## **Review of the Sabbath**

Fred R. Coulter-July 16, 1988

This is a sermon on a review of the Sabbath. I don't need to convince anyone here that we ought to keep the Sabbath because we're all here keeping the Sabbath. What is the *main purpose* of the Sabbath Day? *To keep it Holy*. I want you to think about what is the main purpose:

- to keep it Holy
- to rest,
- to glorify God
- obedience
- get closer to God
- it's a sign
- do no work

Yes indeed! All of those are purposes of the Sabbath—correct?

We're going to learn some other things concerning it. One of the most important things that we need to understand is that even though we know about the Sabbath, we can learn an awful lot concerning the Sabbath, and we're going to in this sermon today.

What does the Law do for us? What does the law *define* for us? *It defines sin; breaking the Law!* What else does it do? *Sets the boundary!* 

The law defines the minimum, accepted behavior, regardless of attitude. Attitude gets into it a little later. I want to state that again: The law defines the minimum, acceptable conduct regardless of attitude! For example:

- You may not have any other gods before you; you might not really like that commandment—but you still follow it.
- You may not have any idols, but you may really desire to have an idol.
- You may not take God's name in vain, but you may be a miserable soul.
- You may keep the Sabbath—notice, I didn't say *Holy*—but you may not keep it the way it should be kept. Or you may be keeping it in a way where you're not sinning.

To not sin does not necessarily equate with acceptable righteousness. Why would I say acceptable righteousness? Is there a righteousness not acceptable? Righteousness not accepted is 'self-righteousness.' What other kind of righteousness did Jesus define? He said, 'Except your righteousness exceed that of that of the Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God.' That is telling us there is a minimum righteousness that is not

acceptable to enter into the Kingdom of God. The law defines the *minimum acceptable conduct* not considering attitude.

What does **grace** do? God's grace is designed to what? Grace shows us God's love, and acceptance of us in our weakened condition, though still having a sinful nature. What is it to do for us, personally, in this life?

- To save us!
- To do what we can't do, that's true!
- Show us God's love!
- It's to pardon!

What else is it supposed to do? This is a major thing it's supposed to do for our relationship with God? If the Law defines the *minimum* acceptable conduct regardless of attitude, what is *grace* supposed to do for us?

Grace, when we understand it, is supposed to inspire us—with God's Spirit—to have a Holy acceptable conduct with a willing heart! That's what grace is supposed to do. That's the difference in effecting law and understanding religion or God by law as understanding God by grace. However, this is not to do away with law. You understand that?

Law is the minimal acceptable conduct. Grace is to bring us to the highest level of acceptance by God. In our condition we're sinners! Every one of us! Deeply! We're all sinners! Miserable! Deceitful! Wretched! Rotten sinning flesh! That's what it is.

God comes along and says, 'I choose you. I want you. I love you. Christ died for you. Repent of your sins. I'll give you My Spirit. You live within My grace.' What is that supposed to do for you? Inspire you to have a fantastic and marvelous attitude of faith! You are not looking for a minimum standard of conduct, but you are looking for a whole way of life.

With that in mind, let's approach a couple of things before we go to the Sabbath. Let's go to Isaiah 66. Believe it or not, it was a challenge to figure out how I can preach about the Sabbath for all those who have known it for so many years and still make it interesting. I got to thinking: What do you do about the Sabbath? What do you know about the Sabbath? This is what started kicking it off here.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And

where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word' (vs 1-2).

Attitude is important, and we're going to see that attitude with the Sabbath gets down to the most important thing. I'm going to save the most important thing concerning the Sabbath until the very end. When I asked what is most important thing concerning the Sabbath, several of you got right close to it. It's kind of like here's the bulls-eye and you just grazed the bulls-eye.

Let's go to Micah the sixth chapter and here's something else it has about attitude, and attitude is very important. I'm not talking about a positive attitude, I'm talking about a Godly attitude. What do I mean? What's the difference there? A person can have a positive attitude toward sin, as far as a positive attitude is defined—In the definition of human, positive attitudes. Just like this '20/20' thing—The Fissures of Men—they have a positive attitude toward sin-don't they? They go out and recruit men through promiscuity and recruit children to be pedophiles in their organization: Children of God; and they do it in the name of Jesus. I'm not talking about a positive-minded, human approach. I'm talking about a Godly attitude, a Godly-minded approach.

Micah 6:1: "Hear now what the LORD says, 'Arise, contend with the mountains and let the hills hear your voice. O mountains, hear the LORD'S controversy; and you, strong foundations of the earth, for the LORD has a controversy with His people, and He will plead His case with Israel. O My people, what have I done to you? And in what way have I made you weary? Testify against Me!" (vs 1-3).

We could say that today concerning the United States, God gave us a tremendous and wonderful land, tremendous crops and just every magnificent thing that a country could ever want. And yet, they turn their backs on God; went whoring after their neighbors and everything like that. All these are results of their sins that come upon them. God held His hand back, held His hand back, held His hand back, extended mercy and was kind.

