

Why Are We Here? Are We Robbing God?

Marlin Fannin—April 5, 2014

It's the time of the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. We know that we should be examining ourselves—actually we should be examining ourselves all year long—especially at this time of year. There's a Scripture that says: 'examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith.'

- Why are we here?
- We do we attend church?
- Why do we keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days?

There are lots of reasons why people go to church. Sometime back I was listening to this minister on TV—actually a Seventh Day Adventist minister—and he brought out some things that I thought was interesting as to why people go to church. He says that a lot of people go:

- because they may have a nice building
- because they have a youth program for the kids and have a youth minister
- because my family goes there
- because mainly the who's who of the community attend there

There are also some things that I've heard over the years from Church of God members as to why they attend:

- because my friends go there
- because mom and dad goes there
- because we really have good potlucks after services and fellowship and have a good time
- because we have social events and things for the kids
- because we have a good time
- because we are the only true church and you need to be here with us

These are some of the things that I've heard over the years from people that actually are from the Churches of God. How often do we hear:

- we come here to hear the Word of God
- we're here to learn of God's ways more correctly
- we're here to learn how to apply them
- we're here to learn how to love and forgive one another
- we're here for fellowship with likeminded people, and that iron sharpens iron
- we're here to worship God

and more importantly:

- Are these things begin taught?

- Are you hearing from the Law, the Prophets, the Writings and the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles?

Peter said, 'Lord, You have the words of life.' Isn't that why we're here, to hear the words of life? Are we hearing them?

Deuteronomy 31:10: "And Moses commanded them, saying, 'At the end of seven years, at the set time of the year of release, in the Feast of Tabernacles, When all Israel has come to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people, men and women and the little ones, and your stranger who *is* within your gates so that they may hear and that they may learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and *that* their children who have not known may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land where you go over Jordan to possess it" (vs 10-13).

Here Moses plainly told them that the men, women and little ones, and even the strangers that were among them were to come and hear the words of the Lord and learn to live by it.

When we are attending a church, a fellowship group or assembly, for some of the reason that I stated as to why people go to church then we're not hearing and being taught and instructed in the way of God and His Word, then it truly just becomes a social gathering. The main reason to be there is:

- to hear the Word of God
- to be taught the Word of God,
- be instructed in the way of God

—and then do those things!

These are things we need to think about in examining ourselves as to what our reason is for being in church.

Are we robbing God? Some may be thinking that he's going to be talking about tithing and probably already turning to Malachi. If you're thinking that, you're thinking wrong. What I hope to bring out are ways that we are robbing God that maybe we never thought about, and maybe that you never thought about.

I'd like to give a definition of 'robbing God' (Mal. 3:8); that word is *to defraud*. Paul said, 'I robbed the churches...' (2-Cor. 11:8). Here it means

to deprive of something legally; belonging to or do to; or to withhold justly or injuriously by stealth or fraud.

Paul was saying, 'I robbed other churches of which I shouldn't have been doing. You should have been participating and contributing to me and my welfare in the work that I was doing.'

So, it is *to deprive of something that belongs*. We know that if something belongs to God it should be given to God. Let's look at some examples of obedience/disobedience:

KING SAUL:

1-Samuel 13:7: "And the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. And Saul *was* still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him, trembling. And he waited seven days, according to the set time with Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal. And the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, 'Bring a burnt offering here to me and peace offerings.' And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and to kneel to him. And Samuel said, 'What have you done?' And Saul said, 'Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and you did not come in the days appointed, and the Philistines gathered themselves at Michmash, and I said, "The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD." And **I forced myself** and offered a burnt offering.' And Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly. **You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God**, which He commanded you; for now the LORD would have established your kingdom upon Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not stand. The LORD has sought Him a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him to be prince over His people **because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you**'" (vs 10-14).

We see that Saul did not obey. He knew it was not his right or privilege to offer offerings, but he got impatient. Isn't it amazing that often we do things and all of a sudden it catches up with us. Almost immediately when he did this Samuel showed up.

1-Samuel 15:1: "And Samuel said to Saul, 'The LORD sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel. And now listen to the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I will punish Amalek for *that* which he did to Israel, how he set against him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek, and completely destroy all that they have... [the command here is to destroy] ...and do not spare

them. But kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'" And Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah" (vs 1-4).

Verse 7: "And Saul struck the Amalekites from Havilah, as you come to Shur, which *is* over across from Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive. And he completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag... [there was a command to kill him, but Saul spared him] ...and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not completely destroy them. But everything *that was* vile and feeble they completely destroyed" (vs 7-9).

Verse 10: "And the Word of the LORD came to Samuel saying, 'It repents Me that I have set up Saul *to be* king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not performed My commandments.' And it grieved Samuel, and he cried *out to* the LORD all night. And when Samuel rose up early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told to Samuel, saying, 'Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a place for himself, and has gone around and passed on and gone down to Gilgal.' And Samuel came to Saul. And Saul said to him, 'You *are* blessed of the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD'" (vs 10-13).

Verse 14: "And Samuel said, 'What then *is* this bleating of the flock in my ears? And *what is* the sound of the herd which I hear?' And Saul said, 'They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God. And the rest we have completely destroyed.' And Samuel said to Saul, 'Stay and I will tell you what the LORD has said to me tonight.' And he said to him, 'Speak on.' And Samuel said, 'When you *were* little in your own sight, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel. And the LORD sent you on the way and said, "Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until you destroy them." Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you fly upon the spoil and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"' (vs 14-19).

Verse 20: "And Saul said to Samuel, 'Yes, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have completely destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took from the spoil, of *the* flocks and herd, *the* best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.' And Samuel said, 'Does the LORD *have as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices **as in obeying the voice of the**

LORD?.... [that's the key here] ...Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice! To hearken is better than the fat of rams**" (vs 20-22).

He was told to kill Agag and all the animals, but he said, 'I've got the best ones and kept them back so we could serve God and sacrifice to God.' But he was not told to do that!

Samuel makes a good point here that we can learn from, as well, ***it is better to obey! God delights in obedience more than sacrifice.***

God says, 'I am the Eternal your God, and you shall have no other gods before Me!' (Exo. 20-1-3). God wants no other gods before Him. It also says that He's a 'jealous God' and He wants worship; He wants us to worship Him!

Are we robbing God when we're not obedient to Him? ***Something that God requires and asks of us!*** If we are not doing it, are we robbing Him of something that He deserves?

AARON and the GOLDEN CALF:

We know that Aaron made a golden calf while Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 32:1: "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, then the people gathered themselves to Aaron, and they said to him, 'Up! Make us gods which shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And Aaron said to them, 'Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* to me'" (vs 1-2). Evidently, when they spoiled Egypt that when people gave to them, before they left, that people got a lot of earrings.

Verse 3: And all the people broke off the golden earrings, which were in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. And he took *them* from their hand, and **fashioned it with an engraving tool**, and made a molten calf...." (vs 3-4). He must have some experience in this. He may have thought that it's been a long time since he was involved in making these things. So, he did that!

"...And they said, 'These *are* your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' And when Aaron saw *the calf*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD.' And they rose up early on the next morning, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go! Get you down, for your people, whom you brought out of the

land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*. They have turned aside quickly out of the way, which I commanded them....'" (vs 4-8). So, it didn't take very long when Moses wasn't around that they began to think that they need a leader.

"...They have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed to it... [they not only made a calf, but they sacrificed to it] ...and said, "These *are* your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up out of the land of Egypt'" (v 8).

Verse 9: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, *it is* a stiff-necked people. And now leave Me alone, so that My wrath may burn hot against them and that I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.' And Moses prayed to the LORD his God, and said, 'LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak and say, "He brought them out with an evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, "I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your seed, and they shall inherit *it* forever'"'" (vs 9-13).

Verse 14: "And the LORD repented of the evil, which He spoke of doing to His people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tablets were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other. And the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God. It *was* engraved upon the tablets" (vs 14-16). So, we see that God personally Himself wrote upon these on both sides.

Verse 17: "And Joshua heard the voice of the people in their shouting. And he said to Moses, 'A sound of war in the camp!' And he said, '*It is* not a sound of a cry of victory, nor a sound of the cry of defeat. I *am* hearing the sound of singing.' And it came to pass, as soon as he came near to the camp and saw the calf and dancing, then Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands, and broke them at the bottom of the mountain. And he took the calf, which they had made and burned *it* in the fire, and pulverized *it* to powder, and scattered *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*" (vs 17-20).

Verse 21: "And Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?' And Aaron said, 'Let not the

anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they *are set* on mischief, for they said to me, “Make us gods who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” And I said to them, “Whoever has any gold, let them break *it off*.” And they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and there came out this calf.’ And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked to *their* shame among their enemies)” (vs 21-25).

So, we see here that Aaron that he just threw in the gold and this calf came out by itself! We see that Aaron was too willing to go ahead and not make a decision and stand up for God. He just did what the people told him to do. Then he makes an excuse that he just threw it in there and the calf just came out. Basically, ‘I didn’t have anything to do with it. I just did what the people told me to do.’

Verse 26: “Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, ‘Who *is* on the LORD’S side? *Come* to me.’ And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves to him. And he said to them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Each man put his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and kill each one his brother, and each one his companion, and each one his neighbor.”’ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men” (vs 26-28).

We see, as a result of Aaron and his sin and the sins of the people... And I’m sure that when he made this golden calf and the people were partying and going on and getting involved in all kinds of things that they were just following things that they had done in Egypt. They had golden calves there and they had many gods, and I’m sure they ‘party-hardied’—as the saying goes—and they were celebrating and doing the same thing that they had done at times back in the land of Egypt. As a result we know that other people had to suffer—3,000 people that day!

I’ve often wondered why didn’t God kill Aaron? *It tells us that He was going to destroy Aaron, but Moses prayed for him* (Deut. 9:20); just like he prayed for Miriam his sister that time when they chided against Moses and she was struck with leprosy and to be without the camp seven days. Moses prayed for her and she was spared. It tells us that Moses prayed for Aaron so God did not destroy him. That’s the reason, or else God would have. We know the Levites gathered behind Moses and 3,000 people lost their lives because of sin.

NADAB & ABIHU:

We see another example of disobedience

where it caused the life of a couple of the sons of Aaron:

Leviticus 10:1: “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, and put incense on it, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had commanded them not to do.” as a result of their disobedience, they lost their lives.

ELI & HIS SONS:

Eli and his sons died because of disobedience, and because he failed to address the problem of sin in his family.

1-Samuel 2:12: “And the sons of Eli *were* worthless men. They did not know the LORD.” In other words, they didn’t have the zeal and conversion that Eli, their father, had. They just took it as a job, nonchalantly, and did whatever they wanted to do.

Verse 13: “And the priests’ custom with the people *was*: If any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant came while the flesh was boiling, with a fleshhook of three prongs in his hand. And *he* stuck *it* into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. All that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So, they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites that came there. Yea, before they burned the fat, the priest’s servant came and said to the man who sacrificed, ‘Give flesh to roast for the priest, for he will not have boiled flesh from you, but raw!’” (vs 13-15). In other words, ‘Give me the meat,’ before it was even sacrificed to God, which they should have taken afterward. They wanted it before.

Verse 16: “And *if* any man said to him, ‘Let them not fail to burn the fat at once, and then take as your soul desires,’ then he would answer him, ‘No! But you shall give now! And if not, I will take it by force.’ And the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men despised the offering of the LORD” (vs 16-17). So, we see that because of disobedience it was causing the people to look down upon God, and not respect God. And it caused them to say, ‘Why should we obey God. We see what the priests are doing and nothing is happening to them.’

I’d like to read where it talks about Eli and the priests and his ‘no good’ sons from:

Eerdmans Handbook of the Bible—No Good Sons:

The priests were entitled to share in the sacrificial offerings (Numb. 18:8-20; Deut. 8:1-5). But what is going on here is a travesty of the law. Eli’s sons seized the best before the offering had even been given to God.

What is more, they were bringing prostitution into the worship of God in the worst conditions of Canaanite religion. On his death these two will be the nation's archbishops and all Eli can do is reason with them.

If it would have continued on, when Eli died you would have these two people that are in charge. If you can see what they were doing there, what would they have been doing after their father died? But God takes care of the situation!

Verse 22: "And Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who gathered *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said to them, 'Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all the people. No, my sons, for *it is* no good report that I hear. You make the LORD'S people to transgress. If one man sins against another, the judge shall judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who shall plead for him?' But they did not hearken to the voice of their father because the LORD desired to slay them" (vs 22-25).

Verse 27: "And there came a man of God to Eli, and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Did I plainly appear to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? And did I give to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire from the children of Israel? Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering, which I have commanded *in My* house? *Why do you* honor your sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?" Wherefore, the LORD God of Israel says, "I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever." But now the LORD says, "Far be it from Me! For those who honor Me I will honor, and those that think little of Me shall be lightly regarded. Behold, the days come when I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that no old man shall be in your house"" (vs 27-31). God is saying here that Eli's house is going to be cut off.

1-Samuel 3:4: "That the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, 'Here *am* I.'"

1-Samuel 4:5: "And it came to pass... [there were all going out to war and took the Ark with them] ...when the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD came into *the* camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again."

Verse 11: "And the Ark of God was taken. And Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were slain."

Verse 14: "...And the man hurried in and told Eli. And Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see. And the man said to Eli, 'I *am* he who came out of the army, and I fled today from the battle.' And he said, 'How did the matter go, my son?' And the messenger answered and said, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also there has been a great slaughter among the people. And also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the Ark of God has been captured.' And it came to pass when he spoke of the Ark of God, Eli fell backward off the seat by the side of the gate. And his neck broke, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years" (vs 14-18).

In one day the sons of Eli were killed, and Eli himself was killed. As God said that He would cut off his line, and that did happen.

Here the people brought the Ark of God, and they knew what Eli's sons were doing and they looked at the Ark of God, that God dwelt in there, and He would be with them when they went to war, as He had been in times past when they were obeying Him, or striving to.

The Philistines, when they heard the cry, they were scared, because this is the God that brought the Israelites out of Egypt, that parted the Red Sea; they had heard of those things. They were scared and said, 'Let's be like men and let's fight, because they've got their God with them today.' But God wasn't in the Ark; He had left them because of sin! What they had was an Ark without God. God was not with them.

God will not dwell where sin is. That's why we need to examine ourselves to see where the hidden sins are, especially this time of year when we look in those cracks and crevices to see where we need to change.

Just as God said that Eli's lineage would be cut off and Zadok's lineage came into the priesthood (1-Kings 2:35). God did exactly as He said, that He cut off Eli's lineage because of what happened in that day of Solomon.

The Ark/Temple of God:

We need to be looking in our Ark. God dwells *in* us! We are the temple of God. It says that God will come and dwell in us—Christ and God the Father—with His Holy Spirit. Once we are called, repent and are baptized and we have received His Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, He says that *He dwells with us*.

We see in the times of Christ the pollution of the temple, Matthew 21:12: "And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all those who were

buying and selling in the temple; and He overthrew the tables of the money exchangers, and the seats of those who were selling doves. Then He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," but you have made it a den of thieves.'" (vs 12-13).

