

April 7, 2022

Dear Brethren, Coworkers and Friends,

When Christ's disciples asked Him what would be the sign of His Coming and the end of the world—this present evil age controlled and ruled by Satan the Devil—He said to be aware of religious deception, wars and rumors of wars, famine, disease epidemics and earthquakes. We have been most certainly experiencing all of them for quite a while, but Christ said when we see those events occurring with ever-increasing strength, the end is near. He called these events the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:8) and cautioned us that while these sorrows or labor pains will overtake this world unexpectedly, we must not be asleep, but awake (1 Thessalonians 5:3-6), redeeming the time, because these are evil days (Ephesians 5:16). But we know that in the end, the present sorrows will be replaced with unspeakable joy (John 16:21).

Before Christ instituted the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread at the time of Moses, He poured out ten plagues on Egypt. While the first three plagues also affected the Israelites, the subsequent seven plagues did not. Especially the Passover provided physical protection from the tenth plague—the death of the firstborn. When Christ changed the Passover symbols prior to His death, He offered spiritual protection to those who would partake of the Passover in a worthy manner. But as the end draws near, physical protection for God's people is also necessary, and so Christ tells us to watch and pray always to be counted worthy to escape all these things which will certainly occur, beginning with the Great Tribulation (Luke 21:36).

It appears that we are living now at the time referred to as the beginning of sorrows. We have not much time left to prepare for the terrible events during the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, culminating in Christ's return. God will pour out the seven last plagues of His wrath on this world (Revelation 15:1), which will be, to an extent, similar to the plagues which He had poured out on Egypt. And as ancient Israel was spared from the seven last plagues in Egypt, so the future seven last plagues will not be poured out on spiritual Israelites either—God's true disciples.

We are called upon to examine ourselves to make sure that we are truly in the faith—that Jesus Christ truly lives in us (2 Corinthians 13:5). We ought to do this all year, but especially now, when the Passover season is upon us (1 Corinthians 11:28). Paul tells us that we must partake of the Passover (also compare John 6:53-56), but we must do so in a worthy manner (verse 27), meaning that when we see areas in our lives which need improvement, we ought to go to God in prayer, express to Him our sorrow and grief for past mistakes and sins, and to ask Him for forgiveness and for the strength to live better lives. In recommitting to God and showing Him our sincerity and dedication, we will be able to keep the Passover in a worthy manner, which we must do.

The Days of Unleavened Bread show us that repentance and the will to live a life pleasing to God are not one-time events, which would only be limited to the Passover evening, but they are ongoing and continuing requirements for us. The number seven signifies completeness and fullness, which means for us that we must come out of sin completely and fully. Only with God is that possible, and Pentecost reminds us of the fact that God the Father and Jesus Christ live in us through the Holy Spirit dwelling IN us (John 14:23, 16-17), directing and strengthening us so that we can live in accordance with God's Law as we ought to (Romans 8:3-4, 9).

So, let us honestly address some personal questions about ourselves. How serious are we about God and His Way of Life? In times of pressure and disappointment, failure and persecution, are we

willing to give up and walk away from God, returning to Satan's world from which God had freed us (2 Peter 2:20-22)? Do we really love God more than anything or anyone else, and our fellow man as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40)?

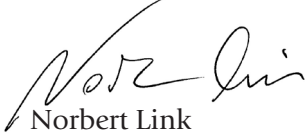
Are we serious enough about keeping the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days and appreciative of the opportunity to spend time and fellowship with our brethren, if and whenever that is possible? To stay at home and listen to services over the Internet, while we could attend in person does not show the kind of love for God and our brethren which we must have. We are admonished to stir up love and not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more as we see the Day fast approaching (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Do we still harbor grudges against others for events which might have taken place years ago, unwilling to forgive and to forget (Leviticus 19:18)? Have we, even now, given in to Satan's evil devices by finding ourselves in quarrels and fights with others, especially with members in God's Church? If so, it would be high time to make peace and pursue it, insofar as and as much as it depends on us (1 Peter 3:11; Romans 12:18).

So many more questions could and perhaps should be asked, and all of us need to examine ourselves individually and personally. NOW is the time, and how quickly does it pass!

In conclusion, we are wishing all of you an extremely rewarding, uplifting and meaningful Passover season. And let the God of peace be with you (Romans 15:33).

In brotherly love,



Norbert Link