

August 2013

Dear Brethren:

I send greetings from the state of Minnesota, the land of ten thousand lakes. It is a pleasure once again to address the beloved of God around the world—those holding fast to the doctrine once delivered by God's end-time servant. This will be a "meat in due season" letter for the fall Feasts.

When God gave the command for His people to observe His Holy Days, He intended for them to learn His great plan for the salvation of all mankind by keeping them. This letter is going to review what Mr. Armstrong originally taught us about God's fall Holy Days.

Feast of Trumpets

We begin these fall festivals by observing the Feast of Trumpets. The command is given in Leviticus 23:23–25:

Then the Lord spoke . . . saying: "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation [a commanded assembly]. You shall do no customary work on it ["no servile work therein"—*King James Version*]" (*New King James Version*).

Here is pictured the next great blissful event in God's redemptive plan, when Jesus Christ shall come again, in clouds, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17). It shall be "at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead [in Christ] shall be raised incorruptible [as immortal spirit beings], and we shall [all] be changed [those who have qualified to be part of Christ's wife and helpmeet]" (1 Corinthians 15:52, *KJV*). Unless Christ returns to resurrect the dead, we will never be given eternal life. If there is no resurrection, "then also those which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1 Corinthians 15:18, *NKJV*).

When the transgression of this world has come to the full, Christ will intervene directly in world affairs at the seventh or last trumpet (Revelation 11:15–19). A trumpet is a symbol of war. Christ comes in a time of worldwide war—when the nations are angry with one another. As soon as the work of gathering in the firstfruits [Christ's future wife and helpmeet] is completed at the end of this present age, then Christ will begin the next stage in the plan of redemption.

The Feast of Trumpets portrays a vitally important, essential turning event in God's master plan. It not only pictures the coming of Christ to resurrect and change the firstfruits, but it also pictures the intervention of Jesus Christ to save humanity from destroying itself as well as to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

At the sound of the seventh trumpet announcing the return of Jesus Christ, Christ's firstfruits will be resurrected to immortal life to form a husband/wife dominion. God will then have reaped the smaller spiritual harvest of mankind. Those who will have received eternal life will then begin to serve Christ as His wife and helpmeet in ruling the earth for a thousand years. Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection [a better resurrection]: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him [their future husband] a thousand years." The reaping of a much greater spiritual harvest of God's family will take place during and after the Millennium.

Could any event in all of history be more important or more glorious than the return of Jesus Christ—in a husband/wife relationship with His firstfruit saints—to rule all nations? That husband/wife dominion is at the center of God's ultimate purpose for all of humanity to become God's eternal children as God Beings.

The coronation of tomorrow's King is coming. Let us consider for a moment what the angelic messenger said to Mary, the mother of Jesus:

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great . . . and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David [a living one]. And He will reign [along with His wife and helpmeet] over the house of Jacob [the nations of Israel and Judah] forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:31–33, *NKJV*).

Notice also the account in John 18:37: "Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world.'" Jesus was born to rule and reign as King with His wife over all nations. But He was not crowned King while a human being. "But now My kingdom is not from here [not of this present world]" (John 18:36). Christ came the first time and was beaten beyond recognition to pay the penalty for physical sin, and then crucified and killed to pay the death penalty in our stead for our spiritual sins. Christ did that to make possible our reconciliation with God—enmity for friendship. Jesus Christ did not assume the responsibilities of His new future office as world ruler at that time.

But Christ's Second Coming, pictured by the Feast of Trumpets, will mark several crucial points in God's plan of salvation: The firstfruits will be resurrected and changed into

spirit beings to fulfill the role of Christ's firstfruits wife. They will intervene to save humanity from itself. The family government of God, beginning with that husband/wife dominion, will be established on earth with Christ as supreme world ruler. How glorious and awe-inspiring!

Day of Atonement

The next Holy Day is the Day of Atonement, or the *Fast*. Notice Leviticus 23:26–28, 31–32:

And the Lord spake . . . saying, . . . Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation [a commanded assembly] unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls [fast], . . . Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of [solemn] rest, and ye shall afflict your souls [by fasting]: in the ninth day of the month at even [not eating the evening meal], from even unto even [or sunset to sunset], shall ye celebrate your sabbath [your annual Sabbath of Atonement] (*KJV*).

Again, in Leviticus 16:29 and 31, where the symbolism of the Day of Atonement is described, we find instituted a holy annual Sabbath to be kept forever:

This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls [by fasting], and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. . . . It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever (*NKJV*).

The Day of Atonement pictures a wonderful and great event to take place after the Second Coming of Christ. The Day of Atonement, like the other festivals, ultimately points to the work of Jesus Christ for salvation. But what, specifically, is the role of Christ in the Day of Atonement? To understand the significance of this day and what it pictures in God's master plan of salvation, we need to examine the rituals that marked its observance in Old Testament times by reviewing what Mr. Armstrong taught us in his booklet, *Pagan Holidays—or God's Holy Days—Which?* The purpose of the sacrificial rituals God gave to ancient Israel was to remind the people of the need for the payment of the penalty demanded of God for their sins. The various sacrifices pointed ahead to the sacrifice of the One who would come later in history as the Savior of all mankind. Although the ritualistic laws are no longer performed, their various aspects still have symbolic meaning for us today. Mr. Armstrong learned this by observing these Holy Days for fourteen years without

understanding. His understanding came through obedience in keeping these solemn assemblies.

Leviticus 16 describes the special ceremonies ancient Israel performed on the Day of Atonement. In one of ancient Israel's more unusual rituals, done only on this day, a goat (*azazel*—symbolic of Satan) was presented alive before the Eternal, to assign accountability to it, and to let it go into the wilderness—symbolically, a place of restraint (Leviticus 16:10). The *azazel*—meaning a *goat of departure* and symbolic of Satan—is the true author of sin. He will take on all blame and guilt of all mankind and will be removed from contact with humanity during the Millennium.

Here is a quote from Mr. Armstrong's booklet previously mentioned:

Christ bore OUR guilt. For we have been guilty, even though the devil was the original CAUSE of it all. But justice certainly demands that God place right back on the head of the devil HIS GUILT — not OUR guilt, but HIS OWN GUILT — for leading us into sin. We were guilty, too — and OUR guilt Christ bore — yet ALL OUR SINS belong right back on the devil as HIS OWN GUILT!

. . . The Azazel goat CARRIES AWAY the sins of all the people ALREADY FORGIVEN. These sins already were fully paid for by Christ's SUBSTITUTE sacrifice, symbolized by the killing of the innocent goat BEFORE those SAME SINS were finally laid on the LIVE goat. They had been previously paid for by the death of the slain goat.

The devil is the real AUTHOR of all sin. . . .

The driving away of the second live goat shows the FINAL ATONEMENT, by placing the sins on their author where they belong, and the complete REMOVAL of the sins and their author from the presence of God and His people — and thus the COMPLETE DELIVERANCE of the people from the POWER OF SATAN.

At the Second Coming of Christ, Satan is not bound by Christ Himself. That job will be delegated to a "fit man"—an angel (Revelation 20:1–2). Furthermore, Satan's binding will not remove all evil. Sin will still exist during the Millennium and White Throne Judgment periods because human beings by nature are the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). The binding of Satan is not the only event to take place on the Day of Atonement. Satan's binding is not a goal in itself; it is a means to an end—a step toward a more important goal. During the Day of Atonement two goats were brought forward (Leviticus 16:7–8). We have already noted the symbolism associated with the *azazel* goat—the goat of departure. But

what about the other goat upon which the Eternal's lot fell, that was killed and sacrificed as a sin offering? And what did the high priest's actions symbolize?

The high priest performed special washings and purifications on the Day of Atonement. Twice he went behind the veil into the Holy of Holies—as was allowed only on that day. These Day of Atonement rituals are explained in the New Testament book of Hebrews. But there is not much there about Satan's binding and removal. Hebrews focuses on the priesthood of Christ and how He restores our relationship with God—the first personage of the Godhead.

The Hebrew root of the word *kaphar*, #3722 in *Strong's Concordance*, from which we get the English word "atonement," is generally translated "to make an atonement." *Kaphar* means to cover over, to appease, to make amends for, ransom, atone, pay the penalty for. However, it is also translated: to make reconciliation, to pacify, to cancel, to purge away, to forgive, to pardon. So the Day of Atonement could or might also be called: the Day of Reconciliations, the Day of Forgivings, the Day of Appeasements or the Day of Pardons. These terms deal with relationships between man and God. There is a need to forgive, purge away or pardon past sin to appease God's anger.

An equivalent name for the Day of Atonement, if you will, is Day of Reconciliations. It implies that relationships are to be amended or restored. "Atonement" means being "at one," being reconciled to a state of oneness. The Day of Atonement celebrates our reconciliation to oneness with God made possible through Christ's sacrifice on the stake. Leviticus 16 details the special rituals performed only on the Day of Atonement. Only a few of the rituals dealt with the *azazel* goat; the main emphasis was on cleansing, forgiveness and reconciliation with God. The high priest made reconciliation for himself and for the people. He entered the Holy of Holies, symbolizing the priestly role of Christ, who gives us access to the throne of God.

Christ is our High Priest—the first of the firstfruits: ". . . even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:20, *NKJV*). "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests [did], to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once [for all], when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:27, *KJV*). "But Christ came as High Priest . . . with the greater and more perfect tabernacle. . . . He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11–12, *NKJV*).

Christ came through the veil with His blood, the ransom demanded by God that paid the penalty of our sins (Hebrews 9:15). He approached the great seat of mercy—seat of reconciliation, appeasement, cleansing, pardon—where forgiveness is granted (upon repentance) by God. He came as the atoning sacrifice, pictured by the Lord's goat that was

sacrificed in Leviticus 16:9, whose blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat (vv. 16:15–16). The blood of Christ can effectively "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14). Leviticus 16 makes this reconciliation clear: "For on that day the priest shall make atonement [a propitiation—a payment for the penalty of sin demanded by God] for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (verse 30, *NKJV*).

We usually associate Christ's sacrifice and forgiveness with Passover. But Christ's death and forgiveness are clearly pictured in the rituals of Atonement as well. The book of Hebrews mentions them in the context of atonement rituals. They are an essential part of our reconciliation with God. Passover focuses on individual forgiveness and escape from the second death; Atonement focuses more on collective or joint reconciliation with God. The primary fulfillment of Atonement is for the future of this world—God's future family—but that atonement in principle is already in effect for the firstfruits of God, if they hold fast to the faith once delivered and make it active and operative in their lives.

Feast of Tabernacles

Now we come to the Feast of Tabernacles—the sixth Holy Day festival. Let us notice the instruction concerning this occasion:

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. . . . Seven days you shall keep a sacred [solemn] 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. . . . and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you (Deuteronomy 16:13–17, *NKJV*).

. . . The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile [customary] work therein. . . . and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. . . . It shall be a statute [commanded] for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month (Leviticus 23:34–35, 40–41, *KJV*).

As Mr. Armstrong taught, this festival pictures the Millennium when the commencement of the "marriage of the Lamb" will take place. Christ (our future husband)

will marry the church—God's Kingdom in embryo. Once that husband/wife relationship has been established, then the reaping of the great harvest of souls will begin.

To portray God's master plan, He uses two annual physical harvest seasons in Palestine as a prototype to picture the two spiritual harvests of souls. The first one is a small spring harvest following the winter rains. It begins on the day of the wave sheaf offering, and ends at the Day of Pentecost. The wave sheaf offering symbolizes Jesus Christ (our future husband), the first of the firstfruits of God's spiritual harvest (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

The Day of Pentecost pictures the very small early harvest—the Feast of Firstfruits. Pentecost or Firstfruits pictures to us the first part of the spiritual harvest, the calling out of God's true church—His Kingdom in embryo—a few chosen to establish that husband/wife dominion that will rule God's Kingdom during the Millennium. That is when the Festival of Ingathering or Tabernacles will begin—the great fall harvest of souls to expand God's Family. When Christ returns to perform the first resurrection (a better resurrection), the firstfruits will be transformed into God Beings (born again). Along with Jesus Christ they will rule with a rod of iron.

What will it be like to be a God Being? Our bodies will be imperishable, raised in glory, raised in power (1 Corinthians 15:42–43). All illnesses, injuries and signs of aging will disappear. Handicaps, hearing loss and poor eyesight will be gone. We will never suffer from physical pain again. We will never grow weary, wear down or grow old (Isaiah 40:28–31). We will have a perfect memory with total and instant recall of the totality of God's Word. We will exercise perfect character, never again to deviate from the way of righteousness—God's Law (1 John 3:9). We will have a full measure of God's Holy Spirit. That is the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and the fear of the Eternal always to embrace His Law (Isaiah 11:2–5).