God is saying now, v 3: "...Testify against Me! For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of slaves; and I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before you. O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab planned...' [We could go back and rehearse Civil War, WWI and so forth] (v 6): ...With what shall I come before the LORD, to bow myself before God

the Most High? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life? He has shown you, O man, what *is* good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?" (vs 4-8).

There's the attitude, right there. *Right there is the attitude!* It's the opposite of what we have in the society today. We're fulfilling the Scripture where it says in Matt. 24, 'because sin shall abound, many will be offended.' I mean, *everybody's* offended *at every little thing*. It's terrible! Like these thieves were going over the San Rafael Bridge and they spotted this mother and son in a Mercedes Benz and then decided, 'Hey man, we want that car.' So, they went out and chased it down, scared her to death! She finally crashes it and then they're all mad because they couldn't steal it; it was crashed up. They ran over and filled the car with slugs and killed the four-year-old boy. They were offended because they couldn't get it.

Or this fellow who they're finally going to put to death after how many years? He went in and he killed an elderly man and woman because they only had 75 cents between them and no more. They just said, 'no money' POW! POW! Everybody is offended. Be careful on the freeway! If something happens, just wave and smile and go on, because who knows, he might have a bazooka there ready to take you out of the lane. Might not like the way you smile! You need God's blessing.

Let's go back to another very basic Scripture, Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name *is* Holy; 'I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

This shows what God is really delighted in. And even says in other places, 'Did I delight in burnt offerings? Even though I commanded them?' What if you bring a burnt offering? What if you only do it because God says so?

- Do you believe that you're going to get any benefit out of it?
- Do you believe that God is going to get any benefit out of it?
- Do you believe that God will accept it?

Why is the Sabbath Day any different than any other day? It's the same length of time, 24 hours—right? It's different because God sanctified it!

Isaiah 66:3—if you don't have this attitude: "He who kills an ox... [for sacrifice] ...is as if he killed a man... [God is not interested in the minimum of doing; because God has said so—'I'll do it because He said so, otherwise I won't do it.'] ...he who sacrifices a lamb is as if he broke a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering is as if he offered swine's blood; he who burns incense is as if he blessed an idol...." Think about the priest and their conduct in the book of Malachi. This is how God looked at a lot of sacrifices that they had. That's why God said in Isaiah, the first chapter, "I'm up to here with all of this stuff."

"...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called... [How does God call? Through sickness, through natural catastrophes, through ministers, through other people who bring it to their attention that they're doing wrong!] ...no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose that in which I did not delight" (vs 3-4).

Let's see what sort of situation that this eventually became. Do the Jews have the knowledge of which day is the right Sabbath, to this day? Absolutely yes, they do! Could they keep it in such a manner that it becomes their Sabbath when it should have been God's Sabbath? Yes! That's what we're talking about here. The Protestants missed the whole point completely. They say God is doing away with His Sabbath here, but He's not.

Isaiah 1:10: "Hear the Word of the LORD, rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, people of Gomorrah.... [Nothing could be more true of our nation today.] ... 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?' says the LORD. 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats" (vs 10-11). He commanded them to be, but Isa. 66 tells us that if you don't do with the attitude God intended—with a humble heart, with a yielded and contrite spirit—these things are obnoxious to God.

Think about it in the way of the churches today. They're claiming to do *all of these things* in the name of Jesus. I mean, just think about it for a minute. There may be some sincere folks out there who are trying to do the best they can. I'm sure there are. But just think about how God looks upon all of these things. Believe it or not, the other night I heard Jerry Falwell say, 'What's wrong with the Protestant churches in America?'—and guess what he read? He read Revelation 3:14-21, about the Laodiceans. 'Rich and increased with goods and need of nothing and are blind and naked...' I think that he was really

preaching a message to those people *that they needed to hear*. We have the same thing here in this situation.

Verse 12: "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts?" Remember the principle of going against what God has said. Remember when God said, 'Ok, I'll lead you into the land, but first we're going to send in the scouts'? Ten of them came back and gave an evil report; and Joshua and Caleb couldn't turn the people back. The people said, 'No, we're not going to go up.' Then they said, 'Oh, yes, we're going to go up,' after God said, 'No, you're not going to go up. You're going to be 38 more years wandering around in the wretched desert out here.'

Oh no, we'll go up, Lord, we'll go up! So, they went up and were beaten in battle and were driven back. People can't take something God says they should do, and say, 'we won't do it'; and then when God punishes them for it, then turn around and say, 'Oh yes, we'll do it our way then, Lord.' Applies to the Sabbath, too. That applies to Sunday. Because they take the principle, 'six days shall you work'—Well, any six days you choose to work, but be here on Sunday, falls into the same category.

Verse 13: "Bring no more vain sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me—new moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies; I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly! Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear *them*. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear..." (vs 13-15). I don't think we're too far from that point, as a nation.

Now let's go look at some of the Psalms and look at some of the attitudes that we need. That's why the Psalms are so good. Psalm 128:1: "Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways.... [The fear here is to *stand in awe* of God. Because 'perfect love casts out fear' if you love God 'with all your heart, mind, soul and being.'] ...For you shall surely eat the labor of your hands; happy shall you be, and all is well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine by the sides of your house; your children shall be like olive plants around your table. Behold! So shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD" (vs 1-4). That goes along with Sabbath-keeping, because Sabbath-keeping is one of the important things showing the attitude.

Psalm 130:1—it shows here how to get out of trouble: "Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD. LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my

supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope" (vs 1-5). That's quite a change in attitude—isn't it? This is what grace is supposed to do for us: bring us to this attitude, bring us to see what a great and marvelous and magnificent thing it is that God has reached down in our lives.

Psalm 131:1: "O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes lofty; nor do I involve myself in great affairs, nor in things too wondrous for me. Surely I have calmed and have quieted my soul as a child weaned by its mother; my soul within me is like a child weaned. Let Israel hope in the LORD from this time forward and forever" (vs 1-3).

1 Peter 2:1 says the same thing: "Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders, as newborn babes, yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow" Perfect New Testament Scripture that fits it—doesn't it? Yes, it is!

Psalm 112:1: "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who **fears** the LORD, who **delights greatly** in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness **endures forever**" (vs 1-3). I want you to think about that. I know none of us are rolling in 'dough,' or have all kinds of wealth. But, I want you to think of that in relationship to the riches of the Kingdom of God. Then that really makes a lot of sense.

Psalm 113:1: "O praise the LORD! Give praise to the LORD, O you servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed is the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its going down, the LORD'S name is to be praised. The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, Who dwells on high, Who looks down low upon the heavens and upon the earth? He raises up the poor out of the dust..." (vs 1-7).

I think the biggest problem with attitude is that people do not have a right attitude before God, do not understand how wretched they really are, they just don't.

Psalm 119:1—this is a tremendous Psalm: "Blessed *are* the undefiled in **the way**... [we're talking about *a way* and *attitude*] ...who walk **in the Law** of the LORD.... [they see more out of it than just the minimum conduct] ...Blessed *are* they that keep His testimonies, and who seek Him with the whole heart.... [the attitude is the important thing]

...They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways" (vs 1-3).

Now, that's interesting. If you're under the grace of God and you're walking in His commandments, God does not see you as having any iniquity. He doesn't do that to puff you up. He does that to inspire you, because down in your heart of hearts you know what a rat you really are. You know! God knows! But He looks upon you that way, and that is fantastic! This is designed to inspire you, to uplift you to really want to do God's way even more with all your heart.

Verse 4: "You have commanded us to keep Your precepts **diligently.** O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes! Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Your commandments. I will praise You with uprightness of heart when I have learned Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes; O forsake me not utterly" (vs 4-8).

Verse 9: "With what shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With all my heart **I have sought You** ..." (vs. 9-10).

I want to really emphasize that this Psalm, this whole Psalm is going through showing the attitude of heart in relationship to God and in relationship to what God has commanded. That is the whole key concerning the Sabbath; because unless that is there, you're going to miss the most important thing concerning the Sabbath Day.

Here we're meeting in this bank room and all the employees just left. They don't even have any idea this is the Sabbath. What we are going through is something that is beyond what they can comprehend, because *this is spiritual* and it has to do with the *attitude*.

"...O let me not wander from Your commandments. Your Word I have laid up in my heart...(vs 10-11) We could put in there: Jer. 32 and Heb. 8:10—whereas the New Covenant will put the laws in their heart and mind. If you have a right attitude and those things are written in your heart and mind, then they become affective, then certain things are going to happen because of that.

Verse 11: "Your Word I have laid up in my heart, so that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD; teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies as much as in all riches. I will meditate upon Your precepts and have respect to Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your Word. Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your Word. **Open my eyes, so** 

# that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law" (vs 11–18).

There are tremendous and wondrous things that we can learn out of God's Law—really great and marvelous. This is what's going to happen today: God is going to open our understanding just a little more concerning the Sabbath, and we're going to learn it even from some of the Scriptures that we've know in the past.

Verse 19: "I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me. My soul **breaks** for the longing that it has for Your judgments **at all times**" (vs 19-20).

Verse 34: "Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law and observe it with all my heart."

Verse 58: "I entreated Your favor with all my heart; be gracious unto me according to Your Word."

Verse 69: "The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep Your precepts with all my heart."

You talk about a real wholehearted attitude, there it is right there. When you and I read it, think: 'This is the kind of attitude I want to have all the time with God. Yes, this is what I want all the time with God and then Monday comes; have to go back to work.'

Verse 88: "Give me life according to Your loving kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Your mouth. Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in the heavens" (vs 88-89).

Verse 97: "O how love I Your Law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they [the commandments] are ever with me" (vs 97-98).

Verse 113: "I hate those who are double-minded, but Your Law do I love." There again, we're getting into attitude, the use of God's Law, the use of God's commandment. And all of this involves the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is more than just the law.

