

WHO IS 'THE FLOCK MARKED FOR SLAUGHTER?'

Church of God, House of Israel, House of Judah - WHO? It's an important prophecy that spans the whole Christian era. It was written 2,500 years ago, and is intended to provide us with valuable lessons concerning our relationship to God. Those who refuse to accept the lesson of this prophecy, or any other, are clearly placing themselves in defiance of God. The meaning of it may shock you, but it will demonstrate the enormous power of God to bring unerring accuracy to all prophecies!

By Neville V. Stevens

New International Version used throughout unless otherwise stated

The Worldwide Church of God has always been diligent, even ferocious at times, in correcting all errors - providing they were errors of others!! Their history of correcting their own mistakes is less impressive. From time to time, we hear of the Catholic Church spending many years, even decades, pondering matters of doctrine. Rarely ever providing definitive answers for their followers. Yet in many respects, the Worldwide Church of God has been exactly the same! They remained silent on many issues that needed correction - merely because they could never admit error! From time to time, when error was admitted, and changes needed to be made, these were announced at 'ministerial conferences,' with the proviso that they be gradually corrected in sermons over a period of months. This drip-feed approach was to ensure that their corrections were not too noticeable. This terrible sin of 'covering lies' became obvious to many, and resulted in people examining many of the doctrines of the Church for error.

Many were outraged by the sanctimonious and self-righteous attitudes of those who valued their reputations above the reputation of Almighty God. They had a responsibility to God to correct any errors regarding their teachings of the doctrine of the Church, and to repent and acknowledge their guilt before the whole Body of Christ - and with all haste!

In the local Churches some of the minister's closest assistants were confided in shortly after the conference, and told of the errors. This information trickled out to the rest of the congregation. When the 'official' corrective sermon was given - most people recognized it not as a correction but as a cleverly devised and disguised justification of their errors.

The situation was intolerable! What this disgusting attitude did was to bring into focus many things taught by the Church. And since most of the things taught were imperfect - not necessarily wrong mind you, but carelessly and foolishly compiled without proper checking, multiple errors began to come to light by those who felt the need to examine all doctrine and to recommend corrections. Those who dared to question doctrine soon found that it was like 'waving a red rag to a bull!' The Church leaders, just like the Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's time, reacted bitterly, and foaming out their rage, they set about casting God's people out of the Church - literally '*tearing off the hoofs of the flock*' and leaving them no-where to go! (**Zech 11:16**)

Many of those who were 'cast out' were not cast out for teaching 'false' doctrine, but for merely hearing it from another. Much of the 'false' doctrine was, in fact, the truth! Many of those at Pasadena were so accustomed to following the man, they had no idea how to follow God.

Just before his death, Herbert W. Armstrong tried to correct and re-establish some of the basic 'truths' of doctrine. Being in a lot of pain and enduring the suffering of a long and lingering illness, he finally succumbed to death. No longer was his **arm strong** as depicted by his name, **Armstrong**, but his power had withered. His eyesight was poor and he was completely **blind in his right eye** (**Zech 11:17**).

It was stated that certain 'factional camps' in the Church were awaiting his death, some to seize power; others who hoped to correct the error that had developed over many years.

WHAT DOES ZECHARIAH 11 MEAN?

For those who have never understood the significance of **Zechariah chapter 11**, it would wise to read and understand it. It concerns this endtime and is a prophecy that greatly affects the Church of God.

Zechariah is told to act out, as a parable, the part of a shepherd - and to pasture or feed the flock marked for slaughter: **Zech 11:4-7** *"This is what the LORD my God says: **"PASTURE THE FLOCK MARKED FOR SLAUGHTER. Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished. Those who sell them say, 'Praise the LORD, I am rich!' Their own shepherds do not spare them. For I will no longer have pity on the people of the land," declares the LORD. "I will hand everyone over to his neighbour and his king. They will oppress the land, and I WILL NOT RESCUE THEM from their hands."** So I pastured the flock marked for slaughter, particularly the **OPPRESSED OF THE FLOCK. Then I took two staffs and called one FAVOUR and the other UNION, and I pastured the flock. IN ONE MONTH I GOT RID OF THREE SHEPHERDS."***

The reference to handing 'everyone over to his neighbour and his king' relates to the Herod dynasty, also called the Idumean Dynasty, which means the hated neighbour state of Edom. Herod was of Edomite blood, and the Jews never let him forget it. Herod was a ruthless murderer and a liar, but at the same time a cunning tactician and diplomat. He murdered two of his own sons, and just before his death, he killed all the children under two years old in Judea. His dynasty continued under three of his other sons, Archelaus and Herod Antipas (both born of a Samaritan woman), and Philip (son of a Jewess named Cleopatra). The Jews endured the hardship of this oppressive dynasty, and were finally conquered by yet another enemy. True to the prophecy **THEY WERE NOT RESCUED**.

The above **PARABLE** concerns **THE TIME OF CHRIST**, as we shall soon see. It speaks in particular of the **OPPRESSED OF THE FLOCK!** It was the poor and humble that Christ concentrated on. The wealthy and affluent weren't all that interested, especially the wealthy religious leaders - **THEY DETESTED HIM! V8** ***"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 that are left EAT EACH OTHER'S FLESH."*** This was fulfilled by Christ who fed the flock (the inhabitants of the Judean region) as a **TRUE SHEPHERD (John 10:1-16)**. ***'In one month, I got rid of THREE SHEPHERDS' (V8)***. These were the **Scribes, Pharisees** and the **Sadducees** - who were the religious leaders or shepherds of that time. The month was Nisan - the **14th day** to be precise. The year was **30 AD**. These religious leaders thought they were getting rid of Him; instead Christ was getting rid of them - on that very day!

They were the flock marked for slaughter! In the siege in 69-70 AD, history records they literally ate **EACH OTHER'S FLESH (V9)**.

In **V10**, only the NIV gives an accurate account. This is what it says: ***"Then I took my staff called 'FAVOUR' and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations."***

Prior to this, the Jewish people had enjoyed great favour with the Romans and all the surrounding nations. They had their own king, even while under the rule of Rome. They enjoyed many privileges not afforded some of the other nations. Caesar Augustus even planned, at one stage, to give the whole nation of Arabia to Herod. This was just prior to Herod's death in 4 BC. Indeed, the whole flock enjoyed great **'FAVOUR'** with ***'all the nations'*** in accordance with the prophecy. **V11** says, ***"It was revoked on that day, and so the AFFLICTED OF THE FLOCK who were WATCHING ME, knew it was the WORD of the LORD."***

How could they not know! Those at the crucifixion site actually saw the Temple Veil torn in two from atop the Mount of Olives where they were standing. **Matt 27:51-54** ***"At that moment THE CURTAIN OF THE TEMPLE WAS TORN IN TWO from top to bottom. THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE ROCKS SPLIT. The TOMBS BROKE OPEN and the bodies of MANY HOLY PEOPLE who had died WERE RAISED TO LIFE. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the Holy City and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were***

guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "SURELY HE WAS THE SON OF GOD."

They witnessed the great earthquake and landslides of cascading rocks! They saw the graves opened and a number of the faithful who had died were restored to life. Even the centurion, who plunged the lance through Christ's heart, and who saw what immediately happened, said **"INDEED, THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD."** He became a Christian (**Mk 15:38; Rev 1:7; Jo 19:33-34**).

The parable in **Zechariah 11** continues. The next two verses deal with the prophecy of Judas, and his 30 pieces of silver. How he cast them into the temple, and because it was 'blood' money - it was used to buy the potters field for a burial ground. This is what Zechariah says in his parable: **V12-13 "I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER. And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter" - the handsome price, which they priced me! So I took the THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER and threw them into the HOUSE OF THE LORD to the POTTER."** This is the scripture that positively identifies this parable with Christ. This is how it was fulfilled: **Matt 27:3-10 "When Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas THREW THE MONEY INTO THE TEMPLE and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is BLOOD MONEY." So they decided to use the money to buy a POTTER'S FIELD as a burial place for foreigners. This is why it has been called the FIELD OF BLOOD to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the THIRTY SILVER COINS, the PRICE set on him BY THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, and they used them to buy the POTTER'S FIELD, as the Lord commanded me."**

Notice here we have some words recorded that were spoken by Jeremiah the prophet. The book of Jeremiah doesn't record these words since they were only spoken, but Jeremiah also wrote concerning this prophecy. Jeremiah was told to enact a parable for a future time, just as Zechariah was told to do many years later. He was told to buy a field, record the purchase and put the document into an earthen vessel that they may continue for many days (**Jer 32:14**). **Verse 15** tells us why: **"For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."**

Here we learn a little about how God reveals things to those who diligently seek him. The purchase of the field by Jeremiah was to prophesy of future events. The buying of the potter's field in **Matt 27** for the purpose of grave sites is a further episode of this prophecy. At the time that Jeremiah enacted the purchase of this field (**Jer 32:6-9**) the Chaldeans (Babylonians) were at the very gates of Jerusalem with their engines of war, ready to destroy it (**V24-25**). Destruction followed shortly after. But Jeremiah foretold that Judah and the northern tribes of Israel would again inhabit Jerusalem.

Other scriptures tell us that Jeremiah said that Judah would return to Jerusalem in seventy years (**Dan 9:1-2**). The Jews at the time knew that Jeremiah had said they would return in seventy years, but Jeremiah in his writings, prophesies about a time much further into the future: **Jer 23:1-4 "Woe to the SHEPHERDS WHO ARE DESTROYING AND SCATTERING THE SHEEP OF MY PASTURE", declares the LORD. Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the SHEPHERDS WHO TEND MY PEOPLE, "Because you have SCATTERED MY FLOCK and DRIVEN THEM AWAY, and have not bestowed care upon them, I WILL BESTOW PUNISHMENT ON YOU FOR THE EVIL YOU HAVE DONE" declares the LORD. "I MYSELF WILL GATHER THE REMNANT OF MY FLOCK OUT OF ALL THE COUNTRIES WHERE I HAVE DRIVEN THEM, and will BRING THEM BACK TO THEIR PASTURE, where they will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD. "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "WHEN I WILL RAISE UP TO DAVID A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, A KING WHO WILL REIGN WISELY and do what is just and right in the land. IN HIS DAYS, JUDAH WILL BE SAVED, AND ISRAEL WILL LIVE IN SAFETY. This is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD Our Righteousness'."**

He is also speaking of the time when Judah will be a burial ground of the bones of

Israel. The Master Potter will resurrect them and remold them, and sculpture new ligaments onto these bones and make them live. This is speaking of a time when Christ will again choose the entire house of Israel as His people. Notice the many references to the potter in Jeremiah: **Jer 18:1, 2, 5, Jer 19:1** (Notice also **Jer 19:9** where it refers to the **eating of their sons and daughters in the siege** - compare with **Zech 11:9**). See also **Jer 19:11** "*I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth..*"

Topheth was the place where Israel sacrificed their children to the god Molech by burning them alive in a great metal cauldron to the beat of demonic drums, and an orgy of sexual perversion. It's plain why God chose to use Topheth in the Hinnom valley as the place of great slaughter for the Israelites. It's also plain that this multitude of bones that God is to raise up and re-fit with muscles and sinews, etc, is a great army (**Eze 37:10**) of physical, fleshly people. These people are to be raised up from the grave and re-united under one king. The staffs of the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Israel (Judah or Little Israel [**Isa 41:14**]) will be joined to become one stick or staff (**Eze 37:16-17**). There will no longer be two kingdoms but one! Just as it was in the reign of King David, so it will be when he is raised up to rule over them. This resurrection will occur at the start of the millennium and these resurrected human beings will be a thriving *physical* nation that will multiply in size from many children being born (**V26**), and with God, Himself living among them (**Eze 37:26-27**). This is the latter fulfillment of an early and smaller resurrection that occurred in Jerusalem after Christ's death when **THE GRAVES WERE OPENED**, and many people were **RAISED TO LIFE** (**Matt 27:51-53**).

One further comment on the thirty pieces of silver and the potter's field before moving on: Consider for a moment if the Jews had understood prophecy and had understood the significance of **Zech 11:13**, would they have **BOUGHT THE POTTER'S FIELD** with the **BLOOD MONEY** and so fulfilled prophecy? The answer is obvious! **No, they wouldn't!** They, like their father, the devil, didn't understand prophecy! Matthew did though! And he alerted us to check with Jeremiah's prophecies to understand the meaning even though it was Zechariah who recorded the most pertinent detail to this prophecy. This is why Christ spoke in **PARABLES** - so that Satan and his brood would not understand. Much more is said on this subject in the article "*Satan and his Demons*".

We are told that the second staff was then broken. **Zech 11:14** "*Then I broke my second staff called UNION, breaking the BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL.*" This broke the bond of spiritual **BROTHERHOOD** between the **TRIBES OF ISRAEL** and the **TRIBE OF JUDAH**. Even though the **LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL** had adopted paganism, and scattered themselves throughout the nations to the north and across Europe, Jerusalem was still recognized by them, as the Holy City, and the **TRIBE OF JUDAH** as the **KEEPERS OF THE SACRED ORACLES** (**Rom 3:2**). They knew their own history and where their roots lay. They just refused to serve God. They recognized that the Jews had maintained the faith of their fathers, and they knew that the Messiah was to spring from Judah! Many of these **LOST TEN TRIBES** still called themselves by the names of their fathers. For example, Saxons (Isaac's sons), and the Beriths or Berithish (Hebrew for 'covenant' from which the word 'British' comes from).

Some of the Apostles traveled widely, establishing Christianity throughout the nations of the **LOST TEN TRIBES** (**Jas 1:1, 1Pet 1:1-2**). The Apostle Paul was sent to the Gentiles. It was the preaching of all the Apostles that finally **BROKE THE SPIRITUAL BOND** between the **HOUSE OF ISRAEL** and the **HOUSE OF JUDAH**. No longer were the Jews *considered* to be the inheritors of the oracles of God *but the rejectors of it*. (This *perception* was not strictly true, as the Jews have yet to play a major role in Christianity - but it was perceived to be true because of the Jewish '*shepherds' rejection* of Christ.) Nor should it be thought that all the Jews rejected Christ. In fact, the world would not have known anything about Christ except for the Jewish people whom Christ called to take the message to the world. Even many years after Christ's departure, Paul confirmed that the **JEWISH PEOPLE** were still the ones **ENTRUSTED WITH THE VERY WORDS OF GOD** (**Rom 3:2**).

God planned it this way, and this is the way it was! Christ appeared to His own people but their shepherds refused to accept Him, just as Zechariah prophesied. Christ knew this prophecy had to be fulfilled, and so He made it very clear to whom He had

come: **Matt 15:24** *“He answered, “I was sent only to the **LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL.**”* And let’s not get emotional about this! **CHRIST’S SOLE PURPOSE WAS TO REACH THE LOST TEN TRIBES!** And whom did He plan to use to accomplish this? Those of His own tribe – **THE JEWISH PEOPLE!** He called the lowly and the despised to be His representatives, and to bear His **NAME – CHRISTIAN!** It was the despised flock of Judah that faithfully fulfilled this commission. The shepherds of this flock continued to act in an outrageous manner, exercising great authority over them, and demanding inordinate respect, while at the same time, lording it over them all!

Prophecy had already determined that the Jewish religious leaders would reject Him. It could not have been any other way **OTHERWISE PROPHECY WOULD HAVE FAILED.** It was preordained that Christ would be rejected, and this rejection was an integral part of God’s purpose. It should surprise no one that God *also* called others who would be preordained to act in a predictable manner and fulfill prophecy.

God describes Himself as a Potter. Those whom He calls are the clay. He decides the circumstances of their calling. Some are called for a **NOBLE PURPOSE**, and others for a **COMMON PURPOSE (Rom 9:21, Isa 29:16)**, and even the whole House of Israel is clay in the hands of Almighty God (**Jer 18:5**). God’s purpose is far greater than the myopic view expressed by most Christians today!

THE FOOLISH SHEPHERD

Judas Iscariot fulfilled the remarkable prophecy of **Zech 11:13** *“Throw it to the **POTTER**” – the handsome price at which they priced Me!”* And the intent of this prophecy was fulfilled with unerring accuracy!

After all these things were accomplished; that is, the spread of Christianity to the lost Ten Tribes and to many Gentile nations, Zechariah is told to take up, **ONCE AGAIN**, the **EQUIPMENT OF A FOOLISH SHEPHERD** - and to act out a parable of a future leader that was to appear after all the original Apostles had fulfilled the earlier part of the parable. This time, the part of the foolish shepherd that Zechariah was to enact, was to follow in the Apostles footsteps in the land that the Apostles went to - the House of Israel; not the land of Judah! This becomes very apparent in the next chapter of Zechariah! Now notice what the Scripture says immediately after the brotherhood of Judah and Israel is broken. **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.””*

Zech 11:17 goes on to give a very specific description of this endtime shepherd: *“Woe to the **WORTHLESS SHEPHERD, who DESERTS MY FLOCK!** May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! **MAY HIS ARM BE COMPLETELY WITHERED, HIS RIGHT EYE TOTALLY BLINDED.**”*

AMAZING PROPHECY FULFILLED!

God raised up, just before the very endtime, as we will shortly see, a man, whom it was already **PRE-ORDAINED**, would act in an outrageous way towards God’s flock. He was a *true* **SHEPHERD** as the Scriptures say; *make no mistake about that!* He brought many people into the knowledge of some important, elementary truth, and re-established Christianity in a form that had strong similarities to the first century Church. This man appeared in this 20th century. But in his latter years, he became careless and foolish - setting his sights on worldly things - costly things - and desired the fame and recognition of successful people and world leaders. All of this was done with the pretence of *‘preaching the Gospel to all the world for a witness.’* **IN FACT, HE PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO NONE OF THOSE WHOSE COMPANY HE SO GRATUITOUSLY SOUGHT! AND YOU CAN BELIEVE THIS OR NOT!**

CALLED BEFORE BIRTH

This prophetic book of Zechariah was written about 2,500 years ago. God at that time determined the type of man that He would call at that time, as His **SHEPHERD.** **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG** fulfilled that prophecy just as God decreed, whether he was aware of it or not. What if HWA had been like John the Baptist or Elijah and had dressed extremely modestly as they did, shunned the trappings of wealth, and was

unimpressed with the influential? Would that prophecy in Zechariah still have been fulfilled?

THE ANSWER IS NO!! ABSOLUTELY NOT! THE PROPHECY WOULD HAVE FAILED! So how could God have known that **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG** would perform exactly to specification, and do exactly what was required of him, 2,500 years into the future?

Because God called Herbert W. Armstrong before he was born! For 2,500 years God waited for the moment when he would be born, and with the right name (*Armstrong*) to ensure the prophecy made sense, and throughout his life developed within him suitable characteristics to perform His will! This is a truly remarkable prophecy, which, because of God's great power, was fulfilled precisely by **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG!** This prophecy **PROVES** that Herbert Armstrong was a **SHEPHERD** of God's flock! He served God **EXACTLY AS GOD INTENDED!** Before he died, he may have understood this prophecy and known that he had fulfilled it precisely, even though he never admitted it publicly. If he did understand it, and regrettably, HWA didn't understand much prophecy, then it would have afforded him the opportunity to repent and make his peace with God. The **MASTER POTTER MOLDED HIM THE WAY HE CHOSE TO**, in order to **FULFILL THE PROPHECY CONCERNING HIM.** These are the ways of Almighty God, and He decides His great purpose. **AS CLAY, WE ARE MOLDED AS HE SEES FIT.**

God used the conduct and the foolishness of Herbert Armstrong to teach us many important lessons. If any fail to heed these lessons then they are denying the importance of a distinct prophecy for our time. The stewardship of Herbert Armstrong was absolutely appalling, particularly in the latter decade of his life. He had callous disregard for the flock, and cared only for himself. *Zech 11:16-17 "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!"*

Few people are actually aware that **HERBERT ARMSTRONG WAS BLIND IN HIS RIGHT EYE.** It's not something that was generally known except to a very few. This secretive approach would suggest that Armstrong clearly understood the meaning of **Zech 11** and all its implications. All should joyfully receive this prophetic revelation through the prophet Zechariah. After all, **WHAT CLEARER MESSAGE** did you ever receive from the Bible that **ABSOLUTELY IDENTIFIED AN ENDTIME WORK OF GOD? IT POSITIVELY IDENTIFIES THE SHEPHERD THAT GOD RAISED TO LEAD A REVIVAL OF FORGOTTEN TRUTH!** How many of you have wondered, in the light of the many rumours and gossip, whether Herbert Armstrong was *really* the man called by God as a shepherd? **WELL, AS OF TODAY, YOU CAN KNOW THAT HE WAS!** He was the man God called for the specific purpose of reviving basic, forgotten doctrine. It's a credit to the man that he pursued this task with the singular, dogged determination that lead him to many months and years of research, and the restoration of basic principles of God's way of life.

God **DIDN'T** call Herbert Armstrong to be **A PROPHET! AND NEITHER WAS HE!** And nor did he claim to be, even though he would have liked to be! Some of those who try to follow in his footsteps (And let's make it clear - *NONE* of them *should* follow in his footsteps!) have since claimed the title of 'prophet' for themselves. Herbert Armstrong had very limited knowledge of the Bible. There were many things he *didn't* understand! God simply never revealed them to him. Herbert Armstrong was purpose-designed **TO PERFORM A CERTAIN FUNCTION - WHICH HE DID!** Inasmuch as the Great God called him for this special purpose, he deserves to be acknowledged as such! And if you want to hear the truth, it was **IMPOSSIBLE** for Herbert Armstrong to do it any other way! **HE HAD TO FULFILL PROPHECY!**

Those who doubt that this prophecy relates to Herbert Armstrong, perhaps they would like to propose an alternative 'shepherd' that has arisen in this endtime, and particularly *after* the 30 pieces of silver were used to buy the potter's field. Check Zechariah chapter 11 again and notice that *after* the potter's field was bought - *after* Christ's death, Zechariah was told to **AGAIN TAKE THE EQUIPMENT OF A FOOLISH**

SHEPHERD, and act out the part of this *future SHEPHERD (Zech 11:14)*. Remember the Bible is not concerned about recording prophecies about *false 'shepherds'*, that is those who have nothing to do with the Body of Christ. The purpose of fulfilled prophecy is to be observable. Whoever fulfilled this prophecy of Zechariah must have left a legacy of fulfillment that *we can observe*. You could not ascribe this prophecy to any of the early Church leaders. Most, if not all, died as martyrs and were certainly not worthless! What about later leaders? For example, the shepherd of the Waldensians - Peter Waldo? Was he a foolish shepherd who was also blind in his right eye? What about the reference to his **arm** being **strong** and then withering? If it was Peter Waldo then history records no such details. The same applies to anyone else that was the shepherd of the flock of those whom Christ sent into the world. Consider them all! Which shepherd of any **SABBATH-KEEPING CHURCH** in the whole world fulfilled this prophecy? Only one - **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG!**

Should we also emulate his mistakes, as many of those have, who have presumed the role of Church leaders? Should we uphold every word that was uttered by Herbert Armstrong? Clearly the answer is no! Herbert Armstrong believed and taught many things that were *false*. He also exercised a certain tyranny over those whom he had elevated himself above. He was willing to cast out anyone out of the Church who disagreed with him. His **KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROPHETS** and the **BOOK OF REVELATION** were zero! He also made outlandish predictions - *all of which failed!* Until the day of his death, he was still assuming that the '*beast power*' was Germany. He insisted that the Roman Catholic Church was *Babylon the Great*. Neither of which is correct. (See the articles: '*The Beast of Daniel*' and '*Satan and his Demons*', and also '*Habakkuk identifies Babylon*').

If any imagine that God was blessing the Church Administration in the final 10 years of the life of Herbert Armstrong they are totally blind - just as he was in **blind in his right eye!** Everyone knew that all was not well, particularly Herbert Armstrong who decided that he had to do something to claw the work back from the edge. This solution manifested itself in the so-called '*restoration of basic truths*.' Apparently about 18 basic '*truths*' were drafted into a document, which were supposed to steady the ship on its future course. They *weren't*, it *didn't* and the Church has been floundering ever since! The great falling away is in full flight now with a whole army of '*ordained ministers*' assuming responsibilities **THAT WERE NEVER GRANTED THEM**. This spiritual shipwreck will continue until God demonstrates with **GREAT POWER** who He is working with. It will not be any self-proclaimed Church 'leader' in Ephraim (USA). God's power will be demonstrated in Jerusalem!

The Holy Scriptures are designed to teach using the principle of here a little, there a little, line upon line, etc (**Isa 28:10-13**). Can you comprehend how much prophecy is still **NOT UNDERSTOOD** by the whole world, and particularly by the Churches of God? During the entire history of the Worldwide Church of God, the practice has been to selectively use a few scriptures and paint a vista of prophecy for our time. The 95% of all prophecy they didn't understand - they ignored! Herbert Armstrong was fond of saying that he had done all the research for Church doctrine and established the truth, and so it was not necessary for anyone else to do it. The implication being, that he was the infallible instrument in the hands of God, and all that he said was biblically accurate. Anyone with even the slightest degree of spiritual enlightenment will see that there are many things that Herbert Armstrong taught that are unscriptural and inaccurate. But he **WAS** a **SHEPHERD** who was called by God, to function in the manner that God intended.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS?

Many people have tried to understand prophecy using human logic. This is not possible. The understanding of prophecy is a special task that God assigns to certain people to whom He has given a special gift (**ICor 12:28, 13:2**). Unfortunately, in the Church of God, the general impression is that only those in the 'ministry' can interpret prophecy. The appalling failure rate of their understanding demonstrates that none of them had *any* special gift concerning prophecy. Ninety percent of Bible prophecy has never been understood by the Churches of God in this twentieth century.

Dr. Herman Hoeh said of Herbert Armstrong that those who knew him, knew that the things he *avoided* talking about were the things he knew *nothing* about. Dr. Hoeh

called these great gaps of knowledge *'unfinished business.'* There is plenty of *'unfinished business'* in the Churches of God. There has been a 'wake up' call that has inspired many to return to the study of their own Bibles. This has led to God's people confronting certain scriptures that Herbert Armstrong and others didn't discuss, because as Dr. Hoeh has also said, some of these scriptures clearly showed that a *different* explanation was needed for some of the things the *ministry was teaching.* This *'confession'* can be found in the article, *'Unfinished Business'* by Dr. Herman Hoeh (1994).

But truth is always the first casualty where reputations are at stake. The love of God and of His truth is scarcely considered when the *'infallibility'* of human *'masters'* is an issue. Rather than to consider 'heresy' that raised questions of doctrinal accuracy, the hierarchy went mad and began to *cast out* anyone who didn't idolize (idealize) Herbert Armstrong. It seems **HERBERT ARMSTRONG'S REPUTATION** is more important than **GOD'S REPUTATION!**

Many of God's people now know that God wasn't blessing the Church with true spiritual growth. There were no miraculous healings on the broad spectrum of the early apostles. There were none who were able to understand or speak foreign tongues they were never taught. There were none that understood prophecy. But most of you were convinced that God was blessing the 'work' because the revenue continued to grow 30% per year. What a yardstick of spirituality!! Growth was considered to be **MONEY!!** Every co-worker letter was a *'begging'* letter!! Always chasing the dollar!! It was bad enough that they were so blatant in their ever-increasing demand for money, but it was outrageous to link the flow of money to spiritual growth!!!

The standing joke in the hierarchy was that the Worldwide Church of God was a non-PROPHET organization. And so it was! They knew it too, because it was obvious! But they were able to reason around this by saying that it was not necessary to have prophets in the New Testament era because Christians were to be led into all truth by the Holy Spirit. What they failed to understand was that the Holy Spirit was not leading them into all truth! Something was wrong! Terribly wrong!

Once the meaning of certain prophecies has been revealed to someone who has God's Holy Spirit, then they should be able to prove it from the Bible themselves, using all the special instructions that God gives in the Bible, and through the Holy Spirit which will lead them into understanding. The Bible is self-explanatory and self-evident - **EVEN IN MATTERS OF PROPHECY!** It's quite possible, in fact it's preferable, to study **ONLY** the Bible **TO UNDERSTAND PROPHECY.** Revealed prophecy is not dependent on how much you know about the history of the Catholic Church, or whether Hitler and Germany are components of the 'beast' prophecies. To understand all Bible prophecy, all you need is your Bible. **THE BIBLE REVEALS IT ALL!** And nor does the Bible require you to guess who the 'beast' is, or who the 'mother of harlots' is. It tells you! **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG AND THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD HAS NEVER KNOWN!** The reason is that they decided that they had the right to guess!

Spiritual gifts were virtually non-existent in the Worldwide Church of God, and as far as can be determined, they are also lacking in all the off-shoots of the Worldwide Church of God. Of course, those who want to believe differently will fabricate some form of explanation showing that they have some obscure 'gift' that fulfills the criteria of 'gifts'. Even though most will not want to accept it, God has reserved special punishment for the **'SHEPHERDS'** of Ephraim's (U.S.) Churches of God. This punishment is because they refused to listen to God! Most of them sat for years in their privileged positions and ignored the many obvious lies and distortions that were being fed to the congregation, and refused to act out of fear of their positions and their regular paychecks.

Without God's Spirit, no-one, not even Satan the devil, can understand prophecy (and Satan doesn't have God's Spirit). The Bible makes it very plain that some true members of God's Church **WILL HAVE THEIR LAMPS GO OUT.** They will lack God's Holy Spirit because they have failed to continue burning with spiritual zeal. Every true Christian has been called to understand all things by applying all the principles set out in the Bible. It's the Spirit of Christ that is to lead them into all knowledge. Sadly though, most twentieth century Christians have been guilty of believing what other men have told them the Bible means. They have not checked for themselves. This has led to appalling ignorance of what the Bible is all about. The Bible is set out like a law book. And like a law book it must be searched for all relevant information concerning the subject in

question.

It may involve studying previous judgments, laws relating to other matters covered in the Bible, historical backgrounds of certain events, and prior decisions made by the men and women of the Bible. Above all else though, the Bible is God's instruction to all those who pledge their obedience and dedication to Him. Only then can they begin to understand what God is really saying to them! To those who have totally pledged their loyalty to God and fulfilled their obligations under the law, God opens a whole new world of understanding.

We all need to accept God's judgments and take heed - that is how we learn! **GOD CALLS HERBERT ARMSTRONG A FOOLISH SHEPHERD (Do you disagree with God?)** Armstrong admitted that God gave him knowledge but He never gave him wisdom. God also calls him the *worthless* shepherd (NIV) or as the KJV has it: *idol* shepherd. Armstrong allowed physical possessions to become his idol. His accumulated 'wealth' was *worthless* because he had not **STORED THE TRUE TREASURES (Matt 6:19-21)**.

The parable of Zechariah tells us that God called a certain man to do a certain job. God tells us that he was a *foolish* shepherd! And an idol or *worthless* shepherd! This man was given the right characteristics at a very early age in order to fulfill this prophecy. God tells us of His judgment of the conduct of Armstrong in advance, and warns His people not to emulate him in his foolishness. Armstrong was a *true* shepherd - the parable *doesn't* indicate otherwise. But he made serious mistakes in the eyes of God. God put a lot of design into Armstrong's life to teach us an important lesson.

Those who deny the prophecies concerning Armstrong, preferring to disregard God's warning, will have their faith tried in far greater ways in the years just ahead. When you see God's true shepherds (also called prophets, witnesses, branches, olive trees, lampstands, anointed ones) in Jerusalem, then you will believe them to be liars, even though they will perform the miracles that you have never observed in the Worldwide Church of God and their offshoots - **AND MUCH MORE!**

Herbert W. Armstrong re-established some lost truth, and did much work in building a solid doctrinal base in the Church of God. But as God says he was *foolish*, and this led to many problems that affected the lives and the faith of many of God's people. Many people in the Church of God are determined to follow in the footsteps of Armstrong and perpetuate all his mistakes, and they are going to find themselves spiritually stone-dead and in the midst of the greatest destruction of humanity the world has ever seen - and they will not survive physically or spiritually.

Before you self-righteously reject truth, first remember God is God and He determines what righteousness is! When in the final days of this corrupt age, and God's Day of Vengeance concludes, and less than one person in thirty is left alive on earth; when all the heavenly host witness the most horrific slaughter in all of mankind's history; they will say that God is worthy of all worship (**Rev 4:11, 5:12, 7:12**). These are the angels of God, who know God better than any human being. **THEY REJOICE AT THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD** - because they know they are **ALWAYS RIGHTEOUS!** Notice what one angel says: **Rev 16:5** "*You are **JUST IN THESE JUDGMENTS**, you who are and who were, the Holy One; because you have so **JUDGED**, for they have shed the **BLOOD OF YOUR SAINTS AND PROPHETS**, and you have given them blood to drink **AS THEY DESERVE**." And I heard the altar respond, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, **TRUE AND JUST ARE YOUR JUDGMENTS.**"*

But perhaps you don't agree! Many people seek to determine how God should conduct Himself. They think they have the right to tell the Master Potter how to shape the clay (**Jer 18:5**). How wide the pendulum swings with some of God's people today. For instance, they believe it was a good idea for Christ to be murdered under horrific circumstances, in order to free them from the penalty of their sins. But they don't believe it's a good idea to emulate their Saviour except to claim His salvation. Before the Apostle Paul died in martyrdom, he said this: **Rom 8:36** "*As it is written, 'For Your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'*" And this is where most Christians draw the line today! They are all-but demanding that God whisk them off to a place of safety to be spared any sort of martyrdom!

It should never be necessary to defend God to Spirit-begotten Christians, but in this strange world, many seem to have developed their own form of righteousness to the

exclusion of God's righteousness. In today's climate of super-sanctimonious, super-pious and hypocritical behaviour, most people have begun to exceed God's righteousness in their own minds. Some even consider God harsh and overbearing in His judgments of old. God said he loved Jacob but hated Esau. The world we live in would never be like that! They favour multi-culturalism! They are more righteous than God it seems! They don't consider why God hated Esau, and why he is to utterly destroy all his descendants [Edomites] off the face of the earth (**Mal 1:1-5, Obad 18**).

In the days of Samson, God gave him a desire for Philistine women in order that he would perform the will of the Almighty God, and war against the Philistines (**Jud 14:4**). His love of these women led to his downfall and brought upon him much sorrow. But his end was glorious, his repentance complete! Even Samson was able to learn this valuable lesson of repentance, and died in faith (**Heb 11:11, 32**). The story of Samson's life is an inspiration to us all. Was God unfair in giving him this terrible impediment of character? Of course not! Should the clay say to the potter "Why have you made me this way?" We are the clay, and God is the Potter. He knows the end from the beginning and will perform His part right to the end. Notice **Rom 9:20-21** "But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the **RIGHT** to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for **NOBLE** purposes, and some for **COMMON** use? What if God, choosing to **SHOW HIS WRATH** and make **HIS POWER KNOWN**, bore with **GREAT PATIENCE THE OBJECTS OF HIS WRATH** - prepared for destruction? What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom **HE PREPARED IN ADVANCE FOR GLORY...?**"

What if God exercises **GREAT PATIENCE AGAINST THE OBJECTS OF HIS WRATH**, and allows these enemies **TO MURDER THOSE PREPARED IN ADVANCE FOR GLORY**? Should our faith fall apart? Should we conclude that God is not a God of Justice? Should we throw a tantrum, and demand greater accountability of God? Or should we, like Paul, be prepared to face death all day long, and accept what God has said, that we are: '*considered as sheep to be slaughtered*'?

God has placed all types in the Church. He molds and shapes the lives of all as He sees fit. He also sets up the rulers of nations - whether good or bad - according to His own desire. God knows what it is that He wants to accomplish, and He alone will bring it about.

