

Announcement Letter April 2017

Dear Brethren:

This letter is being released just before the observance of Passover, so those of you receiving it through regular mail will not receive it before the Feast of Unleavened Bread has already begun. In any case, your servants here in the Eugene office wish to greet you all, with prayers that your Holy Day season will be especially inspiring and rewarding.

Recently, one of our brethren asked a very astute question concerning a statement made by Mr. Raymond Cole in his sermon series on Humility (#7; CL2-RC 144). In that message, Mr. Cole stated, "God's Truth is a bondage in which exists perfect freedom." Given that this statement seems inherently contradictory, what is a deeper explanation? The topic seems very appropriate to address during this Passover season.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:29–30).

Jesus Christ did indeed call His Way a *burden*. He compared it to a *yoke* placed upon an ox to pull a heavy load. A yoke, by definition, is a *working restraint* which locks the animal into a harness to make it serve a master as a beast of burden. Therefore, a yoke implies servitude. Why did Jesus use such an example to describe His Way? It means that following God certainly results in difficulties—burdens—for us. Choosing to become a true Christian requires *many sacrifices* to put God first in our lives. The special preparations required to observe the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread are good examples of burdens we bear in order to please God. Physical, as well as spiritual, preparation requires the expenditure of energy and planning, otherwise we will be guilty of disrespecting God. Humanly, the preparation for annual Holy Days—perhaps especially in this particular season—is stressful. It is clearly a burden to the mind. To avoid being rejected by God, we must willingly put ourselves under His yoke, and be willing to be harnessed to His will.

But compared with the "burdens of sin"—the natural expression of carnal freedom from God's yoke—the weights in serving God are *much less by comparison*. Living the way of sin in this world is *the greatest bondage of all*. It is a huge *burden* upon all humanity. While they claim to cast off all shackles and pursue their individual freedoms, they actually make themselves slaves to penalties that are *built in* to our habitat on this earth. Man can no sooner escape the penalties of sin than he can escape the forces of gravity while standing

upon this earth. He conjures all manner of clever ruses to shield himself from the laws of cause and effect, and yet, no matter how high he flies, he always comes back down to earth. God has designed our environment with laws that are immutable. Man, created by this same God, is subject to them, no matter what he thinks he can do. What we see in this evil and debauched world today are the fruits of man trying to make himself happy without the Creator. In the name of freedom, they have made themselves absolutely miserable, and are reaping the very worst bondage of slavery. Ironically, people like to believe that living as a Christian is a heavy burden, with all of those do's and don'ts, but when we obey God sincerely and correctly, we actually *become free* of all of the curses of this world, the ones that come upon all those who live after sin.

So what Mr. Cole was doing was making an ironic comparison between what the world calls freedom, and what God reveals to be *real freedom*. The people of the world are "free" to do whatever they want without restraint, because God made them to be free moral agents, but living "free" like that puts them under the greatest bondage of all, the curse of sin. So taking on the "yoke of Christ," and disciplining our lives according to His laws of right and wrong is actually the only way to become the very most free of all—free from the burden of sin.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread helps us remember the need to examine ourselves and to search out the sin that is making us miserable. When we do it with the right orientation before God, His "light yoke" is indeed most liberating! May every one of you, dear friends, discover with His help the means to break the hold of sin in your lives. When you do that, you will never call God's commandments a burden.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it (Isaiah 58:13–14).

New Moon

The new moon, Iyar (second month), begins Wednesday evening, April 26. The new moon day is Thursday, April 27.

Second Passover

Anyone needing to partake of the second month Passover after ministerial approval, please be advised that it will be May 10, to be observed the previous evening, May 9, after sunset. If instructions are needed, please contact the church office as soon as possible.

Holy Day

Pentecost..... Monday, June 5

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

April 15, 17..... Maryville, Tennessee

May 27. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Recorded Sermon Schedule

| Sermon # | Mailed | Played | Title |
|--------------------|----------|----------|---|
| CL2-RC 143 | 03-09-17 | 03-25-17 | Principles of Christian Living (Series 2): Humility #6 |
| WSE-JWB 195 | 03-09-17 | 04-01-17 | The Brazen Serpent on the Pole |
| CL2-RC 144 | 03-09-17 | 04-08-17 | Principles of Christian Living (Series 2): Humility #7 |
| WSE-JWB 22-157-26G | 03-30-17 | 04-15-17 | Fund. of Belief #26: Worldly Holidays: Christmas |
| CL2-RC 145 | 03-30-17 | 04-22-17 | Principles of Christian Living (Series 2): Humility #8 |
| CL2-RC 146 | 03-30-17 | 04-29-17 | Principles of Christian Living (Series 2): Humility #9 |
| WSE-JWB 22-158-26H | 04-20-17 | 05-06-17 | Fund. of Belief #26: Worldly Holidays: Easter |
| CL2-RC 147 | 04-20-17 | 05-13-17 | Principles of Christian Living (Series 2): Humility #10 |
| CL2-RC 148 | 04-20-17 | 05-20-17 | Principles of Christian Living (Series 2): Humility #11 |

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby