



"Be not the first by whom the new are tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."  
—Alexander Pope

23-Mar-18

## *Keeping Godly Traditions (Part One)*

As the play *Fiddler on the Roof* opens, the audience sees a solitary figure, barely visible in the shadows of dawn, sitting and playing his violin on a steep roof overlooking a pre-1917 Russian village. As the workday begins, a Jew by the name of Tevye, the patriarch of one of the families in the village, enters the scene and delivers the following monologue directly to the audience:

A fiddler on the roof! Sounds crazy, no? But in our little village of Anatevka, you might say every one of us is a fiddler on the roof, trying to scratch out a pleasant simple tune without breaking his neck. It isn't easy! You may ask, why do we stay up there if it's so dangerous? We stay because Anatevka is our home. And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in a word: Tradition!

Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka, we have traditions for everything: how to eat, how to sleep, how to wear clothes. For instance we always keep our heads covered and always wear a little prayer shawl. This shows our constant devotion to [God](#)! You may ask how did this tradition start? I'll tell you: I don't know! But it's a tradition!

## CGG Weekly: Keeping Godly Traditions (Part One) (23-Mar-18)

Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do!

The play makes it obvious that, to the people of Anatevka, tradition was precisely what Tevye proclaimed: the foundation for their relationships within society, with one another, and with God. Anything that distorted those traditions caused them to teeter and fall from the roof. This vignette should evoke some questions, especially to Christians, who have declared allegiance to [Jesus Christ](#) and are precariously balancing their lives in a perilous world.

- Is tradition a good or a bad thing? If it is good, how important is it to uphold it?
- If upholding it is important, which ones should be upheld for the good of society, the Body of Christ, and a lasting relationship with God?
- Can tradition give a person insight into God's expectations of him personally, society as a whole, and the church in general?

We will answer these questions broadly as a lead-in to a tradition we keep in the church of God that may be one of the most significant but least respected and understood. Yet, some have considered this important tradition, the keeping of the [Night to Be Much Observed](#), to be Herbert W. Armstrong's "pipe dream."

We all know Jesus tells us not to follow the traditions of men blindly (see [Matthew 15:1-9](#)), but we are to follow the traditions God has carefully placed in the church. But unlike Tevye, when asked, we should know, not only how they started, but also the purpose and intent of His traditions. A sizable part of our training under Christ is to learn to think and act like God from the heart.

To reflect a sure truth that needs to be our direction in life, we need to modify Tevye's final statement: "Because of *God's* traditions, everyone who is born a new man knows who he is and what God expects him to do from the heart!" Of course, it takes a lifetime of Christ's work in us to bring us to perfection, but we should always be working to discern what is of God and what is not—and just as important, *why* we do what we do.

So what is a tradition? *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines it succinctly: "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (such as a religious practice or a social custom)." This definition fits well with both human traditions

and the vastly more significant traditions established by God.

[This world](#) has developed inherited, established, and customary patterns of thought, action, and behavior. From the beginning, though, God has also given men inherited, established, and customary patterns of His thought, action, and behavior. Through God's Spirit dwelling in us, we have access to a thought-process that should produce actions and behaviors firmly seated on the purpose and intent of God's traditions, which teach us to be like Him.

Consider one of the most fundamental traditions of God, His [Sabbath](#). Yes, essentially, God's commandments are traditions, as are the statutes and ordinances that derive from those commandments. The Sabbath is a commandment of God that reveals His established and customary pattern of thought, action, and behavior in keeping with the way He lives. God created it for us as an inheritance.

Over the centuries, the traditions of men have perverted the Sabbath, but if we learn to keep His law for the purpose and in the intent in which God gave it, as reinforced by the Word of God, we can produce actions and behavior in line with God's will. If we follow the letter and the spirit of God's Sabbath law, it will continue to provide the real rest that can be found only in keeping it according to God's original purpose and intent.

In [Matthew 15:1-9](#) and [Mark 7:1-13](#), Jesus uses "commandment(s)" and "tradition(s)" several times together. For example, in [Mark 7:9](#), the two words are closely interlocked: "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition" (see [Matthew 15:6](#)). "Your tradition," "the tradition of the elders" ([Matthew 15:2](#); [Mark 7:3](#), 5), originated in the commandments of the Jews' Oral Law, and Jews considered breaking these traditions to be transgression. Jesus reprimanded them, not for following traditions, but for prioritizing their unfounded traditions over God's commandments.

