

Matthew 16:18



“and on this rock (ΤΡΕΪς, a massive Rock, Christ Himself) I will build my church...”

The History of God’s True Church

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Has it? WHERE IS IT, TODAY? This question will be addressed throughout this writing as it is traced from its beginning in 31 A. D. throughout the centuries to its present location today.

The History of God's One and Only True Church

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By

Alton B. Don Billingsley

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Introduction

Regarding the establishment of His Church, Jesus Christ said to the apostle Peter and the rest of His disciples:

“. . . On this ROCK (Greek: Masculine, Petros, Feminine, Petra, meaning Jesus Christ Himself, Deuteronomy 32:3-4; I Corinthians 10:4) I will BUILD My Church, and the gates of Hades (graves) shall NOT prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18; cf. I Corinthians 15:54-55).

This writing is with the effort of putting together the historical events that have shaped, molded, and refined, God's Church from its beginning in 31 A.D. unto this present time.

Searching for its traces from historical sources from 31 A.D. unto this present time can be found through scanty writings about it until about the 1600s A.D. From that point in time it becomes much easier to locate the true Church of God.

While using various historical writings about God's Church, it should be understood there will be repetitions. At the same time among them will be facts that others leave out of their writings. Altogether there will be the needed traces of God's Church from its beginning.

Between those years from 31 A.D. to the 1600s A.D., God's true Church can be traced by following the overview of it from Scriptural writings coupled with historical sources that make references to it by the true doctrinal teachings as taught from the Holy Scriptures.

It is differentiated from the Catholic Church which had its beginning in about 32 or 33 A.D. by Simon Magus, and continued by those who succeeded him to about the 1500s. More about him later in this writing.

Though different approaches can be used to begin the historical writings of the true Church of God, the intent of this writing is to begin with the prophetic Scriptures giving an overview from its beginning as found in the writings of the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 12:1-6

vs. 1-2 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the SUN (*Dual: Congregation of Israel, God's Church; SUN = Christ*), with the moon under her feet (*mother—God's Church*), and on her head a garland of 12 stars (**Type: Genesis 37:9-16; 12 sons of Jacob; 12 apostles**). Then being with child (*Israel*), she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth (*Pharaoh killing boy babies—to give birth to a nation*).

v. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great fiery red dragon (*Greek: "to look, fascinated."* Satan the devil in the guise of his appropriated Dinosaur, T-Rex, 40 feet long, 12 feet tall from the hips with the largest bite force, travels 17 MPH, preys on all others, large or small—the perfect type that befits Satan's image) **having seven heads and ten horns** (*the revivals of the Holy Roman Empire, Revelation 13:1-8*), and seven diadems on his heads (*each leader to be crowned a king – yet future, Revelation 17:7-18*).



v. 4 His tail drew [*dragged—had drawn, past tense; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6-7*] a THIRD of the Stars of heaven (*the gigantic effort of Lucifer trying to overthrow God from His throne*) and threw them to the earth (*they were thrown back to earth*). And the dragon stood before THE WOMAN who was ready to give birth, to DEVOUR her CHILD as soon as it was born (*Herod trying to kill Christ as a baby—he had all the boy babies in Bethlehem murdered from two years of age and under, Matthew 2:16*).

v. 5 She bore a male CHILD who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her CHILD (upon being resurrected returned to heaven, Acts 1:9) was caught up to God and His throne.

v. 6 Then the WOMAN FLED into the wilderness (God's true Church—away from the main centers of civilization—middle ages—the remote mountains and valleys of central Europe, Swiss Alps). where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her 1260 days (1260 years 554-1814 A. D., see Daniel 7:25; 1586-1587, Bloody Queen Mary of England began her reign in 1553 A.D., and died 1558 A. D. England was delivered from Catholic rule by her half-sister Elizabeth 1).

The Domination and Reign of the Catholic Church

With this overview in mind, that led to God's people having to flee and remain hidden for 1260 years due to the heavy persecution by Rome and the Catholic Church, it is needful at this point to pick up with the 1400s with the reformation—the break from the domination and iron rule of the Catholic Church.

The Reformation Period

I. World prepares for religious reform.



A. Gutenberg's Bible -1450. (written in Latin, using metal plates, it is an edition of the Vulgate)

1. People now educated in theology and philosophy.

2. Printing press developed.

B. Britain developing into a world power (c.1588).

1. Break from Catholicism.

2. Protestant movement now able to exist.

3. Within these groups exist members of the true church.

4. Discovery of the New World; colonization.

II. Major Reformers of the Reformation Period.

A. John Wycliff (1320-1384).

1. Reformer within confines of the church for a while.

Walker writes in his book about the Protestant reformation:

"Wycliffe attacked the mendicant friars, the system of monasticism, and eventually opposed the authority of the pope in England. He also wrote against the doctrine of transubstantiation and advocated a more simple church service according to the New Testament pattern. He taught that the scriptures are the only law of the church. Yet, he did not utterly reject the papacy, but only what he regarded as its abuse." P.299

2. Translated the Bible into English.

Fisher writes in *The Reformation*:

"The greatest service which he did the English people was his translation of the Bible, and his open defence of their right to read the Scriptures in their own tongue." P. 274

3. Foremost scholar at Oxford.
4. Believed in commandment keeping.

JOHN WYCLIFFE: REFORMATION MORNING STAR

KEN CURTIS, PH.D.



John Wycliffe, heralded as the "Morning star of the Reformation" was the leading philosopher of the 14th century and an English priest. There were many reformers throughout the history of the Christian church and all of the great ones that ... came from within the Roman Catholic heritage.

They did not set out to form new denominations nor did they seek to break from the Church. Rather, they passionately desired that the Church reform from within and correct abuses that had crept in over many generations.

In the sixteenth century the need for drastic reform and correction of religious abuses burst forth in full force with leaders, such as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. ... But a necessary groundwork had been laid long before them through the work, vision, and sacrifice of others like Hus and John Wycliffe."

End of Quotes

Further information is obtained from the following writing:

All About the Bible, Sidney Collett, Pages 32, 33, 34

“About the year 1320, John Wycliffe, the great reformer was born. He was the first to translate the whole Bible into the English language . . . Wycliffe had been much opposed in his work by the Roman Catholics, who eventually forbade the reading of the English Bible under penalty of death; and history relates a long list of martyrs who died at the stake rather than give up the blessed book.

Wycliffe died of paralysis at Lutterworth, December 31st, 1384. Forty years after his death the Roman Catholic authorities dug up his bones and burned them, scattering the ashes on the River Swift (*cf. Revelation 18:24*).

This Bible of Wycliffe’s was printed in four volumes in 1850. In 1388, Richard Purvey, with the aid of other scholars, made a revision of Wycliffe’s Bible; several copies of this also remains unto this day.

In 1535, William Tyndale . . . was the first to publish an English New Testament in print. . . . Several editions were printed. In all at least fifteen thousand copies were issued, which were secretly imported into England in bales of cloth, sacks of flour, etc. Every effort was, however, made by the Roman Catholic Church to prevent this Testament from getting into the hands of the people; and with this object in view, all that were found were seized and burnt . . .

On October 6th 1536, Tyndale, who had done this great work for England, was first strangled and then burnt at the stake by those who have ever been the unchanging enemies of an open Bible—viz., the Roman Catholic authorities. His last words were, “Lord open the King of England’s eyes!”

End of Quotes

Martin Luther/John Calvin/William Tyndale

Later other strong leaders also rose up in opposition to the Catholic Church. They came out from her in protest in the 1500s A.D., and developed their own Churches.

Internet: “Martin Luther (10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546) initiated the Protestant Revolution. As a priest and theology professor, he confronted indulgence salesmen with his Ninety-Five Thesis in 1517.

*[Note: The Reformation took place during the Thyatira Church of God Era, 1104 to the 1600s, **Revelation 2:18-29**; considering this very troubling time that was affecting all of Europe, it becomes easy to see how Jezebel entered that era of God’s Church and began deceiving the membership – more about this later.]*

The theology of Martin Luther was instrumental in influencing the Protestant Reformation . . .”

Luther was not the only one who started a protest movement against the Church. John Calvin, from France, also complained about the Catholic Church.



William Tyndale

MARTIN LUTHER - Germany (1483-1546)	WILLIAM TYNDALE - England (1494-1536)	JOHN CALVIN - France (1509-1564)
1517 – <i>Ninety-Five Theses on the Power of Indulgences</i>	<i>"I will cause the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the scriptures than the pope"</i>	1534 – <i>The Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
		

Melvyn Bragg's William Tyndale: "A Very Brief History"

The Daily Telegraph on 10th November 2017. The author of the article is Melvyn Bragg who is a famous writer and broadcaster in the UK.

"Remembering William Tyndale"

"In 1517 in Germany, Luther set Christianity on fire. His Ninety-Five Theses, which attacked the Roman Catholic Church with an unprecedented radicalism, violence and scholarship, threatened to destroy the authority and wealth of a religious system which had become an empire since the time of Constantine. His arguments turned the Church's *raison d'être* to dust. His followers rose up in riots; there were slaughters which were to last for centuries.

Meanwhile, in 1517 England, William Tyndale had set himself – against the law – to go back to the original Greek New Testament and translate it into English accessible to the illiterate and literate. By an unanticipated consequence his translation made him,

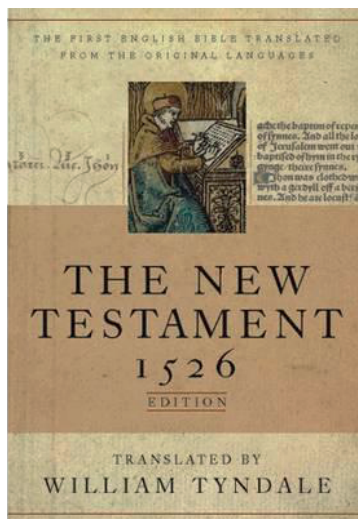
according to medieval historian Ian Mortimer, “the only writer in the English language more influential than Shakespeare”.

In the course of doing this, Tyndale became the most feared man in Henry VIII’s England. After fleeing from the Continent in 1524, he was pursued in exile by the intelligence systems of his own country, the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor.

Tyndale’s influence was to supersede that of Luther. There is no question that the brutal and scholarly volcanic eruption that came from the German monk was key to the Reformation. But once it spread to other countries, they were to have their own champions. And once Protestantism spread around the world, via two accidents of Empire – British and American – it was the English version of the Scriptures in the King James Bible which prevailed and led to global Protestantism.

The English version was Tyndale’s. Ninety-three per cent of the King James Bible is from his translation. In the Reformation’s 500th anniversary year, Tyndale deserves as much, if not more recognition than his German contemporary. He had an unlikely background for such a revolutionary spirit. His family were wealthy wool merchants in the West Country. He was educated at Oxford, was a patriot and a monarchist but he could not believe that the King was so “unkind” to his people that he did not let them read God’s word in their own language. Vernacular translations were all over Europe by the 1520s: in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia. England stood truculently alone: stuck with St Jerome’s Latin of 381, which was held to be so sacred, so untouchable, that it must never be criticised.

Erasmus, Luther and Tyndale thought it was inadequate. For Henry VIII, its exclusivity gave it authority and its limited readership gave it a status even greater than Magna Carta. In England, many from the mercantile gentry and the artisan class, like Tyndale, were critical of the Catholic Church and their clergy’s laxness, some of whom could not even recite the Lord’s Prayer.



Tyndale would have nothing to do with anything not in the Scriptures: so no pope, no pilgrimages, and above all no sale of indulgences – the Church’s biggest money-spinner. Tyndale had vowed that he would teach “a plough boy to know the Bible as well as any bishop”, leading him to write a Bible to be read aloud as well as alone. When his New Testament arrived in London in mid-1520, sent from Tyndale on the Continent, it was welcomed by the people but feared by the Church.

The Bishop of London bought 3,000 copies and burned them in front of the old St Paul’s. Yet they were still smuggled in and widely read. Soon, people replaced books in the flames.

From the end of the 1520s, the fires began to turn on those thought to be Protestants. London became a network of informers. The skies of the city were polluted with the smoke of human flesh. Yet it seemed that nothing could stop the influence of this turbulent Protestant priest. Tyndale was subjected to a vicious attack by Sir Thomas More (*later Saint Thomas*). Henry VIII enlisted this brilliant scholar to destroy Tyndale's reputation. More took on this task as a duty and pursued it with the scarcely credible cruelty and malice of a zealot.



A depiction of Tyndale being burnt at the stake in Belgium, c.1754. His words read: 'Lord, open the king of England's eyes [eyes].' It was reported that he [*More*] had a Tree of Truth in his gardens. Suspects would be tied to it and whipped, often by More himself. They would be taken to the Tower and tortured. You could be arrested for knowing Tyndale, having been seen with him, quoting him or, worst of all, having Tyndale's bible.

Lord Chancellor More's fear for a Protestant future was total. "If Tyndale's Testament be taken up," he wrote "then shall false heresies be preached, then shall the sacrament be set at naught ... then shall Almighty God be displeased, then shall He withdraw His grace and let all run to ruin ... then will rise up rifling and robbery, murder and mischief and plain insurrection ... then shall all laws be laughed to scorn ..." To More, and his fellow Catholics, the failings, indulgences, corruptions and excesses of the Church were a small price to pay for its delivery of the truth, faith and its promise of eternal salvation.

Tyndale's radicalism was in his translation. For example, from the Latin Vulgate, the English translation of the place of worship was "the church". In Tyndale's view, from the Greek, the word "Ekklesia" was not "church" but "congregation" – not a building or earthly property but an assembly of people of souls equal under God. And he translated "Presbyteros" not as "priest" but as "elder" – Christians, he said, needed no such intermediary; Christ was the only intermediary between themselves and God. In those two words, Tyndale sent a wrecking ball through centuries of authority.

Hiding in Germany and Belgium, Tyndale knew that to set foot on English soil – despite politic promises of Thomas Cromwell and the rumoured sympathy of Anne Boleyn – would be to face, under Henry VIII and Thomas More, a public trial and death. He was afraid of neither. But what would it serve?

Messages were sent and Stephen Vaughan, a sympathetic diplomat, met him in woods outside of Antwerp. Tyndale made Vaughan an extraordinary offer. He would return to England and face any trial, and accept execution, provided that the King authorised a translation of the bible into English. It need not be his own which he had laboured a lifetime, but any translation at all. Vaughan took the request back to London . . . but there was no reply.



Betrayed by a fellow Englishman in Antwerp, Tyndale was finally captured by guards of the Holy Roman Emperor, imprisoned for 16 months in a medieval castle outside Brussels, stripped of his status as a priest, tormented by 17 interrogators, and abandoned in a damp underground cell. On October 6 1536, he was paraded through the streets – and burned.

By then, King Henry VIII had commissioned a bible in English. It was his last cruel blow to Tyndale that his was not considered. The Coverdale Bible, the Matthew Bible and others in the 16th century followed up to the King James in 1611. What they have in common is that all of them plagiarised Tyndale’s work. In Shakespeare, there are over 1,300 references to Tyndale’s words which are reproduced in the plagiarised Bibles the Bard would have heard.

The English version of Protestantism, fed at its source by Tyndale, became the quarry in which millions found truth in their faith. His words provoked democracy, enriched liberty and literature, and are a magnificent global cultural achievement.” End of Quotes

The Fury of the Catholic Church

As already noted, during this Reformation period of time, the Catholic Church furiously fought and burned some people at the stake for even having a Bible in their possession. It used kings and queens to try and stamp it out of existence.

The kings of England were members of the Catholic Church. Though some dissented in some areas of their rigid teaching they remained in that Church.

King Henry VIII/Pope in Rome

A break in that iron reign of the rule of the Catholic Church in England came when a dispute arose between King Henry VIII and the pope. Since the pope would not yield to his request, the king rejected the Catholic Church and turned England to Protestantism.

Wikipedia: “King Henry VIII, reigned over England from 1491 to 1547. He played a critical role in the English Reformation turning the nation into a Protestant Nation.”

Queen Mary of England

However, after King Henry's death, his daughter, Mary, was used by Satan the devil to try and restore Catholicism to England.

Wikipedia: Mary 1, (1516-1558) was the Queen of England and Ireland from July 1553 until her death. She is best known for her aggressive attempt to reverse the English Reformation, which had begun during the reign of her father, Henry VIII.

The executions that marked her pursuit of the Roman Catholicism in England and Ireland led to her denunciation as '**Bloody Mary**' by her Protestant opponents."

During her five-year reign, Mary had over 280 religious dissenters burned at the stake in the Marian persecutions.



Wikipedia: Mary was weak and ill from May 1558.[151] In pain, possibly from ovarian cysts or uterine cancer,[152] she died on 17 November 1558, aged 42,

After Mary's death in 1558 her re-establishment of Roman Catholicism was reversed by her younger half-sister and successor Elizabeth 1, daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn, at the beginning of the Elizabethan Era." End of Quotes

The Thyatira Church Era

Throughout the Reformation Period of time, the members of the Thyatira Church of God Era, 1104-1600s, let down their guard and permitted Jezebel, as personified by the Catholic Church, to come among them; this was during the latter years of that Church Era. As the result they were so adversely affected they began to compromise with pagan doctrines (**Revelation 2:20**).

Church history records this as the time of: "The Israel of the Alps, 1600s" This period of time will be explained in greater detail later in these writings.

The Survival of the Holy Bible

All About the Bible, Sidney Collett, Pages 61-62

"Now consider for a moment how the mere existence of the Bible in our midst to-day, is itself a standing miracle.

. . . These oracles [**Romans 3:2; 9:4**] were committed to the Jews for safekeeping; but although they abound in the severest denunciations of their ways, and again and again foretell their destruction, so that the most natural procedure would have been for the Jews to rid themselves of the whole thing; yet, instead of this, age after age they preserved these Scriptures with superstitious care.

The enemies of the Jews, moreover have always been the enemies of the Bible. Indeed, in all the great and dreadful persecutions from Antiochus Epiphanes [**Daniel 8:9-11**], downwards, the chief aim of the persecutors have ever been to destroy the Book that made the Jews what they were.

Infidels also have from time to time spent their strength in trying to destroy the Bible; while Rome has done her best to burn it and its readers out of existence.

And yet this very Book rises up today like a phoenix from the fires, with an air of mingled pity and disdain for its foes, as much unharmed by their puny attacks as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by Nebuchadnezzar's furnace . . .

So with the Bible: in spite of all the storms of criticisms and infidelity that have for ages beat upon this sacred Book, it holds from every point of view a higher place to-day than ever it did before." End of Quotes

INTERNET: In 64 A.D. Emperor Nero not only tried to wipe out the Bible, but anyone who professed Christ. He blamed them for the burning of Rome (which, he did himself) and ordered their mass execution. There are about 7 million graves in 900 miles of caves beneath the streets of Rome which speak of his attempt to rid Rome of Christians. (Reference.)

Obviously, there is something special about this Book.

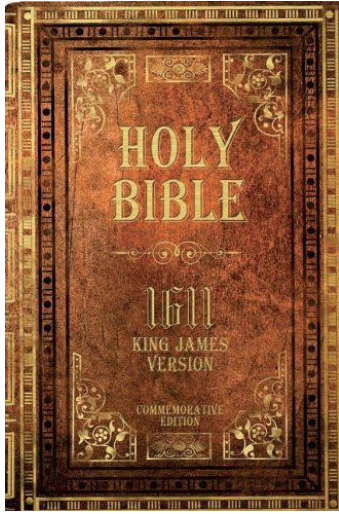
No other written document or collection of documents has even come close to surviving such trials or impacting our lives to such a degree. There is a very good reason for this—the Bible is indeed "God's Word".

God extended His protection over the Scriptures so that His message to us would never be lost. Despite man's many efforts to wipe out God's words, He loves us enough to preserve them so that we might know Him and love Him.

Remember, the Bible is God's love letter to you. Jesus said, "*I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*" (**Matthew 5:18**).

End of Quotes

The Publishing of the Authorized King James Bible



King James VI, reigned over Great Britain, Scotland and Ireland, from 1567 to 1625. He was used by God to have the Authorized King James Bible published in 1611.

At long last the Holy Bible became available to all of the people in England and finally in America. Since that time many translations of it has been published.

Virtually every home in Britain and America has a Bible in it.

Inside the New King James Version, the following writing is worth noting:

Preface

“In the preface of the 1611 edition, the translators of the Authorized Version, known popularly as the King James Bible, state that it was not their purpose ‘to make a new translation . . . but to make a good one better.’”

Indebted to the earlier work of William Tyndale and others, they saw their best contribution to consist in revising and enhancing the excellence of the English versions which had sprung from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. . . .”

End of Quotes

Church History from Holy Scripture

With all of the foregoing in mind as background this sets the stage for the beginning of Church history as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Bible survived that turbulent and violent time period of the Reformation and reached down into the time of the Ephesian Church Era; that had it’s beginning with the establishment of God Church on the Day of Pentecost, 31 A. D. The Book of Acts contains the history of the New Testament Church, written by Luke in 61 to 62 A. D.

The Book of Acts contains an overview of the history of the early New Testament Church of God from 31 A.D. to about 61 to 62 A.D. And by reading the letters from the writings of the apostles, James, Peter, Paul, and John, its history is tracked to about 100 A.D. — during the apostolic era.

When these events are put together with the letters to the Seven Churches in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, it can be realized for a surety where it has always been from its beginning unto this time.

It is a Church that has prevailed throughout the past two thousand years though Satan and his human instruments have desperately tried to destroy and stamp it out of existence.

During the first century the Catholic Church rose in prominence while the true Church of God fades into the background as the following article makes known:

Story of the Christian Church, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, Chapter V, Page 41

THE AGE OF SHADOWS FROM THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. PAUL, 68 A. D. TO THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN, 100 A.D.

We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 A. D., “The Age of shadows,” partly because the gloom of the persecution was over the Church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one we know the least.

We have no longer the clear light of the Book of Acts to guide us; and no author of that age has filled the blank in the history We would like to read of the later work by such helpers of St. Paul as Timothy, Apollos and Titus, but all these and St. Paul’s other friends drop out of the record at his death.

For fifty years after St. Paul’s life a curtain hangs over the Church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A. D. with the writings of the earliest church-fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul. . . .” End of Quotes

The Early Church

Historians have written about the beginnings of the early Church but later blend it in with the beginnings of the Catholic Church.

The following writing makes this known:

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, GIBBON, VOLUME 1

Excerpts from Chapter 15, Pages 382, 387-391

[From these excerpts taken from this writing of the Roman Historian Gibbon, it becomes easy to see how the outside world viewed the laws of God given through Moses, that carried over into the early Church as being repugnant. And in these excerpts we also find the traces of the early Church of God by their names.]

“The scanty and suspicious materials of ecclesiastical history seldom enable us to dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the Church . . .

Our curiosity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. . . . It will, perhaps, appear that it was most effectually favoured and assisted by the five following causes:

- 1 The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses
2. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth.
3. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church.
4. The pure and austere morals of the Christians.
5. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which generally formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire.

. . . A single people refused to join in the common intercourse of mankind.

. . . [*speaking of the Jews, but carried over into God's Church—*] The religion of Moses seems to be instituted for a particular country as well as for a single nation [*Israel*]; and if a strict obedience had been paid to the order that every male, three times a year, should present himself before the Lord Jehovah, it would have been impossible for the Jews to have ever spread themselves beyond the narrow limits of the promised land.

That obstacle was indeed removed by the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem [*70 A. D.*]; but the most considerable part of the Jewish religion was involved in its destruction; and the Pagans, who had long wondered at the strange report of an empty sanctuary, were at a loss to discover what could be the object, or what could be the instruments of a worship which was destitute of temples and of altars, of priests and of sacrifices. Yet even in their fallen state, the Jews, still asserting their lofty and exclusive privileges, shunned, instead of courting, the society of strangers. They still insisted with inflexible on those parts of the law which it was in their power to practice.

Their peculiar distinction of days, of meats, and a variety of trivial though burdensome observances, were so many objects of disgust and aversion for the other nations, to whose habits and prejudices they were diametrically opposed. The painful and even dangerous rite of circumcision was alone capable of repelling a willing proselyte from the door of the synagogue.

Under these circumstances, Christianity offered itself to the world, and with the strength of the Mosaic law, and delivered from the weight of its fetters. And exclusive zeal for the truth of religion and the unity of God was as carefully inculcated in the new as in the ancient system: and whatever was now revealed to mankind concerning nature and designs of the Supreme Being was fitted to increase their reverence for that mysterious

doctrine, the divine authority of Moses and the prophets was admitted, and even established as the firmest basis of Christianity. . . .

The history of the Church of Jerusalem affords a lively proof of the necessity of those precautions, and of the deep impression which the Jewish religion had made on the minds of its sectaries.

The first 15 bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews; and the Congregation over which they presided united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ. It was natural that the primitive tradition of a Church which was founded 40 days [*50 days – Pentecost, Acts 2:1*] after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the [*adherence to the accepted doctrinal teachings*].

The distant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable parent, and relieved her distresses by a liberal contribution of alms [*during time of famine; I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:1-24; 9:1-15*].

But when numerous and opulent societies was established in the great cities of the empire, in Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, the reverence which Jerusalem had inspired to all the Christian colonies insensibly diminished.

The Jewish converts or, as they were afterwards called, the **Nazarenes** who had laid the foundations of the Church, soon found themselves overwhelmed by the increasing religions of polytheism [the worship of more than one god] enlisted under the banner of Christ: and the Gentiles, who, with the approbation of their peculiar apostle had rejected the intolerable weight of Mosaic ceremonies [*Acts 15;1-35, the council at Jerusalem*], at length refused to their more scrupulous brethren the same toleration which at first they had humbly accepted for their own practice.

The ruin of the Temple, of the city, and of the public religion of the Jews, was severely felt by the Nazarenes [*70 A. D.*]; as in their manners, though not in their faith, they maintained so intimate a connection with their impious countrymen, whose misfortunes were attributed by the Pagans to the contempt, and more justly ascribed by the Christians to the wrath, of the Supreme Deity. The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jerusalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient Church languished above 60 years in solitude and obscurity. . . .

The name of Nazarenes was deemed too honourable for those Christian Jews, and they soon received the supposed poverty of their understanding, as well as of their condition, the contemptuous epithet of **Ebionates**. In a few years after the return of the Church to Jerusalem; it became a matter of doubt whether a man who sincerely acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, but who still continued to observe the law of Moses, could possibly hope for salvation. . . .

The unfortunate Ebionates, rejected from one religion as apostates, and from the other as heretics, found themselves compelled to assume a more decided character; and although some traces of that obsolete sect may be discovered as late as the fourth century, they insensibly melted away either into the church [*Catholic*] or the synagogue [*neither one*].”

End of Quotes

Simon Magus/The Catholic Church

The Church that came to be known and identified as the Catholic Church had its beginning in 32 or 33 A. D., by Simon Magus (**Acts 8:9-24**; *the real founder of Christianity, Mr. Armstrong*).

With this dominant Church coming to be recognized, accepted, and later as a state religion, created a real trying problem and hardship for God’s Church. Due to violent persecution it fled and faded out of sight for the most part from the world about them.

More will be written later in this writing about Simon Magus and his reverence by Rome, who even had a statue made of him.

The Seven Church Eras

Not to leave His own elect membership in the dark to the continued existence of God’s true Church from 31 A. D., Jesus Christ made sure it could be traced throughout the many years to follow by giving an overview of its ongoing history through the writings of the apostle John in the prophetic book of Revelation.

From the writings of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong—

The Key to the Book of REVELATION, page 5, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong:

“The second and third chapters contain the messages to the seven churches. These represent the Church in its seven successive stages through the age, and also the seven characteristics to be found in the Church all through the age—the Ephesian condition dominating at the beginning, the Laodicean condition at the end . . .”



The Book of REVELATION Unveiled at Last, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Page 9:

“The first real prophecy of the Book is contained in the second and third chapters—the messages to the seven Churches.

These messages come DIRECT FROM CHRIST—they contain the direct TESTIMONY of JESUS CHRIST. . . . Here Jesus takes the actual spiritual condition and

FUNCTIONING of these seven Churches, then existing in Asia Minor, as a PROPHECY of the spiritual condition and the works and accomplishments, in carrying out Christ's Great Commission to the true CHURCH OF GOD during the SEVEN successive periods of time up until the END of this age and the second coming of Christ . . .

These are messages from Christ, the living HEAD of His Church, to HIS OWN TRUE CHURCH in its seven successive eras of time from about 100 A.D., until a period even YET FUTURE . . .

The first five messages to the Churches are prophetic of stages of God's true people on earth which have already been FULFILLED, and now are HISTORY . . .”

End of Quotes

A Historical Study of the Seven Church Eras

With this as background it is needful to make a study of the seven successive Church eras. At the same time, it is necessary to fit with it historical data that prominently fits in with it bringing to the fore some very important spiritual lessons to God's people.

Since the Ephesian Church Era had such an important role in the beginning of establishing the foundation of the Church of God, and then seeing how it was adversely affected so severely by false ministers in later years, more writing about it will be necessary to enable one to see how their problems carried on down through all of the Church Eras in one way or another.

The following is the beginning of the Ephesian Church Era, the Apostolic Era.

The Introduction to the Seven Churches The Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Seven Churches—

Revelation 1:1-8, 10, 16, 20

vs. 1-2 THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him TO SHOW to His servants— things which MUST shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

v. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear these words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

v. 4 John, to the seven Churches which are in Asia (*Turkey today*): Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne.

v. 5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the RULER over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

v. 6 And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

v. 7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will SEE Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so. Amen.

v. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet), the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

vs. 10-11 I was in the spirit in (*Greek: ‘en’- meaning in the coming day of the Lord*), the Lord’s Day and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “I Am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see write it in a book and send it to the seven Churches which are in Asia:



to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

vs. 12-15 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands. And in THE MIDST of the seven lampstands, One like the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to His feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; his feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

vs. 16-17 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

vs. 18-19 “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen. And I have the KEYS of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

v. 20 “The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels (margin: or messengers, *cf. Daniel 12:2*), and the seven lampstands (*cf. Zechariah 4:2*) which you saw are the seven Churches.”

The Seven Churches in Asia Minor

MYSTERY OF THE AGES, pages 282-293,

“The Seven Churches were located in Western Asia Minor; the region that is called Western Turkey today. These were cities in this region. The primary city was Ephesus, the commercial capital of the province.

Pergamos was the political and religious center. All were held together by a major road system— which was also one of the mail routes of the old Roman Empire. Riders would follow the route carrying messages from town to town.”

The Writings of Jesus Christ to the Seven Churches

There were successive stages or eras of God’s true Church from its beginning on the Day of Pentecost in 31 A. D. (*Matthew 16:14; Acts 2:1-3, 14-40*), and continues unto the return of Jesus Christ, approximately two thousand years later (*Revelation two and three*). During this past two-thousand-years the Church eras were: “. . . like relay runners in a race in which is passed the baton from runner to runner, each one doing its part, until the finish line” (*Mystery of the Ages, page 283*).

The baton has passed from each one of the first six of the seven Church Eras, but not yet the Seventh Era.



