

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings to all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Because we are a small group and are sticking to the original teaching that God gave His church, it has separated us from many church of God groups who have abandoned the original teachings for one reason or another.

I pray keeping the original and true doctrine and being fewer in number does not embarrass you, frighten you, or make you feel uncomfortable. Why do I pray that? Because of something we should all recognize: Precious gems are only of priceless value if they are few in number.

This is the analogy employed in God's Word and relayed to those precious few through God's messenger, Malachi: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi 3:17).

These are the true overcomers whose names are recorded in the book of remembrance:

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name (verse 16).

Psalm 1:1–3 provides a good encouragement, and we should practice it every day in our lives:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

These three verses describe God-fearing people, whose foundational roots are positive, steadfast, fixed and anchored. They might be assailed by trouble and temptation, but they stand firm! The greater the trial, the deeper the root, the stronger they hold on to fearing and trusting God.

For us to have wisdom and understanding we will need nourishment from God's Word so we can discern good from bad and truth from error. Studying and applying the positive fruits of God's Holy Spirit, not the negative fruits of the flesh, will build the character God is looking for in His soon-coming Kingdom.

The Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Romans (the "gems" we read of earlier):

For whatsoever things were written aforetime [those doctrines taught at first] were written for our learning, that we through patience [endurance and steadfastness] and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Romans 15:4).

As we encounter problems, conflicts, tribulations and troubles, God's Word teaches us to be steadfast and not to fear Satan's negative, aggressive action. It is no secret that we are living in a time of great fear, distress and uncertainty. People are fearful and to the point of changing doctrine because of the fear of losing members from their church. People live in fear because the Bible has prophesied that terrible times will come. The spies that were sent to Canaan brought fear among the people. But God expects His chosen people to have a different mind-set than these fearful types.

And when these things [abandoning faith] begin to come to pass, then look up [stand firm], and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

We should recognize by now that God is watching and observing us at all times. Our faith in God's promise always helps us to be strong enough to bear all things that come our way. You cannot stand firm or be strong with wavering faith, when today is YES, tomorrow is NO.

Paul said: "I can do all things through him which strengthens me." Should the majority rule? Does being few in number in Church of God, The Eternal embarrass you or make you feel uncomfortable? Let me encourage you if you feel that way. Remember, these precious gems are of priceless value only if they are few in number!

Do the majority of God's called-out ones today fear the Lord and think upon His name, His doctrine, as being their authority in life? Will rule by majority produce peace, happiness and righteousness in an organization? Does voting bring peace?

How can you destroy the foundation and expect the house to stand? Or how can you remove the car's tires and expect it to move (run)?

The doctrine that says that the desire of the majority is always right, is in itself wrong. To what extent have we absorbed this doctrine of majority rule? That is what I see in some places. This has led other groups to change doctrine from time to time, thinking they can make a wrong right and right wrong.

They think that by making right wrong they are following the lead of the Holy Spirit. The majority of the splinter groups have their own council of elders doing the voting for their organization. They use Matthew 18:18 for their excuse to say that it is okay to vote—that they can "bind and loose." Is that what it is saying? Do the elders have the authority to change the doctrine?

Do men have the authority to change what God has set? Do elders have power to change? What about church leaders, do they have the authority to change? Paul says in Galatians 1:6: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you . . . unto another gospel." It does not say that their change brings them closer to Him who called them, but instead does what? Causes them to believe another (false) gospel.

But though we [apostles], or an angel from heaven [the supposed presence of God], preach any other [another] gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (verse 8).

Paul says in verse 10: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?"

And this is what the majority are doing. They are men-pleasers. Church leaders do not have authority to rewrite God's law. It would be foolish for people to think they have the power of decision in such instances, just as it would be for them to decide whether or not they will recognize and accept the law of gravity. This is obvious of course, yet there have been many occasions when an issue that was fundamentally wrong was called "right" because the majority voted in favor of it.

Moses was given Ten Commandments to give to Israel. God did not tell Moses to determine which was right and which was wrong. He had exactly what he was given on Mount Sinai. Like today, the Israelites were changing what God gave them. The results of disobedience to the law brought death to thousands and suffering for all. Here we see that the majority tried to make wrong right by legislating against a basic law of moral conduct. This brought physical death.

Look at what happened when the spies returned from the Promised Land in Numbers, chapters 13 and 14. Ten spies declared Israel was unable to overcome the inhabitants and possess the land God said He would give them. The two spies reported that the people would be able to do all that the Lord had commanded. The people wrongly accepted the report of the ten spies against the two.

Is there a lesson that we can learn today? Many today are like the ten spies. God calls them, but they do not believe what God tells them. They are like the ten spies that fear man and not God. They become overly cautious and want to be uninvolved. Their motto is: "To keep from failing, stay with the majority."

On the other hand, those who trust and fear God are like Joshua and Caleb. They are willing to follow God's instruction without changing any single doctrine. They are willing to fight the good fight as the Apostle Paul did. They are not afraid to swim against the current, nor do they fear the giants.

Fear and majority rule can paralyze some from doing what they ought to do. They need praise from men (John 12:41–43). Some think when their group is the largest or they produce good quality books that they are doing the work of God. We must be careful.

When emotionalism takes over, good sound biblical reasoning is thrown out the door. When Joshua and Caleb tried to give their report, all the congregation of Israel sought to stone them with stones. That is how we in the Church of God, The Eternal are being treated because we do not go with the majority. Emotionalism can close one's mind to truth. Truth is revealed once and for all.

Fear caused Israel to doubt and have unbelief, and that caused them to question their ability to take the land even though they had already seen God's might and power during the ten plagues in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea.

The same fear and doubt concerning the doctrine happened in the 1970s. Church members doubted the doctrine that God gave them. The Israelites should have trusted and relied on the power, strength and ability of God. This is what the church (Worldwide Church) should have done instead of relying on scholars.

God told Joshua:

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:9).

Like Joshua, today we need to be brave and courageous and face our trials—those "giants" (doctrine changers) and the "majority" that want to influence us and rule our lives. Whether it be suffering, hardship, discouragement, persecutions, something we fear to do, or whatever, we all need to face life's challenges head-on with a fearless attitude.

All of us need to work on having a positive and optimistic spirit as did Joshua and Caleb.

For if these things be in you [us], and abound, they make you [us] that ye shall neither be barren [without truth] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth (2 Peter 1:8–12).

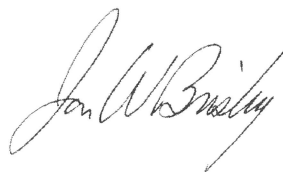
Brethren, no matter how few in number, God will work with the few. Remember Gideon's army. They were few but won the war, and until Christ comes back the church remnant is to be few (little flock). We are to make changes in our own lives, not in doctrine.

With our love and respect, we care for you and are happy to serve and help in these times of trial, while the majority are longing for the things of Egypt.

With deepest affection,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Isaya Owak

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon W. Brisby