So, we see, just like it was with Eli's sons, that the religious leaders of those days—the Pharisees, scribes and others—had allowed the temple where people went to worship God to be come polluted. They were exchanging money, and I'm sure they were making good money on the exchange, and selling doves, etc.; it was a moneymaking place!

Christ went in there and fulfilled the prophecy that was stated that 'you have made it a den of thieves.' That 'My Father's house is supposed to be a house of prayer and you've made it a den of thieves.' And He cast them out! He threw them out of there.

- How about our temple?
- What are we allowing to take place?
- How much sin is dwelling there?
- How much sin do we tolerate?

We know that Paul had to correct the Corinthians because of the situation going on with the man and his stepmother. He had to correct them because the people weren't saying anything about it. They were allowing it to go on and didn't tell him to stop coming until he got his life straightened out and repent. Paul told them, 'You go ahead and cast him out and give him over to Satan the devil so he can learn some lessons, and hopefully, he will repent and come back.'

You can't dwell around sin without being affected! It just doesn't work! Sin is like a vacuum, it has a bigger suck on this wretched nature we have than sometimes the very Spirit and Power of God; to suck us in and cause us to do things that maybe we wouldn't have done. Or get into situations where we put ourselves and cause us to do things that maybe we wouldn't have done.

FLEE SIN:

We know that Joseph set a good example. He fled sin. He knew that sin was against God, and that's what sin is—*against God!* Joseph said, 'How in the world can I sin against my Master Who has given me everything that there is,' because of Potiphar's wife wanting to seduce Joseph. He knew that *sin was against God!* Because of that we know that he had to suffer. That's suffering for righteousness sake. When God tested him in that, later on he became second in command of the whole nation of Egypt. *A good example there: Joseph fled*

sin!

How many times do we have the attitude of Joseph, that we are willing to flee or get ourselves out of a situation, but just don't do it? We don't have the strength or courage, or are afraid of what people might say.

- Sin is against God!
- Sin is a slap in His face!
- Sin affects individuals!
- Sin affects societies!
- Sin affects the whole world!

Just like with Adam and Eve

- Sin affected all of mankind!

God has created us to worship Him; to obey Him! And He says not to set up any other thing as a god or gods.

LOVE & OBEDIENCE:

- How about love?
- Are we loving God?

or

- Are we robbing Him of the love that He wants and deserves?

Deuteronomy 30:19: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, **choose life**, so that both you and your seed may live, that you may **love the LORD your God**, and may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them" (vs 19-20). God is plainly telling us to:

- love Him
- obey His voice
- put Him first in our lives

Don't be robbing Him of the attention and love that *He* requires and that *He* deserves. All parents want their children to love and respect them and obey them. How much more so does God Who created us? He has called us to be His children!

Isaiah 1:2: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken, 'I have reared and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib; *but* Israel does not know *Me*; My people do not understand.'" (vs 2-3). It talks about the animals; they know where to get their food, but mankind basically doesn't want to go to God to get his food, the spiritual food that we need in order to love God and obey Him and obey His voice.

Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now, these *are* the

commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day shall be in your heart. And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up" (vs 1-7). We are to teach them to our children.

Verse 8: "And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house and on your gates. And it shall be when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you did not build, and houses full of every good *thing* which you did not fill, and wells which are dug, which you did not dig; vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be full; *then* beware lest you forget the LORD Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall swear by His name. You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people who are all around you, for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you and destroy you from off the face of the earth" (vs 8-15).

So, we see this command that 'fear Me, love Me and don't do as all the other neighbors around you and how they serve their gods.'

- God wants our heart!
- God wants our whole being!
- God wants our mind to be thinking of Him!

We are commanded to love Him!

- Are we robbing God of love and affection that He deserves, wants and desires?
- Are we worshipping God?
- Are we robbing God of true worship?

