

March 2013

Dear Brethren:

Welcome to the annual pre-Passover "meat in due season" letter 2013.

A very special greeting from deep in the heart of Texas to all of the children of God, set apart by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Are you ready for another Passover, ready to drink the blood and eat the body of Jesus Christ? Have we made progress in overcoming this past year?

The observance of God's Holy Days sets His people apart from this world. The Holy Days are central to all of God's plan. And Passover is the first event of the new year. In a few days we will begin a new year according to God's calendar. It is the time we renew our commitment to God the Father and Jesus Christ—our commitment to come all the way out of Egypt (Egypt being a type of sin). We will do this by partaking of the bread and wine, symbols of Jesus' broken body and shed blood, a very solemn and serious assembly.

Those that rightly partake of these symbols are very special indeed; they have been given understanding of God's overall plan and are being groomed to become part of the bride of Jesus Christ, the firstfruits of God's calling. However, not rightly examining ourselves, personally, can bring damnation upon us. It is the same as "not discerning the Lord's body."

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:27–29, *New King James Version*).

Those who make up the body of Christ are offered His Holy Spirit and a good understanding. That Spirit generates oneness of mind, the faith once delivered. Many left the faith originally given to His end-time servant. They will be sacrificing to a different god, and may eat and drink damnation to themselves. The knowledge God has given to the body of Christ is dangerous knowledge if not used according to God's instructions.

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32, *NKJV*).

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.* And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:1–12, *NKJV*, emphasis mine).

What does it mean to take heed? Take notice, pay attention, be watchful, because Satan is not wasting a single opportunity to put temptations before God's people. But notice the promise in the next verse:

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry [worshiping false gods, worshiping with those that have changed the truth into a lie]. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread (verses 13–17).

Paul goes on to say in verse 20 that if we take the Passover with gentiles or those not of this body, we sacrifice to demons. This is why we must be of one mind.

Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons (verses 20–21).

They did not take the instructions of God seriously, but went after other gods, making themselves gods. So they became our examples that we must not do as they did. The God of Israel will not share His glory with false gods.

Jesus Christ is our example of righteousness. He started the Passover service by humbling Himself to the lowly task of washing the disciples' feet: "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15, *NKJV*).

"If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:17, *NKJV*).

Brethren, we had better be watching, praying, and overcoming. This is not the time to fall asleep spiritually. God has poured out on His people, Israel, a deep sleep of spiritual drunkenness. He has sent prophet after prophet to wake them up, but they have refused to respond to the warnings. They even killed those prophets spiritually.

For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered (Isaiah 29:10, *King James Version*).

Men love darkness because their deeds are evil.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:4–5, *KJV*).

God has given this light of understanding to all who have received His Holy Spirit, while the world is generally ignorant of God's Holy Days because they are spiritually blinded and cannot see. But for those whom God has set apart for His service, this is the time to look back over the past year to give ourselves a spiritual examination. Can you see spiritual growth, or the lack of it? Are we striving to overcome this world, its ways? If we do not overcome in sufficient time, then we must receive of her plagues.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities (Revelation 18:4–5, *KJV*).

The hedge of protection and national blessings to which we have grown so accustomed, are slowly being removed. Our freedom of religion is being threatened.

But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, *for a testimony against them* (Mark 13:9, *KJV*, emphasis mine).

We have become accustomed to living with freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom to travel, and freedom to go where God has placed His name to observe His Holy

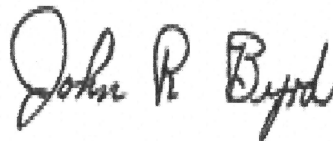
Days without persecution. That day may be closer than we think. We must watch and pray. This is not the time to fall asleep spiritually. Spiritual sleepiness is a weakness of the flesh. It is natural to become sleepy physically or spiritually. Remember what happened when Jesus went to the garden to pray just before being taken before the judges? The disciples had been instructed to stay awake, watch, to be alert, and pray lest they enter into temptation. What happened once Jesus was arrested? They turned tail and ran, even after telling Him they would never forsake Him, even in the face of death.

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; *for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist* (Luke 21:12-15, NKJV, emphasis mine).

Brethren, I know we read these verses over and over. We send them to you in *Monthly Letters* and in sermons. We read them at Passover, you read them in personal Bible study until they just become sort of meaningless. Our challenge is to make these old familiar admonitions new to us once again this year.

Have a wonderful and meaningful Passover.

Your servant in Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John R. Byrd".

John R. Byrd

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon W. Brisby".

Jon W. Brisby