

“Beware of False Prophets”!

A New Look at Fred Coulter’s NON-Christian Passover!

Exodus 16 and The Great “Quail” Controversy!

Fred Coulter in his book *The Christian Passover* and in a letter to me argues that Exodus 16 is the FINAL clinching "PROOF" that the Jews are wrong in keeping Passover on Nisan 15. He insists the true Passover is to be observed at the beginning of Nisan 14. Rod Meredith and the Global Church of God use his book as an authority on the subject. What is the truth? What about the flight of the QUAILS? Let's take a new look at the Passover and the Question of the Quail!

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In a personal letter to me, Fred Coulter took exception to criticism I have made of his stand in favor of a Nisan 14 Passover, and his so-called "proofs" that the Jews are in error when celebrating it on Nisan 15. Coulter claims:

"As you knows, the crux of the whole Passover controversy in the Old Testament lies in the proper definition of *ben ha arbayim*, or 'between the two evenings.' The problem was simply this: If the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as preserved in the Hebrew, did not give a clear definition of *ben ha arbayim*, or 'between the two evenings,' and its relationship to *ba erev*, or 'even, evening,' then the traditional Jewish definition would be the only one which could be used . . .

"However, God did preserve the correct Scriptural definition as found

by His own personal usage of the terms as recorded in Exodus 16. There can be no doubt whatsoever that *ben ha arbayim* comes **after** *ba erev*, or sunset! . . . **In fact, it is impossible that *ben ha arbayim* can come before *ba erev*, unless you have God Himself violating His Own Sabbath**, which you and Rabbi Kaplan and other rabbis must do in order to force *ben ha arbayim* to come before *ba erev*."

What about Coulter's claim? Is he right? According to Fred Coulter, the Hebrew term *ba erev* refers to precise sunset. But is this so? He also claims that *ben ha arbayim* therefore had to be AFTER sunset. Is this really true? Is Fred Coulter wiser and more astute than all the sages of Jewish history, who would vehemently, totally disagree with him? What about this intriguing question? What is the true explanation of Exodus 16?

The Mystery of the Quail

When did the quail mentioned in Exodus 16 come into the camp of the Israelites? Was in on the afternoon of the Sabbath day, or after sunset, during twilight on the first day of the week? This is the CRUX of the whole question. Coulter argues that it could not have been the Sabbath day -- for that would have the Israelites gathering quail and preparing them up ON THE SABBATH. According to him, that is *impossible*, for it would constitute "work"! And the Sabbath is a day of commanded rest during which no work may be done (Exodus 20:9-11). What is the truth?

The assumption is that it would have been sin for the Israelites to gather or pick up quail on the Sabbath, cook it, and eat it, during the late afternoon. But is this assumption true? Fred Coulter's "one and only" proof that *ben ha arbayim* has to refer to AFTER sunset is based on this one argument. He says, in fact, that I have *God Himself violating His own Sabbath!*

What about this charge? Is he right? What is the answer to this riddle -- this enigma?

Let's understand this point, once and for all!

The Journey into the Desert

Israel had come through the Red Sea in a great deliverance. Now they were going into a vast desert region, where there was little food or water. We read: "And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of Israel *murmured* against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, *to kill this whole assembly with HUNGER*" (Exo.16:1-3).

It was a month after the Passover. They had already crossed the Sinai peninsula, and by a mighty miracle crossed the eastern branch of the Red Sea, called the Gulf of Aqaba, west of modern day Saudi Arabia (see our articles, "Where Is Mount Sinai?" and "The Mountain of Moses") -- the true location of Mount Sinai. They were running out of food and water, and their stomachs were beginning to growl, complain, and feel empty. So the congregation raised their voices to accuse Moses and Aaron of leading them to starvation in the desert!

At this time, God said, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my laws, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily" (Exo.16:4-5).

Moses then told the people, "At even, then shall ye know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: and in the morning, then shall ye see the glory of the LORD, for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that you murmur against us? And Moses said, This shall be when the LORD shall give you in the *evening* [*ba erev*] flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full: for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD" (vs.6-8).

When was this "evening"? Was it after sunset? Or before?