The Pharisees claimed to worship God, but what did Christ say of them? *He called the*

hypocrites! Snakes and vipers! He said, 'In vain do you worship Me, teaching doctrines the commandments of men.' They love to walk down the street and have people come up to them and say, 'How are you doing, teacher? rabbi?' and the same today, we know, goes on and people look up to those who are in religious positions. They call them certain names: rabbi, father or whatever.

Christ told them that '***you worship God and Him only.***' The Sabbath and Holy Days can become a ritual unless we are examining ourselves in how we keep them.

- Why are we here?
- Are we here
 - ✓ because our parents are here
 - ✓ because we like the many things that go on
 - ✓ because of the meals and potlucks
 - ✓ because of going out to eat and fellowshiping

God should be the main reason that we come to assemble. We are to worship God in Spirit and in Truth! We are to keep the Truth! It says, 'My Word is the Truth!' We're to walk in that Truth every day that He allows us to live upon this earth ***we need to walk in Truth and His ways!***

We need to fear God! It says that the 'fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

Deuteronomy 5:29: "Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, **so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!**" That's what God wants.

(go to the next track)

Psalms 34:9: "O fear the LORD, all you saints, for there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him.

Verse 11: "Come, hearken to me, you children; I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

Verse 14: "Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry" (vs 14-15).

If we're striving to live righteous lives and obey God, love God, fear God and respect God, it says that "...His ears are open" to our cries. We can expect to be heard and expect His intervention.

2-Cor. 2:5-11 is where Paul says that if a person does repent then you accept them back. If we see someone doing something that is sin, not just a fault, but is truly is sin and breaking the laws of God, we are to put them out. We should associate with them or be with them until they have repented

and are willing to come back.

If we don't then sometimes we are aiding or abetting sin. They may think that by not saying anything nobody is doing anything, so it's all right and they just continue on. The same way with a child, if they're doing something they shouldn't be doing and you don't correct them, they're just going to keep on doing what they're doing.

We need correct where there is sin; true sin, the breaking of God's Law. We should be careful that we're not aiding and abetting in that, but we warn and tell them. If they need not to be a part of us—or family or whatever it might be—that we need to stand up; not like Aaron who did just what the people told him what to do.

That's where tough love comes in. We need to stand against sin not be aiding and abetting. We must examine ourselves and strive to correct the sins in our lives, and not continue to practice them anymore.

We've all missed the mark! We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God! We've all sinned! But it's a matter of recognizing, repenting of and striving not to do them again; not just continue to practice sin. That's what repentance is all about.

We're to come out of sin, just like God brought Israel out of Egypt, a type of sin. We are to come out of the *ways of this world*, and that's why we are to examine ourselves, specifically at this time of the year, to be able to come out of that, and allow God to dwell in His temple.

CHRIST WAS OBEDIENT to the FATHER:

We can't have one foot in the world and one foot in the Church. That's not going to work. God says, 'I'll spew you out of My mouth' as He told the church in Rev. God wants to dwell in a house that's being swept, being cleaned. God tells us how we should relate to Him. Christ shows us the relationship with the Father while He was in the flesh, just as we are in the flesh. We know that Christ came to do the will of the Father. He was obedient.

John 8:28: "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak.'" He wasn't going around speaking His own words, but what the Father taught Him to speak. That's what He was speaking.

Verse 29: "And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him." Christ was always obedient to the Father.

John 10:15: "Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." He was obedient even unto death, because He loved the Father.

John 14:31: "Yet, *he comes* so that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me. Arise, let us go out." So, we see here that Christ is loving the Father. He respected the Father. He obeyed His voice. In all things He showed us the example that in the fleshly form that He could be obedient and was, and became a sacrifice for all of mankind. He loved the Father!

1-John 1:3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ."

