

April 2013

Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings from the Maryville, Tennessee brethren whom God has called to become the firstfruits of His harvest. This high calling to be in the first resurrection can only be accomplished if our trust is in the living God who called us.

In this letter I would like to show you the folly of not trusting in the God who allows us to understand spiritual things through His Holy Spirit. We know that the true day of Pentecost was revealed to us in the beginning by Mr. Herbert Armstrong as being on a Monday, the day that the church received the Spirit of God. It truly set the church apart from the world at that time, and gives us the power to come out of sin during our conversion process.

But what has happened to the church since the day of Pentecost was changed to Sunday in 1974? The folly of not trusting in God, who revealed that day to us, resulted in the Eternal splitting the altar (or the Church of God) where our sacrifices were being presented to God.

Why were the sacrifices and the altar split? Two reasons:

- 1) Not all the sacrifices being offered on the altar of God were acceptable or pleasing in His sight.
- 2) To preserve the seed that would eventually inherit the Promised Land or the Kingdom of God.

That assurance was given to Abram in the very beginning when Abram asked the Eternal how he could be sure that the seed which came from his own body would inherit the Promised Land.

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring [seed, *King James Version*]; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants [seed] be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought

you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (Genesis 15:1–8, *New King James Version* throughout)

The seed referred to here can be viewed or understood either in the physical dimension or the spiritual dimension. If we are still stuck in the physical dimension, then we understand the seed as referring to Abraham's descendants, but in the spiritual dimension we understand it is referring to the one seed, Jesus Christ.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Abram was commanded to perform those sacrifices which were symbolic of Israel. That one seed, Jesus Christ, would be the only seed that could survive the slaughter of the sacrifices as a sign of how this seed would inherit the Promised Land, or the Kingdom of God.

So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking [furnace] and a burning [lamp] that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your [seed] I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates" (Genesis 15:9–18).

The fully mature three-year-old animals that Abram was to cut in two were symbolic of Israel and what would happen to them if they failed to keep His covenant. In *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, page 224, under "covenant," it says: "the term applied to various translations between God and man, and man and his fellow-man. . . . In making covenants God was solemnly invoked as a witness (Gen. 31:50)."

It goes on to say under "ceremonies," that: "Covenants were not only concluded with an oath (Gen. 26:28; 31:53; Josh. 9:15; II Kings 11:4), but, after an ancient custom, confirmed by slaughtering and cutting a victim into two halves, between which the parties passed, to intimate that if either of them broke the covenant it would fare with him as with the slain and divided beast (Gen. 15:9; Jer. 34:18). . . . [Also] Covenanting parties were accustomed to partake of salt, to make the covenant *a covenant of salt* (Num. 18:19; II Chron. 13:5), inviolably sure. The meaning appears to have been that the salt, with its power to strengthen food and keep it from decay, symbolized the unbending truthfulness of that self-surrender to the Lord embodied in the sacrifice, by which all impurity and hypocrisy were repelled."

In Matthew 5:13–16, Christ said that we are the salt of the earth. That happens when we enter into God's salvation process through the covenant of baptism through which we agree to preserve the seed of Christ in us. We become the light of the world and fulfill the promise God made to Abram that the seed of Christ which came through his body would prevail in this end time.

The promises God made to Abram were conditional upon his obedience and willingness to get out of his country—away from his kindred and his father's house—to a new land that God would show him.

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you [in your seed, Christ] all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran (Genesis 12:1–4).

We also can receive the same blessing if we are willing to preserve the seed of Christ by coming out of this world and following Him in our salvation process.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first (Matthew 19:27–30).

This is telling us that God called ancient Israel first by bringing them out of Egypt (picturing sin); but without the Holy Spirit to help them, they broke God's covenant. You and I who have been called last have the glorious opportunity to be in the first resurrection. That can happen if we use the Holy Spirit which was not given to them.

As a sign to Abram that his seed would inherit the new land of promise, God told him to perform a number of sacrifices in which he was to cut in half fully mature (three-year-old) animals, symbolic of Israel. Because they were cut in half they would be plagued by vultures that Abram drove away until he rested in peace with his fathers (Genesis 15:15). Then at a dark time (because Israel failed to keep its covenant with God) the Lord would pass between the sacrifices to seal the covenant with Abram. In one instance, he appeared as a smoking furnace as He did on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:18), and in another instance, as a lamp or torch or a pillar of fire to light the way out of the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10) that was the iron furnace of Egypt, into the new land of promise (Deuteronomy 4:20).

This has a spiritual meaning for us today as we also have been called out of Egypt—symbolic of sin—with the opportunity of entering the Promised Land of God's Kingdom.

Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord [David]. Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them (2 Chronicles 13:5–7).

Jeroboam rebelled against the Davidic dynasty by mustering up some worthless rogues against Rehoboam, who was the successor of Solomon and the last king of the united monarchy, and the first king of the southern kingdom of Judah. Israel was to be slaughtered and cut in two because of rebellion against God. This required the covenant of God with David to be preserved through Judah through whom the promised seed of Christ would continue. This occurred when Jeroboam became king of the northern ten tribes and then set up two calves of gold, one in Bethel and the other in Dan, tempting the people into idolatry. This same thing has happened in God's end-time church, and the reason for so many splits is that of what I call the Jeroboam mentality.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah." Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the

people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah [instead of the fifteenth day of the seventh month, which God had commanded for the Feast of Tabernacles], and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense (1 Kings 12:26–33).

These sacrifices of Jeroboam were not acceptable to God because they were not carried out by Levites and were offered in the wrong month.

Has this happened in the church today with one or more of God's Holy Days? It sure has! It happened in 1974 when Pentecost was changed from Monday to Sunday. How about the seventh-day Sabbath? The major part of the church that God raised up through an end-time servant, Mr. Herbert Armstrong, now accepts Sunday as the day of worship. Will God accept their sacrifices? No way! The altar (symbolic of God's church) has been split apart by the hand of God in order to preserve His seed.

The incense that Jeroboam was burning on the altar was totally unacceptable to God, so He sent His representative from Judah to cry out against the altar which resulted in the altar being split in two.

And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you [this altar] he [Josiah] shall sacrifice the [false] priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.' " And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out" (1 Kings 13:1–3).

This man of God from Judah prophesied that the child Josiah would become the king of Judah and would burn all the bones of the idolatrous priests on this altar of Jeroboam. This prophecy was fulfilled about three hundred years later and recorded in 2 Kings 23:15–17:

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he said, "What gravestone is this that I see?" So the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

Of course when Jeroboam heard this prediction he became angry with the man of God and ordered him to be arrested. But what happened then?

So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar [in rebellion], saying, "Arrest him!" Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered [lost all its strength], so that he could not pull it back to himself. [What followed must have horrified him.] The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD (1 Kings 13:4-5).

Jeroboam had no power to stop what the man of God had prophesied. Then he entreated the man of God to restore his dried up and withered hand; and God, having made His point, granted his request. As a result of all this, King Jeroboam invited the prophet to dine with him and receive a great reward (verse 7). "But the man of God said to the king, 'If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place' " (verse 8). The prophet was refusing fellowship with one who had turned away from God in rebellion, even though he was a king. Why? "For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came' " (verse 9). Has God commanded His church in the end time to do the same thing if one turns away from the truth once delivered? He sure has!

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person (1 Corinthians 5:11).

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

This command from God is to protect us from a physical or spiritual death. So even if an old-time minister from the past tells you differently, do not believe him, otherwise what happened to the man of God from Judah may likewise happen to you. His story is recorded in 1 Kings 13:11–34.

Apparently, an old prophet from the past who lived in Bethel where the altar was split in two told the prophet from Judah that God had countermanded His instructions. He began by telling the man of God that he also was a prophet, and now God had changed His mind and said it was OK for him to dine with him and talk over old times. Of course it was a lie, but apparently the man of God from Judah was anxious to repair the split which had taken place between Israel and Judah, so he believed it. Have some in this end time believed a lie because they had no love for the truth? Yes! (2 Thessalonians 2:10–12).

This is what happened:

Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the LORD said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.' " So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, "It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him" (1 Kings 13:20–26).

This then is the folly of not trusting in the revealed word of God that was given in the beginning. Note that the lion did not kill for food, but was God's executioner to anyone who would seek fellowship with those who have turned away in rebellion. Satan is symbolic of a lion that destroys spiritually those who have turned away from obeying God (1 Peter 5:8).

In the end, the old prophet felt responsible for his death because he deceived him, so he went and retrieved his body from the road and gave him a decent burial, but he was not buried in the tomb with his fathers in Judah.

So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones" (1 Kings 13:31).

So their bones lie together in ashes today waiting for the second resurrection when Israel and Judah will again be united as one through God's Holy Spirit.

Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you mean by these?'— say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand." And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them" ' (Ezekiel 37:15–24).

This unification of God's people can come only when we all are guided by the one and only true Spirit of God that was revealed to us on a Monday Pentecost. A Sunday Pentecost will never be accepted by God no matter how sincere one is in keeping it. The misunderstanding of this truth brings division, of course, because not all are willing to be guided by that one Spirit of God. So a separation has taken place in the world that has also spilled over into God's church because the carnal mind does not want to be governed by the truth—which is Jesus Christ our Lord. The inspired word of God then becomes a sword in the hand of Jesus Christ and His ministry to divide us and cut us in two, because not all are willing to be guided by that truth once revealed. The result is not one of peace, but a spiritual sword of God's word to preserve the seed (Christ) sown in our hearts if we are willing to follow Christ's instruction.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it (Matthew 10:34–39).

What Christ is saying is that if we love Christ and His truth more than our physical family and friends in the world, and are willing to bear our crosses of temporary separation from them until the Father calls them, then we will find a new life in Christ which will lead to eternal life in the God Family.

In this new life we must be willing to put our hands to the plow; to prepare the soil of our minds so that the seed can grow. If we can do this without looking back and yearning for the past, then we will become fit for the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).

The invitation to God's abundant life can be experienced now if we are willing to do what He says:

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—The sure mercies of David. . . . For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (Isaiah 55:1–13).

Of course, this will be conditional upon how we perform.

Thus says the LORD: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil" (Isaiah 56:1–2).

If we can do this, we will experience the abundant life God has promised us. If not, then the message to the unfaithful servant will be carried out:

But if that evil servant says in his heart, "My master is delaying his coming" and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:48–51).

This is because they have trampled on the revealed truth of God by not keeping their covenant with Him to the end.

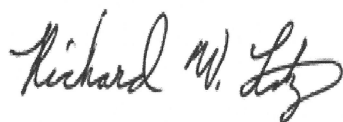
In conclusion:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:28–30).

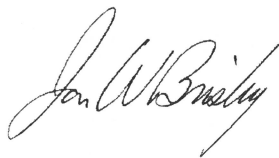
This is true if we are willing to learn of Christ *by doing*; thereby escaping the curses that many, even in God's church, have brought upon themselves by compromising with God's truth. What God wants is unconditional surrender to all His truth, learning the lessons so the curses will stop, and His easy yoke can be experienced with the help of His Holy Spirit.

Thank you, brethren, for your faithfulness to the true word of God.

Your devoted servant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard W. Litz".

Richard W. Litz

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jon W. Brisby".

Jon W. Brisby