Notice! First of all, God is not a harsh, vindictive Monster. He is a God of compassion and mercy. At the beginning of Exodus 16, we find that the children of Israel were VERY HUNGRY on that Sabbath day. They were so hungry that they were murmuring about their great hunger, complaining to Moses. They thought they were going to die of starvation (verse 3).

Continuing in Exodus 16, God tells Israel, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At *even* [Heb., "between the two evenings"] ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall KNOW that I am the LORD" (verses 11-12). The narrative continues, "And it came to pass, that AT EVEN [Heb, *ba erev*] the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat" (verses 13-15).

What do these verses prove? According to Fred Coulter, it proves that "even" [*ba erev*] occurs BEFORE *ben ha arbayim*. And, according to Coulter, *ba erev* should be defined as "sunset." Therefore, if he is right, this would put *ben ha arbayim* after sunset, or on the NEXT DAY. Since the Passover had to be slain on Nisan 14, the only

time when this could occur would then be at the *beginning* of Nisan 14, in the short time between sunset and dusk or twilight, when the stars come out.

But does this passage prove *ben ha arbayim* refers to the time after sunset and before nightfall? The Jews, on the other hand, say that the word "erev" is a general word and simply means "evening," and can refer to the latter portion of the day (the afternoon) as well as the time after sunset until night. They characterize this as the "first" and "second" evenings. The very expression *ben ha arbayim* means, literally "between (*ben*) the (*ha*) evenings (*arbayim*, the plural form of "evening")". Thus this expression itself proves there were *two evenings* to the day!

The Truth about Ba Erev

Any good lexicon or Hebrew dictionary will show you that "*erev*" simply means "evening." We should not "split hairs" over this simple word, lest we become tripped up and entangled in or by our own intellectual vanity. Abraham's servant made his camels to kneel down by a well of water "at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water" (Gen.24:11). This obviously would have been in the afternoon -- not after sunset, with night only minutes away. Goliath challenged the Israelite army "morning and evening" (I Sam.17:16). Obviously, "evening" here means the afternoon -- not after sunset! Israel was commanded to make a "daily sacrifice," twice a day, in the morning and evening of each day (Num.28:3-4). Again, the command implies that the morning and evening sacrifice were the SAME DAY, offered DAILY, and that the evening sacrifice followed the morning sacrifice. Therefore, it had to be performed *before sunset* -- or it would be on the NEXT DAY!

The truth is, therefore, Frederick C. Coulter in his book *The Christian Passover*, has grossly misdefined *ba erev*. As Strong's Concordance shows, the expression *ba erev* simply means, "even, evening, eventide, dusk" (number 6153). *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* defines the word as "evening." Neither authority defines it as "sunset," as Fred Coulter attempts to do. His definition is not scholarly and totally unreliable and leads to gross confusion and error!

Coulter claims "ba erev" just means "sunset." However, the Scriptures prove to the contrary. Further proof that *ba erev* can refer to afternoon, prior to sunset, is shown clearly from Exodus 12:18, where "even" refers to the ending of or afternoon of Nisan 21, the last day of unleavened bread. Notice! God said, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month *at even*, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month *at even*" (Exo.12:18). Now, IF "at even" means sunset, and the sunset refers to the one introducing Nisan 14, as Coulter claims, then the last "sunset" mentioned here *would have to be the one introducing Nisan 21*.

In other words, Coulter's reasoning would have the Feast of Unleavened Bread fall from the beginning of Nisan 14 *till the end of Nisan 20!* Therefore he *contradicts himself*, because he teaches the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the 15th of Nisan through the end of Nisan 21!

The fact that the word "evening" refers to the ending of a day is also shown in Leviticus 23:32. In verse 27 God tells us the tenth day of Tishri in the Day of Atonement. No work is to be done on that day. Then He says, in verse 32: "It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: *in the ninth day of the month at even, from even to even*, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath" -- that is, the Day of Atonement. If "at even" of the 9th day meant at the beginning of the 9th day, then lasted till the "even" of the 10th day, meaning its beginning, then the Day of Atonement would be the NINTH day of Tishri! Obviously, the "even" of the 9th day means at the END of the 9th day! And the "even" of the 10th day has to mean the END of the 10th day!

Quail on the Sabbath Day?