Verse 119: "You destroy all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love Your testimonies."

Verse 127: "Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold."

And there would be absolutely no choice for anyone in the world not knowing God's Law. You do this: if you can, or if it could be done, you get a nice pile of fine gold, say about 18 inches high and folds down in a perfect round cone pyramid. Then

put the Bible right next to it and you call someone in. First you have this little anteroom here, this secret little room, where you have the Bible and you have the gold. You explain to them that you're going to give them a choice: which gift they feel would be the best for them for their entire lives, beginning the very minute that they would make the choice. You tell them, 'You must make the choice. I'm going to blindfold you and lead you down the hall and bring you into this room.' You lead them down the hall, you bring them into a room that is dark and you tell them to take off the blindfold. You switch on the light with just two big spotlights coming down—one on the gold and one on the Bible, and you say, 'Now, choose which one you want.' You can be almost guaranteed-99,000 times out of a 100,000 times—they would choose the gold and leave the Bible there.

But with the *right attitude*, v 127: "Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold. Therefore... [notice what kind of attitude this brings out]: ...I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right... [That takes quite an attitude—doesn't it. *Not hostile against God! Not hostile against His commandments or anything!* If you want a perfect attitude, positive attitude, there it is right there.] ...and I hate every false way" (vs 127-128).

After we've gone through all that, v 142: "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and Your Law is the Truth."

 $\begin{tabular}{llll} Verse & 151: & "... all & Your & commandments \\ are & Truth.... & \end{tabular}$ 

Verse 172: "...all thy commandments are righteousness"

Let's go back and see something about God, and let's see something about the Sabbath. Let's go back to Genesis, the very first chapter. We're not going to take the time to go through and read the Scriptures, but it might be a real good study for you this week. Maybe go through and read the Scriptures concerning each one of the things of the days of creation, and just think about that during that day.

Read that Scripture in the morning, day one: God created the light and just meditate on that and think about that. I guarantee you, everything that God has created—from not only light, separating it from the darkness, to the creation of the earth to the creation of the atmosphere, the water, the dry land, the trees, the herbs, the plants, the flowers, the birds, the fish and all of the animals that man, to this day—after being on earth as long as he has—is still mystified about all of it. He can figure out some of it, but so much of it is an absolute mystery to him, especially when you start seeing some of these

programs about the heavens and the universe. They're finding things now that every theory they ever had concerning the universe is just scraped—forget it, it's gone, over and done—because it's so fantastic.

I just want to focus here on Genesis 1:14: "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for appointed seasons, and for days and years." Of course, seasons has to do, as we'll see a little later here, with the Holy Days.

Remember, God has created everything that there is. What is one of the most important things that God has created? In order to have all the things that have been created, there's one thing that God had to create *first*. What is that? It's essential for human beings, not to God. *God had to create time!* That's the most important thing that God created in relationship to man. *He has created time.* A measurement of that time is, as we saw in v 14: years, days, seasons and so forth. We have this specially created time.

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by the beginning of the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (vs 1-2).

That tells us a lot. That doesn't fly in the face of the commandment that the Lord is not weary.

- He doesn't tire
- He's not worn out
- He's not like men

What need does He have of rest? God rested because on the earth the Sabbath made for man, and He appeared to Adam in *the form of a man*. He rested on the earth. Later, Jesus said, 'My Father works hitherto and I work.'

This gives us an example of some of the things that continuously go on, that God has not stopped. One of the things that God has not stopped, though He rests on the Sabbath, is *time*. God has not stopped the power of electro-magnetism, which upholds the whole universe. That works and goes on. The sun doesn't go out on the Sabbath. If the Jews had their way, there would be no fire anywhere at all—turn the sun off, it's the Sabbath. Well, how will we know when the Sabbath is over? *I don't know, you just stay in the dark!* God created; He rested.

Verse 3: "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it... [That's the key, important thing. *Only God can make something Holy*, or declare

something Holy. Why? *Because only God is Holy, that's why!* Very simple!] ...because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

What was one of the first things that happened on the Sabbath Day? God instructed Adam and Eve! Had to, because He made them male and female, He made them on the sixth day. That's why six is the number of man. I'm not going to go through the whole account with Adam and Eve. I just want to leave that clue with you as to what really is the most important thing concerning the Sabbath Day, aside from keeping it Holy.

What makes it Holy? God makes it Holy! How does God make it Holy? Obviously, He put His presence in it! Let's go right to the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20.

(go to the next track)

Exodus 20 defines for us something concerning the Sabbath. There it is the second longest commandment that there is in the Ten Commandments. The longest is actually the one about idolatry.

Exodus 20:8: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy" We find in the Deut. 5, it says: 'Keep the Sabbath...' So, not only are you to *observe* the Sabbath Day, you are to *keep it Holy*. Why? *Because God made it Holy!* 

The Sabbath contains in it many, many different things. We'll see right here, it says, v 9: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work... [and we'll see several places where it says, 'six days shall you labor.'] ...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 9-11).

