

## VISITING PROGRAM TRAINING CLASS

### Eighth Class

December 29, 1968

#### FORMAT:

1. Open with prayer.
2. World news discussion and drill (5-8 minutes).
3. Difficult scripture drill (30 minutes).
4. Sermonettes and evaluations (30 minutes).
5. Recess (10 minutes).
6. Lecture (one hour).
7. Assignments for next class.

#### DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

- I. It makes no difference today whether or not you keep the Sabbath or the Holy Days and you shouldn't let any man judge you if you don't (Col. 2:16-17).
  - A. The word "is" is in italics in Verse 17 and is not in the original. Therefore, this should read, "Let no man therefore judge you, -- but the body of Christ."
  - B. The body of Christ is the Church of God (Col. 1:18) and it is the Church that is our pillar and grounding in the truth (I Tim. 3:15) and our standard, not the ideas of men.
  - C. The word "judge" in Verse 16 is better rendered "call you in question." The Gentile Colossians previously knew nothing of God or of His Holy Days. God's ministers taught them to observe the Sabbath and the Holy Days, and outsiders called them in question for doing so. The ascetics in Colossae saw those in the Church eating and drinking (feasting) on the Holy Days and despised them for it.
  - D. These Holy Days are shadows of things to come -- they picture the major events in God's master plan to bring all mankind to salvation.
  - E. Therefore, Paul is telling the Colossian converts to let no man call them in question for their observance of God's Holy Days.
- II. Give simple proof that the Sabbath is to be kept.
  - A. Mark 2:27-28 -- The Sabbath was made specifically for man, and Christ

is the Lord of the Sabbath, not some other day.

- B. Genesis 2:1-3 -- It was made by Christ at the same time that man was made, and set apart as holy time for all mankind forever.
- C. Exodus 16 -- Israel had lost the knowledge of the Sabbath in Egyptian slavery and God showed them which day it was by means of a special miracle and reemphasized the importance of keeping it holy.
- D. Exodus 20:8-11-- God commanded all men to remember the Sabbath forever as one of the cardinal points of His spiritual law.
- E. Luke 4:16 -- Jesus kept the Sabbath Day.
- F. Acts 17:2 -- Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, also kept the Sabbath.
- G. Isaiah 66:23 -- The Sabbath will be kept in the future when God's Kingdom will be ruling on the earth.

\* From this we see that the Sabbath was made for man at the time man was made, that it was given before Israel was given the Ten Commandments, it is one of the Ten Commandments, Jesus kept it, Paul kept it, and it will be kept in the Millennium when God's Kingdom will rule. So, we also ought to keep the Sabbath now.

### III. Prove that the Holy Days are still in effect and should be kept today.

- A. The Holy Days are Feasts of God, not the Jews (Lev. 23:2, 4). They were commanded to be observed forever (Lev. 23:31, 41).
- B. But these days were ordained during the year before the sacrifices were given to Israel (Ex. 12 and 13). The Days of Unleavened Bread are part of the identifying sign between God and His people (Ex. 13:9). Jeremiah 7:21-23 also points out that when God began instituting the Holy Days -- at the time He brought Israel out of Egypt -- He did not institute burnt offerings or sacrifices. Therefore, the Holy Days do not stand or fall with the sacrifices, but are truly commanded forever.
- C. Jesus observed the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread (Luke 2:41-42) and the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day (John 7:1-2, 14, 37).
- D. The New Testament Church and the apostles kept the Holy Days. Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread -- Acts 12:3; 20:6; I Cor. 5:6-8. Pentecost -- Acts 2:1; 20:16; I Cor. 16:8.

Day of Atonement -- Acts 27:9.  
Feast of Tabernacles -- Acts 18:21.

Paul told the Colossians not to let anyone condemn them for observing the Holy Days (Col. 2:16-17).

- E. The Feast of Tabernacles will be observed during the Millennium by everyone -- both Jew and Gentile (Zech. 14:16). So all who would be in God's Kingdom had better learn to observe them now!

## THE SABBATH AND HOLY DAYS

### I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE Sabbath AND HOLY DAYS

John 5:17 -- During His earthly Ministry, Christ said, "My Father works) hitherto, and I work."

Philippians 1:6 -- The work He referred to was the Work that God the Father is doing IN US. He is now engaged in a spiritual creation, creating in us His very character to prepare us to be born into His Family! God's weekly and annual Sabbaths have a vitally important role in this spiritual creation!

Leviticus 23:1-4 -- God set aside certain days to be observed by His people. These were the weekly Sabbath (Verse 3) and His annual Holy Days (Verse 4). His purpose for these days is (1) to bring all mankind (ultimately) to a knowledge and understanding of His plan, and (2) to teach and perfect mankind spiritually so that they can qualify to be born into His Family and fulfill the purpose of their existence!

Mark 2:27 -- Notice, the Sabbath was not made for God, or for the angels. It was made especially for MAN. The MAIN purpose of God's Sabbath is to help man to become God!

### II. UNDERSTANDING COMES THROUGH OBEDIENCE

Before seeing specifically how God is using the Sabbath and Holy Days to give us knowledge and understanding and to perfect us spiritually, we need to review an important principle that governs our grasp and understanding of spiritual knowledge. Knowledge and understanding are not synonymous! Knowledge is the academic possession of facts or information, while understanding is the grasp or comprehension of the meaning or significance of that knowledge. Many in God's Church have a certain amount of spiritual knowledge, but lack the depth of understanding to utilize that knowledge because they are not obeying God as they should!

Psalms 111:10 -- If we obey God, we will have understanding. This is an absolute promise from God!

Psalms 119:100 -- Again we see that obedience is the prerequisite for understanding. If you are sincerely and wholeheartedly obeying ALL that God has thus far revealed to you -- and deeply repenting when you do slip -- God will continue to give you spiritual perception and spiritual understanding.

This is an important principle in every area of our lives, and those of you in this Visiting Program Training Class are being given knowledge that most in the Church don't have a chance to learn in the same way. God holds you responsible for that knowledge, and unless you are putting it to work, you won't come to a deep understanding of it because understanding comes as a result of OBEDIENCE!

This principle especially applies to the Sabbath and the Holy Days. We all have a knowledge of the Sabbath and Holy Days, and we are all "keeping" them, but the degree to which we are keeping them God's way -- in the spirit, as well as in the letter -- is the degree to which we deeply understand God's plan and the degree to which we are being perfected spiritually!

### III.. THE SABBATH AND THE HOLY DAYS ARE KEYS TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S PLAN

Matthew 16:19 -- Christ promised that His Church would have the keys to the Kingdom of God. The Sabbath and Holy Days are two of the most important basic keys that UNLOCK the knowledge and understanding of God's plan for bringing all mankind into His Kingdom!

#### A. Weekly Sabbath

##### 1. God is the Creator

People who do not keep God's Sabbath do not understand that God is the Creator. They are deceived by the clever arguments for evolution. Some of them may believe in a "God," but they don't know the true God. Most of them have either a vague notion of a "first cause" or an over-sentimentalized idea of a far-away, helpless God who does not intervene in the affairs of men on earth. Anyone who even knows the truth of the Sabbath, the Seventh-day Adventists, for example -- whether they keep it properly or not -- knows that God is the Creator. They can see the idiocy of the theory of evolution.

But unless they are keeping the Sabbath properly, God is not real to them. They don't know the all-powerful, all-knowing Creator

God of this universe who does intervene in the course of human affairs! The Seventh-day Adventists, for example, will say they believe in a Creator God, but they don't trust God to heal them. They look to doctors, instead, just like everyone else.

In the same way, all of us know academically and intellectually the truth of the Sabbath, and therefore, we all know that God is the Creator and that evolution could never have occurred. But real understanding comes from obedience. The degree to which you are keeping the Sabbath God's way is the degree to which God is real to you and the degree to which you can look to Him in complete faith and confidence in every area of your life!

## 2. Sign of God's True People

Exodus 31:17 -- The Sabbath identifies God's true people. It is a sign that sets us apart from the world and shows that we are truly different. If we are keeping it Properly -- using it as God intended to grow spiritually -- we will be different from the world. We won't just stop working on Saturday, but the way we organize the other six days and conduct our personal lives will set us apart, as well. We won't blend in with the world. Our conversation, the expression on our faces, the way we react to daily problems and in every way our lives will reflect that we are God's people!

## B. Annual Holy Days

It is through keeping the annual Holy Days that we understand the step-by-step plan by which the great Creator God is bringing the family of man into His Family! The depth of your understanding of God's plan is in direct proportion to how diligently and faithfully you keep the Holy Days God's way.

Since the Churches of this world do not keep God's Holy Days, they are in total confusion. Their doctrines do not fit together and complement one another in a logical, purposeful fashion. They are totally ignorant of God's purpose and plan. Since they keep the "Lord's Supper" on a Sunday morning with grape juice and leavened bread instead of God's Passover, they do not know when Christ died, why He died or how He died, and they don't understand that healing is the forgiveness of physical sin. Since they don't keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, they don't understand what sin is, and by not keeping Pentecost, they cannot understand that a human mind must be converted by God's Spirit and given the power to overcome sin.