But what about the mystery of the quail on the Sabbath day? Let's get this scene properly in focus. The Israelites were extremely tired and hungry. They felt like they were starving to death. It was the Sabbath day. However, because God is a merciful and compassionate God, He took note of their distress and condition, and felt for them. Therefore, in mercy, and compassion, God brought them quail to eat late that afternoon, before sunset -- on the Sabbath day!

Was this a "violation of the Sabbath Day," as Coulter claims? Nonsense! God is greater than the Sabbath day. He used this opportunity, therefore, to teach Israel a vital lesson.

This is an important point. Remember, even though that day would normally have been a weekly Sabbath day, *the Israelites were not yet observing it as such* -- for God had not yet "revealed" to them the Sabbath *until the following Sabbath*, when He sent twice as much manna on Friday, and none on the Sabbath! (Exodus 16:22-30). Therefore, it was not until the *following Friday and Sabbath* that God revealed the weekly Sabbath to them, saying, "Tomorrow is the REST of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning" (Exo.16:23). In other words, God did not command them to keep the Sabbath day *until the following week AFTER the visitation of the quail!* Continuing: "And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for TODAY IS A SABBATH unto the LORD: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none" (Exo.16:24-26).

Do you see? For over two hundred years, while captive in Egypt, the Israelites had forgotten the truth about the Sabbath commandment. They had certainly not been observing it while under Egyptian bondage. And up until this point, God had NOT shown them which day was the Sabbath. Therefore, He had not required it of them! It's that simple.

Therefore, what happened next, after God revealed the Sabbath to them, one week later after they had eaten the quail sent to them? "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for the LORD hath [now] given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; ABIDE ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seven day. So the people RESTED on the seventh day" (Exo.16:27-30). Up until this point, then, God had not revealed to them the weekly Sabbath, so He did not require them to observe the Sabbath, and they were not observing it! How plain!

This clearly means that they were *not yet observing the weekly Sabbath!* Therefore, God would have allowed them to do things that day which normally would not be permitted or allowed!

The Two Holy Days of Unleavened Bread

Coulter himself admits that the 15th of Nisan, the first day of Unleavened Bread, is a high holy day (Lev.23:6-8), in which no "work" was to be done. Yet he *also admits* that it was on the 15th of Nisan that Israel got up and *marched out of Egypt* -- a very arduous, difficult task involving WORK ((Num.33:3). Thus in the year of the Exodus, God permitted Israel to WORK on this high holy day!

Coulter also admits that on the final or seventh day of Unleavened Bread, that the Israelites crossed through the Red Sea. This also would have required much work and difficult labor, marching perhaps as much as ten miles across the sea-bottom. Again, however, God permitted it. And on this holy day God Himself "worked" -- and caused the winds to hold back the water in two towering cliffs -- and then caused the towering walls of water to crash down upon the Egyptians (Exodus 14)!

Obviously, things were a little "different" in the year of the Exodus. Special exigencies demanded special provisions. And so it was concerning the question of the quail. It did not matter that God sent the quail on what would have been the sabbath day, because at that time Israel were not yet observing the weekly Sabbath.

God Takes Precedence Over the Sabbath

But would it have necessarily been wrong for the Israelites to pick up quail from off the ground, prepare it and cook it, and eat it on the Sabbath? Why should we assume? This was a very special event! God Himself was proving to them that HE WAS GOD -- the LORD their Deliverer! As such, He is also the GOD OF THE SABBATH, and He is the One who says what can and cannot be done on the Sabbath day! In this case, due to their great hunger pains, they had a true "need" for food, and so God gave them special permission to gather quail, prepare and eat it, as a special "feast" on that Sabbath day!

According to Jewish reckoning, the quail came on the scene BEFORE SUNSET, in the late afternoon, ON THE SABBATH DAY. Nowhere do the Scriptures say that if God delivers quail into your camp, and they fall right at your feet, dead tired from their long flight, that you cannot pick them up on the Sabbath, and then prepare them, and eat them -- *especially if God Himself, by a miracle, provides them for you!* God is greater than the Sabbath day.

If God provides you food on the Sabbath to eat, in His presence, would it not be a sign of disrespect and dishonor to Him if you refused to do so, saying in your heart, "But Lord, it's the Sabbath! I can't pick it up, or prepare it today!?" God is the One who sanctifies the Sabbath day -- not the other way around. And He has authority to make exceptions to the normal observance of a holy day, if and when He chooses to do so! Let's not put the Sabbath ahead of GOD, the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, in importance!

Jesus Christ rebuked the Pharisees for a similar mistake to that which Fred Coulter is making. They, too, were getting the "cart before the horse." They were getting mixed up in their priorities. They thought the "gold" in an offering was more important than the temple of God! Jesus upbraided them, saying: "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! *Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?* And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. *Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?* Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein" (Mat.23:16-21).

The Example of Christ and the Disciples

To prove that it would not have been wrong to pick up quail from the ground on the Sabbath, and cook and eat it, notice what Jesus Christ Himself shows us. We read in the gospel of Mark, "And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, *as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.* And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, *why do they on the Sabbath day that which is unlawful?* And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did *when he had need, and was an hungred*, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?" (Mark 2:23-26).

The God who led Israel into the wilderness, and who sent the quail, is the very One who became Jesus Christ, the Rock, our Saviour (I Cor.10:4). And Jesus Himself said:

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the

Sabbath: Therefore, the Son of man is **Lord also of the Sabbath**" (Mark 2:27-28).

Coulter would make the Sabbath an onerous bondage; Christ did not do so. Coulter says it would have been "work" for the Israelites to pick up quail on the Sabbath or to prepare it and eat it. But remember, this was a very unusual circumstance! God was proving to them Who He Was -- that He was indeed the LORD -- including the LORD of the Sabbath day! He was also showing to them His great mercy and compassion! Although it is normally not proper to prepare meals on the weekly Sabbath, day, *there are obviously exceptions to this rule!*

The gospel of Matthew recounts the same story. The Pharisees criticized the disciples of Christ of breaking the Sabbath by their plucking of wheat on the Sabbath. In their view, as apparently in Coulter's view, this was an outrage. They were insistent. They were angry. In their eyes, Jesus's disciples were profaning the Sabbath!

But was this real profanation of the Sabbath? Jesus said *no*. In fact, in the Matthew account, He goes further, and adds: "Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, *That in this place is one greater than the temple*. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the *guiltless*. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day" (Matt.12:1-8).

Jesus was present at that location, and time, and He as the "Lord of the Sabbath" gave His disciples permission to pluck grain on the Sabbath -- thus proving Who He really Was! They were therefore guiltless in what they did. Even so, the One Who Became Christ was with the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sin, when they, too, were very hungry. And He, the Lord of the Sabbath, sent them quail *on the Sabbath*, showing again that He was the LORD of the Sabbath! It was therefore *all right for them to prepare and eat that quail on the Sabbath!*

Therefore, even though the disciples of Christ plucked wheat and ate it on the Sabbath, which the stringent Pharisees condemned, Jesus Himself said it was all right! Even so, just because Fred Coulter condemns the very idea of Israelites picking up quail from off the ground, cooking and eating quail on the Sabbath, does not make it wrong in God's sight, who was showing mercy to the hungry people! God Himself is greater than the Sabbath itself. What the children of Israel did, therefore, was not a violation of the Sabbath day, since they had divine permission to do so!

Hiding Under Traditions of the Jews?

In his letter, Coulter declares:

"So, if you are truly honest with the Scriptures, you can no longer hide under the traditions of Judaism. It is my hope and prayer that you can come to the knowledge of the Truth of the Scriptures of God

the Father and Jesus Christ. Remember, everyone will have to stand before the judgment seat of God, not men, and 'give an account of himself to God.'"

Is it right for Coulter to claim that I have been "hiding under the traditions of Judaism"? In this article, I have proved from the Scriptures -- not the traditions of Judaism -- the truth about the Sabbath. I have quoted the very example of Jesus Christ and His disciples. Contrary to his assumption, I am not hiding anywhere. My question to him is: Why does he reject the plain and simple Word of God?

Jesus Himself said that certain "traditions of the elders" of the Jews were nothing more than the "traditions of MEN" (Mark 7:1-9). These particular "traditions," He took exception with -- such as the failure of children to provide for and help their aged parents under certain circumstances (Mark 7:11). In the gospel of Matthew we read:

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever saith unto his father or mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition" (Matt.15:1-6).

There were certain traditions of the scribes and Pharisees which were wrong -- and Jesus rebuked them for those wrong-headed traditions, which nullified the commandments of God! He called them "hypocrites" for adding these man-made traditions, and said, "But IN VAIN they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of MEN" (Matt.15:9).

However, Jesus did NOT condemn all the customs of the Jews. In fact, He and His family, Joseph and Mary and their other children, all observed the Passover *along with the other Jews!* We read in Luke's gospel:

"Now his parents went to *Jerusalem EVERY YEAR AT THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER*. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem *AFTER THE CUSTOM* of the feast" (Luke 2:41-42).

Now Coulter claims it was not necessary to go up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Passover -- that they could have remained home, in Galilee, and have killed it there. He claims it was only "Jewish tradition" which declared that the Passover had to be slain at the Temple in Jerusalem! To justify this strange conclusion, he asserts that Ezra the scribe **REWROTE** Deuteronomy 16, and inserted the passage which commands the Passover to be kept only at Jerusalem! But would Ezra have nullified and abrogated the words of Moses? That is nonsense! Utter nonsense!

The traditions Jesus condemned He obviously did not follow. Yet we see in Luke

2 that He and his parents observed the Feast of Passover *with the Jews, in Jerusalem*, just as the Law commanded (Deut.16:5-7, 16). They also observed it at the same time as the other Jews -- not a day earlier, as Coulter claims. If Jesus had kept the Passover a day or night earlier, *why didn't He even once rebuke and upbraid the Pharisees for this dastardly act of changing the date of the Passover? Why are all the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and all the epistles of the New Testament completely SILENT about such a CHANGE?*

Furthermore, if Jesus and the Church observed Passover a day earlier, *WHY didn't the Pharisees and scribes rebuke, question, interrogate, and criticize Him on this account -- WHY were THEY silent about it, since observing Passover at the same time would have been required of all Jews, and any deviation would have been denounced, excoriated, and condemned?*

The Scribes and Pharisees

As to the question of whether the scribes and Pharisees observed the Passover at the right time, Jesus Christ Himself declared that they sat "in Moses' seat." He declared in plain words:

**"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat.
All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that
observe and do"** (Matt.23:2-3).

I believe this Scripture. I obey my Messiah. The scribes and Pharisees were the ones who preserved the sacred calendar, and the dates of all the holy days. This was part of the "oral law" which they received from the time of Moses.

As Paul wrote to the Romans, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: *chiefly, because that unto them were committed the ORACLES OF GOD.* For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom.3:1-4). To the Jews were given the oracles, words, testimonies of God -- the Scriptures, the sacred calendar, and the oral decisions and regulations passed on down from the time of Moses.

We read in the Mishnah, the codification of the "oral law," which came from Moses' time,

"Moses received Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to elders, and elders to prophets. And prophets handed it on to the men of the great assembly" (*Pirque Avot 1:1*).

This ancient authority, first put to writing by Judah the Patriarch about 200 A.D., gives the genealogy of these ancient scribes and sages, who continued the transmission of the "oral torah" from the Great Assembly down to its own day. One of the last survivors of the Great Assembly of Ezra's day was Simeon the righteous; he passed it

on to Antigonus of Sokho; from him to Yose ben Yoezer of Zeredah and Yose ben Yohanan of Jerusalem; they passed it on to Joshua ben Perahyah and Nittai the Arbelite; they passed it on to Judah ben Tabbar and Simeon ben Shetah; from them it went to Shemaiah and Avtalyon; from thence to Hillel and Shammai; then to Rabban Gamaliel (who taught the apostle Paul -- according to Acts 22:3, Gamaliel taught the apostle Paul "according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers!"); and from him to Simeon his son.

Says Jacob Neusner in *The Oral Torah: The Sacred Books of Judaism* --

"Seen as a sequence of names, Pirke Avot 1 therefore makes a startling point. *Torah at Sinai* is passed on in unbroken chain through Moses to Joshua and onward . . . to the very sages cited in the Mishnah itself. Now since *Torah at Sinai* to others of that age -- to the Christians, for example -- meant only the written Torah (e.g., the Five Books of Moses, and prophetic books or the Hebrew Scriptures), the intent becomes clear. The Torah comes to Israel not only in the Scriptures. What sages teach in the Mishnah is part of the Torah, too" (p.53).

