

Church of God, The Eternal

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Passover, Unleavened Bread, and the Millennium

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Dear Brethren:

I received the sermons on DVD that were made at the Feast of Tabernacles. I put the one made on the opening night into the DVD player. Suddenly there appeared this gorgeous, pristine waterfall flowing over meticulously placed stone among a garden of the most beautiful flowers to create a perfect scene of beauty, feeling of tranquility, and peace of mind.

My first thought was WOW! What a perfect scene to begin each Feast of Tabernacles sermon, especially the sermons Mr. Brisby gave on "The Restitution of All Things." How could one keep from becoming a bit emotional with joy knowing that wonderful world tomorrow is just around the corner, when all things will be restored to that excellent, pristine perfection that it once was when God finished His creation. He was well pleased with all He had created. "Then God looked over all He had made, and it was excellent in every way" (Genesis 1:31, *The Living Bible*).

Brethren, we simply cannot imagine a world that is excellent in every way. However, we can think of a little child on this beautiful landscape strolling up leading a bear, an ox, or even a lion, with no harm whatsoever even coming near the child and the animals all feeding and drinking, even sleeping together.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy

mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6–9, *English Standard Version*).

Can you envision such a world as this? Everyone, from the smallest to the greatest, will be filled with the knowledge of God. That means everybody will be living God's laws and producing the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:22–24, *King James Version*).

The true meaning of *love* will be restored. Great *joy* will be in every heart because of such *peace* throughout the whole land. People will not have to pay a large tax to support a sophisticated military and out-of-control spending by elected officials.

[A]nd many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord (Isaiah 2:3–5, *ESV*).

Think about it, brethren! Everybody walking in the *light* of the Lord, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:19–21, *KJV*).

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my

people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old [notice, brethren, that a person that dies being a hundred years old is considered young], and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, *for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord*, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord (Isaiah 65:17–25, *ESV*) [emphasis mine].

Christ is going to return as King of kings and Lord of lords, and we, His saints, will assist Him in bringing this utopian world into reality—a thousand years of peace, prosperity, and happiness. "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing" (Isaiah 14:7, *KJV*).

They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful (Revelation 17:14, *ESV*).

That is referring to us, brethren, if we continue in the faith and keep producing the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Before this world can undergo the changes necessary to bring about this time of great joy, Satan must be put into a place of restraint for a thousand years, and this most welcome event will occur sometime in the not-to-distant future.

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1–2, *ESV*).

Can you think of any family that would not welcome, with open arms, such a utopian society, when even the wildest of animals will become as gentle and harmless as a little lamb?

The Millennium and the Passover

What does the Millennium have to do with the Passover? Much in every way. The Millennium will be the ultimate reward given to those who fulfill the keeping of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread today. Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread begin God's appointed new year. It is the season in which we are commanded to put leavening out of our homes and spiritual leavening (*sin*) out of our lives.

A Time for Serious Personal Evaluation

Keeping the Passover each year reminds us Christ is God's spokesman, the Truth, the standard by which we must judge ourselves and renew our commitment in Christ and His way of life in manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–24).

Eating unleavened bread for a full seven days is a reminder that we must overcome the works of the flesh. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7, *KJV*).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God [that wonderful world tomorrow] (Galatians 5:19–21, *KJV*).

You know these words by heart. However, if we are not reminded year after year in season and out of season, we will forget.

Brethren, there is always room for improvement. I can tell you from many years of experience, keeping the mind and tongue under control is very difficult. It requires constant surveillance.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it (1 Peter 3:10–11, *KJV*).

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless (James 1:26, *ESV*).

[B]ut no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water (James 3:8–12, *ESV*).

Make Peace Rather Than Strife

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (James 3:17–18, *ESV*).

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels (Revelation 3:5, *ESV*).

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world (1 John 2:15–16, *ESV*).

The world has so much in the way of pleasure to offer to young and old alike, it is almost impossible—even for some God has called—to give up this addiction, until they begin suffering the aftereffects. By that time, for some, it is too late.

But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world (1 Corinthians 11:31–32, *ESV*).

If we fail to realize that we have these human traits, we will never overcome them.

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things being fervent in your love among

yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins: using hospitality one to another without murmuring (1 Peter 4:7–9, *American Standard Version*).

And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world (1 John 4:16–17, *ASV*).

Yes, brethren, a paradise is coming. We must stay focused on the importance of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, keeping in mind that it is the one who overcomes who will inherit the wonderful world tomorrow. It surely will be worth every effort.

With sincere love and concern,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John R. Byrd". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Byrd".

John R. Byrd