

Restaurants in the Millennium

By
Tom, Dick & Harry

Do you believe there will be restaurants operating on God's Sabbath during the Millennium? Apparently, some of God's leaders do. Oh, they won't come right out and admit it, but this idea has subtly emerged in arguments presented by certain COG leader's in defense of dining out on the Sabbath. One such leader is David C. Pack of the Restored Church of God.

In an article commissioned by Mr. Pack entitled *Dining out on the Sabbath*; a very interesting stream of logic is presented. He claims through his spokesman, Mr. George Rogers, that because great numbers of God's people will be fed at the temple when His Millennial Kingdom is established on earth, true Christians may now dine out at restaurants on the Sabbath. Furthermore, because those who will serve God's people in the Millennium are compensated (albeit not on the Sabbath) for their Levitical duties, it is permissible to pay restaurant workers for their services. Mr. Pack, through his representative, then likens the labor performed by restaurant employees to that performed by Levites serving in the temple. Therefore because these Levites engage in profane labor on this day and are held blameless, restaurant personnel serving God's people today should also be held blameless for their labor.

At the conclusion of this article, Mr. Pack, through his team of writers, employs what can only be described as standard operating procedure for the RCG—he smears and belittles anyone and everyone who believes contrary to him. With that said, let us examine Mr. Pack's argument and ask some very important questions concerning the biblical facts he claims authorizes him to go to a fine restaurant on a Friday evening, and even do so with God's blessing. In the interest of fairness we will quote Mr. Packs position verbatim. We assume it is his position because he has acknowledged commissioning the article we cite and he is also the physical head of the RCG. So let's proceed.

Mr. Pack's Position:

“During the Millennium, throngs of people will come to the temple complex on Mount Zion and offer sacrifices, especially on the weekly Sabbaths and annual Holy Days. Yet, the writers of the previously quoted book [*A Sabbath Test*] make this blanket statement: “In the millennium there will be no restaurants [implying dining facilities in general] operating on the Sabbath” (p. 10).”

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack is redefining the term “restaurants” as “dining facilities” and attributing this new definition to the authors of *A Sabbath Test*. However this is NOT their definition; it is his, disguised as theirs’. According to Mr. Pack, “restaurants” are now broadly defined as any place where food is served. He has crafted it this way because he knows food will be served in the temple during the Millennium. Furthermore, by referring to the temple as a “dining facility” (aka restaurant), he will be able to discredit the authors claim that no restaurants will be open on God’s Sabbath when His Kingdom is established. However, there is an even greater objective to his strategy.

By making no distinction between a “restaurant” and a “dining facility” such as a church kitchen or a set of picnic tables in a park, Mr. Pack intentionally blurs the line between what is appropriate Sabbath dining and inappropriate Sabbath dining. According to Him there is no distinction between having a “pot luck” after services and going out to a restaurant. Furthermore, he doesn’t want you to make that distinction either. This is because he wants you to believe that because you can do one, you can also do the other. What he never admits is that the “other” will not be open on the Sabbath in God’s kingdom.

Through the deliberate manipulation of this term, Mr. Pack is arguing that the authors don’t know what they are talking about because there will be dining facilities (a.k.a. restaurants) serving food to God’s people at the temple every Sabbath during the Millennium and beyond. He then suggests that this is comparable to what restaurants do today.

What Mr. Pack is doing in this section of his article, is twisting the authors’ words to conform to his pre-conceived conclusion. In reality the authors of *A Sabbath Test* think no such thing. They are fully aware that great numbers of people will be fed in a dining facility at the temple on the Sabbath. However, they absolutely know that commercial restaurants like those frequented by Mr. Pack and others, will not be opened on the God’s holy day when His Kingdom is restored on earth. Furthermore, so does Mr. Pack.

Now for some clarity. When the authors of *A Sabbath Test* refer to the term “restaurants”, in their book, they mean it in a traditional sense. In other

words, there will be no commercial restaurants open for BUSINESS on the Sabbath during the Millennium—the same restaurants Mr. Pack patronizes on the Sabbath today. What is clearly being conveyed by the authors is that in the Millennium Mr. Pack will not be able to go out to dinner at a fine bistro on a Friday evening. This is because they will be closed in accordance with God's commandment.

However, because Mr. Pack wants to engage in this practice and teach others to do the same, he twists words and employs semantics to advance his cause. He now explains why the authors are wrong in thinking there will be no "dining facilities" open on the Sabbath in God's Kingdom. Understand however, this is NOT what the authors believe. It is only what Mr. Pack wants you to think they believe.

Mr. Packs Position continued:

"This [the statement in *A Sabbath Test* that there will be no restaurants open on the Sabbath in the Millennium] contradicts what is described in the book of Ezekiel. [Remember, it is Mr. Pack who created the contradiction and now attributes it to the authors of *A Sabbath Test*] In the huge temple complex, four large kitchens in the outer court (Ezek. 46:21-24) will be in operation, providing food for many thousands who will dine in 30 separate dining rooms, each about 6,400 square feet. The kitchens provide a place to cook the sacrifices that people will bring to the temple. They will be allowed to have a portion of the offerings they present; a portion will also be reserved for the priests.

Just as this was done in ancient times, it will also be done in the world tomorrow. The future temple will be a huge complex that will accommodate the many thousands—and later, millions—who will come to worship there each year. This complex will need to accommodate far larger numbers than Solomon's temple or the temple that was renovated in the days of King Herod. In the future, certain types of service will be done on the Sabbath—and this will be done with God's full knowledge and blessings!"

While privately owned restaurants are different from Church-operated dining facilities, both require labor. The millennial temple complex will involve specialized workers who will serve in distinct capacities, meaning they will be compensated."

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack first acknowledges that there is a difference between a retail restaurant and what is being described in Ezekiel, but then he seems to dismiss the difference. As a matter of fact he never mentions one. However,

he does expound on the similarities. For example: according to Mr. Pack, both require specialized labor and that like restaurant personnel, Levites serving in the temple are compensated. Therefore, according to Mr. Pack's argument restaurant employees have more in common with a Levite than one may think.

At this point it is important to understand that we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** take no pleasure in denigrating anybody, let alone a church leader. However, the argument advanced by Mr. Pack is totally contrived. Its purpose is to justify an activity that is found nowhere in the scriptures. Remember that the purpose of his article is to defend the practice of God's people dining out on the Sabbath. To do this Mr. Pack attempts to blur the lines between what will be done in the Millennium, and beyond, with going out to dinner on a Friday night. Once again, REMEMBER that Mr. Pack's purpose with this article is to defend the practice of going to restaurants on the Sabbath.

While Mr. Pack, for obvious reasons, argues the similarities between restaurant personnel and Levites working on the Sabbath, we would like to present the differences—and they are significant. Consider just a few.

1. Those who perform Levitical duties in the Kingdom serve the God of Heaven. Those who work in restaurants on the Sabbath serve the god of this world (2 Cor.4:4).
2. Those who serve in the temple during the Millennium are committed to assisting God's people in honoring His Sabbath and holy days. Those who work in restaurants have no idea what those days are let alone what they mean. They will however, wish you a "Merry Christmas" or a "Happy Easter."
3. Any compensation extended to those performing Levitical duties in the Kingdom is provided by God Almighty from tithes and offerings given to Him. By the way, the same is true today. Meanwhile, those who work in restaurants are compensated by patrons in the form of tips and by their employer who generates revenue by selling products.
4. Those who perform Levitical duties on the Sabbath are held blameless before God. However, those who work in restaurants on the Sabbath are commanded to REPENT!

The idea that anyone would characterize serving God's people a meal on the Sabbath, from His temple no less, as tantamount to what is done at a commercial restaurant is reckless, and a huge distortion of the scriptures. Once again, remember that Mr. Pack's entire reason for this article is to

argue that God approves of His people dining out on the Sabbath. Can you imagine giving that explanation to God?

Mr. Pack then explains how those serving in the temple on the Sabbath are engaged in profane labor through their service to God's people—often very strenuous labor. The implication here is that if God's people can cause Levites to W-O-R-K on the Sabbath, why can't they cause restaurant employees to do the same?

Mr. Pack's Position continued:

The food menus at the millennial temple will not solely consist of meat (beef, lamb or goat). Ezekiel 46 also mentions meal (grain) offerings and baked bread. Certainly, God will allow vegetables, fruits and various trimmings to make the dishes attractive, as well as nourishing. Again, all these things spell W-O-R-K. Much of it will be pre-assembled on the preparation day, but also much will be done on the Sabbath. During the Millennium, as the world's population escalates into the billions, only a tiny fraction of the people will be present at the temple at any given time. There will be hundreds of other locations in which Sabbath services will be held. Provisions will be allowed for people to eat. This means that there will be dining facilities to accommodate larger groups numbering into the thousands. Perhaps on many occasions, the people might bring potluck meals prepared the day before. But there will be times when potlucks for such large gatherings will not be practical.

Ezekiel's vision of the future temple gives us a glimpse into how God will conduct things in the world to come. From this, we can readily discern that feeding large congregations on the Sabbath will entail a degree of real labor. If God can make—and always has made—allowances for His priests when they worked on the Sabbath, is it not possible for Him to make allowances for others who serve God's people? Those who condemn brethren for dining out on the Sabbath do not think so. Nevertheless, the glimpse that God inspired Ezekiel to record, along with many other scriptures, shows us a more realistic picture.

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack offers an interesting, but very humanly contrived argument. Notice again what he says:

“If God can make—and always has made—allowances for His priests when they worked on the Sabbath, is it not possible for Him to make allowances for others who serve God's people?”

Here is where all the problems with issues like this begin! Like so many in professing Christianity, Mr. Pack attempts to employ human reasoning and attribute it to God. The Protestant world does the identical thing when justifying all kinds of traditions. For example: God loves children and wants them to learn about His Son. Therefore because Christmas is beautiful and teaches children about the birth of Jesus; it must be good. Now Mr. Pack might argue that our example is nonsense because the Bible CONDEMNS Christmas. BUT THAT IS OUR POINT! It also condemns going out into a world where God's Sabbath is being trampled on and paying people to trample on it for their benefit.

With these words, Mr. Pack is actually attempting to speak on behalf of God, and in a sense use God's law against Him. He knows that Jesus explained that profane labor performed by the priests on His Sabbath is exempt from God's judgement, therefore why not take it further. What his argument is saying in effect is:

"If God will allow his priests to work for his people and not be held accountable for it, why wouldn't he allow anyone to serve them on His day? You know, like waiters and waitresses who profane the Sabbath every week. God could surely give them a pass when they wait on His people. Perhaps not when they serve others, but certainly us."

Mr. Pack's words may sound logical, but they reek with self-justification. Furthermore, they are designed to extend a form of amnesty to those who profane God's Sabbath with impunity. This is not much different than selling indulgences.

Additionally, it is interesting that here Mr. Pack acknowledges that restaurant personnel are serving God's people. However, elsewhere he asserts that they are only serving their masters—the restaurant owners, NOT GOD'S PEOPLE!

Mr. Pack's Position continued:

Let's understand: There are circumstances under which God says that work on the Sabbath is wrong and other times He makes plain that it is not. Thus, it comes down to: What are the circumstances involving the work?—who is doing the work?—why, for what purpose, is it being done?—who is being burdened and who is being unburdened?

God always answers these questions in principle, but does it through His faithful leaders (Tit. 1:9), not through any "Tom, Dick or Harry" who gets a notion in his head about the who, what, why, when and where of that work according to his personal opinion or feeling.

Here is why following personal opinions of misguided, unqualified, self-appointed teachers becomes a truly serious issue.

Our Response:

Mr. Pack is actually correct here. There are circumstances under which labor on the Sabbath is wrong and other times when it is permissible. Working in a restaurant on the Sabbath falls into the former category regardless of how hard this church leader tries to rehabilitate it. Mr. Pack, These people are SINNING! Can't you see that?

If you can't see it, then consider the following hypothetical situation: Suppose one of your members came to you and asked if she could work this Sabbath. She informs you that she is a waitress and that some of your congregation will be dining at her restaurant today. What would you recommend? What if she told you that the ONLY people she would be serving would be RCG members? Could she do it then?

Perhaps the biggest error in Mr. Pack's argument is that he believes it is up to him, as a minister, to decide what is appropriate behavior on God's Sabbath. We couldn't disagree more. We believe it is God's decision. Furthermore, we are absolutely convicted by His word that He has spoken loudly here. God's word says that we are not to compel the servant or the stranger to labor on our behalf on the Sabbath. God even provided the reason for this (Dt. 3:14-15).

The following illustrates why we don't rely on the wisdom of men, even well intended ministers who have become blind guides. If you think these are harsh words consider the following: Let's see if we understand what is being said in this article. Mr. Pack believes that because food is served in the Millennial temple by God's servants on the Sabbath, and that because these servants must work very hard in their Levitical role, and because they are held blameless before God for their service, Christians may now go out into a world that is profaning God's Sabbath, and enjoy a delicious meal with His full blessing. Is that it?

In Conclusion:

Dear Mr. Pack, We appreciate the fact that you believe you are eminently qualified to render such wisdom. And that any "Tom, Dick or Harry" who claims you are in error should just butt out. However, we don't agree.

In our view, the authors of *A Sabbath Test* have seen what you apparently have missed—a steady erosion in the honoring of God's Sabbath. Furthermore, it sickens them, and us, to watch this wonderful day being

contaminated by those seeking out a place where God's Sabbath is being trampled on by slaves to sin and asking them to trample on it for them. As a leader you should know that such behavior dishonors God's law. If you can't see that then God will work through Tom, Dick and Harry, and anyone else for that matter, to proclaim this vital truth to His people. And there is nothing you can do to stop it.

Finally, in all due respect, your argument doesn't inspire much confidence in us. Furthermore, we are not prepared to offer it before the Holy One of Israel in defense of any behavior connected to going out to eat on the Sabbath. Quite frankly we can't believe you offer it now. God's judgement in this matter is crystal clear. His people are not to gather food on His Sabbath, they are not to prepare it on His Sabbath and they are not to go outside their place on His Sabbath (Ex. 16). It is interesting to note that in your description of this millennial feast, none of these things happen. According to Ezekiel's account, the Levites acquire the food, the Levites prepare the food. And the food is eaten by God's people within the gates of their place (the temple), just as God had instructed. At no time did they go out to your restaurant and buy it.

Respectfully,

Blow the Trumpet