The Mishnah, too, in its original form, then, traces back to Moses at Sinai, and is called the "oral law." However, it is subordinate to and dependent upon the written Torah, or Scriptures, and any traditions which were "added" by later generations of sages would have to be evaluated and certified in the light of the Scriptures themselves. Nevertheless, the point is clear: There was an "oral law" handed down from Moses, and the scribes and Pharisees were the custodians and inheritors of it! That is why Jesus Christ said they, and they alone -- not the Sadducees, or Essenes, or some other heretical sect or group -- "sat in Moses' seat" and had authority to adjudicate the calendar, determine the new moons, the feast days, and so forth. Jesus acknowledged their authority in this regard. To say otherwise is to make the Messiah out to be a liar.

Therefore, when we observe the same day for the Passover that the Jews do, who received the Mishnah, and the traditions of the Pharisees, and who walk in the footsteps of the Pharisees, today, we are literally *obeying Christ Jesus, our Lord!*

Fred Coulter, by changing the date of Passover to the beginning of Nisan 14 -- regardless of whatever "reasoning" tautology he uses to do this -- disobeys the command of Jesus Christ, and dishonors Him, and obviates His plain and simple statements and commandments, and His example which He set for us.

I personally look forward to meeting Jesus someday, and appearing before His judgment seat on this issue, because I am OBEDIENT to the words of my Lord. I rejoice in obeying His Truth! But Coulter and those who think like he does, and who follow him -- such as Roderick C. Meredith and the Global Church of God, and others, which endorse His conclusions -- are disobedient to the words and commandments of Christ, the Law Giver.

A Hint of Anti-Semitism?

Coulter asks, in his letter to me:

"Why should we put the people of God in bondage to Judaism and make Christ of none effect?"

But it is not "Judaism" which is at issue here -- it is simply which is the true interpretation of Scripture itself! At no time do I profess or claim that all Christians are to keep ALL the commandments of Judaism, including traditions which Jesus Christ Himself rejected, such as the washing of pots and pans, and very onerous laws about Sabbath observance (see Matt.15, Mark 2, 7). That is not the issue at all! The issue is simply WHAT IS THE TRUTH? And Jesus Himself said that insofar as the LAW of God is concerned, the 'Scribes and Pharisees SIT IN MOSES' SEAT' (Matt.23:2). That fact seems to mean nothing to Fred Coulter. He dismisses it as of no consequence. But if it is meaningless, then *WHY DID JESUS CHRIST STRESS IT TO HIS OWN DISCIPLES?*

It is really Fed Coulter who "makes Christ of none effect" *by rejecting His very own words!*

It is not "bondage" to Judaism to acknowledge that the Jews are the ones whom God used to transmit, preserve, and retain the "oracles of God." It is not "bondage" to admit that they preserved the correct calendar, the correct holy days, and the weekly Sabbath!

The apostle Paul did not consider it "bondage" to obey the LAWS of God, which He gave at Mount Sinai, and which were preserved by the Jews. He wrote, "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; *touching the righteousness which is in the law, BLAMELESS*" (Phil.3:5-6). If Paul had been taught erroneously, by Gamaliel, as to the correct day and time to observe the Passover, then he would NOT HAVE BEEN BLAMELESS! But, he tells us, Gamaliel taught him "according to the PERFECT MANNER OF THE LAWS of the fathers" (Acts 22:3). Therefore, Paul obviously observed Passover at the same time the Pharisees did -- there is not even a whiff of a hint that he changed the day and time he observed this high holy day after his conversion!

It was Paul who said, "Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of CHRIST*" (I Cor.11:1). Therefore, both Christ Jesus and the apostle Paul observed the SAME DAY THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES OBSERVED!

Striving about Words

It seems as if Fred Coulter seeks to make a great issue over words, particularly the words *ba erev* and *ben ha arbayim*. It is sad that he cannot see the forest because his nose is stuck up so close to one single "tree." It becomes onerous arguing over the

definitions of words. The apostle Paul said of such, that they are "proud, knowing nothing, but *doting about questions and strifes of words*, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings [Greek, gallings one of another] of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth" (I Tim.6:4-5).

