

August 2015

Greetings Brethren:

I hope that this letter finds you *prospering* as we rapidly approach the fall Holy Day season. It is a time when our efforts to prepare to convoke before God will be realized. We see the command to convoke in Numbers 29:1:

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

This day is not a worldly holiday get-together, a workplace social, or even a convocation with friends, but a holy convocation before God. We are not just getting ready to do something ritualistic, but something with great meaning and purpose. The spiritual significance behind the keeping of the Holy Days—revealed to Mr. Armstrong—explained what God is doing here on this earth.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you (John 15:15).

Through the annual Holy Days, God has revealed what His Plan is for mankind. Each Holy Day is a special time that not only reminds us of what God is doing, but is also a time of special significance because God then delivers a message to His people. As we convoke—as we fulfill the command to be present—we show our respect and acknowledgment of what He is doing, and we position ourselves to hear the message.

Originally, the trumpet was used for religious events such as a calling to assemble, or was blown to call and maneuver troops into battle. It was also used to announce the arrival of the king. Today we do not physically blow a trumpet; however, there is still a call to assemble spiritual soldiers to battle before their King.

This coming Day of Trumpets is the day from which all the rest of the year is calculated. It is a day of special significance. Physically, everything else that happened was based on this day. Spiritually, the purpose of our existence is all about Jesus Christ. This is His day—it pictures His triumphant return and His wedding. All of the previous activities and events were intentionally planned with this day in mind. It is a day when the end results of the initial work of the Holy Spirit within mankind—from Christ's first time on earth until His Second Coming—will be realized. God made an investment with His Holy Spirit in

those whom He called, and now He is going to receive the profit, the dividend, or the firstfruits of that investment.

What is God doing with His profit—the firstfruits? To use a gambling term, He is "doubling down" with it. "Doubling down" is a gambling term from blackjack, and it describes a strategy in which a blackjack player who is sufficiently convinced in the strength of his hand can choose to double his original bid. In this context, "doubling down" means making a calculated gamble in order to maximize the potential yield of a project.

The difference is, God is not gambling, nor should we be gambling. However, what is the first thing that occurs when that trumpet sounds?

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

What occurs? The successful firstfruits that have died are resurrected and receive their reward of eternal life; then the same occurs with those that are alive. They are immediately translated from being physical and engaged to Jesus Christ, to being spiritual and married to Jesus Christ. God immediately takes the "profit" of His initial investment and reinvests it with His Son to maximize the potential yield of the project—to bring many Sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). They then descend together to bring about the next phase of The Plan.

Trumpets is a day that represents God delivering on His promise:

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour (Titus 1:2–3).

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:54).

The purpose of beginning our spiritual year started off by partaking of those emblems that represent all that Jesus Christ stood for was to take us to this day when the Word preached will have taken root in the called to produce the desired Bride who has

made herself ready. God delivers on His promise to those who applied themselves. They profit. He profits. A win-win situation.

So, is the Word of God profiting you? We will know in a day not too far off.

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Hebrews 4:1–2).

Now, God gave the Law, as noted in Exodus 20. And it is interesting that God inspired Moses to once again remind Israel about forty years later of the same Law, as noted in Deuteronomy 5. But, in between those two times, many carcasses fell in the wilderness, did they not? Sadly, it appears that many carcasses have fallen over the last forty years as well.

Why did it not profit them, or God? Because the word preached was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. It says they heard it, so they had to have been in church services, but they were not taking what they heard and using it. They did not believe that the Law was real. They did not believe that there really was a penalty for violating it. They deceived themselves. Somehow, they discounted, they watered down, they disregarded the Word they heard, and therefore it did not profit them like it was supposed to have done. It was not that the Word was not profitable at the beginning, but they did not apply it, or else they perverted it. When we pervert anything that God gives, at a minimum it becomes less profitable, and in many cases it becomes totally *unprofitable*.

That is the gist of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30. God gave talents to each of the called; He did His part. They, then, were under obligation to take it, apply it, and return a profit. Right? And what was the result of the unbeliever who was afraid? He was *unprofitable*, and therefore not given the reward of the promise.

We are those who have been given the incredible privilege of being called to hear the Word—to understand. Are there any areas of our lives where we are discounting, watering down or disregarding God's Word, thereby failing to profit us because we are not putting it to use—believing?

We see a warning of this in Hebrews 4:3–7:

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest. . . . For he spake in a certain

place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Verse 11 reminds us that it is going *to feel* like work, and if we are not convinced of the necessity and urgency of the requirement, we, just like our forefathers, are not going to be there.

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief (Hebrews 4:11).

We are further reminded not to rationalize or deceive ourselves in how we might be *inclined to feel* about what is required, but instead to use the Word of God to properly discern those *feelings* and choose to obey. Those *feelings* could be ones of fatigue because we have been enduring a challenge for a long time, weariness in continuing to be obedient, frustration in our lack of progress, doubt that our efforts are worth it, apprehension about what our family, friends or employer might say or do, or having discouragement in "just still being here," because our belief that we are all here for purpose has waned. If we are still here, that means there is still work to be done. Are there *any feelings* that will keep you from being present at those commanded assemblies, not only physically, but enthusiastically?