People say that they don't have anyone to fellowship with, and in many cases people are scattered out and they don't. But *you always have fellowship with God the Father and Christ!* That's the main fellowship that we should have. Our relationship should be with Them, and then people come second. We have to know and *know* that we know that God and Christ are the Ones Whom we worship and serve, love and obey. They're the Ones Who are going to give us eternal life; *not men!*

Hopefully, for those who don't have fellowship with others, except maybe just an occasional letter or phone call, that there will be those who would come up in their areas that they could have fellowship with likeminded people, and that they want to hear God's Word and read God's Word and talk about God, and fellowship with one another.

2-John 4: "I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth, exactly as we received commandment from the Father."

Christ and the Father rejoice when we walk in Truth! John was saying that he rejoiced to hear that the people that he had taught and had communication with that they're walking in Truth. It's certainly joyful to me to see people that I haven't seen for years that are still walking with God.

- Are we robbing God of love?
- Are we robbing God of respect?
- Are we robbing God of worship?
- Are we robbing God of fear?

These are required in order for us to walk out of sin. Christ said, 'I have done it.' With the help of Christ and God the Father we know that we can do it, as well.

One of the reasons why this subject came to mind—and I'm usually a pretty positive person when it comes to thinking about God and eternal life in His Family and kingdom—is because I've talked to people and they say, 'I just hope I can be in God's kingdom.' I say, 'You determine that. You've got to obey God! God wants you to be a son/daughter in His Family. He doesn't want you to be destroyed.'

I'm pretty positive when it comes to that, I don't usually think that way. I am going to be in God's Family because I'm striving to overcome sin and to put sin out of my life and evaluate myself that I can be in the very Kingdom of God. But I guess it was not too long ago when I was having thoughts about this life, and I don't really know eternal life. All I know is this life. I don't know what eternal life is; I haven't been there. I would rather be dead and be as if I had never been, than to know that someday I would be in the Family of God and then still sin after that. It says you can't, but I thought:

I'd be robbing God of the opportunity of a son in His Family! Do we ever think about that? That we are robbing God of being sons/daughters in His Family? That's the whole purpose of Christ coming to this earth in the flesh and giving Himself as a sacrifice as pictured on the night of the Passover as we observe the New Testament commandments that He gave. That's the whole purpose; for us to be sons/daughters in His Family.

I'd be robbing God of becoming a son in His Family. That's why I thought about this topic. Are these areas that we are robbing God because we're not truly loving Him? Israel gave their love to idols, and the world—as a whole—still does today.

- Are we giving Him the respect that He deserves and worship?
- Do we fear Him in a right way?

Are we afraid to break His laws and commandments and don't want to hurt His feelings or slap Him in the face?

Revelation 3:5: "The one who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. **The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches**" (vs 5-6).

Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are coming up, and it is a chance to examine ourselves in these areas, that we can make God happy; that He can be happy with His children. They're being called out and Christ is working with them with His Holy Spirit.

Let's look forward to the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, and be coming more like our Father and elder Brother Jesus Christ.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 3:10-13
- 2) 1 Samuel 13:7-10
- 3) 1 Samuel 15:1-4, 7-22
- 4) Exodus 32:1-28
- 5) Leviticus 10:11
- 6) 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25, 27-31
- 7) 1 Samuel 3:4
- 8) 1 Samuel 4:5, 11, 14-18
- 9) Matthew 21:12-13
- 10) Deuteronomy 30:19-20
- 11) Isaiah 1:2-3
- 12) Deuteronomy 6:1-15
- 13) Deuteronomy 5:29
- 14) Psalm 34:9, 11, 14-15
- 15) John 8:28-29
- 16) John 10:15
- 17) John 14:31
- 18) 1 John 1:3
- 19) 2 John 4
- 20) Revelation 3:5-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Malachi 3:8
- 2 Corinthians 11:8
- Exodus 20:1-3
- Deuteronomy 9:20
- 1 Kings 2:35
- 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Also referenced: Book:

Eerdmans Handbook of the Bible—No Good Sons

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