Though the Laodicean Church Era, as an entity (*having a recognized leader over it*), has not yet materialized, its Scriptural presence or spirit however is very evident (*this will be made known later*). And when it does develop into an entity, this will complete the full circle; the passing of the baton will have been completed—possibly very close to the beginning of the Great Tribulation; three and one-half years before the coming of Jesus Christ.

Considering future prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled, and other major events that fit into it, it is believed it will take place in the year 2026 (*For details, please read the October, November, December, 2017 in the Philadelphia Remnant Magazine, the article – “The Foreboding Total Solar Eclipse”, together with its continuation in the Oct. Nov. Dec., 2018 publication; and the projected one scheduled for the Jan. Feb. Mar., 2019 edition.*

At Christ’s return the faithful and enduring people of God from all Seven Church Eras, will then rise to meet Jesus Christ, along with all of the prophets and patriarchs of old (*I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 11; Luke 13:28*).

Jerusalem the Headquarters Church

God’s Church was first headquartered in Jerusalem and pastored by the Apostle James, brother of Christ (*Acts 15:4, 13; Galatians 1:18-19; 2:12*). James was still pastoring the Church in 60 A.D. He was martyred at the Temple in Jerusalem in 62 A.D. (A/C Correspondence Course, Lesson 44, page 1). Other elders continued pastoring it (*Acts 21:18*).

When the Church fled to Pella in approximately 70 A.D., it continued as the headquarters Church of the Ephesian Church Era. History records it having remained there for about 65 years.

Names by Which the Church Members Were Identified

It is important in this study to know the NAMES by which the people of God were known among themselves, and by outsiders, for this a major factor in tracing their history.

In the beginning, they were called **disciples** and later referred to as Christians: “. . . and the disciples were first called CHRISTIANS in Antioch (*Acts 11:26*). They were also called **Saints** by the Apostle Paul (*Romans 1:1-7*).

Outsiders identified them by either their circumstances or by their leader at any given time throughout their history as will be made known before this writing is completed.

While giving evidence against the Apostle Paul before the governor in Caesarea, Tertullus, the prosecutor said the following:

“For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of THE SECT OF THE NAZRENES (Acts 24:5).

Nazarenes was a reference to Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It was also referred to as a sect:

The Apostle Paul called together the leaders of the Jews in Rome to speak to them concerning the hope of Israel. They said to him: “. . . **concerning THIS SECT it is spoken against everywhere” (Acts 28:22).**

The Problems of the Seven Churches

While studying the writings of those Seven Churches, it can be seen upon close scrutiny their overall problem began in the first Church era. From there it only got worse through each of the four succeeding Church eras until it became so bad in the 5th Church Era it virtually died.

The major underlying cause of the Ephesian Church Era—*having left their first love (Revelation 2:4)*. This led to such major problems, Christ removed the lamp from them.

Their loss of love opened the door to even greater problems than those of Ephesus into Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira and Sardis. [It then leapfrogged over the Philadelphia Era into the 7th Church Era whose love centered around themselves, self-righteousness (*Revelation 3:17-20*)].

From the writings in Revelation 3, it can be seen how this primary problem was corrected by Jesus Christ in the 6th Church era, but then re-entered the 7th Church era. As the result their light has dimmed so much from its lack of oil it has virtually gone out; *unnoticed*, they are sleeping their way into the **Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:14-22; Matthew 25:1-13)**.

It is noteworthy that the blessings from Jesus Christ to the Seven Church Eras are only given to those who remain awake and are over-comers as can be seen in each letter.

Addressing Each Church by Name

Jesus Christ addresses each Church Era by saying: **“And to the angel”** (*Margin: Messenger*), this appears to be synonymous with the apostle of each Church era; and the messenger, or apostle, reflects the Spiritual state of each Church Era.

History reveals the Church is only as strong and zealous as is the messenger. [Think of this regarding Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and the Philadelphia Era of the Church of God. In spite of strong oppositions from various ones, he held the majority of the Church together and on track until his death in early 1986].

In addition, there is the need of connecting THE NAME of each Church era to its place in history at that time for the name reveals the major weaknesses of each era.

Letters from Jesus Christ to the Seven Church Eras

These two chapters, Revelation 2 and 3, NKJV, will be considered as an overview and more in detail in this present writing.

Chapters 2 and 3 are successive stages or eras of time of God's Church from its beginning unto Christ's return. True to Christ's promise it has never failed at any time in its ongoing history (**Matthew 16:18**).

[As it is today], there were always the few who remained faithful to the precious truth that had been revealed to them while the baton was passed from one to the other of the Church Eras; thus, keeping the Church alive (**Luke 12:32**).

The history of God's Church also reveals when the Church fled to Pella escaping Satan's wrath from Titus and his enormous Roman army closing in on Jerusalem in 70 A.D. with the objective of destroying the city; and it did. It continued there as a Headquarters Church for the Ephesian Era of God's Church."

End of Quotes

Thus, the beginning of the overview of the Church Era of Ephesus, the Apostolic Era as follows.

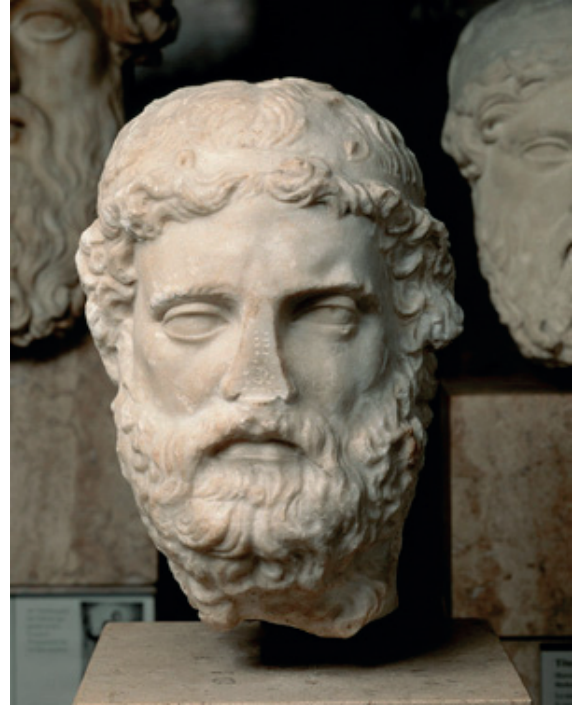
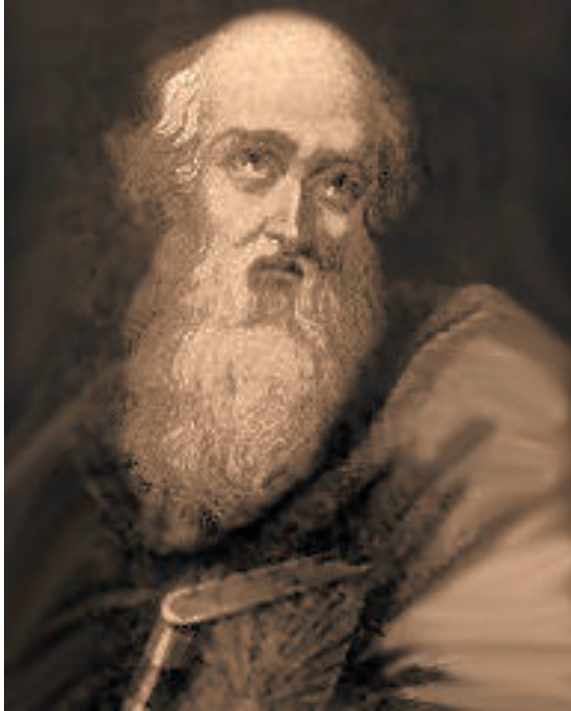
Background of the City of Ephesus

Ephesus was the commercial capital and primary city of western Asia Minor. It was a Roman province in Asia. Today it is known as Asia Minor – Turkey.

It was a magnificent city of a population of 225,000. It was at the center of the Imperial Highway from Rome to the East, and was the backbone of the Roman Empire (**Acts 19**).

Ephesus became the metropolis of the Churches in Asia Minor and became another headquarters of the Ephesian Era. After having been released from the island in Patmos in the 90s A. D., the apostle John returned to Ephesus.

While dwelling in Ephesus the Apostle John trained Polycarp who later carried forward the Work of John and Philip. Polycarp trained Polycrates, who replaced him (*more about these two men later*). It was here that the Apostle John, and the original deacon, Philip died.



And though it did have its good points, it was in this very first Church Era that a major problem developed that later caused its lamp to be removed by Jesus Christ (**verse 5**). Sadly, this problem filtered on down through all of them until the Philadelphia Era.

What was that grave problem?

The answer is given by Jesus Christ through the Apostle's John writing:

“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have LEFT your first love”
(Revelation 2:4).

Their First Love

That FIRST LOVE was the caring desire to share the wonderful truths of the gospel with others; that same LOVE with which they were blessed in their initial conversion by having had their minds OPENED to receive those truths from God our Father and Jesus Christ.

This can be seen by those who were brought to conversion on the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., and sometime afterwards:

Acts 2:41-47

vs. 41-42 Then those who gladly received his word (*from the apostle Peter*) were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them (*the 120, Acts 1:15*). And they continued steadfastly in THE APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers.

vs. 44-45 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common (sharing, see Acts 4:32-35), and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

vs. 46-47 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people . . .

Shortly thereafter due to severe persecution coming on the Church, except for the apostles, the Church was scattered in 33 A.D., but it was still zealous for they went everywhere preaching the word (**Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19**).

The following writing regarding the true Church picks up with it a few years later making known the scant writings of the New Testament among the membership.

THE STORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, Page 40:

Literature of the Period

At the time of the Council at Jerusalem, 50 A.D. [**Acts 15:6-29**], none of the New Testament books had been written, and the Church was dependent for its knowledge of the Saviour's life and teachings upon the memory of the earlier disciples.

But before the close of this period, 68 A.D., a large part of the New Testament was in circulation, including the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the epistles of St. Paul and James, I Peter and perhaps II Peter, . . ."

End of Quotes

Major Problems Developed Within the Church

Over the next few years the members love for the truth and the work had faded and this brought with it major problems within the Church. This can be seen in the writings of the Apostle Paul to the Churches in Galatia, Corinth, and elsewhere.

The blessing of that first love was overpowered by both the acceptance of false teachers, and ministers who turned apostate (**Acts 20:29-30**). As the result the entrance was made easy for erroneous teachings and the majority of the members embraced them.

A few remained faithful, but from the context of what was written to the Ephesian Church Era, it appears the majority did not! Jesus Christ then removed its lamp and the faithful members were *scattered*

Simon Magus the Magician

It is needful to write further about this wicked man that was used by Satan the devil to perpetuate his mark in human history, as perceived by the Apostle Peter (**Acts 8:19-24**), by his dedication to overthrow the truth of God.

Simon Magus was the man Satan used to begin this counterfeit church that would over time become the dominant church through the centuries and would come to have a membership exceeding one billion members in its fold in this end-time.

This church, the media reports, is filled with priests preying on thousands of little boys, and a few girls (dated: 8-14-18)! This has been reported time after time over the past few years – even reaching up to the cardinals and continues to this present time. And the Pope hides by not saying anything other than the devil is responsible.

Indeed, the devil is overall responsible (**Ephesians 2:1-3**)! However, the pope and priests as free moral agents still have the option to make the decisions, just as all of mankind has the same option to choose – whether good or bad! Any other Church would have been stamped out of existence, *but not the Catholic Church!*

To understand its rotten history over the centuries, please read of it in Halley's Handbook, pages 768-784, 24th Edition, 1965.

And it began with Simon Magus—

Acts 8:9-11

vs.8-9 But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery (*margin: magic*) in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

Clarke Commentary, volume 5, Page 740, **Acts 8:9**, Simon: "Sorcerer", Greek word signifies practicing the rites or science of the Magi – from which we have magician." Note "Acts 8:9: Simon Magus (*cf. Genesis 10*). Around 80 A. D. there was no Peter, James or Paul—only John. Apostasy was developing rapidly—especially in the west. Many people began to look for new leaders and new headquarters.



Peter's Confrontation with Simon Magus by Avaranzo Nucci (1620)

Dositheos the Samaritan Source: wfoos-nghl-kslsta.blogspot.sg

Simon Magus and Dositheos

At this moment, an old pagan tradition was revived and circulated that Peter had been in Rome. The most important part of Rome was

‘Vatican Hill’. Vatis means ‘Prophet’ or ‘Soothsayer’.

There was a pagan cemetery where the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is today. The chief object of reverence at the cemetery shrine is the tomb of “Peter.” [*Actually, Nimrod*]. Anacletus (*pope*) dedicated this shrine of Nimrod to the Apostle Peter around 80 A. D. Anacletus claimed to have been ordained by Peter [*Simon Magus*] – and hence the beginning of the development of what came to be the Catholic Church.”

Though more will be written about Simon Magus who was baptized by Philip, but was denied the laying on of hands for the receiving of God’s Holy Spirit (**Acts 8:9-23**), it is sufficient to say here that he was the instrument of Satan the devil and used by him to begin what came to be known over some time as the Catholic Church. He is introduced here in brief.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Simoni Deo Sancto

“Justin and Irenaeus also record several other pieces of information: After being cast out by the Apostles he came to Rome, having joined to himself a profligate woman of the name of Helen, he gave out that it was he who appeared among the Jews as the Son, in Samaria as the Father and among other nations as the Holy Spirit.

He performed such miracles by magic acts during the reign of Claudius that he was regarded as a god and honored with a statue on the island in the Tiber which the two bridges cross, with the inscription *Simoni Deo Sancto*, "To Simon the Holy God".

However, in the 1500s, a statue was unearthed on the island in question, inscribed to Semo Sancus, a Sabine deity, leading most scholars to believe that Justin Martyr confused Semoni Sancus with Simon.”

End of Quotes

Conspiracy Within the Church of God

The followers of Simon Magus (**Acts 8:9-24**) had already infiltrated into the Churches of God. At first they implied they believed the same teachings but over time they began coming out into the open with the same teachings as do the Christian Churches today (**II Timothy 4:1-4**).



Instead of obeying the words of Jesus Christ through the Apostle Paul to disfellowship them (Romans 16:17-18), they were tolerated by some of the leading ministers and members who felt they would not be showing love if they did disfellowship them—perhaps believing they would come to see their errors and change (*I Corinthians 5:1-13*). It didn't happen!

The faithful members of that Church Era were commended by Christ for their perseverance and for TESTING the ministers among them who were in reality ministers of the synagogue of Satan the devil.

Revelation 2:2

v. 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience (margin: perseverance), and that you cannot bear (margin: endure) those who are evil. And you have TESTED those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars.”

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Messenger sent by God

By A.D. 53—the false ministers had also *infected* some of the leading ministers and members in Galatia by changing the correct teaching of the Gospel from what the Messenger, Jesus Christ, had brought to mankind to that about the person of Jesus Christ as made known by the Apostle Paul

Galatians 1:6-9

vs. 6-7 “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to A DIFFERENT GOSPEL, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to PERVERT the gospel of Christ.

vs. 8-9 “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you let him be ACCURSED. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what we have received, let him be ACCURSED (*a double curse*).”

The Lost Century

Mystery of the Ages, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Chapter 7, Mystery of the Kingdom of God, pages 293-294:

“During the first 20 or 30 years after the founding of the Church in A.D. 31 a violent controversy arose over the very question of what is ‘the Gospel of Jesus Christ.’ There ensued a hundred years in which all history of the New Testament was destroyed. It has been called ‘the lost century of Church history.’

When the curtain lifted, about the middle of the second century, there appeared an entirely different church calling itself Christian, but in the main preaching its own gospel ABOUT Christ [Himself], not the gospel OF Christ.”

“During this time the Church Era of Ephesus had actively ceased carrying God’s TRUTH to the world. It went to sleep spiritually. From about A.D. 59 the gospel was suppressed. A counterfeit gospel replaced it.”

End of Quotes

The Churches in Asia

It was also during this time that the Churches in Asia began falling away as the apostle Paul made known:

II Timothy 1:15

v. 15 “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me . . .” Without question, this was very discouraging for the true membership. In type this is what happened with the Worldwide Church of God after 1995—turning apostate—away from the teachings Jesus Christ revealed to His Church through His late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

After both encouraging and urging the members of God’s Church to be faithful to their calling in their last letters (*II Peter 1:10-15; II Timothy 1:13-14; 4:6-8*), the apostles Peter and Paul were martyred in 68 A. D. The Apostle Paul in Rome; and the Apostle Peter in Britain. This was also the same year that Emperor Nero of Rome committed suicide (*June 9th, 68 A.D.*).

The Church in Jerusalem Flees—

Between the years of 69 A.D. and 70 A.D, the members of the Church of God who were dwelling in Jerusalem fled from that city to Pella, Jordan, to escape the slaughter the Jewish people would experience upon the arrival of Titus and his massive Roman armies and their attack against that city. A type of what will take place in 2026.

To try and pinpoint as closely as possible the actual time the Church fled, references will be used primarily from the writings of the very famous and respected Jewish historian, Josephus.



Josephus— ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS

THE JEWISH WAR, Volume 4, Book IV, chapters 9- 11; Book V, chapters 1-3., pages 134-135

June 9, 68 A. D. “Now as Vespasian was returned to Caesarea, and was getting ready with all his army to march directly to Jerusalem, he was informed that Nero was dead, after he had reigned thirteen years and eight days . . . Galba was made emperor . . . and slain by treachery in the middle of the market-place at Rome, and Otho was made emperor; with his expedition against the commanders of Vitellius, and his destruction thereupon, and the fight was about the Capital; as also, how Antonius Primas and Mucianus slew Vitellius and his German legions. . . .



Wherefore Vespasian put off at first his expedition against Jerusalem, and stood waiting whither the empire would be transferred after the death of Nero. Moreover, when he heard that Galba was made emperor, he attempted nothing till he also should send him some directions about the war: however, he sent his son Titus to him to salute him, and to receive his commands about the Jews.

Upon the very same errand did King Agrippa sail along with Titus to Galba: but as they were sailing in their long ships by the coast of Achaia, for it was wintertime, they heard that Galba was slain before they could get to him, after he had reigned seven months and as many days.

Upon whom Otho took the government . . . Titus, by a divine impulse, sailed back from Greece to Syria, and came in great haste to Caesarea, to his father. And now they were in great suspense about the public affairs, the Roman empire being then in a fluctuating condition, and did not go on with their expedition against Jews, but thought that to make any attack upon foreigners was now unseasonable, on account of the solicitude they were in for their own country.”

End of Quotes

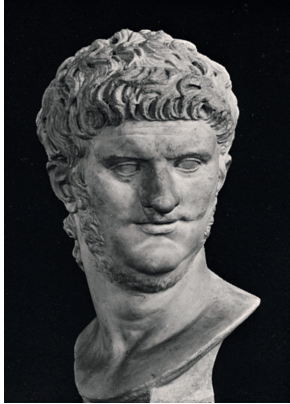
The following is an overview of the same history.

The Jewish Rebellion against Rome

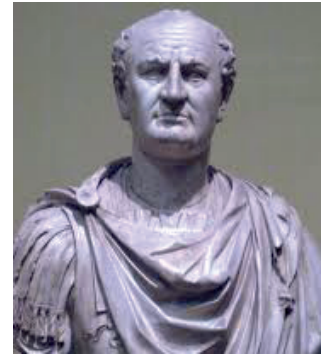
The Bible as History by Werner Keller, page 66.

[In Jerusalem] “. . . mounting anger broke into open revolt against Rome in May, 66 A. D. . . . Jerusalem fell into the hands of the rebels . . . This was the signal for the whole country. Rebellion flared up everywhere,”

[Prophecy, together with major events taking place, strongly implies the same will begin in America in 2024 and become very bad in 2026, a virtual revolution]

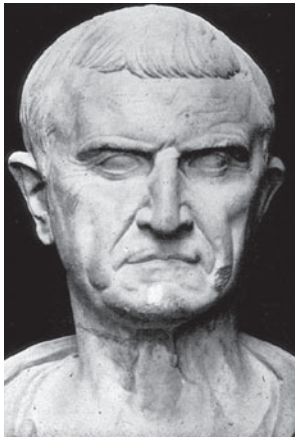


Pages 398-399, excerpts: “Rome fought back. The Jews were victorious for a time; however, the armies of Rome over the next three years proved to be too much for the Jews.



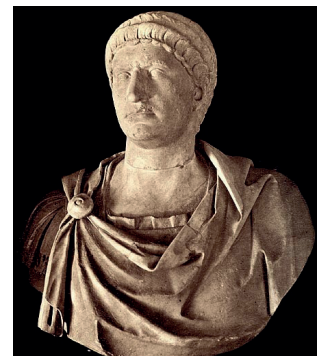
City after city was taken by the Roman General Vespasian’s armies until they reached Jerusalem and began making preparations to conquer the city in 68 A.D. After personally making the preparations for the attack against Jerusalem, Vespasian then returned to Caesarea and was making ready with all his army to march directly to Jerusalem.

He then learned of the suicidal death of Nero (*June 9, 68 A.D.*) and changed his intentions of beginning the attack against that city.



Vespasian stood [*waited*] to see whether the empire would be transferred. He heard Galba was made emperor and attempted nothing further till he should send him some directions about the war [*June 68 A.D.*]. With this in mind he sent his son Titus to salute Galba as the new emperor and receive instructions about the Jews.

However, Galba was slain before he arrived [*January 15, 69 AD*].



Otho then became the new emperor [*January 15, 69 AD - April 16, 69 AD*]. Titus hurriedly returned to his father in

Caesarea.



“While Vespasian and Titus were waiting there an internal struggle broke out again near Jerusalem by the Jews against Rome” (page 399).

Vespasian and Titus fought back; and after they had overthrown all the places near Jerusalem; he returned to Caesarea. They heard further of the continuing troubles that were in Rome; and that Vitellius was now emperor [*April 17, 69 AD*].

This produced indignation in Vespasian; his passion excited him to avenge his country. Because it was still the winter season he restrained himself . . . Afterwards Vespasian left Caesarea and came to Antioch on his march to Rome.

Vitellius had his head cut off by Vespasian's troops in the midst of Rome, having reigned eight months and five days [December 20, 69 AD]. As Vespasian was come to Alexandria this good news came to him from Rome. And upon confirmation of him being established as the new emperor by his entire government he turned his thought back to the unsettled state of Jerusalem.

However, he himself made haste to go to Rome, since the winter was now almost over [69 A.D and early in 70 A.D.], and soon set the affairs of Alexandria in order. While he (Titus) was assisting his father in settling the government in Alexandria which had been newly conferred upon them by God, it so happened, that the sedition at Jerusalem was revived, and parted into three factions, and that one faction fought against the other.



Vespasian then sent his son Titus [from Alexandria] with a select army to destroy Jerusalem. So Titus marched on foot the many miles until he at last reached Caesarea.

After having reached Caesarea with his select army, Titus then gathered his forces together and ordered the others to meet him at Jerusalem. He then marched out of Caesarea toward Jerusalem.

Shortly before the full moon in the spring of 70 A.D. Titus appeared with an enormous army outside Jerusalem. Marching columns filled the highways and byways leading to the city such as Judea had never seen before . . . almost 80,000 men.

The Holy City was swarming with people, for pilgrims had come from far and near to celebrate the Passover.

Titus launches His Attack against Jerusalem

“The siege against Jerusalem began at the Passover, 70 A.D. According to Josephus there were well over a million Jewish people gathered there to observe the Passover for he says the entire number that perished in the siege was 1,100,000.

“In addition thousands of captives were sent to labor in the Egyptian mines. Those under 17 were sold into slavery until no one would buy them.



“At Caesarea 2500 captive Jews were burnt to death, or fought with one another, or with wild beasts, in honor of his brother, Domitian’s, birthday.

“At Berytus in Phoenicia, Titus celebrated his father’s birthday in a similar manner” (ANCIENT HISTORY IN BIBLE LIGHT, Dorothy Ruth Miller, page 262).

Foreseeing this Calamity, Jesus Christ Wept

Shortly before He was arrested and then crucified, Jesus Christ foresaw this slaughter that would take place in Jerusalem in 39 years, and He wept:

Luke 19:41-44

vs. 41-42 Now as He drew near, He saw the city (Jerusalem) and wept over it, Saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

vs. 43-44 “For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, And level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave to you one stone upon another (*Matthew 24:1-2*), because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Later, as the Roman soldiers were leading Jesus Christ to where He would be nailed to the stake, He turned and said directly to the women, though His words carried within the hearing of the many people who followed Him, words of great compassion:

Luke 23:28-30

v. 28-29 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women also who mourned and LAMENTED Him, but Jesus turned to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

vs. 29-30 “For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us?”

The Church in Jerusalem

It was only the few Christians who miraculously escaped the slaughter by the Roman armies in the city of Jerusalem. This was due to their having a right and close relationship with God. They escaped some little time before Titus attacked Jerusalem.

This is a type of the soon-coming future for the faithful Elect of God who will also have a need to flee before the Revived Roman Empire attacks the House of Joseph

(Leviticus 23; Deuteronomy 28). Prophecy, duality, with major events then to take place strongly indicates this will be close to the time of the Passover in 2026.

This should be seen and understood by God's true people with real effort of trying hard to have that kind of a relationship with God so each one can also be spared before the same fate befalls the members of the Church who will not be counted worthy to escape!

It is vital that one must have a reverent fear for God! Otherwise it becomes easy to pursue human reasoning rather than trusting in Prayer and the Scriptures for the guidance of God.

A Continued Overview of These Historical Events

(The Bible as History by Werner Keller, pages 398-399).

"The Roman General Vespasian left the war in Jerusalem to go to Rome, during the latter part of 69 A.D., at which time he became the confirmed new Emperor, December 22, 69 A.D."

An overview: There were three others, one after the other, who claimed the role of Emperor after Nero had committed suicide in 68 A. D., but their rule was very short term: Galba - seven months; Otho - three months; Vitellius - eight months and five days. All three lost their lives.

After arriving in Rome, Vespasian fought against the newly crowned emperor Vitellius. The capital (Rome) was burnt during the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the 19th of December, A.D. 69. *(The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, volume 1, page 461 by Gibbon).*



Vespasian had commissioned his son Titus to bring defeat to the Jews in Jerusalem. However, this had to wait for Titus had also left Jerusalem and was with his father in Alexandria assisting him in settling that government in 69 A.D. *(Josephus, volume 4, Book 5, chapter 1).*

It was from Alexandria that Titus went back to Jerusalem with an enormous army and began his attack on Jerusalem at the Passover in 70 A.D.

The Signs Being Watched for by the Christians in Jerusalem to know when to Flee Jerusalem

Based on those yearly dates by the foregoing historians, it would appear the people of God in Jerusalem began watching for the opportunity to flee the city sometime after Pentecost

69 A.D., after having heard the voice saying, “**Let us remove hence.**” ANCIENT HISTORY IN BIBLE LIGHT, Dorothy Ruth Miller, page 261).

When considering that Vespasian did not leave for some months after the death of Nero, in 68 A.D., and the deaths of first two of the new Emperors, Galba and Otho, altogether 10 months, it would appear the Christians did not flee until shortly before the Passover in 70 A.D.

From the context of these historical writings it can be seen a small window of opportunity opened up for the Christians to escape somewhere before Titus arrived and the beginning of the Passover.

The Roman armies that were left behind in the area of Jerusalem after Vespasian and Titus had left Caesarea for Alexandria were left there as occupational armies. They were not to engage in trying to storm the city of Jerusalem but rather to wait until Titus was to return with additional armies.

There was another sign Jesus Christ had told His disciples to watch for before fleeing Jerusalem. In their circumstances, they were not to watch for the abomination to be placed in the temple as found in Matthew 24, and Mark 13, for the Romans had not yet conquered the city.

Rather they were to watch for the armies that would be closing in on Jerusalem as made known by Jesus Christ:

Luke 21:20-21

vs. 20-21 “**But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, THEN KNOW that its desolation is near, THEN let those in Judea FLEE to the mountains (Dual: Pella, Jordan in 70 A. D., Petra, Jordan soon), let those who are in the midst of her (then, and future - Jerusalem) depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.**”

A Scenario based on Historical Fact:

After realizing the remaining armies of Rome were left there only as occupational armies to make sure there would be no further outbreaks by the Jews, the Christians began watching for the opportunity to slip away, undoubtedly in the middle of the night as not to be seen fleeing the city.

Due to the **SIGN** Jesus Christ had told them to watch for they probably did not leave until they knew Titus and his armies were very close to Jerusalem; this had to be a real test in patience and faith for them as it always is for God’s true and faithful people in trying situations.

An Example of Duality

There is a duality with Joseph and Mary who fled during the night after receiving the warning by an angel to flee to Egypt due to Herod's army being sent by him to murder the Child—Messiah (**Matthew 2:13-15**).

It seems without question that an angel, Gabriel, appeared in person or in a dream to the leading pastor of the Church in Jerusalem, telling him the exact time to flee (*consider the departure of Lot from Sodom, Genesis 19:15-17*), and the place where they were to go as did the angel to Joseph and Mary (**Matthew 2:13-15**).

How else would they know where their place of refuge would be?

At the same time the members of God's Church had learned of Titus who was on his way back to Jerusalem with enormous armies. Seeing an opportunity to flee, they then heeded what Christ had said and slipped away into the darkness of night on their way to Pella, Jordan.

The Church FLED in 70 A. D.

ANCIENT HISTORY IN BIBLE LIGHT, by Dorothy Ruth Miller, page 262

“The Escape of the Christians. Attention has been called to the fact that the Christians in Palestine took no part in the revolt of the Jews. Some time before the siege, following the warning in Luke 21:20-22, they withdrew to Pella, beyond the Jordan led by Symeon, the cousin, it is thought, of the Lord Jesus, and of James the first pastor of the Church at Jerusalem.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, Symeon led back the more faithful Christians to Jerusalem. Symeon was pastor of the Church for 40 years. He was crucified in 109 A.D. under Trajan.”

An Overview – A/C Correspondence Course Lesson 49

“The new Emperor died suddenly [Otho]. Leaving the army in Palestine to his son, Vespasian raced for Rome to be emperor. Again, the Roman armies temporarily withdrew!

And in Jerusalem, as God's people were gathered at the Feast of Pentecost in 69 A. D., there was an earthquake, accompanied with a great noise, and a supernatural voice was heard to say in the Temple: "LET US REMOVE HENCE!"

Ancient History in Bible Light, Miller, page 261 “Again on the night of the last Pentecost ever celebrated in the Sanctuary [69 A.D.], “as the priests were going by night into the inner Temple, as their custom was, to perform the scared ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, ‘Let us remove hence.’”

God's people did "remove hence!" The Church fled to the mountains, and on to Pella, a small town just beyond the River Jordan. Behind them the Roman armies closed in rapidly on Jerusalem.

The Jews were STARVED into submission [*having plundered and destroyed their own food supplies by fighting against each other*]. Jerusalem fell after HORRIBLE SUFFERING. The Temple of God was razed to the ground!

And the Church of God everywhere in Roman lands was silenced. No meetings were allowed after A.D. 69 out of fear of revolt after the death of two Caesars already that year. Thus ended, after just two 19-year cycles, the work of the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem! The Pella congregation still called itself the Jerusalem church. Its chief elder was still pastor of "Jerusalem."

