

Why Keep the Holy Days¹

The following message was given by Herman Hay on Saturday, October 1, 1955 at Big Sandy, Texas, USA.

It was given on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacle.

But since so many of you are new, I estimate it perhaps the third, at least from those who rose yesterday evening.

A third of you have never been here before.

Some of you have been baptized within the last year and have had the opportunity, perhaps only in the last month or two, to read any articles explaining the annual festivals to you.

I think it is appropriate that we take that subject immediately for the simple reason that most of you, perhaps in the past or even now, have been confronted with a question.

If you are the Church of God, why do you keep these customs when all of the world has, for over a thousand years, been observing other customs masquerading under the name Christian? I want to have you understand one thing.

I think it is one of the most important principles we can grasp when we look at God's word.

First of all, did you ever realize that there is only one religion on earth? One religion only, now, mind you, which says that if you can disprove its historical basis, you, by that very fact, have disproved that religion.

Do you know what I mean by that? You could take the religion that the Arabs have, the Mohammedan religion, the religion that the Chinese have developed or that the Hindus have developed.

There is no historical basis to their religion.

It is only a doctrine that the people have developed and certain great thinkers have developed.

But in these two books, the Old and New Testament, is declared a way of life, which, if the historical basis of this is untrue, then Christianity is a hoax and a lie.

Because Jesus himself said, I am going to give this generation, and he was speaking to the Jews of his day, he said, I am giving you but one sign that I am the God who created the world, who spoke to Adam and who has become your Savior.

Jesus gave this sign, he didn't say, believe my teaching, that's the proof that I am the Messiah, did he? In Matthew 16.4 he said this, there is only one sign that any of us can know that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, that he is the Lord who spoke to Moses in the days of our ancestors.

And he said that sign is the sign of Jonah, that he would be dead and buried for three days and three nights in the tomb.

He staked the truth of what he said on the fact, the historical fact, that he would be dead three days and three nights.

And so no one could say it was a hoax.

He chose the fact of his death so that he himself would be dead and not alive, but he couldn't perpetuate a hoax and say that he was dead when he was not.

Did you notice that he chose a sign, his death, and when he was dead, even the Romans knew it, the Pilate knew it, the Jews all knew it, so that there could possibly be no fake, no fakery on his part where he would not really be dead and would profess to have risen from the dead when he had not been buried at all.

But he said, I want you to notice that again, that after three days he would rise.

Now, it would be impossible for him to rise from the dead if he were dead unless there was a power higher than mortal man who could raise him up.

And the only one who would raise him up would be the very God who sent him.

And that would be a testimony that why Jesus himself said would be true, wouldn't it? Because God isn't going to raise and give someone eternal life.

He isn't going to raise anyone to immortality and to his level unless that person has been his servant, as we all here are to become his servants.

Now, if you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you have to have absolute historical testimony that he did die and that he was in the grave three days and three nights, and that at the end he arose from the dead.

Now, I'm not going to go into the subject at this time of the historical truth of the resurrection accounts as given in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

I'm going to assume that you're here because you recognize that there is no other historical account which contains these facts and that these facts have been preserved because God foresaw that we would need to know them and that anything the world has said to deny what's written here is untrue and can be demonstrated.

But let's grasp the significance of the fact that Jesus state his messiahship, his divinity, he stake whatever he said on a historical fact which, if you could disprove, would wreck everything he said.

And so the world and all the customs that the Christian religion has developed in the last 1900 years is based on one historical error that Jesus did not die three days and three nights before he rose.

So that all of the religious customs, and I mean all of the religious customs that are forbidden in God's word can be traced to this root source, that Jesus did not die on a Wednesday and that he did not rise at the close of the Sabbath, that he lied when he said I would be three days and three nights and the scholars just as plainly as they can say that he did not tell the truth. They do not believe the historical record.

Now if Jesus said that he would rise after three days and three nights which he did do and it can be demonstrated by infallible proofs of history then it behooves us to reckon the rest of this book as the historical account of God's dealing with man.

Now most of the churches that perhaps some of you have come out of have assumed that there is no real historical basis to most of the Old Testament and for that matter to most of the new.

We will be discussing here the doctrinal proof as to why God commanded his people to keep the festival which we are observing today.

But I want to show you not just the doctrinal proof from God's word itself but I want to show you the historical evidence.

And remember Jesus Christ himself staked his divinity on historical evidence.

I want to show you that if this is the church of God then you must find in history a time from the beginning of the apostolic days when a church of God claiming to represent Jesus Christ and having as its officials the apostles themselves observed the customs that all of us are observing here and now.

And more than that we must have proof.

Mr. Meredith told you this morning to prove all things.

We must have proof, not hearsay, not I think, not it seems to me, but proof that there is a period in history at which time churches masquerading as the churches of Jesus Christ calling themselves the church of God were split and divided over the subject of keeping God's festivals.

And as year by year went by those who did not want to observe the festivals dominated and so control the situation that they instituted laws and through the power of the state forced those who were obedient to depart to lands unknown in order to save their lives.

Now if we can see from the historical evidence that that is true then it behooves us to obey what God himself has said here.

As someone said to me this morning, no one would want to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Most of you wouldn't be out here or would want to be out here on our grounds this morning unless God himself commanded it.

It's human nature not to obey God and God has given us some things though good for us that may be at first sight rather difficult to do.

Now the common statement is this, oh so you're a follower of Mr. Armstrong are you? Well that's just one man's idea and I think that a great many of us have come up with the concept that the observing of these festivals started about 25 years ago because Mr. Armstrong founded in God's word and that nobody since apostolic days, in fact nobody since Old Testament times as a usual argument ever kept these festivals that the early church really didn't know it and some new cult has been developing based on some Old Testament religion.

That is what has been told me, I suppose that is what many of you have been told and perhaps some of you have assumed that that is just about true.

And the argument usually runs next in line that because we do not find a great and a powerful church observing these things in the last 20 to 30 years, I should say in the last 50 or 100 or even a thousand years that we are developing some new doctrine.

Now that is the common idea because the historical evidence, the proof where Jesus Christ commands every one of us to have if we're going to be here has deliberately been buried, has never been spoken of in order that the customs of the world might appear to be the customs of the apostolic church.

Now I want us to understand and grasp the picture, not just the doctrinal evidence in the Bible but the picture of the development of these festivals and I'm going to give it to you in summary form just in a moment.

First of all remember that God gave a revelation to Adam and from that time on the world departed from the truth and so we are told in the first chapter of Romans.

Now I suppose all of you having heard Mr. Meredith Sermon will write down Romans 1 and then you wait for my next verse and write down whatever it may be, won't you? Do you know how to take notes? Do you know how to make what is said here, what you read in the magazines, what you hear over the air stick in your mind? Not just write down a verse, maybe you will need to.

That is, if I quote Romans 1-1, you write down Romans 1-1, but that's not enough.

After all, you could look in a concordance for these verses, couldn't you? I don't have to tell you, I could just simply read off the verses if that's all you want.

You wouldn't have to be here if you just wanted the verses, I would say go buy a concordance, save my time and save yours, save a lot of expense.

You can't understand what we say or what you may hear over the air or read in the magazines unless you grasp what that verse means.

And when you write down a verse, it is up to you, if you want to develop your understanding to write in your notes the significance of that verse which maybe you otherwise would not find unless you write it down, you would be losing.

Now, in turning to Romans 1, we read of the following facts.

Verse 18, now explain it, that God's wrath, that is His anger, is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness.

In other words, unrighteousness is defined in the Psalms as disobedience to wall, God's wall.

Then there are some people who suppress deliberately as many ministers have told some of you and as they have told me that I know better but the people don't want to hear the truth so I'm going to tell them what they want.

