

September 2011

Dear Brethren:

From deep in the heart of Texas, a very special greeting to all of you whom God has called and is giving the very rare opportunity to prove you sincerely want to be one of those who are part of the bride of Christ. Now is our time to fill our lamps with oil (the Holy Spirit), trim our wicks and let our lights shine so others can see we are not of this world. Many are called, but it is few who will be chosen to be part of the bride of Christ. Now is our time to prove whether or not we are serious about this responsibility.

God's Holy Days are pivotal in His overall plan and purpose. One cannot have a good understanding of what God is working out for man's salvation and the bride of Christ unless he observes and understands the weekly and annual Holy Days. Observing His Holy Days with real purpose—appearing before Him where He has placed His name to feed on the spiritual food that is being prepared for that time—is proving to Him that we really want to be part of His faithful bride.

### **Three Times in the Year We Must Come Before God**

Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year (Exodus 23:14, *New King James Version* throughout).

The spring Holy Days are the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost—Passover being the most solemn occasion of the year.

And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:37–39).

This time in Christ's life was exceedingly sorrowful, but He was determined to do the Father's will.

Then comes the Night to Be Much Remembered when Israel was freed from slavery—leaving Egypt, a symbol of sin. The Days of Unleavened Bread follow, and a fifty-day count from the weekly Sabbath within the Days of Unleavened Bread brings us to Pentecost when the New Testament church was born and animal sacrifices were nailed to the stake. They were no longer needed because the true sacrifice—Jesus Christ—paid the price for our sins and sent the comforter—the Holy Spirit—of power into the disciples.

The Holy Spirit was the missing ingredient needed to change human nature, but it was not given until Jesus Christ became the firstborn [First of the firstfruits]. He had to ascend to the Father's throne to be glorified. He qualified to be King of kings and Lord of lords.

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

These Holy Days were being taught and observed by the apostles thirty years after Christ's death. The Holy Days did not cease at the death of Christ, but took on an even greater meaning. The firstfruits could now worship God in spirit and truth with a much greater understanding.

Just a few days from now, we will observe the Day of Trumpets. This festival pictures Christ's return to earth to take His bride—the Church—and begin the restitution of all things.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God" (Revelation 19:7–9).

Will you be one of those arrayed in fine linen? I certainly hope so, but I can tell you for sure, if you have been baptized, received the Holy Spirit, and you do not take this summons seriously—to *rejoice* (and I emphasize "rejoice") *where He has placed His name—you will not be feeding the Holy Spirit. You will be putting yourself in danger of becoming a reject.*

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of

sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Hebrews 3:12–14).

We must examine ourselves as we did before Passover to see if we have that first love we had in the beginning when we were really fired up for the truth and wanting to overcome human nature, desiring to do good works, wanting to grow in faith, and putting on the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Do you no longer look forward to being where He has placed His name, or has it become a drag to you to take the time off, or perhaps you would like to just get the Feast over with so you can get back with all of your friends and neighbors? If you find this is the way you feel, then you need to take very seriously what God told the church of Ephesus:

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent (Revelation 2:4–5).

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the *trumpet* of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17) [emphasis mine].

The Feast of Trumpets is a day for God's people to rejoice. In the near future God's Kingdom will be established on earth forever—the only kingdom to serve mankind with absolute justice.

Will Christ return on the Day of Trumpets? No one knows. When will He return? When we least expect Him. Only the Father knows. Things must get much worse before God intervenes to cut the *time short* in order to stop man from destroying all flesh.

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened (Matthew 24:21–22).

Why a commanded Holy Day just a few days before the Feast of Tabernacles—the Day of Atonement? It is to atone to God for our sins—a day of fasting before the Lord. This day is extremely important. Notice:

Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. *For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.* You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath (Leviticus 23:27–32) [emphasis mine].

Also read all of Leviticus 16, but for now note verses 29–31:

This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.

The Day of Atonement prepares us spiritually to receive the Word of God for all seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. It also helps to condition our physical bodies for the changes in our daily routine during the next several days while attending the Feast of Tabernacles. Many of us are advanced in years and we must be careful to get plenty of rest and enjoy the abundance of physical food, but not indulge to the point of becoming sick. We cannot please God to rejoice in these commanded days while recovering from an illness we brought upon ourselves through carelessness.

God commanded us to observe the Feast of Tabernacles:

You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice (Deuteronomy 16:13–15).



These times are the most wonderful occasions of the year for God's people because of what they represent in the near future. Let us read just a portion of what we are looking forward to:

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD (Isaiah 2:2-5).

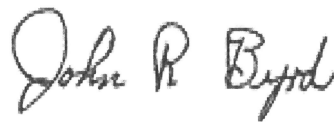
The world will have a thousand years of rest, a Sabbath from Satan's influence over human nature. When the thousand years are ended Satan must be let out of his prison for a little season to influence human nature for the last time.

The seventh and last annual Holy Day in God's plan for salvation is called The Great White Throne Judgment, called the eighth day because it is added at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles.

This is the time for all those who were never called or never heard the name of Christ. They must be resurrected and given the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit. This will be Satan's last effort to try and turn man away from living the way of God. Then Satan must be locked away in a place of restraint forever.

There will be much, much more at the Feast of Tabernacles. *Do not miss it!* We look forward to seeing you there.

With much love from myself and  
the Texas brethren,



John R. Byrd



Jon W. Brisby