They don't know when Christ will return -- whether it will be tonight

or a thousand years from now -- or even if He will return. Most of them don't believe that Satan is a literal being who must be bound before the world can have peace. They certainly aren't looking for God's Kingdom to bring peace to this earth. They think that God is desperately trying to get the world saved and is thus far failing) not realizing that today is not the only day of salvation.

God's Holy Days unlock to us the knowledge of His plan, and as we participate in them by keeping them, we gain an understanding of the significance and meaning of each facet of that plan as it relates to us personally. Whether our understanding is shallow and superficial will be determined by the degree to which we are keeping them as God intends! If we are keeping them properly, we will deeply and fully understand God's plan and we will be MOTIVATED by their significance and meaning to us personally!

#### IV. GOD'S REGULARLY SCHEDULED TRAINING SESSIONS TO TEACH AND PERFECT US SPIRITUALLY

In addition to giving us knowledge and understanding as a result of our keeping them properly, God uses the Sabbath and Holy Days as regularly scheduled training sessions to teach and perfect us spiritually.

Acts 8:27-31 -- You need someone to teach you. You can only go so far in study on your OWN, and then you need guidance and help.

Ephesians 4:11-13 -- This is the very purpose of God's Ministry -- to teach and perfect His people. God has given us His Sabbath and Holy Days as regularly scheduled training sessions at which this primarily is to be done.

##### A. Holy Days

God prescribes what should be taught on His Holy Days. The repetition each year of the meaning of each day keeps us in remembrance of His plan. It gives us an overview and helps us to get the BIG PICTURE!

In your own personal study you should concentrate on each Holy Day as it comes around each year, realizing that God wants your attention focused on that particular aspect of His plan at that particular time.

##### B. Sabbath

II Timothy 4:2 -- God wants His ministers to preach the Word in season and out of season -- to preach what should be preached on the Sabbath according to the needs of the congregation. God's ministers always

ask God to guide them and help them preach what the people need the most at that particular time -- whether it be instruction, exhortation, correction or encouragement. You too, should pray every week that God will inspire your local minister and all of His ministers everywhere to give you what you need and what all of God's people need that coming Sabbath.

Then come eagerly and expectantly to Sabbath Services, alert and ready to take personally the messages that are given that day, considering that whatever is given is what God intends to be a major part of your spiritual diet for the coming week. Look forward to each Sabbath as another special training class that God has given you the opportunity of attending to teach and train and perfect you for your responsibilities as part of His ruling family. Take good notes and then concentrate on and diligently study that particular "lesson" God has given you for that particular week -- and above all be sure that you change your life to conform to the knowledge given! Ezekiel 33:31-32 -- We often apply these scriptures to the world, but too many in God's Church refuse the instruction God makes available through His ministers on the Sabbath. They reject the knowledge -- even though they may pay lip service to it by saying, "What a fine sermon" -- because they don't do it! Don't let this be your approach! Take seriously the instruction you are given on the Sabbath and apply or make a part of you whatever knowledge is given!

Romans 2:13 Just hearing the Word -- having spiritual knowledge is not enough. God is not interested in how much you know but how much you OBEY!

## V. YOUR ATTITUDE AND APPROACH

Now that we have seen the importance of keeping God's Sabbath and Holy Days properly and that superficially going through the motions of keeping them is not enough, let's see what our attitude and approach should be in keeping them!

### A. Holy Days

We can't have a passive attitude toward God's Holy Days. It's true that familiarity does breed contempt! We can't come to God's Feasts as spiritual dullards with a "ho-hum, another 'why are we here?' sermon "!

Malachi 1:12-13 -- If you grow bored with what you consider the "same old sermons" every year, you are contemptuously turning up your nose at the spiritual fare God has set before you at His Feasts!

By your attitude you have shown that you are taking His Holy Days for granted, and you are on a collision course with disaster, spiritually.

We must approach each of God's Feasts positively and thankfully. Be thankful that God has called you in this age of spiritual darkness and revealed His plan through His Holy Days. Really APPRECIATE each particular facet of God's plan as you keep the Holy Day which pictures it. Meditate on the meaning of the day, and drink in deeply of it through your own personal study and through the training sessions on that day -- the Holy Day services! Absolutely FEAR to take any of those days lightly, but keep them zealously and wholeheartedly!

