

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440
www.cogeternal.org

The late Raymond C. Cole
Founding Pastor
Jon W. Brisby
Pastor, Director

Offices in:
United States
Philippines
Switzerland

Pentecost—a Spring Festival for Reason

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Dear Brethren:

The spring season we are now enjoying in the northern hemisphere includes two of the three "times" designated by God for annual Holy Days. Deuteronomy 16:16 earmarks those three times as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Although we know there are actually seven Holy Days—plus the solemn Passover service—(Leviticus 23), each of these commanded convocations are grouped into one of three "times" of the year. And Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, *as well as Pentecost* all fall within one particular season—the spring.

It is very easy to overlook this fact and erroneously assume only Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread fall in the spring season, thinking Pentecost falls in the summer season, and then the rest follow in the fall season. In fact, in the very earliest years when God was still revealing the Truth to Mr. Armstrong one doctrine at a time, he too assumed at first that Pentecost was a summer festival. In the 1940 *Good News* article entitled, *How To Figure Passover*, he stated, "But Passover ALWAYS comes in the SPRING . . . Pentecost ALWAYS came in the summer, Tabernacles ALWAYS in the Fall, at time of, or right after Fall harvest." God had only miraculously revealed to him that Pentecost was on Monday four years prior to this time (and the church then kept that correct day from 1936 until 1974). But he had not yet noticed that this Monday Pentecost *always* fell before the summer solstice—never afterwards. During this very period in which truth was being revealed, Herbert Armstrong was writing articles all along the way. It is interesting to see how prior assumptions coming from his own thinking were positively being purged out as God taught him step by step. God inspired him in short order to notice that Pentecost was indeed falling every year in the *spring*—not summer—and it certainly then became an important part of our greater understanding about the *significance* of Pentecost. Notice Mr. Armstrong's statement in the original 1957 booklet entitled, *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?:*

Notice, too, that these feasts, Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost, fall at the BEGINNING of the year, and the great events they picture occur at the very BEGINNING OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION!

This was not an example of doctrinal "change" affecting Pentecost from 1940 to 1957. Mr. Armstrong never asserted God had first *revealed* to him that Pentecost should be in the summer, and then changed later to say God had corrected him to know it should now be in the spring. Far from it. God revealed first the need to keep Pentecost, then later the knowledge of the correct day for Pentecost, and then even later the deeper significance of Pentecost. This revelation truly came one piece at a time over a number of years. But once God *did* reveal a piece of that doctrinal puzzle through divine inspiration, that piece became part of the foundation of unchanging Truth—the cornerstone which is Jesus Christ. And it could never then be removed from that foundation. This very process of augmenting and filling out our knowledge of God's divine law is the perfect example of growing in grace and knowledge. That kind of godly growth always adds to—*complements*—our understanding, never undoing or refuting past Truth.

The reality is, Pentecost *never* falls in the summer. By God's calendar, that Feast *always* falls at the end of—but within—the spring season. Although Trumpets and Atonement can sometimes fall in the summer—before the autumnal equinox—such is specifically forbidden with the Feast of Weeks. Pentecost *must* be a spring feast, and there is an important reason for that, which we will see.

Now those former brethren of God's church who today reject the Hebrew calendar as God's inspired tool for assigning Holy Days will challenge this fact vehemently. Since they conclude the Hebrew calendar is a Babylonian product and not an expression of the original inspiration of God to the Israelitish authority, most of them will allow their Pentecost to fall either in the spring or the summer, ignoring the calendric rule requiring a spring observance. They will claim there is no direct command in the Bible that Pentecost must be in the spring, and they are correct in that. But if one accepts what Mr. Armstrong taught us from the very beginning about the calendar—that God made the Jews accountable for bringing down to us both the Holy Scriptures *and* the calendar as holy oracles (Romans 3:1–2)—then the rules preserved by the Jews and contained within that calendar were not the creation of men, but the very inspiration of God. And those calendar rules will not allow Pentecost to fall in summer. The purpose of this letter is not to get into the technicalities of the Hebrew calendar. That calendar's validity can be proven in our article entitled, *The Hebrew Calendar—Is It Reliable?* But for anyone who accepts that God founded His Church upon truth and not error and seeks to hold to the faith once delivered, that calendar was part of the very foundation of the Radio Church of God from the beginning. Anyone rejecting that calendar is rejecting a very key component regarding spring Holy Days.

