

January 2023

Dear Brethren:

Our warmest greetings to you who were chosen by God to know and live His infallible Way in order to be born into the divine Family at the appointed time.

For another year in God's calendar, we had the privilege of observing God's Holy Days. By the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, we were reminded that we are approaching the time when the earth will be full of the knowledge of God for the happiness of mankind.

As we sanctify God's Sabbath week after week and His Holy Days year after year, we understand God's Plan for man more and more.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:27–28).

That is the starting point of the billions who will have lived on the earth: created in the image of God. Therefore, this passing physical life is not an end in itself.

God said to Abraham: ". . . walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). ". . . for a father of many nations have I made thee" (verse 5). Abraham did not see the fulfillment of many of the promises that he received from God, but he did what God required of him: "walk before me, and be thou perfect."

And being not weak in faith . . . He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness (Romans 4:19–22).

What about us?

We too received many promises from God. When He called us, what did He promise to give to us? His Truth, His Way of Life, and the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). We too are required to walk before God and to become perfect without letting up. The stronger that is our belief in our call by God, the better we apply ourselves to practicing

His Way of Life, because we are fully convinced that God does not lie and that He will do what He promises.

Whatever our disability, our handicap, or our difficulties, we are always assured that God will not forsake us and that He is performing in us the work that He began and wants to bring to perfection.

But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand (Isaiah 64:8).

If our attitudes and our behaviors are such that we put physical and material things before our spiritual growth and we obstinately resist the progress of God's work in our lives, Jesus Christ shows in Mark 9:42–50, that no sacrifice of the self is too great in order to let God long for His work and allow us an entrance into His Kingdom. "For every one shall be salted with fire [through trials] . . ." (verse 49). "Have salt in yourselves [accept the desire that God has for the work of His hands], and have peace one with another" (verse 50).

The work brought to perfection will be our birth into the Family of God. The way that leads to that goal is hard and difficult, because we go through times of testing. "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand" (Jeremiah 18:6). Every flesh being must put on the character of God in order to be an heir of His Kingdom. God wants children that are like Him.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

As clay models, ". . . we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Our own uprightness cannot save us. Many examples recorded in God's Word illustrate how He works with those whom He chooses. By the Apostle Paul we are told: "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons" (Hebrews 12:7). Though He never committed any sin, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, went through the same process.

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death [eternal death], and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:7–9).

We must repent, submit to God and by the life of Christ in us—by His mind—we must bring our wills into tune with the will of God. We must realize how powerless we are and we must learn to rely upon God through faith in order to receive the strength, the understanding and the righteousness that we cannot acquire on our own. God wants us to be malleable clay, because we were redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ.

How do we respond to the trials that God is allowing in our lives?

The book of Job teaches us many things. Job was the wisest and most perfect man on the earth in his time. God said of him: ". . . there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8). But Satan makes war against those who fear God and are blameless. He is a fierce enemy of God's called ones. In order to test Job, God allowed Satan to attack him. Satan stripped Job of his riches: he sent thieves to take his cattle and murderers to kill his servants. Satan caused lightning to burn up Job's sheep and shepherds. Satan made a great wind smite the house in which Job's ten children were gathered and were feasting. The house collapsed on them and they died. What a test! In the aftermath of such circumstances, was Job going to curse God, as Satan expected?

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (Job 1:20–22).

Satan triumphed on the material plane but not on the spiritual plane. Therefore, he returned to the attack and came again to present himself before God. And he has done so to this day.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night (Revelation 12:10).

The second time, God said to Satan:

Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause (Job 2:3).

Knowing the make-up of man, what permission did Satan ask God?

And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life (Job 2:4–6).

We see that Satan operates under God's authority. He was allowed to inflict the most cruel calamity of all with one restriction: he was to spare the life of Job.

The added test was that Job was struck with sore boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). His three friends who came to see him did not recognize him because his suffering looked so great. "In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:10). After Job's long debates with his friends who were accusing him and thinking that they understood the reasons for the evils afflicting him, God Himself spoke to Job. He showed him what man is, even when he makes every effort to be obedient to God. The trials allowed by God killed the ego in Job. God said to him: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding" (Job 38:4). After a long series of questions asked by God, Job answered: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (Job 40:4). As God was describing His greatness and His power, Job understood the reason for his trials and he abased the high opinion that he had of himself.

Everyone, called by God, can derive an important lesson from the experience of Job. Let us not forget that we are the workmanship of God. In order for us to be brought to perfection and to be born into the Family of God, we must be humbled through trials. God allows this in order to lead us to pluck out our bad character traits, to repent and to submit to Him. Job did so after he had suffered.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.  
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:5–6).

The book of Job helps us to understand many of our trials. They teach us our complete helplessness and the need to rely upon God.

The prophet Jeremiah is another inspiring example.

I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light (Lamentations 3:1–2).

Jeremiah remained faithful in spite of being slandered, persecuted and being thrown into a dungeon cell where he was kept a long time (Jeremiah 37:16).

Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day. My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones (Lamentations 3:3–4).

Tormented by pains, how did Jeremiah respond?

Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD (Lamentations 3:19–26).

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the LORD commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? (verses 37–39)

There are many situations that are tests of faith. Whatever the trials, let us remember that God is always near. He is our Father, an extremely merciful and good Father, who in His wisdom allows great tests. He wants to see by such circumstances whether or not we are examples of courage and conviction, remaining faithful to the end, keeping a living faith in His promises.

No human being can appropriate eternal life. He must become an heir. That implies some obligations that he must meet before being a partaker of that inheritance. It is made possible in Christ by His life in us. He is our Savior. He is the Firstborn of God's Family. He will be our Elder Brother at our new birth.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (John 3:6–7).

Jesus Christ was the first to undergo that entire process. It is what God planned for those who respond to His training on the path of life.

Let us prove to God that we believe in Him with unwavering faith. Our successes will depend upon the choices that we will have made and on the mind that we will have let rule in our lives: the mind of man or the mind of God. It is with the mind of God that we can spiritually withstand the attacks from Satan and be heirs of the promise of reigning with Christ.

Our prayers and our love are with you all.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat'.

Jean Aviolat

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby'.

Jon W. Brisby