## B. Sabbath

God's Sabbath not only identifies God as the Creator and identifies His true people, but it is also a type of the Millennium -- the 1000 years of the Kingdom of God on earth. Your Sabbaths should picture the wonderful peace, happiness and closeness with God that the entire world will experience at that time! (Isaiah 14:7.) It should be a time of both spiritual and physical refreshing and rejuvenation (Acts 3:19).

Isaiah 56:2 -- Do you pollute God's Sabbath by your attitude and approach to it?

Amos 8:5-- Do you sometimes catch yourself with this attitude toward the Sabbath -- an attitude of impatience for the sun to set so that you can get on with your pleasures? Many in God's Church have this attitude. They just can't wait to live it up and blast out of their consciousness any shred of what they might have learned or any special rapport and closeness to God they might have achieved on the Sabbath!

In addition, by staying up late on Saturday night they begin the new week short on sleep and tired, rather than physically rested and refreshed as a result of a peaceful Sabbath Day.

Isaiah 58:13-14 -- God wants us to sincerely look at His Sabbath as a delight. He wants us to be refreshed and rejuvenated physically, mentally and spiritually. He wants us to experience the peace and closeness to Him that we can have by spending extra time in study, prayer and especially in meditation.

This won't happen accidentally, however! You must work at it because our human nature causes us to naturally laze around on the Sabbath, feel bored and waste time in the way that people in the world do on



Sunday mornings. It takes a little effort to make the Sabbath a delight, but it is worth it. It is much more enjoyable than just drifting through another Sabbath, marking the passing of another week of your life and accomplishing nothing as a result.

Don't let your Sabbath just "happen." Prepare for it and look forward to it, not just for the physical rest, but for the spiritual uplifting, refreshing and strengthening that comes as a result of keeping it right!

The Sabbath doesn't come unexpectedly like a "thief in the night"! If at all possible, be home an hour before sunset -- in time to shower and change clothes before the Sabbath begins. Shift gears in your mind as sunset approaches and begin to put away all the worries and physical concerns of the past week. Don't scurry and rush around right up to the last minute and be on the brink of breaking the Sabbath in the letter. You can't do this and at the same time keep it in the spirit! Consciously change the pace of your life as you enter God's time.

It is good to begin God's Sabbath with prayer, and you should either have family prayer or make the prayer at dinner extra long to thank God for His blessing and protection that week. Then use the long winter Sabbath evenings (Friday night) to spend extra time with your children -- perhaps giving them a bath before bedtime yourself, and telling them stories from the Bible or reading the Bible Story to them. Make the Sabbath attractive to them so that they, too, will look forward to the Sabbath rather than look on it as a "cannot" day.

You can allow yourself a half hour or an hour extra sleep, but have a regular getting-up time on the Sabbath. If you are getting your sleep during the week -- and you should -- you will feel refreshed after eight-and-a-half or nine hours of sleep. On the Sabbath then, if you don't have to drive a long distance, you can sometimes go for a leisurely walk with your family, or in the summer, you can stop for a picnic lunch on the way to or from services.

Talk about God's Work, His Creation, His plan, the sermon and sermonette. Explain to your children some of the wonders of the physical world around them and how delicately, perfectly and wonderfully God has designed every creature and plant to maintain perfect physical balance and harmony. Show how God has put beauty, humor, intrigue, into His creatures for the benefit and interest and enjoyment of mankind.

Forget your problems on the job! Stop grumbling and complaining about your neighbors, the weather, or little irritations! Make the Sabbath a day of rejoicing, happiness -- delightfully refreshing! Then, having

been refreshed physically and spiritually, don't ruin it all with late-night Saturday night "entertainment" offered by the god of this world. Try to get to bed reasonably early, so you can begin the new week refreshed and ready to apply what you've learned -- alert, close to God, and determined to obey Him more fully than ever before.

Hebrews 4:9-11 -- This is what we are looking forward to! By keeping God's Sabbath His way we will enter into His rest. We'll enjoy the mental and physical refreshing here and now that comes as a result, and our Sabbaths will truly picture the Kingdom of God on earth. Further, we'll be taught and perfected spiritually to prepare us for that Kingdom!

#### ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT CLASS

- "Personal from the Editor," by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong,  
December 1967 PLAIN TRUTH.
- "The Seven Laws of Radiant Health," by Mr. Roderick C.  
Meredith, Reprint #180.
- "So You Had A Cold," by Mr. Paul Royer, November 1965  
GOOD NEWS.

\*NOTE: There will be no test with Lesson #8. We will send the test with Lesson #9, and it will cover Lessons 7, 8 and 9. Then we will be sending a mid-year exam along with Lesson 10, which will cover all the lessons from 1 through 10.