In the first 38 years, as congregations and conversions multiplied, the distant churches had very frequently appealed to the authority of the mother church in Jerusalem. But now a period of declining zeal set in for the whole Church. This condition was foretold in the prophetic messages to the Seven Churches (***Revelation 2 and 3***).

1. Did Jesus Christ highly commend the first era of the Church for its labor and patience and goodness? ***Rev. 2:2, 3***. Did He state it had EARLY to face false apostles – men seeking to build up a following for themselves, whom Jesus Christ had not ordained? Same verse. Who were these people whom the True Church "canst not bear"? ***Verse 6***.

2. But did He also have something against this church era? What is it? Verse 4. What did Christ threaten to do if this church did not awaken from its lethargy? ***Verse 5*** compared with ***chapter 1, verse 20***.

COMMENT: He would REMOVE IT OUT OF ITS PLACE [*the lamp stand, cf. Revelation 1:20*]! This was done physically, in type -- even before the prophecy was written, when the Jerusalem headquarters church was transferred to Pella. It was done spiritually when the authority and respect in which this mother church had been held was stripped from it in A.D. 135 after a second Jewish War with Rome.

At the time John penned these words, Jesus Christ already knew the performance record of the church at Ephesus. That church congregation was a type of the entire church in apostolic times. The Ephesus Church had let down. It had not continued its work after A.D. 69 to all nations (***Matthew 28:19***).

Did the apostle Paul before A.D. 68 find it necessary to warn even some ministers to be more diligent? ***Colossians 4:17***. Was even the Evangelist Timothy, his most faithful helper, in need of being stirred up? ***II Timothy 1:6***, compared with ***Philippians 2:19-20 . . .***"

The Devastating Problems that Ended the Ephesian Church Era

Revelation 2:1-2 And to the angel of the Church at Ephesus, write, . . . “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you CANNOT bear those who are evil. And you have TESTED those WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES and are not, and have found them liars.”

COMMENT: From about 50 A. D. the Gospel was suppressed (*Galatians 1:6-7*) by these false apostles who had crept in unnoticed and began decimating the Church (*Jude 3-4*). A counterfeit gospel had replaced it. From 70 A. D. ensued the lost century.

Revelation 2:3-5 “And you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My Name’s sake and have NOT become weary. Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have LEFT your First Love (*agapao*). Remember therefore from where you have fallen; REPENT and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and REMOVE your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”

Revelation 2:6-7 “But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

COMMENT: Nicolaitans: identified with the counterfeit Christianity founded by Simon Magus. Their doctrine was one of no laws, unrestrained indulgence, and promiscuity. Nicolaitans could well be translated “Balaamites—the religion was from the same source. Balaam and Simon Magus both occupied the office of Nimrod (*C. C. 50, page 10*). Jesus Christ did remove His lamp from the Ephesian Church Era due to the lack of repentance. The few faithful and enduring members were absorbed into the Smyrna Church Era.”

End of Quotes

The Church of God fades into the Background

From 70 A.D. ensued the lost century of the Church of God—

A History of the True Religion* *DUGGAR and DODD

Chapter 5, page 57, ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED A.D.

“The first century closed with the death of the last of the apostles and writers of the New Testament, the Apostle John. No sooner had the apostles and disciples, who had been with Jesus, fallen asleep, then a new order arose and a different class of writers began to pen religious epistles . . .”

End of Quote

Story of the Christian Church, chapter 5, page 41, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut:

THE AGE OF SHADOWS FROM THE DEATH OF ST. PAUL, 68 A.D., TO THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN, 100 A.D.

“We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 A.D., “The Age of Shadows,” partly because the gloom of persecution was over the Church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least. We have no longer the clear light of the Book of Acts to guide us; and no author of that age has filled the blank in the history . . .

For fifty years after St. Paul’s life a curtain hangs over the Church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A. D. with the writings of the earliest church-fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul.”

End of Quotes

The Catholic (Universal) Church.

The emergence of this entirely different Church that came on stage came to be known as the Catholic (*Universal*) Church.

Leaders of the Catholic Church

To enable one to know who occupied the offices of the popes (the name ‘pope’ was not used until 642 A.D. by Pope Theodore) during the time of the Ephesian Church area, their names and dates in that office is as follows:

1. [St. Peter](#) (32-67) [In reality, Simon Magus]
2. [St. Linus](#) (67-76)
3. [St. Anacletus](#) (Cletus) (76-88)
4. [St. Clement I](#) (88-97)
5. [St. Evaristus](#) (97-105)
6. [St. Alexander I](#) (105-115)
7. [St. Sixtus I](#) (115-125) Also called Xystus I
8. [St. Telesphorus](#) (125-136)

At that date of 120 A.D., we find the emergence of the Catholic Church that was begun by Simon Magus [32 A. D.], the man who claimed he was an apostle. He had been baptized by Philip but was refused the laying on of hands by the Apostles Peter and John who perceived how this man would be used by Satan to try and destroy God’s true Church (**Acts 8:4-23**).

The Caesars Ruling Rome

For future reference the listing of those filling the office of the Roman Caesars from 31 A.D. during the time of the Ephesian Church Era are as follows:

About.Com: Ancient/Classical History

Julio-Claudians

(31 or) 27 B.C. - 14 A.D. [Augustus](#)

14 - 37 [Tiberius](#)

37 - 41 [Caligula](#)

41 - 54 [Claudius](#)

54 - 68 [Nero](#)

Year of the 4 [Emperors](#)

68 - 69 [Galba](#)

69 [Otho](#)

69 [Vitellius](#)

Flavian Dynasty

69 - 79 [Vespasian](#)

79 - 81 [Titus](#)

81 - 96 [Domitian](#)

5 Emperors

96 - 98 [Nerva](#)

98 - 117 [Trajan](#)

117 - 138 [Hadrian](#)

138 - 161 [Antoninus Pius](#)

161 - 180 [Marcus Aurelius](#)

161 - 169 [Lucius Verus](#)

The Ephesian Church Era

The following are excerpts from the writings by Dr. Herman L. Hoeh about the Ephesian Church Era.

A TRUE HISTORY of the TRUE CHURCH



By **Herman L. Hoeh**
1959 edition

Tracing the History of God's True Church

“. . . Except for the writings of the Apostle John in his last three epistles, there is nothing known about the Church of God in Holy Scripture. Historical writings reveal it faded into obscurity after the Apostle Paul's death in 68 A.D.

History records two great men who were trained by the Apostle John followed him in succession after his death. One pastor in the concluding part of the Ephesian Church Era, but mostly in the Smyrna Era that followed. The other man followed the first and his work was also in the Smyrna Era.

Antioch Retains Leadership of Greek Christians

The Churches of God which Paul raised up in Asia Minor were later under the general supervision of the apostle Peter. Peter wrote to the Churches in Asia and Galatia (**I Peter 1:1**). Catholic writers have acknowledged for centuries that the apostle Peter watched over the Gentile converts from the ancient city of Antioch, which was, next to Jerusalem, the most important center of Church life (**Acts 14:26-28**).

Consider what happened at Rome. The local Church of God at Rome, which was built up by Paul's, not Peter's, teaching, was severely persecuted by Nero in 64 A.D. Nero falsely charged the Christians with burning the city. Perhaps some three or more years after the burning of Rome Paul was seized near Troas (**II Timothy 4:13**) and brought to trial at Rome where he was martyred. Events were now moving rapidly.

While the Church in the East was being held together through Pella and Antioch, the Roman Church – with most of its leading members martyred – BECAME THE PREY OF FALSE TEACHERS. As soon as Peter was martyred, probably before 70 A.D., events moved to a climax. (See Ramsey's "The Church in the Roman Empire to 170 A.D.")

There was no James or Peter or Paul. John alone was in charge. The apostasy was developing rapidly -- especially in the West. Many people who listened to false teachers began to look for new leaders and new headquarters. They did not look to Christ, the head of the Church! Where did they turn?

Rome Assumes Leadership of Apostasy

At this moment in history, the centuries-old pagan tradition was revived and widely circulated that "Peter" had been in Rome. The heathen had never heard of the APOSTLE Peter. But everyone at Rome had heard that there was a shrine of A Peter on Vatican hill and that THAT Peter traditionally had come from Babylon. Who was that Peter?

Let the shocking record of history answer!

When the Babylonian mysteries in Mesopotamia were broken up by Alexander the Great and introduced into the West, they gravitated to Pergamos and then to Rome. Rome had long been a center of religion. And the most important part of Rome was Vatican hill. "The Vatican sanctuary ... seems to have been a well-known ... cult center ... of the worship of Cybele (*the "Mother of God"*) . . . No less than nine inscriptions referring to the same cult have long been known from the immediate vicinity of St. Peter's . . ." (*from "The Shrine of St. Peter and the Vatican Excavations", by J. Toynbee and J. W. Perkins, p. 6*).

In the days of the apostles a "pagan cemetery lay on a knoll called Vaticanus" – Vatican hill, where the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is today. "The Latin word "vatis" means a 'prophet' or 'soothsayer.' In days gone by there had been an Etruscan oracle on this spot," writes Werner Keller in "The Bible as History", p. 389.

Notice that this Satanic oracle was a SOOTHSAYER -- one who soothed the people by preaching what the people wanted to hear. And it was associated with a cemetery. The chief object of reverence at this cemetery CENTURIES BEFORE THE TIME OF CHRIST was the shrine or tomb of a "Peter"!

But why would pagans be honoring "Peter" long before the apostle Peter was ever heard of?

The answer astonishingly points back to Babylon and Nimrod. Nimrod, according to ancient tradition, was "the opener" of secrets, "the firstborn" of deified human beings. He was the religious hero or star of that day – just as many have their "Hollywood idols" today. Nimrod was therefore called the "opener," and in the Babylonian tongue (*a dialect of Hebrew*) the word for opener was "PETER"! (*See "Young's Concordance".*)

But how did Nimrod – "Peter" – become associated with Rome?

Because it was to Rome that Nimrod fled from his pursuers. The ancient name of Rome was "Saturnia," recorded Pliny in his "Natural History", bk. 111. But what does "Saturnia"

mean? It means the dwelling place of "Saturn." And the inhabitants of ancient Italy called NIMROD "Saturn," meaning "the hiding one" – because he "lay hid" from his pursuers at Rome (*Jackson's "Chronological Antiquities", p. 233*). Nimrod was discovered hiding at Rome. There he was executed [*by Shem, son of Noah*].

His worshipers mourned his death. A pagan shrine was later set up on Vatican hill to commemorate this event. It is no wonder that wherever the Babylonian Mystery spread, people heard that Peter, ANOTHER NAME FOR NIMROD, was killed at Rome!

Anacletus, an elder or bishop in the apostate church at Rome, dedicated the ancient shrine of the pagan Peter (or Nimrod) to the apostle Peter around 80 A.D., according to a record in the *Liber Pontificalis (i, p. 125)*.

It was now an easy task for Anacletus to convince the drifting, unemployed pagan population of Rome – which was becoming interested in the mysteries – that the shrine at Rome was the site of burial of the apostle Peter – for had not the apostle Peter been at Babylon! And to cement his authority, he claimed to have been ordained by Peter.

Anacletus claimed to be the SOLE SUCCESSOR to Peter. He insisted that Rome should be the new headquarters of all the churches. When the news of the pretended authority of the bishop of Rome spread abroad, many other false teachers saw the advantage of casting in their lot with him. If they were associated with him, they too, could use the name of Peter and take the customs celebrated in honor of the pagan savior and attribute those customs to Christ IN ORDER TO CREATE A FOLLOWING AFTER THEMSELVES.

That is how the new headquarters of the apostatizing churches quickly gravitated to Rome! It now became a STRUGGLE TO STRIVE FOR THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED (*Jude 3*). The Church had left its first love.

But there were still faithful churches, though small in number, who kept "the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" (*Rev. 12:17*). The world called them "Nazarenes" – the same name used in the Bible to refer to Paul and the true Church (*Acts 24:5*).

The TRUE CHURCH after the Apostles

Here is what the "Encyclopedia Britannica" says of them:

"Nazarenes, an obscure Jewish-Christian sect . . . they dated their settlement in Pella from the time of the flight of the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, immediately before the siege in A.D. 70; . . . Jerome (*Ep. 79, to Augustine*) says that they believed in Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose again, but adds that, 'desiring to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither the one nor the other'"

. . . while adhering as far as possible to the Mosaic economy as regarded circumcision, Sabbaths, foods and the like, they did not refuse to recognize the apostolicity of Paul or the rights of heathen Christians (*Jer., Comm. in Isa., ix, 1*)." (*From article, "Nazarenes," "The Ency. Brit.," eleventh edition, Volume XIX, page 319.*)

Among the Gentiles the churches in Asia remained the most faithful to the word of God. We pick up the story of the true Church in the lives of such men as Polycarp and Polycrates. They were called "Quartodecimani" because they kept the true Passover celebration instead of Easter.

The following is what the early Catholic historians admit about the true Church:

"But Polycarp also was not only instructed by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church of Smyrna ... He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus" – bishop of Rome around 154 A.D. – "caused many to turn away from the . . . heretics to the CHURCH OF GOD, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles . . . While at Rome, Polycarp discussed with the Roman bishop the matter of the introduction of the pagan Easter in place of the Passover.

Irenaeus continued: "For neither could Anicetus (*the bishop of Rome*) persuade Polycarp not to observe it" – the Passover – "BECAUSE HE HAD ALWAYS OBSERVED IT WITH JOHN THE DISCIPLE OF OUR LORD, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to FOLLOW THE CUSTOMS of the presbyters before him" (*Quoted from Eusebius' "Ecclesiastical History", book V, chap. 24, in the "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 1*).

Notice that bishop Anicetus had no scriptural grounds – he determined to follow the "customs" of men! – Easter Sunday!

But the Easter controversy did not end here!

Within 35 years it broke out vehemently between Polycrates of Asia Minor and Victor of Rome, who attempted to "cut off whole churches of God, who observed the tradition of an ancient custom" – the true Passover. Here is a part of the forthright answer given by Polycrates to Victor, vindicating the truth of God:

"As for us, then, we scrupulously observe the exact day, neither adding nor taking away. For in Asia great luminaries have gone to their rest, who shall rise again in the day of the coming of the Lord . . . I speak of Philip, one of the twelve apostles . . . John, moreover, who reclined on the Lord's bosom . . . Then there is Polycarp . . . THESE ALL KEPT THE PASSOVER ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOSPEL, WITHOUT EVER DEVIATING FROM IT, BUT KEEPING TO THE RULE OF FAITH."

This remarkable letter is preserved in Vol. 8 of the "Ante Nicene Fathers", pp. 773-774.

Polycrates came from that area in which Paul spent most of his time – in Asia Minor, near Ephesus. This is also where John spent his last days. HERE WE HAVE CHRISTIANS STILL REMAINING TRUE TO THE FAITH!

Here is proof that both the apostles to the circumcision and Paul, the special apostle to the Gentiles, taught the true Church to observe the Passover on the 14th of the first month of God's sacred calendar. Chrysostom, who wrote several centuries after the apostles admitted that "formerly it (the Passover) prevailed also at Antioch" from where Paul began many of his apostolic journeys.

But the Church as a whole never repented of leaving its first love for the truth of God. Jesus was now about to fulfill His warning: "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place" (**Rev. 2:5**).

Thus ended the first age of the Church, typified by the "Church at Ephesus."

End of Quotes

The Apostle John

The Apostle John died somewhere about 100 A. D. However, some little time before he did die, he underwent a terrible trial, but was delivered from it by Jesus Christ as the following historical writings make known:

A History of the True Religion

By
DUGGAR and DOD

Thirty-Three to One Hundred A. D.

XVI The Apostle John

Pages 56-57 > "The 'beloved disciple,' was a brother to James the Great. The Churches of Smyrna, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil.



A. N. Dugger

He escaped by miracle without injury. Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation—approximately 95 A. D. Nerva, the successor to Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped violent death." [*The Emperor Nerva reigned from 96 – 98 A. D.*]

The first century closes with the death of the last of the apostles and writers of the New Testament, the Apostle John. No sooner had the apostles and disciples, who had been with Jesus, fallen asleep, then a new order arose and a different class of writers began to pen religious epistles."

End of Quotes

A Falling Away

A few years later a falling away from the Church occurred. Whether these were truly converted people or those who had accepted the Church for whatever reasons only God knows. Based on many Scriptures, it would appear none of them were really begotten by God's Holy Spirit.

The Emperor Hadrian of Rome



During the Reign of the Emperor Hadrian, August 10, 117—July 10, 138 A.D., there was a falling away from the True Church, as often has taken place through the centuries and in this present time.

The Apostle Paul wrote of this falling away in his letter to Timothy:

II Timothy 1:15

v. 15 “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me . . .”

He further wrote:

II Timothy 2:3, 16-19

v. 3 “You therefore MUST endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ . . .

vs. 16-19 “Shun profane and empty chatter (margin), for they will INCREASE to more ungodliness. And their message WILL SPREAD LIKE CANCER . . . nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands firm, having THIS SEAL: The Lord knows those who are His . . .”

In his letter to the members of God's Church, probably in the 70s or 80s, the Apostle Jude tried to stem the flow away from the Church, but to no avail:

Jude 3-4

v. 3 “Beloved while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you EXHORTING YOU to contend earnestly FOR THE FAITH which was once for all delivered to the saints.

v. 4 “For CERTAIN MEN (*false apostles*) have crept in UNNOTICED, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation (*like Judas Iscariot*), ungodly men, who TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD into licentiousness (*license to do evil*) and DENY the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Note: The falling away that was fully experienced in the Ephesian Church Era is exactly the same as the falling away that took place in 1994-1995 within the Worldwide Church of God due to an apostate pastor general.

The following are quotes from: *“The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”* by the English historian and Member of Parliament, Edward Gibbon.

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chapter 15, Edward Gibbon, the Progress of the Christian Religion . . .

Pages 389-391 “The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jerusalem [fleeing before its destruction in 70 A. D. by Titus] to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where the ancient Church languished above sixty years in solitude and obscurity. They still enjoyed the comfort of making frequent and devout visits to the Holy City, and the hope of being one day restored to those seats which both nature and religion taught them to love as well as to revere.

But at length, under the reign of Hadrian, the desperate fanaticism of the Jews filled up the measure of their calamities [not the true Christians]; and the Romans, exasperated by their repeated rebellions exercised their rights of victory with unusual rigour.

The emperor founded under the name of Aelia Capitolina, a new city on Mount Sion [Zion], to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and denouncing the severest penalties against any of the Jewish people who should dare to approach its precincts, he fixed a vigilant garrison of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders. *The Bible as History, Werner Keller, page 408*

“On top of these desolate and cheerless ruins, on which neither Jews nor Christians were allowed to set foot on pain of death, the Emperor Hadrian built a new Roman colony—Aelia Capitolina. The sight of a foreign settlement on this sacred Jewish soil provoked yet another open rebellion. Julius Severus was summoned to Judaea from his governorship in Britain and smashed the last desperate attempt of the Jews to regain their freedom. But it took him three years to do so.

The Emperor Hadrian then erected a racecourse, two baths, and a large theater. A statue of Jupiter was enthroned above the ruins of the Jewish Temple as if in derision, and on the site that Christian tradition believed to be that of the Holy Sepulcher, strangers climbed the terraced steps to do homage at a shrine of the pagan goddess Venus.”

The Nazarenes had only one way left to escape the common proscription, and the force of truth was on this occasion assisted by the influence of temporal advantages. They elected [notice – voting, a breakaway from the church] Marcus for their bishop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles, and most probably a native of either Italy or of some of the Latin provinces.

At his persuasion the most considerable part of the congregation [as did those in the *Worldwide Church of God under the apostate pastor general in 1994-95, Joseph Tkach, Sr.*] renounced the Mosaic law, in the practice of which they had persevered above a

century. By this sacrifice of their habits and prejudices they purchased a free admission into the colony of Hadrian, and more firmly cemented their union with the Catholic church.

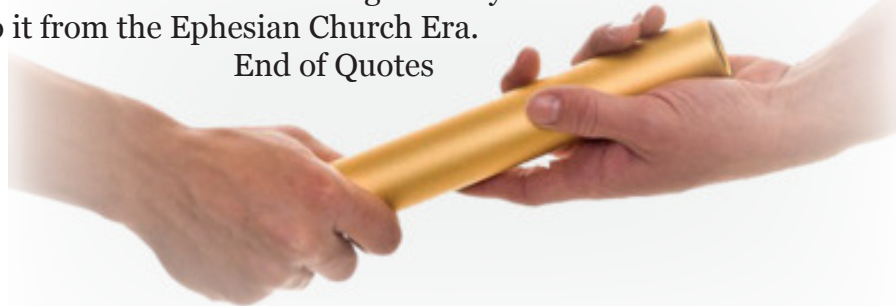
When the name and honours of the church in Jerusalem had been restored to Mount Sion, the crimes of heresy and schism were imputed to the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes [*similar to the present day Philadelphia Church Era remnant*] which refused to accompany their Latin bishop. They still preserved their former habitation of Pella, spread themselves [*scattered as today*] into the villages adjacent to Damascus, and formed an inconsiderable church in Berea, or, as it is now called, of Aleppo, in Syria. The name of Nazarenes was deemed too honourable for those Christian Jews, and they soon received, from the supposed poverty of their understanding, as well as of their condition, the contemptuous epithet of Ebionites . . .

The unfortunate Ebionites, rejected from one religion as apostates, and from the other as heretics, found themselves compelled to assume a more decided character; and although some traces of that obsolete sect may be discovered as late as the fourth century, they insensibly melted away either into the church [*catholic*] or into the synagogue.” [*in reality – not either one as continued history teaches – they came to be known by another name, for the Church of God would never die, **Matthew 16:18***].

To preserve His Ongoing Church of God, Jesus Christ began using another apostle who had been directly trained by the Apostle John, Polycarp.

This will be seen when considering the Smyrna Church Era who received the baton handed off to it from the Ephesian Church Era.

End of Quotes



The Smyrna Church Era

Introduction

**The Letter from Jesus Christ to the Church in Smyrna
(Revelation 2:8)**

The Church in Smyrna - *The Persecuted Church* 135-600 A.D.

"To the angel of the Church in Smyrna write:

‘These are the words of Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer.

“I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days.

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

**“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death”
(Revelation 2:8-11).**



Background of the City of Smyrna

Smyrna was the crown city – An Acropolis. Circle of beautiful buildings standing on a peak close to the bay that created a beautiful view.

It was a Roman province in Asia. Today it is known as the city of Izmir and located in Asia Minor – Turkey.

Internet: Commentary on Revelation

“Smyrna is today called the city of Izmir, it lies about 35 miles north of Ephesus on the Aegean coast of Turkey. It has an excellent harbour. It had a strong allegiance to Rome and in 195 BC it became the first city in the ancient world to build a temple in honour of Dea Roma. Later in 23 BC, Smyrna won permission to build a temple to the emperor Tiberius.

The strong allegiance to Rome plus a large Jewish population which was actively hostile to the Christians made it exceptionally difficult to live as a Christian in Smyrna. The most famous martyrdom of the early church fathers was of the elderly Polycarp, the 'twelfth martyr in Smyrna', who, upon his refusal to acknowledge Caesar as Lord, was placed upon a pyre to be burned (*Mounce*). There is still an active church in the city today.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

“Smyrna (*Greek*: *Σμύρνη*) was the ancient city now in Turkey represented by modern Izmir. Located at a central and strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia and aided by its advantageous port conditions, its ease of defense and its good inland connections, Smyrna rose to prominence before the Classical Era.

As early as 195 B.C. Smyrna foresaw the rising power of Rome and built a temple for pagan Roman worship. In 23 B.C. Smyrna was given the honor of building a temple to the Emperor Tiberius because of its years of faithfulness to Rome.

Thus, the city became a center for the cult of emperor worship – a fanatical religion that later, under such emperors as Nero (ruled A.D. 54-68) and Domitian (ruled A.D. 81-96), brought on severe persecution for the early church. Polycarp was martyred in the stadium at Smyrna in 155 A.D.” End of Quotes

Mystery of the Ages, Counterfeit Gospel, Pages 53-54,
Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong:

“After the death of the apostle John [*possibly 100 A.D.*], a disciple of his, Polycarp, bishop of Rome [Anicetus], by then leader of the church [*Catholic*] started by Simon [*Magus*].

Christ’s true Christianity, Polycrates, waged a still hotter controversy over the same Passover-Easter question with another bishop of Rome. The theological battle was called the Quartodeciman Controversy.

Polycrates contended, as Jesus and the original apostles taught, that the Passover should be observed in the new Christian form introduced by Jesus and by the Apostle Paul (***I Corinthians 11***) using unleavened bread and wine instead of sacrificing a lamb, on the eve of the 14th of Nisan (*first month in the sacred calendar*), occurring in the spring! But the Rome church insisted that it be observed on Sunday.”

End of Quotes

Polycarp

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
For other uses, see [Polycarp \(disambiguation\)](#).

Polycarp (*Greek*: Πολύκαρπος, *Polýkarpos*; AD 80 – 167) was a 2nd-century [Christian bishop of Smyrna](#). [2] According to the [Martyrdom of Polycarp](#) he died a [martyr](#), bound and burned at the stake, then stabbed when the fire failed to touch him. [3] Polycarp is regarded as a [saint](#) in the [Roman Catholic](#), [Eastern Orthodox](#), [Oriental Orthodox](#), [Anglican](#), and [Lutheran churches](#).

It is recorded by [Irenaeus](#), who heard him speak in his youth, and by [Tertullian](#), [4] that he had been a disciple of [John the Apostle](#). [5] [6] [Saint Jerome](#) wrote that Polycarp was a disciple of John and that John had ordained him bishop of Smyrna.”



INTERNET: Visit to Anicetus [\[edit\]](#)

According to Irenaeus, during the time his fellow Syrian, [Anicetus](#), was the Bishop of Rome, in the 150s or 160, Polycarp visited [Rome](#) to discuss the differences that existed between [Asia](#) and Rome "with regard to certain things" and especially about the time of the [Easter](#) festivals. Irenaeus said that on certain things the two bishops speedily came to an understanding, while as to the time of Easter, each adhered to his own custom, without breaking off [communion](#) with the other.

Polycarp followed the eastern practice of celebrating the feast on the [14th of Nisan](#), the day of the Jewish [Passover](#), regardless of what day of the week it fell. Anicetus followed the western practice of celebrating the feast on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox (March 21).

Pope Anicetus—the Roman sources offering it as a mark of special honor—allowed Polycarp to celebrate the [Eucharist](#) in his own church.[11] Their customs for observing the [Christian Passover](#) differed, Polycarp following the eastern practice of celebrating the feast on the [14th of Nisan](#), the day of the Jewish [Passover](#), regardless of what day of the week it fell.

Date of Martyrdom [\[edit\]](#)

In the *Martyrdom*, Polycarp is recorded as saying on the day of his death, "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong", which could indicate that he was then eighty-six years old[12] or that he may have lived eighty-six years after his conversion.[3] Polycarp goes on to say, "How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour? Bring forth what thou wilt."

Polycarp was burned at the stake for refusing to burn incense to the Roman Emperor.[13] The date of Polycarp's death is in dispute. [Eusebius](#) dates it to the reign of [Marcus Aurelius](#), c. 166–167. However, a post-Eusebian addition to the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* dates his death to Saturday, February 23, in the proconsulship of [Statius Quadratus](#)—which works out to be 155 or 156.

These earlier dates better fit the tradition of his association with [Ignatius](#) and John the Evangelist. However, the addition to the *Martyrdom* cannot be considered reliable on only its own merits. Lightfoot would argue for the earlier date of Polycarp's death, with which Killen would strongly disagree. In addition, some have proposed a date in 177. However the earlier date of 156 is generally accepted.[14]

End of Quotes

An Overview of the Smyrna Church Era

The following is an overview with some detail regarding the Smyrna Church Era by the writers of the Seventh Day Church of God (Mr. Andrew Dugger was the apostle at that time). The writing in the Correspondence Course to follow later reveals needed details.

A HISTORY OF THE TRUE RELIGION
DUGGER and DODD
Chapter 6
TWO HUNDRED TO THREE HUNDRED A.D
The Remnant Church

Pages 68-69> “. . . About 130 A. D., the Church was again permitted to return to Jerusalem, although some remained behind in Pella. For over a hundred years they continued in peace, with the Headquarters again in the Holy City, as at the beginning. Later, however trouble arose, and as persecutions began to fall upon the holy men of God at Jerusalem, they again fled, being scattered over the world. Some fled in vain, being captured by their enemies, and lost their lives for the gospel’s sake. Smith says of the Church at this period:

About one hundred and twenty years after the church of God at Pella was permitted to become again established at Jerusalem, under the leadership of Mark, and imperial edict was issued from Decious, the Roman emperor, and the Church was again exposed to great calamities. The venerable bishops of Jerusalem and Antioch died in prison, and many true followers were scourged to death, many sacrificed to wild beasts, some burned, and others perished by the sword.

The Lord interfered, it seems, by sudden death coming upon the emperor Decius, but Gallus his successor, continued in the path of his predecessor. In two years, however, Gallus fell at the hand of one of his own soldiers, thus the year 253 closed this brief and terrible period of violence to the Church. ‘ – Hugh Smith’s History.

Chapter 7
THREE HUNDRED TO FOUR HUNDRED A. D.
Continued Persecution

Pages 74-75 > The Church enjoyed freedom of worship for almost another hundred years, but when Diocletian consulted with Gallienus Caesar, after returning victorious from the Persian Wars, they formulated plans for the extermination of Christians.

The edict obtained stated that churches, and all Christian writings, should be destroyed, and all their rights and privileges annulled. Furious persecutions raged. Some were broiled to death on gridirons after being cruelly scourged, and their wounds washed in brine. Others were thrown to wild beasts, and some starved to death. These persecutions lasted approximately ten years [**Revelation 2:10**].

This Smyrna period corresponds to the time of Diocletian. A dreadful and loathsome disease fell upon the emperor, causing him to cease his persecutions of Christians, about the year 310, and the empire was abdicated.

The Emperor Constantine

At this time Constantine, the pagan emperor, came to the throne, who from beholding, as he claimed, a luminous cross in the sky, with the inscription, “By This Conqueror,” he embraced Christianity and was baptized by Eusebius. In 313 an edict was issued from Milan favoring the church, and peace was enjoyed for twenty-four years, until his death. During this time, at the council of bishops and prelates, assembled at Nice, 321, among other ecclesiastical laws, one was passed relative to the Sabbath, stating that all people should rest from their labors on the venerable day of the sun . . .”

Chapter 8

FOUR HUNDRED TO FIVE HUNDRED A.D.

From Bishop to Pope

Pages 94-96 > In the beginning of the fifth century, Vigilantius, a learned and eminent presbyter of a Christian church, took up his pen to oppose the growing superstitions. His book, which unfortunately is now lost, was directed against the institutions of monks, the celibacy of the clergy, praying for the dead, and to the martyrs, adoring their relics, and lighting up wax candles before them, were the ensigns of idolatry. . . . Soon after Constantine, emperor of the Roman Empire, had embraced Christianity, the bishop of Rome, being located near the throne of the emperor, naturally was received into favor as the presiding prelate over other bishops.

The bishop of Rome was soon placed at the head of the clerical order, as superior bishop, and he maintained his claims of superiority by immense splendor and magnificence . . .

Chapter 9

FIVE HUNDRED TO SIX HUNDRED A. D.

The Flight of the True Church to the Wilderness

Pages 100-101 > It was between 500 and 600 A.D. that the Church of God was sorely oppressed by the state religion clothed with civil power, and completely overpowered, and scattered to the valleys of the mountains in all parts of the world. The historian Jones gives an account of the flight of the persecuted saints from the oppressions of the harlot church seated upon the Roman beast. His account follows:

“Multitudes however fled like innocent and defenseless sheep from these devouring wolves. They crossed the Alps, and traveled in every direction, as Providence and the prospect of safety conducted them into Germany, England, France, Italy, and other countries. There they trimmed their lamps, and shone with new luster. Their worth everywhere drew attention, and their doctrine formed increasing circles around them. The storm which threatened their destruction only scattered them as the precious seeds of the glorious reformation of the Christian Church.” — *Jones’ Church History*, p. 208, ed.1837.

. . . Though these Christians were known by many names for various reasons in their new homes, yet the predominating name for them seems to have been “Vaudois,” which means “Valley Dwellers.” . . . or, in the native tongue, “Vaudois.”

The Vandois, known as such by the world, but holding to the true Bible name, were persecuted for the truth. They observed the seventh day of the week, according to the commandments, immersed for believers baptisms, and kept the Passover, or the Lord’s Supper, once a year, in the first month.—see pages 348-349, *Persecutions and Atrocities on the Vaudois*.

End of Quotes

Names attached to the Anti-Catholic Groups

Nazarenes
Ebionites
Paulicians
Bogomils
Patarines
Bulgarians
Cathars
Albigenses
Passagi
Publicani
Waldensians
Petrobrusians|
Henricians

B. Events during this time:

1. Period of the Dark ages.
2. Catholic supremacy. Great power, very corrupt.
3. Time of crusades - great persecution on these groups.

II. CATHARS:

A. Not part of the true church in general...

1. Called Bogomils, Patarines, Albigenses, etc.

From Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France, by Walter L. Wakefield, we read:

"Between 1140 and 1160 a new dualist heresy spread from northern Europe where it appeared in cities such as Koln and Liege southward. It probably penetrated Languedoc about 1150. The name Cathars was first applied to the heretics in the north about 1160.

An Overview of the Ephesian and Smyrna Eras

The following writings from Lesson 50 of the A/C Correspondence gives an overview of the history of both the Ephesian and Smyrna Eras of God’s Church:

Why Persecution?

The second age of the New Testament Church is portrayed in Revelation 2. It is typified by the local congregation of the Church in Smyrna (**Rev. 2:8-11**).

1. Was this Smyrna era of the Church to be persecuted? Rev. 2:10. Were some in that era to be martyred? Same verse.

COMMENT: Already we have seen two periods of persecution on Christians even during the first century. But both these persecutions were local. They even fell heavily on the developing Catholic Church in Rome. And there was a REASON! What was it? Notice! The ONE REASON the Roman GOVERNMENT ever persecuted any religion was FEAR. Why?

Because the Roman Empire was a dictatorship. Its very foundation principle was exploitation of the masses. There was NO DEMOCRACY. Any new NON-GOVERNMENT grouping -- lodge, union, club, anything -- was strictly, forbidden -- illegal -- lest opposition become organized. Only because they were a race as well as a religion were the Jews specifically exempted from those Caesar suppressed. The leaders in power feared for their power -- and for their lives. If an Emperor persecuted a church, it was NOT because he cared if false doctrine enslaved his subjects. All shades of opinion were welcome. But only so long as they served and supported the Emperor!

When Nero feared for his throne he persecuted Christians. For this unauthorized organization was taking root in his very capital. Nero cleared HIMSELF, and rid himself of a potential rival at the same time. He was "killing two birds with one stone!"

2. Have events proven the Roman civil government had REASON to feel a church seated in Rome had designs on supreme secular power? See **Rev. 17:3**. Remember, THIS church is NOT the poor and humble True Church of Rev. 2.

COMMENT: YOU should review Lesson 31 which shows how the "woman" mounted and rode the "beast" -- the false church. usurped AUTHORITY OVER the territory and peoples of the Roman Empire.

In the days of Diocletian (284-305 A.D.), so-called "Christians" were deeply involved in political haggling. Diocletian believed he had uncovered a plot to take over the empire when he found "Christians" taking sides between himself and co-emperor Galerius. "Church father" Lactantius tells us Galerius had spent the winter urging Diocletian to extirpate Christianity.

Diocletian's persecution edict of February, 303, was directed solely against Christians IN GOVERNMENT or in homes as servants of GOVERNMENT personnel! When it was issued there were rebellions in Syria and Melitene. Suspicion became certainty. A second and much stiffer edict ordered all church leaders imprisoned.

A special civil tax on all Jews -- which the Romans had substituted for the former temple tax (**Mat. 17:24-27**) when the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. -- was now rigorously exacted of "Christians" of the Synagogue of Satan. Did they not, after all, CALL THEMSELVES JEWS?! (**Rev. 2:14.**)

But the True Church of God never planned to usurp power in this world. Contrary to modern interpretations, the Apostle Paul never envisioned making the Roman Empire the Kingdom of God!

Remember the grandsons of Jude? When suspicion fell on them -- because they were Christians, and DESCENDED FROM DAVID, and because Domitian feared any person who might claim a right to be a king -- THEY were found INNOCENT and were released -- exonerated.

"On the Just and the Unjust"

1. But, just as God often sends good things on the just and the unjust alike (**Mat. 5:45**), must TRUE Christians sometimes suffer along with the false -- through no fault of their own? **II Tim. 3:12.**

2. Did the apostles instruct Christians to do their best to avoid giving the government any ground for persecution -- to prove their innocence by their actions? **Rom. 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16**, noting particularly **verses 15** and **16**.

3. But if unjust persecution came anyway, what then? **I Peter 2:20-21; 3:12-17.** COMMENT: Few have realized Peter wrote these words in the shadow of his own martyrdom, instructing and strengthening the Church for the religious persecution that lay ahead.

4. How did he say a Christian could rejoice in such persecution? **I Peter 1:5-6; 4:13.** Notice the words "in the LAST TIME," "when his (Christ's) glory shall be revealed."

COMMENT: Keeping your eye on the goal beyond is the only way. Certainly one will not ENJOY persecution itself even though he may realize tribulation is for his ultimate good! Read also **Hebrews 12:11.**

5. Is the Church of God also called the Church of Christ? **Rom. 16:16.** Then, isn't the name of "Christian" fitting and proper for a follower of Christ? Compare **Acts 11:26.** Did Peter write that some might suffer because evil men had brought "the name of Christ" and "Christian" into reproach? **I Peter 4:14-16.**

6. Did Peter mention these same evil men elsewhere? **II Peter 2:10.** Note that they "despise government." They refused to be RULED!

COMMENT: They falsely claimed to be members of God's Church (**verses 1 and 13 -- notice also Jude 4, 8**). The Romans couldn't tell the difference between true and false

brethren, of course. The real motive of those who secretly had crept into God's Church was to GET for SELF. They WANTED TO RULE others but would not first themselves obey.

This carnal motivation -- while professing the name of Christian -- brought retribution on them (**II Peter 2:1**, last part, and verse 3) and persecution on the innocent.

Once "false brethren" had drawn persecution, special persecution edicts were placed on the Roman law books. Nevertheless, they were not enforced during most of the time. Throughout the first three centuries of the Christian era, persecution was only occasional.

The letter of Pliny -- before cited -- is a case in point. Pliny found most Christians in Bithynia-Pontus law-abiding, hard-working, model citizens. They had HEEDED what Peter wrote them. Yet Pliny knew, also, that for a Christian congregation to MEET TOGETHER -- even on the Sabbath -- was against state law. That's why he wrote the Emperor for clarification. Just how far must he go? How rigidly enforce the law? Pliny seems to have been generally a humane and upright man. He was willing to be lenient -- to let PEACEFUL (**Mat. 5:9**) Christians alone. And Emperor Trajan allowed it! Christians were to be punished for THE NAME of Christ ONLY IF someone formally accused them before a judge. Then, of course, law MUST BE upheld!

7. Had Jesus forewarned that persecution follows right after famine, pestilence, and earthquakes? **Mat. 24:6-9**.

COMMENT: This will not only happen at the end time, but it has happened before. Events run repeatedly in similar cycles. That is why it is said, "History repeats itself." Human beings want a scapegoat. Just as Nero blamed Christians for burning Rome, so others blamed them for other things. If Christians had mentioned prophecies foretelling troubles, and if those troubles happened, then they must have CAUSED them! It was all THEIR fault! So people reasoned.

"Under Marcus Aurelius (161-180)," says Fisher, (*"History of the Christian Church"*), "Christians suffered both from popular fury and from government. In this reign risings of the populace against the Christians were frequent. These were occasioned by the terrible calamities which the empire suffered. There was not only warfare without cessation; there was a plague, from the destructive effects of which, Niebuhr tells us, the empire never recovered."

As the Work of the Smyrna age drew to a close, economic conditions became worse. The famous Edict of Diocletian (A.D. 301) fixing standard prices empire-wide was issued as a direct result of several bad harvests and resulting scarcity. Unfortunately, as always, such legislation only made matters worse.

Eusebius (*Ecc. Hist.*, IX, 8) gives a vivid description of the culmination of famine, pestilence and war about A.D. 310. In all this, true Christians were in jeopardy along with the false! Many migrated. They knew that Christ counseled flight (**Mat. 10:23; 24:16**).

Persecution by STATE CHURCH Begins!

1. Did Christ foresee that the real persecution would come from religion, not government? **Mat. 10:17; 23:29, 34**

COMMENT: Even more than governors, pseudo-religious men fear for their positions of influence over others. Especially do they persecute the real TRUTH -- because it CONVICTS THEM of iniquity.

2. Does Christ reveal that the major part of the persecution on the "Smyrna" Church was to come in a specified period of ten years duration? **Rev. 2:10**, and the "day for a year" principle in **Num. 14:34**.

COMMENT: This prediction has been completely misunderstood by most people. Most everyone has sought to apply it to the wrong church! Eusebius (*Ecc. Hist. VIII, 15,16*) mentions that the ten years were fulfilled in the last great pre-Constantine persecution (*that of Diocletian and Galerius*) in 303-313. It lasted on Rome only three years. In the Eastern Roman Empire it lasted 10 years. That is where God's people were.

But the True Church was not yet stamped out of the Roman Empire. That was accomplished when the false church first gained the POWER to persecute others! That power was given when Constantine established Catholic "Christianity" as STATE RELIGION by the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325, and then issued edicts favoring it and anathematizing all others.

Granted, Constantine was not incensed against solely and especially the True Church. He was against ALL who would not join with the church he had chosen. And that certainly included all that remained of the True Church within the Roman Empire! Eusebius, always a supporter of Constantine, explicitly states that Constantine put every other church out of the Roman Empire, or exterminated them -- IN HIS LIFETIME, beginning in 325.

Constantine himself was not a Christian. He was a worshipper of the sun god, who foresaw how political advantage might be reaped by allying himself with "Christianity." He allied himself with the faction which offered the most immediate benefits -- the strongest ally. That faction happened to be reigned over by Sylvester, bishop of Rome. He, too, observed the day of the sun. Sylvester could become head over all christendom -- UNDER THE EMPEROR, of course!

Not for years, until nearing his death, did Constantine himself formally become a "Christian" by undergoing baptism. Thus, by the "marriage" of a popularized form of Roman Samaritanism with sun worship did Sunday Christianity become dominant. Only it was NOT really MARRIAGE -- but a fornicating relationship! Each party remained separate, distinct, each striving to GET more from each other. Neither did the "woman" OBEY any husband.

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the MIDST of the seven golden lampstands, which you saw are the 7 Churches (*Explanation given in **Revelation 1:12. 16***).’ End of Quotes

The baton now passes to the Pergamos Church Era



The History of the Pergamos Church Era

The Pergamos Church Era – approximately from 600 to 1104 A. D.

The Compromising Church Era

Revelation 2:12-17

vs. 12-13 “And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write, “These says He who has the sharp, two-edged sword: “I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.



v. 14 “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

vs. 15-16 “Thus you also have those who hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which things I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

v. 17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it’ ”

The Message to Pergamum

The city itself, Pergamum, once the center of a small kingdom, is here labeled a place where Satan has his throne, or where Satan lives (**v. 13**).

One reason often suggested for this statement is that Pergamum housed a famous temple to Asklepius, the Greek god of healing, symbolized by the figure of a snake (*Finegan 1981:173*). An evil dragon in one of John's later visions is labeled "that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray" (*12:9; compare 20:2*).

Another possible reason for placing Satan in Pergamum is that Antipas, possibly the first Christian martyr in Asia, was killed there (**v. 13**), and "Satan" is simply the label attached to his persecutors (*like "Satan" or "the devil" at Smyrna*).

Other "bad names" are drawn from the Old Testament: Balaam in this message (**v. 14**) and "Jezebel" in the message to Thyatira (**2:20**). Both were foreigners linked to false prophecy in Israel. In these messages both are linked to certain prophetic groups in the congregations.

Balaam in *Numbers 22--24* appeared to be a true prophet who refused to utter a curse against Israel [not so, *II Peter 2:14; Joshua 13:22*], but in *Numbers 31:16*, and consequently in later Jewish and Christian tradition, he was blamed for Israel's idolatry and immorality as described in Numbers 25 (*see Philo, Life of Moses 1.48-55; Josephus, Antiquities 4.126; 2 Pet 2:15-16; Jude 11*).

The "Balaamites" and the "Nicolaitans" at Pergamum are almost certainly not two groups but one, "Nicolaitans" being a coined nickname based on what some believed to be the Greek equivalent of "Balaam." The latter, in Hebrew, could be read as "master of the people" (*ba`al`am*), while "Nicolaitan" in Greek could be read as "conqueror of the people."

First some background for this Church Era:

Pergamon

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about the ancient Greek city of Pergamon. For the nearby modern city of Turkey, see [Bergama](#). For [Greek mythology](#) and [Bible](#) character and the citadel in [Homer's Iliad](#), see [Pergamus](#).

Dr. Hoeh – continued: “The local Church to which John wrote was situated in Pergamos, the capital of the Roman Province of Asia in Asia Minor. Pergamos was Satan’s seat of worldly government for that province. Just as the local Church at Pergamos was situated in a city where Satan swayed human politics, so the next work of God’s Church occurred within the bounds of Satan’s government in the Eastern Roman Empire where a small body of God’s people was found.

It was about 650 A. D. that God, as of by miracle, raised up among the scattered remnants of His Church in Cappadocia and Armenia a man who revitalized His people and spread the Gospel. ... Constantine of Mananali . . . He was stoned to death 27 years later. The man who was sent to stone him was so stirred by his death that he became converted and carried forth the gospel until he was burned at the stake.

Within another 100 years God raised up a third great minister, Sergius, to guide His people WHO WERE ALLOWING MANY FALSE TEACHINGS to grow in their midst . . . The devil was angry with these people who understood the gospel and kept the commandments. Knowing that he could NOT overthrow their FAITH by force, he corrupted them by introducing FALSE TEACHERS who taught the doctrine of Balaam (Revelation 2:14). In turning to Numbers 31:16, you will see that Balaam INDUCED the Israelites to practice idolatry and spiritual fornication.

Israel and Moab

It was on Balaam’s advice that the Moabite women SEDUCED the men of Israel at Peor. Balaam supposed that a righteous God would CURSE the people for sinning. Eventually, God took Balaam’s life for this sedition (***Numbers 25:1-18; Numbers 31:8, 16; Joshua 13:22***).

Balaam was a mercenary prophet who exploited others. The Bible calls such unscrupulous greed, “The Way of Balaam” (***II Peter 2:15; Jude 11***).

These unconverted teachers (*in the Pergamos Church Era*) gradually (*over 9 years in our time*) INDUCED many in the Church to celebrate certain idolatrous pagan holidays, particularly the Orthodox feast of Epiphany C the original birthday of Nimrod, the pagan Christ child, supposedly in honor of Christ’s birth and baptism. (WCG) Satan ALSO caused MANY TO TAKE PART IN WORLDLY POLITICS in the hope of SAFEGUARDING themselves (*As did members in Big Sandy, Texas, approximately 1973, a member even became the mayor of the small community*). Mixing with the politics of the world is called “FORNICATION”:

“. . . I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters with whom the kings of the earth were made drunk with her fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2).

God's Church is to be a virgin and remain pure and separate from the world, waiting for the marriage to Christ: "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy for I have betrothed you to ONE husband, that I may PRESENT you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (**II Corinthians 11:2**).

As the result of these sins, Jesus WARNED His Church:

"Repent; or else I will fight you with the sword of My mouth" (Revelation 2:16). Most took the WARNING LIGHTLY UNTIL it was too late. Trusting in their worldly political alliances with neighboring Arabs, INSTEAD of relying on Jesus= protection, they were BETRAYED and SLAUGHTERED, 100,000 of them.

CC 50, Page 15: Multiple 1000s did perish by the literal sword, because the Church did NOT repent of its error. . . . the people would NOT listen to any true minister of Christ now. Remember, most of these Paulicians (*were called by outsiders*) now merely CLEAVED TO THE Church with flatteries, **Daniel 11:34**. They were NOT converted!

Remember, Jesus referred to His Church as a little flock (**Luke 12:32**)!

NOTE: The world calls these>Pergamos, Christians Paulicians, just as they called the Smyrna Christians Ebionites, the Ephesus Christians, Nazarenes, heretics. In its original Armenian. This word meant "a follower of wretched little Paul." The FAITHFUL FEW who escaped were driven to Southeastern Europe and called Bogomils. There they thrived for centuries, and. . . spread. . . their tenets into Bohemia, Poland, Germany, Italy, France, and even into England (*Page 104, The Key of Truth*).] The prophesied Church at Thyatira arises next."

End of Quotes

The Pergamos Era

However, before picking up with the Thyatira Church Era it is needful to continue reading what Jesus had to say to the Pergamos Era with this background in mind:

Revelation 2:12-17

vs. 12-13 "And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos, write: 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My Name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.'

v. 14 "But I have a few things against you, BECAUSE you have those who HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM, who TAUGHT Balak to put a stumbling block BEFORE the children of Israel, to EAT things sacrificed to idols [*in December, 1994, the apostate pastor-general told members they could eat the unclean*], and to COMMIT sexual immorality [*both spiritual and literal by doing away with God's laws*].

vs. 15-16 “Thus you ALSO have those who HOLD the DOCTRINE of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the SWORD of My mouth. He who has an ear LET HIM HEAR what the Spirit says to the Churches: . . .”

NOTE (CC 50, Page 9) The name Balaam in Hebrew means “Conqueror of the people”; It is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek “Nicholas”. Both words denoted the office of Nimrod, dictator and arch-rebel, who after the Flood established man’s political and religious government based on false principles, in opposition to the Government of God. NOTE (CC 50, Page 10): The Nicolaitans are identified with the counterfeit Christianity founded by Simon Magus. Their doctrine was one of the law, unrestrained indulgence, promiscuity.

The same problems became so bad in Ambassador College that Mr. Armstrong closed down the colleges. He then began with only one college with fewer students, 1977-1978. But later the same problems began all over again when the student body was enlarged!

NOTE (CC 50, Page 10) From the Catholic Encyclopedia these Nicolaitanes led lives of unrestrained indulgence. They claimed to have derived from NICHOLAS the doctrine of promiscuity. Nicolaitanes might be well translated Balaamites and vice versa.

Balaamites = The religion was from the same source. Balaam and Simon Magus both occupied the office of Nimrod. Balaam was the greatest pagan prophet of his time—the Pontifex Maximus , the chief oracle paganism. His headquarters, 1500 years before Christ, was called Pethor (*same office today is located in St. Peters*), located in Mesopotamia, a place far to the north of Balaam’s country, and was near the border of modern Turkey.

NOTE: Balaam wanted to go just as far in the wrong way as he dared. This is Satan’s way. This is the way to bring God’s wrath upon a person. The doctrine of Balaam was the original, universally received religion of the region.

And now the Church of God was centered there. Naturally, unconverted members who sat in the Congregations of God’s Church were influenced by that doctrine!

They were just local people who had never really given up the common doctrine of their ancestors. The doctrine of Balaam: The wages of unrighteousness. The apostle Peter wrote about this:

“But there were also FALSE prophets (ministers) AMONG the people, EVEN as there will be FALSE teachers among you, who will secretly BRING in destructive heresies. EVEN denying the Lord who bought them, and bring ON themselves SWIFT destruction. . .” (II Peter 2:1-15-22).

To explain this in a way that we can understand it today, the wages of unrighteousness is the reward of keeping one's job, salary and benefits for preaching and teaching doctrines that are known to be wrong

Whether they knew it or not these men were wrong for not trusting God to supply their needs. Mr. Dean Blackwell was more honest and open about this than others; he said that he remained with WWCG due to his salary and retirement for he had no other source of income].

Let us again notice what Jesus Christ said about what we should have been watching for in our time by learning from the former Church Eras:

“These things says He who holds the seven stars (1:20) in His right hand, who walks IN THE MIDST of the seven golden lampstands (Churches) (Revelation 2:2, 3, 9, 13).

We should have learned from what God had to say about Balaam and then gone back and reviewed what Balaam did in the Book of Numbers and then followed through by looking at what Peter and Jude wrote; what he caused to be done then and now.

Let us briefly review the history of Balaam and what he did to Israel for his doctrine has caused the same thing to take place in our time today and can be witnessed in some of the corporate Churches today:

Numbers 22:12-17, 37

vs. 12-13 And God said to Balaam, “You shall NOT go with them; you shall NOT curse the people for they are blessed. So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, “Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you.”



vs. 14-15 And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, Balaam refuses to come with us.” Then Balak again sent princes more numerous and more honorable than they.

vs. 16-17 and they came to Balaam and said to him, “Thus says Balak . . . ‘Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come and curse this people for me.’”

v. 37 Then Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?”

Balak offers three prophecies—all for the good of Israel.

Then Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way **(Numbers 24:25)**.

It was undoubtedly in their final meeting that Balaam told Balak what he could do to bring God’s wrath on Israel and destroy them.

Then Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab . . . **(Numbers 25:1-3, 16-18)**.

Moses made known that Balaam did counsel Balak how to bring about God’s wrath upon Israel:

“Look, these women (*women are symbolic of churches*) caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to TRESPASS AGAINST the LORD in the incident of Peor” **(Numbers 31:16)**.

Later Israel killed Balaam,
. . . Balaam ... they also killed with the sword **(Numbers 31:8)**.

It is important to keep certain things in mind for it should be realized the doctrine of Balaam and the teachings of the Nicolaitans are yet within the Churches of God, certainly spiritually.

It should also be realized many of these people were not really converted any more than the many thousands who departed from the Church in 1995. Cleaving to the true people of God with flatteries.

The wise understands this by remembering what Jesus said of His Church, that it was a little flock. This He said to His disciples:

“Do NOT fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” **(Luke 12:32)**.

The True Church was Never Large

PAGE 15, Mr. Armstrong, The Plain Truth about Easter, 1973, pp 14-16 (*an excerpt*)

“First, remember this Church was NEVER large, NEVER politically powerful, or a world-known organization of men **[Luke 12:32]**. It is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not a political organization. It is composed of all whose hearts and lives have been CHANGED by the Spirit of God, whether visibly together, or individually scattered.”

End of Quote

The Church of God

Comment: God's Church has always been a little flock even to this time when the number of the membership reached well over 100,000. There were the FEW among the MANY (*Matthew 20:16; 22:14*)!

Almost all of them were like so many through the centuries who were never converted. Not just those who went worldly-wide, but also the many within the corporate Churches of today, and even within the more, but not fully, conservative Churches.

Preface: A TRUE HISTORY OF THE TRUE CHURCH, 1959

by

Herman L. Hoeh:

“Is Christ divided? There are more than 250 major denominations in America alone and other 100s of little groups and sects. WHY? Where did this confusion start?”

How much do you really know about the TRUE CHURCH? Where has it been? . . . You will be ASTONISHED to see the true history of God's Church. . . . This surprising truth is bound up in the real meaning of the SEVEN CHURCHES IN REVELATION

A TRUE HISTORY OF THE TRUE CHURCH, Page 4,

Herman L. Hoeh, 1959:

“Nowhere is there any prophecy that the ONE TRUE CHURCH should become great, powerful, exerting INFLUENCE in this world. Rather, Jesus called it the LITTLE FLOCK, despised, persecuted, scattered BY the world! Scattered but NEVER DIVIDED! Always, ONE CHURCH, speaking the same thing NEVER MANY DIFFERING SECTS. . .

Page 1> In His final prayer for His ONE Church, Jesus prayed: “They are NOT of the world, even as I am not of the world” (*John 17:9-16*). “I pray for them: I pray not for the world . . . Holy Father, KEEP through Your Own Name those whom You have given Me, THAT THY MAY BE ONE, as We are. I have given them YOUR WORD, and the world hates them, because they are NOT OF the world. I pray NOT that You should take them out of the world, BUT that You should keep them from the EVIL one . . .”

End of Quotes

The Faithful Members

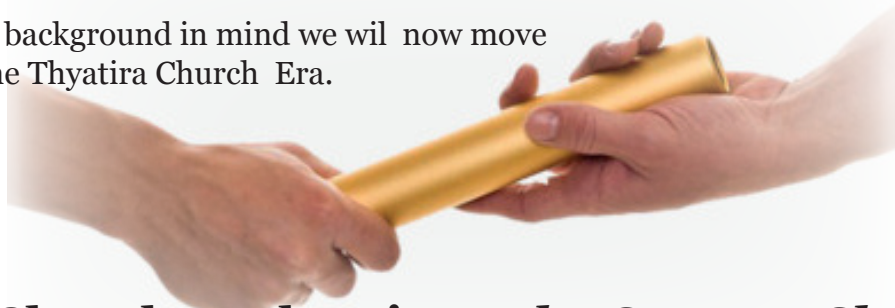
Dr. Hoeh was right in the closing part of his quotes when he said, maybe some of the problems that are yet within the Church, and shall continue to have, ARISE from NOT listening to what the Spirit says to ALL the Churches.

Revelation 17:14

v. 14 “And those who are with Him are called, chosen and FAITHFUL”

This is speaking about all of God’s true people who have remained FAITHFUL to Jesus Christ all through the trials and tribulations, deceptions from false ministers, from the beginning of the Church until now.

With this background in mind we will now move forward to the Thyatira Church Era.



**The Church at Thyatira - *The Corrupt Church*
1184-1600s A.D.**



The Greek word Thyatira is "sweet savor of contrition," in other words, "real repentance."

Thyatira began approximately 1184 by Peter of Bruys. The members called petrobrustians; then Henry People—called Henrissians.

**The Letter from Jesus Christ
to the Church in Thyatira Church Era.**

Revelation 2:18-29

vs. 18-19 “And to the angel (*margin: messenger*) of the Church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire,

and His feet like fine brass; “I know your works, love, faith and patience (*margin: perseverance*); and as for your works, the last more than the first.

v. 20 (*tolerate*) THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

v. 21-22 And I gave her time to repent of her SEXUAL IMMORALITY, and she (*willed not to*) did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit sexual adultery with her into Great Tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

v. 23 And I will KILL her children with death. And all the churches will know that I am He who SEARCHES the minds and hearts. And I will give each one of you according to your works.

v. 24 “But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the DEPTHS OF SATAN, as they call them, I will not put on you no other burden.

vs. 25-26 “But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who OVERCOMES, and KEEPS MY WORKS until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

vs. 27-29 “He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter’s vessels shall be broken in pieces’—as I also have received of My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

Details of The History of Thyatira

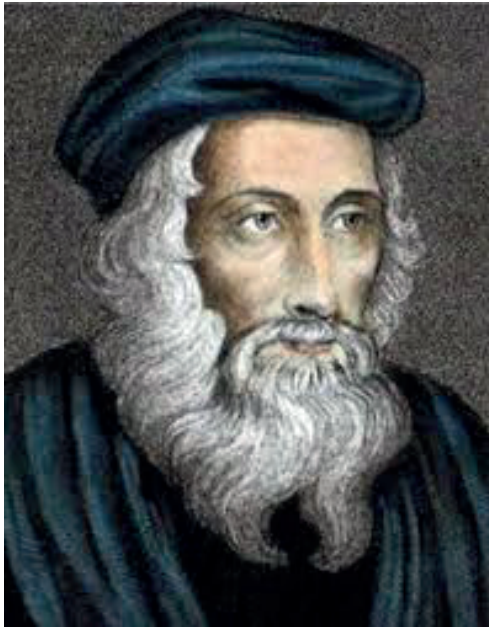
Both Scripture and Church history reveal THIS CHURCH ERA was one of ‘COMPROMISE’. Compromise with the pagan teachings of the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

The Infamous Jezebel

Correspondence Course, Page 15, Lesson 51, “As we see from Scripture (verse 20) that it was also during that period of time ENTERED the infamous JEZEBEL!

This was brought about by the persecution that began in 1199 by Pope Innocent. In the same period, he began a series of moves to PERVERT, to SEDUCE or VIOLATE God’s Church . . . in South France.

When the Lateran IV Council of 1215 forbade the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, it virtually closed the door on the evangelistic Work of God's Church. And Jesus Christ allowed it.



By 1218, Peter Waldo now dead, and the Waldenses divided, the Work became ineffective.

About 1215 also, the pope instituted the Franciscans (*Preaching Friars*) and Dominicans (*Minor Friars*) to combat more forcefully the [*the Church*]. In 1233, the Inquisition was put in their charge.

In the mid-13th century they, the Church, had already adopted the name of Vallenses (Vaudois in French). ... Forgotten was the connection with Waldo of this name given them by the world. All but forgotten, too, the name Church of God.

But in the valleys they practiced their religion openly, and though often threatened, were divinely protected.

The 7,000 persons in the original Jezebel's day prefigured these people. Elijah thought he was the only one left who was faithful to God; and he spoke to the LORD about it:

I Kings 19:2, 10, 18

v. 10 “. . . the children of Israel have forsaken Your Covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword, I alone am left, and they seek to take my life . . .

v. 18 Then the LORD said to him, ‘Yet I have reserved 7,000 in Israel, all whose knees have NOT bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.’”

What assurance did Jesus Christ give to those who remained free from JEZEBEL'S ceremonies and practices?

Revelation 2:24-25

“Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as who do NOT have this doctrine (*verse 20, pagan doctrines of Catholicism and Protestantism*), who have NOT known the depths of Satan, as THEY say, I will put on you NO other burden. BUT HOLD FAST what you have TILL I COME.”

The emphasis here is:

Revelation 2:24

v. 24 “[to those who] **have NOT known** [experienced] **the depths [deep things - mysteries] of Satan. . .I will upon you NONE other burden. . . hold fast.**”

Only the few did hold fast in Thyatira and Sardis. The rest began absorbing the pagan teachings. The FAITHFUL were to be given NO MORE ADDITIONAL WORK TO DO, nothing additional to endure, only they MUST withstand that FALSE system.

COMMENT: Even here the prevailing doctrine became in time NO more than a form of puritanic Catholicism. They began to claim the 9th century bishop Claude and other early dissenting Catholics as their spiritual ancestors. And when in 1380 many of them took up arms to REPEL the invading Inquisitors, God’s protection ceased. From 1319, their valleys were invaded repeatedly until they were decimated. [*the Alpine Valleys in Southern France*].

Martyrdom prevailed to a large degree in other places as well.

PAGE 16, During the century, the scattered groups lost contact with the valleys, those who were the FAITHFUL. Many carnal-minded individuals ATTENDED Mass, pretending in every way to be good Catholics while continuing to teach their children what remained of their own doctrine.

Remember, the original Waldenses before they were corrupted were in NO way Protestant. . .The spirit of Protestantism was utterly foreign to them, as to God’s Church in all ages [*just as it was with WCG before 1986*] The FAITHFUL in God’s Church has been a centuries-long witness to Catholicism;

“And I gave her time to REPENT of her sexual immorality, and she did NOT (willed not) repent” (Revelation 2:21).

This can be seen when paralleling this verse with what the apostle Peter said to Simon Magus: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” (Acts 8:22).

Jezebel, like Simon, “WILLED NOT TO REPENT” and kept on grasping. There is JUDGEMENT coming and not all that far away for the symbol of Jezebel who represents the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Extinction for them will come with a final Great Tribulation:

“And the 10 horns which you saw on the Beast, these will HATE the harlot, make her desolate and naked (expose her for the fraud she really is), eat her flesh, and burn her with fire” (Revelation 17:16).

And saying, “Alas, alas, that great city (Rome) ... for in one hour, such great riches come to nothing. . . .” (Revelation 18:16-21).

Now to RETURN to the WARNING given to the Church in Thyatira, and it also applies to the recent history of the WWCG as well:

“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow (tolerate) THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit SEXUAL IMMORALITY and to eat things sacrificed to idols” (Revelation 2:20).

Correspondence Course, Lesson 51, page 12

“WHO WAS “JEZEBEL”? Why was she called Jezebel in the Church in Thyatira. The Bible explains this symbol. To understand the answer to that question, another question needs to be asked: Who was the original Jezebel? To understand why God used the name and memory of JEZEBEL to describe the condition of the Church in Thyatira, we need to look at the real Jezebel and the part she played in the history of Israel for what she did contributed greatly to Israel going into captivity later on in 719 to 721 B. C. [*I Kings 16:31; 18:4, 13, 18-19*].



Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah. He then went into hiding (*We could say here that Jezebel was a type of the Catholic Church and Elijah a type of the true Church.*)

I Kings 17:5-21 Elijah was sent by God to another area to be away from the clutches of Jezebel and remain there until time for the famine to end.

Jezebel was a Gentile and represented a false - Gentile - religion. The man who replaced Mr. Armstrong was also a Gentile, Russian, and came to represent a false, Gentile, religion. Please keep in mind that the True Church is called spiritual Israel. Notice the chosen wife of king Ahab of Israel:

I Kings 16:31

v. 31 “(Ahab) . . . he took as wife JEZEBEL the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.” Scripture reveals the sordid and evil character of JEZEBEL. *** Further, her name and character is used in ***Revelation 2:20*** TO ENABLE US TO SEE THE PROBLEM within the Church in Thyatira!

[The same problem that CONTINUES to be seen in the corporate churches of God today.] To understand this one has to KNOW the belief and teachings of these corporate churches of God that will be examined later. Now we will see another example of the evil and murderous woman, Jezebel:

I Kings 21:1- (whole chapter) Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth and was sullen and sulking because Naboth would not sell it to him. Jezebel saw this and then had Ahab murdered. She then told Ahab that Naboth was dead and go and take the property for your own. The character of Jezebel was one of greed, grasping, selfish, and destructive.

She scrupled to plan and act deceitfully when it served her purpose (verses 8,10). I Kings 21:8, 10 Seeing Ahab sullen, in essence, she said, “Be happy, cheer up, I will get it for you.” She then had Naboth murdered. She, the female, dominated and ruled over the man who should have been her master (**verses 7, 25**).

I Kings 21:7, 25



vs. 7, 25 . . . But there was no one like Ahab who SOLD himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, BECAUSE Jezebel stirred him up.”

[This is like the wife of President Clinton who lost out in her candidacy to become the next president—losing it first to President Obama, then to President Trump. She will not lose in her third quest, 2020] Jezebel greatly misused the power of SEX to lead King Ahab around

by the nose. She also practiced this with others. Note what Jehu said to king Joram of Israel (son of Ahab and Jezebel) who was now the new king having replaced Ahab:

II Kings 9:22, 30

vs. 22, 30 “The harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are many. . . And when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it, and she put PAINT on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window.



Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition, volume 15, JEZEBEL “Her name is often used in modern English as a synonym for an ABANDONED woman or one who PAINTS her face.”

She was also guilty of the murder of the True Servants of God.

I Kings 18:4

v. 4. . . Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD . . . Elijah had the 450 prophets of Baal killed. Ahab went home and told her about it:

I Kings 19:2-3

vs. 2-3 Then Jezebel sent a message to Elijah, saying [in essence], . . . **By this time tomorrow you will be as dead as those whom you had murdered.”** In all of these things she was A TYPE of the “JEZEBEL” of Revelation 2, who made deals and ruled over the kings of Europe during the Middle Ages. She can be seen in all of her abominations in another passage of Scriptures of which the apostle John also saw in another VISION, this great FALLEN WOMAN of exactly JEZEBEL’S character:

Revelation 17:1-6

v. 1-2 “ . . . Come, I will show you the judgment of the GREAT HARLOT, who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth were made DRUNK with the WINE of her fornication . . . ”

To help us understand, we need to think back to the mass coverage of the News Media of the recent death of the previous pope, Pope John Paul II, 2005. And the media glorified the pope and his church for several days and huge crowds of people flowed into Rome at the time. Even the president of the United States and his wife were there with dignitaries from many countries who were also at his funeral that was dragged out to glorify the Church.

Revelation 18:3, 7

vs. 3, 7 “For all the nations have DRUNK of the wine of the WRATH of her fornication . . . ‘I SIT AS A QUEEN, and am NO widow, and will see NO sorrow.’”

This woman has been identified as a great whore . . . as a great FALSE CHURCH dominating over nations and having a fornicating relationship with the governments of this world.

PAGE 13 Her counterfeit pretensions were so bedazzling that even John had to be carried in vision into the “WILDERNESS” to view her in proper perspective:

Revelation 17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filth of her fornication.



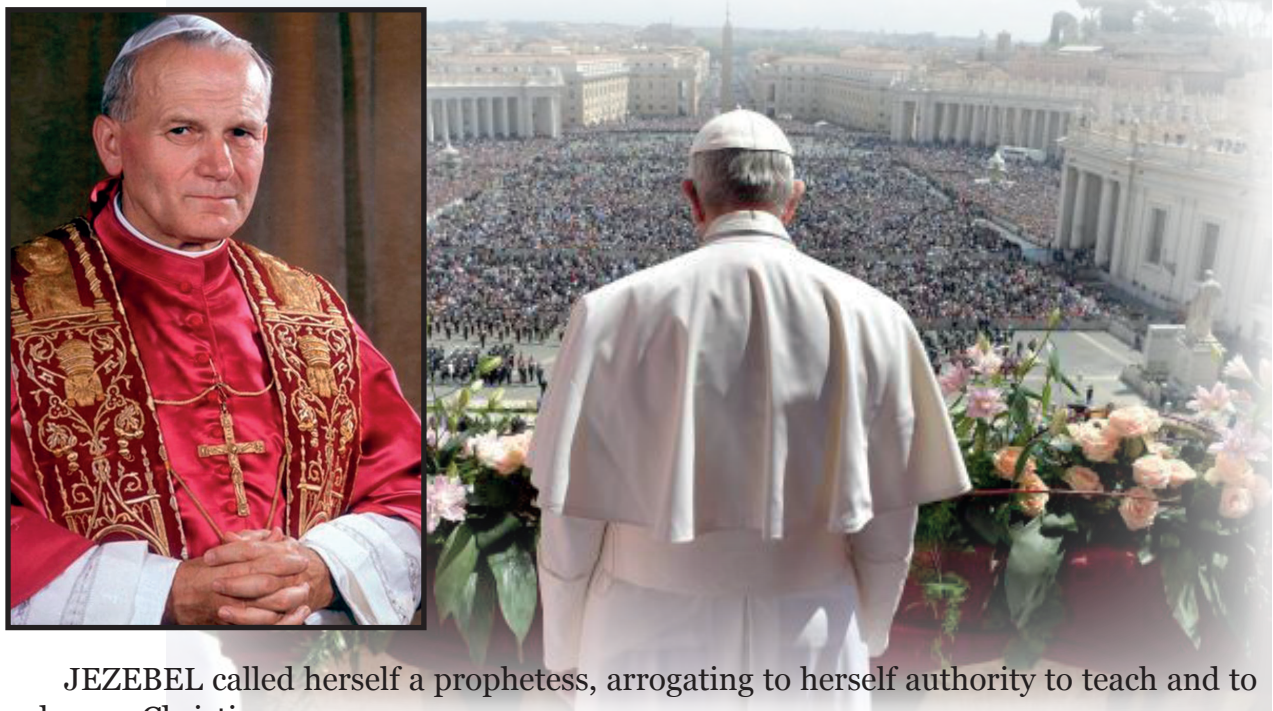
COMMENT: While the whole world was drunk on her FALSE DOCTRINE and JEZEBEL herself drunk on the blood of God's servants, the persecuted, suffering True Church IN THE WILDERNESS saw her clearly revealed in all her filthiness. In the Middle Ages, this False Church sank to its lowest depths:

***Revelation 2:24* “But to you, I say, and to the rest in THYATIRA, as many as SATAN, as they call them, I will put on you NO other burden.”**

Careful, reputable, scholarly historians bear unanimous witness of her scandal and sin which blasphemed God's Name. Her celibate priests begat numerous offspring. Popes filled their palaces with harlots and thieves. Vicious females actually RULED that church, elevating their lovers to the papal throne, murdering them later to elevate others. See Halley's handbook who wrote in much detail about these terrible popes [24th Printing, pages 768-784].

WHY would God call SUCH a “woman” JEZEBEL? Because like the ancient Gentile JEZEBEL, ruling as an Israelite queen, this JEZEBEL of the Middle Ages was a GENTILE CHURCH having the same old pagan religion while masquerading as God's Church, spiritual Israel, and calling herself Christian. ***II Corinthians 11:13-15***.

Here is merely a LATER FORM of the same universal paganism that had earlier falsely claimed to be Jewish, being actually the synagogue or church of Satan: ***Revelation 2:9* “... I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”**



JEZEBEL called herself a prophetess, arrogating to herself authority to teach and to rule over Christians:

Revelation 2:20 “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow (*tolerate*) THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit SEXUAL IMMORALITY and to eat things sacrificed to idols.”

It is no wonder that John marveled at the splendor of her outward appearance: **Revelation 17:6** (*last part*) “. . . And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.” Even in the wilderness in the Middle Ages, some members were DECEIVED into hearing and heeding her false doctrine.

Regarding the Waldensians it is interesting to note that on the Waldensian Emblem or seal were 7 stars. They knew who they were and what Era:

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the 7 stars which you saw in My right hand, and the 7 golden lampstands: the 7 stars are the angels of the 7 Churches, and the 7 lampstands which you saw are the 7 Churches.

Directly below and pointing at the 4th star was a lighted lamp representing the then active Thyatira Church. Around the rim was the Latin motto = “A light shines in the darkness.” They knew they were to be A LIGHT to the world, as Jesus said:

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the LIGHT of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they LIGHT A LAMP and put it under a basket, but on a LAMPSTAND, and it gives LIGHT to all who are in the house.”

God’s people knew they were the Thyatira Church! They also must have known who JEZEBEL was. One of their oldest surviving books, The Book of Antichrist, equates the Roman Papacy and priests with Babylon (*Isaiah 47, the little horn of the 4th beast (Daniel 7), the whore (Revelation 17-18), the man of sin, the son of perdition (II Thessalonians 2:3) false prophets, lying teachers (II Peter 2), spirit of error (I John 4), clouds without water, trees without leaves (Jude), ministers of darkness, Egyptians, Balaamites, etc.!*



Half of Jesus message to Thyatira, THE LONGEST OF THE Seven Church Eras, is devoted to **WARNING AGAINST** JEZEBEL. Yet in spite of the WARNING, MANY did fall into her trap.

[The same was true with the ministers of the Worldwide Church of God who attended the Azusa Protestant Bible College. Then they contacted leading ministers of the protestant world to help them SEDUCE the whole Church. And they did!]

How Jezebel Seduced God's Servants

Just HOW did JEZEBEL SEDUCE God's servants:

Revelation 2:20 “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow (*tolerate*) THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit SEXUAL IMMORALITY and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” Through the false ministers of Baal, JEZEBEL began introducing her pagan teachings . . . and taught in the Catholic and Protestant churches. From what we see in **Revelation 2:20**, and knowing that Jesus tells us we are to pay attention to all that is said in His messages to the Seven Churches, we know the same teachings are found in God's Church today [*as from 1986*].

COMMENT: The chief worship in the ancient city of Thyatira was that of the sun god Apollo. Sunday was the pagan's chief day. And just OUTSIDE the city of [*Pasadena*] Thyatira, a sybil or prophetess presided as a famous Chaldean sanctuary [*Azusa Protestant Bible College*]. The Bible says her name was JEZEBEL: **Revelation 2:20** “. . . THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL . . .”

Probably she not only pretended to be converted (*as Simon Magus did, Acts 8:9-24*) but took every opportunity to URGE the members of Christ's Body to come to HER CHURCH, TEACHING them there to commit both physical and spiritual fornication, and to eat the things sacrificed to idols in her Chaldean *mysteries*:

History of the Christian Church Section II, Pages 240-241, Jones, A. D. 1500-1550

“The history of Modern Europe does not present us with a more interesting period than the commencement of the 16th century ... The sanguinary proceedings that had been carried on against the Waldenses in the southern provinces of France, towards the close of the former century, had apparently exhausted the malice of the court of Rome; THE HERETICS for the moment at least, were driven from public view; and the state of the catholic church was more than tranquil.

“. . . the flame which was kindled throughout Europe, at this time, by the preaching of [Martin] Luther and his associates, so completely occupied the attention of the catholic party for about a dozen years, namely from 1517 to 1535, that the Waldenses, in France and Piedmont, were happily, in a great measure overlooked. But as the conflagration excited by Luther's hostility gradually subsided, they began again TO ATTRACT the notice of their adversaries and to come in from an equal share of their malice and malignity; . . .

“Many amongst them had been induced to shrink from the cross; and to avoid its inconvenience, were FALLEN into the practice of FEIGNING a complaisant KIND OF ACQUIESCENCE with the national forms of worship. Some of the Waldensian churches of Provence [another area] appear to have been deeply affected at seeing this LAODICEAN CONDUCT PREVAIL.”

Letters were written from some of these people to others seeking their counsel. Please note excerpts from one such letter sent back to these people so affected:

Page 244 “We understand that the fear of persecution has caused you to conceal and dissemble your faith. Now, with the heart we believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. But those who are afraid to confess Christ before the world, shall find no acceptance with God the Father; for our God ... is a jealous God, He cannot endure that any of His servants should take upon them THE YOKE OF ANTI-CHRIST.

“For there is no fellowship or communion between Christ and Belial; and if you communicate with infidels, BY GOING TO THEIR ABOMINABLE MASSES, you will there hear blasphemies against the death and sufferings of Christ. . . “That IF we participate of that impure table, we thereby declare ourselves to be of one and the same body with the wicked, however contrary we may PRETEND it to be to our wills and inclinations. And when we say AMEN to their prayers, do we not DENY Christ?”

End of Quotes from the Correspondence Course

The Incredible HISTORY of God’s True Church, Pages 165-167, Ivor C. Fletcher

“The THYATIRA ERA of the Church had major internal problems relating to COMPROMISE with False Doctrine (Revelation 2:20). In the ancient Waldensian Book of Antichrist, we find that the JEZEBEL of Bible prophecy was equated with the Roman Papacy.

The Roman church during the Middle Ages used various means, including the threat of persecution, to induce the Waldenses to participate in SUNDAY SERVICES AND THE CATHOLIC MASS. Many ALLOWED themselves to COMPROMISE AND COMMIT SPIRITUAL FORNICATION, some even allowed Catholic priests to BAPTIZE their infant children.

Generations of coexistence with sin led the THYATIRA Church to gradually DEPART from its doctrines. By 1380 many members NO LONGER had the faith to rely on God for protection and began to use military force to

RESIST their persecutors. This was in spite of the fact that God, on several occasions, had caused **A WALL OF DENSE FOG** to separate the Waldenses from their enemies. . . .

The probable justification for using military force against their enemies, rather than to follow Christ's instructions to **FLEE** from persecution, was that the ancient Israelites had used military might, along with God's assistance to defeat their enemies, and as the Waldenses looked upon themselves as Israel of the Alps, why should **NOT** they do likewise.

Most, by the 15th century, had forgotten that the Church of God is a holy and spiritual nation, using spiritual rather than carnal weapons (I Peter 2:9). ... Although the first Waldenses had obeyed the **COMMAND** of Christ to **SWEAR NOT AT ALL**" (Matthew 5:34-37), by ... 1532 they had departed so far from their earlier true doctrines that they now held that a Christian **MAY SWEAR** by the Name of God.

The Sabbath seems to have been forgotten to have been rejected by the Waldenses at About this date. One of the 17 articles of their faith written in 1552 states: that on **SUNDAY** we ought to cease from our earthly labors.

The later history of the Waldensian movement is **DOMINATED** by persecution. This period must be ranked as one of the blackest episodes in the entire history of man's inhumanity to his fellow human beings. God appears to have permitted the **MASS SLAUGHTER** of multitudes of these people, perhaps in order to induce them, by means of these severe trials, to **REPENT AND RETURN** to their former **TRUE** doctrines and godly way of life. . . .

Page 168 "As we read of this very sobering aspect of Church History, it is good to remember that **HISTORY DOES INDEED REPEAT ITSELF**. A time yet future is predicted, **WHEN** the final era of God's Church, the Laodicean Era, will also be exposed to **THE WRATH OF SATAN**, and those **HUMAN INSTRUMENTS** that he can influence.

Is it **NOT** far better to learn the lesson that the Waldenses **FAILED** to heed, and to stay close enough to God that we may be counted worthy to receive His protection."

NOTE: "When the main body of a Church took up arms in self-defense as did the Paulicians and Waldenses, they were no longer the True Church" (*History of the True Church, Dean Blackwell.*)

NOTE: A truth to remember in Church history: Any Church that had to go through tribulation had to do so to **PURIFY** their impurities.

Revelation 17:1-5 “. . . Come, I will show you the JUDGMENT of the great harlot, who sits on many waters . . .”

In the Middle Ages, the false church, the antitypical, JEZEBEL, strove similarly to bring the Thyatira members into her communion [as did the Worldwide Church of God under the ruling apostate pastor general, Mr. Joseph Tkach, Sr., wooing, threatening, and disfellowshipping those in disagreement with their acceptance of pagan teachings]. *[To come to Jezebel's Church: The apostate Worldwide Church of God teaching was to seduce the membership to accept the Protestant teachings. Those coming to be participants of the pagan teachings were of the Synagogue of Satan and were standing at the door to welcome all others to come in and become members with them.]* She claimed to be Christian. Some of the humiliated Waldenses, not having individually repented when their group came out of the Catholic Church, were disposed to listen to her.

Others were coerced by FEAR of persecution into following her ways committing spiritual fornication with the world. The apostle John tells us what it is:

I John 2:15-18

vs. 15-16 “Do NOT love the world or the things in the world. If anyone LOVES the world (this system), the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is NOT of the Father but of the world.

vs. 17-18 “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. Little children, IT IS THE LAST HOUR; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming; even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.”

While listening to her these weak and unrepentant people were caught up in their system: They ALLOWED, JEZEBEL'S priests to BAPTIZE their infant children as demanded by civil and ecclesiastical law, gradually took part in her Sunday worship, and ATE the sacrifice of the Mass.

Revelation 2:20 (last 7 words) “. . . to eat things sacrificed to idols.”

What does God say about this idolatry?

I Corinthians 10:20-21 “But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and NOT to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, you cannot partake of the table of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.”

Acts 15:29 “. . . That you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

Note that the Greek word does NOT specify animal sacrifice.

COMMENT: The Waldenses considered those ceremonies and sacraments of the Catholic Church meaningless, and therefore harmless. But Christ thought otherwise. This coexistence with EVIL cost following generations the understanding of real repentance, true baptism and even of the true Creator God.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, volume III, Page 1676, Article JEZEBEL

“The character of Jezebel is seen revived in that of her daughter, Athaliah of Judah (*II Kings 11:1-3*, the antitype of the next president of America, 2020); there is no doubt that Jezebel was a POWERFUL personality.

She brought the worship of the Phoenician Baal and Astarte with her into Hebrew life; and indirectly introduced it into Judah as well as into the Northern Kingdom [*Israel*]. In judging her connection with this propagation, we should bear in mind that she is not a queen of the 20th century, she must be judged in company with other queens famous in history.



Her religious attitude and zeal might profitably be compared with that of Mary, queen of Scots. . . .

. . . The superiority of JEH-worship was not as clear then as it is to us today. It may also be held that Baal-worship was not unknown in Hebrew life (*cf Judges 6:25*), that Baal of Canaan had become incorporated with JEH of Sinai, and that there were pagan elements in the worship of the latter.

But against all this it must be clear that the Baal whom Jezebel attempted to introduce was the Phoenician Baal, pure and simple; he was another god, or rather in him was presented an idea of God very different from JEH.

And further, in Phoenicia, where wealth and luxury had been enjoyed on a scale unknown to either Israel or the Canaanites of the interior, there was

a refinement, if one may so speak, and at the same time a prodigality of vicious indulgences, connected with the worship of Baal and Astarte to which Israel had hitherto been a stranger . . .

It was like a cancer eating into the vitals or a head and heart sickness resulting in total decay (*Isaiah 1:6*). In Israel, moral deterioration meant political as well as spiritual death. The weal [*spiritual health*] of the nation lay in fidelity to JEH alone, and in His pure worship.”

End of Quotes

The History of the True Church Continued, Dr. Herman L. Hoeh

The verdict of the Hebrew historian is thus substantiated. Jezebel is an example, an extreme one no doubt, of the bad influence of a highly developed civilization forcing itself with all of its sins upon a civilization less highly civilized, but possessed of nobler moral and religious conceptions. She has parallels both in family and in national life. . . .

“In *Revelation 2:20*, we read of Jezebel, “the woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess;” not thy wife . . .

Some members of the Church at Thyatira under the sway of an influential woman refused to separate from the local guilds where moral interests, though not ostensibly defied, were often seriously compromised. . . . Her lax principles or tenderness made for a connection with foreign and compromising associations which evidently exerted a dangerous influence upon some weaker Christians in the city.

Her followers PRIDED THEMSELVES UPON THEIR ENLIGHTENED LIBERALISM (verse 24, as did those who fell away from the Church in 1994-1995; ***II Thessalonians 2:1-4***). It was not the cults but the trade guilds that formed the problem at Thyatira. And yet true to the promise of Jesus Christ the true Church of God continues to exist in spite of Satan’s efforts to destroy it through the centuries even unto now by persecution, deception, and apostasy - deception from known leaders a departure from the faith from within the Church itself.

Some leaving completely, and others remaining within yet holding to some of the pagan teachings and inculcating them into the corporate churches in which they are! As we approach the end with the purifying process in place with the scattered membership we see that it continues today and Satan is intensifying his efforts through deceptive means that is leading to outright persecution with words and worse in the future.

Brethren, in view of all of this, it is necessary that the Church go through a purifying process to reveal who the real and true People of God really are.

It is important that we learn the lessons from the THYATIRA Church Era, for what they experienced in sufferings and death due to COMPROMISING, mirrors where we are today and the martyrdom that is soon to befall many in God's Church.

At the same time, Jesus Christ tells us to pay heed to what is said to each era, lest we fall victim to the same things they did and lose all that we have lived for the years we have been blessed to be members of God's Church.

***Revelation 2 - 3* "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."**

The Church in the Wilderness – Page 22

"John was inspired to commend the "Church at Thyatira" because the last works of the Church were more than the first. In the local Church there was a false woman teacher (*symbol of a great Mother Church*) who taught some to practice idolatry. Jesus warned He would cast them into great tribulation and "kill her children (Protestants) with death" unless they repented (***Rev. 2:18-29***).

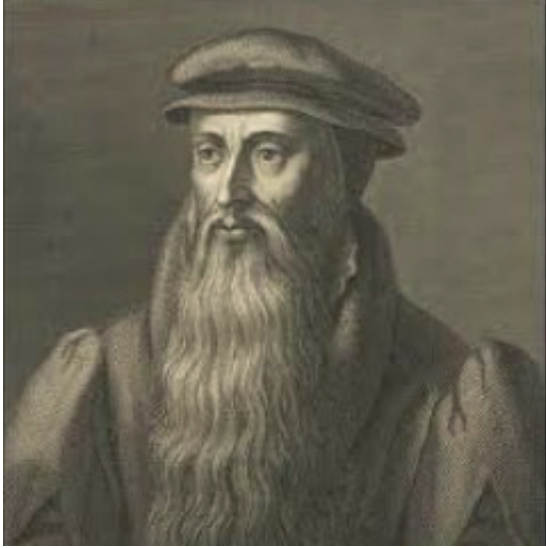
Now let us notice how this description fits exactly the next great expansion of God's people. As a result of the evangelization of the Alpine regions by the Paulicians and Bogomils of Bulgaria, as God's people were called, there arose numerous ministers and faithful congregations around 1000 A.D. One of these men was Peter de Bruys who preached the gospel of the Kingdom in the south of France (*Jones' "Church History", ch. 4, sec. 3*). Two other preachers of the time were Arnold and Henry. They were charged by the Catholic Church with remaining faithful to the whole law of God and of observing the Sabbath ("*Ecclesiastical History*", by Peter Allix, pp. 168-169).

The Lutheran historian Mosheim admits that the congregations of the Church in the twelfth century held "a notion that the observance of the law of Moses, in everything except the offerings of sacrifices, was obligatory upon Christians ... they abstained from those meats the use of which was prohibited under the Mosaic economy, and celebrated the Jewish Sabbath. The second tenet which distinguished this sect was advanced in opposition to the doctrine of three persons in the divine nature."

Yes, they knew that God was not a trinity, but a family!

A crusade was instituted against many of these people in Southern France. Thousands perished. But when it seemed that the FIRST WORK WOULD SOON BE ENDED, there arose an even GREATER leader among God's people.

It was the close of the twelfth century. In Lyons, France, lived an astonishingly successful and wealthy merchant, Peter Waldo. "One day, while in the company of some of the leading citizens, one of his friends fell lifeless at his side. Terrified by the event, he said to himself: If death had stricken me, what would have become of my soul?"



Being a Catholic, Waldo asked one of these theologians what is the PERFECT way. 'Ah!' answered the theologian . . . 'here is Christ's precept': "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come take up thy cross and follow me." (Comba, *"History of the Waldenses"*, p. 21).

Waldo disposed of his property by distributing to the poor. But from his wealth he also had a translation of the Scriptures made. In this translation he noticed the command to the apostles to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. His mind began to understand the

Scriptures. God was using Peter Waldo.

Comba says that "he brought to the study of the Scriptures that practical common sense which had guided him in his business transactions ... The word of Christ was clear enough, for Waldo it was simply a question of furnishing a literal translation" (p. 243 of Comba's *"History"*).

The humble remnant of the Church of God listened to him. Soon many new disciples were coming to repentance. "His disciples became almost as many CO-WORKERS for him" (p. 26). The world called them Waldenses. God's Church was once again spreading the gospel! A SCHOOL FOR MINISTERS WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE THE TRAINED HELP TO CARRY THE GOSPEL.

Called the "Church of God"

Here is a marvelous record from these people, still preserved, dated 1404: "We do not find anywhere in the writings of the Old Testament that the light of truth and of holiness was at any time completely extinguished.

There have always been men who walked faithfully in the paths of righteousness. Their number has been at times reduced to a few; but has never been altogether lost. We believe that the same has been the case from the time of Jesus Christ until now; and that it will be so unto the end.

FOR IF THE CHURCH OF GOD WAS FOUNDED, IT WAS IN ORDER THAT IT MIGHT REMAIN UNTIL THE END OF TIME . . . We do not believe that the Church of God absolutely departed from the way of truth; but one portion yielded, and, as is commonly seen, the majority was led away to evil." (Quoted in Comba's *"History"*, pp. 10-11.)

Their enemies admitted that these people proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom of God, that they baptized repentant believers and obeyed the WHOLE law of God. But just as there was a false teacher, Jezebel, in the local church at Thyatira so now there were many FALSE teachers and FALSE brethren among these people. Some rose up among the Waldenses teaching that it was right to have Catholics, and later, Protestants, baptize their children and to attend IDOLATROUS mass once in a while. Others committed spiritual fornication by meddling in politics in the hope of avoiding persecution. *[Parallels of Today]*

To correct His people God caused a frightful crusade to pass over them about 300 years after the death of Waldo. Only a faithful remnant escaped.

Once again we see the repeated fact that after a few generations, the local congregations are no longer composed of truly converted brethren, but of unconverted children and half-hearted believers who either go aside into total error in the face of persecution or else are forced to give up their lives for the faith, as Daniel prophesied.

But in 1315 A.D., long before the crusade against the Waldenses occurred, the truth of God was carried to England by a German Waldensian preacher, Walter Lollard. It took deep root for a while until the Protestant Reformation.

Now let's notice what John wrote to the "Church at Sardis." End of Quotes

The baton is now passed to the Sardis Church Era.



The Church at Sardis - *The Dead Church*

It began in the 1600s A.D., around 1585

The Greek word Sardis “That which Remains”

With the 1800s their zeal vanished. The cause? Their willingness to remain in fellowship with false churches; the lack of real spirituality.

The Sardis Church Era was raised up in England and spread immediately to America

The Letter from Jesus Christ to the Church in Sardis

Revelation 3:1-6



vs. 1-2 “And to the angel (messenger) of the Church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the Seven Spirits of God and the Seven Stars: “I know your works, that you have A NAME (Church of God) that you are alive, but you are dead.

vs. 3-4 “Be WATCHFUL and STRENGTHEN the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore HOW you have received and heard; hold fast, and repent. Therefore, if you will not WATCH, I will come upon you as A THIEF, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

vs. 4-5 “You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in WHITE, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS, and I will not BLOT OUT his name from the Book of Life; but I will CONFESS HIS NAME before My Father and before His angels.

V. 6 “He who has an ear, let him HEAR what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

Preface

The Saris Era is very important for our understanding for it came to be a dying Church spiritually due to the problems that came all the way down from the Ephesian Era through the successive eras of the other three to end up as a cemetery marker in the Saris Era. And the Churches who espouse those teachings and beliefs are dying as well.

Correspondence Course Lesson 53

Approaching Modern Times

“Most of the LATER Dickensian – during the long Hydration Era – were not converted. These people merely sympathized with the truth. They were not willing to give their very lives for it. When the going got rough, they dropped away from what truth they had received, often neglecting the Sabbath and condoning the partaking of Mass.