We will be able to travel anywhere in the universe at the speed of thought, even passing through solid objects, as Christ did upon His resurrection. We will inherit and inhabit eternity (Isaiah 57:15). We will be freed from all the anxieties, strains and pressures associated with living in the flesh—earning a living. God is about to set us free from anything that will hinder us from performing our future responsibilities—that is, fulfilling our calling as Christ's Kings and Priests of God.

We will rejoice greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice (John 3:29). As we face challenges and problems, as Gods, we will know precisely what to do under Christ's authority. As a Family dominion we will be tending to God's future children (Romans 7:4).

We will be pillars—the main supports—in God's temple in the capital city of the world, never to be removed from that honored position (Revelation 3:12). God will make us

kings and priests, governing both in civil and religious matters (Revelation 1:6; 5:10). The God Family will legislate, execute and judge according to God's eternal law of love—the Ten Commandments.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2). That word "judge" includes managing, governing and the controlling this coming Millennial society. What Paul is saying in the context of this statement is: The Church (God's Kingdom in embryo) is preparing to replace the legislatures and judiciaries of this world by managing and judging matters within the Body of Christ today. In this coming millennial society, disputes will be handled directly by God Beings, who can read hearts and minds, administering God's law with a perfect balance of judgment and mercy (Matthew 23:23).

That Family dominion will be very visible, serving the physical nations, guiding them away from sin's deadly power so they can enjoy the good life in obedience to God's truth (Isaiah 30:20–21). Christ's Family will be on call continually, always available to teach and instruct every individual of every nation.

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3). This word "judge" also means to declare the standard concerning right and wrong, or to manage, rule or govern. Angels will be servants to that Family dominion, to help rebuild this millennial world after "the desolations of many generations" of man ruling over man. In this coming age of man (the world tomorrow), it will be a towering, demanding, grueling, physical job. Christ's wife will be named the priests of the Eternal—the ministers of God. The Eternal God (the first personage of the Godhead) will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations through that husband/wife dominion.

In the coming Millennium *no one* will be deceived—as the vast majority of humanity is today. *All* will be called to receive God's Holy Spirit. *All* will come to know truth as it is revealed. No more religious confusion. No more spiritual blindness. Eyes will be opened to the truth of how God is building a family. Humanity will learn the necessity of becoming teachable. People will be given the opportunity for spiritual conversion, although they will still have the requirement of choice. God's law of love will be applied precisely and enforced to prevent harming one's neighbor, but individuals will still choose whether or not they will worship God, i.e.: the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14).

In the world tomorrow, under that Family dominion, there will be no abusive taxes, meaning no more of today's welfare, unemployment, disability. Widows, fatherless and otherwise needy persons will be funded from a third-tithe system. Sickness and disease, pain and suffering, malnutrition and starvation—*gone!* Poverty, ignorance, language barriers—*gone!* Volatile weather, drought, flood, insect damage and disease—*gone!* Birth defects and financial curses under which most people live will be healed. Wild animals will

become tame. Children will never again be the victims of abductors or wild animals. They will play and learn in schools that teach God's way of life. They will grow up learning how to live by God's law-abiding love that guarantees happiness. God's Millennium will be filled with more happy, radiant, elated, blissful humans, among those who *choose* that way of life. *All* will be free from fear—free to rejoice. *All* will be taught and have the opportunity to live God's long-term conversion process, so they too may inherit everlasting life in the God Family.

But there is an act of rebellion against God's Family dominion or government after the end of the Millennium when Satan is loosed for a little season. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison [his place of restraint], And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters [or all] of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Revelation 20:7–8, *KJV*).

Why? It is because they were *forced* to live by God's Law, imposed and implemented by God's government. Righteous character cannot be forced upon anyone. Character demands choice. Mankind must choose to be righteous—to live by God's Law, statutes and judgments.

Last Great Day

Now we come to the Last Great Day—the seventh Holy Day festival. Let us notice where it is mentioned: " . . . The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. . . . On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation . . . it is a sacred [solemn] assembly, and you shall do no customary [servile] work on it" (Leviticus 23:34, 36, *NKJV*). The Last Great Day pictures the time when all who died in ignorance of God's salvation process will be given their opportunity to obey and understand.

And I saw a great white throne, and him [Christ Himself—John 5:22, 27] that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead [the rest of the dead who have ever lived, cut off from God], small and great, stand before God . . . [with the exception of the firstfruits and the incorrigibles] (Revelation 20:11–12, *KJV*).

Standing before God in a second resurrection will be all those who died in ignorance of God's process of salvation. The horribly sinful men who were burned up in Sodom and Gomorrah will be there. All the people who mocked Noah and then drowned in the great flood, Korah and those who followed him—whom God swallowed up in an earthquake—and

all the rest of the faithless Israelites who died in the wilderness and beyond will be there. The Pharisees and Sadducees, Herod, Pilate and Caiaphas, who all murdered the Son of God and knew not what they were doing, will be there. Those who through the ages have killed God's prophets and have cruelly tortured and martyred God's saints, and spat upon the message of God's Kingdom, will be there. Men whose last moments of life were spent in hatred and fear as soldiers on one of a thousand battlefields, and the billions who have lived and died in atheist Russia or pagan China, will be there. All those who spent their lives under the boot of a dictator, who knew nothing but the *worst* of the evils of man's rule over man, and the dictators themselves—who used their power as a weapon against the people, and never learned to submit—will be there. All the exalted men of history, educators, scientists, inventors, philosophers and false prophets who never knew the truth—whose greatness of intellect served only to further confuse and deceive a race already pitifully ignorant—will be there. Slaves, harlots, pirates, gangs, thieves, drug addicts, illiterates, suicides and people formerly possessed by demons will be there. People who never knew true love in their families—who may have died at the hand of an abusive husband, or father, or mother—will be there. All the people and children of Africa who never lived a day with real food in their bellies, all those in poverty and squalor, and those who lived in absolute darkness as to the purpose of their existence, will be there. The people with whom we went to school, with whom we worked—including the boss who gave us so much trouble over the Sabbath—and the family members who could never understand our religion and believed we were in a cult, will be there. The terrorists who flew the planes into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon and all the other bombers around the world will be there. They will all be brought back to life again, resurrected to physical flesh and blood in the second resurrection. Even those who died fighting Christ and the saints at Armageddon will be there. We will see them all standing before us—billions of them—with all of their previous concepts, hatreds and dysfunctions—the accumulation of many different races of failed peoples.

. . . and the books [sixty-six books of the Bible] were opened [to their understanding]: and another book was opened, which is the book of life [the opportunity to embrace truth and to inherit eternal life]: and the dead [in this flesh and blood resurrection] were judged out of those things which were written in the books [the Bible], according to their works (Revelation 20:12, *KJV*).

This is that judgment day mentioned in Matthew 10:15: "Verily I say unto you [twelve disciples], It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment [that Last Great Day], than for that city [which refuses to receive you or to hear your words]." It is a time when all those who died in ignorance in past ages will be given an opportunity to be called to receive salvation. Ezekiel 16:53–55 makes this very plain. All those who died in their sins will be given their first opportunity to understand the truth of God's way of life (Ezekiel 37). This is precisely the salvation that Jesus mentioned in His

sermon on that Great Day of the Feast. The eighth day, which immediately follows the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, pictures the completion of God's redemptive plan. It is just prior to the new heavens and the new earth.

What does the Apostle John see happening immediately after the White Throne Judgment period of testing is over?

And the sea gave up the dead [those who refused to enter into God's salvation process] which were in it; and death [those killed and left unburied] and hell [grave] delivered up the dead which were in them [the incorrigibles in a third resurrection]: and they were judged [by God's written word] every man according to their works [their resistance to God's established government]. And death and hell [the grave, symbolic of the resurrected incorrigibles] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death [for all those who refused to live by God's law and government]. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life [where names are added upon their calling] was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13–15; 21:8, *KJV*).

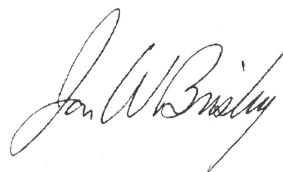
Many will receive God's gift of eternal life—hundreds of thousands who have qualified to be part of the husband/wife dominion at Christ's Second Coming, multiple billions who have qualified to be added to the God Family through the Millennium, and the resurrected billions added to the God Family after the White Throne Judgment period. The rebellious, no matter how few or how many, will meet face to face with their Judge in the third resurrection. Their temporary human life will be suddenly cut short in the seething flames of the lake of fire. This end-time inferno is recorded in 2 Peter 3:10, 12 and Malachi 4:1–3.

God's Family dominion or government is the hope of the world! No other hope exists. This concludes the "meat in due season" letter for the fall Feasts.

With much law-abiding love from
myself and Nancy,



Robert J. Litz



Jon W. Brisby