One thing God has upheld—we won't necessarily go back and prove it—has been that the seventh day of the week is the seventh day of the week and no one has ever lost the fact that it's the seventh day of week, except those who want to lose it. So therefore, God has never made it impossible to keep the Sabbath Day. That's why He kept it that way, so that no one could say, 'Well, Lord, how could I remember something that I didn't know.' God made it so that we all know.

Let's go back to Exodus 16. Here's where God revealed—through the, the miracle of the manna and the gathering of the manna—the Sabbath

Day. What I want to do is impress upon our minds the fact of the *first* sin.

They were told 'Don't go out there.' And they were told, 'Don't gather, there will be no manna.' Exodus 16:27: "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 27-30).

God was right there with them. I want to emphasize that again. What is the most important thing for us in keeping the Sabbath?

- We know it's in the Law.
- We know that God has *created* it.
- We know that God has sanctified it.
- We know that God has blessed it.

What is the most important thing for us?

Exodus 23:12: "Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may be rejuvenated. And be watchful in all that I have said to you. And make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth" (vs 12-13).

Wherever He brings up the Sabbath, God normally brings up concerning 'six days you shall work.' That doesn't mean that as soon as the sun goes down on the Sabbath you have to start working immediately. That's six days is when you do everything that you do.

I want to enunciate a principle that is true, which is this: We know what Jesus said when He was asked, 'Which is the great commandment?' 'Love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength and being.' And the commandment like unto it is: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' and 'On this hangs all the Law and the Prophets.'

There's another principle and that is this: You take everyone of the commandments and instead of reading them in a ladder-like sequence as they are in the verses, sort of spread them out in a long way. *Under the Ten Commandments hangs all of the other commandments*, relating to the Ten. You will hear someone say, 'Well, the Ten Commandments say you ought to keep the Sabbath, but it doesn't say anything about the Holy Days.' This is virtually the Church of God Seventh Day approach. Ask them, 'If the Holy Days were in the

Ten Commandments would you keep them?' Oh, yes! You've got 'em!—if you ever have to argue it with them—you've got them by their own logic.

How? Let's talk about one of the other commandments. Do you believe in the commandment which says 'you shall not commit adultery'? Oh yes, I firmly believe that. That commandment says nothing about homosexuality. That commandment says nothing about some of the other perversions of mankind. 'Do you think those other perversions of mankind have to do with the sex commandment: 'You shall not commit adultery'? Oh, yes, I firmly believe it!

Then you could go to Lev. 18 & 22 and bring those in about how you shall not approach and all that sort of thing. You've got them concerning the Holy Days because just as these other laws governing sex, which are not contained in the Ten Commandments, are a subdivision of the commandment: 'You shall not commit adultery' so are the Holy Days a sub-commandment under the Sabbath, which are also Sabbaths, which are other days to be kept. You could do that with everyone of the commandments.

You could do that with 'Make no graven image.' You could go through and show that includes pictures; that includes icons; that includes even idols in your own mind—when you get down to the heart. We've covered that before. You could do that with 'taking the name of God in vain.' Not only should you not write God name in vain, not speak God's name in vain, and then you can filter that on down to filthy language and things like that. Same way with stealing. There are different degrees of stealing which are listed in there. Those are all sub-commandments of the Ten Commandments.

When we come to Exodus 31:13 where Moses said: "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, 'Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths... [that's plural.] (Here's where it becomes confusing): ... for it... [how can you have 'it' referring back to a plural word? The 'it' does not refer to the 'sabbaths.' The 'it' refers to the 'keeping of.'] ...is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I am the LORD Who sanctifies you." We can write down all the benefits: God has:

- blessed it
- sanctified it
- created it
- · rested in it

It shows that we know God, and it shows we know that God sanctifies us. So, there's another subsanctification. Not only God has sanctified *it*; but God sanctifies *us!* 

We're starting to get into some of the meaning of the Sabbath. I won't go through the rest of it. It talks about six days working and so forth again a little later. We've kept the Holy Days so many times and so forth, so I'm not going to belabor the point in this because we're talking about things that we do know.

Leviticus 23:2: "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, 'Concerning the appointed Feasts of the LORD..." We also know that the Sabbath is also a feast. But what kind of feast is the best feast? Spiritual feast, yes! We're getting in more on the purpose of the Sabbath. Not only is it things we should not do. But, what are the things we should do? If there are certain things you shouldn't do, that precludes the fact that if you shouldn't do this, then you ought to do something else.

There are the Feasts of God. "...which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings. These are the appointed Feasts of the LORD, Holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons." (vs 2-4). Exactly the same word used back in Gen. 1:14.

Now let's go to Ezekiel 20. I just wanted to stop there from the point of view that in covering the things concerning the Sabbath, I wanted to bring out the principle that the Holy Days are *a sub-category* of the Sabbath; and Lev. 23 *proves it* by the way that it starts out.

