

# THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN PROPHECY

The mystery of the seven Churches in the Book of Revelation is revealed. The Bible links these seven Churches to some of the most horrific events in all human history, and they also feature prominently in the greatest events of all time – the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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New International Version used throughout unless otherwise stated.

Anciently, seven Churches existed in the region of Asia Minor and bore the names of the cities where they were located. Of all the Churches that had been established around the world at that time by Apostles and teachers, *only* these seven were singled out for special prophetic mention.

The Churches of God referenced in the prophecy of the seven Churches in Asia Minor, and defined by God in the Book of Revelation, are today living amid the increasing domination of Gentile degenerates. God chose to type-cast the seven Churches in Asia Minor as examples for us. And Christ’s instructions to John were: **Rev 1:19** “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later.” Christ then dictated seven messages to seven churches in Asia Minor. And God set an angel over each of them.

Firstly, let’s consider this: the seven spirits were before God’s throne when this message was delivered, and these specifically sent greetings to the seven Churches: **Rev 1:4** “John: *To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and FROM THE SEVEN SPIRITS BEFORE HIS THRONE, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the Kings of the earth.*” At the time of John, the SEVEN SPIRITS were before God’s throne, and actually send greetings. And to further complicate this mystery, notice what is recorded in relation to these seven spirits: **Rev 4:5** “*From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, SEVEN LAMPS were blazing. These are the SEVEN SPIRITS of God.*”

We have a serious conflict here unless there is some other explanation. Here God says that the seven lamps and the seven spirits are one and the same thing. To further complicate things, God speaks of seven lampstands: **Rev 1:20** “*The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the [messengers] of the seven Churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven Churches.*”

Well this is quite a mystery! The mystery becomes even more puzzling when you read what else is said in relation to these things.

And right at the outset, Christ says that the Church’s lampstand can be removed: **Rev 2:4** “*Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*” If the seven lampstands are the seven Churches (**Rev 1:20**), did Christ mean that He would remove the Church? So this is quite a mystery, isn’t it? And if He speaks of removing the lampstand from its place, what place is this?

The word ‘lampstand’ is used in the NIV, and ‘candlestick’ in the KJV. Strong’s Concordance renders the word from the Greek ‘luchnia’ (3087) with the meaning of a lesser light, that is, a candle or candlestick candelabrum. The word is derived from ‘luchnos’ (3088) with the meaning of a lamp or candle placed on a stand or candelabrum. So the seven golden lampstands or candlesticks are a lesser light, which if placed on a hill can be seen from a distance, but of a lesser intensity than the blazing lamps (‘lampas’ Str. 2985) which are described as ‘*a torch, a lamp, the flame of which is fed with oil*’. The blazing lamps are the seven spirits before the throne of God (**Rev 1:4**), and they are also the seven eyes of Christ the Lamb (**Rev 5:6**).

If this is not complicated enough, we also have the example of a lampstand with seven lamps on it, and this is described in the Tabernacle that Moses built: **Ex 25:31** “*Make a lampstand of pure*

gold and hammer it out, base and shaft; its flower-like cups, buds and blossoms shall be of one piece with it.” **V37** “Then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it.”

Moses was primarily concerned with the Levite priesthood, and God gave the Levites dominion over the 12 Tribes of Israel. God, through His servant Moses and the Levite priesthood ruled the Tribes of Israel as a holy nation. God communicated His instructions to the Levites directly through the Urim and Thummin, which was mounted on the breastplate with the 12 stones representing the 12 Tribes of Israel. The seven lamps were fueled with olive oil: **Lev 24:1** “The LORD said to Moses, “Command the Israelites to bring clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. Outside the Curtain of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually.” And God had yet another instruction for Moses and His priesthood: **Num 8:1** “The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to Aaron and say to him, ‘When you set up the seven lamps, they are to light the area in front of the lampstand.’” Aaron did so; he set the lamps so that they faced forward on the lampstand, just as the LORD commanded Moses. This is how the lampstand was made: It was made of hammered gold – from its base to its blossoms. The lampstand was made exactly like the pattern the LORD had shown Moses.”

Well all this happened long ago. Is it still relevant to our time?

In the Book of Hebrews we find the reasons for the great care that Moses took in seeing that everything was done according to God’s pattern. The reason is that the whole structure, together with all the fittings are an exact pattern of the true sanctuary in heaven. **Heb 8:1** “The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a High Priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the Sanctuary, the True Tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.” What follows are the duties of a high priest, and we learn that if Christ were on earth He would not be a priest, and when He was on earth, **He was not a priest!** **V3** “Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. **If He were on earth, He would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by Law**. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven.”

You might consider that when the Book of Hebrews was written, there was no Tabernacle – but there was a Temple. Was the Temple a copy and shadow of what is in heaven? Let me state at the outset that it was not! And neither does the Book of Hebrews imply that it was! Notice that it is speaking of the Tabernacle built by Moses: **V5** “They serve at a Sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the Tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

The point of what the writers are saying (**V1**) is that Christ ministers in the heavenly Sanctuary, the True Tabernacle and this ministry is superior to the earthly one – and He continues to do so! **V6** “But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs AS the Covenant of which He is Mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.” So Christ’s ministry in heaven is superior to the earthly ministry in the Tabernacle, and in a similar manner, the Covenant that Christ administers as Mediator is superior to the Old Covenant. Here we see a link between the Tabernacle ministry and the old and new Covenants. It should be noted that Christ has never abandoned His ministry in the heavenly Tabernacle, and He continues to serve there.

So what is the new Covenant all about? Well, the Book of Hebrews continues with a description of it: **V7-9** “For if there had been nothing wrong with the first Covenant, no place would have been sought for a second. But God found fault with the people and said: “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah. It will not be like the Covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to My Covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.”

So this new Covenant is to be made specifically with the House of Israel and the House of Judah! Then we see a slight change in emphasis; God specifically addresses the House of Israel only: **V10** “This is the Covenant I will make with the House of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put My Laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord” because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

I think you know that this has not yet been fulfilled! Does the whole House of Israel know the Lord from the least of them to the greatest? Has God forgiven their wickedness and forgiven their sins? God specifically says their guilt is stored up and their sins are kept on record (**Hos 13:12**).

And the last verse in **Hebrews 8** is this: **V13** “By calling this Covenant “new”, He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and ageing will soon disappear.”

**But not yet!** God has not yet made this Covenant with Israel, and the Old Covenant is still in full force and effect! Even those God called for a special purpose were still under the first or Old Covenant when called: **Heb 9:15** “For this reason Christ is the Mediator of a new Covenant, that

*those who are called* may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first Covenant.” Yes, on repentance, God **set free those He has called** from **the sins they committed under the first or Old Covenant!** If these true and faithful Christians were still under the penalty for *their sins committed under the Old Covenant*, and were **set free** from those **sins**, then the House of Israel is certainly still under the Old Covenant. They have **not been set free from their sins!**

But Christ is the Mediator of a new Covenant! When was this instituted? And who are the recipients of this new Covenant?

Christ spelt it out very clearly! He detailed the meaning at the last **Passover** before He died. It should be noted that only Christ and the 12 Apostles took this Passover (not the rest of the 120 disciples who had deserted Him). **Luke 22:14** “*When the hour came, Jesus and His Apostles reclined at the table. And He said to them, “**I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the Kingdom of God.”** **V20** “*In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “**This cup is the NEW COVENANT in my blood, which is poured out for you.”***”*

Recall how the 120 disciples left him when He told them **they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood**, and only the 12 Apostles remained (**John 6:53-70**). The implications of this were too much for them so they left – and Christ didn’t try to stop them. There are wider ramifications for this but it can wait for another time. Importantly, Christ made a **NEW COVENANT** with **the twelve Apostles – and they alone!** And notice what Christ said in **John 6:70-71** “*Then Jesus replied, “**Have I not chosen you, the Twelve?** Yet one of you is a demon!”* (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray Him.)” And Jesus freely admitted He had chosen this betrayer. He chose him specifically for this purpose in order **to fulfill prophecy.**

Fifty-five days later there was an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit **only on those who had drunk from the Cup!** (**Acts 1:13**). After 3½ years plus 50 days of training, these men received the full portion of God’s Holy Spirit – that is, the addition of **the Counsellor** – the **Spirit of Christ** (**John 14:25**).

So the whole point of the New Covenant is to establish God’s relationship with the whole House of Israel – that is, all 12 Tribes. And the whole purpose of the Church that Christ built is to facilitate the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is why they are inexorably linked. When Christ said, “**I was sent only to the lost Tribes of Israel!**” (**Matt 15:24**) He meant exactly that! Any Christian who believes that Christ came only to get them saved has a very twisted view of reality! What is more, the **very purpose** of the Church is set to be activated **only** when God sets His hand to redeem Israel. This is God’s sworn purpose and His only purpose! The Tribes of Israel alone are the only people on the face of the earth that God has called as His own! There are no others! But Christ indicated that God reaps where He hasn’t sown, and those who are not God’s are given the opportunity to be God’s by being a part of His people Israel, and being grafted into the tree.

The rest of humanity belong to the ruler of this earth – Satan the devil. The reason Christ came is to destroy the devil’s work – all of it! He will destroy everything that has been done, born, or built under the auspices of the devil (**1John 3:8**).

If Christ was sent only to the **lost Tribes** of Israel – that is **the northern ten tribes**, then what of Judah and Levi? Did God cast them away? They answer should be obvious! It was these two tribes that were **ALSO sent** to the lost Tribes of Israel! Christ did His Work on earth through these two tribes alone – that is, those who are collectively called ‘Jews’ and resided in the Holy Land at the time. The lost ten Tribes had long before been dispersed and scattered through the earth. In the course of time the ten Tribes lost their identity and failed to understand that the day would come when God would again make a **Covenant** – a **New Covenant** - with them and restore them to the Land He gave to Abraham.

And this is when the Church will come into their own! This is their purpose! Now, I think every Christian knows he’s supposed to keep his lamp burning brightly. An **oil fueled** lamp (and **olive oil** at that) can go out if the oil runs out. If you look around you, Christians are **not** making a good showing are they? How they could ever believe that their self-centered purpose is God’s Purpose is beyond belief! How petty do they think God is?

God knew in advance that Christianity would be in need of oil to fire up their enthusiasm, and to get their lamps burning brightly. Notice these verses: **Zech 4:1** “*Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. He asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”* The conversation continues in the second half of **V10** “*(These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth.)” Then I asked the angel, “What are these two olive trees on the right and left of the lampstand?” Again I asked him, “What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?” He replied, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I said. So he said, These are the two who are anointed to serve the LORD of the whole earth.”*



Zechariah's message is closely connected with the building of the Temple (see **Zech 6:12**). Similarly, this Temple is mentioned in **Rev 11:1**, and so are **the two olive trees**. **V3** "And I will give power to **my two witnesses**, and they will prophesy for 1260 days clothed in sackcloth. **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.**" I hope you understand that God is the LORD of the earth! Satan is merely a ruler who is about to be deposed! (It's just that one crazed person insists that Satan is the lord of the earth. This person would make a good Moslem!) Satan is the oak tree, and you can't squeeze olive oil out of an acorn, even though it looks a bit like an olive.

Even in the Garden of Eden God spoke of a greater and a lesser light. God again refers to these in these terms: **Ps 89:35** "Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness – and I will not lie to David – that **his line will continue forever** and his throne endure before me **like the sun**; it will be established forever **like the moon**, the **Faithful Witness** in the sky." Christ is that **Faithful Witness** (**Rev 1:6**). He is also the Root and Offspring of David (**Rev 22:16**).

Being **like** the lesser light in the sky, David was very careful to instruct his son in the building of the Temple. As a king, David was concerned with the Tribes of Israel. He ruled as king over all 12 Tribes of Israel. This is what he said to his son Solomon: **1Chron 28:10** "Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a Temple as a sanctuary. Be strong and do the work." Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for a portico of the Temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the Temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things." **V21** "The divisions of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work of the Temple of God, and every willing man skilled in any craft will help you in all the work."

God appointed the Levites for the work of building the Temple, but He also ensured that David would always have **a lamp**: **1Kings 11:36** "I will give **one tribe** to his (Solomon) son so that David my servant may always have **a lamp** before me in Jerusalem, the City where I chose to put My Name." The fact is, God left **two Tribes** in Jerusalem, but gave only one to Solomon. The other Tribe, Levi, He gave to no-one! This Tribe of Levi is God's own Tribe which He has reserved for Himself always: **Num 8:15** "After you have purified the Levites and presented them as **a wave offering**, they are to come to do their work at the **Tent of Meeting**. They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to Me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. Every firstborn male in Israel is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for Myself. I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel."

You'll recall that in the Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle, Moses instructed that a single lampstand be made – with **seven lamps** mounted on it. That lampstand represented the Levites. The **seven lamps** were attached to the lampstand and used to illuminate the Way. This lampstand represents one of the witnesses spoken of in **Rev 11:4**. The other **lampstand** mentioned in the Book of Revelation is the **witness** for the Tribe of Judah – the **one Tribe** that God left **as a lamp for David**.

In order that no mistake is made in this regard, God tells us plainly that **His Covenant continues with Levi** (**Mal 2:4**), and God says this in **V5** "My Covenant was with him, a Covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered Me and stood in awe of My Name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin."

It's significant that Solomon's son was to lose 10 Tribes of Israel (**1Kings 11:31**). It's also significant that Solomon installed **10 lampstands** in the Temple right in front of the inner sanctuary: **1Kings 7:48** "Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the LORD'S Temple: the golden altar; the golden table on which was the bread of the Presence; the **lampstands** of pure gold (**five on the right and five on the left, in front of the inner sanctuary**); the gold floral work and lamps and tongs...."

This represents a significant departure from the way that Moses set up the Tabernacle. In the Temple that Solomon built, there were **ten lampstands** before the **inner sanctuary**. Why ten instead of the **one** that Moses made?

God gives us a lot more information concerning this in the **Book of Ezekiel**. God speaks of another Temple that must be built – a Temple that has never been built! Great detail is given in **chapters 40 to 48** concerning this Temple. The great detail concerns the structure of the Temple, and great emphasis is placed on the sacrifices to be offered there. And in chapter 48 the allotment of the Holy land to the 12 Tribes is detailed. But there is no mention of lamps or lampstands. When God brings His people Israel back to the land that He promises Abraham, no lamps will be required to light the Way. God's Laws will be written on their hearts and minds, and **Christ Himself will be their lamp**. Speaking of **the Holy City that will descend from heaven**, God speaks of the true light: **Rev 21:22** "I did not see a temple in the City, because the **Lord God Almighty** and **the Lamb** are its Temple. The City does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light**, and **the Lamb is its Lamp**. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour to it."

And just prior to the description of the Temple that is to be built in Jerusalem, and in which God will dwell forever (**Eze 43:6-7**), God explains his position clearly: **Eze 39:21** *“I will display my glory among the nations, and **ALL THE NATIONS** will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay upon **THEM**. From that day forward the **House of Israel** will know that I am the LORD their God. And the nations will know that **the people of Israel went into exile for their sin**, because they were unfaithful to Me. So **I hid my face from them** and **handed them over to their enemies**, and they all fell by the sword. I dealt with them **according to their uncleanness** and **their offences**, and **I hid my face from them.**”*

It’s significant that the Temple in Jerusalem will be built at a time of very great trouble, and at a time when God’s face will be hidden from them. A time of great gloom and darkness. It will be a time when men’s hearts will fail them for fear, and all hope will be abandoned. Not only will Israel know that God has sent them into slavery for their sins, the whole world will know it! The House of Israel will be plundered and slaughtered.

But those nations that see all these things and rejoice for a short while until they see the punishment God inflicts when a hand is laid **upon them**. Then the House of Israel will have their hope restored, and they will know that the Mighty Hand of God has empowered their rescuers.

Continuing in Ezekiel: **V25** *“Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now bring Jacob **back from captivity** and will have compassion on **all the House of Israel**, and I will be zealous for My Holy Name. They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed towards me **when they lived in safety in their land** with **no-one to make them afraid**. When I have **brought them back from the nations** and have **gathered them from the countries of their enemies**, I will show Myself holy **through** them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, **I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind**. **I will no longer hide My face from them**. **FOR I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL**, declares the LORD.”*

And God will give them their own land – the land He promised to Abraham, and He will bring them back to their allotted portions. The last chapter of the Book of Ezekiel details the exact allotments to all the 12 Tribes of Israel. But God also includes provision for many Gentiles who are faithful and true to God; people who have become Israelites in their hearts and minds: **Eze 47:21** *“You are to distribute this land among yourselves **according to the Tribes of Israel**. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and **for the aliens who have settled among you and have children**. You are to consider them **native-born Israelites**; along with you they are to be **allotted an inheritance among the Tribes of Israel**. In whatever Tribe the **alien** settles, there you are to give him **his inheritance**.”*

It’s very clear exactly **when** God intends to pour out His Spirit on the House of Israel. He says it’s when He brings them back from captivity.

**So what has all this to do with the prophecies of the seven Churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation?**

**Far more than you could possibly imagine!**

The lengthy parable of the messages to the seven Churches covers the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation. These messages were given to Christ by the Father (**Rev 1:1**). The beginning of each message begins with *‘These are the words of...’*, and in every case, Christ confirms His identity with a short statement. So the Mighty Being that appeared to John, and whose face shone like the sun, and whose eyes were like blazing fires, whose feet were like molten bronze, and whose words were like a two-edged sword, was the Mighty Christ Himself.

Now the message that Christ delivered was for seven Churches, to each of which, God had appointed a spirit being – an angel or messenger. Yet we find the entire message was delivered to John and he was told to take the message to the seven Churches. We could ask the question, ‘Why was the message given to a human being to deliver when there were seven powerful beings before the throne of God, each of which was assigned to a Church, and whose express purpose was to oversee their activities?’

And why John? It was John that sent the greetings **from the Father**, and **from the seven spirits before His throne**, and **from Jesus Christ**. This is the way God required it to be done, and it was done.

And it was Christ Himself that delivered the message to John. And this is how that Mighty Being is described: **Rev 1:12** *“And I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash round His chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a blazing fire. His feet were like*

bronze glowing in the furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like **the sun shining in all its brilliance**. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. **I am the First and the Last, I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of Death and Hades.**”

This is a fair and accurate description of the One who was in the beginning with God (or at the **First**) and what He is at the **Last**. The appearance of this Mighty One is a little different from the One who ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, and in the presence of the Apostles. What the Apostles saw was a man like them with all the wounds of death on His body. Yet the two men (angels) standing next to them said, **Acts 1:11** “.... **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.**” This same Jesus had returned on a number of occasions after His resurrection – over a period of 40 days. His appearance still bore the scars of his wounds, which were clearly seen by all. This was the same Jesus they knew and loved.

Many years afterward, Jesus returned in glorified form, but only to John (just as He said He would – **John 21:22-23**). So Christ has already returned on a number of occasions since His resurrection. Much later, when John saw Him, however, He was **not** the **same Jesus** whom they saw go, **but a Mighty Being whose face shone like the sun**. The two men (angels) who witnessed His departure and said this **same Jesus** would return were speaking the truth!

Christ Himself confirmed that He would **not leave His followers like orphans**, but would **come to them** (**John 14:18**). Oddly enough, the disciples understood exactly what He meant (even though Christianity today doesn't): **V22** “*Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”*” It was clear to them that the Jesus they knew and loved would appear to them – but **not to the world!** And Jesus did appear to them – many times over a period of 40 days. Since then, every follower of Christ has been left as **orphans** – is this right?

**No, it's not!** In the next verse, Christ begins to explain a few things about who His disciples are. These are the ones **who listen to Him** and **obey His commands** and **His teachings**; that is, they hold to **His Testimony**. It's these who will **not be left as orphans!**

John makes this point very clear! This is what he said: **Rev 1:9** “*I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the Isle of Patmos because of the Word of God, and the Testimony of Jesus.*” True followers will know that the **Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy** (**Rev 19:10**). The **Word of God**, of course, is the Scripture that existed at the time John wrote the Book bearing his name – what we call today, the Old Testament. This Scripture is sacred to all true believers. In fact, John refers to **Christ** and the **Word of God** as being one and the same thing (**John 1:1**). Christ and all the Apostles continually referenced the **Holy Scripture** – the **only Scripture** that existed for many years after Christ's departure.

After the messages to the seven Churches, which were delivered by the Mighty Glorified Christ Himself, John observes another Being that looks like a lamb that has just been slaughtered. The appearance of this Lamb is vastly different from the appearance of the Mighty Being described in chapter one of the Book of Revelation – yet it's a reference to the same Person. And to complicate things further, this Lamb is first described as the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah**: **Rev 5:5** “.... *Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.*” Did the One who sits on the throne (**the Father** – **V1**) have a reason for this role-switching? Yes, He did! It's not just semantics, but very purposeful. God is revealing a long and complex series of prophecies that will culminate with His Kingdom filling the earth. The problem is the present rulers of this earth, called **the rulers of the heavenly realms**, zealously guard their domain. While they are aware that Christ has offspring here on earth (**Isa 53:10, Acts 17:29**), they are confident of handling every situation that develops, even when it involves the offspring of Christ. Satan has a lot of power, but nothing the equal of the Power of God. A long time ago, Satan sought to convert Christ to his reasoning, and to entice Him to worship him. Christ treated him with the contempt he deserved and Satan left. Now was this just a bit of play-acting, or did Satan really believe he might succeed? He certainly saw Christ as a threat to his continued existence. Yet he had no power to harm Him or even to lay a hand on Him. So he plotted to bring this about by proxy using his own offspring. To his utter amazement, he succeeded. Yet he later learned that Christ had **triumphed** over them! (**Rev 5:5, Col 2:15**).

It was a serious strategic error on Satan's part. He believed he won the battle by killing the Christ – the Lord of Glory. Satan the devil has no idea about anything to do with God's Plan. Do you believe this? Notice this instruction: **1Cor 2:6** “*We do, however, speak a message of Wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret Wisdom, a Wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*”

And who are these rulers? **Eph 6:12** “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*” Those on earth today have yet to see **the rulers and**



**authorities of the dark world unleash their powers!** But when they do, you will know that you are dealing with something far greater than human experience.

The rulers of the heavenly realm are fools – but fools with enormous power! But they also know they have no power at all – except that given by God. Christ made this very plain: **John 19:11** *“Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”*

A prime example of these disgusting rulers of the heavenly realm can be clearly seen in the despots of the Black African States. These evil black beasts have no concern for anyone, including their own people. The hacking to death of women and children mean nothing to them. If it provides entertainment for their soldiers then they are quite happy. They are totally bereft of any type of godly behaviour or decency. And into whose hands did the Tribes of Israel consign 3 million white South Africans? Into the hands of Satan’s evil hordes! Nearly 20 million blacks have now all but destroyed a stable and prosperous nation of South Africa. The United States of America, Britain and Australia took all the credit for this great betrayal. They all boasted of their roles and their achievements. You hear very little about it these days though! They’ve seen the colossal demise of a stable nation reduced to economic ruin – and these arrogant do-gooders are now ducking for cover!

The Israelite nations saw what the blacks in South Africa were *really* like! They saw them ‘necklacing’ their own people with petrol-soaked car tyres, which were set alight to inflict an agonizing death. Would you want to sit next to someone in a bus that does this sort of thing? The House of Israel saw the seating in a bus to be the greater issue and the greater sin. No wonder God says, in derogatory terms, they are like Canaanites. It was the Canaanites that God instructed Moses to utterly destroy – man, woman and child! Little wonder that God has vowed that no Canaanite will set foot in the House of God (**Zech 14:21, last part**).

Mainstream Christianity fully supports the madness. They’ve become completely deranged in their support of the blacks over their own blood-relatives. And how unlike Christ they are! Notice what Christ said to the twelve: **Matt 10:5** *“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.”*

Well, it seems that Christ later changed His mind in relation to Cornelius, doesn’t it. No, He didn’t! Those whom God chose to cleanse and to call as full Israelites were exempt, provided they were prepared to live as God instructed the Israelites. Cornelius was such a man: **Acts 10:1** *“At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.”* Here was a man who had caught God’s eye as a faithful man. He practiced Godliness. As an **Italian** soldier assigned to the State of Judah, he had chosen to serve the God of Israel rather than the many gods of the Romans. It’s even possible he was descended from the Spartan warriors who knew they were of the Lost Tribes of Israel: **1Macc 12:20** *“Areios king of the Spartans, to Onias the high priest, greetings. It has been discovered in a document concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers, and of the race of Abraham.”*

But certainly, Cornelius, at the end of his tour of duty would return to Italy and take a message to the many Spartans who had infiltrated the land. How do we know this? Well, Paul also wrote to the Romans in **Italy**, and referred to them not as the **true olive tree**, but as a **wild olive shoot**: **Rom 11:17** *“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches.”* God had a purpose in calling Cornelius.

Then there’s Paul who was not one of the **twelve Apostles**. He was called for the specific purpose of going to the Gentiles – and to the Gentiles he went! He went to many Gentiles scattered all around the Mediterranean at that time. Perhaps the most notable of all these were **the seven Churches in Asia Minor**. Notable because it was **these seven** that God chose to name **in the Book of Revelation**.

Why only the seven Churches in Asia Minor? What about all the other Churches that existed at that time? There were groups of scattered believers all over the world at that time. Why did God single out these particular groups of people? We can be absolutely certain that the reference to these Churches is **prophecy** and for a period that was then in the distant future: **Rev 1:3** *“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take it to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”* It may be thought that this last phrase is misleading because of the long passage of time that has elapsed since it was written. When it was written, the time for its fulfillment was not near. But when **the truth is made known**, and those **who hear it take it to heart**, then **the time will be near!** To this very day, the **words of this prophecy** have not been made known.

Long ago, God scattered the Lost Tribes of Israel (the northern Ten Tribes) through many lands and among many people. Their day of disaster began in 721BC. These people were sold into slavery and all but lost their identity. Even today, most don’t know who they are. Some even believe that God cast them away and ceased to honour His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yet in **Rev 7:4-8** we find this is not true. All the Tribes of Israel are foremost in God’s mind, and His unbreakable

promise to the Patriarchs is still His earnest priority. If this should be doubted, then one need only read the words of our Saviour in **Matt 15:24**.

Christ said a few others things too, which have significance in relation to the seven Churches in Asia. He said of John the Baptist that there was none greater born of women. It's also recorded that none could understand truth who are not baptized by John. The significance of these things is found in the reference to the leaders of these seven Churches. These were **12 men** whom Paul met. In the Book of Acts we find the account of these men, and the commission Paul gave them – **and also the dire warnings**. The account of their meeting is described like this:

**Acts 19:1** *“While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard there is a Holy Spirit.” So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about 12 men in all.”* (Note the words ‘the Holy Spirit came on them’ because they have significance for a later comment by Paul.)

Well this seems to be a demotion for John the Baptist. The 12 men were baptized by him but didn't receive the Holy Spirit, and what is more, **they hadn't even heard of it**. Of course, Christianity would have a ready answer for this! They would say the Holy Spirit was not given until the Day of Pentecost. Is this true? Notice what the Scripture says: **Luke 1:13** *“But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the Spirit and Power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the Wisdom of the righteous – to make a people ready for the Lord.”*

So obviously, **the Holy Spirit** was not unknown to John! **He was born with it!** John's commission was **to prepare a people ready for the Lord** – and the **people of Israel** in particular. The 12 men that Paul encountered had been prepared for the Lord by John, and had received John's baptism. It's significant that these things are recorded.

The testimony of John the Baptist is useless without the **Testimony of Jesus**. Yet without the testimony of John no one can understand truth, and they certainly cannot understand prophecy!

Since God calls the references to the seven Churches a **mystery**, we are left with just two options on how to understand this **mystery**. Firstly, we could try to guess the meaning, or consult with other 'scholars' to see what they have to say. Or we could even isolate one of the Churches which most closely resembles the perception of ourselves and call ourselves by that name (this has been done plenty of times). Or the other option would be to look for references to these seven Churches in the writings of the Apostles.

By sheer 'chance' we find a letter from Paul to the **Ephesians**, called the **Book of Ephesians**. So this Book is a clear reference point to the **seven Churches in Asia Minor**. Also in the Book of Acts we find some final instructions to the 12 men in the province of Asia, the same 12 men who founded all the Churches in Asia Minor. These final instructions were clearly a message from God. From Miletus, Paul sent to **Ephesus** for these men (**Acts 20:17**). The message that Paul gave them was quite severe, and since he was never to see them again, he was quite distressed about telling them what must be.

This is what Paul says: **Acts 20:24** *“Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore I declare to you today that **I am innocent of the blood of all men**. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the Church of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. Now I commit you to God and to the Word of His Grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.”*

Readers of this website will know that God raised up a shepherd who did not spare the flock. The article **'Who is the flock marked for slaughter?'** details these things. This shepherd tore them to pieces leaving them maimed and crippled – just like a wolf! The account is found in **Zech 11:15-17**. God refers to this man as a foolish and worthless shepherd, but still makes the point that **He Himself raised him up (V16)**. What is more, God speaks here of **one shepherd** – one who would exist at the time when all endtime prophecy would begin to be fulfilled. In the course of nearly two thousand



years, no-one has understood the meaning of the seven Churches of the Book of Revelation and neither did the foolish shepherd.

Paul makes the point that savage wolves would come among them and not spare the flock. Let's not blame Herbert Armstrong for it all – he had plenty of willing helpers who were always willing to turn a *'blind eye'* to all that went on. And they were just like Armstrong who was also blind **in his right eye!** **Distorting the truth** was, to all these men, an art-form that they all cultivated successfully. Did any of these men **covet anyone's silver or gold?** Paul makes the point strongly that he didn't personally, but implied that this was going to be one of the big problems among these seven Churches, and the overseers in particular. In the Worldwide Church of God it was the highest priority. Even Church growth was defined as growth in income!

The **Church of Ephesus** is the Church that loses its lamp or candlestick (and indeed has lost it!) Which Church do you know that fulfills this: **Rev 2:2** *".... I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false."* I myself have stated many times **that Herbert Armstrong was no apostle!** As for Tkach and his successors, they're scarcely human, yet he, Tkach, and also his son, claim to be an apostles! It seems to be like a contagious disease that afflicts everyone who comes to leadership in that Church.

What is so amusing is the claim by Joe Tkach that he was an apostle! Joe Tkach's wife (the mother of Joe Tkach jnr) was demon-possessed. Everyone on campus at Ambassador College, Pasadena knew about her. Most of the time she had to be kept locked up and out of sight. Now here was a man who claimed to be an Apostle of God and he couldn't cast out the demon[s]! Was he really an apostle? Christ has a message for such people: **Matt 7:19** *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your Name, and in your Name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' **Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers.'**"* Tkach never even reached the standard of these **evildoers** who could at least **cast out demons!**

In the parable in **Zech 11-15-17**, God specifically states that He will raise up a shepherd who will **not care for the flock**. Was God speaking of some obscure shepherd that passed into history virtually unnoticed hundreds of years ago? Or was God specifically speaking of a significant event; one that would be recognized at a very appropriate time. The significance is that God wanted this worthless shepherd to be recognized, so God virtually named him, and identified him by his name 'arm-strong'.

It just so happens that this shepherd decided to teach that the Worldwide Church of God is the Church in Philadelphia. In this, he has a lot in common with many of the other churches of men, that is, all the churches, which have been established with no authority from God. All these other churches have established doctrine that is opposed to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, but they also like to think they are the Church described as the Church of Philadelphia.

Ephesus became the headquarters of the seven Churches in Asia. It was from Ephesus that all the other six Churches developed. And while there were Churches springing up everywhere around the Mediterranean, God singled out **only the seven Churches in Asia Minor** for special mention, and only at the time of the most tumultuous times in history described by the Book of Revelation. What follows the description of the seven Churches is the fulfillment of all prophecy.

It was God's intention to let everyone know **where His seven Spirits would be sent in the endtime.**

And so, in seven rather cryptic messages to the seven Churches, God identifies the destination of the **seven Spirits** that are before His throne. Now some might like to imagine that God is going to send these **seven Spirits** to all of Christendom, but God makes it clear that this is not so.

All those who were formally associated with the Worldwide Church of God know that great emphasis was placed on the identifying name *'Church of God'*, and they also know that Christ said, 'Father, let **your Name** be called on them' (**John 17:11** – see the NKJV, apparently the NIV balked over rendering this correctly). It was this name, *'Church of God'* that Paul consistently used. But not just the Church! The Name of God is far more extensive than that! Notice what Paul said in the message to the **Ephesians**: **Eph 3:14** *"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name."* Would the Church be given any other name but that of the Father?

It would be an extensive task to go through all that Paul wrote in the **Book of Ephesians**, but we can still reference some of the highlights. And there are some unique passages in this Book. In writing to the **Ephesians**, Paul was addressing all the seven Churches. Christ also confirmed that the endtime Book of Revelation was to be delivered to the seven Churches, and this is confirmed after the entire message of the Book of Revelation was delivered: **Rev 22:16** *"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this Testimony for the Churches."* So obviously, the seven Churches that Christ specifically mentions are to be prominent in the endtime when all is fulfilled. And just as God has identified a certain worthless shepherd in a parable, so He also identifies the seven Churches in a series of seven

parables. These are the messages to the Churches – the ones who were associated with the worthless shepherd that God raised up for this specific purpose.

Why would God call a man to be a shepherd, when God Himself predicted that he would be a foolish and worthless one? In the Book of Ephesians Paul makes some important points in this regard. Firstly he says this: **Eph 3:2-5** “Surely, you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy Apostles and Prophets.” Paul speaks of this mystery, which is also mentioned in the messages to the Churches of God. Here Paul also makes it clear that this mystery is revealed through the holy Apostles and Prophets. The men in Ephesus, whom Paul is addressing, would later claim to be apostles (**Rev 2:2**), and even in the Book of Ephesians, he specifically says that the holy Apostles and Prophets were others, not them!

Christ Himself makes this point in **Rev 2:2** “I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.” There you have it! In these verses these people are the grassroots flock of God who cannot tolerate wicked men (who rule over them like wolves) and who claim to be apostles in order to lord it over the flock. These members of the flock have tested these wretched men and found them to be false. And notice that these messages are addressed to the Churches; that is, the people not the leaders! It’s the flock that must test those who are false, and who teach false doctrine and who claim to be something they are not!

In these verses (**Eph 3:2-5**), Paul identifies God’s grace, which was given him by revelation. This was on the road to Damascus. Paul was an absolute beast, who breathed fire and brimstone, and reigned down death on all Christ’s people. He was stopped dead in his tracks and blinded, and Christ said, “Saul, why do you persecute Me?” Paul never forgot God’s grace that was given to him on that day. God removed his sins and set him on a course of faithful service. ‘Grace’ is a legal term which means to extend mercy for sins committed. There could be no greater sin than to murder God’s people – the very Body of Christ – hence the question ‘Why do you persecute Me?’ This is what Paul was guilty of, and it was for this that God extended grace to him.

Just before his death the worthless shepherd Herbert Armstrong decided to restore 18 specific ‘truths’ (sic). Foremost was his determination to claim that he runs the government of God on earth. He was still asserting his preposterous claim to being an apostle! How unlike Paul this man was! Notice what Paul says: **Eph 3:8** “Although I am less than the least of all God’s people...” And Paul said this knowing full well that he was a real Apostle! To the Church in Ephesus, Paul continually taught personal humility, because he recognized the appalling arrogance of them. Yet he loved them, and felt deeply for them; he realized that the end for them would be horrific. This is reflected in **Acts 20:36-38**.

But let’s quote in full what Paul said in **Eph 3:8** “Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God who created all things. His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold Wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

And just so there is no confusion about what he meant regarding the rulers and authorities of the heavenly realms, Paul made it abundantly clear to the Ephesians: **Eph 6:10** “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His Mighty Power. Put on the full armour of God so you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

So in **Eph 3:10** we are told that it was God’s intent, that through the Church, His Wisdom would be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. The problem is, what could the present Church reveal to the rulers and authorities of the heavenly realms that they don’t already know? Nevertheless, Paul tells them to be strong and to equip themselves with the armour of God in order to take their stand against the devil’s schemes.

God makes it known that the devil will have plenty of schemes when he goes out in fury against the offspring of the woman who gave birth to Christ (and this woman is not the Church!). The offspring will need to be fully equipped with the armour God is giving them if they are going to be able to stand. Paul’s choice of words reflect the condition of the flock as described in **Zech 11:16** where the flock has had their hoofs torn off. Paul further says in **Eph 3:15** “...and your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace.”

Paul knew what was required of them! They must adhere to the Gospel of peace, and go as sheep to the slaughter – just as Christ did! God has not called the Church to take the Kingdom of God by force. This task has been given to others. But many of those in the Churches will see the Kingdom of God established and will live in hope of God’s redemption. And their hope will be

vindicated if they **faithfully endure**. God gives this hope in **Rev 2:26** *“To him that **overcomes** and **does My Will to the end**, I will give him authority over the nations – ‘**He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery**’ – just as I have received authority from My Father.”* So those in the Church that do **truly overcome**, and who **faithfully do God’s Will to the very end** will be given the power over the nations to rule them with an iron club. For those of you who think this is alien to God’s Way, you have never understood the **Wisdom of God** and the **Power of God, which is Jesus Christ (1Cor 1:24)** – the Mighty Ruler under God the Father. It’s through the **Testimony** of this **Mighty Wisdom of God** that the nations will understand their fate.

And God even taunts them! Notice: **Psalms 2:1** *“**Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His anointed one. “Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.”** They obviously don’t like being dominated by God’s anointed one. And God’s response to their remarks? **V4** *“The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the LORD scoffs at them. Then He rebukes them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, “I have installed My king on Zion, My holy hill.”* Yes, God has a sense of humour! He laughs at the stupidity of human beings who think they can dictate to Him. Then we find the same verse, which was quoted in **Rev 2:26**, in **Ps 2:9** *“**You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.**”**

God makes it very clear that Satan will unleash his fury on those who are responsible for his demise from power. Unfortunately for Satan, God takes the **object of his fury (the woman)** out of the way, and he must be content to pursue **their offspring (Rev 12:17)**. The **offspring** are those who will finally have the **Testimony of Jesus (which is the Spirit of Prophecy – Rev 19:10)**, and they will also keep the **Commandments of God**. In this regard, at least, Herbert Armstrong equipped them with the understanding of obedience to the **Commandments of God**. He was never able to equip them with the **Testimony of Jesus** because *he never understood prophecy!*

But they are not alone in failing to understand prophecy. The fact is that neither Satan nor his demons understand either. Paul made this clear in **1Cor 2:8** *“We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but **not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak God’s secret Wisdom, a Wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**”* What Paul makes clear here is the fact that Satan and his demons do not understand anything to do with the Wisdom of God. If they did, they would certainly **not have crucified Christ!** It was a stupid, strategic blunder on their part! But it had to be that way otherwise prophecy would not have been fulfilled (**Matt 26:53-54**).

But notice these words in the above verses: *‘destined for glory before time began’*. With all the evidence of the Wisdom of God being unattainable by the rulers of the heavenly realms, and the relationship of the ‘offspring’ and the ‘woman’, we find that Paul wrote some other very enlightening comments in the **Book of Ephesians: Eph 1:4** *“For He chose us in Him **before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.**”* **V9** *“And He made known to us **the mystery of His Will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times have reached their fulfillment** – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, even Christ.”* So all these things were **to be put into effect when the times have reached their fulfillment!** And when would that be? Well God destined these things for our glory **before time began**, and in the Garden of Eden, God established **certain elements of time**, these were the **seven days of the week. When the times have reached their fulfillment** means after the six millennial days that usher in Millennium Seven. For the entire habitation of humanity on earth, God has ensured that they always remember that there **remains a day of rest**. This rest reflects the absence of the arch-rebel of the universe that has ruled as a tyrant over all the inhabitants of the earth. He will be locked away in chains for the **millennial day of rest**.

Those who hate God’s Sabbath cannot ever understand God’s Purpose and Will. **It’s the observance of the Sabbath that is a constant reminder of God’s Purpose.**

The leaders of the Church in Ephesus received the Holy Spirit after they had been baptized and had Paul’s hands laid on them. Paul explains to them, in his letter, that this was the **earnest or down-payment** of the Holy Spirit. But he adds more! He tells them that they still lack the Wisdom of God. He earnestly prayed that God would grant them this understanding. Yet they never received it at that time. Notice what he says: **Eph 1:17** *“**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of Wisdom and revelation** (prophecy), **so that you may know Him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, **the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great Power for us to believe.**”* These people had serious deficiencies! They did not understand the purpose of God because they lacked the **Spirit of Wisdom and revelation (prophecy)**. And all Paul’s requests to the Father to grant this were denied! And when Paul saw them for the last time in Miletus, he said they would not see him again. At this meeting he told them plainly what would happen in the course of time. It did not bode well for them. But all that he said came true. And



this **same spirit** pervaded the latter fulfillment of all that he said in relation to these seven Churches, and God Himself confirms this in the Book of Revelation.

Nothing much had changed when Paul wrote this letter. He had not seen them for many years prior to writing the letter, and as he said, they would not see him again. So this letter was a final contact. And Paul was still telling them of their deficiencies. He continued to pray that they might experience **the Power of God's Spirit**, and that they might be established in the same love that existed with all the other saints: **Eph 3:16** *"I pray that out of His glorious riches He **may strengthen you with Power through His Spirit** in your inner being, so that Christ **may dwell in your hearts through faith**. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **may have power, together with all the saints**, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love surpasses knowledge – that you **may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God**."* Again, in the Book of Revelation, God confirms that this was **not** the case with these people – they had a severe lack of the Godly gifts. In the message to the Church in Ephesus God warns them to get their act together or He would remove their lamp altogether (**Rev 2:5**). Paul recognized their many deficiencies when he saw them for the last time; hence the severe warnings (**Acts 20:27-32**).

The Churches in Asia Minor were completely insulated from the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Because of the distance separating them and the Holy Land it didn't affect them. Yet Paul gives this advice: **Eph 4:4** *"Make every effort to **keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace**."* Paul also holds out to the hope to them that they might become mature, and **attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ** (**Eph 4:13**). (You might even **contrast** this with the **fullness of the Gentiles**). And contrary to all you may have believed in the past, these people did not attain this! They only received the **down-payment or deposit** of the Holy Spirit: **Eph 1:13** *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a **deposit** guaranteeing our inheritance **until** the redemption of **those who are God's Possession** – to the praise of His glory."* Don't treat these words lightly! Christ Himself spoke of another Spirit which would come: **John 16:12** *"I have much more to say to you, **more than you can now bear**. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will **guide you into all truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you **what is yet to come**."* This Spirit of Truth is to be added to the Holy Spirit to complete the **full measure** of Christ. The 'he' who is mentioned here is Christ – that is, His very Spirit!

Christ was even more explicit: **John 14:15** *"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you **another** Counsellor to be with you forever – **the Spirit of Truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him or knows him. **But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**"* What Christ was describing was **His own Spirit, the Spirit that God gave Him without measure**. This is further confirmed in **John 14:25** *"All this I have spoken while still with you. **But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my Name, will teach you all things** and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

Without this Counsellor you don't have **the full measure of the Holy Spirit!** And without it you cannot understand prophecy. It's **this Spirit** that tells us '**what is yet to come**'. This is the Spirit that will be given to all the House of Israel when God's Laws are written in their hearts. Those who have **this Spirit of Truth** have greatly enhanced perception of evil, lawless men. They are easily disgusted by the cunning, crafty methods adopted by those who hate the Father and His eternal Laws. The whole Book of Revelation tells us '**what is yet to come**', yet Christianity in these present days has never understood. Some Christians today love to imply they have this Spirit of Truth by claiming they have the Laws of God written in their hearts. They know they don't – and neither do they understand '**what is yet to come**'. If they understood, then they would know that the **Testimony of Jesus** is the **Spirit of Prophecy** (**Rev 19:10**) – by which means we will know '**what is yet to come**'. And most Christians today know they have believed all manner of 'prophecy' devised by men – **which has not come true!**

There have been many Christians down through the ages who had the **down-payment or deposit** of **God's Holy Spirit**. They lived their lives in faithful obedience to God and His Laws, and without ever knowing the final outcome of all that God will do. Their reward will be according to **what they have done**: **Rev 20:12** *"I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. **The dead were judged according to WHAT THEY HAD DONE as recorded in the Books**. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and **Death and Hades** gave up the dead that were in them, and **each person was judged according to WHAT HE HAD DONE**. Then **Death and Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. **If anyone's name was not written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**" (Note: **Death and Hades** are mentioned in **Rev 6:8**). So judgment will be from what is recorded in the Books, but the most important record is the one in the **Book of Life!** If your name is **not** recorded in this Book, **then you will be cast into the lake of fire.***

It should come as no surprise that those who seek to beguile the people of God insist that you **must do nothing!** According to them you must **not obey God** because His Laws are a curse, and you are under a curse if you keep them.

Daniel also spoke of this time of judgment: **Dan 12:1** *“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until now. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the Book – will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake; some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”*

All those who received the **down-payment or deposit of God’s Spirit** will be raised from the dead to receive judgment. They will be judged according to **what they have done**. Their acts have been recorded in the Books. But if their names are not in the **Book of Life**, their fate is sealed! They will be burnt up and will cease to exist forever.

It should be noted that one of the rulers of the heavenly realm liked to emulate this act. This was Nebuchadnezzar who had his own furnace for throwing human being into. Satan’s seed loves doing this. Throughout history it was popular to throw people into volcanoes, either as a punishment or for sport. Out of fear for the mightiest power on earth today – Ephraim – Satan’s brood are content just to throw animals and chickens into the blazing volcanic furnaces in the land.

Hurling animals and chickens into an active volcano to appease their gods is a popular pastime among the offspring of Satan.



There are plenty of Christians today, who, while not understanding prophecy, have decided it isn't important. To them, the only thing that is important is to appear sweet and innocent - to men! With all their charades and play-acting they do appear to have a form of godliness that appeals to the self-righteous – their own kind! And to mask their disinterest in prophecy they refer to themselves as the flock. And while they exhibit sheep-like qualities, they don't fully realize the purpose of a sheep. The Bible does explain though. A normal sheep grazes and feeds itself, and produces wool. The latter end is to go to the slaughterman. This is how God designed them, and this is their purpose.

So why does God refer to the offspring of Christ as sheep? All Christians should understand that Christ went as a Lamb to the slaughter. Down through the ages many others have followed Him, and they also have given up their lives out of love for God. And they did it willingly so they might gain a better resurrection: **Heb 11:35** *“Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put into prison. They were stoned, they were sawn in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and ill-treated – the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what has been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”*

Those who think that Christ did it all for them are woefully and tragically mistaken! The people mentioned here that endured such brutality did so in the hope of **a better resurrection**. Not only this, they **refused to be released!** If they already had salvation through grace, as fraudulent mainstream Christianity would have you believe, why would they **refuse to be released?** So highly esteemed by God are these people, that the Book of Hebrews states: *“the world was not worthy of them”* and they *“were all commended for their faith”*.

As a point of interest, the man who co-wrote the Book of Hebrews is the man who put some of these people to death. Saul of Tarsus was that man, whom Christ later named Paul. On the road to Damascus Christ stopped him dead in his tracks and blinded him. Most would agree that following this encounter with the Living Christ, Saul was transformed from a very evil man to a very righteous man. Killing the people of God is an evil act, even though he did it in ignorance. While Saul was conducting all these activities against true Christians, God didn't intervene. When Stephen was martyred, it was Paul who was standing there giving approval to his death (**Acts 8:1**). Yet few men have walked this earth that had more zeal and devotion for God than the **transformed** Paul. When he realized his monstrous blunder he turned wholeheartedly in obedience to God.

God allowed many men and women to suffer at the hands of Saul without any intervention. We find that a great persecution broke out in Jerusalem the very day that Stephen was killed. And it

was Saul that spearheaded the assault on the Church (**Acts 8:1-3**). Clearly, God was permitting this great persecution!

When Christ said to Paul, *'Why do you persecute Me?'* Paul was actually persecuting the people of God – true Christians. These people were called the **Body of Christ!** We see an example of **this Body of Christ** described as a Lamb with **seven eyes** and **seven horns** in **Rev 5:6**. This seems to be a strange transition from the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah (V5)** and the One described in **Rev 1:12-18**.

This Lamb with seven eyes and seven horns looked like it had been slaughtered (**V6**), yet it lived and survived. This Body of the Lamb is the Church of God, and in this description it now has **seven horns and seven eyes**. And God explains what these are: **Rev 5:6** *"Then I saw a Lamb, looking like it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had **seven horns and seven eyes**, which are the **seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth**."* So these **seven Spirits** have a job to do of global proportions, that is, in **all the earth**. They are not just seven eyes, but also seven horns! A horn being a reference to a bull's horns that gores its victims and leaves them dead or mutilated. Great power is given to these seven Spirits of God.

In the next chapter of the Book of Revelation we find further descriptions of this slaughtered Body of the Lamb: **Rev 6:9** *"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those **who had been slain** because of the **Word of God** and the **Testimony** they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the **inhabitants of the earth** and **avenge our blood**?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed."* These people are still human beings.

I wonder how they all managed to fit under the altar? The earthly altar described by the men of God throughout the Bible was not very big. But here we find that this is speaking of the real altar, not an **earthly copy** (see **Heb 8:4**), and under the real altar is a huge expanse – a massive sanctuary which is fully equipped with all the necessities of life including clothing. And these people **who obey the Word of God and His Testimony**, do indeed receive spotless linen clothing. But the end is not yet! **They must wait until their fellow-servants and brothers are also killed as they were**. That will take a little time. But no true servant of God would want to accept anything less than martyrdom! And God intends to extend to them the same privilege He granted His Son! And all these forevermore, will be called the **Sons of God**.

Christ said: **John 15:18** *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."* Why would this be? More importantly, why does it have to be this way? Christ added this: **John 15:25** *"But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in [the] Law: **They hated me without reason**."* And where in **the Law** is this written? Well this is yet another reference by Christ to **the Law** where He quotes the **Book of Psalms**. It's worth noting that Christ linked the **Law and the Prophets**, and said they must be fulfilled (**Matt 5:17**). The reference to *'They hated me without cause'* is found in **Ps 35:19** and **Ps 69:4**. It just so happens that **Psalm 69** prophesies of certain events connected to crucifixion (**V21**), and this is the chapter that the Apostles consulted for the procedures for replacing Judas Iscariot (**Acts 1:20**). While the **Book of Psalms** is a **Book of Law** that will be rigorously applied, this is another story for another time. It would serve no purpose at this time to digress.

Importantly, Christ warned His followers that they would be hated. It's interesting that the Churches of God are themselves providing all the ammunition to ensure this is so! They have embarked on a cannibalistic feeding frenzy of tearing each other apart and publicly bringing the Church of God into public disrepute on a global scale. They seem to want the whole world to know that this is the most evil Church on earth. Perhaps they are judging from their own perspective. Many who have so loudly proclaimed all the **sins of their leaders** seem unconcerned **about their own sins**. Would it be fair to suggest that many of these who so openly condemn are also guilty of the same sins? The **true Body of Christ** would know this is so!

Those who have so openly attacked the Church publicly seem to think the definition of sin is 'sex'. They think that anyone who breaks the seventh commandment is far guiltier than someone who breaks the fourth. Having found out that their former leader and his son have committed some depraved sexual acts, they feel qualified to destroy the whole Church (**the Church of course, being the people – not the organization and its leaders**). The leaders who deliberately taught the lies and continue to do so are already condemned – and you had better believe this! They knew they would be judged more strictly (**James 3:1**), but they have continued to teach things that cannot be proven from the Bible. Peter hammered home this point in the clearest terms: **2Pet 2:1** *"But there were also **false prophets among the people**, just as there will be **false teachers among you**. They will **secretly introduce destructive heresies**, even denying the Sovereign Lord who bought them – **bringing swift destruction on themselves**. **Many** will follow their shameful ways and will bring the **Way of Truth** into disrepute. In their **greed** these **teachers** will exploit you **with stories they have made up**. **Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping**."* As a



point of interest, Peter was addressing those in **Asia Minor – the place of the seven Churches (1Pet 1:1)**.

Many people have read the Bible from cover to cover and never understood it. The same is true of all the biblical scholars for hundreds of years. They have never understood anything! Yet put a pastor's hat on someone and suddenly he thinks he knows everything. They develop a stunning repertoire of **stories they have made up** and everyone believes everything they say.

The **Body of Christ** is also described as the **flock of God** of which Christ is the **true Shepherd**. The messages to the seven Churches in the Book of Revelation are addressed to the **Body** or **flock – not** to the leaders of these Churches. And while the leaders may consider themselves to be very important, the reality is they are not! And when persecution comes to full bloom, these cowardly creatures will desert the flock and attempt to flee to save their lives. Some of you members of the Body will recall that a certain worthless shepherd fled when called on by the State of California to give an account of the money entrusted to him by the Flock of God. His life wasn't even in danger, only his freedom if convicted.

And what right did he have to collect tithes? Paul told the leaders of the seven Churches that he never collected tithes or any money from them, **but worked with his own hands to provide for himself and all those with him (Acts 20:33-35)**. Notice what he says in **V35** *"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* Remember these words **'must help the weak'**; we'll recall them shortly.

Now where did Herbert Armstrong get the idea that he could collect tithes? Paul didn't, and he made it perfectly obvious in everything he did that it was through hard work with their hands they should feed and help the weak. In the Book of Hebrews we have the principle established absolutely! This is what it says: **Heb 7:8** *"In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that **Levi, who collects the tithe, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchisedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.**"* If Paul ever had any ambitions of collecting tithes (**which he didn't!**) then he would have blown it right here! Firstly, **he says it's Levi that collects the tithe**. Secondly, although Abraham paid a tithe to Melchisedek, he states that **it could be said that Levi still paid the tithe to Melchisedek** because he was still in the body of his ancestor. Paul makes it very clear that only Levi is empowered by God to collect the tithe.

But let's skip the semantics and go straight to the core of the matter. In the Book of Malachi, God speaks of one man – **a man called Levi!** This is the man with whom **God's Covenant continues**; he is the **messenger** of the LORD Almighty, and this is the **messenger** that precedes the **true Messenger of the Covenant**. Of this man **Levi**, God says this: **Mal 2:4** *"And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that **my Covenant with Levi may continue,**" says the LORD Almighty. **"My Covenant was with him, a Covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my Name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.***

*"For the lips of a priest ought to **preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction** – because he is **the messenger of the LORD Almighty.** But **you** have turned from the Way and **by your teaching** have caused many to stumble; **you have violated the Covenant with Levi,**" says the LORD Almighty. **"So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my Ways but have shown partiality in matters of Law."***

God says **Levi** is the **messenger** of the LORD Almighty! And this is how God describes His messenger: **Mal 3:1** *"See, I will send my **messenger,** who will **prepare the Way before me.** Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His Temple; **the Messenger of the Covenant,** whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. **But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears?** For He will be **like a refiner's fire** or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **He will purify the Levites** and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD **will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,** and the offerings of **Judah and Jerusalem** will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years."*

John the Baptist was the messenger who preceded the first coming of Christ (**Luke 1:15-17, 76-78**). But John did **not** immediately precede **the great and dreadful day of the LORD (Mal 3:2, 4:5)**. John the Baptist and Christ were both murdered, and the role of the mighty conquering Messiah was never realized – at that time (even though the Apostles had thought that it might – **Luke 24:21**).

God had something else in mind. The six days still had a long while to run **before the Day of the LORD dawned**. Yet God confirms once more that **Levi** would be called to duty, just as in the days of John the Baptist. Now **Levi** is a little different to the Churches of God, and his role is completely different in both reality and magnitude. In **Mal 3:1** we learn that this Levite messenger will precede the **true Messenger** of the Covenant **who will come to His Temple**. So part of the preparation of **'preparing the Way'** is to ensure that the Temple that God has designed and planned

(Eze 40-48) is built. This was accomplished at Christ's **first** coming – a Temple had been built! Herod built it!

Levi also has the responsibility to prepare a city and a country for the people of God. And this city and country are **Jerusalem and Judah** (Mal 3:4). Now comes one of the biggest shocks of all to the Churches of God (it's a shock because many of them love money so much they'd rather eat their own offspring than give God His portion). Not only are they supposed to be paying their tithes to **Levi the servant of God**, but so should the **whole nation of Israel**, that is, **all twelve tribes** are supposed to be doing so. That's a real shocker isn't it? Here's a man who says that whole nations are supposed to be paying a tenth to a man called Levi. Outrageous isn't it? Utterly disgusting! Who does he think he is!

Well this is what God says: **Mal 3:6** *"I the LORD do not change. So you, **O descendants of Jacob**, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. **Return to Me**, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. **"But you ask, 'How are we to return?' In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing Me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My House. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough to receive it."***

Most of you in the Churches are very familiar with these verses because in the past you probably received hundreds of begging letters from Herbert Armstrong quoting these very verses. He was the absolute master of the 'guilt trip'. He couldn't care less about God's instruction that **only Levi was to collect the tithe**. And as for working with his own hands to provide for his own and to feed the flock (as Paul indicated) this was total anathema to him.

But, believe it or not, this is exactly how the seven Churches will finish their days, **and their days will finish in Glory!** But only if they **return to God** and follow His instructions.

Of all the Christian groups around the world, and particularly in the United States of America where the greatest diversity of beliefs exist, why did God single out one shepherd for a mention in prophecy? What was so notable about this one man whom God calls a **foolish** and **worthless** shepherd? (**Zech 11:15-17**). And especially since God makes it very plain that this one man would perform a significant task. Armstrong is referred to quite a few times throughout the Bible including **Psalms 52** and **Eze 34**. So why did God call Armstrong? Well, the truth is that God prophesied of this man over 2,000 years ago, and in precise terms – and even named him (when you fully understand the parable). So this man had to fulfill all that God said about him, and God made sure it was so. He was everything God said he would be; **in precise terms, a foolish and worthless shepherd!**

The Churches of God should be thankful to know that the identity of Armstrong reveals the **True and only Church of God! There are no others!** But it's not the administration that is the Church, but the people! This tyrant brutalized the **true** people of God, but they never forgot **their first love – the love of God**. The **true** flock loved God and they loved all His people. They made allowances for the tares who were obviously among them, but didn't judge too harshly.

You may believe that God made provision for hundreds of differing religious beliefs reflected in the thousands of different Christian denominations. He never did! He named only **one shepherd**, and this man was raised up right on schedule and fulfilled everything God said about him. As diminutive as the Worldwide Church of God was in the vast sea of humanity, this was the only group that had the **down-payment or deposit of the Holy Spirit of God**. And you can believe what you like to the contrary! This truth stands! What they **never received** was the **promised double-portion of the Spirit – the Spirit of Christ!**

Why should anyone doubt God's right to call a foolish shepherd to watch over His flock? Didn't God also choose King Saul to reign over the House of Israel? And didn't He later sack him and call another from the sheepfold – that is, David? Whatever God does He does for a purpose; and what He did concerning Herbert Armstrong was in line with that purpose.

Just prior to the dawning of the seventh millennial day, God raised up his prophesied shepherd who would toughen up His Flock and test their obedience – to Him, God! Would they balk and turn away from God because of a slaving tyrant? Many continued in quiet faithfulness, continuing to rejoice in the wonder of God's Word. After God struck down that shepherd and scattered the Flock, God again tested them to see if they would turn away from Him. Some separated into small groups but retained their first love – the **love of God** and **obedience to His Way**. Many of these, perhaps inadvertently, began to follow Paul's instruction to work with their hands while feeding the Flock. These are the **true** overseers of God.

Those who **failed** to **test those who claim to be apostles** (**Rev 2:2**) became caught up in the lies of these so-called 'apostles' and died spiritually. They no longer had a genuine love for God and they certainly didn't obey Him or love His Way. In addition to this, they sought to use Balaam's way to entice the Flock to sin.

It was against this background that God named **seven Churches in the Book of Revelation**. No matter how you try to reason around it, all seven Churches are associated with the worthless shepherd that God raised up for this purpose. Christ always spoke in parables, and the message to the

seven Churches is no exception. Similarly, the prophecy about the worthless shepherd is also a parable. You can go on guessing for the rest of your life trying to determine the meaning of these seven messages to the Churches, but without the **Spirit of Prophecy** you will never understand. Of course, God has already told you **where you should seek instruction (Mal 2:7)**, but many will probably prefer to take their chances – until it's too late!

The Worldwide Church of God has fulfilled the description of the Church in Ephesus. They have now had the Lampstand removed from them and are in the process of destruction. And bear in mind that whatever Christ says to one Church, it applies to all of them: *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches”* (plural). God counsels His people to come out and be separate from those who despise Him. What fellowship does light have with darkness?

Didn't the Churches of God always believe that two of their leaders would be God's two witnesses? They knew very well that two men would arise with the Power of God. They knew these two would immediately *precede* the return of Christ at the last Trumpet. They also knew that the Levite would appear before the great and dreadful Day of the LORD. They knew all these things because they encountered, many times, the references to these things in the Bible. They just couldn't bring themselves to believe it!

Well where are your two witnesses? Point them out! Let's see how they have fulfilled everything that is written about them! Put your cards on the table and let's see what you are holding. You're not even holding a pair of deuces! And you know it! Consider now the appalling nonsense you have believed in the past.

As for prophecy, what prophecy did you ever understand? Don't you feel just a little uncomfortable knowing that so many of Armstrong's stupid prophecies failed? Yet you thought he was Elijah! God calls him a shepherd (and a worthless one at that), not a prophet! Why then did he utter so many prophecies and make so many outrageous predictions? For the very reason that he was a **foolish and worthless shepherd!**

Yet God called him to duty to fulfill the prophecy concerning him. Like all shepherds he was required to feed the flock and instruct them in God's Way. Of all the 'shepherds' who have arisen for the past hundreds of years, only Herbert Armstrong developed a doctrine of God's Way. He set you on a course of obedience to Almighty God and instilled within you the necessity for this obedience.

Our beloved Christ informed everyone that the Jewish leaders of His time sat in Moses' seat, and everyone was to seek instruction from them concerning God's Law. He counseled them, however, not to do as they did, because they were hypocrites. The Churches of God today now exist against this very background. On matters of Law, Herbert Armstrong established Godly doctrine, but no-one should follow his conduct or example. He, too, was a hypocrite.

**But now God's Covenant continues with Levi**, just as God predicted long ago. It's from Levi that **men must seek instruction (Mal 2:4-9)**. Your leaders have failed you, and will continue to fail you as long as they seek to build corporate structures in the Church. The Church, that is the people, must get back to grassroots, and graze in the uncluttered field of their first love – that is, their love of God and the genuine love of His true people.

With the Church now scattered and disoriented and directionless, the time has come to face the biggest test of all. The seven Spirits that were before the throne of God and sent greetings to all the Churches (**Rev 1:4**) are set to become the **seven blazing lamps (Rev 4:5)**. **These lamps are the seven Spirits of God (same verse)**. These are the seven Spirit (beings) that will be jointly responsible for the seven Churches and are described as the sevenfold Spirits, sevenfold in intensity, and sevenfold in duty to the Churches. These are the ministering Spirits who will guide you to your destiny.

God has already done some **pre-destinating**. This is described in the **Book of Ephesians (Eph 1:4)**. It's a message to the Churches of God, and is designed to **come into effect when the times have reached their fulfillment (V10)**. This is the time when God plans **to bring everything in heaven and on earth together under one Head, even Christ (V10 again)**.

Peter spoke of these things, and described them as the new day that is **yet to dawn. 2Pet 1:19** *“And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, UNTIL the day dawns and the Morning Star arises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origins in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* Peter understood that a new day would dawn and the Morning Star (**see Mal 4:2, Ps 19:5**), which is Christ, would arise in the hearts of the faithful people of God. When our **Champion**, that is, Christ, **arises from His pavilion (Ps 19:5)**, His Spirit will be given to all the faithful Church, and His laws will be written in their hearts, and then they will have **a double-portion of God's Spirit**. They will **understand prophecy** and they will **understand the Testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17, see also Rev 19:10)**. These are the Commandment-keeping remnant of the Churches, and are the **offspring of the woman (same verse)** that gave birth to Christ – that is, the House of David. The House of David comprised the people of **Judah and Levi (Zech 12:10-13)**.

It's certainly clear that the people in the Churches of God have a job to do. But that job is vastly different to all that you have imagined! Perhaps under the influence of the super-sanctimonious,



super-self-righteous leaders of the worldly churches you have imagined that you must emulate the parody they live. These people appear as whitened sepulchers but inside are filled with dead men's bones. They love to beguile people with their feigned love and righteousness, but care nothing for God's instructions. By now, you should be aware that you must *not* seek instructions from them. You are to seek your instructions from God and His Word, and from His appointed servant.

The Churches of God have a wonderful future just like Christ – provided they emulate Christ. They must faithfully follow Him, because He is their Head, and they are His Body. Christ's Body was horribly marred before the life was drained from it. He went to His death knowing that God would raise Him from the dead. The Body of Christ, that is the Church, must have the same faith that Christ had when He went to His death.

Abraham was called the father of the faithful because he believed God. Abraham didn't hesitate to do as God commanded him to do. When God required the life of his son, Abraham rose up early to obey. He knew that God could **raise him from the dead** (**Heb 11:19**) and he never doubted God's righteousness. It's the faith of the **Head of the Church** and the **faith of the fathers** that the Church has been called to emulate. The Church has long believed that they are to be **living sacrifices**. Their mentors continually suggested that the term 'living sacrifice' had something to do with financial contributions. They milked this for all it was worth! Yet never once did they explain the true meaning!

Well, God has! So have all the Prophets and Apostles. These men made it clear that God requires the same of the Church as He required of His faithful Son. Paul stated it in concise terms, and again reiterated the meaning of predestination just as he did in the **Book of Ephesians**. Here's the whole passage: **Rom 8:28** *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His Purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestinated to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, he also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."* You will recall that these things are spoken of in the **Book of Ephesians** and linked to **'when the times have reached their fulfillment'**.

Continuing: **V31** *"What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – **more than that, who was raised to life** – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? **Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?**"* Did God ever promise to spare us from **trouble, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or sword**? This is the very point Paul was making. God didn't spare His own Son – are you worthy of greater privileges?

What if God chose to inflict some severe trials on some of his people to build them up for greater things? And what if God refuses to remove the trial even after earnest prayers by the saints? Should we imagine that our prayers are ineffective? Should our faith in God begin to fail? Or should we stand firm and wait and trust in Him for deliverance in His own good time? As Paul said, *"...**all things work for the good of those who love Him**"*. If from time to time you don't experience severe trials – **be afraid!** God may not be preparing you for anything! All those He loves He rebukes and chastens, and if you are without chastening, then you are bastards and not sons!

I don't like to see God's faithful people suffer, but I know that God must toughen them up to do the Work that He requires of them. Speaking of the Church, Paul explains why: **V36** *"**As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*** Let these words thoroughly sink in! **God considers His Flock as sheep to be slaughtered!** Just like Christ you have been called to be **conquerors** and to **triumph** over the seed of Satan. Through His death He **triumphed** over them (**Col 2:15**), and so must you. You will need to **face death all day long** – just **as it is written!** Paul continues to explain what is **written**: **V37** *"No, in all things we are **more than conquerors** through Him that loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"*

Yes, you've probably read these verses many times, but did you believe them? Perhaps you've sat in the congregation of your Church and heard the minister state in stentorian terms that he was ready to die in martyrdom at any time for Christ. And you've agreed by nodding sagely. But in your mind, you never went that far, and neither did your minister. Looking back, you will probably find in virtually every case, he added a rider. He promised you safe deliverance if you were faithful. In other words, he, by default, was saying that others, not you, would be martyred. He probably mentioned, at some point, the Laodiceans. In their minds, the Laodiceans were the baddies who, like Christ, would be martyred. Do you begin to see the gravity of what they suggested? They suggested that those who followed Christ in martyrdom were the baddies.

Recall again **Rev 20:4** *“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” **Yes, these were beheaded and came to life again.** Notice the words ‘**authority to judge**’. You’ve heard the depraved beasts who feign Christianity *taunting* those **who obey God** as ‘legalists’. Those who are **given authority to judge** will do it **legally** and **according to God’s Law!** This is what judges do! And God is the Great Judge – the Judge of all! Why do professing Christians have so much trouble identifying the **lawless**, those who continually taunt others with the term ‘legalist’? Whose side are you on? God’s side? Or Satan’s side? You’d better decide real quick! The Bible speaks of the **lawless** in defamatory terms, but doesn’t mention legalists. God is the greatest Legalist of all! He set in motion laws throughout the universe, He established His Law for all mankind, and even the animals response to set laws that God has set in motion to govern their activities. Lawlessness has no place anywhere in the universe. The great arch-rebel of the universe hates God’s Law and he hates God’s righteousness. It’s not hard to establish who are the **offspring of Satan (Gen 3:16)**.*

The whole world will worship Satan’s appointee - the beast – all except those who remain faithful to God. This is the big test, and this is the time when the faithful and true Body of Christ – the Church – will be called to service as a light and a beacon to a vast multitude and by their example many will enter the Kingdom of God and receive eternal life. The faithful Body will hold to the **Commandments of God** and they will be given the **Spirit of Prophecy** to understand all things. They will at that time, fully understand the **Testimony of Jesus**.

God is going to hand you – the Church - over to the beast, just as He handed His own Son over to the beast that then existed. He has told you in advance, so you must start preparing. **Rev 13:7** *“He (the beast) was given power to make war with the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names have not been written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. He who has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance of the saints.”*

Well now, this must be referring to the Laodiceans – isn’t this what your ministers taught you? Didn’t they suggest that **only** the naughty Laodiceans will suffer any kind of martyrdom?

Well Daniel makes it crystal clear that **these very saints** are the ones **who inherit the Kingdom of God!** He makes it clear that these saints are the good guys who faithfully serve God and obey Him – **they go to their deaths as sheep to the slaughter**. This is what Daniel recorded: **Dan 7:25** *“He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints and try to change set times and the Laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed for ever. Then the Sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.”*

Not quite the scenario you’ve always believed, is it?

God never promised anyone **anything** for mere **lip-service**. You will notice that those who **think** they are saved now, because of their cock-eyed belief in ‘grace’, which, they insist, only requires **lip-service**. They say that if you obey anything that the apostles or prophets said (and Christ was also an Apostle and Prophet), then you have denied Christ. If **the saints** are the ones who are to be handed over to the beast, and these **same saints** are the ones who **inherit all the kingdoms under the whole heaven**, then what does that leave for **those who refuse to obey God and His Laws?** Their hatred of ‘legalism’ reflects their hatred of God’s Laws and the Great Judge Himself!

These spiritual perverts say that Christ did it all for them, and so they don’t have to do anything. Christ said *“**Don’t think I have come to abolish the law and the prophets...**”* **They don’t believe Him! They say He did!** And they quote **spurious books** and other worldly scholars to confound the very words of Christ! When Christ said, *“If you will enter into life, keep the Commandments”* they seem to think Christ meant *“if you will enter into death...”*. They subtly teach that if you obey God’s Commandments then you will go to the lake of fire. Why would anyone suggest that **any** words **supposedly** written by Paul could contradict what Christ proclaimed?

Logically, what is there in the entirety of the Scriptures that suggests that Christ’s sacrifice does away with God’s Law? If this sacrifice was a substitute for anything, you would expect it to be in place of the sacrifice of the Flock so they would not need to go as sheep to the slaughter. Instead we find that God requires His chosen ones to give up all, including their lives. And the one to whom they ascribe contradictory comments from a spurious book, is Paul. Was Paul’s life spared? Or was Paul aware that he had to go to the slaughter also? Paul sought a better resurrection, one that would bring eternal life. He was prepared for it and knew when the time had come. He told the men of **Ephesus** this: **Acts 20:23** *“I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships*

*are facing me. However, **I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*** Here Paul **warns of prison and hardships and his impending death** and concludes this to be the **gospel of God's grace**. A little different to the once-saved always-saved doctrine that insists you must do nothing. Paul seemed to think he still had to **finish the race** and **complete the task** given him. Obviously, his views are a little different from those who think Christ did it all for them.

Paul spoke of a future time when people would not put up with sound doctrine. He perfectly describes the situation today among some members of the Churches of God. **2Tim 4:3** ***“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardships, do all the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. For I am ready to be poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”***

It's a great pity that Bible translators adopted the word 'salvation' rather than 'salvage'. Christ being the firstborn of many brothers was indeed salvaged. His body didn't see corruption, and it was raised and brought back to life. There are many Scriptures that show that Christ was bodily resurrected. His body disappeared from the burial chamber, and it was the very body that He had before death. The disciples saw the wound in His side and in His hands. The current meaning of the word 'salvation' today implies a completely wrong meaning because of its excessive use in the wrong context.

We do have a description of a resurrection in the Book of Ezekiel. This speaks of very dry bones and describes how the flesh and sinews were restored and then they received breath and lived. It may seem like a mute point, but God does say that He will redeem the dead from under the earth and the sea – that is, from wherever they died and were buried. It's true that God has a blueprint copy of all His people much like an architectural plan or a chemical formula. These are called 'souls'. When Adam was created from one of these souls, he became a **living** soul. A soul is not a living entity until God uses it to create a form, and then imparts life to it. Human beings today are not created from souls, but are grown biologically in the mother's womb. At death, God takes a 'snapshot' of the soul of His people for later salvaging.

There is a spirit in man that records all the activities of a man. A wise young man in the company of Job said this: **Job 32:8** ***“But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right.”*** It's not only the old who are wise, but even the young and even children who are able to utilize the spirit that gives understanding to a man. This spirit is the breath of the Almighty, and when God breathed on Adam he became a living soul. As in Adam's case, God demonstrated that He was able to give not only understanding but knowledge. God brought all the animals to Adam to see what he would call them, and Adam named them all.

Paul understood all these things concerning the meaning of being 'saved'. And contrary to what many in the Churches have believed, Paul states this: **1Thess 4:13** ***“We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly NOT precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”*** Why was it necessary for Paul to emphasize these things if there was only a few minutes between them. And if you read it carefully, you will find that those who have fallen asleep **will be brought back with Jesus**. Yet Paul says the Lord Himself **will come down from heaven and call them from the grave**. Now the Lord cannot come down and get them, and yet bring them with Him at the same time! **So Christ must come and get them first!** Just bear in mind that this is **not a rapture of live people – but dead ones!** Paul says that those who are alive **will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep**.

Now I've heard all the 'smokes and mirrors' explanations for this. None of them have any bearing on truth! God Himself explains! Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are the martyrs who are **raised from the dead** and are taken to **Glory** and placed in the vast expanse under the altar. This is how God explains it: **Rev 6:9** ***“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God and the Testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Then each of them was given a white robe and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.”*** Yes, this describes the first of them, **and there are more to come – many more who are to be killed just like them**.

And who is it that comes down from heaven to collect them? It's Christ! And when the slaughter of the flock is completed, **they will return with Christ to earth**. These things may be hard



to accept by those who have been steeped in the nonsense of the past, but you need to understand the truth.

Yet not all those who are Christ's are killed! If this were to happen, then the gates of hell *would* prevail against them in contradiction to what Christ said in **Matt 16:18**. Paul made it clear that **some would be left alive**, and these *also* will be rewarded. In many ways, these will be men and women of **great endurance**. It is God's purpose they remain alive even though, like Paul, their lives mean nothing to them. God says that **some will be killed** and **some will go into captivity**; either way it requires great **endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints** (**Rev 13:9-10**).

God called the seed of Abraham as His own. From Abraham's grandson Jacob and his 12 sons, God formed 12 tribes. These 12 men became the fathers of twelve nations. Of all the vastness of humanity, God chose only these as His own. Even though they rebelled against Him and His Laws and were driven from His presence, God never rejected them! Paul confirms this: **Rom 11:1** *"I ask then, Did God reject His people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the Tribe of Benjamin."* There are any amounts of *lawless* people who insist that He did! If God had done so, then His word would be worthless. But then, isn't this what the *lawless* ones say of God and His Word and His Laws?

If God had rejected the 12 Tribes of Israel, then He would have destroyed the entire earth. There would be absolutely no purpose in continuing. And we are not 'out of the woods' yet! God says that if His appointed prophet Elijah fails in his duty, then God will strike the earth with utter destruction! (**Mal 4:5** – the word 'curse' means utter destruction).

God says this: **Amos 3:1** *"Hear this word the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel – against the whole family I brought out of Egypt: "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins."* (**See also Deut 7:6, 14:2, 2Sam 7:23**).

Perhaps some might think this is a little unfair. Why did God single out just the 12 sons of Jacob and their offspring? Well God has a very great purpose in mind.

Similarly with the Churches of God! Why did God single out just seven Churches out of the vast array of Christian denominations? Is this fair? Has God made a strategic error?

Christ said that after we have done all that is required of us, we are unprofitable servants. So if we do all that God requires what else is left? What is left is the ultimate test of faith! God must determine whether **our love of Him** will override **our love of life**.

It's necessary for all the nations on this earth to be blessed through Abraham, in order that God's promises be fulfilled. And how does God intend to do this?

Christ built His Church for a special purpose, and this purpose will be evident *'when the times have reached their fulfillment'*. They are the Church of the firstborn. To further complicate things, God chose **the Levites in place of the firstborn**, and **the Levites are the wave offering** (**Num 8:15-18**). It's the Levites that **were given wholly to God** (**V16**), and God is going **to purify them** (**Mal 3:3**) for the great task of delivering the final message to the world. And it's a **Levite** who is the **messenger** that precedes the **True Messenger – the Son of God!** The Church is the **offspring** of the **firstborn** (**Rev 12:17**).

As unpalatable as this is to all the Churches of God, your whole destiny is dependent on the **woman who gave birth to Christ** (**Rev 12:13-14**) - the House of David, and the two tribes that comprise that house (**Zech 12:10-13**).

What of all the other Christian denominations? Aren't there any righteous people among them? There are probably plenty of people like Cornelius (**Acts 10:1**). Like Cornelius, they have a desire to serve God, and like Cornelius, they don't have God's Holy Spirit. But they will if the Church does their job properly. If they set the example of obedience even in the face of death, then many others will follow their example. The good news is that God knows they will *'when the times have reached their fulfillment'*. Their numbers will blow out to 144,000 – the allotted number, and a vast sea of humanity, from every tribe, people, nation and language will *also* receive the blessing of deliverance and eternal life through martyrdom.

You know, humanity was made a little lower than angels, yet God says angels are ministering spirits to them. What is more, the angels desire to look into the grace that God has extended to humanity. The question is asked, *'What is man that you are mindful of him?'* It's from the pool of humanity that God intends to choose a vast family. God describes Himself as a father, and He also has a Son who is the heir of all things. Those whom God is calling as sons are also called joint-heirs. Perhaps foremost of all the wonders of the universe is the fact that God has chosen lowly human beings rather than the mighty spirit beings that now exist to be elevated to this privileged position. God says He will crown them with great glory. Even the 24 elders that surround His throne are ready and prepared to relinquish their crowns in favour of God's chosen ones.

The **fear of God** is the **beginning of Wisdom**. Those who don't fear God do not even have the **beginning of Wisdom**. And what mainstream Christianity believes is Wisdom today is something wholly different. The **Son of God** is the **Wisdom of God**, and Christ is also the **Power of God** (**1Cor 1:24**). As an Apostle, Paul knew that the fear and love of God would not be evident in many. Yet he also knew that God would give them the means to use the Holy Spirit to build them up and prepare

them: **2Cor 1:21** “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” The Holy Spirit of God, the **initial down-payment or deposit** of the Holy Spirit is a **guarantee** that **there is still something to come**. Those who received the **initial deposit** know they have **never** understood prophecy or the many mysteries of God.

Most have stumbled along, driven by every wind of doctrine, and seemingly never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. They sought not to know God but only His many benefits. And as much as they deny it, they have never honoured Him. Their whole focus was on their own glory, and arrogance bloomed as they used defective and foolish doctrines to entice others to follow them.

There were some subtle differences in those who truly had the **seal** or **deposit** of God’s Holy Spirit. And while some believe that it’s through the magic hands of their minister that they receive the Holy Spirit, **God says He, Himself, anoints us**. While it’s a requirement after baptism to lay hands on a believer in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit, the act of imparting His Spirit is God’s alone! There are many tares among God’s people; most of which were baptized, and anointed at that time, but on the authority of God, God refused them His Holy Spirit. They were never the true wheat or grain. They could never be refined to make bread (and Christ is that Bread)! And this is God’s intent – to produce children just like His Son. But those who have tasted the heavenly gift and have turned away, there remains no further sacrifice for them: **Heb 6:4** “It is **impossible** for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace.” And also this Scripture: **Heb 10:26** “If we **deliberately keep on sinning** after we have received the knowledge of Truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and a raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

It may seem a little harsh to some that those who keep on sinning after they have **received the knowledge of the truth** should be consumed in the raging fire, but is it really? Even in our own societies today when a law is enacted it’s required to be obeyed, and if it isn’t obeyed then a penalty is enforced. It just so happens that God feels exactly the same way – and always has! This is made very clear in **Deut 29:19-21** “When such a person hears the words of this oath, he invokes a blessing on himself and therefore thinks, “I will be safe even though I persist in going my own way.” This will bring disaster on the watered land as well as on the dry. The LORD will never be willing to forgive him; His wrath and zeal will burn against that man. All the curses written in this Book will fall upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. The LORD will single him out from all the Tribes of Israel for disaster, according to the curses of the Covenant written in this Book of the Law.”

God certainly hates hypocrisy! Those who think they are **safe** and **persist in going their own way**, and who have **heard the Word of God** yet refuse to obey – **will never be forgiven!**

## CHAPTER TWO

Christ said He would build His Church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it (**Matt 16:18**). How do we reconcile this to the fact that God told us long ago that **He would raise up a shepherd** who would mistreat **His** flock? When this man arose, there were others who held to the basic truths of God, Christians who honoured God and His commandments, yet had ceased to grow in grace and knowledge. But they still existed. The long passage of time had not extinguished their beliefs.

So what should we say? Are any of these one of the Churches that God speaks of in the Book of Revelation? Can we manipulate the descriptions given by God to identify them as one of the seven Churches? We could also pose a similar question about the Seventh Day Adventists. Both the Seventh Day Baptists and the Seventh Day Adventists arose from similar roots.

If this is true, then what about the Roman Catholic Church? Did this church arise from the teachings of early Christians? Isn’t it true that Paul ministered to the Romans and wrote a Book that bears this name? Wasn’t the Church in Rome in existence at the same time as the seven Churches in Asia Minor? The truth is - it was! Yet God didn’t mention them in the prophecies of the Book of Revelation but only the seven Churches in Asia Minor. Then there’s the Anglican Church, which spearheaded the push into Protestantism – a protest against the Roman Church. This protest came about because of an errant king wanting a divorce. Whose side was God on? The Protestants or the Catholics?

Again, God ignored them both, preferring to identify only the seven Churches in Asia. Yet it was the seven Churches in Asia that Paul severely warned for future transgressions. And one of the great mysteries of the ages is: God chose to use these recalcitrant Churches to arise in the endtime **in**

**the same spirit**, and to represent the Body of Christ – as distinct from all the others. Why would God do such a thing?

All those to whom Paul wrote eventually died, and we have no record of whether they fulfilled all that Paul said - in regard to them. Paul said he saw in part and he prophesied in part. Of course, many people today prophesy in part. Whenever they speak about Christ returning, they are prophesying in part.

But a true prophet is sent to warn. His function is a little different. God chose to keep one of the 12 Apostles alive until Christ came to him on the isle of Patmos. Here He revealed an overpowering message of destruction and judgment. He prefaced these prophecies with a description of seven Churches which would exist immediately prior to the second coming of Christ.

Out of the vast sea of Christianity, God speaks of one man whom He would raise up as a shepherd over His flock! We can either believe God – or we must invent our own ideas about the vast hords of Christians apart from this man. God told Zechariah to act out a parable concerning him. This is what God says concerning him: **Zech 11:15** *“Then the LORD said to me, **“Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs. Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded.”** More evidence of this man is found in the article **“Who is the Flock Marked for Slaughter?”***

Well, God did as He said! He did raise up such a man who would shepherd His flock. God’s flock keeps His Commandments and obeys Him. They recognize Him as the Almighty Creator God who is to be honoured above all else. They call Him ‘Father’ and honour Him as such. Many of them lived their lives in quiet desperation, but rejoiced at their trials and hardships, and always kept their eyes on the coming, glorious Kingdom of God. They sought to know all about their Heavenly Father and to honour Him. They also honoured His Son and sought to obey His directions and examples. When Christ said not to be like the Gentiles who lord it over their subjects, and then added, **“Don’t let this be among you”**, they believed and obeyed. The faithful flock of God had a genuine love for their brothers and sisters.

The flock of God knew there were tares among them, but didn’t make judgment calls. They recognized some things that were not according to Godly teachings but allowed the tares to live among them until such time as God concludes the harvest. They also recognized that tyrants ruled over them who utterly discarded what Christ had said about ruling over His flock. And like the sheep that they are, they submitted to the obscure verses that seemed to contradict Christ, and which were used to great effect by their leaders to reign over them.

The flock rejoiced when they believed God had inspired Herbert Armstrong to build a ‘House of God’ in Pasadena. They sent in their ‘widow’s mite’ from their meager earnings to supplement the building of this structure. Later, when it became an auditorium to host expensive concerts for the rich and famous, they quietly acquiesced to the folly of a worthless shepherd. But through it all, those who were truly God’s flock sought to serve their Heavenly Father.

The worthless shepherd that God raised up died in January, 1986. Another ‘apostle’ arose who inherited his ‘mantle’. This man is no shepherd at all! He hated God’s Laws and His Ways. He quickly moved to change everything and to simulate the churches of the world. God struck him down and he died. In contradiction to what God says in **Psalm 103:2-5**, he taught that God has no power to heal (and don’t even think I’m falsely representing his teachings – he believed God in **nothing!**) He contracted a deadly disease and suffered the consequences. In other words he got exactly what he deserved!

The faithful people of God departed and wandered around like lost sheep in need of a shepherd. Then the jockeying for position began, and leaders arose who sought to gain a following. A number of Churches arose – some good, some bad. But all of them were spin-offs of the Church that God raised up through a worthless shepherd.

In Bible revelation, the Church that God raised up under the tyranny of that worthless shepherd is the first Church mentioned in the Book of Revelation – the Church in Ephesus. This is the Church that has now had its lamp removed. This was done in January 1986.

Zechariah acted out the parable of the worthless shepherd (**Zech 11:15-17**), and he also spoke of two olive trees that would arise and who would pour out the golden oil. John, who wrote of the seven Churches, recorded details of these two olive trees, but also refers to them as two lampstands. These two lampstands are men. In the Book of Zechariah, this is recorded: **Zech 4:1** *“Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from a deep sleep. He asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” I asked the angel who talked to me, “What are these, my lord?” He answered, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I replied.” (Then several verses are inserted here which are completely out of context, and were probably wrongly inserted here by*



scribes, instead of at the end of the chapter.) But we do know that the **angel's answer** is found at the end of **V10** *"These **seven are the eyes of the LORD**, which range throughout the earth."* Then I asked the angel, *"What are these **two olive trees** on the right and left of the lampstand?"* Again I asked him, *"What are these **two olive branches** beside the **two gold pipes** that pour out the golden oil?"* He replied, *"Do you not know what these are?"* *"No, my lord,"* I said. So he said, *"These are the two who are **anointed to serve the LORD of all the earth**."* Note that the **seven lamps** are the **eyes** of the LORD which range throughout the earth. The Body of the Lamb is described as having **seven eyes** (**Rev 5:6**). So we find many **strong links** between the **Book of Zechariah** and the **Book of Revelation**. And in the Book of Revelation we find the reference to the two olive trees and the two lampstands. God speaks of two men who will fulfill this joint role: **Rev 11:3** *"And I will give Power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the **two olive trees and the two lampstands** that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die."* It should be noted that the time when the two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth is the culmination of a lengthy period when many prophecies are fulfilled. At the end of this 1260 day (3½ year period) these two men are killed and their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem (which God at that time refers to figuratively as Sodom and Egypt – **V8**, because of the terrible things that are done in it.) After three days, they will be raised to life and will be received into heaven – the Glory of God. There will be many others who have preceded them (**Rev 6:9**).

**Prior to** this 3½ period, the whole House of Israel will have been taken into captivity, and the Church that Christ built will go with them. This is the role for which they were called. They must go as a shining beacon of hope to the whole House of Israel. They will be equipped with the knowledge of the Commandments of God and will also be given a double portion of God's Holy Spirit, which will enable them to understand prophecy. Then they will understand why God has done things this way.

Concerning the House of Israel, and God's promises to His friend Abraham, He has promised to redeem 12,000 of each of the tribes (except Dan – Joseph will get a double portion), and these 144,000 will occupy a position in God's Kingdom that will never be equaled by any others. As the **seven lamps** shine as a beacon to the **House of Israel**, so will God's precious Seal be placed on God's special elect among the Tribes of Israel – all 144,000. They, in turn, will be a light to the Gentiles as well as all the Tribes of Israel – in fact, every nation, tribe, language and people.

Those Gentiles, who are like Cornelius the Gentile, and who embrace the Almighty God in love and devotion, and who refuse to worship the beast, will also go to their deaths willingly. And they too will be redeemed from death and given the white robes of the saints of God.

Before all this, God prepared His Church to play a crucial role. The Church being the flock of God, that is, the sheep. The sheep have followed worthless shepherds, but now they must follow the true Shepherd – Christ! Like Christ, they must go as sheep to the slaughter, and they must do it willingly and in faith, believing God can raise them from the dead. But not only this, they must believe that God **will** raise them from the dead and they must seek that better resurrection – the same as all the faithful of God have done in times past. This will require you to refuse deliverance, and to set your eyes on the hope that Christ had when He went to His death.

Christ spoke of the peace He had when He went to His death, and said He would leave this peace with all of those who would follow Him (**John 14:27**). This 'peace' is the peace of mind that you will have if you follow Christ's instructions to perfection. If you seek to save your life you will lose it – forever!

Long ago, God spoke in this manner: **Ps 116:15** *"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints."* And in **Isa 57:1** *"The righteous perish, and no-one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no-one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death."*

Weren't you always taught that salvation meant escape? Didn't you have an expectation that you would be spared from evil by going to a place of safety? If you want the same peace that Christ had when He went to His death, then you must be prepared to **enter into peace** and **find rest as you lie in death**. That is, of course, if you are truly **saints**! A **saint** is someone who has the Spirit of God.

Bear in mind that those who willingly obey God and who don't try to save their lives, who emulate Christ by going like sheep to the slaughter are guaranteed a quick death. Woe-be-tide these who try to escape. They will pay a heavy price.

Of course, you need to know who the enemy is. It's not the mugger in a dark alley somewhere (if you have the strength to tear out his heart then do so). No, the enemy is the king of Babylon and the vast hordes that he will galvanize to his doctrine. Satan has chosen the Islamic hordes to infiltrate every nation, and these will respond to their 'spiritual' leader. Whoever controls Babylon will rule the world and control all world trade. The Bible describes a vast trading bloc with Babylon at its head. This will trade in all the precious commodities of the earth – including slaves! (**Rev 18:11-17**). Who is it that all Islam hates with a vengeance? Isn't it the House of Israel, and Ephraim (U.S.) in particular? Isn't it their avowed intention to destroy them? But they don't dare! At least, not until God takes Ephraim out of the way. When Ephraim speaks, men trembled (**Hos 13:1**). Today, the

mightiest power on earth is all that is keeping Islam in check. They've made some inroads, however. They now control the most sacred place on earth – the Temple Mount. They have infiltrated the nations of Israel, and are in the process of controlling the nations that surround the Tribes at their borders.

Paul spoke of this restraining force in the world being removed. He said that when they are removed, then the forces of Satan and his man on the ground, will be revealed. This is what Paul wrote: **2Thess 2:5** *“Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? **And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.**”* Paul, of course, was speaking of the endtime forces of lawlessness and the Lawless One in particular. He explains that this Lawless One will be destroyed by Christ Himself when He returns (**V8**). He speaks of counterfeit miracles and all sorts of signs and wonders, and every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing (**V9**). And then comes the warning from God: **V11** *“For this reason **God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.**”*

In this, God's first line of defence, are the Churches of God who have been trained to **believe Him**. In many ways they have not done this perfectly! Many of God's sheep have followed a man who robbed other churches of doctrine and claimed it as his own. They followed the teachings of this worthless shepherd who identified the enemy as the Roman Catholic Church. He taught many stupid things, which kept the flock blinded to reality. And his personal conduct was appalling.

Yet this is the man God raised up to shepherd His flock! There is no other! He is the one, and you had better believe it! Will you blame God because He didn't call a righteous man? Will you judge God's teachings because of a foolish and worthless shepherd? Are your roots so poorly established in rocky ground that you no longer recognize truth? Will you migrate to the other end of the pendulum and hurl out all of God's instructions for Godly living – according to His Law and His Way?

All these things you had better find answers for, because now God is telling you to return to the faith that was once delivered and to hold fast! If you don't you are of no use to the Kingdom of God. Now you are required to retrace your steps and get your feet on the right path – the path that leads to the peace of Christ.

Where are you at now? Are you still with the church that no longer has a lamp? Are you dutifully following a man who claims to be an apostle – but is a liar. Where did anyone get the idea that an apostleship is a right by succession? You're confusing kingship with apostleship, but then you are very familiar with the form of government that was enforced in accordance with the rights of kings.

I don't care what is written anywhere – if it conflicts with Christ's instructions in **Matt 20:25-28** then it's a lie! God gave the whole House of Israel instructions for government, and He appointed leaders and kings over the whole House of Israel. Since when did the Church suddenly become the governing body over the whole House of Israel? The Church is under government all right – the government of Ephraim (U.S.), Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and many other lands where they have settled. And wherever the Church is today, they must abide by the laws of the land (provided they don't conflict with God's Laws). He *never* gave any – including his own apostles (see **Matt 20:24 for evidence of this**) the rights of rulership – but only shepherdship over His Body. It's true that Christ gave Peter an elevated position of stewardship over the flock (**John 21:15-19**), but never to lord it over the others.

Christ did impart special qualities to three men. These He took up the sacred mountain with Him and they saw the vision of Christ speaking to Moses and Elijah. These three were Peter, James and John, and these were to be pillars of strength to all the others. James was the first to demonstrate his great faith by going to his death. Peter was told in advance the sort of death he would suffer (**John 21:19**), and John was to suffer many things (**Rev 1:9**) until Christ came to him (**Matt 21:22, Rev 1:12**).

Of the other nine of the Apostles we know very little. We know that Matthew was a Levite, and he wrote the Book bearing his name. Neither Luke nor Mark were of the twelve, even though they wrote Books bearing their names. The Gentiles would like to claim Luke as one of their own, and have advanced theories concerning this. Although the evidence is rather thin, it is almost certain that Luke was a Levite. Only a Levite would write with the accuracy that is evident in the Book of Acts, and the Book that bears Luke's name.

Recall that of all the Tribes of Israel, God chose only the Levites as His very own. They are **the wave sheaf offering**, and God has taken them **in place of the firstborn** (**Num 8:15-16**). And to ensure that what God meant is understood, God describes, in the Book of Malachi, one man called Levi and his 'sons and daughters' who would establish an endtime ministry before the great and dreadful Day of the LORD (**Mal 2:4-8, 3:1, 3, 4:5**). Their names are recorded in the Scroll of **Remembrance** (**Mal 3:16**), and they, and all their offspring, are called God's 'Treasured Possession' (**V17**).

Now some might wonder why God chose to **remember** those whom He chose long ago and record their names as wholly His own, and **in place of the firstborn**. It's the Levites who are now the firstborn – and the true Church, that is, the individual members - *are* the **offspring** of the firstborn.

This is why the Church is referred to as the Church of the firstborn: **Heb 12:22** *“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the City of the Living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.”*

How God chooses to enact His Plan is His right alone! Who He calls to do this is His judgment call alone! God calls some for a **noble purpose**, and some for a **common purpose** (**Rom 9:21**). Long ago, Christ said: **Matt 21:43** *“Therefore I tell you the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but on whom it falls will be crushed.”* Clearly, the Kingdom of God has to be in existence before it can be taken away. That kingdom is presently in the Holy Land and is presided over by Judah. It will be taken from them and **given to a people who will bear fruit**. The **Kingdom of God** will begin like a **tiny mustard seed** and will grow to become a large tree. The **Kingdom of God** is like a little **leaven** that a woman puts in a large quantity of flour and prepares to make bread.

The Levite, John the Baptist, came to prepare a people before the coming of Christ. And this is how it will be again. The next Levite will teach the **Law of Moses** (**Mal 4:4-5**). Now notice what Christ said: **Matt 13:52** *“He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the Law who has been instructed about the Kingdom of Heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”*

It’s a sad thing that the Worldwide Church of God for many years has been **unable to bring out of their storeroom any new treasures!** They understood that Christ spoke in parables to cloud the meaning of the secrets or mysteries of God, but they failed to follow the instruction of searching for the answers to these secrets. To His closest companions Christ said this: **Matt 13:11** *“He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. This is why I speak in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.””*

The fuzzy logic to date of the Churches concerning the **knowledge** and **secrets of the Kingdom of God** has been developed with little regard for anything that Christ said on the matter. As far as the knowledge of the secrets are concerned, they couldn’t care less. They’re convinced that knowledge is not important provided they get over the line and lob in God’s Kingdom. It’s even been stated that prophecy is not important because Christ will explain it all in the Kingdom after He returns. This is where the Churches stand at the present moment. **They don’t have the Testimony of Jesus** (**Rev 19:10**).

And neither is the **Testimony of Jesus** about to be poured out on masses of people in an indiscriminate manner. God has chosen only the His flock, which He raised up under a worthless shepherd to receive this knowledge, and they will receive it from their mother – the Woman! (**Rev 12:17**). Didn’t Christ always counsel humility among the flock? Yet this flock has descended into appalling arrogance of believing they have a free ticket into the Kingdom. By serving themselves they think they have been serving God. They speak in glowing terms of their baptism, and consider it to be the **only** form of ‘death’ they will have to undergo. Christ Himself spoke of another baptism (**Luke 12:50**), which He had to go through – the real baptism of death! But of course Christ did it all for you! Is this what you think? Isn’t the ultimate purpose of a sheep to go to the slaughter?

Sure you made some sacrifices under the worthless shepherd! God tested you! Now the ultimate test is about to come on you – God wants to see if you are prepared to give up your life for Him just as His Son did. When you have done this, God will know that you are prepared to give up all, totally! Then, and only then, will you be considered worthy to enter into God’s Kingdom and receive eternal life. Remember what God said in the Book of Psalms – and God hasn’t changed His mind! Here it is again: **Ps 116:15** *“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.”* And didn’t Christ say that when you have done all that is required of you, **you are unprofitable servants?** (**Luke 17:10**). Christ was speaking to the living not the dead.

What of the rest of Christendom? Are there some out there just like the Gentile Cornelius who loved God and His Way before he even received the Spirit of God? Aren’t there some who recognize the Great Creator God of the universe and who have a desire to faithfully serve Him? There are many! But some don’t know it yet.

God has prepared a people to showcase His Way; these are the ones who keep the Commandments of God as taught by the worthless shepherd. Armstrong’s teachings were not perfect, but God’s Word is! So those of God’s flock – God’s only flock at this present time – must now go back to their first love and rekindle the fires of enthusiasm. You will need to find the **teacher of the Law** that is appointed by God – and **receive instruction from him** (**Mal 2:7**)

Those whom God has called to go as sheep to the slaughter (**Rom 8:36**), need to be preparing now. There is little point in ducking and weaving in and out of the various Churches of God hoping to find safety. You won’t find it!

God speaks of seven Churches that will exist just prior to your final destiny. It’s from this base that you must begin building up again amid the destruction of the legacy of worthless leaders.



In the past, God didn't require much of you. He gave you Ten Commandments to instruct you in righteousness. He even ensured that you have a day of rest each week because He loves His people and knows they need a rest from their usual labors. Those who have despised His Ten Commandments (**not nine principles** as one madman stated) are not worthy of God. Nor are they ten suggestions!

God sets the rules for human conduct, but He also gives you the choice of whether or not you will comply with His rules. In simplest terms, God describes this as a choice between life or death. He counsels us to choose life.

The Ten Commandments formed the 'heads of agreement' in a binding Covenant: **Deut 4:13** *"He declared to you His Covenant, the Ten Commandments, which He commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two tables of stone. And the LORD directed me at that time to teach you the Decrees and Laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess."*

After Moses taught them all the Decrees and Laws, the time came to ratify the Covenant: **Deut 29:9** *"Carefully follow the terms of this Covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do."* **V12** *"You are standing here in order to enter into a Covenant with the LORD your God, a Covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as His people, that He may be your God as He promised you and swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am making this Covenant, with its oath, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today."*

Yes, it is speaking of the 12 Tribes of Israel and not the Church. God's Covenant was with the only people on the face of the earth that He chose as His own – the whole family He brought out from Egypt – the 12 Tribes of Israel (**Amos 3:1-2, Deut 7:6**). Christ was sent **only** to the lost Tribes of Israel (**Matt 15:24**), and **He built His Church to follow His example**.

And now the time has come to follow Christ's example and His instructions. And do you know what His instructions are? If you follow these instructions properly, then those who hate God's Ways will also hate you. They will cast you out of the Churches, and may even beat you up, when you speak up and refuse to deny Christ and His true instruction. There must be a preliminary dividing of the sheep from the goats.

Though not a top priority, you may even have to tell your minister to go out and get a job and fund his own needs and wants – just as Paul told the Ephesians (**Acts 20:33-35**). This is sure to get you beaten up. These parasite overseers who have eaten the fat of the flock would probably want to kill you. Tell them they have no right to collect God's tithe – and they'll probably want to burn your house down as well.

Notice what God says in regard to the Church in Ephesus: **Rev 2:2** *"I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false."* There is nothing about the **leaders** of the **modern-day** Ephesian Church that could imply **hard work!** No, this is speaking of the many who worked hard to provide these leaders with the excessive luxury they have enjoyed. Some of those who are wise will understand that **none** who have claimed to be apostles are genuine. You will have found them to be false! But be thankful to God that He has led you to an understanding of basic doctrine through the means of those who are less than Godly. And even though they ignored the burdens they placed on you, you were still able to rightly divide truth from error. You are over the first hurdle, and now you must reestablish the truth that was once delivered.

Some of you may be aware of the carnival atmosphere that is practiced in this defunct Church of God for the Passover ceremony. They can't even honour Christ's Passover, which He describes as **the New Covenant**. Instead they substitute 'the Lord's Supper' and have music and entertainment to accompany it. What sort of degenerates would treat the sacrifice of their Saviour in this manner? Here was an innocent Man (and the Son of God) going to his violent death, and He asked that this Passover be kept in memory of Him and of that murderous day. How could any true Christian enter the room on that anniversary and not be gripped with sorrow and a sense of mourning? Particularly since you go there to reenact the **breaking of His Body** and the **drinking of His shed blood**.

Well those who are, or who once were, that Body, and have treated it in an unholy way, will now drink the wrath of God's Cup unless they repent deeply! Sadly, there remains no further sacrifice for many of them. But it was their choice!

Most of those in the Worldwide Church of God knew in their heart that it was the one and only Church of God on earth. You knew this for no other reason than you had the down-payment of the Holy Spirit. You may not have been able to define in clear terms why you thought that, but you did! If you didn't, then I can tell you that you never had God's Holy Spirit! And what about all the ministers? Were all of them guilty? Perhaps not, but neither were they wise, but they were 'smart' enough to look after themselves and to feed off the sheep.

We could certainly speculate on which of the other six Churches are represented by the organizations that exist today, and the descriptions that God has given might indicate one or the other. But is this what God had in mind? No, the message to each of the Spirits was to **all the Churches** (plural). While each of the Churches might be divided geographically and administratively, they are supposed to be of one mind and one body. The Testimony of Jesus is not seven different doctrines.

All the divisions must be broken down and faithful obedient service to God must be restored. This is the job you have ahead of you, and it must be done.

Zion Ministry is a completely different ministry; just as the ministry of John the Baptist was different from Christ's ministry. John the Baptist made this clear in **John 3:26-36**. Christ also made it clear that a ministry similar to John's must exist in the endtime. Christ said that of all those born of women there was none greater than John the Baptist – so he (John the Baptist), who was to prepare the way for Christ, is the greatest of all. John completed his job and was commended by the Son of God Himself for his service to Him. Then Christ added more and said that he who is least in the Kingdom of God will be greater than him.

Here's the account given by Christ concerning John the Baptist: **Luke 7:24** *"After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, then what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare the way before you.' I tell you, among those born of women there is no-one greater than John; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he."*

Forsaking all the nonsense taught by the Churches of God concerning the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of God will be established on earth prior to it being handed over to the Father. Christ said this: **Matt 21:43** *"Therefore I tell you that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew He was talking about them."* There are some who think that Christ took the Kingdom of God from Judah and gave it to them. They forget that they don't preside over the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God will be established in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land. It will be a Kingdom – not a Church!

Christ also said this: **John 18:36** *"My Kingdom is not of this [age]. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my Kingdom is from another [time]."* No, Christ didn't establish His Kingdom at that time. If He had, then His servants would have fought a battle to prevent His arrest. And neither did the Jews at that time preside over a Kingdom. They were ruled by others. At the time when Christ takes the Kingdom from Judah and gives it to others who will bear fruit – **then His servants will fight!** At that time, Judah will be in control of the territory of the Kingdom of God. **The Kingdom of God will be taken by force, and forceful men will lay hold of it (Matt 11:12-14).** And if you have ears to hear, this Kingdom will be established by a man like John the Baptist, who is the Elijah to come (**V14**).

Christ wants you to understand that from the appearance of the Elijah, the Kingdom of God will be **forcefully advancing**, and He speaks of **forceful men** laying hold of it. Christ was **not** describing the Church here! He is referring to an entirely separate ministry! Of all those born of women, there will be none greater than these. These forceful men must prepare a territory, reestablish David's fallen tent, seize the Holy City, set the boundaries according to the land that God promised to Abraham, and establish all the Laws of Moses in that land. It will be a true Kingdom – but it will begin as a mustard seed that will arise **among** the people of Judah: **Luke 17:20** *"Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is' or 'There it is', because the Kingdom of God is [among] you."* As a mustard seed it will be almost imperceptible until it grows into a large tree (**Matt 13:31-32, Luke 13:18-19**).

John the Baptist came calling in the wilderness and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. He was far away from the pageantry of the religious organizations. He shunned the fancy regalia of those who think they are somebody – and chose to live simply. Those who think they must impress everyone with the trappings of wealth have nothing in common with John. Christ also agreed. He said, ***"Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you."*** And He also said this: **Mark 10:29** *"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mothers or father or children or fields for Me and the Gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."*

The message here is: Don't set your hearts on material things – but on the things of God. If you set your heart on love and obedience to the Gospel, then you will be given **at least** a hundred times more **in this present age**. Christ was speaking of those who are prepared to serve God without reservation – those who are prepared **to forsake all** to establish the Kingdom of God and to provide the **Good News** of the Gospel, **the message of hope**, for all those who must face captivity.

Christ describes those who make this choice: **Luke 17:33** *"Whoever tries to keep his life will it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken*

and the other left.” “Where, Lord,” they asked. He replied, “Where there is a dead body, there the eagles] will gather.”

Christ later came to John and explained this more fully: **Rev 12:13** “When the dragon saw he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.”

And just a word of caution! The Church did not give birth to Christ! This woman did! This woman is the Kingdom of Judah, and more particularly, the **House of David** (see **Zech 12:10-14** for a description).

You may have been titillated by Herman Hoeh’s rendition of these verses, and concluded that the **offspring** of this woman was the Laodicean Church – but he was wrong – hopelessly and wantonly wrong! The woman is the faithful mother of the Son of David (Christ), and Christ is the root and offspring of David (**Rev 22:16**), and it is this woman which gives the **Testimony of Jesus** to her **offspring (same verse)** – which is the **Body of Christ**.

The offspring of the woman is described like this: **Rev 12:17** “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring – those who obey God’s Commandments and hold to the Testimony of Jesus.” What sort of trickery did you succumb to, to imagine that those **who obey God’s Commandments** and **hold to the Testimony of Jesus** were somehow second-class Christians? What sort of madness have you been guilty of? Who told you that **God’s obedient faithful servants** would be **punished** by handing them over to the dragon? Was Christ being **punished** when God handed Him over for slaughter? No, the offspring of the woman are God’s faithful people whom He has called to go as sheep to the slaughter – just like His Son! And He comforts you with these words: **Psalms 116:12** “How can I repay the LORD for all His goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.”

## CHAPTER THREE

It seems that many things have beguiled Christianity! They just weren’t prepared to accept the standards God requires for faithful service.

When we send soldiers to war we expect them to be willing to die for the cause for which they are fighting. The soldiers understand this, and dutifully go into battle knowing this could occur. The armies of Israel, even today, go out in battle as the ‘*armies of the Living God*’. Just as in days of old, God decides to whom He will give victory. Sometimes this is conditional on some strange circumstance, but always for a purpose. Recall the days of Moses, when the battle continued favourably as long as Moses hands were outstretched. When he tired, others held up his arms and still the battle went favourably (**Ex 17:11-13**). It was perfectly obvious to all observers that God was favouring His faithful servant Moses.

What was God telling us?

The simple truth is that God raises up men and empowers them to do His Will. He sets them apart in certain ways, but not necessarily in the ways that humanity expect. People today look on outward appearance. They expect their leaders to be equipped with the regalia of their office. This was one of the drawbacks of having a human king in place of the Almighty God. The ancient Israelites saw their kings in a similar light to Almighty God and feared and trembled before them. Their human kings became a substitute for the real King – Almighty God.

As great as David was, and as much as God loved him, he was no substitute for the Mighty King he replaced over the House of Israel. No longer was the appointed leader able to raise his hands to ensure victory in battle even though God certainly supported David in the many furious battles he fought.

The Apostle Paul also saw his role as a battle. In **Ephesians, chapter six**, he explains that our struggle (battle) is not against human beings, but against the evil forces of the heavenly realms. He counsels to put on the armour of God to prepare us. At the end of his life, he said **he had fought a good fight**. He was constantly aware that it would require battles with the rulers of the heavenly realms to establish God’s Kingdom. He knew that eventually, a war would be fought in heaven, and the loser of that battle would then go after God’s people to destroy them. He would actually **make war** with the saints and defeat them: **Dan 7:21** “As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the Kingdom.”

So it was in defeat that the saints had judgment pronounced in their favour. They lost the battle but won the war. The words ‘and the time came’ indicate that a period of time would exist before this occurs.



Daniel spoke of four kingdoms that would arise in the endtime, which would be crushed at the same time by the Mighty Rock: **Dan 2:35** *“Then the **iron and clay**, the **bronze**, the **silver** and the **gold** were broken to pieces **at the same time** and became like chaff on the threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away **without leaving a trace**. But the Rock that **struck the statue** became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.”* Daniel further added this: **V44** *“In the **time of those kings**, the God of heaven **will set up a Kingdom** that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to other people. **It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end**, but it will itself endure forever.”* All of those kingdoms still exist today. **Iraq (Babylon), Iran (Medes and Persians), and Greece** (all the way to the Danube River) still exist.

All four kingdoms would exist together in the endtime and would be crushed by the Mighty Rock at the same time, and Daniel describes the first kingdom as **Babylon**. Running parallel to this great prophecy by Daniel is the **Book of Revelation**, in which John describes four battle horses upon which four riders sit. The first has a bow and a crown, and he rode out bent on conquest (**Rev 6:1-2**). He is the head of gold that would exist in the endtime. He is the first of seven seals. The seven seals conclude with the same result described by Daniel – a world Kingdom that fills the whole earth with the Rock at its head. By the fifth seal, John gives us a picture of the saints that were defeated. They were killed and are now alive, and they are given white robes and told to wait a little longer until the rest of the saints, which are to be killed, are killed (**Rev 6:9-11**). At the time of the fifth seal these saints are raised from the dead and transported to Glory. They are raised from the dead following a long succession of events. Their purpose is to judge. This is how they’re described: **Rev 20:4** *“I saw thrones on which were seated those **who had been given authority to judge**. And I saw the souls of those **who had been beheaded because of their Testimony [of] Jesus and because of the Word of God**. They had **not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands**. **They came to life** and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”*

Daniel wrote of these and others – all of whom are called **saints**. And the final outcome will be when the court sits and judgment is given by the Great Judge Himself who presides over the court (**Dan 7:9-10**), together with the saints of the first resurrection who will be in God’s presence. Daniel describes this court: **Dan 7:26** *“But the **court will sit**, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven **will be handed over to the saints**, the **people of the Most High**. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all rulers will worship Him and obey Him.”*

But what of the other saints who are to be killed as the ones mentioned in **Rev 6:9-11** were? Daniel wrote of them too! The Bible speaks of an evil, loathsome beast that will arise, who will make all previous rulers look like boy scouts. At this point, all the kingdoms of the earth have not yet been crushed, and neither are they Christ’s. This man appears at the latter end of horrific destruction when things appear to be as bad as they can get. The tentacles of power from the first three kingdoms have spread throughout the entire world when this man arises, and the third kingdom is still controlling all world trade (**Rev 6:5-6**) – from the City of Babylon! The vast complex of this rebuilt city will house the most ruthless of traders, and the merchants throughout the world will support them (**Rev 18:11-17**).

We are told that the third kingdom is the king of Greece: **Dan 10:20** *“So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the **Prince of Persia**, and when I go, **the prince of Greece will come**; but **FIRST** I want to tell you what is written in the **Book of Truth**.”* Then a lengthy discourse ensues that **precedes** the arrival of the prince of Greece. The **prince** of Greece is different from the **king** of Greece. Notice what the Bible says: **Dan 8:19** *“He said, “I am going to tell you **what will happen later in the time of wrath**, because **the vision concerns the appointed time of the end**. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. **The shaggy goat is the king of Greece**, and the **large horn between his eyes is the first king**. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represents four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.”* God ensured that we understand the meaning of this by allowing a **fore-type** of this prophecy to occur. You will notice this prophecy of the vision **concerns the appointed time of the end**. Gabriel **first** wanted to tell Daniel what would happen before the Prince of Greece came. This is written in the **Book of Truth**; that is, what has now occurred, as distinct to **what is to come** (prophecy). But it’s truth that we can rely on.

But all this is not nearly enough for the ruthless beast that will arise. In the latter part of his reign, he will seek to destroy all those who are still alive and who still honour the Almighty God. Daniel speaks of this ongoing scenario after the first group of saints has been defeated (**Dan 7:21**).

In order for God to know if you will serve Him in all circumstances He must put you to the test. He has to know if you will stand firm in the face of all opposition. Why would anyone think it would be different during the course of six thousand long years under the rule of Satan the devil? Was God derelict in His duty during this long period of time? He chose His own people and concentrated on them – was He wrong to do this?

In reading through the Books of the New Testament, the part of John the Baptist seems relatively minor since he did no miracles and passed from the scene soon after Jesus’ arrival. Yet his commission was quite extensive (**Luke 1:67-80**).

From the time that Satan is deposed as ruler of this earth, persecutions begin immediately. No longer is he content to merely accuse God's faithful people, he pursues them with murderous intent. The beginning of this is described in **Rev 12:10** "*Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the Power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their Testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice you heavens and you that dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows his time is short.*" With these few words, we know that Satan's legitimate rule is over, and the **Kingdom of God** and the **authority of Christ** has begun.

Long ago, God chose a people as His own. He chose the children of Abraham. From Abraham's grandson Jacob, God raised up 12 tribes – the 12 Tribes of Israel. Before these were even born, God told Abraham He would send them into slavery for hundreds of years to serve an overbearing monster – Pharaoh of Egypt (**Gen 15:13**). So this small family, numbering just 70 people, began a long period of harsh captivity. The fulfillment of this began shortly after Abraham's death when a great famine swept the land. God already had a prophet in the land of Egypt preparing for this eventuality. This was Joseph.

Now why would God decide to send His own beloved people into slavery? It seems to go against all rationale. Since God planned it long before it happened, it was obviously a part of His Plan. In the harshness of the environment, and reduced to slaves under a harsh master, they quickly forgot all **God's requirements, Commandments, statutes and laws** (**Gen 26:5**) which He gave to Abraham.

God had something in mind, and He intended to bring it about in His own time and in His own way. When the Tribes of Israel were at their most vulnerable, God would bring them out of slavery with a high hand. He would shatter the people that had enslaved them, and lead His people to the land which He promised Abraham. But even then it would not be an easy road! For another 40 years they would suffer deprivation in a harsh wilderness. What is more, they would have to fight for their inheritance with real battles, and with some of the most ruthless of nations. All of them stronger and better equipped than the House of Israel.

And at the end of 40 years, God required them to be circumcised before they entered the Promised Land (**Joshua 5:5-8**). I imagine that many wished their parents had circumcised them on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of their birth according to God's requirements in dedication to Him. While **adult** Gentiles were not required to be circumcised at the time of the Apostles, it was clearly spelt out that their children should be circumcised according to the Law of Moses, that is, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after birth (**Acts 21:21, 24**).

When God prepares a people for service to Him, He does it thoroughly. There are many Christians today who like to claim they are saved. Saved from what, we might ask. Even the poorest scholars among Bible students would know it's speaking of the second death. And of course, this implies a first death. If you are resolved in your own mind to serve God even in the face of death, then you are saved, provided you have continued to do as God requires, because God will certainly complete His task in you. But without the faith to believe that God will, you are already doomed. If you shrink back from your obligations, and if you refuse to go into captivity or go to your death if called upon to do so, then there remains no further sacrifice for you. As Christ said, when you have done all that is required of you (and most Christians today refuse to do anything that God requires of them), you are unprofitable servants. So how does one become a profitable servant? The answer is found in **Ps 116:15, Isa 57:1**.

Now most Christians would admit that Christ was a profitable Servant of God because He willingly went to His death. It's His death that empowers us as servants of God. What most people don't realize is that Christ's baptism at the hands of John the Baptist was the precursor to the real baptism (**Luke 12:49-51**), and Christ made it very plain to His disciples that they must undergo the same baptism (**Matt 20:23**). It's absolutely insulting to Christ that anyone should believe otherwise.

### **THE GREAT STATUE AND THE FOUR BEASTS OF DANIEL**

In addition to the vision of the great statue, Daniel also had a vision of four beasts. These four beasts describe the component parts of the great statue, but focus on the leaders of these nations. In other words these are the leaders of the nations or riders of the horses described in the Book of Revelation. So we have a number of descriptions for the same prophecies. In one the four nations are described in the statue, then by the four beasts, and also by the riders on the four horses of the Apocalypse. The divisions of the great statue represent kingdoms, that is, **Babylon (Iraq), Medes and Persia (Iran), Greece**, and the fourth is a conglomerate of nations comprising all three, together with the beast at the helm, and his sidekick, the false prophet, in total support of him. The four beasts represent the riders or rulers of those kingdoms.

Of particular importance is the first, since he now exists. This is how he is described: **Dan 7:2** "*Daniel said, "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.*

*The first was **like a lion**, and it had the **wings of an eagle**. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, **and the heart of a man was given to it**.” In one of the great reverse twists of logic, this man **emulates another man** who is **a lion** (just like his Saviour – **Rev 5:5**) and **an eagle** whom God gathers with his **eagle companions** (**Luke 17:35-37**).*

Saddam Hussein is currently Satan’s man-on-the-ground. He’s presently making a good showing of destroying his own people – the same people who will be destroyed by God’s man-on-the-ground – the lion and the eagle[s]. Saddam Hussein has one goal in mind, to unite all the Arabs against his two enemies – the tiny nation of Israel and “the great satan” – the United States of America! Yes, it’s Saddam that calls the U.S. “the great satan”. He believes that he is the righteous one even though he has the mind of his master – Satan the devil. There are others who are just like Saddam Hussein, who also call the U.S. the satanic beast, and many of these are professing ‘Christians’. As long as they persist in this, they are just like their father the devil! It’s a severe indictment that those who claim to be Christians should judge the U.S. as being worse than all the other nations on earth. It’s true that God will judge the U.S. (Ephraim) more harshly because, **to them**, as the House of Israel, He gave His perfect Laws of conduct, which they have despised. But God also made allowances. He says Ephraim’s sins have been stored up and kept on record (**Hos 13:12-13**) for the day when God will bring all their sins down on their heads.

Saddam Hussein has no love for the other Tribes of Israel either, like Britain, France and Germany, but his hatred is reserved primarily for the U.S., because when Ephraim speaks, men tremble! (**Hos 13:1**).

Since the Boston tea party, Britain has learnt that she is no match for her younger sibling! Ephraim is greater than her. In times of trouble, Britain always calls on Ephraim’s help, and Ephraim always answers the call! Relatively speaking, the nations of the earth have been well-behaved since Ephraim began to speak in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. None have willingly provoked a confrontation with the mightiest power on earth!

Satan’s futile effort to gain ascendancy with his rabble continues to end in defeat. Even when he seized control of one of the brothers and raised up a despicable leader to attack his other brothers, Satan could not win. His purpose was to pit brother against brother, and to utterly destroy all living descendants of the southern Kingdom – Judah! Even when the battle went against Simeon (Germany), they still continued to slaughter the Jewish people to the very end. Even when all hope of victory was gone, their primary purpose was undiminished – leave no Jewish people alive! How well they obeyed their despicable father – not Hitler (who described himself as a father), but Satan the devil! Anyone with an ounce of brains will understand what the overriding factor was! To exterminate all Jews!

Satan is not smart, but he’s no fool either! He doesn’t have the Wisdom of God – the indispensable ingredient for understanding. His flame went out long ago. He no longer shines like the sun (the day star), but is now a dull serpentine colour. Another **Day Star is soon to arise** (**2Pet 1:19**); He is the One who will soon **dawn** as the **Sun of Righteousness** (**Mal 4:1-2**). The Bible makes it plain that **Christ must remain in heaven until the time comes to restore everything** (**Acts 3:21**), and that time is almost upon us.

When Christ gathers His eagles together, there will be people working together; some will be taken and others left behind. Those who are taken will be expecting it, but others will know nothing! Christ explained this clearly: **Matt 24:37** *“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; **and they knew nothing about what would happen** until the flood came and took them all away. **This is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man**. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.”*

Yes, there will be many people who will **know nothing about what is to happen** until it’s too late. God says He’s going to gather His eagles on ‘eagles wings’ and take them out of reach of the dragon (**Rev 12:13-14**). What place would be out of reach of the dragon? **V12** tells us where the devil will be when he is cast out of heaven, and says woe to [the inhabitants of] the earth. The serpent (Satan) will spew water (**not Living Water** – **John 7:38-39**) from **his mouth** in an effort to overtake the woman. Ever the great counterfeiter, Satan will spew out his spirit in deceitful propaganda and deceive everyone, and the earth will swallow it all – and believe it!

At the same time, a sharp, double-edged sword will proceed out of the mouth of the Mighty Christ, and men’s hearts will fail them for fear. Christ doesn’t take kindly to those who treat Him as a sissy and a weakling. When all hope is gone, humanly speaking, you will have the assurance that the Mighty Commander of Armies will arise with devastating Power to fulfill God’s Great Plan. The people of God have been called for a special purpose; some for **a noble purpose**, and some for **a common purpose**.

Many of you may think Satan has not deceived you, but he has been conditioning you for a long time. He is presently swinging the tide of public opinion against all the people of God – those who keep His Commandments! Everything that is loathsome, Satan is busy making respectable. It’s



generally called ‘political correctness’, and the degenerates in the House of Israel are spewing it from their mouths. It seems right though, doesn’t it (**Pro 14:12**), and you don’t want to die the death mentioned in this proverb! Rather, you should be practicing the **Wisdom** mentioned in **Pro 9:1-12** and particularly **V10**.

Having been cast down from heaven, and knowing that his time is short, and knowing also that the woman is out of his reach, he will turn on the object of his hatred – the offspring of the woman! These keep the Commandments of God and hold to the Testimony of Jesus. The river of lies and deceit that come from his mouth will militate against the true people of God.

### **THE SEVEN LAMPS**

We still have the mystery of the **seven Churches** to resolve, including the **seven lamps**, the **seven Spirits** – and the **two lampstands** who are the **two olive trees**. Now unless God reveals these things, then we can only guess. But, wonder of wonders, God has revealed it all in the pages of His precious Word.

Firstly, it should be understood that the Churches of God have a very important and strategic role to play in endtime events. The Churches are very important for the successful conclusion of God’s Great Plan. The Church that Christ built has endured these past two thousand years, rarely perfectly, but nevertheless it has endured to this present day with minimal influence from Gentile Christianity. Satan induced the Gentiles to introduce a form of idol-worship that seems respectable and disguised it as the worship of the mother of Jesus. This subtle ploy has worked well with many. It’s a short step from there to worship a man – Satan’s representative – who will deceive the whole world into worshipping his image. While Satan may use the Catholic Church to sanitize idol-worship, the worship of the beast will be instituted by the incarnation of an Islamic prophet like Mohammed. He will support the beast and induce the whole world to worship the image of the beast. This ‘Mohammed’ is the false prophet (or second beast): **Rev 13:11** *“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.”*

The **first beast** is a little different in that he comes **out of the sea**, rather than **coming out of the earth**. The **second beast** (false prophet) actually comes up **from the earth**, that is, **the Abyss** (**Rev 11:7**) – that dreaded place where all demons fear to be sent (**Luke 8:31**).

The Arabs are not good at making war. They only think they are! They’re emotionally unstable people who chant religious slogans to invoke the memory of their famous ‘prophet’ Mohammed, breathing out fire and brimstone, but when push comes to shove they run like whipped dogs. They’re like the proverbial bar room bully who relies on his size to intimidate everyone, and who enhances his reputation by picking on the weak. Then one day he picks on a seemingly inoffensive person, only to find himself flat on his back with a curdled brain and a fat lip and a mouth full of loose teeth.

Satan’s best effort to make war always ends in defeat. From his first defeat to his last, it has always resulted in humiliation. But war is his answer to everything, and at the end of his six-thousand-year rulership he does not intend to go quietly. No, wars will continue to the end, and the forces of the devil will face some humiliating defeats from an insignificant force that has all the Power of Almighty God. The Good News is that God planned all this long ago.

God is presently making it known to all of humanity just how vulnerable they are. Just by withholding rain He can wreak havoc on any part of the earth. It seems humanity only acknowledge God’s existence when they want someone to blame. Apportioning blame has become a way of life to the Tribes of Israel today.

Nestled away in the vast sea of humanity is a small group of people that God plans to call to service – but for a common purpose. God identifies them as seven Churches, and likens them to seven Churches that formerly existed in Asia Minor. **What was then** is about to become **what is now** (**Rev 1:19**). You can howl and rage and throw tantrums if you like, but what God has said will become reality. What the true Church of God has inherited is the doctrine of the only shepherd God called in this endtime for the seven Churches. His name was Herbert W. Armstrong, and now you have the task of deciding from the Word of God which parts of Armstrong’s doctrine was true and which part was false, and you must hold fast to that which is true.

At a time when all the Churches are seeking membership by deliberately manipulating the Scriptures to enhance their appeal, they are about to come crashing to the ground. They are soon to realize that they too, have a baptism to undergo – one which they always hoped to avoid. This is the true meaning of the water baptism when they so willingly gave up their lives – figuratively! Now they must prove that they meant it and face the reality that Christ faced when He went to the baptism of death! This is how Christ described it: **Luke 12:49** *“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled. But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two, and two against three.*

*They will be divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”*

You know the ethereal platitudes that are being taught today! You know that Christianity is stage-managing their appearance of righteousness. And you also know that those who claim to be so righteous are really hypocrites who hate righteousness, but love the wages of sin and rebellion to all that God calls righteous. Many of those in the Churches of God are very smug. They compare themselves with the basest of doctrines generated from the **minds of the lawless**, and think they are doing well. The very act of comparing themselves among themselves doesn't cut it with God! It doesn't make you righteous!

Christ said He came to bring **fire on the earth!** He wished it were already kindled! In this context He spoke of the **baptism** He had to undergo. Christ **didn't** come to bring peace on earth! He came to bring division! And He further describes that division as being in the family setting. The five in the family will be divided against each other in the proportion of three and two. What a pity that the number seven wasn't used. It might have paralleled the seven Churches, which make up the family of God. But in fact, the five do parallel the Churches. The first and the last are discounted! The first loses its lampstand. The last refuses to acknowledge the opportunity of an open door and keeps it firmly shut.

The remaining five are faced with some big decisions. Only one willingly submit to the same baptism that Christ underwent, and these are spared from the terrible trials that will come **on the whole world!** (**Rev 3:10**). They will be spared this terrible time of testing. As in days of old, the Philadelphia Church will willingly submit to God's requirements. And let it be stated firmly, the names given by the various leaders to the groups they have formed have no bearing on who and what they will be when the right divisions are made. And let's be very clear that Christ said He would bring about the **divisions** (**Luke 12:51**), and He was speaking of family settings. As for only one Church, God Himself speaks of seven! But He only speaks of the one shepherd that He Himself will raise up: **Zech 11:15-16** *“Then the LORD said to me, “Take again the **equipment** of a **foolish shepherd**. **For I am going to raise up a shepherd** over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs.”*

The companion verses to these are found in **Eze 34:2** *“Son of man, **prophecy against the shepherds of Israel**; prophecy to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to **the shepherds of Israel** who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. **You have ruled them harshly and brutally**. So they were scattered **because there was no shepherd**, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. **My sheep** wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. **They were scattered over the whole earth**, and no-one searched or looked for them.”*

As for those who weaseled their way into the ministry with flattery and deceit, God has a message for you too! **V9** *“Therefore, O shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “**I am against the shepherds** and **will hold them accountable for my flock**. I will **remove them** from tending the flock so that **the shepherds can no longer feed themselves**. I will **rescue the flock** from **their mouths**, and it will **no longer be food for them**.” For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I Myself, will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his **scattered flock** when he is with them, so will I look after **my sheep**. I will **rescue them** from all the places they were **scattered on a day of clouds and darkness**. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them **into their own land**.”*

And just so that we know that these verses are relevant for our time now, and that Christ confirmed this, we find references to the sorting of the sheep from the goats – not once, but twice! In the first reference Ezekiel wrote this: **V17** *“As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats**. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you trample the rest of your pasture **with your feet**? Is it not enough for you to **drink clear water**? Must you also muddy the rest **with your feet**? Must the flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied **with your feet**?”*

Christ referred to the sorting of the sheep from the goats. He spoke of condemning worthless servants who lack the pasture to feed the flock. This is what He said: **Matt 26:29** *“For everyone who has **will be given more**, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has **will be taken from him**. **And throw the worthless servant outside**, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. **All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. **Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’**”*

So here we see a melding of the parable of the talents with the gathering of all nations and the separation of the sheep from the goats. The parable itself details that some will be given more and some less, but those who do nothing with what they have been given will find themselves cast outside into darkness. Of particular note is the casting out of the **worthless servant or shepherd**.

It was always God's purpose to call people for Himself, and He made this plain in the Garden of Eden (**Gen 3:15**). He chose the children of Abraham, and more particularly, the 12 sons of Jacob. Of all the people on the face of the earth, He chose only them (**Amos 3:1-2, Deut 7:6**). Strangely enough, God didn't limit His people to this bloodline, but made allowances for anyone from any nation who chose to become an Israelite by living as they do, and obeying their Great God. God speaks of these people as being grafted into the olive tree.

So when Christ speaks of casting out the worthless servant, and gathering all nations before Him, and sorting out the sheep from the goats, He is speaking of a two-fold purpose. At the frontline is His flock of which He is the true shepherd. Their job is to go into captivity with the nations of Israel and to utilize the talents God has given them. By their example many more will be added to the flock so that God's promise to Abraham will be fulfilled. By their example, the whole house of Israel, while in slavery and in want of all things, will realize the purpose of God's Great Plan. And most particularly, 12,000 of each of the Tribes of Israel will be honoured above all else, and will become the Bride of Christ. To this 144,000 there will never be any additions! In other words, there will not be a second wedding.

However, there will be other rewards given, and people of every people, nation, tribe and language will be given eternal life. They will replace a vast multitude of angels who abandoned their former habitations and disqualified themselves from life everlasting. Human beings will replace them, a vast multitude of people who will be transformed and given life everlasting. God describes them also: **Rev 5:9** *"And they sang a new song: "You [Christ] are **worthy** to take the scroll and to open its seals, **because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe, language and people and nation. You have made them to be a Kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on earth.**"*

It's interesting that Christ was found **worthy** to open the seals **because He was slain!** Of all the heavenly beings, only Christ was prepared to face the ultimate test of obedience. He gave up all, including His life, trusting in God to raise Him from the dead. He lived as a man for 33 years and faithfully obeyed God. Christ also knew what was at stake! Had He sinned, sin would have claimed His life – forever! Not only did His faithfulness empower Him as the greatest name under God the Father, but the Father has also put everything into His hands, and He will reign over everything in the universe (except the Father, of course – **1Cor 15:27**). But even more than this, the Father has applied the faithful blood of His Son as an atonement for all that He has called, provided they continue in obedience.

Now those who take the glorious Name of Christ and call themselves Christians are bound to live as He did! They must faithfully serve the Father, since **by Christ's blood they were purchased for the Father** (**Rev 5:9**). And even though they may sin occasionally (hopefully rarely), they have an Advocate (Christ) who is with the Father to defend them. But if they sin willfully and in a disrespectful manner, then there is no further sacrifice for sins, but only a painful wait for their ultimate demise. But then, those who were disciples of a certain foolish shepherd should already know this! It was drilled into their consciousness for decades! And never mind the hypocrisy of your teachers; that doesn't absolve you! And what a catch-cry this has become – to blame their teachers for their own disobedience, and their willful disregard for God's instructions. And those who justify themselves on this basis are blaspheming the Father!

It's quite unconscionable for those who claim to be Christians to imagine that God has cast away His people Israel. If this were the case, then there is no purpose for you! God's Covenant was made with Abraham and his descendants and no-one else (**Amos 3:1-2**). The purpose of the Church is to deliver a message to the whole House of Israel. Christ said He was sent only to the **lost Tribes of Israel** (**Matt 15:24**), yet He also said He would build His Church. Since Christ never reached the all the Tribes of Israel personally, He made provision for others to do so. Not only this, but He also made a Covenant with those He would send! That Covenant was His shed blood, and those who drank of that blood were promised a Counsellor – the Holy Spirit – which would be sent by the Father in Christ's Name (**John 14:25**). This Counsellor was to teach them all things, and it's the very Spirit of Christ. What they were to be taught was the Testimony of Jesus – all of it! Including all that is yet to come. In fact, the **Testimony of Jesus** is the **Spirit of Prophecy** (**Rev 19:10**).

If you have the Spirit of Christ, then you have His Testimony also. And if you have His Testimony, then you understand prophecy. Well, do you? You know very well you don't! In matters of prophecy you have understood nothing! You know very well that all the prophecy that has been taught to you is utter nonsense. Many of you believe God's only purpose is to get you saved. God's purpose **for you** is to send you with the House of Israel into captivity and to deliver a message, and to enable the House of Israel to understand God's purpose for them. When the flood comes and they are swept away **they will know nothing about what is to come** (**Matt 24:39**), and this is the job of the



Church. They must deliver the **Testimony of Jesus** while in captivity and give instructions on obedience to the **Commandments of God** (Rev 12:17). Many others will follow this example, and will willingly go to their deaths in obedience – just like Christ! In fact, a vast multitude will result from your efforts if you obey God faithfully – and your reward will be great!

God intends to keep you informed. He will send seven messengers who will deliver their messages to all the Churches. These are angelic spirits and also the eyes of Christ. They are the lamps that will light your paths. When the door is standing open in heaven and the instruction: *“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this”* (Rev 4:1) these **lamps will be blazing** (V5) and no longer passive as described in Rev 1:4. Great intensity will result, and all this after the relatively gentle warnings to the seven Churches.

God speaks of rescuing his flock. He has made provision for this. But first He must prepare a place to receive them. In accordance with His promise to Abraham, God will establish the Holy Land that He promised to Abraham. Cities and houses will be built – and a Temple that will last forever. This Temple has never been built and is described by Ezekiel (Eze 40-48). Your rescuers are fighting men just like David. In fact, they will be called the House of David and will comprise two tribes – Judah and Levi (Zech 12:7-14). In that day, the men of Judah will recognize this fighting force and will recognize that the Great God is their God: Zech 12:4 *“On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the LORD. “I will keep a watchful eye over the House of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.’”* Who are these **people of Jerusalem** (or more correctly ‘the sons of Jerusalem’) whom the Jewish people recognize for their strong power, and their God – the LORD Almighty?

God describes them: V8 *“On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the House of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.”*

So you see God has made provision to rescue His people. And He will do it just as He did in the days of His servant David. And those He calls to this task will be called the **House of David**. And all this is not too remote from Christianity. After all, **Christ was the Son of David**, and was born of the **House of David** (Matt 1 and Luke 3), and God has called to duty those **who gave birth to Christ** (Rev 12:13). And these are distinct from their offspring who are mentioned in V17.

The worthless shepherd balked at these things and endeavoured to link the House of David to the Church. He contradicted Christ by saying the Church began in the wilderness of Sinai and used a verse in the Book of Acts to prove the congregation in the wilderness was a church. Christ said *“I will build my Church...”* (Matt 16:18). The worthless shepherd used this little bit of trickery to enhance his ideas on the ‘place of safety’.

Christ made it plain that He was **the root and offspring of David**: Rev 22:16 *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this Testimony for the Churches. I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”* So Christ is both the **Root** and the **Offspring** and these have different functions, and this is made very clear in Rev 12:13 and 17. And what **Testimony** was it that **the angel** gave to John? **The Book of Revelation!** The very Book the Churches have never understood! This is the Book that summarizes all that the prophets of old have written.

And who is this angel? He’s the one who is mentioned in Zech 12:8 who goes before those who are strong like David, and who have God-like qualities when they go out to battle.

God chose to go into exile from **the earth** that He loves so much (John 3:16) until the time comes for Christ to restore everything to its former glory (Acts 3:21). God presently resides in a temporary dwelling-place. His purpose is to restore everything and to install a perfect government of faithful human beings who have been tested in the fire and refined. At the end of it all, God will dwell among men (Rev 21:3). God has always said, *“The earth is mine and everything that’s in it”*. But another has ruled over it for 6,000 years. This ruler’s days are numbered and his time is short (Rev 12:12). This serpent is the former light-bringer – the former **morning star**. But God’s other Son Jesus, who is now God’s **only** Son, will supplant him, and He will be the **Morning Star** (Rev 22:16) – the **Sun of Righteousness** (Mal 4:2).

It becomes evident that God has something greater in mind than merely saving those who claim to be Christians. And how diminutive are the minds of those who think such things. If you are not prepared to serve the Father as Christ did, then you are worthless, and fit only to be gathered up and burned. The Father has tired of your pitiful lip-service, and if you want to be **justified** for the greatest calling of the ages (a calling that even the angels desire to look into 1Pet 1:12), then you’d better get a grip on yourselves and start acting like true **servants** - not overlords of God’s flock! It’s the doers of the Law that will be justified!

As it stands presently, Christianity is of the view that when their lives are in danger they can flaunt the Law, and God will understand. But if this is not bad enough, they flaunt the Law when their lives are not in danger. What use would they be in God’s Kingdom if they can’t uphold God’s Laws? Would God corrupt His Kingdom with their lawlessness?

It's true that not many noble are called, but God does make it plain that some will be called for a **noble purpose** and some for a **common purpose** (**Rom 9:21**), and even though they are made out of the **same lump of clay**, they have completely different roles. So how does God determine which is which? Is the destiny of each set in stone? No, God has given you the choice of believing the message that He has delivered through His servant - in whom is the double-portion of God's Spirit - or waiting to see if what he says comes true.

And God has made it even easier! All you have to do is to check whether the message is according to the Word of God and make your choice. But there is a caveat; if you are like a reed shaken in the wind and blown around with every wind of doctrine, then stay where you are! You would be useless in the House of David.

God has called those who are strong and courageous - those who have already resolved in their minds to obey God regardless of the consequences. To these, God intends to grant His great Power, and the invincibility that goes with it. The House of David is to be like David, and like God; David being a man **after God's own heart** (**Acts 13:22**). Christ's own commander - a mighty angel - will go before them (**Zech 12:8**), and like David, the House of David will fight many victorious battles. None of these things will be achieved by human power and might - but by the mighty Power of Almighty God.

Those who cannot believe some of the minor principles of God's teachings will have great difficulty believing the weightier portions of it. David wrote many things in the Book of Psalms for his offspring that were to come. His son Solomon also wrote of these things in fulfillment of David's intentions, and in some ways, greatly expanded the meaning. The Son of David, who came much later also referred to David's teachings and called them Law. In speaking to the Church in Thyatira, Christ quoted from the Book of Psalms. This is what He said in **Rev 2:26** *"To him that overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give him **authority over the nations** - **he will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery** - just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the **Morning Star**."* The **Morning Star** is Christ, and these will be given **the very Spirit of Christ** (**John 14:15-18**). During His life on earth, Christ frequently referred to what is **written!** And this example is no exception. This verse in the Book of Revelation is a reference to **Psalm 2:1-12**. So at the very least, the Church in Thyatira has the opportunity to be a part of the fulfillment of these prophecies. But not all those in the Church in Thyatira: **Rev 2:23-25** *"I will strike her children dead. Then **ALL the Churches** will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Now to **the rest of you** in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and who have not learned **Satan's so-called deep secrets** (I will not impose any further burden on you): Only hold on to what you have until I come."*

So a harpy-like creature is to be in this Church who will hold to **Satan's so-called deep secrets**, and will attempt to mesmerize everyone with her clever renditions of prophecy (probably about the Pope and the Catholic Church which is generally the theme of the lightweight know-it-alls), and she is presently trying to develop her authority as a teacher. It suits Satan's purpose to have everyone believe that '**mystery, Babylon the great**' refers to the Catholic Church, and has he ever spun a web of deceit! Those who know their God will believe that Babylon refers to the city that God speaks of again and again in the Bible. It's the city on the Euphrates River that is presently being rebuilt!

This Jezebel will point to a verse that seems to **contradict** Christ when He says this: **Rev 2:20** *"Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality **and the eating of food offered to idols**. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, **unless they repent of their ways**."* Now if you found a verse that seems to contradict Christ, who would you believe? And what if Christ repeated it twice (**see V14**) would this make the difference, or would you still prefer to believe someone else? Well, apparently (unless you think God is wrong) this Jezebel is going to wield a great deal of influence over some who can't bring themselves to believe God. These people will willingly take the first step of paying homage to an idol. And they will pay for their deeds (**V23**).

Those who refuse to listen to this harpy, and who refuse to learn Satan's so-called deep secrets, will be given authority over the nations. These people, that is, '**the rest of you**' will be given a very great role in God's Kingdom when He installs His king in Jerusalem. This is what God says in relation to **ruling the nations with an iron scepter** and we'll quote the Psalm in full: **Ps 2:1-12** *"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His **anointed one** [margin]. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." They obviously don't like being dominated by another power - the Power of God. **V4** *"The **One enthroned in heaven** laughs; the LORD scoffs at them. Then He rebukes them in anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, "**I have installed my king** [margin] **on Zion, my Holy Hill**." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD. He said to me, "You are my son [margin]; today I have become your Father. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your**

*inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. **You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.**” Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son [margin], lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”*

So this is what the **‘rest of you’** in the Church in Thyatira have the opportunity to be a part of, and if you hold on to what you have **until Christ comes**, you will rule the nations with an iron scepter. And when will Christ come? He told His disciples He would not leave them as orphans but would come to them (**John 14:18**). The disciples understood that Christ would come to them and show Himself to them – **but not to the world: V22** *“Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, **why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?**”* And Christ did come to them privately as He said He would. **He said He would not leave them as orphan children.** And He certainly will not leave His disciples as orphans in the endtime. He will come to them – often!

A king will be installed on the Holy Hill (**Zech 6:11-15**). This king will be a caretaker king in preparation for Him to whom the crown belongs. The crown will be set-aside in the Temple of the LORD. This king will build the Temple, and many people who are far away will come and help build it (**V15**).

Many of those in the Churches of God baulk at God’s Word. They have been thoroughly indoctrinated by shepherds who are not shepherds at all! These worthless shepherds have thrown up barriers to prevent the truth being told. They constantly counter truth even if it means having to **contradict** God Himself. They don’t believe God unless He agrees with them, and they certainly don’t fear Him! How boldly they paint their vistas with themselves at the head. They see themselves, not as shepherds or servants, but as rulers! In their tyranny they extract the last morsel from the sheep, yet they howl and rage over the national rulers God Himself has placed over them. God sets up kings – for better or for worse – and He also destroys them!

Christ appointed His Church to go to the lost Tribes of Israel - not as rulers but as servants! What they have failed to achieve in life, they will achieve in death. They must set the same example that Christ set! By going as sheep to the slaughter – willingly – they will encourage the many people who will see their example and understand God’s purpose.

When God told Abraham that his children would be enslaved for 400 years, He also told him that He would rescue them and bring them out - to the land that He had promised (**Gen 15:12-16**). God also told him that his descendants would be given the land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates. In fulfillment of His promise, God sent His Levite servant, Moses. The Israelites never did get to own all the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River. At the rate that the tiny nation of Israel is giving back captured land today it will never be achieved.

God speaks of this in very harsh terms: **Hos 5:9** *“Ephraim will be laid waste on the day of reckoning. Among the Tribes of Israel I proclaim what is certain. **Judah’s leaders are like those who move boundary stones.** I will pour out my wrath on them like a flood of water.”* Who gave the leaders of the tiny nation of Israel (Judah) the right to give God’s Holy Land to Satan’s brood? Since they’ve despised God’s inheritance, it will be torn from their hand. Christ told them clearly; He warned them in advance: **Matt 21:43** *“Therefore I tell you that the **Kingdom of God** will be **taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.** He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”* *When the chief priests and Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew He was talking about them.”*

The leaders of Judah are presently controlling the **territory** of the **Kingdom of God**, including the Holy Hill (even though Jewish people are denied access to it). They recognized the Mighty Hand of God when He gave them victory in recapturing ground 3½ times greater than their former lands, but promptly began to give it all back in order to buy peace. In this they are not even as righteous as some of those around them. King Hussein of Jordan turned his guns on the Palestinians (after giving them safe-haven in his country) and slaughtered them, driving them into Lebanon. Not only did the Palestinians cause great chaos in Jordan, they were also actively involved in acts of terrorism blowing airliners out of the sky with planted bombs. And its these disgusting, stone-throwing creatures, headed by a demon, whom the Israelis seem to want to pacify with land! And God’s Holy Land to boot!

Of course, the Churches of God are not too concerned about these things. They’re not really interested in the things of God, but only themselves. Would they sigh and cry over the evil things that are done in God’s Holy City? No, they are too preoccupied with their ongoing power-struggle for preeminence in the Churches of God. No doubt many of you know some of these self-proclaimed leaders and they seem so nice, don’t they? They have a form of godliness that sets them apart – from the flock! How they love to occupy center stage and titillate you with stories they have made up.

The religious leaders of Christ’s time were very religious too! It seems that everyone recognized that these religious leaders were very righteous – all except Christ and John the Baptist! Yet it was from these two men they most keenly sought recognition, but to no avail. Both Christ and John the Baptist treated them in an offhand way. And why not? Christ knew there was a prophecy that



needed to be fulfilled – this one: **Zech 11:7** “*So I pastured the flock marked for slaughter, particularly the oppressed of the flock. Then I took two staffs and called them Favour and the other Union, and I pastured the flock. In one month I got rid of three shepherds. The flock detested Me, and I grew weary of them and said, “I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another’s flesh.”* Yes, in one month, the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan, 30AD to be exact, Christ was rid of the three shepherds – the predominant religious leaders in the land. It was only the **afflicted of the flock** who were **watching** that knew this was **the Word of God (V11)**.

And how well this was fulfilled – right down to the 30 pieces of silver the betrayer got for his services (**V12-13**). And how well Zechariah acted out this parable! He even threw the 30 pieces of silver to the potter (in the fulfillment of this parable, a potter’s field was bought with this money – by the ‘shepherds’ in the House of God). After all this, Zechariah was told to take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd (**V15**) – which he did! See **V16-17**.

Perhaps we tend to forget that Jesus designated **the three shepherds** who were to **replace** the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees. These were Peter, John and James. Jesus took them up Mount Tabor (**Matt 17:1**), and there they saw Him transformed into the Mighty Christ and His face shone like the sun (**V2**). They saw Him speaking to Moses and Elijah (**V3**). Christ instructed them to tell no-one what they had seen until the Son of Man had been raised from the dead (**V9**). So the significance of these things would be evident **after** Christ’s death.

Then the disciples raised the question of Elijah, whom it was commonly understood would arrive before the Mighty Christ made His appearance – as stated in **Mal 4:5** which refers to **the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord**. This is what was asked: **V10** “*The disciples asked Him, “Why do the teachers of the Law say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things.”* There was no doubt in Christ’s mind about this! Elijah would surely come, and in keeping with the vision on Mount Tabor, Elijah would **restore the teachings of Moses (Mal 4:4)**. Many of the Laws of Moses were designed for a nation of people – a Kingdom! They could not be enforced by a Church. Only a ruling body could enforce such Laws. The Jewish people of Christ’s time had limited rights to stone offenders, or to have them beaten, and this they did without regard for the qualities of **mercy** that Christ spoke of (**Matt 12:7**). Today, the Church of God cannot enforce the Laws of Moses because they don’t possess the Kingdom – the territory of the Holy Land, and they certainly don’t govern in their own land of Ephraim. The Jewish people control the sacred territory, but they have no intention of ever enforcing the Laws of Moses. Christ said the land would be forcefully **taken from them** and **given to others who will bear fruit (Matt 21:43)**. No doubt some of the leaders of the Churches of God are arrogant enough to believe they could produce this fruit.

Recall how Christ said that **Elijah comes** and **will restore everything (Matt 17:10)**. He went on to say this in **V12** “*But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood He was speaking of John the Baptist.*” You might also understand that Christ’s words that **‘they’ did to him everything they wished**, was not a reference to the religious leaders – who did nothing to him, but to the **‘they’** that are responsible for killing **Abel the son of Adam (Matt 23:35)**. In fact it was **Herod** that killed John the Baptist. John was in open conflict with this **ruler of the heavenly realm**.

While John the Baptist was in prison awaiting his sentence under the murderous hands of the demon Herod (**Matt 11:2**), Christ began to speak about John: **V7** “*As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in king’s palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will send My messenger ahead of you, who will prepare the way before you.’ I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.”*

There can be none greater than one who willingly goes to his death in martyrdom – **except** those to whom the Kingdom of God is given. Everyone of these will be greater than John the Baptist. And why? Because they will be **more than prophets!** These are resolute, forceful people but not by their own strength, but by their determination! They are of the same caliber as the Mighty Christ! Christ went to His death as a lamb, but will reappear as a lion. He will crush the nations with a rod of iron and flatten their cities and give them what they deserve. Christ does not plan to return and reason with the nations!

John was removed from the scene just a few years after he appeared. No Kingdom was established and Christ made this plain in His comments to Pontius Pilate (**John 18:36**). But he did add that if the Kingdom were established at that time, **then His servants would fight!**

Continuing Christ’s comments about the messenger, John the Baptist, Christ said this: **Matt 11:12** “*From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear.”*

Is this true? Did all the **Prophets and the Law** *only* prophesy until John? The fact is that there are many prophecies that detail events long after John! John was killed shortly after Jesus spoke these words, and it's clear that the **Prophets and the Law** spoke of Christ's death, which came later. And it's very clear that all the **Prophets and the Law** spoke of the establishment of **a Kingdom that would never be destroyed** (**Dan 2:44**). Christ Himself made mention of Daniel's prophecies and spoke many things that would later occur (**Matt 24:15**). The key to this understanding are these words: *'He who has ears let him hear'*. It was a parable in which Christ named John the Baptist as the Elijah to come.

Christ said John the Baptist was a prophet – and more than a prophet. Yet John the Baptist plainly said he was **not** the Elijah to come (**John 1:21**). He knew he was not *that* prophet! Christ said *that* prophet, that is, **Elijah**, would come and restore everything. John the Baptist didn't do that, but he faithfully lived out the parable of the later messenger (**Mal 3:1**) who would precede the true Messenger of the Covenant. And in this context, the true Messenger of the Covenant would **restore the Levites** (**V3**). These Levites are also described in **V16-18**. In **Mal 2:7-8** God speaks of a Levite just like John the Baptist and Elijah. He is the messenger of the LORD Almighty, and **God's Covenant** is with this man (**V8**). God says this: **V7** *"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction – because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty* (the Father). *But you have turned from the Way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the Covenant with Levi."*

God is speaking to you. Who do you know in this very endtime who have turned from **the Way**, and by their teachings have **caused many to stumble**?

God has taken the Levites as His very own in place of the firstborn, and His Covenant is with Levi (**Num 8:15-16**). This is the Covenant that God made with Abraham when He said: *Do you see all this land? All of it I will give to you and your descendants forever*. The Levites are forceful men who will take it by force! They will establish the Kingdom in the Promised Land – just as Christ prophesied (**Matt 11:12**). And they will fight! Just like Christ (**Zech 14:3**).

In the fullness of time, and when the dust settles from the migration from Church to Church as the falling away from **God's Way** continues, the identity of the seven Churches will be made known. Zion Ministry is not your enemy – but your mother! A mother who cares for her offspring (**Rev 12:17**). While you may balk at this, at least believe that God promised to send a messenger who would speak the Truth! And while much of what we say is offensive to your sensibilities – don't blame us! It's you who have listened to the lying lechers who have promised you a safe passage into God's Kingdom! They ignored the prophets and substituted their own 'prophecies'. It was you who believed them, even though they didn't speak according to God's Word!

Having read all this now, no doubt many of you are saying 'I don't believe any of it!' And if this is true, then you are fulfilling prophecy. And rest assured, all these things will burn in your mind when you go to fulfill your destiny – either as faithful servants or fit only to be burned. It's only the comparative few that are called to this ministry at the present time. It really comes down to whether or not you stand in awe of God and believe His every Word or whether you are comfortable with your present ignorance of God's Great Plan and Purpose. If getting saved and being spared any hardship is your priority, then you are of no use in the Kingdom of God. Yet you won't be spared! God identifies who He will spare in **Mal 3:17** – and this is not speaking of the Church!

If Elijah must come first and prepare the way for the true Messenger of the Covenant, and to prepare a people and a nation, and to take over the role of the firstborn, and to establish the Laws of Moses with all the penalties and regulations, then this will require a great many brothers and sisters who are well aware of **God's Way**. As it says in **Mal 2:8**, **God's Way** has been corrupted by the teachings of those who don't know God and have **caused many to stumble**. They have violated God's Covenant with Levi, chiefly because they have established their own covenant with God, based on their own perceptions. And so, those who truly want to serve God will need to repent deeply of their flagrant disregard of God's Way and His Laws.

And of course, this is exactly the function of John the Baptist. He came preaching a doctrine of repentance from the errors of the past, and a renewal of mind and spirit. It's time to purge out the old leaven, that is, the false teachings of the past, and to start walking in the renewal of the Spirit, and in peace – the same peace that Christ had when He went to His death (**John 14:27**).

Who'd have ever thought that in the last days, and following a lengthy period when the Churches had such enormous resources and manpower, that a lone man would need to be sent to get the Churches back on track, and to prepare them for the task appointed by God. What happened that they all went off the rails and didn't know what to believe?

It really comes down to one thing. A certain worthless shepherd instituted Church government in defiance of Christ: **Matt 20:25** *"Jesus called them together and said, "You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. NOT SO WITH YOU! Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life for a ransom for many."* These are Christ's words! Your Saviour is speaking to you! How much clearer could it be? And what did the Churches of God do? They began

to rule like **the Gentiles!** Never mind what you *think* Paul said - no one has the right to contradict Christ! And of course, the worthless shepherd forbid anyone to contradict him or correct him. In the finish he was a cowardly tyrant with a massive paranoid complex – just like the **rulers of the Gentiles.** He fulfilled the prophecy about him perfectly. He was everything God said he would be – yet he was a shepherd appointed by God Himself – and a worthless one at that.

Many of you who love to hate him so much would be well advised to get your own houses in order. You may well find yourselves being identified as hypocrites, and remember Christ's feelings about hypocrites! If you have any doubts on Christ's feelings on hypocrisy, then you would be well-advised to read **Matt 23**. From what I have personally seen, hypocrisy seems to be rampant in the Churches of God, just as it was among the religious leaders of Christ's day. Concerning hypocrisy, just remember that a great number of you believed everything Herbert Armstrong said, right up to the time when he died. You believed everything he believed – so who's the greater fool? Why blame him? You didn't have the wit to challenge him, now did you? You've been searching for truth ever since hoping to stumble on some leader in the Church who knows what he's talking about. But none of them do! Instead we now have seven different Churches teaching seven differing categories of 'truth', plus hundreds of small, scattered groups teaching various shades of 'truth' from the bizarre to utter madness.

So why do I criticize Herbert Armstrong? Because this is my job – a job appointed by Almighty God – to identify prophecy and detail its fulfillment. For those who want to stand toe to toe and defend their 'truth', perhaps they should first read some of the Prophets and come to the realization that they understand none of it. There's no shame in not understanding truth, but it's a great shame to *reject* truth. God doesn't require us to seek knowledge from historians or religious scholars in order to discover His Truth! He says **His Word is truth!**



This article is by no means complete. More chapters are to follow.

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