Why Is Pentecost a Spring Feast?

What is the real significance of Pentecost being a spring festival? Just as Mr. Armstrong stated in the quotation above—along with Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread—Pentecost is included in the part of God's master plan which represents events transpiring *at the beginning*. The plan begins with Jesus Christ as cornerstone and the need to accept Him as our only Savior. Accepting the true Christ is more than just a profession with the lips, but requires that we then work to crucify the natural, carnal mind and replace it with the mind of that one Christ—all of this being pictured in the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

But then can that personal resolution to change and follow Christ just stand upon its own? Can a motivated new convert simply will himself to stop breaking God's law and begin to think, act, and behave like Jesus Christ? Is it a matter of human conviction and willpower to put out that old leavening and begin to partake of Christ as the true unleavened bread? Even Jesus said of His own self He could do nothing (John 5:30). If that is really true—He being the powerful Son of God made flesh—how much less you or I, or any human being with a rebellious, carnal mind? Then if we cannot begin to fulfill that commitment through mere strength of will, how can we ever hope to walk in His footsteps and come out of sin?

The answer to that question is the essence of Pentecost. Pentecost represents the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church—God's chosen people—spiritual Israel. It is the power of that Spirit dwelling within us that gives us the means to accomplish everything represented by the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is the presence of that Spirit which makes us true members of the Body of Christ. Without that Spirit, we have no part of Him.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy [Spirit] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:38–39).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:9–11).

The gift of the Holy Spirit as an indwelling part of the mind of man was never given in that way until the Feast of Pentecost in A.D. 31, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was the monumental day on which the New Testament Church was founded (Acts 2:1–4), because this was the first moment that God performed the miracle to allow His very Spirit to begin to live

within the minds of His called ones. God had certainly moved men by His Spirit before this time, as the patriarchs of old were certainly guided and inspired by that very same power. But never before had God actually placed His Spirit *within* the human mind to create a newly-begotten spiritual child in Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy *hath begotten us* again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3–4) [emphasis mine].

Jesus Christ was the begotten Son of God, and before the gift of the Spirit to the Church, He was the *only* begotten Son.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

But He was never intended to *remain* the only begotten Son forever. He was truly the first of many more to come.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the *first* begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:5–6) [emphasis mine].

It was always God's intention to expand His glorious Family through the spiritual birth of many children, following the Firstborn, Jesus Christ.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing *many sons* unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me (Hebrews 2:10–13) [emphasis mine].

A human being can only become one of those begotten children by impregnation of the Holy Spirit to form a new spiritual life. Through baptism and receipt of that Spirit, a new child of God is begotten, with the hope of eventual birth into the glorious Family of God, to share His eternity and majesty as a *bonafide* God. Those begotten ones now are the only true members of the Church, which is spiritual Israel.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. . . . Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen (Galatians 6:16, 18).

It is these members of the Church of the living God which are preparing now to be part of the first resurrection. It is these God calls His firstfruits. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). The Feast of Pentecost is all about these firstfruits—those begotten of God's Spirit at this very time.

These firstfruits are the ones who have had Jesus Christ revealed to them through a special calling, accepted Him and all that He stands for as the Word made flesh, and then committed to the process of crucifying the carnal mind and replacing it with the very mind of that Savior. This is why Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost are all tied together with an unbreakable bond. Who can truly accept Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb except those who have been called and set aside as part of the firstfruits? ". . . Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). And God is the One who makes choice of whom and when He offers such a call. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . ." (John 6:44).

Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them (John 12:39–40).

It therefore becomes much more meaningful when we recognize that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the firstfruits—pictured in Pentecost—is the power that allows those called ones to fulfill the very meaning of the Passover and Unleavened Bread. This is why Pentecost is just as much a spring festival as are Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They all work in harmony together as a representation of the *beginning* of God's plan to save mankind.

Why a Corrupted Pentecost Is So Devastating

In the last thirty years, many of God's people have come to view the dispute over the correct day for keeping Pentecost as rather a minor point. When Pentecost was changed from Monday to Sunday in 1974—exactly thirty years ago—most members of our parent organization went right along with it without much of a second thought. Why? In their minds, whether it was

Monday or Sunday was relatively immaterial. If the church said so, that was OK, especially if the new teaching would save them from taking off an extra day from work. Since then, many will say the technicalities are so confusing anyway, that it is hard to know the truly correct interpretation of the count. Therefore, in their minds, they prefer to discount the significance of the specific date for the observance, and focus instead on the "spiritual meaning" of Pentecost. But do they really believe God is so cavalier about those appointed times which He sanctified as holy? Most would never agree the appropriate day for the weekly Sabbath is immaterial. Why then is Pentecost such a stepchild by comparison, even though it represents the founding of the Church—the mother of us all (Galatians 4:26)—and the life-giving waters of God's Holy Spirit?

The answer is that God's people were spiritually asleep during those crucial years, and have remained that way for the most part, even unto this day. It is amazing how so many will still put much weight upon partaking of Passover each year, but are very nonchalant about Pentecost. There are still many individuals who will move heaven and earth to make sure they participate in the Passover service, but will not go out of their way at all to gather on Pentecost, even their corrupted one. It is very similar to churchgoers of this world who are called "C&E" Christians. These are ones who do not go to church at all during the year, except on Christmas and Easter. Within God's true church, we have much the same with those who only make a real effort in relation to Passover.

The problem is, by discounting the vital importance of keeping the one and only true Pentecost, they miss any opportunity of partaking of Passover correctly. If one has knowingly rejected the revealed day of Pentecost in favor of one derived from doubtful disputations of human scholars, their Passover is likewise meaningless. The two observances are bound inexorably together.

John 6 and the Passover-Pentecost Connection

Let us examine this connection between Passover and Pentecost as spring observances through the encounter of Jesus and the Jews recorded in the book of John, chapter six.

To begin with, note that Jesus was asked a very direct and seemingly simple question: "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God" (John 6:28)? All human beings claim to value spiritual truth, and see themselves as champions and defenders of what is right. By asking the question, these men hoped to demonstrate how committed they were to godly truth and righteousness.

How did Jesus respond? "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). This was not the answer they had expected. They anticipated a reply concerning commandment keeping. But Christ said the first

key to fulfilling God's will is recognizing the legitimacy of whomever God has chosen to be His ambassador. This principle was absolutely confirmed later by the Apostle Paul:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and *how shall they hear without a preacher?* And *how shall they preach, except they be sent?* as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:14–15) [emphasis mine].

God has always chosen to work through commissioned representatives to reveal Himself, rather than a special revelation to each individual person; and that very aspect of God's plan has always been a stumbling block to human beings. What did Paul express in the very next thought? "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:16). In spite of the fact God *did* send commissioned servants to proclaim the Truth in God's very name, very few have ever been able to accept His servants. This was the very thing Jesus Christ experienced in the aftermath of His statements in John 6. Because they did not really believe Jesus was the true Spokesman of the Father, they were skeptical of His words and sought "proof" according to their own standards.

They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat (John 6:30–31).

What did they want from Jesus as proof? They wanted Him to perform a miracle commensurate with the raining of manna from heaven, which they attributed to Moses' credibility as a spokesman for God. Is it not ironic, however, that the Israelite ancestors of these very men never really accepted Moses, even while manna was raining down upon them? Ironic, too, in that the Being of whom they were asking a sign was the very God of Israel who gave their fathers that manna! But in their minds, if He were who He claimed to be, they should be able to expect some miracle as proof. But how did Jesus reply?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (verses 32–33).

Now this concept of a Messiah come from God to save them was something they truly believed, which is why they replied, ". . . Lord, evermore give us this bread" (verse 34). What then was Jesus' response to this opening?

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day (verses 35–40).

Remember that this whole discourse began with their asking what must be done to work the works of God. Now Jesus is getting more specific, telling them they must accept Him as the very Son of God who came from heaven to save the world. He begins to allude to the fact that He is the true Passover—the bread of life—but they have refused to believe it.

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? (verses 41–42).

Jesus then replies with an even more specific assertion concerning the need for one to be called, and then to take up that unique calling by accepting Christ as intermediary between the Father and man. Manna, although a miraculous food from heaven, did not grant eternal life, but partaking of Christ—the Passover Lamb and true unleavened bread—would offer that salvation.

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (verses 43–51).

As Christ was now zeroing in on His identity as the Passover Lamb, the Jews became more indignant in rejecting Him. "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (verse 52). They were carnal men, interpreting all things according to natural, human wisdom. Because the things Christ was explaining could only be discerned *spiritually*, they could not appreciate it, and in fact were repulsed by it. Even so, Jesus now responded with His most blunt and open answer to the issue of human salvation:

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. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum (verses 53–59).

Here was finally a direct reference to the Passover symbols picturing the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which would be instituted at the time of His final Passover. From the time that wine and unleavened bread were made part of that memorial service, only baptized members of the Body of Christ were thereafter permitted to partake of the Passover. Why? Because the Passover was now revealed to represent the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the *only* means to salvation—the only means to truly "work the works of God!" No one who did not believe that Jesus Christ was that authorized Ambassador of the Father—sent to be the Savior—could please God. And since Jesus already had made plain that no one could come into that personal relationship with God without a special call, the exclusive relevance of the *firstfruits* was now beginning to take shape. But because these unconverted Jews could not grasp these spiritual things, they were repulsed by His words, including those who had claimed to be disciples to that point. "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (verse 60). By "hard," they meant impossible to accept and believe. But why could they not believe it? Why could they not truly accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah?

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father (verses 61–65) [emphasis mine].

The words of God could not be understood or accepted by one who was not called and who was not being led by the Holy Spirit. It is *the Spirit* that is absolutely essential to come to know the Father, through acceptance of His Son as Savior. Because Jesus Christ is that Passover Lamb, this means only ones being singled out to be led by God's Holy Spirit can ever acceptably keep the Passover—a memorial to His death, and a confirmation of that covenant with spiritual Israel.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).

Because Pentecost represents the gift of that essential ingredient—the Holy Spirit—to those singled out for a special calling—the firstfruits—only those who have made a covenant with God through baptism and have been begotten of that Spirit can partake of the Passover. The interconnection of Passover and Pentecost cannot be ignored. Yes, Passover—representing Jesus Christ—comes first in God's master plan, but no human being can begin to partake of that Christ—to keep Passover—if he does not first have a calling, followed by acceptance of that calling through baptism, and then receiving the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit—the picture of Pentecost. So in reality, the meaning of Pentecost must be fulfilled in order for the Passover command to be fulfilled. Only the firstfruits of God's Spirit can eat His flesh and drink His blood.

Change in Pentecost Was Rejection of the Passover Lamb

Do we begin to see why the corruption of Pentecost by God's church in 1974 was far more devastating than most even realize today? It was not just changing an observance from one day to another. First, it was a change in the Holy Day which pictures our lifeline to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. By thinking it was "growing in grace and knowledge" to reject Monday for Sunday according to the authority of human scholars, Jesus Christ was actually rejected as the source of that church's doctrines. To reject Monday means we could not have believed Jesus Christ *revealed* Monday to Mr. Herbert Armstrong by divine revelation in the first place. But miraculous, divine revelation is *the only way* that men ever receive real Truth! And if we were ever the true Church of God, that is what we also received.

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:2–5).

That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:12–14).

The formula God uses is *always* the revelation of Truth to His people through divine inspiration of a chosen servant, who is commissioned to be a mouthpiece to proclaim that message to those who likewise have been miraculously called out. You will find no other method in all the Bible by which God deals with man. The admonition to God's people has *always* been to hold fast that which was revealed from the beginning!

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy [Spirit] which dwelleth in us (2 Timothy 1:13–14).

By rejecting Monday as Pentecost in 1974 after nearly forty years, the church effectively said they no longer wanted what Christ revealed through His chosen servant, but preferred to have that which comes out of the rationalization of human scholars whom they trusted more. In one fell swoop, that doctrinal change did two things: First, it corrupted the very Holy Day picturing the gift of the Holy Spirit to God's Church. In essence, it was an act to cut ourselves off from the flow of that Spirit. Second, it was a rejection of Jesus Christ Himself—that Passover Lamb. Changing Pentecost to Sunday said we did not believe Christ was the Revelator of Truth, but that we believe doctrine was put in the church by a man, therefore subject to error and correction. One single change did all of these things. It drove a dagger through the heart of the meaning of both Pentecost *and* Passover. As has been emphasized all through this letter, the two observances are bound up inexorably together. One cannot be violated without corrupting the other by extension.

Will Ye Also Go Away?

The Israel of God—both physical and spiritual—has always had a very difficult time in accepting God's revealed ways and holding fast. The lessons of the entire Bible show the repeated inability of God's chosen people to be resolutely faithful. They invariably trade what was revealed to them for something of their own creation. The church in the wilderness did it time and time again, the New Testament Church went into apostasy for the very same reasons, and then before our very eyes, the last day Church of God followed exactly in their footsteps.

This was the same doubting spirit Jesus was dealing with in the aftermath of His summary teaching in John 6. When all was said and done—after He had made the doctrine of salvation very plain—what was the final reaction of his disciples? "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). So the great masses who were initially mesmerized by His miraculous works and professed allegiance were somehow put off when they found out for what the true Christ really stood. It was even a challenge for those who had been closest to Him to really believe and accept His message about eating the flesh of Christ and drinking the blood of Christ. He knew they were tempted to waiver. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67). These were His closest companions whom He had

handpicked and with whom He had shared all these things. Thankfully, eleven of the twelve proved they really did believe and accept Him.

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God (verses 68–69).

Peter proved that he understood the message. And after Christ was resurrected, he was one of those few gathered in the appropriate place—on the one and only day of Pentecost—to receive the Holy Spirit as a begotten child of God. Those who were holding to a perverted concept of Pentecost were not in the right place at the right time, and so did not receive that Spirit.

Brethren, the question is, are you intent on holding absolutely faithful to the commands God revealed to His one and only true Church in this age by divine revelation, or "will ye also go away"? Many who initially responded to that Good News message of the coming Kingdom of God eventually became offended and turned aside. Because they had no faith in the divine work of God to establish and sustain His church upon Truth, they allowed deception to enter in, quenching the Holy Spirit in their lives (Pentecost), and thereby rejected Jesus Christ, the very cornerstone of the Church (Passover).

There is absolutely no reason for any of us to follow that path to destruction, if we can learn these vital lessons from the mistakes of others (and our own), and seek the simplicity of the revealed Christ in opposition to our own wisdom.

When we come to value the promise that the Church of God—as the Work of God rather than the work of man—would be founded upon Truth and not error, we have a framework upon which to evaluate all that has transpired to test God's people over these past three decades. As we prepare to observe Pentecost once again this year, what a privilege to understand its deep meaning, made richer by the difficult things we have all endured. And what a joy to grasp the significance of Pentecost as part of the spring Holy Day season.

May you all have a rich and rewarding observance before God, in absolute confidence of Jesus Christ's gift of Truth to us by miraculous revelation.

With love and devotion in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the text "With love and devotion in Christ Jesus,".

Jon W. Brisby