Read the whole chapter of Ezekiel 20, Where the Israel came to Ezekiel and said, 'We want to inquire of the Lord,' and sat before him [Ezekiel]. So, God answers: 'What have you come to inquire to Me for? As I live, I will not be inquired by you. Look, I did all of this, I brought you out of Egypt, I took you in your polluted state and was kind and gracious to you. I brought you forth out of Egypt.'

Ezekiel 20:11: "And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And also I gave them My Sabbaths [plural] to be a sign between Me and them, **that** *they* **might know that** I *am* **the LORD** who sanctifies them" (vs 11-12). So there it is, you *know* God.

- God created it!
- God blessed it!
- God sanctified it!
- God *rested* on it!
- God says we are to keep it!
- It is a feast!

He gave them the Sabbaths, v 13: "But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes..." etc. etc., etc.

Verse 16: "Because they despised My judgments and walked not in My statutes; and they polluted My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols." We can read in the book of Amos where that they had their own secret gods all the way along, all the way through the wilderness—it was terrible.

Verse 18: "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am the LORD your God. Walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances, and do them, and keep My Sabbaths Holy; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.' But the children rebelled against Me. They did not walk in My statutes, nor keep My ordinances to do them—the ordinances which, if a man do, he shall even live in them. And they polluted My Sabbaths..." (vs 18-21)

I tell you it's an onward struggle—from generation to generation—isn't it? It sure is! God turned them over to their own devices. God let them have what they wanted. And the worse thing in the world that could ever happen to anyone is God just turn you over to your own devices and say, 'I wash My hands of you, I kick you out, I despise you, and I don't even want to hear about you, think about you, or talk about you anymore at all whatsoever until you repent totally.' That's a terrible condition to be in, but unfortunately some people get themselves in that condition. The children of Israel did!

Ezekiel 22:8: "You have despised My Holy things, and have profaned My Sabbaths." Again, very, very, strong language.

Verse 13: "Therefore behold, I have struck My hand against your dishonest gain which you have made, and at your blood which has been in your midst.... [Sounds our ethics today. Washington D.C., etc., etc.—right?] ...Can your heart stand, or can your hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with you?.... [Who wants to fight against God?] ... I the LORD have spoken it and I will do it. And I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you in the countries, and will consume your uncleanness out of you" (vs 13-15).

Verse 25: "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey.... [Sounds like the TV evangelists—doesn't it? Not all of them are bad, but a good number of them have proved that way.] ... They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they made many widows in her midst. **Her priests** 

have done violence to My Law ... [those who are to teach the Law and *the way* of God.] ...and have profaned My Holy things. They have put no difference between the Holy and the profane, and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (vs 25-26).

Now, that's some strong language. And I tell you, that book of Ezekiel is so strong. You read the book of Ezekiel and think about it and let the words sink deep in—and by time you get to about the tenth chapter you can hardly breathe. It is tough! When you read it, just kind of picture yourself having to go through what these people are going to be put through. It is tough!

Verse 31: "Therefore, I have poured out My fury on them. I have burned them up with the fire of My wrath. I have recompensed their own way upon their heads,' says the Lord GOD." WHEW!

Let's go to the New Testament. Suffice it to say, God upheld Sabbath-keeping, punished Sabbath-breaking all the way through the Old Testament as we know. Let's go to the New Testament, book of Mark, chapter two, and you probably know exactly where I'm going to turn, because this is one of the most basic Scriptures concerning the Sabbath.

Mark 2:27: "And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (vs 27-28). This tells us some very important things. The Sabbath was made for man—in other words, man needs the Sabbath. What is the worst thing in the world to happen to a person? Be separated from God! That is the key concerning the Sabbath. That's why the Sabbath was made for man, that man be in contact with His Creator always!

That's what this verse is telling us. Who is the Lord of the Sabbath? *Jesus is!* That is the Lord's day. This phoniness of the Sunday is the Lord's day is a bunch of nonsense. Never was, never going to be, never shall be. The Lord's day is the Sabbath, and therefore, He shows us what's to be done on the Sabbath.

We go back to Luke 4, and here's another very basic Scripture. Most of these you may even have keyed in, and you may, if you're taking notes, you may want to just key in your margin these things one to another, if you don't have them in there yet.

Luke 4:16: "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." And probably said, 'Ya'all dumb-bunnies sitting here in this synagogue on the Sabbath, I'm telling you I'm going to change it to Sunday—see you here to tomorrow.' Rolled up the scroll and walked out. *NO!* That isn't what it said. Protestants would love it to say that, but it doesn't.

He read concerning the prophecy of the Messiah, which He was, and what He was going to do. He did it on the Sabbath Day, which is *a day of rest!* And what did He preach? *Spiritual rest!* 

You might want to get the book by Samuele Bacchiocchi *Rest for the Modern Man*. It's a very good one. I don't have the book, but I've seen it so I can recommend it. I might send off for it.

Here's a spiritual rest. He preached, v 18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, 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). He preached the entire meaning of the Sabbath right there, and the entire meaning of His ministry.

Verse 4: "But Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God."" As He answered the devil's argument concerning what the devil was trying to make Jesus do. Would that not also apply to the Sabbath Day? I would have to say, *yes!* 

Now, let's quickly go through some of these other Scriptures here. In the book of Acts, we will go very quickly because there are some other things that I want to cover. Again, you might want to key these Scriptures. The book of Luke and the book of Acts were designed to show how the Gospel started out to the Jew first and then went to the Gentile as the Jews rejected the message of God. Here's part of it here. Wherever they went, they went to the Jews first.

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). Open invitation for Paul to preach. So he let them have it. And boy, he turned that synagogue into an uproar!

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.... [Gnash, gnash! Grind, grind! Boy, I tell you.] ...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." 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).

If anyone asks you about the Sabbath, what you can do is this: Here's a perfect opportunity for Paul to say, 'Everybody, why wait till next week?' Wouldn't it be important to let them know, especially the Gentiles that they're to do it on Sunday. Perfect opportunity to say, 'Why wait a week, come back tomorrow!' Didn't do it.

Verse 43: "Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.... [Here's another key important thing: *Sabbath-keeping and grace go hand-in-hand.*] ...And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God" (vs 43-44). Of course, they had a big fight on their hands. I wouldn't want to preach the way the Apostle Paul preached—he had it tough.

Acts 16:13: Then on the [Sabbath] day of the weeks we went outside the city by a river, where *it* was customary *for* prayer to be *made...* [where there was not a synagogue. So you can't say that everywhere Paul went there was only a synagogue—there was no synagogue here.] ...and after sitting down, we spoke to the women who were gathered together *there*."

Acts 17:2: "And as was the custom with Paul, he went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, expounding and demonstrating that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from *the* dead, and *testifying*, 'This Jesus, Whom I am proclaiming to you, is the Christ'" (vs 2-3). He did it on the Sabbath Day!

Acts 18—he came to Corinth (v 1)—v 4: "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded *both* Jews and [Gentiles] Greeks." And then the whole thing had a big uproar again. The synagogue split, so the problem of splitting churches is nothing new.

Verse 8: "But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul in a vision in *the* night, 'Do not be afraid; but speak, and do not be silent, For I am with you; and

no one shall set upon you to mistreat you because I have many people in this city.' And he remained there for a year and six months..." (vs 8-11). The key thing is which day do you think he was keeping and preaching the year and six months? *Obviously, the Sabbath!* There were a lot of Gentiles, there were some Jews, etc.

Hebrews 4:9: "There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God." The word 'rest' comes from the Greek—let me get my *Interlinear*—"There remains a sabbatism" [I'm reading the English out of the Interlinear, but the word is *sabbatismos*. That means a keeping of the Sabbath. Sabbatismos is a Greek word, which means: a keeping of the Sabbath.

What is also unusual about this, it is also a word—in its category—a 'hapax legomenon,' which means it is used only once in the New Testament; only usage is once. It doesn't say for Israel, does not say for the Jews—it says: 'for the people of God.' And the reason there's a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God is because the first part of the verse tells us about 'the rest.'

Verse 7: "Again, He marks out a certain day, 'Today,'... [Every time they had a revival they had to be shown which day was the seventh day. God limited a certain day. What is the only day that God has limited? *The Sabbath Day and the Holy Days!* ...saying in David after so long a time (exactly as it has been quoted *above*), 'Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'"

This goes back to Psa. 95, which is the Sabbath psalm, and what do people harden their hearts over quicker than anything else? *The Sabbath!* If you 'harden not your heart.'

"For if... [it says 'Jesus' in the King James.] ...Joshua had given them rest... [that is entering into the 'rest' of the Millennium] ...He would not have spoken long afterwards of another day. There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping [sabbatismos] for the people of God" (vs 7-9). And that is 'tou laos theos'—that is the people of God—belonging to God! That is to this day.

Let's go back and look at a couple of other principles and then we will answer the question as to what is the most important thing in keeping the Sabbath for us who know to keep it. I've tried to bring this in a way, not only in the way of review, so some of the things that were just pure review I went through quicker because no use belaboring the point. But, also I wanted to put it in such a way that we will learn something new concerning the Sabbath, or at least reinforce something that will refresh our minds in a new way. Also to have it in such a way that if someone asks you about the Sabbath, you can

take the last part of this sermon—where we started with Gen. 2—and go forward with it. Just chain those Scriptures and use those to show about Sabbath-keeping. When we come to the end-time, they say, 'Well, we're living in the end-time and it's a little different than it was then."

Isaiah 56:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation *is* near to come... [We're at the end-time—right?] ... and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed *is* the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; **who keeps the Sabbath from profaning** it; and keeps his hand from doing any evil." (vs 1-2). Now we have a time-setting, the time of the end.

You might want to key right here, Matthew 24:20. "And pray that your flight be not in *the* winter, nor on *the* Sabbath." That's end-time, too—isn't it. We're tying the end-time in together with about Sabbath-keeping. If the Sabbath didn't matter for a Christian, why bother—right? Why say, 'don't flee on the Sabbath'? Because you're doing something you ought not do on the Sabbath! That's not going to keep it Holy!

What about the Gentiles? Let's go down to Isaiah 56:6: "Also the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant" This shows very clearly that it is also for Gentiles.

The Sabbath doesn't belong to the Jew; it belongs to God! The Sabbath was not made just for the Jew—it was made for all mankind, which includes anybody on earth—period! Now, you can get real strong at that point, if you want to.

Isaiah 58—again, I encourage you to read the whole chapter. It shows the biggest sins that they have are the religious sins and their own religious things, which ties in with trying to God's will that you see it and perceive it, rather than the way God sees and perceives it. Many people like to claim God to what they're doing, as they see and perceive it. This one woman said—this one Lesbian—on the Donahue Show, 'Well, I believe in a Supreme Being, but I believe in a loving God, not One Who will punish.' That's your own view of God. God says that they seek Him daily and they fast, they do all these things.

Isaiah 58:13: "If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy Day... [and it's Holy because God made it Holy and puts His presence in it] ...and call the Sabbath a delight... [now we're talking about attitude] ...the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and

shall honor Him, not doing your own ways... ['ways' here is *business*] ...**nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking** *your own* **words**" (vs 13-14).

Let's go to 2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self... [Today they call it selfesteem—right? You have to have self-esteem. It's more like *self-steam*—you're puffed up.] ...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection ... [Yeah, just like this mother that wants her baby back, but she had it back there in the restroom and stuffed it under the counter in the restroom on an airplane and left it alone there for six hours!—Without natural affection!] ...implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of true Godliness. But as for you, turn away from all these" (vs 1-5). These first five verses in 2-Tim. 3 fit perfectly with Isa. 58, the entire *chapter!* That's why you should key them together.

Isaiah 58:13: "...not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking your own words." What do you speak then? The words of God! Does that mean in fellowship that you don't talk about your own lives and the things that you do? Of course not! I mean, in fellowshipping with each other you're not going to stand around and quote Scripture back and forth like a recording. But you can certainly tell of your experiences with God and the things that you have learned, and you know, things like that. That's not all your words, because you're walking in the way of God.

Verse 14: "Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD...[Notice, the 'delight' comes after you finally come to the attitude that God means what He says, says what He means and that the Sabbath is not only a good idea, but a tremendous blessing and a wonderful thing to do, then you'll 'delight' yourself in the Lord.] ...and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it" (vs 13-14).

- What is the most important thing concerning the Sabbath?
- The Sabbath is Holy—correct? Yes!
- What are the brethren? *Holy brethren!*
- Why? Because they have the Spirit of God!

We are going to see the most important thing concerning the Sabbath. I read a little booklet put out by the Sabbath Association, which was a nice booklet concerning the Sabbath. I thought—they had six points concerning the Sabbath, unfortunately—

rather not the greatest choice of number. Six are better than none. I thought the seventh should have been added, which is the most important one, as to why. They went through and showed it's in the Law.

- Jesus kept it
- Paul kept it
- Never been done away with
- Time has never been lost

That's fine! Wonderful! What's the most important thing concerning the Sabbath? It is that we have fellowship with God! That is the most important thing. And fellowship with each other, which fellowship is the fellowship that God has brought together—which is different than out in the world.

John 1:1 "That which was from the beginning... [which is Jesus then—not only the beginning of Creation, but the beginning of the Gospel] ...that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life." John was the only living apostle that could say 'that handled the Word of Life.' I mean, that's something to think on.

Verse 2: (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us..." (vs 2-3).

We want to change the emphasis of what the world does. The emphasis of what the world does is to have self-esteem and have all this groupiness together. God is saying: *first love God and then love your neighbor* as yourself, but you can't do that until you have fellowship first with God. Then the fellowship that we have together ought to be great—and it is. We've had great fellowship. I mean really good.

"...for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ" (v 3). That's the main thing concerning the Sabbath. Believe me, there is—and I don't know if you've noticed it on the Sabbath; I notice it on the Sabbath vs any other day of studying, or vs any other day of reading the Bible or any other thing—that with God's Spirit there is an extra something special with the Sabbath that is not there on any, any other day, it just is not.

There is a fellowship and a warmth with each other which is special on the Sabbath Day. Why? Because God has put His blessing in the Sabbath Day! God has put His presence in the Sabbath Day! It is for us with that benefit and

blessing and that is the reason we keep the Sabbath day. *That's fantastic!* 

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

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- 11) Psalm 113:1-7
- 12) Psalm 119:1-20, 34, 58, 69, 88-89, 97-98, 113, 119, 127-128, 142, 151, 172
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- 15) Exodus 20:8-11
- 16) Exodus 16:27-30
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- 18) Exodus 31:13
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- 20) Ezekiel 20:11-13, 16, 18-21
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- 24) Acts 13:14-15, 38-44
- 25) Acts 16:13
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- Revelation 3:14-21
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#### Also Referenced: Book

Sabbath Rest for the Modern Man by Samuele Bacchiocchi

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