In the same way, God's commandments establish patterns of action and behavior that inspire traditions among His people. If a tradition has its source in God's commandments and reflects His thoughts, actions, and behaviors—even if they are traditions conceived by a human being—they are good traditions and keeping them is right. We can even say they are God-inspired traditions. As the apostle Paul writes in [II Thessalonians 2:15](#), "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle."

Tradition, then, is godly if we know how it fits into truly understanding the mind, character, and behavior of God. Unlike Tevye, who could not even explain why he wore tassels or where the tradition started, we need to know how the traditions we keep

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began and how they help us to have a more productive relationship with God in humility and gratitude.

Part Two will take a closer look at the commanded tradition of the Night to Be Much Observed.

- Mark Schindler

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## *World News Highlights*

### [Millennials Couldn't Be More Different From Their Grandparents](#)

Fast Company 19-Mar-18

### [Official Washington Flocking to Domsday Camps](#)

The Washington Examiner 19-Mar-18

### [Student Planning Abortion Protest After School Shooting Walkout](#)

CBS Sacramento 20-Mar-18

### [Rabbi Says Meat From Genetically Cloned Pig Could Be Eaten by Jews - Including With Milk](#)

Jewish Telegraphic Agency 22-Mar-18

### [Jared Kushner's Dreams of Mideast Peace Are Alive](#)

Bloomberg 21-Mar-18

### [Congressman Suggests Second Amendment as Means of Opposing Trump](#)

The New York Post 19-Mar-18

### [An Information Apocalypse Is Coming. How Can We Protect Ourselves](#)

The Guardian 16-Mar-18

### [The Us Military Is Making Lasers Create Voices Out of Thin Air](#)

Defense One 20-Mar-18

### [World's Largest Collection of Ocean Garbage Is Twice the Size of Texas](#)

USA Today 22-Mar-18

### [The Saudis Take on Radical Islam](#)

## *New Transcripts*

### [1419c: Solving the School-Shooting Crisis](#)

Given by Richard T. Ritenbaugh on 17-Feb-18

### [1420c: Billy Graham's Death](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 24-Feb-18

### [1423c: What Kind of Bugs Have You Eaten?](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 17-Mar-18

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## *Prayer Requests*

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[King Family](#)

[Jeannie Beal](#)

[Melissa Chandler](#)

[Melissa Chandler](#)

[Allen Dickens](#)

[Al Ferke](#)

[Pat Higgins](#)

[Pat Higgins](#)

[Robert Pelkie](#)

[Kondwhani Sakala](#)

[Kondwhani Sakala](#)

[Bupe Sakala](#)

[Nancy Schindler](#)

[Naomi Vaghi](#)

[Naomi Vaghi](#)

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## *From the Archives: Featured Sermon*

## [The Lesson of the Night to be Much Observed](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh emphasizes that the Night to be Much Observed symbolizes the beginning of a time of spiritual liberty. The meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek served as a precursor of Passover, having parallel symbols of bread and wine. This event sets the stage for the covenant between Abraham and his descendants (both physical and spiritual) of liberty and land. As we approach Passover, we need to realize that the same God who exercised vigilance and care over our forebears does so over us. The killing of the lamb signifies our responsibility resulting from our sins, the eating of the lamb signifies establishing a relationship between God and us, and going out of Egypt signifies maintaining this relationship.

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## *From the Archives: Featured Article*

### [Remaining Unleavened](#)

by John O. Reid (1930-2016)

We have a tendency to put matters behind us once we are finished with them, but we cannot afford to do this with the lessons we learn from the Days of Unleavened Bread. John Reid shows that those lessons are eternal!

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## *Featured Audio Schedule*

### **Friday Night Bible Study**

The next Bible Study will be **The Commandments (Part 9)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 23-Mar-18**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

### **Daily Audio Programs**

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage](#).

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Sunday 25-Mar-18	It's Important To God Too (Part One)
Monday 26-Mar-18	Preventing the Warfare State
Tuesday 27-Mar-18	Lessons From the Animals
Wednesday 28-Mar-18	Libya in Prophecy
Thursday 29-Mar-18	Thank You for Finishing What You Start!
Friday 30-Mar-18	Leadership and the Covenants (Part Twenty-One)

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