



# The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

March 20, 2020

## **Are We Free to Choose Which Days to Observe?**

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, co-workers, and spiritual family on the Coast of the Gulf of Mexico and scattered children of God, from our offices here in Spanish Fort.

Last Sabbath evening near the end of my letter I penned these words. *"Rather than panic over all the "news" of this virus, a fall in the stock market, or whatever catastrophe comes up next, I hope we will keep our focus, and reflect on our new beginning at baptism when we began our journey to the promised Kingdom of God!"*

So, as we come up to the Passover, Night to Be Much Observed, and Days of Unleavened Bread just a little over 2 weeks away, let's continue our focus on the spiritual importance of His plan in our lives.

Many Bible believers claim that these upcoming days are abolished and if one celebrates them it should be purely voluntary. Many claim that God does not require New Covenant participants to celebrate the festivals listed in Leviticus 23. They are termed "Jewish". Interestingly enough, the first Feast Day mentioned in Leviticus 23 is the weekly Sabbath.

Let's remember, Christ said *"The Sabbath was made for man."* (Mark 2:27) He did not say it was made only for the Jews! God who led Israel out of Egypt stated that these annual celebrations were "the Feasts of the Lord!" God did not label them "the feasts of the Jews".

One specific scripture that is sometimes used in an attempt to discredit the observance of God's Sabbath and Feasts is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. *"One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks."* (Romans 14:5-6)

From these words, some claim Paul is saying that whatever day or day's one chooses to rest and/or worship is irrelevant so long as one is "fully convinced in his own mind" and "observes it to the Lord."

Does this imply that the Sabbath is no different from any other day of the week, or that you and I are free to choose whatever day we wish to observe? To come to that conclusion, one must

interpret these verses differently or read into these verses, because the Sabbath is nowhere mentioned.

So, what are the "days" Paul was talking about? Let's look at the context for the answer.

The passage in question about "days" in Romans 14:5-6 is immediately sandwiched between references to both eating meat and vegetarianism. Verses 2, 3 and 6 and the context simply can't be ignored. "*For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.*" (Romans 14:2) There is no biblical connection between Sabbath observance and vegetarianism, so these verses obviously are being taken out of context by those who *assume* Paul was referring to the Sabbath.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary explains that "the close contextual association with eating suggests that Paul has in mind a special day set apart for observance as a time for feasting or as a time for fasting" (Everett Harrison, 1976, Vol. 10, p. 146). It is apparent that Paul wasn't discussing the Sabbath but, rather, *other days* during which feasting, fasting or abstaining from certain foods was practiced.

Paul was writing at that time to a congregation composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome (Romans 1:13; 2:17). Eating and fasting practices that were not clearly addressed in the Scriptures unfortunately had become a point of contention. The Talmud records that many Jews during that time fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. They also had other traditional fast days (see Zechariah 7:3-5).

Since some of the Jewish Christians in Rome self-righteously criticized others (Romans 2:17-24), perhaps they had become similar to the Pharisees who boasted, "I fast twice a week" (Luke 18:12), and set themselves up as more righteous than others who were not fasting at these times. Even today, we have within various fellowships some who claim to observe and worship better than others.

Why were some avoiding meat? In Romans 14:2-3 Paul discussed vegetarianism ("*he who is weak eats only vegetables*") and continued this theme in verse 6 ("*he who eats . . . and he who does not eat*").

The context shows us that some members of the congregation in Rome were eating meat, while others were abstaining from eating meat. The vegetarians were likely members who "feared lest they should (without knowing it) eat meat which had been offered to idols or was otherwise ceremonially unclean (which might easily happen in such a place as Rome), that they abstained from meat altogether" (W.J. Conybeare and J.S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, 1974, p. 530).

In 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, Paul addressed the issue of eating meat that may have been sacrificed to idols, which consequently could have been viewed by other brethren as improper to eat. Paul's point was that unknown association of food with idolatrous activity did not make that food unsuitable for eating.

Paul was evidently addressing the same issue with both the Romans and the Corinthians. Specifically, whether members should avoid meats that may have been associated with idolatrous worship. This is indicated by Paul's reference to "unclean" meat in Romans 14:14, "*I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean [koinos AV-common 7, unclean 3, defiled] of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*"

Rather than using the Greek word used to describe those meats listed in the Old Testament as unclean, he used a word meaning "common" or "defiled," which would be appropriate in describing "meat that had been sacrificed to idols". Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 8 was the same as his conclusion in Romans 14:15-21, "be especially careful not to offend a fellow Christian, causing him to stumble or lose faith over the issues of eating or not eating meats or even in drinking wine".

In context we see that Paul was *not* saying you and I can keep or observe any day that we want. He did not say that the Feasts of the Lord are neither commanded to be observed, nor important in worship of God. God commands us to keep and observe His Feasts as recorded in Leviticus 23.

As we come up to this integral part in the plan of God, let us rejoice, keeping the Feasts of the Lord, and in so doing stay focused on Him, permitting His Spirit to live in us, and reflect Him by how we live in spite of the fear, worry and calamity that appears all around us.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

***Scott Hoefker***

*(Pastor, The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast)*

The schedule for this **Sabbath** is:

**March 20<sup>th</sup> / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm** (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

**March 21<sup>st</sup> / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am**, with services held in **Montgomery and Spanish Fort** at our normal **10:15 a.m.** (with *phone conference connection*)

available from Montgomery and *Live Webcast* from Spanish Fort). A noon “potluck” meal will be enjoyed and shared in **Spanish Fort** shortly after worship services.

**March 21<sup>st</sup> / Saturday: Malachi 3:16 Sabbath Fellowship** (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Spanish Fort. (Connecting live with all via telephone conference).

Telephone Ministry (English): Call **1-712-770-4700**; then, when asked, enter Code **112165 #** to join.

(Note: All callers are muted and must press \*6 to comment and \*6 to resume mute.)  
All times are listed in Central Standard Time zone.

#### Our Daily Bread Recordings

Sunday through Saturday / Our Daily Bread [listen anytime 24/7 to a recorded 15 minute message] Call 1-712-770-4709 (note this call in number is different and ends in “9”), then when asked, enter code 112165# [reference code numbers are on “Spiritual Fellowship Opportunities” on this website <http://www.tlgministriesgc.org> or at “Resources/Archives” on <http://www.haggai114.net>]

#### Daily Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday – Friday / **Morning Sacrifice** (Prayers & Scripture Reading) at 6:00 a.m.  
Sundays / **The Minor Prophets** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Whit, Logan & Friends]  
Mondays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]  
**Almond Branch Fellowship** at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) (Stephen & Friends)  
Tuesdays / **Haggai Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) [Stephen & Friends]  
Wednesdays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]  
1st & 3rd Wednesday / **Sons of God Fellowship** (Young men training) at 6:30 p.m. [Stephen & Friends]  
2nd & 4th Wednesday / **Lydian’s Fellowship** (Ladies) at 6:30 p.m. [Esther/Gayle/Laura & Friends]  
Thursdays / **Mt. Carmel Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Scott & Friends]

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