Regardless of what impediments or limitations we may have in our characters, God knows how to turn it to advantage to produce the Potter's masterpiece at the end of our days, provided we, like Samson and others, remain faithful and endure to the end. And a word of warning: Don't think for one moment that righteousness is based on the 'wisdom' of this world! The recent emergence of such transparent philosophies as human rights, indigenous land rights, equal opportunities, and other socialist madness is **NOT** God's way of doing things. All of these are designed to denigrate and destroy the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel and rank them as inferior to the Gentiles who want all the blessings that God has bestowed on His people, *without acceptance of the responsibilities*. The greedy, self-serving mendicants that have flooded the nations of the tribes of Israel, and those who claim indigenous 'rights' will soon receive God's judgment together with the tribes of Israel who have allowed this madness to continue. **THEY WILL RUE THE DAY THEY RAISED THEIR VOICES AGAINST THE SEED OF ABRAHAM!**

Christ said, "*Except your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you won't be in the Kingdom of God.*" (**Matt 5:20**). God called us to obedience - not a competition of self-righteousness! If there is anything that typifies the Church of God today, with their many off-shoots, it's the mind-numbing arrogance of the leaders. Some are teaching mindless lies and distortions, and claiming that they can't be deceived! And such people are the most deceived of all! They have imagined that they are the 'very elect' who can't be deceived. They imagine that **Matt 24:24** where it refers to the 'very elect' is referring to their group. Rarely do they quote the parallel passages in the book of Mark. This clearly identifies who the 'elect' are - whom they believe to be the House of Israel. Notice what it says: **Mark 13:20** "*And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved [alive], but for the elect's sake, whom He has chosen, He has shortened the days.*" The 'elect' are the called and chosen of God (**Matt 22:14; John 15:19; Acts 22:14; Eph 1:4; Jas 2:5; IPeter 2:9**) - the Churches of God. It is they, who will go through the great

tribulation, and will have those days cut short to spare them. But a further distinction is made. In **Matt 24:24** it mentions another group - they are the *very elect*! It is this *very elect* who are to flee to the mountains east of Judea. These people are the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea. The fleeing is directed to those in Judea - and no-where else! Christ plainly told His disciples what he meant. It is not open to 'spiritual' or 'symbolic' interpretation. It means what it says!

Also we see a strange misconception existing among the Churches of God relating to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. All the Churches of God claim the prophecy of **Rev 3:10** applies to them - the Church in Philadelphia. This is what it says: *"Since you have kept My command to endure patiently, I will also **KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL** that is going to come **UPON ALL THE WHOLE WORLD, to TEST THOSE WHO LIVE ON THE EARTH.**"* Now notice that whatever it is that they are to be kept from, **IT CONCERNS THE WHOLE EARTH - EVERYONE THAT DWELLS ON THE EARTH.** The **WHOLE WORLD** is to suffer this trial!

The latter-day type of this early Church in Asia Minor, is the only Church that is going to be kept from the hour of turmoil (temptation) that is to come on all the earth.

What is this great trial that will affect the whole earth? The Bible makes it abundantly clear! It is the first 4 of the 7 seals. The loss of life as a result of these 4 horrific events is one fourth of the people on earth. This is commonly referred to as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (**Rev 6**). Now notice **V8** *"They were given **POWER over a fourth of the earth to kill by the sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.**"*

This is what this Church is to avoid! They will avoid it because they will be dead - they will be the blessed ones chosen for martyrdom before the full fury of the fourth horseman engulfs the world! **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 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 are already dead at the time of the opening of the fifth seal. **THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS AND BROTHERS ARE TO BE KILLED AS THEY WERE!**

Their own spiritual brothers will have betrayed many of them! All the other Churches in Ephraim will go through the Great Tribulation - with the exception of a mere handful that will be a part of the greatest work done on earth since Christ! But these few will be hand-picked by God and not by any man!!

Why would God allow such disasters to befall His Church? The answer should be obvious! Death should be a welcome friend to those who are devoted to God, particularly martyrdom! It is the greatest honour God can bestow on a human being. The **SECOND DEATH** is the enemy - when those who suffer it **ARE CONDEMNED FOREVER!** (**Rev 2:11**)

God even allowed His beloved Son to suffer the first death - are you better than He? When has God ever said that our prime concern should be to save our physical lives? God wants your final commitment if you are to inherit all the wealth and power He has planned for you. God has allowed the martyrdom of multiple thousands of His true Spirit-led children in the past. Many of the Apostles suffered Martyrdom. What great sacrifices have you made in your life for God?

Now notice what happens when Satan is cast down to earth with his angels: **Rev 12:9** *"...He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." **V11** "...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.**"* In the Book of Hebrews we learn of others who have gone before us, who not only **DIDN'T SHRINK FROM DEATH, THEY REFUSED DELIVERANCE!** **Heb 11:35** *"...Others were tortured and **REFUSED TO BE RELEASED**, so that they might gain a better resurrection."* Satan will go out in fury against the people in God's Church. Those who make it into God's Kingdom **WON'T SHRINK FROM DEATH** - they will die as martyrs!

So you've obeyed God's Laws over a number of years - very commendable! You

are now an **UNPROFITABLE SERVANT** - you have *only* done what was *required* of you (**Luke 17:10**). You have also been able to live in the glory of knowing a little about God's perfect way, and many things that the rest of the world can never understand because they lack God's Holy Spirit!

The Laws of God are not a hard task master - they are glorious! Have you yet suffered great persecution for obedience to God? If you have suffered - it's most likely because you have been chastised for disobedience. Most foolishly call chastisement 'trials.' This way they are able to deny their guilt, deceiving themselves and others into believing it's merely a trial. Trials are what God gives to test His people for greater responsibility. Proportionately, they are extremely rare compared to chastisement!

There is much that needs to be written concerning wealth and poverty. It's a subject that deserves a whole chapter by itself. But the truth is, that those who God loves most are usually kept poor all their lives. Wealth is certainly no indication of God's love. In a large proportion of Christians, wealth leads to a diminishing of their love for God. Never despise the poor! You may be despising God's most loved, and obedient sons and daughters. The comments of Christ, the Apostles, Solomon, all add a great deal to this understanding. Every Christian, at some time during his life, should take the time to understand the great store of knowledge on this subject. Consider John the Baptist; he exhibited none of the trappings of wealth, yet Christ said, there was none greater born of women (**Matt 11:11**). If you reserve disproportionate honour for the affluent in your Church, or if others do, be aware that this is not the mind of God or the fruits of His Spirit.

Humanly speaking, it's understandable that certain scriptures that contradicted the doctrines of the Worldwide Church of God and their offshoots would be ignored. Everyone was more than willing to believe that they would go to a place of safety while the whole world suffered devastation. Hence, very little research was done. Equally and logically though, an observer would have to ask the question - why? That is, why would the Church of God today have such great expectations of saving their lives? When you consider the history of many of God's people down through the ages, and the horrific deaths they suffered - **AND WHICH GOD ALLOWED**, the issue becomes even more poignant. The great faith and devotion of these people was such that they refused deliverance! Remember: **Heb 11:35** "...and others were tortured, **NOT ACCEPTING DELIVERANCE**; that they might obtain a better resurrection." Notice that these wonderful people refused deliverance!!! Death meant nothing to them - their sights were set on the first resurrection! Many of these were stoned, sawn in two, hacked to death with swords, fed to wild animals, and tormented in the most bestial manner (**Heb 11:36-27**). Through all this they *refused* deliverance!

It puts a whole new complexion on the notion that the Church of God is to swan their way into the Kingdom of God. It also makes a mockery of at least one of the magazines put out in the name of the Church of God that emphasizes the hope of 'the place of safety' in every issue. The cunning treachery of the teachings of this group is not fully evident until you realize that they also claim to have the **Key of David**. This is claimed because they have named themselves after the 6th Church of Revelation. They have followed Herbert Armstrong's foolish interpretation of **Rev 3:7**. They believe it says that the Church of Philadelphia has the Key of David. Rather ironic really! They don't even know what the Key of David is! Now read **Rev 3:7** "And to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia write; these things says He (**Christ**) that is holy, He (**Christ**) that is true, He (**Christ**) that has the Key of David, He (**Christ**) that opens and no man shuts; and shuts and no man opens; I (**Christ**) know your works...." They don't have the Key of David! **Christ does!** And the man upon whose shoulders Christ is going to lay this Key is **not** some fraud who has made himself a leader over God's flock!

God is to place the key of the house of David on a man's shoulder. This is told in a parable in **Isa 22:20**. It concerns one of the two witnesses - the Elijah to come; a man who is to be cut down like John the Baptist and killed. Both these prophets will be killed by the Beast that ascends from the abyss (bottomless pit - KJV) (**Rev 11:7**). Who this Beast is, and what the abyss is, is covered in another article. This article reveals things that have never been understood in this endtime! The false prophets have deceived you! Only the Bible reveals who and what this 'Beast' is!

The knowledge of the Worldwide Church of God has always been incomplete. Speaking of the ten tribes of Israel, and Ephraim in particular, God tells us: **Hosea 4:6** "My

people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you shall be no PRIEST to me, seeing that YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE LAW OF YOUR GOD...." This verse is a dire warning! Do you really know what God has called you to? **Rev 1:5** *"...To Him that loves us and has FREED US FROM OUR SINS by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and PRIESTS to serve His God and Father - to Him be glory and power for ever and ever."* If God has rejected you from being a PRIEST to Him, then you will not be in His Kingdom. When God sets His hand to redeem the TRIBES OF ISRAEL, you will be judged worthy of EVERLASTING CONTEMPT and will die forever. **Dan 12:1** *"...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."* The time spoken of here 'AT THAT TIME' is the time of the Great Tribulation: **V1 (first part)** *"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 THEN."* It is also the time that Daniel will awake to receive his inheritance: **V13** *"As for you [Daniel], go your way till the end. You will rest, and then AT THE END OF THE DAYS you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."*

You will not EARN a place in God's Kingdom by merely keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days and believing what you have been taught! You will be judged on knowledge - true knowledge, knowledge that you have READ and proven from the pages of your Bible, and lack of knowledge will be no excuse! You cannot EARN a place in the Kingdom - it's a REWARD! You will be rewarded for your true service to God with your allotted inheritance and the GIFT of eternal life! Christ's reward will be with Him when He comes: **Rev 22:12** *"Behold, I am coming soon! MY REWARD IS WITH ME, and I will give to everyone ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."*

Perhaps you believe you are safe from punishment because of your ignorance! Perhaps you believe you can wait, just in case God is exaggerating the severity of all that He has said. You may even believe you can hide until it all passes over. God demands worthy service from all those whom He has called, and they will be judged accordingly: **Luke 12:47** *"That SERVANT who KNOWS his MASTER'S WILL, and does NOT get ready or does NOT do what his MASTER wants WILL BE BEATEN WITH MANY BLOWS. But the ONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW and DOES THINGS DESERVING PUNISHMENT will be BEATEN WITH FEWER BLOWS. From everyone who has been given much, MUCH MORE WILL BE DEMANDED; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, MUCH MORE WILL BE ASKED."*

The slovenly attitude and the severe lack of knowledge currently being taught by the Church of God is an offence to God. They are without excuse! These 'leaders' are destroying the flock! Brothers and sisters in the Church of God, you are the flock, and truly you have been marked for slaughter if you don't wake up! For you, that slaughter will be eternal death!

God has made no promise to you that He will spare your physical lives. You WILL be tested - some in death and others in captivity: **Rev 13:10** *"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 and FAITHFULNESS on the PART OF THE SAINTS."*

God's true shepherds must speak the truth and face the wolves and the beasts of the field. They too, must face great adversity - yes, and they must also be killed (**Rev 11:7**). Just two true shepherds will exist in the endtime, and it is they who will pour out the Holy 'Oil' to the seven lamps: **Zech 4:11** *"Then I answered and said to him, "What are these TWO OLIVE TREES - at the right of the LAMPSTAND and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these TWO OLIVE BRANCHES that DRIP INTO THE RECEPTACLES OF THE TWO GOLD PIPES FROM WHICH THE GOLDEN OIL DRAINS?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These are THE TWO ANOINTED ONES,*

*who **STAND BESIDE THE LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH.***

Surely you can see that the leaders of the Churches of God are currently going nowhere. They understand nothing! They are preaching soothing words to you. This populist approach is to make you feel good and remain faithful to *them*. They are lying to you. All prophecy must be fulfilled - even the most unpalatable parts. Notice what our beloved Christ said: **Luke 12:2** "*There is **NOTHING CONCEALED THAT WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED, or HIDDEN THAT WILL NOT BE MADE KNOWN. What you have said in the DARK will be heard in the DAYLIGHT, and what you have WHISPERED IN THE EAR IN THE INNER ROOMS will be PROCLAIMED from the HOUSETOPS. I tell you, My friends, DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THOSE WHO KILL THE BODY and AFTER THAT CAN DO NO MORE. BUT I WILL SHOW YOU WHOM YOU SHOULD FEAR: FEAR HIM WHO, AFTER THE KILLING OF THE BODY, HAS POWER TO THROW YOU INTO HELL.***"

Even if the 'leaders' of the Church of God understood prophecy, do you really think that they would preach the message? Do you really think that they tell you the shocking truth? If they did, their followers would leave in droves! They rely on your financial contributions, and they don't care whether you believe their evil, twisted message or not, as long as you keep sending your money. And do they *really* FEAR GOD? Christ's own words were: "*But I will show you **WHOM YOU SHOULD FEAR***". Christianity has a completely different view! They believe that since they have 'accepted Christ as their Saviour' they can now demand salvation! The insolent, 'good ol' boy' approach to God is utterly outrageous, and particularly among those who should know better! Even the mighty beings that surround God's throne GREATLY FEAR and stand in awe of Him: **Psalm 89:7** "*In the council of the holy ones God **IS GREATLY FEARED; HE IS MORE AWESOME THAN ALL WHO SURROUND HIM.***" This FEAR of the Great and Awesome God is no longer evident in the Churches of God. The WCG for instance, refuse to obey His Law, and have virtually rejected the **WORD OF GOD – the very Scripture that Christ used – THE OLD TESTAMENT!**

Mercifully, God has called a few people who do FEAR Him and who STAND IN AWE of Him, and God refers to them as His *Treasured Possession* (**Mal 3:16-18**). While everyone else is disregarding the **LAW OF MOSES** that God gave him at Horeb FOR ALL ISRAEL, these people are remembering it and living by it (**Mal 4:4**). And God makes the distinction between these who serve Him, and those who do not (**Mal 3:18**).

This problem is evident in one Church of God who recognizes that their own concepts of the Holy Days needs revision, yet they've decided to delay their research until their organization is well established, and they have gained a sizeable market share of converts. Then, apparently, they will begin the drip-feed process to correct any 'minor' doctrinal errors. In the meantime, God's truth can wait! Funding, market share, and prestige of leading the flock are the primary goal!

On the authority of Almighty God they will never make it!!! But ignore this warning - as many surely will; and in a few years time lift your heads and see where you are standing! You will not like what you see! Many will be appalled and horrified that nothing has worked out in accordance with what they have been told by the worthless 'shepherds' of the flock.

God's message is different! It's the whole truth, unfettered and unreserved! It will stir up hatred and venom from all quarters. Many of those of the Body of Christ will be offended and will seek to destroy it. If this means you, then do your worst! If God's Word offends you, then put a gun to your head right now! Or tie a millstone around your neck and throw yourself into the sea (**Matt 18:6**). It will be better for you to do this than to attempt to fight God.

But to those faithful and true servants of God, those who love God and His Word, who, in their minds have already died for Christ, glory to you forever. God is watching over you, and will complete His Work in you, and you will stand before the Great God as blameless. Don't let the wretched 'tares' trouble you! They can't harm you in the eyes of God. Though they beat you up or even kill you, your reward is sure! Be strong and very courageous!

THE TRUE AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS

Do you think that God has not reserved some faithful and true people on this earth

today, whom He has proven over many, many centuries? God has reserved his most faithful and loyal servants for this endtime. They are to do the work that the Churches of God pretend to do, but have never done! The very work that the Church of God leaders have arrogantly assumed that they were commissioned to do! You know very well what that is! It's probably the most quoted Scripture in the Churches of God. Here it is: **Matt 24:14** *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the **WHOLE WORLD** for a **TESTIMONY** to **ALL NATIONS**; and **THEN** the **END WILL COME**."*

In terms of time frames, this prophecy follows after the betrayal and deaths of many in God's Church. Remember that Christ was asked: **Matt 24:3** *"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and **WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING AND OF THE END OF THE AGE?**"* Then Christ tells them of certain events that would be **birth pains** to them, not 'sorrows' as some versions state. These **birth pains** will be felt in the true and faithful Body of Christ. This describes the birth of a special group of people spoken of by the prophet Isaiah (**Isa 66:5-10**). This is covered in other articles.

Prior to the **TESTIMONY TO ALL NATIONS**, Christ speaks of horrific persecution: **Matt 24:9-13** *"Then **YOU WILL BE HANDED OVER TO BE PERSECUTED AND PUT TO DEATH**, and you will be **HATED BY ALL NATIONS BECAUSE OF ME**. At that time **MANY WILL BETRAY AND HATE EACH OTHER**, and **MANY FALSE PROPHETS WILL APPEAR** and **DECEIVE MANY PEOPLE**. Because of the **INCREASE OF WICKEDNESS**, the **LOVE** of **MOST** will grow cold, but he **WHO STANDS FIRM TO THE END WILL BE SAVED**." You must be told the whole truth! This is what the prophet Daniel said: **Dan 7:25** *"He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints and try to change the set times and laws. The **SAINTS WILL BE HANDED OVER TO HIM** for a time, times and half a time." **YES, THE SAINTS WILL BE HANDED OVER TO HIM AND THEY WILL BE CONQUERED!** **Rev 13:7** *"He was **GIVEN POWER** to make war **AGAINST THE SAINTS** and to **CONQUER THEM**."***

After the war in heaven, Satan is cast back to earth together with some of his angels. Still the Gospel has not been preached as a testimony to the world! This martyrdom begins with the opening of the seals. But still the 'preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom for a **TESTIMONY TO ALL NATIONS**...' has not been done. All of the first 4 seals, which result in the deaths of 1½ billion people on earth, over a period of several years, will be opened. But *still* the gospel is **NOT** preached to all nations as a testimony. So when is this prophecy to be fulfilled? We have already seen that it comes after the martyrdom of the saints (**Matt 24:9-13**). In the next verse, **V14** *"And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the **WHOLE world** as a **TESTIMONY TO ALL NATIONS**, and then the end will come." So the Gospel is preached as a **TESTIMONY!** We know that what Christ preached was the Gospel. What, then, is a '**TESTIMONY**'? As always, the Bible tells us! **Rev 19:10** *"At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow-servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the **TESTIMONY OF JESUS**. For the **TESTIMONY OF JESUS** is the **SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**."**

Since the **SPIRIT OF PROPHECY** is non-existent in the Church of God, there is no chance of them preaching 'the Gospel to the whole world as a **TESTIMONY!**' God knew that in advance and has made other plans! The Book of Revelation describes the three herald angels. The first one arrives with the eternal Gospel, the second announces the fall of Babylon, and the third proclaims a warning to all peoples not to accept the mark of the beast. This gives us the exact sequence of events! **Rev 14:6** *"Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, **AND HE HAD THE ETERNAL GOSPEL TO PROCLAIM TO THOSE WHO LIVE ON THE EARTH** - to **EVERY NATION, TRIBE, LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE**. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the **HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME**. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water. A **second angel** followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great..." **V9** *"A **third angel** followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand..."**

So at the time of the **HOUR OF JUDGMENT** the herald angel arrives with the eternal Gospel to be **PROCLAIMED** to '**EVERY NATION, TRIBE, LANGUAGE**

AND PEOPLE.' This **HOUR OF JUDGMENT** is described in **Dan 7:9-10** "As I looked, **thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days [God the Father] took His seat. His clothing was as white as snow, the hair of His head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming from before Him. Thousands upon thousands attended Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The COURT WAS SEATED, AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED.**" And what is the final outcome of this trial? **V21** "As I watched, this horn was **WAGING WAR WITH 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.**" **V26** "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 and OBEY Him.**"

SATAN WARS WITH THE 'REMNANT'

There is great persecution ahead for the saints of the Most High. Everything will be made known **BEFORE** it happens (**Luke 12:2, Amos 3:7**). The responsibility of the saints is to **READ** their Bibles to see if these things are so!

Satan is furious - and goes out to make war with the 'woman' that gave birth to Jesus (**Rev 12:1**). "What? Blasphemy," you say, "the Church of God never gave birth to Jesus." That's true. The 'woman that gave birth to the man child' (**Jesus - V5**) is the **TRIBE OF JUDAH**. It is the tribe of Judah, or more properly, the House of David, that will be involved in the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God as a **TESTIMONY TO ALL NATIONS** - but not yet! It is these people that God calls 'ZION'. **Never does the Bible refer to the Worldwide Church of God, and its offshoots, as 'ZION.'**

There was a foretype of this in Jerusalem in 70 AD. Many fled for about 3½ years before returning to Jerusalem. It is this **WOMAN** that is to go to a place **PREPARED BY GOD**. While the Worldwide Church of God always believed that they were to swan off to the 'place of safety' when things heat up, neither them or any of the offshoots will go. They are all required to be 'faithful unto death.' Death is their 'place of safety' - safety from the second death - not the first. Read **Rev 12:13-14** "And when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the **WOMAN WERE GIVEN TWO WINGS OF A GREAT EAGLE, that she might FLY INTO THE WILDERNESS, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time from the face of the serpent.**"

Even Herbert W. Armstrong saw a flaw in his understanding of these verses. To explain it, he claimed that this 'woman' was the Church that existed *before, during, and after* Christ's death and resurrection (*The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last, page 38*). **A most unsatisfactory explanation!**

THE TWO PROPHETS

Now we see the start of the fulfilment of **Matt 24:14**. Now where did the Worldwide Church of God ever get the idea that it was **their** job to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all nations? Nowhere in the Bible is this stated! [**Special note: Mark 16:9-20 is a deliberate insertion that is not in the original manuscripts and is not a part of the canonized Bible. For evidence of this see the NIV version or any good Bible commentary.**] Instead, we find that 3 angels are to appear; one of them has the **ETERNAL GOSPEL** to **PROCLAIM** to the whole world - **TO EVERY NATION, TRIBE, LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE!** (**Rev 14:6-7**).

It is now that the angel delivers this script to those 2 witnesses in Jerusalem, who are to **PROPHESY AGAIN ABOUT MANY PEOPLES, NATIONS, LANGUAGES AND KINGS** (**Rev 10, Zech 4:1-14; Eze 2:7-9, 3:1-12.**) A **WITNESS** is someone who has *direct knowledge - not hearsay!* These two are to provide absolute proof of what they proclaim. You will also notice that these two witnesses stand by the seven lamps and pour in the oil. It is through them that the seven Churches will receive spiritual sustenance in the terrible time of trouble. Notice, also that they are to pour out the oil to all seven Churches - not just one or two. So all seven Churches mentioned in Revelation are to be present in the end time. These two are both "Branches" (**Zech 4:12**). Also in **Zech 6:12**

and elsewhere. They are also called "olive trees" **Zech 4:3**). These two prophets have enormous God-given powers of life and death and other wonders. They are the very personification of all the great prophets.

Most of the prophets of old referred either directly to these two prophets or made mention of the specific message that they are to deliver. John the Baptist preached the self-same message - the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. But no-one has ever understood what that Gospel of the Kingdom of God was all about - **including the Worldwide Church of God**. Yet the Bible plainly tells us! Because they have rejected knowledge - they don't understand what the 3 whole chapters of Isaiah that John the Baptist referred to, was all about! Isn't that amazing? All these **years**, they believed they were to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations - **and they don't understand what it is!**

Do you really believe that God is happy about the conduct of all the splinter group Churches of God? All of them image-building and hacking on each other. Do you really believe that our beloved Christ is going to wait until someone comes up with the right formula, and begins to plan for broadcasting to the whole world? And what would these Church leaders broadcast anyway?

NEW TREASURES

Christ spoke a parable about the Kingdom of God. Notice what it says: **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**.""

Certainly the leaders of the Churches of God have some **OLD** treasures. But what **NEW** treasures do they have? Obviously, there are many **NEW** treasures to **BRING OUT OF THE STOREROOM**. Christ, Himself says so! What are these?

Again, it should be obvious to all the leaders in the Churches of God that there are many prophecies that they don't understand! Now some are claiming that they are 'beginning to understand more and more of the prophecies.' Yet this is *not* evident from their literature. What is happening is that some of them are beginning to dream up interpretations that seem to 'fit.'

In the book of Isaiah, God tells us that He is to reveal all this new information suddenly and totally so no-one can later say, I knew of this before. Anyone that says they knew of it before is a liar!!

Isa 43:8 "Lead out those who have **EYES BUT ARE BLIND**, who have **EARS BUT ARE DEAF**. All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and **PROCLAIMED TO US THE FORMER THINGS?** Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, 'It is true.' **YOU ARE MY WITNESSES**, and **MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN**, so that you **MAY KNOW AND BELIEVE ME**, and understand **THAT I AM HE**. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me."

Isa 41:22 "Tell us **WHAT THE FORMER THINGS WERE**, so that we may consider them and know their outcome." **V26-27** "Who told of this **from the beginning**, so that we could know, or beforehand, so that we could say, 'He was right'? No-one told of this, no-one foretold it, no-one heard any words from you. **I WAS THE FIRST TO TELL ZION**, "Look, here they are! **I GAVE JERUSALEM A MESSENGER OF GOOD TIDINGS**."

Isa 48:6-7 "From now on I will tell you of **NEW** things, of **HIDDEN** things **UNKNOWN TO YOU**. They are created now, and not long ago; you have **NOT HEARD OF THEM BEFORE TODAY**, so you cannot say, 'Yes, I knew of them.'"

Who in the Church of God knows of the **FORMER THINGS?** Plenty of them have made wild guesses, which are generally referred to as 'inspired preaching' by their listeners or readers. But of the true history of the earth they have never begun to understand? Notice **Isa 41:22** tells us that by knowing **THE FORMER THINGS** we may know the [final] outcome. God speaks of **NEW** things, and **HIDDEN** things, things God has **RECENTLY CREATED** - what are these? Who is there among the 'ministry' that can identify and explain these things? If any of them do know, then they are certainly keeping it secret! **THE TRUTH IS THEY DON'T KNOW BECAUSE GOD HAS REVEALED NOTHING TO THEM!**

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE KINGDOM

John the Baptist heralded a whole new era of understanding. He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God before Christ started His ministry. Then in the prime of his life (he was just 30 years old) he was beheaded and removed from the scene. Someone has yet to come to complete the work started by John, and to restore the truth of the fathers to the children of Israel, and to restore the hearts of the children of Israel to believe, once more, the fathers. He is to prophesy again, about many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings (**Rev 10:11**).

WHAT JOHN THE BAPTIST DIDN'T PREACH

And what did John preach? He preached about many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings! How do we know this? Because John the Baptist and Christ told us! You see, both told us that the prophecies applicable to John the Baptist started with **Isaiah 40:3**. What John preached was from **Isa 40:3** through to **Isa 66:24**. When Elijah comes to complete the work started by John the Baptist, he too will prophecy from **Isa 40**, but this time he will start with **verse 1 - not verse 3**.

This is vitally important! It is the key to understanding many things! Don't fail to look it up in your own Bibles. Here it is: **Isa 40:1** "**COMFORT, COMFORT MY PEOPLE, says your God. SPEAK TENDERLY to JERUSALEM, and proclaim to her that HER HARD SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED, that HER SIN HAS BEEN PAID FOR, that she has RECEIVED FROM THE LORD'S HAND DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS.**"

God is to open the minds of the Jewish people in Jerusalem to see their mistakes of the past and to repent - as no-one ever has before!! The Jewish people will provide a whole new meaning for the word 'repentance.' Their repentance will totally eclipse the repentance of the people of the House of Israel and many of those of the Churches of God headquartered in Ephraim [USA]). God will mightily use many of the Jewish people to perform the greatest work done on earth since Christ. They will provide the means to complete the work of heralding the return of Christ! And the true 'oil' (God's Holy Spirit) will flow to the Churches of God and to many others from all nations eventually. The eternal lives of all those in the Churches of God will depend on **ZION – THE CITY AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD**, because, for most of them, their lamps have gone out! They are being destroyed for lack of knowledge; knowledge that they have rejected!

Their '*flower-child*' facade of speaking with much 'love' and endeavoring to model themselves after the '*love of this world*' is a stench to God.

Now is the time, as never before, to put off the love of the world. If the world loves you, then you are in serious trouble! The world will hate you - because God is going to see that they do! Many of you are going to suffer because you have left undone the things that are required of you. This is God's indictment to the shepherds of Israel, those who shepherd the Churches of God in Ephraim: **Isa 56:10-12** "**ISRAEL'S WATCHMEN ARE BLIND, THEY ALL LACK KNOWLEDGE; they are ALL MUTE DOGS, that cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep. They are DOGS WITH MIGHTY APPETITES; they never have enough. They are SHEPHERDS WHO LACK UNDERSTANDING; they all turn to their own way, EACH SEEKS HIS OWN GAIN. Come, each one cries, let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.**"

Notice that the word '*watchmen*' is plural! It's interesting to note that all the Churches of God are headquartered in the U.S., which is modern-day Ephraim. Now notice that God has set a true watchman (singular) over Ephraim and its watchmen (plural). Hosea chapter 9 is speaking specifically to Ephraim. Notice what it says: **Hos 9:8** "**THE PROPHET, ALONG WITH MY GOD, IS THE WATCHMAN OVER EPHRAIM.**" Here we have a **PROPHET - ONE WHO IS CLOSE TO GOD**, and who is the **WATCHMAN (singular) over EPHRAIM - THE HOME OF THE CHURCH OF GOD**. This **WATCHMAN** must do, **UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GOD HIMSELF**, the work that the **WATCHMEN OF EPHRAIM HAVE FAILED TO DO!**

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

We have all heard the story of the prodigal son. We know all about the youngest son going off and squandering his inheritance. But who was the older son? The parable tells us that the older son was always with the father and everything the father had was his. The younger son, because of the wanton disregard for his father's inheritance finished up destitute and in need of all things. When he had come to his senses, he decided to return home, and was warmly greeted by his father. The older son complained that he had remained faithful to the father but never received any honour. The father replied that he, the son, was always with him, and everything the father owned was his. But he went on to stress the importance of mercy and kindness.

It's a lovely story, which is both thoughtful and meaningful. But Christ plainly said that the parables that He spoke were to disguise the true meaning! So what is the true meaning of this parable?

THE ELDER SON

When you understand this parable, you begin to understand the rest of the chapters of **Isaiah 40-66**. The older son represented Judah, the son of Jacob and Leah - and the father of the Jews. It was Judah who ruled over all the tribes and established the dynasty of King David. It was Judah that gave birth to the Messiah.

Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, broke away and left the rule of Judah, and established an independent nation. In doing this, they left their father - God! Ephraim was the son of Jacob [Israel] since he adopted the two sons of Joseph as his own. Ephraim was the younger son that squandered his father's inheritance.

Ephraim was the younger. Ephraim is called God's 'firstborn' in **Jer 31:9**, thereby elevating him above Manasseh, his brother. The Book of Hosea speaks predominantly about the northern ten tribes of Israel and Ephraim in particular, and contains prophecies for our time. Ephraim led the ten tribes astray, and have always been the dominant tribe. Speaking of the endtime, God tells us this: **Hos 13:1 "WHEN EPHRAIM SPOKE, MEN TREMBLED; he was EXALTED IN ISRAEL."** Only the United States of America can speak against any nation on earth with impunity - and cause them to tremble. Unlike the **TRIBE OF JUDAH**, who is about to 'give birth' (**Isa 66:7**), **EPHRAIM** will **FAIL TO BE DELIVERED**: **Hos 13:12 "The GUILT OF EPHRAIM IS STORED UP, his sins are KEPT ON RECORD. PAINS AS A WOMAN IN CHILDBIRTH come to him, but he is A CHILD WITHOUT WISDOM; when the time arrives, HE DOES NOT COME TO THE OPENING OF THE WOMB."** All the might and power of **EPHRAIM** will not help them this time. They will be defeated! **V14 "I WILL RANSOM THEM FROM THE POWER OF THE GRAVE; I WILL REDEEM THEM FROM DEATH. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? I will have no compassion, even though HE THRIVES AMONG HIS BROTHERS."**

The reference to 'he thrives among his brothers' is yet another scripture that tells us that all of the ten tribes live in the United States, though not every individual. When God speaks of the ten tribes, particularly for the purpose of prophecy, He is usually referring to the United States of America, because people of all the ten tribes dwell there. There are many prophecies concerning the nation of Ephraim in the Book of Hosea. The Book of Hosea concludes with these words: **Hos 14:9 "Who is wise? He will realise these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right, the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them."**

Continuing the parable of the prodigal son, the elder son, Judah, stayed with God and preserved the Sacred Oracles and revered the Holy City and greatly desired to return from captivity. Their overwhelming desire has always been to build and preserve Jerusalem and the Temple. They have always remained faithful, even though there were periods of backsliding. Always they rebounded to express their love for the true God. God has proven their character over millennia. God knows, that given sufficient evidence, they will repent of their mistake of rejecting the Messiah.

It's not surprising that they don't, today, embrace Christianity. They have suffered more than any other group of people under the vicious, murdering 'christian' factions and organized religions. Millions of them have been murdered in the name of 'christianity'

amid almost two thousand years of constant persecution of God's chosen people.

It's also true that there were many periods of persecution against both true and 'pretend' Christians, but nothing that begins to compare with the murderous persecution that the Jews have suffered. They have truly suffered double punishment - **Isa 40:2**. Throughout the entire Christian era, the most numerous Sabbath-keepers were always the Jews. Almost every pogrom started was against Sabbath-keepers - either Christian or Jewish. Mainstream Christianity quickly learned that the way to avoid persecution was to drop Sabbath-keeping and adopt the widely accepted pagan tradition of Sunday-keeping. From the 5th century onwards, the only community-visible Sabbath-keepers were the Jews. There were small, scattered groups of Christian Sabbath-keepers down through the ages, but they were so few that history almost failed to notice them. The most notable exception to this was the Waldensians, but even they, after a couple of hundred years, had begun to adopt pagan traditions. Whether they were still God's true Church at that stage is not known. Many had already left the Alps of Switzerland and settled in Britain..

THE YOUNGEST SON

Continuing the parable of the prodigal son. This son took his inheritance early and squandered it on sumptuous living with no thoughts of appreciation of his father's generous gift. He took it for granted and squandered it. How true this is of modern Ephraim today. They've enjoyed wealth and prosperity as no other nation on earth, and they've squandered it. Now they are about to serve a cruel hard master in literal slavery. But God is prepared to welcome back his prodigal son - whom He still loves very much. God has a special love for Ephraim because they have focused on Christianity more than any nation on earth. They have been the resident nation for all the Sabbath-keeping, Christian religions, in addition to hundreds of other Christian sects that have arisen. No other nation on earth has had so much focus on the teachings of the Bible. Whether rightly or wrongly, in their doctrinal approach these churches have, nevertheless, kept the focus of Christianity alive. In ratios per capita, modern Ephraim has the highest rate of believers in Christianity in the world. The founding fathers of this nation were men who devoutly believed in God. The nation has slid a long way since the days of the founding fathers, but even today, it is not uncommon to hear the term, 'God Bless America.' There is an underlying recognition by the American people that God has played a very great part in their prosperity.

In complete contrast, Manasseh (Britain today) long ago replaced God with the deified Anglican Church. The Anglican Church is god for all practical purposes to these spiritually-dead people.

It's therefore understandable that God would welcome back His prodigal son, Ephraim, with rejoicing and celebration. And when the repentant Ephraim arrives back from slavery and degradation, there at Jerusalem will be the deeply converted Jewish nation awaiting their arrival.

THE ROLE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The primary role of John the Baptist was to be a voice crying in the wilderness and to proclaim the first arrival of the Messiah Christ. But he also preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The chapters in **Isaiah 40 to 66** proclaim the Kingdom of God. So great is the change in these chapters to the preceding 39 chapters, that some commentaries suggest a second author, calling him the second Isaiah. This is wrong; Isaiah wrote the whole 66 chapters. There is, however, a marked change in the intensity of the writing. All that the other prophets have written reinforce these chapters. Notice the words in **Matt 11:12-14** *"I tell you the truth: Among those **BORN OF WOMEN** there **HAS NOT RISEN ANYONE GREATER THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST**; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven 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."*

This Scripture tells us many things. Firstly, John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. In the short space of time between the appearance of John the Baptist and the appearance of Christ, the Kingdom of God was forcefully advancing - and forceful men lay hold of it. Did Christ consider John to be forceful? You bet He did! He asked the

people if when they came to see John they expected to see 'a reed shaken in the wind'. He was implying that John was a tower of strength - not a shaky reed! He was forceful, resolute; not of the type seen in religious circles today. Nor was he a show pony! He shunned the trappings of wealth - and by desire lived simply. Nothing could shake his resolve. When he faced the executioner, his one thought was to make certain that he had completed his job. Notice that he didn't appeal to Christ to send legions of angels to save his life - he merely sent a message to inquire of Christ if He was definitely the One who he, John, was to proclaim. John already knew that he was because at Christ's baptism John heard God confirm that Jesus was his Son. When John sent the message from Herod's prison, he asked, "Are you He that should come or should we expect another?" John had to be sure that this kindly, gentle Son of God was the same one who was to return to fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah.

This was recorded so that we can know the mind of the great men of God - and how they are prepared to go to their deaths without a whimper. In that cold, dark cell, John received the reply from Christ. His cell became a palace - a temple of glory, as his heart nearly burst with joy to receive this reassurance from his Creator. Nothing could diminish his joy of that wonderful vision of the glorious Kingdom of God. It stayed with him until the moment when his head was severed.

No wonder Christ said of him, "Among those born of women, there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist." John the Baptist has set a standard, surpassed only by Christ Himself, for all those who obey God. John's endtime counterpart, who is to arise in Jerusalem in the 21st century, will also die as John did. There will be two prophets at that time, and both will be cut down by the beast that comes up from the Abyss (**Rev 11:7**). The whole world will rejoice when this happens. Why? Notice the reason: **Rev 11:10** "The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had **TORMENTED THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.**"

Let's be absolutely practical, and consider why these prophets will '**torment those who dwell on earth**'! Would it be because the earth-dwellers have not accepted Jesus as their Saviour? The percentage of those that God **HASN'T** called is in the high 90's - they **CAN'T** accept Christ as their Saviour. And what is more, God never planned to call them! Nor has God ever offered them Salvation. And to those who actually believe God, let it be known that He will **NEVER** call them to salvation! The liars have taught you that all the human beings that have ever lived will come up in a resurrection and be offered salvation. **THIS IS A BLATANT LIE!** These lying weaklings have put a glossy spin on everything! They expect God to conform to their own self-righteous standards by offering salvation and a place in His Kingdom to those whom He hates. Let's now consider some very plain scriptures: **Isa 26:13** "O Lord, our God, **OTHER LORDS BESIDES YOU HAVE RULED OVER US**, but Your name alone do we honour. They are now dead, **THEY LIVE NO MORE**; those departed spirits **DO NOT RISE**. You punished them and brought them to ruin; **YOU WIPED OUT ALL MEMORY OF THEM.**" **Isa 14:20** "...**The OFFSPRING OF THE WICKED will never be mentioned again**. Prepare a place to slaughter **HIS** sons for the sins of their forefathers; they are **NOT TO RISE to inherit the land [earth] and cover the earth with their cities.**" **Isa 43:16-17** "This is what the **LORD** says, He who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, **NEVER TO RISE AGAIN, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick**; forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a **NEW THING!**"

A '**NEW THING**'? What is meant? Although it's a major digression from the theme of this article, let's consider the meaning: **V19** "...Now it springs up; **do you not perceive it?** I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to My people, My **CHOSEN, the PEOPLE I FORMED FOR MYSELF that they may proclaim My praise.**"

In other articles the true meaning of this will be made known. It covers the many things in the Bible that you have always read and ignored because you didn't understand. God is going to re-landscape the earth. All the continents will come together to form one landmass again. Inland seas will disappear and the single landmass will be divided by rivers. God will re-create the animals - and they will honour Him! They will no longer

hurt or destroy (**Isa 11:9, Isa 65:17-25**). Be sure to read the articles on 'GEOLOGY.'

Continuing now the theme of Satan's seed and their fate. Speaking of the destruction of **BABYLON THE GREAT**, Jeremiah has this to say: **Jer 51:36** *"Therefore, this is what the LORD says, "See, I will defend your cause and avenge you; I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry. **BABYLON** will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of Jackals, an object of horror and scorn, a place where no-one lives. Her people all roar like young lions, they growl like lion cubs. **But while they are aroused**, I will set out a feast for them **and make them drunk**, so that they shout with laughter - **THEN SLEEP FOREVER AND NOT AWAKE**," declares the LORD."*

Isa 51:54, 56 *"The sound of a cry comes from **BABYLON**, the sound of great destruction from the **LAND** of the **BABYLONIANS**." **V56** "...For the LORD is a God of **RETRIBUTION**; He will repay in full. "I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well; they will **SLEEP FOR EVER AND NOT AWAKE**," declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty."*

When Satan is cast down to earth the angels will rejoice, even though it means absolute disaster for humanity! Doesn't this seem a little insensitive? After all, isn't the whole plan of God to save human beings? **NO, IT'S NOT!** This is the real reason: **1John 3:8** *"...The reason the Son of God appeared was **TO DESTROY THE DEVIL'S WORK**." This is what the Bible says: **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 who 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 THAT HIS TIME IS SHORT**."*

Retracing where we left off: why do the two prophets **TORMENT** the inhabitants of the earth? Even more pointedly, why do the inhabitants *feel* tormented? Why would these dragon-worshipping pagans feel tormented by two men in Jerusalem? It's true that these **TWO PROPHETS** will rain down on the **EARTH HORRIFIC CALAMITIES AND PLAGUES** (**Rev 11:6**), but why would the inhabitants of the earth believe that it's *them* who are doing it? Don't think for one moment that the Moslem or oriental hordes, for instance, are going to get all dewy-eyed because two men are preaching 'the Gospel of salvation' as it is taught by all the liars masquerading as God's people. The hostility is to arise because these two prophets will humiliate the intelligentsia of this world for their stupidity in believing that God is **NOT** the Creator! Ultimately, it will come down to a contest between the belief in a Creator God and paganism - just as it was in the days of Elijah. Everything the nations of the earth have believed, that dismisses God as the Creator, will be thoroughly debunked! This includes Geology, evolution, environmentalism, biology, medicine, history, and the many other mad theories and sciences falsely so-called, that have been devised to destroy the credibility of the Great Creator. The contest will involve the 21st Century Elijah, in whom will be vested the **MIGHTY POWER OF GOD**, and the adversary will be Satan and his agents. Satan's counterparts will be imbued with his power and great authority (**Rev 13:2**).

From now on, whenever you study your Bible, and particularly where it deals with endtime prophecy, take note how often God emphasizes that **HE IS THE ONE WHO CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**. You will be amazed at the frequency of this - and its importance! Particularly since the rejection of God as the Creator is a phenomena that has reached excessive proportions in this endtime, and even more particularly by those whom God especially selected as His people - the English-speaking peoples of the world. It is these people who have been at the fore-front of denigrating God - and they will pay dearly for their disgusting conduct, because they should have known better!

THE MIGHTY COMMANDER

It's time to forget all your perceptions of Christ as the kind and lovable man who walked the earth in the first century. It's time to see Christ as the Mighty Being that He is! He is the glorious and faithful Servant of the Ever-living Creator God. The time has come

for you to begin thinking like God and to forget the sanctimonious dribble that you have been fed all these years. **CHRIST IS THE MIGHTY GENERAL OF THE ARMIES OF GOD!** Christ, Himself, told us to see Him as the returning, conquering Commander of the mighty armies of God. This is what He said: **John 18:36** "*Jesus said, "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]."*" Jesus Christ is our Champion! Those who love Him will mourn for His return and the establishment of His Kingdom.

It seems that most Christians today have forgotten the purpose of Christ's return! He is coming to set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed. All the kingdoms of this world will become His kingdoms (**Rev 11:15**). He will conquer all His enemies and destroy them: **1Cor 15:24** "*Then the end will come, when He hands over the Kingdom to God the Father **AFTER HE HAS DESTROYED ALL DOMINION, AUTHORITY AND POWER. FOR HE MUST REIGN UNTIL HE HAS PUT ALL HIS ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET.**"* The whole world will rebel against Him; and when they do, **OUR HERO, OUR COMMANDER, OUR SAVIOUR, OUR MIGHTY CREATOR WILL FIGHT AGAINST THEM:** **Zech 14:3** "*Then the LORD will go out and **FIGHT** against those nations, as [it is] He **THAT FIGHTS IN THE DAY OF BATTLE.** On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..."* And for all those nations that dare to fight against God's Holy City, He has a special fate awaiting them: **V12** "*This is the **plague** with which the LORD will **strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem.** Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths."*

If you are offended that Christ plans to establish righteous government on this earth, and to rid the world of the evil generation - **SATAN'S OFFSPRING**, then you are in real spiritual trouble. Christ said that if you are **NOT WITH HIM** then you are **AGAINST HIM** (**Luke 11:23**). We shouldn't be concerned about our own enemies - they're nothing at all! We should be against the enemies of Christ - it's to Christ that our loyalty lays. Satan's forces are now gaining momentum under the banner of Islam. This is the religion to watch - not Catholicism! Read the article, '**The Beast of Daniel**.'

WHO IS ELIJAH?

It's utterly pathetic that some have claimed to be Elijah, and it's even more pathetic that some have claimed that the '*worthless shepherd*' was Elijah.

Now John said, when asked, that he was not Elijah (**John 1:21-23**). Christ said that he was! (**Matt 11:14**). John knew that he was not the Elijah to come, because he knew what the future held and what would occur. Notice **Matt 3:12**; this tells us that John preached about the second coming of Christ when he would "*gather the wheat in the barn and **BURN THE CHAFF WITH UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.**"*

So did Christ get it wrong? No, He did not! Jesus was at that time addressing the multitude (**Matt 11:7**) - and to the multitude He always spoke in parables (**Matt 13:13, 34**). It was a parable that Christ spoke concerning John. What Christ was saying was that John, in terms of the parable, was the Elijah who is to come. By studying the example that John the Baptist set, you will know what to expect when the latter-day Elijah arrives on the scene in Jerusalem. John knew that he was **NOT** the latter-day Elijah! Christ qualified his explanation with the customary '*He who has ears, let him hear.*' **Matt 11:14** "*And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. **He who has ears, let him hear.**"* This phrase means those hearing it did *not* understand. In fact, Christ spoke in parables so they would *not* understand (**Matt 13:13-15**). But at a later time His servants would understand!

It's utterly mind-boggling that some of the Churches of God are so vehemently proclaiming **Herbert W. Armstrong** to be **the latter-day Elijah**. There is not a single word in the Bible to imply it, let alone prove it! There is nothing about Herbert Armstrong that remotely resembles the Elijah to come! Nothing!! How could these foolish people get it so wrong? Don't they understand anything?

It's a case of the blind leading the blind - and they will pay dearly for their sloppy and ill-conceived fabrications of the Word of God. What is so galling about some of these Church leaders is that they are now starting to believe themselves to be prophets! This is beginning to appear in their literature - where they are directly claiming to be prophets. On

the authority of Almighty God - **none of them are prophets!** The real test is whether they speak according to the Word of God. And if not, it's because there is no light in them! (**Isa 8:20**). Again, on the authority of God, all the seven Churches are going to be in need of oil to give them light - and that oil will be poured out by God's two witnesses in Jerusalem: **Zech 4:11** *"Then I answered and said to him, "What are these **two olive trees** upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?" And I answered again, and said to him, "What are these **two olive branches**, which **through the two golden pipes empty [pour] the golden oil out of themselves?**" And he answered me and said, "Don't you know what these things are?" And I said, "No, my Lord." Then he said, "**These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.**" (KJV).*

Again it should be stressed that these are prophets as well as witnesses. A witness is someone who has direct knowledge from God. They will preach the Gospel to the world *"for a witness [testimony]..."* There's the word 'witness' or 'testimony' again! These are **legal terms**. These are the **WITNESSES FOR THE PROSECUTION** in the **GREAT COURT PRESIDED OVER BY THE GREAT CREATOR HIMSELF**. Are you beginning to understand, all you 'leaders' who believe yourselves to be prophets?

The final pastoral letter of the New Testament is the book of Jude. It's specifically for the latter days. It's not by chance that it resides immediately before the book of Revelation that was written to the seven Churches by God the Father (**Rev 1:1**). It concerns the state of things that will precede the final resolution of all earthly problems. It deals with the abuse of hierarchical government that is prophesied to be widespread throughout the latter day Churches. The KJV doesn't really clarify this because of the unfortunate use of badly interpreted terms. This is the result of scholars translating the scriptures under the commission of a British king (James) who was also the 'head' of the state church. Their commission was to enshrine within the Anglican Church the belief in hierarchical leadership. Nothing in the early manuscripts support this view! See the article on Church 'government'. It deals with the difference between the Old and the New Covenants. You will be shocked to learn the truth!

Jude 1:12 identifies those who sit among God's people at the Feasts caring only for themselves. The Greek word used here is the same word used for 'shepherding' and so identifies these people. The NIV version makes the clear distinction and names them as shepherds: **Jude 1:12** *"These **MEN** are **blemishes** at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm - **SHEPHERDS** who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along with the wind, autumn trees, **WITHOUT FRUIT AND UPROOTED - TWICE DEAD**. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame, wandering stars, for whom the blackest darkness has been reserved for ever."*

The New Bible Commentary Revised supports the description of **THESE MEN** as the **SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK**, and goes on to clarify the descriptions of these men. For instance, the waterless clouds 'emphasizes their failure to live up to appearances, and their consequent instability. Fruitless trees which have no fruit at harvest time have failed to fulfill the function for which they exist.' It describes twice dead and being uprooted as a process that began with spiritual enlightenment, which died, and their final demise being rooted out for the judgment fire.

The New Bible Commentary Revised also further describes the word 'blemishes' as being 'reefs' or 'sunken rocks' as a hidden danger to the flock.

This type of description to the shepherds of God's flock is scathing in its criticism. Perhaps some might believe that its unwarranted criticism since *their* perceptions of the shepherds don't match this criticism. If this is so, then such people would be well advised to consider what has invoked this scathing attack, and to remember that it's God's warning to them.

Jude and 2Peter are directed to God's true Church in the endtime - all those who have His Holy Spirit. Both these books contain quotations from Ezekiel. Notice **Eze 34:2** *"..Woe to the **SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL WHO ONLY TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES! SHOULD NOT THE SHEPHERDS TAKE CARE OF THE FLOCK?**" This is what God says: **V15** *"I MYSELF WILL TEND MY SHEEP and make them lie down," declares the Sovereign LORD, "I WILL SEARCH FOR THE LOST and BRING BACK THE STRAYS. I WILL BIND UP THE INJURED and STRENGTHEN THE WEAK, but the SLEEK AND THE STRONG I WILL DESTROY. I WILL SHEPHERD MY FLOCK WITH JUSTICE."**

If you read the whole chapter of **Eze 34** you will understand a lot more about **Jude and 2Peter**. You will also notice that the sleek and the strong of the flock are the **shepherds** whom God is going to destroy. If you don't understand why then you will need to study your Bible a whole lot more. Naturally enough, the option of repentance is available to these shepherds. They need not perish, but they need to take a good hard look at themselves. They **KNOW** that they have not been *serving God as they should*, and they **KNOW** they have put earthly things before God's flock. They also **KNOW** they have not been preaching the true Gospel and nor have they been healing the sick (**Eze 34:4**). It's **IMPOSSIBLE** for any true Christian to **DILIGENTLY** study the Word of God and **NOT** hear the voice of the True Shepherd! But the *worthless shepherds* insist that the flock hear only their voices! And always with the veiled threat of '*shape up or ship out.*' This is what Christ said: **John 10:14** *"I am the good Shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me - just as the Father knows Me - and I lay down My life for the sheep. I HAVE OTHER SHEEP THAT ARE NOT OF THIS SHEEP PEN. I MUST BRING THEM ALSO. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be ONE FLOCK AND ONE SHEPHERD."*

Christ is concerned for His flock, not the worthless shepherds!! They will suffer terribly for their evil, and for all the evils they have inflicted upon God's flock!! Their self-proclaimed, and unbiblical, hierarchical rule is about to destroy them!

So where does this leave the devoted, Spirit-led Christians who want to serve God in Spirit and in truth? Your calling remains unchanged. You have been called to obedience and devotion to God. God has always sent prophets to warn His people before disaster strikes. If you study the history of the Bible you will understand that prophets messages were of pending disaster. Rarely did God sent prophets to proclaim good tidings. The role of the false prophets however, was always to refute the true prophets with a contrary message of hope and prosperity. The Bible is full of examples of those who prophesied the false belief that all would be well. In most cases the people refused to believe the *true* prophets because they didn't like the message. More and more you will hear the false prophets preaching a message about a place of safety, or about escaping the wrath to come. If you believe them and follow them, you will die as they will, but you will almost certainly not die in faith!

The obvious question then is, is there any hope of escaping the horror just ahead? No man can give you that answer! Only God has the power to decide, and He makes this very clear: **Rev 13:10** *"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 THE PATIENT ENDURANCE AND FAITHFULNESS ON THE PART OF THE SAINTS."* God will decide whether you must die, or whether you will be taken captive. It is entirely in His hands. If God required the death of His own Son, of whom you are followers, why should you have any expectation that your physical lives will be spared?

From the moment you were called and chosen by God, you unconditionally dedicated yourself to God. If this is your attitude, then you have nothing to worry about. Focus all your attention on our Mighty Saviour and leave everything to Him. He is a **GOOD SHEPHERD** and He cares for His flock. If you hear His voice [His testimony] and believe Him then you will know what to expect, and you will be prepared. The truth will make you free. Nothing will be able to separate you from obedience to Christ. **Rom 8:35** *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE FACE DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." No, in all things we are more than CONQUERORS through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither 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."*

Christ has warned us that if any man would seek to save his life he will lose it (**Matt 16:25, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24, 17:33**). During the history of the twentieth century Church of God you have seen no martyrdom. Doesn't it seem a little strange since tens of thousands were martyred in the first century? Have you been led to believe that there will be no martyrdom - against all the warnings of the Bible? Here we are on the very

threshold of the most momentous events in history where all prophecy is to be fulfilled (**Luke 8:17**), including the wholesale slaughter of the saints, and the 'shepherds' are preaching lullabies and the sheep are falling asleep!

Your calling is to wake up now! Prepare yourselves spiritually so that you will endure martyrdom for God. If you are not prepared to die for God **AS OUR SAVIOUR DID**, then **YOU ARE UNWORTHY OF HIM**, and there is nothing surer than you will die. Those who are not martyred will be taken into captivity. If you are not martyred and you don't go into captivity then you are probably not Christ's! In the Churches of God there are many tares. These wretched people will lead the assault on God's servants. **THE FATE OF THE TARES IS THAT THEY WILL BE GATHERED AND BURNT!** (**Matt 13:24-30**). There is no salvation for them! If you are following some of the fruitloop 'shepherds' and/or 'prophets' who preach a good news 'gospel' about saving your physical life, then you will most likely follow them to the lake of fire to be burned with the rest of the tares.

Don't imagine *their* pious sanctimony and their *feigned* love for you, and the comfortable doctrine they preach, or the fellowship that you currently enjoy, will mask *their* error in God's eyes. It won't!! When you begin to fully understand the true Gospel you will be hated by all! Yes, and you may be killed for your beliefs. If you reject the true Gospel then you will die anyway! If you don't believe this, then you will not have much longer to wait to see it come to pass. And those who 'show much love' towards you (as long as you follow them) will reveal themselves for the brute beasts that they are!

The word 'Gospel' means good news - and it is good news for those who long for God's Kingdom to be established. This should now be foremost in your mind - and even more so, as you see the day approaching. Up until now, no-one has preached of the horror that lies ahead. You have been led to believe that the Great Tribulation will start and you will be whisked off to a 'place of safety.' And what does the Bible say?

Speaking of the Beast of Daniel your Bible says: **Dan 7:25** *"He will speak against the Most High and OPPRESS HIS SAINTS and try to change set times and laws. THE SAINTS WILL BE HANDED OVER TO HIM for a time, times and half a time."* Speaking of the same individual in the book of Revelation, the Bible has this to say: **Rev 13:7** *"HE WAS GIVEN POWER TO MAKE WAR AGAINST THE SAINTS AND TO CONQUER THEM."*

If you have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, then you will understand exactly what these verses are telling you. You don't need a worthless 'shepherd' to tell you that it's referring to the 'Laodiceans' - **BECAUSE ITS NOT!** It's referring to you! It's referring to the saints - the very body of Christ!

For many of you the true Gospel - the **eternal** Gospel (**Rev 14:6**) - will be hard to accept. This is because your spiritual lamps have not been burning brightly for many years. Christ made it very plain that this situation would exist in the endtime, when He told the parable of the ten virgins. In the book of Zechariah God warns that this dearth of spiritual light will need to be supplemented by the two prophets (**Rev 11:10**) who pour out the golden oil to the seven lamps (**Zech 4:1-3, 11-14**). They are also called the two witnesses (**Rev 11:3**), the two olive trees and the two lampstands (**Rev 11:4, Zech 4:3**), the two olive branches (**Zech 4:12**), and they are also called the two anointed ones who will serve the LORD of all the earth (**Zech 4:14**).

And who are these two men? If you are spiritually aware, then you will recognize them when God sets them in their place. The two prophets will bring out of the storehouse **NEW TREASURES** as well as the **OLD** (**Matt 13:52**). The Bible, the Gospel and your purpose in life will take on a whole new dimension. Your eyes will be opened to see and to understand things that have been **HIDDEN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD** (**Matt 13:35, Ps 78:2**). You will be shocked and horrified when you realize that what you have been led to believe was the true Gospel was merely the whitewash of the wall.

Notice what God has to say in this regard: **Eze 13:1** *"The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL WHO ARE NOW PROPHECYING. Say to those WHO PROPHECY OUT OF THEIR OWN IMAGINATION: 'Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says, "Woe to the FOOLISH PROPHETS who FOLLOW their own spirit and have SEEN NOTHING! YOUR PROPHETS, O ISRAEL, ARE LIKE JACKALS AMONG RUINS. You have*

not gone up to the breaks in the wall to repair it for the house of Israel so that it will stand firm **IN THE BATTLE ON THE DAY OF THE LORD (Zech 14:3).**" **V10** "Because they **LEAD MY PEOPLE ASTRAY**, saying, "**PEACE**", **WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE**, and because, **WHEN A FLIMSY WALL IS BUILT, THEY COVER IT WITH WHITEWASH**, therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. Rain will come in torrents, and I will send hailstones hurtling down, and violent winds will burst forth. When the wall collapses, will people not ask you, "**WHERE IS THE WHITEWASH YOU COVERED IT WITH?**" **V19** "You **HAVE PROFANED ME AMONG MY PEOPLE** for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. **BY LYING TO MY PEOPLE, WHO LISTEN TO LIES, YOU HAVE KILLED THOSE WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE DIED, AND SPARED THOSE WHO SHOULD NOT LIVE.**" Read the whole chapter of **Ezekiel 13**. It deals with events *immediately preceding* the **GREAT DAY OF BATTLE OF THE LORD (Zech 14:3)**. And who are the '**prophets of Israel who are now prophesying**'? You know who they are! By lying to you, and covering the cracks in the wall with whitewash they have condemned you to death - eternal death - **UNLESS YOU QUIT BELIEVING AND FOLLOWING THEM!**

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