Fred Coulter has challenged me. Now I challenge him -- to open *his* mind, to "think it possible, in the bowels of Christ, that ye may be mistaken," as Oliver Cromwell pleaded in his day. There is an old saying: "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink!"

I can only pray that God will have mercy on Fred Coulter, and those who follow him, and who accept his book as if it were the "latest word" on the Passover controversy, and open up their mind and understanding to the truth, before it is too late. They are treading on very dangerous ground. They are rushing in where angels fear to tread. They are walking straight into the quicksand of error and falsehood. I urge them all to repent, now, before God delivers them over to an evil spirit, or to the destruction of the Great Tribulation and the wrath of God, because they have rejected the word of the Lord!

The day is coming soon when we will "all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom.14:10). Indeed, "every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal.6:5). I urge all of those ministers who came out of Worldwide, to remember the admonition of the apostle Paul who said:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal.6:7).

The apostle Paul also wrote:

"Every man's work shall be made manifest [revealed]: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed by fire*; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work ABIDE which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall [possibly] be saved [if his error was in true sincerity and not malicious or deliberate obfuscation and denial of the truth]; *yet so as by fire* " (I Cor.3:13-15).

Whence Cometh Salvation?

It is truly sad that so many former ministers who have left the Worldwide Church of God now seem to evidence such an unwavering bias and bigotry in their total rejection of all that is Jewish and related to Judaism. For Jesus Himself said,

"Salvation is OF THE JEWS " (John 4:22).

In the book of Zechariah we read:

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, *We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you*" (Zech.8:23).

Instead of putting down the Jews, because of a spirit of hatred and anti-Semitism, isn't it time we realize that God knew what He was doing, and that He is the One who chose the Jews to preserve His Word down through the corridors of time, from hoary antiquity? Isn't it time we give credit where credit is due, and honor to whom honor is due, and not argue over picky, hair-splitting, contrived definitions and meanings of words?

Isn't it time we develop an honest approach toward the Word of God, and a deep humility and reverence for the "truth" (II Thess.2:8-12)?

"Answer a Fool according to His Folly"

In his letter, Fred Coulter said that he felt compelled to answer me, "Because such ignorant, brazen, hateful behavior as you have demonstrated must be answered! It must be answered publically [sic]."

However, he said he was "torn" as to whether he should "answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceits," or "not to answer a fool according to his folly lest you become like him."

Of course, that quotation is a reference to the book of Proverbs, chapter 26:4-5. Solomon wrote, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*" I have answered his letter, and written this article, for the sake of the hundreds, if not thousands, who may be wrongly influenced by his allegations, the subtlety of his book, and the claims and assertions he makes. BEWARE! Satan was very subtle in the garden of Eden, when he deceived Eve (Gen.3:1; II Cor.11:3). His servants are also very clever, extremely slick, and may even *appear* righteous on the surface (II Cor.11:13-15).

Watch out! Don't let Satan the devil deceive you regarding the Passover. Don't let him catch you in his devices, trap you in his snare, and enthrall you with his deceptions. You are a free moral agent. "Prove all things," as the apostle Paul commands (I Thess.5:21). Take nothing for granted!

Ask God to search your heart, praying, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O LORD, correct me,

but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer.10:23-24). Remember, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer.17:9). Pray with David, "Search ME, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way [Heb., *way of pain*] in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

David also prayed, setting us an example -- and I urge EVERY MINISTER WHO PROFESSES TO SERVE GOD -- to pray this prayer, as well:

"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:12-14).

Think about it, my friends. If you truly fear God, then remember, "The fear of the LORD is the *beginning* of knowledge: but *fools* despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). Are you "teachable"? David writes, "The MEEK will he guide in judgment: and the MEEK will he *TEACH HIS WAY*" (Psalm 25:9). God says to every true believer in Christ: "I will INSTRUCT thee and TEACH thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will GUIDE thee with mine eye [Heb., I will counsel thee, *mine eye shall be upon thee*]. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding*" (Psalm 32:8-9).

What about you? Are you teachable?