And they by their misconduct and unrighteousness deliberately suppress the truth, hold it down.

It mentions here that they were perverted in all their reasoning, verse 21, and their senseless heart, not having good common sense up here, was dark and so they couldn't see things clearly.

They professed to be wise, that is they thought they were superior in being able to understand some things in the Bible but they didn't surrender to God and so they became fools.

Now, we're told in verse 24 that God gave them up to the lusts of their heart unto uncleanness, that their bodies be dishonored among themselves and they exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

Did you notice that? They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

Has human nature changed since the days of Adam? Did Adam have the same kind of flesh, the same attitudes of mind and heart as we do today? Then why, I ask you, should you assume that although an age has passed, the whole world, every last human being, departed from the truth and exchanged the truth of God for a lie? That's what it says here.

And Paul tells us, quoting from the Old Testament, that we all, like sheep, have gone astray.

Now, if we haven't gone astray, then we must have someone who is perfect.

Will that individual rise in this audience? There isn't any, is there? You see, there has been no one beginning with the time of Adam who has remained faithful to the truth, save Jesus Christ.

Now, if in that day, as Paul himself said, from the time of Noah on when the world and Noah had to be called out of ignorance into truth, that from the time of Noah on, the world exchanged the truth for a lie, why should we assume that since the days of Jesus Christ, the world has exchanged the lie for the truth? It doesn't make any sense, does it? Do you think the world has exchanged a lie for the truth? There may be some here, I hope all of you have.

But the principle in Scripture is that the world exchanges the truth for a lie.

And when Jesus Christ came to preach the truth, just as Moses preached the truth, as Enoch, as Noah, as all the prophets, and even those who should have known God's word, stone and kill them and persecute them, so they have exchanged the truth of Jesus Christ for a lie.

Now, what is the basis of this lie? First of all, most of the customs that have developed have been laid bare in the plain truth.

Dr. Meredith and some others have written series of articles showing where the customs of this world have developed from.

And did you notice that it is very simple to remember where these customs came from? I suppose some of you said, oh, that's very difficult.

I can't remember 10 pages of printed matter with lengthy quotations.

Well, it isn't very difficult to remember because all of the customs of this world developed from one single fundamental mistake since the flood.

And that mistake is the perversion of sex in the family home.

When you read the story of Nimrod and of his wife Ishtar, or Easter, and the very legitimate children, you will find some fundamental errors, but there is the same thing as Paul said here, that because they didn't want to yield to him, he let them go, God did, to the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness that their bodies were dishonored among themselves.

And it goes on to say that God gave them up to a reprobate mind in verse 28 to do the things that are totally unbecoming any normal natural human being.

And they were filled with unrighteousness and a host of other sins.

Without natural understanding, I'm skipping some of these verses here, without natural affection and merciless, developing all kinds of sins.

I have overlooked, here's the verse I wanted, it's 26, and for this cause God gave them up unto passions of dishonor, for both their females changed the natural use into what is against nature, while for the males, leaving the natural use of the female, burned in their lust toward one another, males with males working what is unseemly and receiving in themselves the needful recompense of their error.

Now I suppose we have had in the past some prudish ideas, but I think it is time we realized that the beginning, the fountain head of all sin that resides this side of the flood, is a matter of perverting the sex life of a man and a life in the home.

And every single religious custom and holiday is either a memorial of the birth of the doger of a harlot, or some other fake religious custom that is developed in honor of the evil results that stemmed from the perversion of sex in the life of Nimrod and Samaritanus.

Now that's very plain, but it isn't hard to remember.

Let me just summarize.

The Church of God is made up of all races.

We all come as equals before Jesus Christ with respect to the bar of justice.

But before there was any sin on the part of Nimrod or any sin on the part of Ishtar, there were already the distinction of races.

And God from time immemorial has set the races apart as far as marriage.

We may discuss that later, most of you already understand it and certainly should.

