

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter March 2005

Dear Brethren:

It is such a pleasure to greet the children of God again in this monthly mailing, and to express our love and devotion to each one of you, recognizing it is you whom God is inspiring and motivating through the power of His Holy Spirit. How dear are those few with whom God is working in this age of darkness. How priceless are those who have responded to that call and have not quenched that Spirit in their personal lives. There are many of God's sheep who are currently wandering to and fro upon the mountaintops of spiritual wilderness. How we pray for the day God will bring many of them back to an appreciation for the faith once delivered. But in the meantime, how much more unique and beloved are those of you who have resisted deception and held fast to those true doctrines of Jesus Christ. Those who are making themselves pliable in the hands of the Creator—using that Spirit to build righteous character—are part of that small light shining out of the blackness of this deceived world. How we pray for the day when that light will fill this whole earth, at the return of the Great King—Jesus Christ.

Because the spring Holy Days are so late this year, we are still several weeks away from the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, which normally would not be the case at this point in March. But still it is not too early to emphasize the preparation required for that critical appointment before God. For many years we have recorded a special sermon called the pre-Passover evaluation message which goes out by tape to everyone on that mailing list. (You will notice at the end of this *Announcement Letter* that this special message is assigned to be heard a couple of weeks from now, on Sabbath, March 26.) Why do we make such provision for a special message, and why do we begin so early to admonish God's children to prepare for the Passover?

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is

broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore *whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily*, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (1 Corinthians 11:23–30) [emphasis mine].

The Apostle Paul confirms we cannot just fritter away our time and then show up at the Passover service unprepared. We must aggressively examine ourselves before coming to partake of the emblems of Christ's sacrifice. But this command has been a source of worry for some of God's people over the years. Why? Because they have misunderstood what it means to be *worthy* to partake of Passover.

There have been instances where devoted members of God's church have failed to come to the Passover service, feeling they were unworthy to partake of it. How did they come to this conclusion? It was not because they did not examine themselves, but because their personal examination revealed how far short they were falling in obeying God's commands. Because they felt guilty for not being as "perfect" as they felt they should be, they concluded they were *not worthy* to partake of Passover. But is that what Paul was teaching—that only those who measured up to a certain level of righteousness were eligible to keep Passover? Not at all!

We all fall far short of the image of Christ. If it were a matter of a predetermined level of righteousness, not one of us would qualify to keep the Passover. No matter how much we may have been failing to live up to what we know is right, the most important thing is to admit that state before God, and then recommit to fight to overcome that sin in our lives. There is no better time to start than now. And if we are sincere in admitting our weaknesses to Him, and determined to work to walk in His way, He is ever willing to forgive us and blot out that guilty past. No matter how recently you may have sinned and become ashamed, if you are truly repentant, you are eligible to partake of Passover. Notice another very critical command of Jesus Christ:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you (John 6:53).

This means that any baptized church member who does not partake of the bread and wine of Passover each year is cut off from Jesus Christ! Without Christ, there is no hope for salvation. Without partaking of Passover, we cut ourselves off from that spiritual lifeline. So partaking of Passover is imperative for spiritual survival!

This proves there are *two* ways we might cut ourselves off from God. One is by not taking the Passover at all—for whatever reason. The other is by taking the Passover *unworthily*. Falling into either category results in spiritual suicide. Therefore, anyone who concludes he is not qualified to take the Passover because he is unworthy, still winds up in the same state of separation. He is no better off by avoiding Passover than he was by taking it unworthily. We *must* partake of Passover, and we *must* partake of it after the right spiritual preparation. Any other course leads to spiritual oblivion.

May every one of you use your time wisely now to do that serious work of spiritual introspection. Be honest before God. But no matter how much leaven you find there, never let that cause you to become discouraged. Our God is a powerful God, and there is nothing you cannot achieve through the power of His Holy Spirit. We must believe and be willing to act. When we do that, no matter what sins and weaknesses we may still be facing, we can still go to the Passover service with confidence that we can take those emblems worthily. We must then follow through to apply the meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread—the process of actually purging our lives of that sin we have found.

Birth

Mr-s. Zablon Ngonda, from the Migori area of Kenya, wish to announce the arrival of their baby boy, named Raymond Cole. Raymond was born Wednesday, February 2. We congratulate them on their new arrival.

Holy Days

Passover	Friday evening, April 22
Night to be Much Observed	Sabbath evening, April 23
First Holy Day of Unleavened Bread	Sunday, April 24
Last Holy Day of Unleavened Bread	Sabbath, April 30

Trip Schedule

March 26	Knoxville, Tennessee
April 22, 23, 24	Albertinia, South Africa
April 30	Migori, Kenya

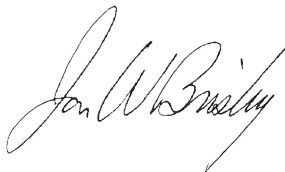
Reminder

As we announced in the February *Announcement Letter*, we will soon be ready to offer our weekly sermon programs on CD, as well as on cassette tape. We are committed to continuing to provide cassette tapes to those who prefer them, and for as long as they choose. However, we are hopeful that many (most over time) will choose to begin receiving sermons by CD instead of cassette. Those of you who would like to be among the first to receive CDs when we are finally ready to mail the first batch, we are requesting that you notify the church office right away or return the special request form which was mailed out. Please remember, in order to play our sermon CDs, you *must* have an MP3 *compatible* player. If you have any questions concerning this new program, please feel free to contact us at the church office.

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC I-3	02-17-05	03-12-05	The Three Minds #3
WSE-RC I-4	02-17-05	03-19-05	The Three Minds #4
WSE-LW 2	03-03-05	03-26-05	Pre-Passover Evaluation
WSE-JB 73	03-03-05	04-02-05	How Long Can You Wait?
WSE-JB 22-73-23A	03-17-05	04-09-05	Fund. of Belief #23A
WSE-RC I-5	03-17-05	04-16-05	The Three Minds #5

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby