
- We are here to grow in love one for another!
- We are here to help and encourage one another!
- We are here to know one another
 - ✓ so we can pray for one another
 - ✓ so we can understand each other

That’s why we’re here in these meetings. That’s why we fellowship together—isn’t it? *Yes!*

“For the Kingdom of God is not *a matter of* eating and drinking; rather, *it is* righteousness and peace and joy in *the* Holy Spirit Because the one who serves Christ in these things is well pleasing to God and acceptable among men” (vs 17-18). I have never, never found any of those meetings to be not well pleasing to God.

So, if you stay and have a meal with those kinds of meetings, that’s well pleasing to God. We are guiltless. Now, however, if we just make it a practice and go out and eat every Sabbath when there’s no travel, when you’re living in your own city, when none of these things that I’ve described are necessary to get together, then you may be taking

advantage of something that you shouldn't be taking advantage of. You need to make that judgment yourself and understand that is probably not correct.

Verse 19: "So then, we should pursue the things of peace and the things that edify one another.... [that's what we are to do] ...Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of meat..." (vs 19-20). Let me just stop here and add this. ***The work of God is what He is doing within us:***

- that we develop the mind of Christ
- that we grow in grace in knowledge
- that we grow in spiritual character and understanding

What he's saying here, this is not referring to a work that the corporate church is doing, but the work in the individual, because that's what he's talking about.

Verse 20: "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of meat..." Let's understand that.

Verse 22: "Do you have faith?..." That is, in those individual things you choose. And if you choose not to eat out, that's perfectly fine. If you choose to eat out on occasions like I have suggested or as I have to do when I travel to go up to Fairfield, I have to pay \$5 toll.

"Do you have faith?.... [Of course, there's no sin in giving them the \$5. I've got to go across the bridge.] ...Have *it* to yourself before God. Blessed *is* the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves.... [That's what this is. This is a choice and a judgment.] ...But the one who doubts is condemned if he eats because *his eating is* not of faith; for everything that *is* not of faith is sin" (vs 22-23).

It gets down to our own personal spiritual choices. When we get together and have meals and are meeting in facilities where it's required that the facility provide the meals, that's perfectly just fine. When we're at home, we don't need to go out. If you really need to go out, in the summertime, go out Friday night before sundown. In the wintertime, go out Saturday night after sundown. That way you can still have a special meal and do something special for someone and you won't have to be out there having a meal when you really don't need one.

Is it really necessary? *If it is really necessary, we are guiltless before God!*

Well, we'll leave it at there. I've covered about everything I can with it. So I'm not going to talk anything about the eat out on the Sabbath or not for a long, long time now, since we've covered it three years in a row.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 16:22-30
- 2) Exodus 20:8-11
- 3) Jeremiah 7:2-11
- 4) Jeremiah 17:19-25, 27
- 5) Nehemiah 13:15-22
- 6) Nehemiah 8:1-6, 8-9, 12, 14
- 7) Luke 4:14-24, 31-32
- 8) Mark 3:1-6
- 9) Acts 13:14-17, 24-28, 38-44
- 10) Matthew 16:17-19
- 11) Mark 2:23-28
- 12) Matthew 12:1-8
- 13) 1-Corinthians 8:1-10
- 14) 1-Corinthians 10:19-21
- 15) Romans 14:10-20, 22-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ezekiel 8
- Luke 2
- Acts 13:29-37
- Exodus 34
- Matthew 28

Also referenced:

Books:

- *The Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin
- *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or Religion of Me?* by Philip Neal