But one of the cardinal sins, and I want you to notice is, and it's in the very beginning of this whole system that Satan used a female, a white woman, and an Negro man, because Cush, who was the father of the Ethiopians, gave birth to Nimrod, and Ishtar apparently was an Assyrian.

That is a Germanic person.

And from that marriage, an illicit marriage in the first place, decided that this white woman was an out-and-out harlot.

And they established and lorded over all the establishes system and lorded over all of the other people.

You read of this in Genesis 10 and 11.

After Nimrod met his untimely death, and Samirimus kept her practices of harlotry, as you find described by a female church in Revelation 17, who is described by the same terms as this original harlot.

You will find that she gave birth to an illegitimate white child, and they called him Tamoz, and his name starting with a T, that was a towel or a mark, the same symbol as today the cross.

And so the pagans adored the cross as a symbol of the Messiah Tamoz.

But it all can be simply remembered if you just understand that all of the sins developed out of a perversion of the sex life in that home.

And this woman, Samirimus, conceived of the idea that it would be better to be a virgin than to be married.

Now, I want you to understand why the idea of it being better to be a virgin than being married has been so prevalent the world over.

Mr. Armstrong, maybe I think you said this in past times here, or you should at least be acquainted with it, I know he has said it over the program.

That two-thirds of the homes are unhappy, even of those who are married, and may not even have divorces, because people are abominably ignorant.

Now, isn't it interesting, of course, that apparently this white woman seems to have understood some of the principles of sex, but she so perverted it that her mind became warped.

And she conceived of the idea that it's better to be a virgin than to be a mother.

And so many, many people in the world have developed that same idea.

Marriage is a sin that is tolerated, and it goes on and on.

Let's understand. God set the home as the basis, and all laws regulate the home.

Satan said, if I can destroy God's laws, the best way to do it is to wreck the home.

And since, if I once wrecked the home, that would lead to one and another sin.

Human beings who don't like to obey God in the first place always follow unusual customs, and they like the mysterious, they like to have their wisdom appealed to.

And so this woman, as most people like to celebrate birthdays, which God himself forbids, found that it was very interesting and easily done to have the people celebrate the birthday of her illegitimate son.

So you see, there is nothing hard to understand about the development of all the customs in this world, because most people, and most of you, and maybe some of you still like to celebrate birthdays.

You look in God's Word and you see who celebrated the birthdays.

That's human nature to want to do that, and Satan took advantage of it.

And here's the illegitimate son born to this woman.

His birthday has been commemorated ever since, around December the 25th.

One and another religious custom and religious holiday has developed out of the whole mass of evil.

The great events that were accomplished by Nimrod and many of the other things that were done in that day and age were celebrated and special days were set apart because it's human.

It's natural for human beings to want a day to honor a particular event so they don't forget it.

Now, there's nothing wrong with honoring particular events.

It just depends on what events they are and who has the right to appoint a day on which we should assemble and worship.

You can read the whole story.

If you want to go over the magazine articles on this subject, you can read in the Old Testament and you will see that these holidays, which the world keeps today, all of them stem from commemorating illicit and evil or abusive events, abusive conduct in the life of that original family that set the pattern for this whole civilization.

And so today the whole civilization is made up of a union of the female, that is the religious element, as it is described in the Bible, and the male, that is the political.

But the pattern is in the whole.

Now, when all the world departed from the truth, God called one man Abraham and then he called the whole nation in the days of Moses.

Now, most people have the concept, and here's the argument, I suppose you've heard it.

The argument is that God gave these festivals and the feast of tabernacles to the Jews.

But we, our Gentiles, had sabbath the memorial of creation and had invented the very customs that the church is practicing today.

God called out a nation and revealed to them His truth.

Now, when you see the fact that that truth was preserved to the days of the Apostolic Church, and that since then the world has developed the same customs, what you really have is this, that the world has departed, exchanged the truth of the Apostolic Church, which we now hold for a lie, the same as the whole family of Noah exchanged the truth which he had given them for a lie.