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Even though there are times when our feelings weigh on us and it looks hopeless physically, we are encouraged to continue to engage in the battle against anything that exalts itself or tries to discourage us from achieving our goal. When we do this, *and believe* that all things *do work* for good for those that love (obey) the Lord, we can have confidence to continue on and go boldly in the footsteps of our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. Even if physically it currently *feels* like there is no benefit or reward for persevering, we overcome those negative feelings because we are spiritually persuaded, reassured and comforted that our efforts to obey will be worth it. Part of what Jesus Christ endured was the temptation that came from his *physical feelings*, but the difference was, when those feelings pushed up against His being obedient—being present at holy

convocations or persevering on—He put them in their place. Jesus Christ recognized that His feelings were a temptation. He tried them. And then, through obedience to the Law, He was able to reap the benefit of being comforted, as noted below:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the *feeling of our infirmities*; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14–16) [emphasis mine].

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me [A byproduct of obedience to the law should be comfort.] (Psalm 23:4).

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Revelation 22:12).

Will our work be rewarded? Will the Word of God profit you and me? Will we be able to stand in confidence in that day?

It will, and we can, if we as the called accept the race that is set before us *and believe* that there is great purpose and value in it, and if we respect the Law and acknowledge when we fall short of it. Then we can look unto the author and finisher of our faith in confidence, believing that just as God the Father brought the Captain of our salvation to glory, so also will He bring many other sons and daughters to glory (Hebrews 12:1–7; 2:10).

If we refuse to be properly exercised by the experiences we are going through, if we do not believe that there is anything else for us to gain from our continuing to be here, if we disrespect the Law or will not acknowledge our sins, then we will not stand in that day, or be rewarded. God wants you and me to use His investment in us to overcome and be successful, so that we both win. God wants us to set aside any weight that besets us and to be where He has placed His Name so that His Word will profit us. Do not be deceived by *the feeling* that His Word will profit you at home when He commands you to be present elsewhere. Whenever we believe His Word and back up our belief with obedient action, our names remain in the Book of Life and our reward is not far removed.

Opportunity is defined as a set of circumstances that make it possible to do something. Opportunities are time sensitive in business and with God. Entrepreneurs see opportunities frequently. However, seeing the opportunity is only the first part of the equation. Successful entrepreneurs see the opportunity and seize the moment. God has created the opportunity for the called to profit. He has allowed us to be able to see the opportunity, even if not fully at this time. The question is, will you and I seize the opportunity that this day pictures—a gathering of the saints—and be "present to win"? Being present at God's Holy Days means that we have planned ahead. It means that we are in agreement with what He is doing, and how He is doing it, and therefore have prioritized our obedience to be at the top of the list. You and I are going to worship a god; the only question is, which god? Where we place ourselves during those times will reveal which god we are worshipping. Those that are looking for treasure in heaven will profit because they not only see the value of the opportunity to draw near, but also *act* to come into His very presence.

A common mistake in the past was to get our priorities mixed up. Our first priority is to be present at all the services. Then we can fulfill the second priority, that of hearing. And thirdly, we are to be enthusiastic and rejoice before God. The mistake is to get #3 and #2 mixed up. Although we are blessed with the opportunity to be able to rejoice, we must be sure that our rejoicing does not compromise our ability to "be present to win." Some individuals, when given liberty, cannot handle it. Always remember that just because we are at the Feast does not mean that the guidelines of moderation go on hold. Remember, our priority is to hear while at the Feast; therefore, plan ahead to get the rest you need, get some exercise, and maintain your time for prayer and Bible study. Be present to participate and look for opportunities to fellowship before and after services. Being present to participate in the song services means that you arrive early. It is offensive to God when we blow it off or arrive late for our assigned "shift." Failure to arrive at our assigned shift usually means only one thing—we failed to plan. For us to be at tomorrow's services, attentive and on time (early), means that tonight we have to go to bed and get the necessary rest so that we can get up early enough tomorrow morning to arrive early. Are you planning to be present at the opening evening? Do not deceive yourself into thinking that you will be better rested if you disregard this assigned "shift" because it is just easier to stay home. If we need extra rest in order to be present, we should do something like take a nap in the afternoon prior to opening evening, and we excuse ourselves right after services and go to bed. If we do all we can to have and maintain the right priorities, we will profit both now and in the future.

May all of our efforts to convoke remain focused and determined, with minds ready to receive the engrafted Word as we hold in high esteem and appreciation the revelation of God's Plan. The world at this time does not understand what God is doing, and therefore they have no hope. We, on the other hand, are among those who have been

richly blessed to comprehend the Plan of God revealed through His Holy Days, and we, therefore, should be full of hope and the joy of our salvation. Never take that blessing of divine revelation for granted. This first of the fall Holy Days is full of great meaning and purpose, as with all that God does. When we show our respect for His commands and appreciate them more than just ritualistically, truly we prosper. On this Feast of Trumpets, may we all continue onward as faithful spiritual soldiers and be present enthusiastically once again, rehearsing what will soon be reality.

With much love and respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Brandenburg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

David F. Brandenburg