Now to refresh our memories as we begin this final lesson on true church history. Recall that it was prophesied, hundreds of years before Christ, that the number of true Christians in the Middle Ages would be reduced almost to the vanishing point – that the "little horn" (the papacy) would "wear out the saints" (Dan. 7:25).

From such a background – where the truth of God was about to perish (**Rev. 3:2**) And only a very few were converted members of the true Church – Jesus Christ raised up a new era of God's Church. It was in England that He chose to raise up the "Saris" Era. But, sadly, the lack of real spirituality continued to permeate this era of the one true Church of God.

LESSON 53

Character of the Saris Era

1. Does Christ verify that the "Saris" Era began at this time when His truth was in danger of being completely forgotten? Rev. 3:2. Were these people exhorted to GET BUSY (*BECOME watchful, or "wake up" -- according to the original Greek*) and "STRENGTHEN the things which remain, that are READY TO DIE"? Same verse.

COMMENT: Much was lacking in the doctrine and practice they received from the latter end of the Hydration Era. Proper organization and government in the Church were in great need of strengthening. And they desperately needed a school for the training of a qualified ministry.

2. What does Jesus Christ say is the outstanding characteristic of the "Sardis" Era of His Church? **Rev. 3:1.**

COMMENT: Sardis had a "name" (*a position or office*) as one of the seven LIVING eras of God's Church, but was, according to the inspired original Greek, as if DEAD! Of all the seven churches, Christ has the least to say to Sardis. For there were only a very FEW in the Sardis Era who had not DEFILED their garments, spiritually speaking (*verse 4*).

Significantly, the site of the ancient city of Sardis is completely deserted today. Nomad Turkish herders pitch their tents near a place they call Sart. Its DEAD condition symbolizes the spiritual condition of the Sardis Era of the Church of God!

How the Sardis Era Began

About 1585, almost immediately after the end of her 1260 years in the wilderness, God's Church began to revive -- this time in England.

In the reign of Elizabeth (1558-1603), states Chambers' Encyclopedia, article "Sabbath," "many conscientious and independent thinkers" advocated the seventh day. Most of them, although they saw the truth about the Sabbath, were not really converted in heart and mind.

A "great disputation" about the Sabbath arose. Oh yes, they could argue for the Sabbath, but would they fully surrender to the government of God? Sabbath keepers now commonly came into historical view. Books were published urging the keeping of the seventh day.

One of those not satisfied with Puritan SUNDAY observance was a stentorian-voiced minister named John Traske. Traske also understood the truth concerning unclean meats. He ordained four evangelists about 1616, whose labors resulted in the conversion of many.

Because of these things, Traske was censured in the Star Chamber, set on the pillory, publicly whipped and then imprisoned. Three years later, having written and published a recantation – "a brief and silly treatise" – he obtained his release, and "afterwards relapsed, not into the same, but other opinions rather humorous than hurtful" (*Cox's "Literature of the Sabbath Question", Vol. I, p. 157*). His wife died in prison after having been confined about 15 years for holding fast to the Sabbath.

Another who shared Traske's belief in keeping the Sabbath was Theophilus Brabourne, a former Puritan minister in Norfolk (*where many Anabaptists from Holland had migrated*). He published books in 1628 and 1632 advocating the true Sabbath. Of him, Cox says, "(He) MAY BE REGARDED AS THE FOUNDER IN ENGLAND of the sect at first known as Sabbatarians, but now calling themselves Seventh Day Baptists." (*As we shall soon see, they then CALLED THEMSELVES the Church of God. And only later did a majority organize themselves as Seventh Day Baptists, while a small minority continued as the Church of God.*)

Cox continues, "THIS SECT AROSE IN GERMANY IN THE 16TH CENTURY." He means they had been among those the world loosely called Anabaptists, among whom were Sabbath keepers such as those in Bohemia (mentioned by Erasmus) and elsewhere.

Later, official pressure was brought to bear on Brabourne. He "became a convert, conforming himself quietly (*though temporarily*) to the Church of England. HIS FOLLOWERS, HOWEVER, DID NOT ALL ACCOMPANY HIM BACK TO ORTHODOXY" (*Vol. 1, p. 220; Vol. 2, p. 6*).

About this time Philip Tandy, a minister of the established church in the north of England, saw the truth concerning the Sabbath and the true mode of baptism, and abandoned that church.

Another book in defense of the Sabbath was written by James Ockford, and published about 1642. His enemies called him an Anabaptist. At this time, those who CALLED THEMSELVES THE CHURCH OF GOD were commonly and "falsely called Anabaptists" (*Underhill, "In Confession of Faith and Other Public Documents", quoted in "A History of the True Church", by Dugger and Dodd, pages 242, 246*).

Many others throughout the 1600's and 1700's also wrote and published works expounding and defending Biblical truth, in particular the commandment to keep God's Sabbath. God's Church was beginning to use Christ's gift of the printing press, though still not with the zeal which was needed.

The Church of God in England

1. What did Christ exhort His people in the Sardis Era to remember? **Rev. 3:3**.

COMMENT: They were told to remember HOW they had received the truth. They received it from those in the preceding Thyatira Era who HAD HELD FAST (**Rev. 2:25**) to the death! – NOT from those who had fallen away from the truth. Yet, through fear of persecution – in England and later also in America – many of God's people continued to fellowship with those who had fallen away, and even with some of the churches of this world!

Many of the successors of the Waldensians had now become Puritans within the established Church of England. Others, outside that church, had become Baptists. Some of the ministers of the early Sardis Era of God's Church – as already mentioned – maintained fellowship with these people.

Jesus Christ was CONCERNED about the inevitable result of this relationship with the world that some of His people maintained. They allowed – even encouraged – the circulation of more and more false doctrine among His people, causing more to fall away!

"What shall we say," wrote Dr. Peter Chamberlen, graduate of Cambridge University and pastor of a Sabbath-keeping congregation, "of those that take away of those TEN WORDS (the Ten Commandments), or those that make them void (*particularly the fourth one*) and teach men so? Nay, they dare give the lie to (*the Eternal*), and make Jesus Christ not only a breaker of the law, but the very author of sin in others, also causing them to break them! Hath not THE LITTLE HORN played his part lustily in this, and worn out the saints of the Most High, so that THEY BECOME LITTLE HORN MEN ALSO!" (*"The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America", page 1264, emphasis ours.*)

And having become "little horn men," THEY – like the prophesied "little horn" – joined in PERSECUTING God's Church!

2. Did Christ command His "Sardis" people to repent? **Rev. 3:3.**

COMMENT: The Sardis Era of God's Church should have profited by the experiences of – and Christ's messages to – the Thyatira and Pergamos Eras of the Church before them. They should not have tolerated the unconverted and unbelievers in their midst!

However, God's people throughout the Sardis Era felt they must always "have love" for those of differing opinions. They even invited them right into their meetings and asked them to speak! They did not realize that condoning falsehood – which does harm both to the believer and the hearer – is NEVER showing real love.

That false concept is one of the primary reasons why the Sardis Church is "dead."

3. Did the Apostle Paul make it very plain that condoning evil in the Church is NOT "showing love"? Read **I Cor. 5:1-13**. What is the inevitable result of such practice? **Verse 6**. Did Christ warn the "Sardis" people that their ways would eventually leave them completely UNprepared for His second coming? **Rev. 3:3**. That happened!

The Bitter Fruit of Neglect

Consider, for example, the further history of the congregation founded by Francis Bampfield. For many years another separate Seventh-Day Congregation also met in the same hall. One church met in the morning, the other in the afternoon. Through the years – and several changes of meeting place – the two congregations continued to use the same hall. They differed on the question of "Calvinism." (*"The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America", page 65*).

For lack of qualified ministers, services were often conducted by the ministers of other churches. During one period, four DIFFERENT Baptist ministers preached to the afternoon congregation. Similar instances seem to have occurred in the morning church as well. Gradually the two congregations merged.

The leaven of error was by now firmly entrenched in the Sardis Era of the Church of God [*It is very evident today*].

Later, this "combined" congregation merged again – this time with the so-called "Mill Yard church." Significantly, in the Mill Yard church building, also, there had been separate morning and afternoon services with separate ministers since 1754. And Mill Yard church records of that very year contain the earliest extant mention in England of a group known as "a congregation of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, commonly called SEVENTH-DAY BAPTISTS" ("*The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*", page 42, *emphasis ours*).

That there were two separate groups of Seventh-Day Churches in England during this time is also indicated by the fact that ministers were often required to be re-ordained to *come from one Sabbath-keeping congregation to another* (*ibid.*, page xxiv).

By the later 1700's, these people had so adopted Protestant viewpoints that they began to ELECT their ministers, instead of relying on Jesus Christ to select them [as do the United Church of God; Church of God-Worldwide Association]. And some of these ministers -- even Seventh-Day believers themselves – had long pastored "first-day" congregations on SUNDAY, as well as congregations of the Church of God on the Sabbath! (*Belcher, "Religious Denominations in the United States", pages 232, 235, 238.*)

The natural result was an almost total lack of feeding the flock of God, or promulgating His truth. No wonder Christ calls the Sardis Era "DEAD", for the Church was sound asleep spiritually!

1. What did God's people need in order to STRENGTHEN themselves and that which remained? ***Eph. 3:16***. Also see ***Zech. 4:6***, last part.

COMMENT: Those in the Sardis Era needed more of God's Holy Spirit to strengthen them. But they neglected the gift of God. Error continued to weaken them. "With the eighteenth century, their zeal vanished" (*Andrews, "A History of the Sabbath", p. 733*). *The cause? Being willing to remain in fellowship with false churches* (p. 734).

Sabbath keepers were never very numerous in England. By about 1800, they had become almost extinct again. As no "7th-day" pastor could be found in Europe, the three remaining English congregations imported an American. He led them to limited prosperity again, but no longer as the Church of God. They now called themselves Seventh-day Baptists.

But before these early congregations were completely swallowed up in the Seventh Day Baptist denomination, Jesus Christ had caused His Church – the Church of God – to be established in America.

The Sardis Church in America

Almost as early as local congregations are known to have existed in England, the Church of God in the Sardis Era spread to America.

In 1664, Stephen Mumford was sent from the "Bell Lane" Church of God in London, England, to Newport, Rhode Island. For a while he associated with the members of a Sunday Baptist church, and persuaded several of them to embrace his views. After seven years, a seventh-day congregation of seven members was raised up from these people. They identified it as (*a part of*) The CHURCH OF GOD ("*Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*", p. 36, Vol. 1).

The Church in Rhode Island became the MOTHER CHURCH in the United States. It grew slowly for about 30 years. Then in 1708, the enlarged and geographically widespread Newport congregation was officially constituted into two congregations.

The "Westerly" or "Hopkinton" congregation retained the original records -- being recognized as the leading or HEADQUARTERS location.

The reason for this transfer is most interesting. Previous to this time, the "Westerly" or "Hopkinton" site had become the regular meeting place for "a YEARLY MEETING" of members from all over! It was at such a meeting -- on September 28 (*Gregorian calendar*) -- that the decision was made to establish the new congregation. Details are lacking, but it is highly significant that this date falls during the Feast of Tabernacles of that year!

The earliest of these annual meetings of which we now have record had been held in late May, 1684. Other annual meeting dates consistently fell either during the fall Holy Day season or near Pentecost ("*The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*", pages 127, 150-152, 174, 602, 614). None of these meetings came at Christmas, Easter, or even in midsummer! This was not mere chance. God's people were, at least in part, attempting to follow the pattern of the Holy Days He had ordained.

In the meantime, a number of other congregations of Sabbath keepers had been formed -- mostly of new converts and immigrants from England. And though they recognized their relationship to the mother church in Rhode Island, distance made it necessary for the brethren in New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania to gather in annual meetings in their own areas. These assemblies often sent greetings to each other by letters and delegates. At these times, "the Sabbath, with its general communion, was indeed an HIGH DAY" ("*The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*", p. 151, *emphasis ours*).

It was not until much later that the MAJORITY accepted the Protestant idea that God's Holy Days had been done away.

The NAME of the Church

One of the most important local congregations was founded at Piscataway, New Jersey, in 1705. The record of its founding uses the name "the Church of God." The connection of this name and this local congregation with the Rhode Island headquarters is also clearly demonstrated by the fact that its minister was sent to Westerly for ordination (*"Seventh-day Baptist Memorial", Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 121*).

At Shrewsbury, New Jersey, also, the record plainly speaks of "the Church of God dwelling at Shrewsbury" (*"Seventh-day Baptist Memorial", p. 160, vol. 2, No. 4; Randolph, "A History of the Seventh Day Baptists in West Virginia", pages 19-20*).

At the same time, the Church was also called "the Church of Christ" (see **Romans 16:16** for a Biblical usage of this name) or simply the Church at Hopkinton, or Newport, or Shrewsbury, etc. Outsiders sometimes spoke of the "Sabbatarian" church of such and such a place. But none of these was the OFFICIAL name. Christ shows that His people should be kept through the Father's name (**John 17:11**). This is why the official name is "THE CHURCH OF GOD." (*Notice also the true name of God's Church in Acts 20:28; I Cor. 10:32; 11:22; 15:9 and Gal. 1:13*).

Emergence of Other Seventh-Day Congregations in America

1. Were there only "a few names" in Sardis who were truly dedicated, command-keeping Christians? **Rev. 3:4**. Are these individuals' names written in the Lamb's "book of life"? **Verse 5**. Will those wearing clean, white linen garments – a symbol of righteousness (**Rev. 19:8-9**) – be in the first resurrection and take part in the marriage of the Lamb? See the parable of the marriage of the King's son in Matthew 22:1-14. Notice especially **verses 11** and **12**.

COMMENT: All during the eighteenth century, many other Sabbath-keeping congregations were being formed in America. But unfortunately many of the persons in these congregations had NOT become CONVERTED, nor acquired the habit of prayer and Bible study. They had merely accepted the doctrinal "argument" of the Sabbath.

Among them were some individuals who had "crept in unawares" – just as they had in Jude's day (**Jude 4**) – for the express purpose of drawing away converts to their own style of belief. One of these was an "evangelist" who is very important historically in connection with the future development of the Seventh Day Baptist denomination in America. William Davis had studied at Oxford to become a clergyman of the Church of England, but changed his mind and became a Quaker instead. Migrating to Pennsylvania, he soon fell into disagreement with other Quakers. He then switched to the Baptists. Soon afterward he accepted the Sabbath and founded a seventh-day church near Philadelphia.

Mr. Davis CAME AMONG the members of the Newport, Rhode Island, Church of God in 1706 and applied for membership. He was turned down on the grounds that he held wrong doctrines!

Four years later he tried again at Westerly and was accepted, subject to approval by the annual meeting. Approval was finally granted, though some still objected. In 1713, he was authorized to preach and to baptize.

But had this man become a true member of God's Church? His fruits show he had not. He was in trouble with the Church, and was "in" and "out" of fellowship for the rest of his life. He twice moved to Pennsylvania and back, lived in Connecticut for a while, and finally died in the midst of a settlement of his followers and children in New Jersey. To the end, he maintained the "rightness" of his own views and argued with God's Word.

Listen to a bit of this letter he wrote, defending himself and accusing the truth. "Now all this enmity against ME among seventh-day men arose against ME originally from a noted seventh-day man and soul sleeper in this country, who ABOVE TWENTY YEARS AGO opposed ME about my principles of IMMORTALITY OF HUMAN SOULS, and afterward proceeded to differ with ME about my faith in Christ and THE TRINITY, who having poisoned several other seventh-day men with the mortal and atheistical notion, and set them against ME, he secretly conveyed this drench (*enmity or accusation*) against ME OVER TO WESTERLY to the persons before named, ('old' Mr. Clarke, Joseph Crandall, Thomas Hiscox -- the elders and pillars of the Church of God in Rhode Island), who, COMPLYING WITH HIM IN THEIR JUDGMENTS (*doctrines*) in the Socinian and Anti-Trinitarian error, drank it greedily DOWN BEFORE I CAME AMONG THEM . . ." (*"Seventh-day Baptist Memorial", Vol. 2, No. 3, pages 101-108, emphasis ours*).

Notice how he continually accuses his opponents of being "against" HIM, at the same time tacitly admitting it was really his false doctrines they were against – doctrines which were totally at variance to the truth the Church had long held "before (*he*) came among them."

In later years, a host of his descendants and followers were to be found in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. And this was how it came to be that as early as 1776 some Sabbath keepers began to take part in war (*Randolph, "A History of the Seventh Day Baptists in West Virginia", pages 45 and 450*) and believed in a Trinity and an immortal soul. They called those among them who knew the truth "soul sleepers" (*referring to their disbelief of the false doctrine of the immortality of the human "soul"*).

By 1800, these and other Protestant doctrines were prevalent in the Sabbath-keeping congregations. Many began to try to ORGANIZE, so that at first seven or eight, and later a majority of the congregations united to form a denomination. This group officially adopted the name "Seventh Day Baptist" in 1818.

Ten or twelve congregations -- in the Pennsylvania to Rhode Island area alone -- would not at first affiliate with this denomination of men. Even as late as 1828, only 16 to 20 congregations were being represented at the Seventh Day Baptist Conference meetings, while they spoke disparagingly of other -- "fanatical and unworthy" -- Sabbath keepers (*"The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America"*, pages 153, 175).

As always, the FEW had refused to go along, and had remained faithful to the name and doctrine of the Church of God!

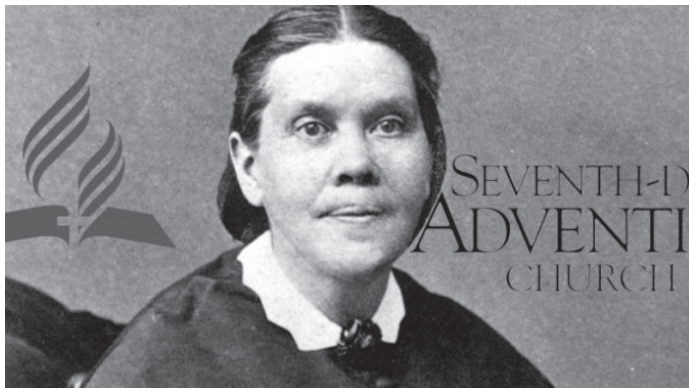
Next – the "Adventist" Movement

About a generation later a great movement began among the Sunday churches. Basing their hope on William Miller's false interpretation of Daniel's prophecy of the "2300 days" (Dan. 8:14), many began to expect the return of Jesus Christ to earth in the year 1844. They became known as Adventists (from "advent," meaning COMING, ARRIVAL).

When Adventist expectations for 1844 proved to be an illusion, the Adventists split into a number of differing groups according to their various doctrinal backgrounds. The most important group, refusing to admit that they had been wrong about the date, accepted the idea that God's throne in heaven had been in need of "cleansing" at that time!

A Seventh Day Baptist woman in New Hampshire called the Sabbath to the attention of some of these Adventists in 1844. But it was not until about 2 years after their great disappointment that the seventh day was widely publicized among them. The group as a whole then accepted the Sabbath.

But they did not join the Seventh Day Baptists. Instead they began to assemble with the remnant of the Church of God with whom they had come into contact. This is shown by the fact that they GAVE UP their former belief in a Trinity, an immortal soul, etc. -- doctrines in which the Seventh Day Baptists also believed. And they began to call themselves by the Biblical name, The Church of God. Their first songbook was dedicated to The Church of God. Some of them were active in publishing a periodical in the name of The Church of God.



Those Adventists were never spiritually a part of the Church of God, however, they had only associated themselves with God's Church for a season.

Later, the majority of them began following a woman whom some considered a prophetess. In 1854, they began to set a price on and to sell

their religious literature – even though Christ tells His true ministers to "FREELY give" (**Matt. 10:8**).

In 1860 they rejected the name "The Church of God" and officially adopted the name of Seventh Day Adventists. As before, a few faithful members – but only the few – of the Church of God did not go along.

1. Were some of the Adventist doctrines prophesied for the "latter times"? **I Tim. 4:1**,

3. Note particularly the one forbidding the eating of meats.

COMMENT: Every one of the points prophesied here was not necessarily fulfilled at the same time or in a single group of misled people. But each of these points HAS been fulfilled in one group or another which departed from the truth in the last few centuries.

2. Does the Bible say these people were being deceived by DEMONS? Same verse.

COMMENT: The early history of this movement clearly reveals the kind of spirit behind it. In its early days the supernatural power of demons was manifest. For example, in Norway and Sweden, children – too young to have yet experienced true conversion – were influenced to preach and spread the church's doctrines. Some of them were no more than 6 or 8 years old (E. G. White, "The Great Controversy", p. 366).

The New Testament Church which Jesus built NEVER HAD CHILD MINISTERS! They were always men mature enough to have been taught, trained, tried and tested. God's ministers are all ELDERS -- not "children" (*see Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5*).

3. Even in Old Testament times, did God's ministers – the Levitical priests – have to be mature men? **Num. 4:2-3, 22-23, 29-30**, etc. Also **Num. 8:24**. How old was Jesus Himself when He began His ministry? **Luke 3:23**.

COMMENT: Notice how one of those poor, deluded, misused children later described his experiences: "Preached! Yes I HAD to preach. I had no devising in the matter. A power came upon me, and I uttered what I was COMPELLED by that power to utter." Another, who was 15 years old when these events occurred, related: "As soon as we were SEIZED by this heavenly power, we began to speak to the people, and to proclaim with a loud voice that the judgment hour had come" (*Emma Howell Cooper, "The Great Advent Movement", pages 22-23, emphasis ours*).

4. But now COMPARE! When GOD uses a human being as His spokesman, is the spirit of God in that speaker SUBJECT TO THE MAN'S CONTROL? **I Cor. 14:29-32, 37**.

COMMENT: God's Spirit LEADS (**Rom. 8:14**), but it does not COMPEL or FORCE one to do anything. The power which SEIZES and completely controls a human being is DEMONIC! (*See Mark 9:20, 22.*)

A Remnant Remains Faithful

Recall that only a FEW remained faithful in the Sardis Era of the Church of God (**Rev. 3:4**).

When the Adventists organized themselves as a denomination in 1860, only a few -- mostly in the states of Ohio, Iowa and Missouri -- did not go along. The printing plant and the magazine formerly published in the name of The Church of God were taken over by the Adventists. But a group of the faithful in 1861 began the publication of a new monthly paper called "The Remnant of Israel", later changed to the "Sabbath Advocate", and finally the "[Bible Advocate](#)".

Soon these people, greatly influenced by the Protestants around them, again began to organize themselves into a general conference and various state conferences. See Mead's "Handbook of Denominations in the United States", article "Church of God (*Seventh Day*)." Through the remainder of the century their numbers slowly increased, though they still remained relatively few.

Certain strong families provided the Church of God a tenuous continuity. These came to be located mainly in Missouri, Oklahoma and Oregon. SOME of them retained a knowledge of God's Holy Days and the identity of modern Israel. During the same period, Church of God ministers began missionary-like work in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, the Philippines, etc. A few thousand of their converts and/or their descendants remain throughout Latin America to this day. Spanish-speaking congregations in Chile and Argentina kept the Holy Days continuously from their beginning in the 1890's until the middle of the twentieth century. But for 70 years after the departure of the Adventists, the Church in the United States remained spiritually powerless.

The Church Spiritually DEAD

1. Did Christ find the Sardis Era lacking in spiritual works? **Rev. 3:2**.

COMMENT: A characteristic of the modern remnants of the Sardis Era of Christ's Church is the lack of true spirituality.

AS a whole, this era of the Church of God did not "remember HOW" it had received the truth from earlier Christians who were FAITHFUL even to death by fire. Nor did it, like those, "hold fast" what truth it had. It did not emphasize repentance (**verse 3**). It did not "watch" (**verse 2; Matt. 25:13**).

During those last 70 years, only a few individuals really repented and strengthened the truth that was ready to perish in their midst. Most of their ministers, instead of yielding themselves to be used by God, tried to carry on a work by their own human power. At the end of the era, many of them were only seeking an income for themselves. They were not diligently seeking to serve God.

These ministers had rejected God's government, having lost the knowledge of HOW CHRIST GOVERNS His Church. They absorbed the PROTESTANT IDEA of democracy applied to church government -- with its accompanying divisions, controversies and selfishness.

The result of rejecting Christ's direction was increasing doctrinal deviation and lack of true conversion among the members. These were the people Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong came in contact with in 1927.

End of Quotes

The History of God's True Church, Continued, 1959

Dr. Herman L. Hoeh

Continued quotes from His writings.

"Now let's notice what John wrote to the "Church at Sardis."

The Church in England and America

The "Church at Sardis" had a name that it was alive BUT IT WAS DEAD (Rev. 3:1). Only a minute fraction of its people were really surrendered to God and holding to the faith once delivered. This is just the picture of the Church of God for 400 years after the outbreak of the Reformation.

Through the preaching of Lollard and other helpers, hundreds were repenting. Thousands were learning for the first time that baptism means immersion -- that the world's religious holidays came from paganism and that Sunday was not the Sabbath.

After a period of persecution, there remained only a few who kept the faith and observed the Sabbath and God's annual Holy Days. When confronted with imprisonment at the hands of Protestant "reformers" for their faith, several ministers gave up the faith even though some of their followers remained steadfast (*Cox's "Sabbath Literature", Vol. 1, p. 162*).

It was not until about 1650 that there were again enough Sabbath keepers to establish local congregations. They often called themselves the Church of God, but the world termed them "Sabbatarians" and Sabbatarian Baptists. From England the true Church of God spread to America. In 1664, Stephen Mumford, sent to Newport, Rhode Island, raised up a small church mainly from Baptist converts. One by one new churches were established through continued help of the churches in England.

But as always happens, after several generations the children take truth for granted and never really surrender their wills and their lives to God. In less than one hundred and fifty years, the English churches almost disappeared, having cut themselves off from God BY TURNING FROM His truth, and by adopting the name "Seventh-day Baptists."

In America the NUMBER OF CHURCHES gradually increased as the gospel was spread from state to state. But so nearly dead were these congregations that in 1802 MANY began to ORGANIZE THEMSELVES together into a General Conference instead of submitting to the government of God for the carrying out of the gospel. At this serious juncture, MOST of the local churches JOINED THEMSELVES TOGETHER to form the Seventh-day Baptist General Conference and thereby ceased to be the true Church of God. Soon they began teaching the pagan Trinity doctrine and the immortality of human souls!

Several faithful congregations did not become members of the Conference because they would not submit to the new Protestant doctrines being introduced (*see p. 246 of Belcher's "Religious Denominations"*). For another half century the congregations maintained the little truth they possessed, although most of them did not go all the way in obedience to God. John aptly described this period: "Be watchful, and establish the things remaining, WHICH ARE ABOUT TO DIE, for I have not found thy works perfected before my God" (**Rev. 3:2**).

The Adventist Movement

During this time the advent movement among SUNDAY-OBSERVING CHURCHES was begun by the uninspired William Miller. In 1843 several followers of Miller in Washington, New Hampshire, became acquainted with the truth of the Sabbath. It was not until after the miserable disappointment of 1844, however, that the general body of Adventists had the Sabbath question called to their attention. A small number accepted the Sabbath and SOON UNITED WITH THE FEW REMAINING CHURCH OF GOD BRETHREN who refused to be affiliated with the Seventh-day Baptist Conference.

They called themselves the "Church of God" and began publishing "The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald". Their first songbook was dedicated to "The Church of God scattered abroad."

With each passing year, new and different doctrines were being introduced by Ellen G. White to explain away the Adventist failure of October 22, 1844. The original Church of God brethren generally did not go along, with the "inspired testimony" of Ellen G. White. Finally, a meeting was held by some of the members in Battle Creek, Michigan, September 28 through October 1, 1860.

"This conference also took into consideration the subject of a name by which our people should be called," wrote Loughborough. "This again called forth a diversity of opinions some pleading for one name, and some for



another. The 'Church of God' being proposed it was objected to on the ground that it gave none of the distinctive features of our faith, while the name 'Seventh-day Adventist' would not only set forth our faith in the near coming of Christ, but would also show that we were observers of the seventh-day Sabbath.

So unanimous was the assembly in favor of the latter name, that when PUT TO VOTE only one man voted against it. He contended to the last for the name, 'Church of God.' A few days afterward, at the close of a meeting . . . a stranger came forward and purchased some books, who said he belonged to the 'Church of God.' I asked, 'Are you a Winnebrenarian?' 'No,' said he, 'Church of God.' I then asked, 'Are you a Dunkard?' 'No,' he answered, 'I said, Church of God.' We knew he was not an Adventist, and on turning to the man who had so strongly favored the name, said, 'Brother -----, can you tell me what the man's faith is?' 'No,' said he, 'I cannot.'

And that is how the Seventh-Day Adventist movement began. Let's see, for a moment, who was responsible for naming this organization. Continuing Loughborough's account of Mrs. E. G. White's testimony: "In Testimony for the Church,' No. 6, we read: "No name which we can take will be appropriate but that which accords with our profession, and expresses our faith, and marks us as a peculiar people. "The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind. . . "I was shown that almost every fanatic who has arisen, who wishes to hide his sentiments that he may lead away others, claims to belong to the Church of God. Such a name would at once excite suspicion; for it is employed to conceal the most absurd errors." (*J. N. Loughborough's "Rise and Progress of the Seventh-Day Adventists", chapter XIX, page 227.*)

Presumably this makes the Apostle Paul a fanatic because he called the church "the Church of God. Not long after his ordination in 1931 (*see "A History of the True Church", by Dugger and Dodd, p. 304*), a momentous juncture occurred. A movement was under foot to organize the local congregations of the Church of God under human government -- a financial board of seven men.

By 1933 certain leading ministers demanded that no more NEW truth be preached to the brethren. They were refusing to repent and allow the Holy Spirit to work through them to establish the truth that was ready to perish! Most of the congregations succumbed to spiritual DEATH. The age of the Church of Sardis was over. THE CHURCH PERIOD OF PHILADELPHIA WAS TO BEGIN! End of Quotes.

The baton is now passed to the Philadelphia Church Era



**The Church at Philadelphia - *The Church of
Brotherly Love*
October 1933 A. D.**

The Letter from Jesus Christ to the Church in Philadelphia

Revelation 3:7-13

v. 7 “And to the angel (*messenger*) of the Church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true. “He who has the Key of David, He who OPENS and no one shuts, and SHUTS and no one opens;



v. 8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you AN OPEN DOOR, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have KEPT MY WORD, and have NOT DENIED MY NAME.

v. 9 “Indeed I will make those of the Synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews (*Romans 2:28-29*), and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

v. 10 “Because you have KEPT My command TO PERSEVERE, I also will KEEP YOU from the hour of TRIAL which shall come upon the whole world, to TEST those who dwell on the earth.

v. 11 “Behold, I come quickly! HOLD FAST what you have, that no one may take YOUR CROWN.

v. 12 “He who OVERCOMES (*Matthew 24:13*), I will make him A PILLAR in the Temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the Name of the City of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him MY NEW NAME.

v. 13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

**Correspondence Course Lesson 53, The Philadelphia
Church of God**

The Beginning of Today's Era of God's Church

“Mr. Armstrong had been very successful in business as a younger man. But three times God had swept his business away in order to humble him. Then God called and converted him.



Mrs. Dilan Armstrong

Six months before his conversion, an elderly woman who was a member of the "Sardis" Church in Oregon introduced Mrs. Armstrong to the truth about God's Sabbath.

Mrs. Armstrong gladly accepted this truth because God had opened her mind. But Mr. Armstrong was anything but pleased. He was worried about what their friends would think!

Mr. Armstrong was challenged to study the Bible for the first time in his life.

He tried to disprove this seemingly "crazy, wacky" notion that his wife had accepted. Instead, he found the Sabbath absolutely proven to be the day God commands us to keep holy today.

He came to the conclusion that if the Bible be true, the Sabbath MUST be kept on the seventh day. That led to proving the existence of God, and that the Bible is indeed His Word. He studied each question intensively, from all angles. That initial intensive study lasted six months.



Mr. Herbert Armstrong

Immediately Mr. Armstrong began to search for the one true church which he knew must exist. Somewhere there had to be the church Jesus Christ said He would build (**Matt. 16:18**). These Church of God people in Oregon SEEMED TO HAVE THE TRUTH -- certainly they were the closest of any. But something was wrong. They were spiritually DEAD! Consequently, Mr. Armstrong never "joined" their organization. But he began to fellowship with the people. He was asked to speak to them, and was finally ordained by the Oregon Conference of the Church of God in June, 1931.

1. Is the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to those who have truly repented?
Acts 2:38.

And is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide Christ's Church into all TRUTH? **John 16:13.**

COMMENT: As soon as Mr. Armstrong was baptized, the fruits of the Holy Spirit began to be manifest in his life. He continued to study and prove all things, as we are instructed to do in ***I Thessalonians 5:21***. As he studied, much of the truth which the Sardis Church had allowed to perish began to be brought to his attention by God's Spirit. Immediately he began to expound this knowledge to the remnant of God's people in the state of Oregon.

God revealed the true identity of the modern House of Israel to Mr. Armstrong. He also came to see that God's ANNUAL Festivals were commanded to be kept today ALONG WITH the weekly Sabbath. He began to understand their meaning. But it was SEVEN YEARS before any others in Oregon kept God's ANNUAL Sabbaths with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong.

End of the Sardis Era

By 1933, it was obvious to many that voting their own leaders into office was not God's way, and that it had led only to confusion. In an effort to strengthen the hands of MEN at the top, it was decided to REORGANIZE the Church. Government of the Church was to be placed in the hands of "twelve to look after the spiritual affairs of the church, and seven to take charge of the financial business, and also the seventy to go forth two by two in giving the warning message for the hour" (*Dugger and Dodd, "A History of the True Church", p. 299*)

A reorganization meeting was scheduled to be held in Salem, West Virginia. The date -- November 4, 1933. An appeal was made to the "lot" (in an attempt to follow the singular case in ***Acts 1:23-26***) to choose from among the names presented. Prior to the meeting, a call for prayer had been sent to God's people around the world "that God would again choose men to lead His Church as in the former time."

God ANSWERED that prayer! But NOT in the way they expected! As the hands of the clock neared high noon on that fateful Sabbath day, the drawing of names for the "seventy elders" reached number FORTY. The fortieth name was "Elder Herbert Armstrong of Oregon" ("*The Bible Advocate*", Nov. 6, 1933, page 5).

No one knew it then, least of all Mr. Armstrong, who was not present at the meeting, but JESUS CHRIST HAD MADE HIS CHOICE -- with the number forty -- of a man to REVIVE His Work in the end time. Forty signifies the completion of testing. Now the time of trial and test for the Sardis Church had run out. And as with ancient Belshazzar, the Sardis Era of God's Church had been "weighed in the balance and found wanting" (***Dan. 5: 27***).

The reorganization by men in 1933 was never to be a success. In just a few years that Church had permanently disintegrated into several ineffective fragments, neglecting much of God's truth.

1. As a result of neglecting to "watch," is the last generation of the Sardis Era going to be surprised when Jesus Christ SUDDENLY returns? **Rev. 3:3.**
2. Are WE TODAY told to learn from Christ's message to "Sardis," and from the sad experiences of this era? **Rev. 3:6.**

COMMENT: There are important SPIRITUAL LESSONS to be derived from all of these things. So diligently study this lesson and all scripture references to see HOW these spiritual lessons apply to you personally.

View online movie "History of the True Church - Transition from Sardis to Philadelphia" [High Speed Internet Connection](#) [Slower Speed Internet Connection](#).

Christ Opens a "Door"

The world did not notice the Sardis Era of God's Church because it did not proclaim the gospel with POWER. It did not exploit the possibilities opened to it by the development of printing. The great multiplication and distribution of printed Bibles, though it occurred during this era, was not accomplished by the Church of God, but by various Bible societies.



Christ saw to it that the Word of God was MADE AVAILABLE to the world. But it REMAINED for His Church to MAKE THAT WORD UNDERSTOOD! For this purpose He now raised up a special Work in His Church.

At the critical moment when the Church of God in the Sardis Era was breaking up, the living Jesus Christ separated a mere handful of people in Oregon to begin the present "Philadelphia" Era of His Church (**Rev. 3:7-12**). He began to USE Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, and the small group He had called to assist as co-workers, to reach the world with the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

1. Did Christ promise to set an "open door" before the Church in the Philadelphia Era? **Rev. 3:8.**

COMMENT: The "door" mentioned here is an opportunity to disseminate Christ's gospel (**see I Cor. 16:9; Col. 4:3**).

Christ opened the "door" of RADIO to the Philadelphia Era of His Church. Since the first Sunday in January, 1934, THE WORLD TOMORROW broadcast has never missed a week on the air. And now the message goes out also on television -- an even GREATER "door."

This Church Era has "(only) a little strength" of itself (**Rev. 3:8** [*cf. Habakkuk 1:5*]), but it is MAGNIFIED greatly through the modern "doors" of radio, television and the printing press -- and most important of all, through the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT!

2. Does **Revelation 3:8** imply that some people actually want to SHUT the "door" Christ has opened to the "Philadelphia" Church? But will they be able? Same verse. In the end, will even the "synagogue of Satan," which has persecuted and killed God's servants through the ages, have to bow at the feet of the "Philadelphia" Church? **Verse 9.**

COMMENT: The history of the Philadelphia Era need not be covered IN DETAIL in this lesson, as it is readily available in frequent articles in THE PLAIN TRUTH magazine and in our other free literature.

The Era of "Brotherly Love"

PHILADELPHIA means "brotherly love" or "those who love their fellow men as brothers." It expresses the characteristic which is the motivating zeal of the Philadelphia Era of God's Church. The Church shows love to mankind by carrying out God's commission -- that of warning the world of the impending destruction that hangs over it. It is revealing HOW Jesus Christ will soon rescue humanity from cosmocide and teach man the way of peace, happiness and prosperity. The goal of the "Philadelphia" Church is the ultimate salvation of all mankind!

1. Has this Church "not denied" Christ's NAME (*including His nature, character, personality and power*), and KEPT -- that is, both believed and PRACTICED -- His Word? **Rev. 3:8.**

2. Is "Philadelphia" promised a SPECIAL reward? **Rev. 3:12.**

COMMENT: It is significant that the ancient Anatolian city of Philadelphia still lives today, unlike dead Sardis. Its Turkish name, ALLAH SHAIR, indicates the destiny of the Church it portrays. Translated it means "the CITY OF GOD"!

3. Will the overcomers of the Philadelphia Era be "PILLARS" in the temple of God in New Jerusalem? Same verse.

COMMENT: The two pillars in front of Solomon's temple -- Jachin and Boaz (**I Kings 7:21**) -- represented STABILITY and STRENGTH. And as Peter, James and

John stood out as "pillars" among the congregation in 49 A.D. (**Gal 2:9**), the Church of the Philadelphia Era is to stand out EVEN MORE in time to come!

4. Is the "Philadelphia" Church promised a place of safety for her faithful service and obedience? **Rev. 3:10 and 12:14.**

COMMENT: As the ancient city of Philadelphia has been kept from destruction to this very day, so will the "Philadelphia" Church be preserved from the Great Tribulation which Satan will soon bring upon all the earth.

5. When those in "Philadelphia" are taken by God to a place of safety, will another part of God's Church be left behind? **Rev. 12:17.**

COMMENT: The "remnant" left behind will constitute the seventh and last era of God's Church -- the "Laodicean" Era -- which will last but a very short time.

The Laodicean Church

Notice what has happened, since 69 A.D., to the preaching of the true message of God's coming kingdom. Instead of proclaiming that message worldwide, the Church as a whole went to SLEEP! Only briefly, as during the days of Peter Waldo, the Church stirred in her slumber, but did not fully awaken to do the Work of God.

The parable in Matthew 25 EXPLAINS this long slumber. Turn to it and read through the first 13 verses. The "virgins" represent the members of God's Church through the ages. The Apostolic Age expected Christ's return momentarily (**I Thes. 4:15**). But when He did not immediately appear, they grew drowsy, lost their first love (**Rev. 2:4**) and went to sleep on the job.

For nearly 1900 years God's Church continued to slumber and sleep. Then in 1934, a voice on the radio began to proclaim that the intervention of Christ in the affairs of this world is near (**Matt. 25: 6**). The Philadelphia Era of the Church of God began to zealously DO Christ's Work! (**Verse 7.**)

1. But at the end of the Work of "Philadelphia," will many lack a sufficient supply of "oil" (*the Holy Spirit*)? **Matt. 25:8.**

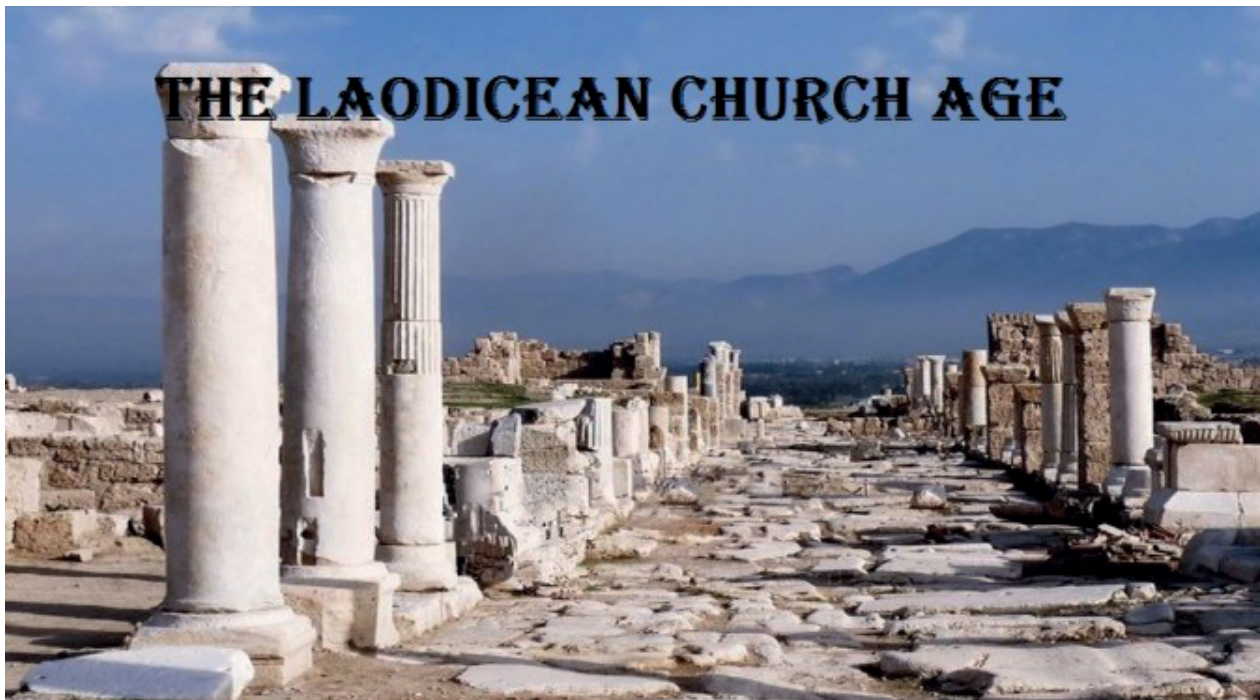
2. Are the five unprepared "virgins" told to go and figuratively BUY a supply of the Holy Spirit? **Matt. 25:9.** Does **Revelation 3:17-18** show that the typical Laodicean also belongs in this category?

COMMENT: These members of God's Church can still be born of God if they do as Christ instructs. But they will have to PROVE their spiritual dedication to God by overcoming in the midst of the Great Tribulation – very likely through martyrdom!

Matthew 25:10-12 indicates that SOME of the end-time "foolish virgins" will not yet be ready" when Christ arrives.

3. In spite of Christ's warning and the constant repetition of the message by the Philadelphia Work over a period of years, is the spiritual condition of the "Laodiceans" just LUKEWARM – neither hot nor cold, not really stirred up about overcoming? **Rev. 3:15.**

COMMENT: The name LAODICEA is Greek. It means "the (*self-*) righteous people." It is significant that the ancient city of Laodicea lies a great ruin today -- and like Sardis it is COMPLETELY DEAD! (*It is recommended at this point that you go back and review your notes over page 10 of Lesson 44.*)



4. WHY will the Laodiceans find themselves in such a pitiable state? **Rev. 3:17.**

COMMENT: They will have been self-deceived. They "know not" that they themselves are "the ones pitiable and beggarly and blind and naked" (*according to the original Greek*). They THOUGHT they HAD made proper preparation for the return of Christ. They will say, "I HAVE BECOME rich (*physically and spiritually*). . . and have need of NOTHING."

The ancient city of Laodicea was famous for its money transactions and its soft wool. Laodicea was almost a synonym for soft, luxurious living. Not far from the city was a pagan temple with a great MEDICAL school.

Naturally, Laodicea produced some famous SKEPTIC philosophers!

The MODERN "Laodiceans" will be products of this MODERN age of skepticism, unbelief, creature comforts, medicine and permissiveness. They are too close to the ways and false gods of this world to get really "shook up" about God's truth until finally shaken out of their lukewarmness by having to suffer in the Great Tribulation!

5. Will Christ be showing LOVE to these people by allowing them to suffer so? **Rev. 3:19 and Heb. 12:6-11.**

COMMENT: The Laodiceans actually have been begotten of God's Spirit. Their lamps are lit (**Matt. 25:8**), but are "going out" (*see margin of your Bible*) because the supply of "oil" (*the Holy Spirit*) has not been continually replenished and increased.

Christ does NOT WANT to cast off these people. **Revelation 3:16** should be translated "I AM ABOUT TO spue thee out," NOT "I WILL spue thee out." He stands ever ready to receive the OVERCOMERS – to give them eternal life and rulership with Him (**verses 20-21**).

6. How might a "Laodicean" recognize his spiritual condition in advance of the Tribulation? **Luke 6:26**. But will the world HATE whoever is a dedicated believer in, and doer of, God's Work? **John 15:19-20**. What else does Christ say, through the Apostle Paul? **I Cor. 10:12 and II Cor. 13:5**.

The Work of "Elijah"

1. Did Christ affirm that "Elijah" must come before His own return? **Matt. 17:11**. Is his job to "restore"? Same verse.



COMMENT: Note that Christ is not speaking of the original Elijah. John the Baptist, who was a type of "Elijah," came "IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER of ELIJAH" (**Luke 1:17**). John the Baptist did a one-man work. But today God works through the Body of Christ -- the Church composed of MANY MEMBERS (**Eph. 4:12, 16**).

After Christ's ministry on this earth, it was no more a single individual that did God's Work (*through the power of His Spirit*), but the Church -- the BODY of Christ.

John the Baptist, the "Elijah" of his day (**Matt. 17:12-13**), was one man. But Christ founded God's CHURCH. After Pentecost, 31 A.D., the "body" of Christ, with various "members" like the hands, fingers, toes, etc. of a human body, did the work that one man used to do.

Today the "body" of Christ -- the entire CHURCH OF GOD, through its VOICE, its PRAYERS, its TITHES and OFFERINGS and its various other functions -- is heralding Christ's imminent return (**Matt. 25:6**).

2. What else will the "Elijah" of our day do? **Mal. 4:5-6**.

COMMENT: This is being done through the dissemination of the knowledge of proper child rearing methods, and the principles governing legitimate and happy family relationships. And the hearts of both parents and children are being turned back to the GOD of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

THIS IS WHAT THE "PHILADELPHIA" ERA REMNANT OF GOD'S CHURCH IS DOING TODAY!

3. Is this what the original Elijah did? Read **I Kings 18:20-40**.

COMMENT: Elijah RESTORED the true religion which in his day – as in the "Sardis" Era – had been nearly lost, turning the hearts of the people back to their fathers and their God.

4. Had Elijah begun to train young men for the work to be done? **II Kings 4:38**.

COMMENT: The expression "sons of the prophets" refers to young men being trained to continue the work of those whom Jezebel had killed (*see I Kings 18:13*). Remember, Jeroboam (I), king of Israel, had long before rejected the Levites from being priests and teachers. God had to use other men in the House of Israel to do His Work. But they had to be trained!

5. Were there THREE schools for the training of these men? **II Kings 4:38 and 2:1-5**. And did the students all know when God was about to take Elijah away and leave Elisha in charge? **II Kings 2:3, 5**.

COMMENT: It is significant that the Philadelphia Era of God's Church trained students on THREE campuses! And it is the faithful remnant which will be taken away to a temporary place of safety just as Elijah was taken to a place prepared by God. (*If you do not understand where and why Elijah was taken away, [visit the Church of God Faithful Flock website](#) immediately to view the free online booklet, "Where Are Enoch and Elijah?"*)

6. What would happen to the earth if it weren't for God's Church and the work it is doing today? **Mal. 4:6**. Notice especially the last part of this verse.

COMMENT: The greatest time of trouble ever is soon to occur on this earth (**Dan. 12:1**). And unless God cuts these hellish days short FOR THE SAKE OF HIS ELECT, there would no flesh be saved alive! (**Matt. 24:22**.)

Note that the word translated "curse" in **Malachi 4:6** is the same word used in **I Kings 20:42** and **Zechariah 14:11**. It means "complete and TOTAL destruction" – UTTER ANNIHILATION!

Except for the presence and prayers of God's people, this "present evil world" (**Gal. 1:4**) WOULD experience "utter destruction"!

We need to realize just how important it is for each of us to personally overcome and plunge WHOLEHEARTEDLY into God's present Work.



At the time of the Flood, ONLY righteous Noah and his family escaped "utter destruction." In the destruction of Sodom, ONLY Lot and his two daughters escaped. BUT had there been as many as TEN righteous people in that city, God would have SPARED IT ALL! (**Gen. 18:32.**)

HOW MUCH of this present world's population survives the coming holocaust and lives on into the World Tomorrow depends a GREAT DEAL on the effectiveness of this present Work in reaching the world with the good news of God's coming kingdom – and on the NUMBER converted during this age who will be available to teach and serve those who survive!

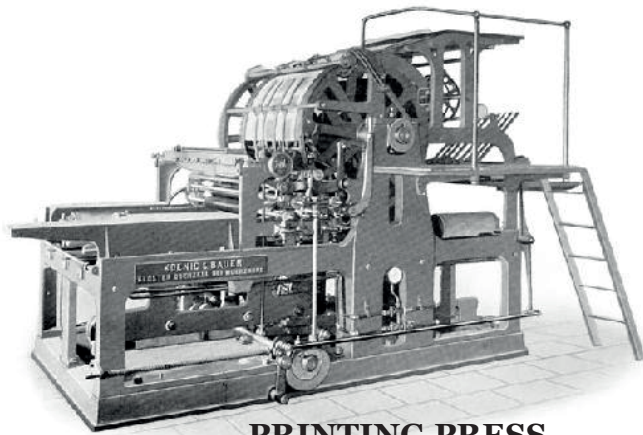
WE HAVE ONLY A VERY SHORT TIME LEFT. Think how much depends on YOU – on YOUR prayers – YOUR efforts – YOUR tithes and offerings!

End of Quotes from the Correspondence Course

The History of the True Church
by
Dr. Herman L. Hoeh

A DOOR Opens

The time had come for the gospel TO GO AROUND THE WORLD! Having tested and proven that Mr. Armstrong would remain faithful and subject to His government, God opened before him and a few faithful brethren the marvelous DOOR of radio and the printing press to carry forth the gospel.



PRINTING PRESS



RADIO

From a minute beginning in Oregon, in 1934, the work of God spread to cover much of North America in 19 years. In 1953 it leaped to Europe and the world! This is very significant.

God gave the Apostolic Church **JUST TWO** nineteen-year cycles to carry the gospel to the Old World. He opened a **DOOR** to the apostle Paul **AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND NINETEEN-YEAR CYCLE** by which the gospel went to Europe (**Acts 16:9; 11 Cor. 2:12-13**).

So now, just before the second coming of Jesus Christ, God has given His Church – **THIS CHURCH** – **JUST TWO** nineteen-year cycles in which to carry the gospel to the world! The first cycle **PASSED**. Then God suddenly opened the door for the second cycle in January 1953, and the gospel is now going to all the world!

Do you catch the significance of this? It means that this work, this **MISSION** to which God has called us all, is a **DIVINE WORK**, a **DIVINE MISSION** – not the work of some one man. It is the work of **THE CHURCH OF GOD** to whom Jesus committed this **GREATEST** task ever to fall upon mortal men – the carrying of His gospel, the good news of the Kingdom of God, to **ALL** nations.

We are a people with "little strength," but God has set before us an **OPEN DOOR WHICH NO MAN CAN SHUT**. We must use that door. We must become zealous, working,

praying, studying, giving tithes and offerings as we have never given before, so that this gospel can go IN POWER around the world! Notice that this Church has not denied God's NAME. What is the true name of the Church?

The TRUE NAME

The Bible gives the true NAME of the Church in TWELVE different places. Twelve, remember, is God's COMPLETE number.

In five passages where the true NAME of the Church appears, the entire Body of Christ – the Church as a whole – is indicated. Thus when speaking of the entire Church, including all its individual members on earth, the name is "The CHURCH OF GOD." Here are these five passages:

- 1) **Acts 20:28.** The admonition to the elders is to feed THE CHURCH OF GOD."
- 2) **I Corinthians 10:32.** "Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to The Church of God."
- 3) **I Corinthians 11:22.** "... or despise ye The Church of God, and shame them that have not?"
- 4) **I Corinthians 15:9.** Paul wrote: "For I persecuted The Church of God."
- 5) **Galatians 1:13.** This verse repeats the one last given -- "I persecuted The Church of God."

Notice that Paul did not call the true Church "Catholic" or "Protestant." Nowhere is the true Church called after the name of a MAN or after the name of a doctrine. Where one specific local congregation is mentioned, the true Church is called "The Church of God," often in connection with the PLACE or location. Here are four more passages:

- 6) **I Corinthians 1:2.** "The Church of God which is at Corinth."
- 7) **II Corinthians 1:1.** "The Church of God which is at Corinth."
- 8) **I Timothy 3:5.** In speaking of a local elder in a local congregation, Paul wrote Timothy: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of The Church of God?"
- 9) **I Timothy 3:15.** "... behave thyself in the house of God, which is The Church of The Living God." Here it is The Church of the LIVING God.

In speaking of the local congregations collectively not as one general Body, but as the

total of all local congregations, the Bible name is The CHURCHES OF GOD. Here are the final three verses of the twelve which name the Church:

10) **I Corinthians 11:16.** ". . . we have no such custom, neither The CHURCHES OF GOD."

11) **I Thessalonians 2:14.** "For ye, brethren, became followers of The Churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus."

12) **II Thessalonians 1:4.** "So that we ourselves glory in you in The Churches of God."

These verses prove the name of the true Church. Denominations NOT bearing this name could NOT be God's true church. And of all the churches that do bear the name, ONLY ONE could be the TRUE Church of God – that one which OBEYS ALL the commandments of God and maintains the FAITH delivered once for all time – the one which GROWS in truth. All others are counterfeit, even though they may have the knowledge about the true NAME of God's Church.

Since Christ is the Head of the Church, Paul also called the various congregations "the churches of Christ" (**Romans 16:16**) -- but the actual NAME is the CHURCH OF GOD. It is kept in the NAME OF THE FATHER (**John 17:11**).

Today's Church Scattered

The Church Jesus founded was prophesied to be a SCATTERED church, small in number, rejected by the world, its people often without personal fellowship with other brethren!

While we are instructed, in **Heb. 10:23-25**: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" – yet, notice carefully, we are not instructed to assemble with blinded, deceived people in the denominations.

The instruction is "not to forsake the assembling of OURSELVES together" – that is, true Christians who have the TRUTH, who are filled with God's Holy Spirit, truly converted, and WALKING IN THE LIGHT, living by every Word of God. It is time you knew why!

The fallen "woman" of **Rev. 17** is clearly identified as the great false Church, which ruled over the kings of the Roman Empire from 554 until 1814. Her doctrines and practice, falsely called by Christian names, are actually the same identical "Chaldean mysteries" of the ancient Babylonian Baal worship, denounced in the Bible as the most idolatrous of all false worship.

Notice **Rev. 17:5**: she is called "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS." She is a MOTHER church. She has DAUGHTER CHURCHES. She calls the Protestant denominations her wayward daughters. They came out of her, IN PROTEST, calling themselves "Protestant." They, like their mother church, participate in the governments and politics and affairs of this world.



Thus they reject the Government of God! This (**verse 2**) is the cause of her fall from grace. All Protestant denominations contain a certain mixture of false Roman doctrines which have been handed down from the ancient Babylonian idolatry. It is an ORGANIZED SYSTEM, even though divided into hundreds of sectarian-organizations. Shall the true Christian JOIN, and thus become a PART OF this apostate system?

Notice, "the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (**v. 2.**) They are spiritually drunk on her false doctrines, until they are unable to see clearly Bible TRUTH -- their spiritual eyesight is blurred. They are spiritually BLIND. The truth is, GOD DID NOT PLANT THESE CHURCHES. And Jesus said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. LET THEM ALONE: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (**Mat. 15:13-14**).

The Bible does not say we are to assemble with the world, but with OURSELVES -- THOSE WHO ARE TRULY CONVERTED. God has not convoked weekly religious meetings on Sunday morning!

Neither are we to assemble on Saturday with an apostatizing Church which sees the ARGUMENT about the Sabbath but which follows the false visions of a woman "prophetess" and rejects the gospel of THE KINGDOM OF GOD. God is not in these churches. They merely assemble themselves together, by their own authority and not by the command of God's ministers.

If you are converted and made righteous by the Spirit of God, "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (**II Cor. 6:14**).

No, God commands us, "Have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfruitful works of darkness" (**Eph. 5:11**). If God has opened your understanding to His TRUTH, it is precious beyond price. "If there come any to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (**II John 10-11**).

When the disciples asked Jesus if MANY were being saved, he explained that the many turn into the broad way that leads to destruction -- but FEW find the straight and narrow way that leads to everlasting life. Those in His true fellowship He called the "LITTLE FLOCK."

Remember, our fellowship is WITH THE FATHER, AND WITH JESUS CHRIST first of all, and with one another ONLY IN AND THROUGH CHRIST (**I John 1:1-7**). You can have communion and fellowship with Him wherever you are. Withdraw at once from all other fellowship, except that of CHRIST, and those who are IN CHRIST, and Christ IN THEM.

Assemble Without a Minister?

In **John 15:5**. Jesus said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." What would you think if the branches would say to themselves, let us bundle ourselves together? Yet that is exactly what you are doing when you meet OF YOUR OWN ACCORD WITHOUT MINISTERS!

To be a Christian you need to "abide" in Christ – you need to LIVE by HIS instruction. Do the branches of a grapevine receive their sap from each other? Or do they receive it from the central stump? You need to receive your spiritual power from Christ – the vine. Not from a branch – an individual who thinks he would like to hold a private study.

In **Eph. 4:11-17** Paul explains that Christ gave evangelists, pastors and teachers and other ministerial offices "for the perfecting of the saints ... for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man . . . that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things."

What is the purpose of the ministry?

To instruct the brethren to grow in love and in good deeds -- exactly as **Heb. 10:24** mentions. Then God intends THE PASTORS to set the right example and to instruct the flock which should assemble WITH a minister. IF BRETHREN COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS BY ASSEMBLING WITHOUT A MINISTER, THEN JESUS WASTED HIS TIME TO TRAIN INDIVIDUALS TO BECOME PASTORS OR ELDERS. Then He was mistaken in training the disciples to preach and to feed the flock, if the flock could feed itself!

The very fact that the ministry is FOR the edifying of the Church is PROOF POSITIVE that assembling without a shepherd will NOT lead to UNITY and perfection in knowledge. Without a pastor, disunity, contention and error will inevitably arise in a local group. EXPERIENCE PROVES IT!

Where Two or Three Gather Together

But didn't Jesus promise that wherever two or three brethren gather together, He would always be in their midst?

The common misapplication of this text comes from careless reading. Christ was discussing with His apostles the matter of making binding decisions in the Church (**Mat. 18:17**). He promises to back every decision -- even where only two or three are gathered together IN His NAME!

What does "in His name" mean?

It means "by His authority"! We baptize "in the name of Jesus Christ" -- "by His authority." But Jesus never gave authority for His converts to hold meetings by themselves without a pastor! Any who do so are not acting according to Jesus' commands. They are going contrary to Christ's authority. He does not promise to be in their midst. Besides, according to the pattern laid down in Lev. 23:2-4, GOD ORDERS HIS MINISTERS to convoke assemblies -- to order meetings. God tells us upon which days we must meet, and He orders His ministers to tell the people when and where He wants the assemblies held. It is God's doing, not man's. Ministers are God's bond-servants and the shepherds of the flock.

But we are actually not left without fellowship. When the World Tomorrow Broadcast is on the air, you are attending, in a sense, a church service WITH A MINISTER. This is how God is feeding many in His flock!

[Services now go forth from Valley Springs, California on Zoom—enabling God's people worldwide to come together both in picture and sound]

Future Is Dangerous

This is the time of the end when prophecies hidden for ages are being revealed. TRUTH is being restored, knowledge is rapidly increasing. But knowledge brings RESPONSIBILITY; it becomes DANGEROUS if not rightly handled.

Now notice Jesus LAST WARNING to His Church. At the VERY CLOSE of this age, when the work of spreading the gospel is almost finished, Jesus addressed yet another Church work -- the "Church at Laodicea": "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: ... I WILL SPEW THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH (**Rev. 3:15, 16**).

This frightful condition lies now ahead of us. Just as the remnants of the Sardis era of the Church exist side by side with the Philadelphia era, SO WE WILL CONTINUE OUR WORK to the very "end time" when another group will appear -- a group not accounted worthy to escape the coming tribulation. Another separate work is yet to arise -- made up of begotten individuals who are spiritually lukewarm!

WOE BE TO ANY OF US IF WE TAKE PART IN SUCH A WORK! Here is a work, yet to arise because of our preaching, which will say: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." And Jesus will reply: "As many as I LOVE, I rebuke and chasten: be ZEALOUS therefore, and repent."

It is time to WAKE UP! If you become complacent, lacking in zeal, looking upon a local church as a social club, instead of having your heart in the gospel, you, too, may find yourself in the "Church of Laodicea" left to suffer the impending, horrifying tribulation.

Notice Jesus' admonition for today in ***Luke 21:36***. **"WATCH ye therefore and PRAY ALWAYS, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape ALL these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

Let us all PRAY and WORK TOGETHER to carry this gospel to all nations so Jesus will say to each of us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

End of Quotes

The Devastation of the Worldwide Church of God

January 16, 1986, God's apostle and the Elijah to come, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, died. And after his death, Jesus Christ began removing His Holy Spirit from the midst of the ministry and the membership that He had used to enable Mr. Armstrong to do the Work of God from 1934-1986. (*cf. Isaiah 63:11; Numbers 11:16-17; Matthew 20:16; 22:14*).



In a Radio Broadcast, Mr. Armstrong said, "I do not know whether God's Holy Spirit was in them or among them." – speaking of the prophets and others God had used.

He also said in a sermon, entitled, Are you Really a Christian, “No one was begotten before Jesus Christ” (*John 7:37-39*).”

Jesus Christ Purposely Blinded Mr. Armstrong

To fulfill end-time prophecy (*II Thessalonians 2:1-8*), God had blinded the mind of Mr. Armstrong to his appointment (*not ordained*) of Mr. Joseph Tkach, Sr. to the office of pastor-general; a totally unconverted man as the following years revealed.



Jesus Christ knew what was in his heart and how Satan the devil would use him to devastate the Worldwide Church of God via denying the truth that he and all others had been taught and superficially believed before the death of Mr. Armstrong. He then turned the Church to the pagan teachings of Protestantism.

From almost the beginning of his appointment Mr. Tkach began elevating himself before the Church while subtly making insidious comments about Mr. Armstrong.

Over the following eight years he and his administration having begun slyly at first, then began growing bolder over time of speaking against Mr. Armstrong, while replacing the true teachings with pagan protestant teachings.

Coming Out Into The Open

As I, Alton B. Don Billingsley, understood at that time, they were not fully prepared to make known to the Church the complete breakaway from God’s Holy and Righteous Laws—just yet, but an expected turn of events led to that time.

I was mailed a cassette tape of a recorded sermon by the pastor of the Atlanta, Georgia Church. In that sermon, he stated that he did not believe that God’s laws were to be obeyed, etc.

After listening to it, I immediately talked to Dr. Fowler, a very close friend of Mr. Tkach (*having been earlier together in the Chicago, Illinois Church area*), and also a member of the Church I pastored in Stockton, CA, and told him about the tape.

He then went to Pasadena to voice his alarm to Mr. Tkach while taking the tape with him. Mr. Tkach then flew to Atlanta taking Dr. Fowler with him. He then gave the sermon

in Atlanta, voicing his agreement with the pastor that God's laws had been done away with the Old Covenant, December 17, 1994.

Having believed Mr. Tkach would correct the pastor, Dr. Fowler was shocked, stunned, and disillusioned, to find his friend of many years actually agreed with the pastor and preached the same belief that God's laws were done away. Knowing it was now out in the open, Mr. Tkach then began preaching to the Church the same diabolical pagan teachings.

December 20, 1994, he proclaimed the same false teaching to the gathering of the ministry in our region in Santa, Barbara, CA. December 24, 1994, He gave the sermon in which he also strongly stated God's laws had been done away before a huge gathering of the membership in Big Sandy, Texas. January 1, 1995, he also gave the same sermon before the headquarters Church in Pasadena, California. So it was, at the end of the eight years, December, 1994, Mr. Tkach boldly and authoritatively proclaimed all of God's laws and teachings were done away under the guise of saying they were all under the Old Covenant and we were now under the New Covenant.

This led to the prophesied, "Falling Away!" (*II Thessalonians 2:1-8*).

The Truth of God Was Trampled Underfoot

God used His prophet from ancient times to speak of the present time today:

Isaiah 59:4-8

vs. 4-5 "No one calls for justice, nor does anyone PLEAD for TRUTH. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. They hatch vipers' eggs and weave spider's webs; he who eats their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

v. 6 "Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

v. 7-8 "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood, their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace."

Isaiah 59:14-15

v. 14 "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for TRUTH has fallen in the street (*to be trampled underfoot*), and equity cannot enter. SO TRUTH FAILS, and he who departs from evil makes himself a pray."

Jezebel Conquers and Divides the Ministry and Membership

The Worldwide Church of God had fully become a Protestant Church. Jezebel had entered the Church and destroyed it (*via pagan catholic and Protestant Teachings with the aid of professional teachers; duality: Church of Thyatira*). Virtually all of the membership followed Mr. Tkach and the pagan teachings in one way or another!

Approximately 60 to 70 thousand members chose to believe Mr. Tkach. They have since named their church, "Grace Communion." Some members chose to go back to their former churches and others chose not to go anywhere.

Possibly 40,000 to 50,000 members chose to go with known ministers who could not accept all of the pagan teachings but retained a few of them, while developing their own churches, and their own individual recognition. The very few true and faithful Church members of the Philadelphia Church Era fled from all of them over time and became scattered in different places (*cf. Acts 8:1; Ezekiel 34., Jeremiah 23.*).

Continued History of the Philadelphia Era of God's True Church

The historical writings of the true Church of God will continue to focus on the history of the Philadelphia Church Era from the death of God's apostle January 16, 1986, to the present date of April 7, 2019, while focusing on the evolving transition from that time to what came to be the Church of God, Faithful Flock in 2006.

The Door to the Gospel was Closed



It was at the last dying breath of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong that Jesus Christ closed the door to the Gospel and the Ezekiel warning message.

The simple fact is Jesus Christ was not going to use an apostate pastor general to continue with His Work so He closed the door (***Revelation 3:7-8***), nor would He use the four presenters on television who also chose wrong teachings and wrong churches.

Realizing the Gospel must continue to be preached before Jesus Christ returns to this earth (Matthew 24:14), it should be understood that He would only use a leader of a corporate Church of God who would prove to be FAITHFUL to Him in TRUTH AND IN NAME while standing up for the True Teachings of God (***Revelation 3:8***).

As He had done before in about 50 A. D., Jesus Christ again closed the door to the gospel. He did not re-open that door until July 1933 with 19 members present. Mr. Armstrong said in a sermon tape that it was at that time God laid on him the responsibility of preaching the gospel.

After Jesus Christ had closed the door to the preaching of the Gospel after the death of Mr. Armstrong, time was required to see if any evangelist or pastor would stand up for the fullness of the doctrinal teachings and rulings Jesus Christ used His late apostle to restore within His Church regardless of the deceptive pressures brought about by Satan the devil through his human instruments. **No one did!**

Jesus Christ would not re-open the door to the preaching of the gospel until either 19 or 20 years later, 2006. More about this later. Due to Mr. Armstrong saying he had done the work many believe there is no work to be done. It is true that when he died he had finished his lifetime ministry, but it would not end there.

Jesus Christ made known to His disciples at the temple mount (**Matthew 24:1-3**), the sign he would give revealing the end of this age would be His gospel reaching the world (**Matthew 24:14**). Through His prophet Daniel, He made known when this would reach that point in time:

Daniel 12:6-7

v. 6 And one said to the man (angel) clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?”

v. 7 Then I heard the man (angel) clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand, and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time (3 and 1/2 years); and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.”

This would be the time when God’s people will flee to the place of safety. I have a note in my Bible by Mr. Armstrong who said the Work would continue to go forth until this time as said by God through Daniel.

How is this being done? Jesus Christ is yet using His late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s Recorded Works of his life time ministry that is more relevant today than during those earlier years. **Hebrews 11:4** tells us that Abel being dead still speaks by the excellent sacrifice that he offered and was considered by God that he was righteous before he was murdered by his brother Cain.

The same is true with Mr. Armstrong, though he is dead, he still speaks via of his recorded works on our websites. Jesus Christ is still using him while giving Faithful Flock the awesome blessing of supporting His Work. As to why Jesus Christ is using Faithful Flock will be made known by the following writings that took place after the destruction of the Worldwide Church of God:

My Personal History

Up to almost that time in 1994, I had remained as pastor of the local Churches in Stockton/Modesto, California without being dealt with by headquarters though I had not preached any of the changes.



It was my intention to remain as long as I could as pastor to be there for the loyal members of the two Congregations that totaled approximately 450 people.

I did not realize how few there would be of the faithful members among them until the changes to pagan teachings were made known to the ministers in a regional conference in Santa Barbara by Mr. Tkach, Sr.

Mr. Joseph Tkach, Sr., made known to the ministry all of the laws were done away during the morning of the first day of that regional ministerial conference in Santa Barbara, California, December 20, 1994. Upon hearing this, I was stunned and very sorrowful.

During the lunch hour a few of us were sitting around a table and discussing among ourselves what Mr. Tkach had said about God's laws being done away. Mr. Ronald Kelly was sitting on my right. I made the statement, "I could never believe it." Mr. Kelly was startled to hear me say this and abruptly left the table.

I returned home and broke the news tearfully in a Bible study. The members were fascinated and were eager to hear more! Once again, I was shocked! I thought they believed as I did and had preached!

For example, my last two sermons were back to back about the Dietary Laws in the Old Testament (*Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14*). In those sermons, I proved the unclean were not to be eaten from both a physical and spiritual point of view.

The pastor who replaced me said I threw a bombshell in the Church by preaching those sermons for I knew they were going to be changed due to the new teaching. No, I did not know, though I suspected it.



Those sermons did not change anyone for after they heard the sermon by Mr. Tkach that all of the laws of the Old Testament were done away, they went out and ate whatever they formerly had denied themselves.

Since I continued to refuse preaching the pagan teachings, I was told by Mr. Joe Tkach, Jr., I could no longer preach. He would send Bill Bradford and LeRoy Cole to preach until the permanent pastor would take over.

Shortly thereafter, I was told by John Anderson from Church Administration that Mr. Tkach, Jr. said I was either to be fired or retired. I chose to resign and he accepted it. My last day of employment with WWCG was March 31, 1995.



The evolving transition of the faithful few members began after the departure from the parent Church that had now become totally corrupted by the apostate leadership 1994-1995 (***Daniel 12:7***).

The Lamp had been removed by Jesus Christ as He had done with the Ephesian Church Era (***Ephesians 2:5***). In actual fact, the lamp began being removed immediately after the death of Mr. Armstrong.

The Faithful Few Members

Scripture implies there were approximately 7,000 true and faithful members who survived the Satanic apostate fallout of the Worldwide Church of God at that time (***Romans 11:4-7***), and they scattered—similar to the early Church during their persecution (***Acts 8:1***).

It is not known where most of them were and are at this time. Possibly most are within the Tribes of Israel (***Revelation 7:1-8***), and a few Congregations in Gentile countries. One Congregation in Belgium has since associated with the Church of God, Faithful Flock, located in Valley Springs, California. To understand my evolving history from that time until now can be found in my biography, www.cog-ff.com

My Continued History in Summary

Without malice or vindictiveness, I write the ongoing history of the Church as it came to be over an approximate 14-year time period that led to the name of the Church of God Faithful Flock of the Philadelphia Church of God Era.

Though I yet love all of those who ill-treated me and this little flock, we can no longer walk with them because of their disagreement with one or more of the true teachings that Jesus Christ had used Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to restore within His Church (*Hosea 4:6; Amos 3:3; Malachi 4:4-6; Matthew 17:10-11; 11 John 10-12*).

Our Beginning Step in 1995

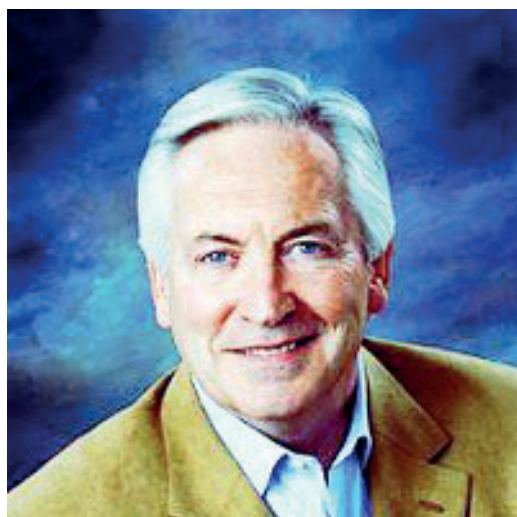
After our departure from the Corporate Worldwide Church of God in 1995, we then searched for a place we could have Sabbath services for the members who chose to remain with us—125 and a few elders, April 8, 1995. The only place we could find was in Escalon, California. The sermon: “Faithfulness to God’s Covenant.”

It is interesting how a name or numbers can sometimes become very meaningful to those in God’s way of life. Escalon is a Spanish name. It means a beginning or beginning step. And it was for us. We took on the name Church of God Modesto without incorporating the name legally. This lasted for some time until we came to incorporate under the name, EIM, *Established in Modesto, California*

The Second Step

Not knowing what else to do, and wanting to believe the top ministers who chose not to go the way of Mr. Tkach were faithful, the elders and I then attended the conference in Indianapolis, IN in 1995, that began Sunday, April 30, 1995.

They formed under the name of United Church of God. We then became part of them.



They chose David Hulme to be their leader. The conference ended May 2, 1995. Though I saw from the beginning some things that were questionable, it did not alarm me for I wanted to believe it would all come together the way it was under Mr. Armstrong. Instead it only became worse over the three years we were with them.

They were accepting ministers regardless of what they believed. While observing Pentecost in Sacramento in 1995, it was admitted to a number of us during the lunch hour between services by Victor Kubik there were those among them who had accepted what Dr. Hoeh had taught, ‘THE THINKER’ a form of the Trinity teaching. Shortly thereafter, I challenged the man chosen by David Hulme to become our regional director because Mr. Tkach had said this minister had come to believe we are born again now. This was done before all of the regional pastors in our area.

Mr. Hulme had sent him to be with us in a meeting. And I said before him and the other ministers sitting at a long table that I could not accept him. Further, I said before all of them, “I am going to continue to believe what Mr. Armstrong had taught us.” Not one minister said I am with you; rather they just sat there with their heads down.

Later in a meeting with Roy Holladay, who was on the doctrinal committee, I pointedly asked him what they were doing with the question about being born again. One minister spoke up and said, “Why bring this up—let it go!” I replied, “No, I want to know!” Roy Holladay then said, “It is not going to be this or not going to be that.”

In our last ministerial conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, I knew I could not stay with them any longer for it was now abundantly clear they were not going to return to the teachings we had been taught by Mr. Armstrong. They had their own agenda.



We had a meeting after returning home with the ministers in our area that included Clyde Kilough.

Each one was asked what we thought about the conference. When it came my turn, “I said there was too much wall-papering, Robert Rules of Order, etc., they were wrong here and there.” Jim Chapman then said to me, “Give them a chance!” I did for three years. A little later I told Richard Pinelli, their



point man, in a meeting that I quit.

They had the Passover wrong, a wrong gospel, and a wrong government, and they voted. Further, they did not want to teach we were Israel for fear of offending some of the people. This is what we were told by Mr. Hulme in a private meeting with the elders in our home area.

In the interim, I had written to the doctrinal committee about the importance of following the teachings of Mr. Armstrong and spoke to the head of it, Jim Franks. His reply was that Mr. Armstrong was not perfect – meaning they were going to correct those teachings.

The THIRD STEP

The United Church of God and David Hulme came to a parting of the ways during that last conference for us. We had a private meeting with him. He led us to believe he was going to follow the teachings of Mr. Armstrong. On this basis, we came to be part of the Church of God, An International Association, with David Hulme, evangelist, as the head of it. To give them a kick-start financially, we, ministers, agreed to not being paid until June 1, 1998.

And during the following Feast of Tabernacles, he let it be known in a meeting with elders and deacons that any who chose not to follow the teachings of Mr. Armstrong did not belong with us. This soon began changing to the worse.

After some time, I became disillusioned upon coming to see he had his own agenda and it was not walking in the footsteps of Mr. Armstrong. It began with the Passover.

The Passover Service, April 10, 1998 (after dusk)

There was a problem with the Passover regarding the ceremony that was sent to us to be used by John Anderson, who was being used by Mr. Hulme to interact with the ministry regarding whatever he wanted to pass on to us.

After viewing the ceremony and recognizing it as the same one changed by Mr. Tkach, I immediately called Mr. Hulme and voiced my protest. He said he would talk to John Anderson about it – indicating he was unaware of it. Nothing came to us regarding a change. I used the same ceremony Mr. Armstrong had put together. After the Passover I again talked to Mr. Hulme about it. He said he touched on Physical Sin during the service he conducted.

December 29, 1998

In our first ministerial conference Mr. Hulme spoke about “Born Again” not really saying anything for or against it, while keeping his eyes primarily on me. He summed up his talk on the subject by saying he did not want anyone to preach on it until he did. He never did while I was with him. Mr. Hulme also said in that conference that he believed what God said about Noah being righteous in his generations did not pertain to pure in stock/ancestry in marriage – meaning marrying people of your own race. This was a stark contrast to what Mr. Armstrong taught.

Another time he mentioned in a sermon that— “If Mr. Armstrong were alive he would re-write the Mystery of the Ages for that was the way he was.” There is no way Mr. Armstrong would change any of those doctrinal teachings. Troubles had been building in my mind about the direction Mr. Hulme was going by what he would say here and there that was not in alignment with the teachings of Mr. Armstrong. I voiced some of them in my sermons to the Congregations that I pastored.

One woman passed on her thoughts about what I was saying in my sermons to her husband's son-in-law who was a minister with Mr. Hulme. He passed this on to Mr. Hulme. As the result Mr. Hulme had John Anderson to call and say he wanted to talk to me in Pasadena.

February 22, 2000 – I boarded a flight to Pasadena and was picked up at the airport in Burbank by his secretary. Almost immediately he and I sat down together. He then raised his voice in anger saying he was told that I did not trust him and there was going to be a split in his church (*trying to intimidate me – a man in his 50s yelling at me – a man of my age at 74 – which was contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 5:1; I Peter 5:5)*).

I replied calmly that at least Stephen had a chance to defend himself before they stoned him to death. He looked surprised at my response and calmed down. I then quoted God who said we are not to trust any man. As to the split I do not remember making that statement. I also pulled out from my briefcase the WWN in which was listed the 18 doctrines that was published in 1986 and showed it to him. He said that just means teachings.

Though I did not leave him at that point but it was building to that point. Inadvertently, a taped sermon was played to the churches that had been given by one of his elders in the UK in which he said he was going to take the bull by the horns and preached we are born again now. I called David Hulme voicing my concern and protest! Rather than correcting the elder himself, he said I should call him. And I did! It did not change anything.

Sunday, May 7, 2000 I attended a ministerial conference in Pasadena at the request of Mr. Hulme. It ended May 9, 2000. During my time there, I remained by myself through lunch and the breaks between sessions, and dinners. I was not happy. In one of his sessions he stated that **Matthew 24:4-5** did not mean what we had been taught – it applied to the world's leaders – not ministers. John Anderson spoke up and said this destroys the teaching of it being connected to the white horse in **Revelation 6**. This did not change his mind nor his teaching.

August 20, 2000 During this week David Hulme and I talked on the phone for about an hour. During our conversation, I told him numerous areas in which he was wrong in his teachings. He warned me that I was on dangerous ground but it did not stop me.

I was not angry but I was very passionate in what I said to him. During our first conference I had told him one on one that I was very passionate about what I believed. He said he knew it. However, I think he thought with his superior intelligence he could intimidate me. I am sorry to say that I did remain with him longer than I should have.

August 26, 2000 Mr. Hulme spoke in the Oakland/San Francisco Church. His wife told a member from the Fresno Church who was there for the service he would be speaking in the Modesto Church the following Sabbath. He had not told me about it. Knowing I was going to resign, we began looking around for a place to observe the Feast of Tabernacles.

September 2, 2000 As expected Mr. Hulme and his wife were in Modesto for this Sabbath. He and I met in a private room to talk. Knowing I was upset about his stand on not speaking on prophecy, he told me he did not believe it was relevant at this time.

This was the same thing Mr. Tkach had told us, that he did not want us preaching on prophecy. Looking back, I came to see from his own writings that David Hulme embraced the trinity teaching; he believed we are born again now, etc. Since I left him he wrote a booklet trying to prove there is no such thing as physical sin.

In actuality, he had been a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde all along. In other words, he was a totally unconverted man caught up in his own intellectual vanity. I loved the man, but could not agree with him.

September 9, 2000 I gave the sermon in Modesto and informed the members I was resigning from Mr. Hume's Church and why. After the services, I e-mailed my prepared resignation to Mr. Hulme. Later in the day I had his right-hand man Stephen Andrews to call and plead with me not to do it. He said, "I am crying and begging you not to leave."

I told him Mr. Hulme was in disagreement with Mr. Armstrong. He replied by saying, "Look Don, Mr. Armstrong was wrong in a lot of things." This statement reflected the beliefs of Mr. Hulme. He did not change my mind. Once again, we lost some members who chose to remain with Mr. Hulme.

Church of God, EIM, 2000 September 9 Though I resigned, Steve LeBlanc chose to remain with David Hulme until the 19th. We elders' then incorporated with the above name within a very short time. I was the president with other board members – all elders – Stephen LeBlanc, Wayne Carlson from Modesto, David O'Malley from Fresno, and Alan Hambleton from Bakersfield.

When we incorporated, it was with the understanding that we would work together on making decisions that had to be made. However, I also told them there would be the times that I would make unilateral decisions – meaning aside from them. They said they understood and this would be no problem.

And it was no problem except in areas of strong beliefs on their part, but I had to remain faithful to the truth and protect the Church. This only happened toward the end of our relationship later on.

2002 September 21-28 During the Feast of Tabernacles in Tucson, Arizona, I learned from the Carson Fultz family, that Nathan O'Malley told Nathan Fultz the elders had formed a conspiracy against me. To pave the way in each of their sermons, though I was not named, it was obvious I was the primary target of their correction.

Meeting with David O'Malley privately during that Feast, He said to me, "You have the Modesto Church but Fresno is mine," He repeated it. And he was right. Only one member from that congregation remained with me.

Added comment, 3-15-2019, I was told by a former member of Mr. O'Malley's Church in Fresno, CA, he has only three members left to pastor. Something to think about.

We returned home. Shortly thereafter the break came.

2002, October 11, Friday I wrote a letter to the Fresno Church via David O'Malley cancelling the service in Fresno, and asking all of them to attend Fresno to try and restore unity. He would not answer my call.

2002 October 15 I made two calls to Steve LeBlanc. I told him unless he could support me, I did not want him to make any more visits.

2002 October 19, Sabbath Wayne Carlson went to Fresno for the service contrary to what I wanted him to do. On the 13th, I disfellowshipped David O'Malley for refusing to cooperate with me. Suspecting the break was coming, I began to mull over a new name for this Congregation. While thinking about it, I had a member at the time to call me about a problem and said, "I have always been faithful."

I thought about that and then connected it with this small number of people and the name, "flock." It connected: "Church of God, Faithful Flock."

2002, October 23 I made a trip to Sacramento and filed the necessary paperwork to record the new name: Church of God, Faithful Flock. The next day I opened up a new Church account in the Faithful Flock name in Modesto, CA. I returned and announced the new name in Church services. Then I told the Congregation, with the elders present, we would continue to use the name EIM for the outreach and among ourselves Faithful Flock;

2002 October 22 I proposed to Steve LeBlanc a meeting with him, and Wayne Carlson to see if a peaceful solution could be worked out. He said he would talk to Wayne and get back with me. Without my knowing about it, Wayne Carlson then went to the deacon who had the key to the post office for our Church mail and got it from him. Then he went to the Bank and had my name removed from the Bank account.

2002 October 28 Steve LeBlanc returned my call about the proposed meeting, and said Wayne did not want to meet with me without David O'Malley being present. I rejected this. Steve then resigned.

Then they wrote a letter against me to all of the Church members. Many of the members went with them, including the heavy tithe payers. I was told that Wayne's Carlson's wife, Jill, said, "Poor Mr. Billingsley what is going to happen to him now?"

Had it not been for God they would have destroyed me from pastoring. Other elders have come and gone as well since that time. Each elder taking members from this flock with them. Altogether, we have lost approximately 98 percent of the members that were originally with Faithful Flock. Though this was sorrowful, it worked together for our good for they no longer agreed with the direction Jesus Christ was leading this small flock.

Once all of them left us (*the Church of God Faithful Flock*), it became apparent Jesus Christ had removed His Holy Spirit from them just as Christ lifted His Holy Spirit from Israel (***Isaiah 63:11***), and from those of the former Corporate Worldwide Church of God in 1994-1995 after the death of God's true Apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

The Apostle John wrote of all these people that were presumed to be true members of God's Church:

I John 2:19

v. 19 "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us."

The Door was Reopened to the Gospel Message

It took about 20 years before circumstances directed by Jesus Christ brought about the Church of God *Faithful Flock* into a place whereby He could use this small handful of members to once again **open the door** to His Gospel and the Ezekiel warning message going forth to this world that Christ had closed at the time of the death of Mr. Armstrong in 1986.

The Passover Season 2006

A miracle occurred during the Passover season in 2006: During the 6th day of the Days of Unleavened Bread, I was called and asked by Frank Olive if I would like to have my name placed under Mr. Raymond McNair on his website that had other ministers' names on it. I was reluctant to do it. Seeing my reluctance, he did not press me.

In the early evening of the dawning of the last Day of Unleavened Bread, after I had gone to bed, the phone rang and my wife at the time (*she died September, 2007*) answered the phone. She then said to me, "I think you need to take this call."

It was Frank Olive, though not connected with us at the time, again making a call to me. He told me he had 13 or 14 websites, and asked if I wanted them. He said he no longer wanted to deal with these ministers. They were offered to me free with no cost or obligation. I told him that I would like to have them. Shortly thereafter, I was asked by Raymond Mills (*our webmaster at the time*) and Frank Olive if I would like to have the recorded works of Mr. Armstrong uploaded on the Faithful Flock website. I asked if this could be done legally. After being assured there would be no problems, I said yes.

The Door to the Work was Re-Opened

It was at this time I began seeing by circumstances and miracles that Jesus Christ was once again opening the door for the Gospel to be preached as a witness to the world (**Matthew 24:14**), by this small congregation of the Philadelphia Era of God's Church.

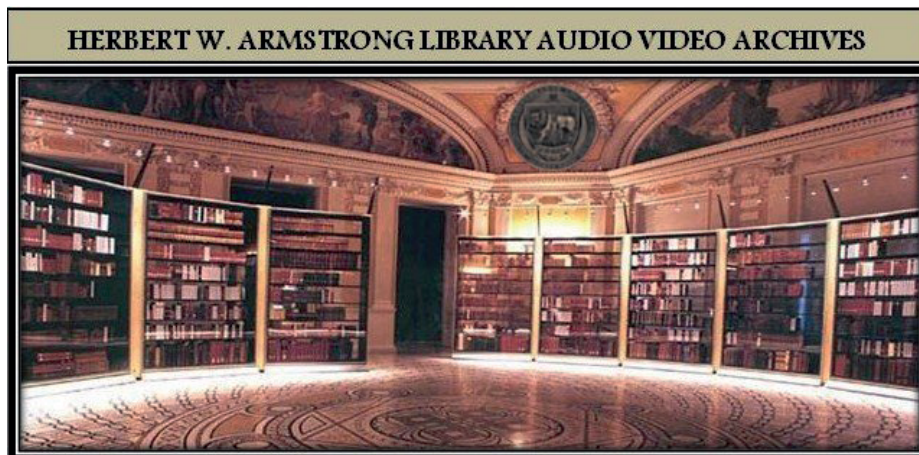
Revelation 3:7-9

v. 7-8 “**And to the angel (messenger) of the Church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is Holy, He who is true, ‘He who has the KEY of David, He who OPENS and no one SHUTS (as Christ did when Mr. Armstrong died in 1986), and no one OPENS (until Christ chooses to open it)’:**

v. 9 “**I know your works. See, I have set BEFORE you and Open Door, and NO ONE can shut it; for YOU have a little strength, have KEPT My Word, and have NOT denied my Name.**”

Faithfulness to the Truth

Due to God's mercy and grace, He had kept me and this little flock faithful, He re-opened the door to the Gospel to reach out to the world by using those 14 websites with the Recorded Works of Mr. Armstrong on them.



And though he is dead, by those recorded works from the 52 years of his ministry, God is yet using him to do the work while using this small Church to support it.

Though this little flock has undergone some real trials regarding loss of members and income, Jesus Christ has continued to grace and bless this *little, little*, Church that belongs to Him (**Luke 12:32**).

A Prophecy for the End-Time

There is a prophecy that has a dual meaning having carried over into the time of the Radio Church of God, October 21, 1933, later renamed, the Worldwide Church of God, June 1, 1968, and now the Church of God, Faithful Flock, October 22, 2002:

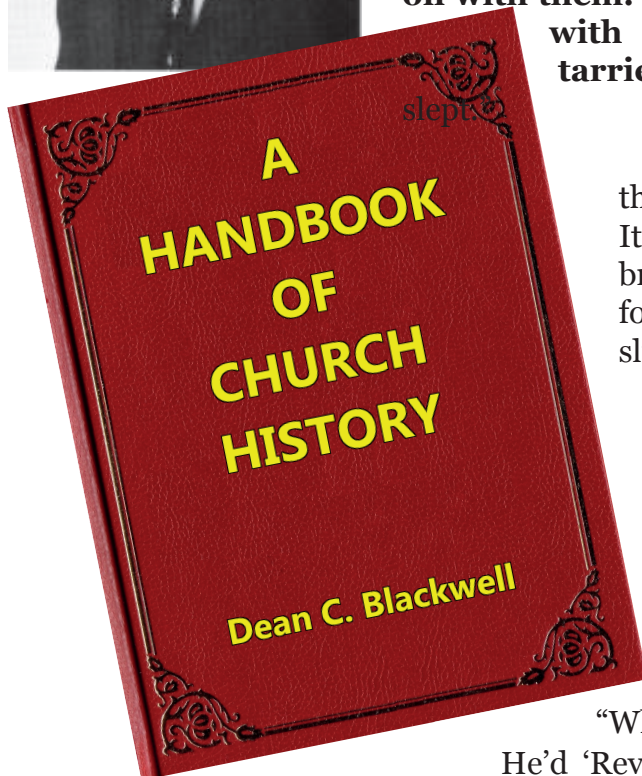


History of the True Church, Mr. Dean Blackwell, Pages 27-29 "Church Slept on the Job,"

Notice **Matthew 25:1-5**:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."



While the bridegroom tarried, was it just the foolish who slumbered and slept? No! It doesn't say that, does it? It says, while the bridegroom tarried, they all—wise and foolish slumbered. Even the true Church slumbered.

Then when you're looking for the history of the true Church you're going to find that for years and years they went to sleep on the job, they did not evangelize.

Revive Your Work

"Why do you think in Habakkuk, God said that He'd 'Revive His work' in the midst of the years?"

Would this be said if they were doing the work in all the time of the New Testament Church?

You might note that in **Habakkuk 3:2**, he says:

"O Eternal, I have heard Thy speech and was afraid: O Eternal, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known in wrath remember mercy."

He is referring to God reviving His work in the midst of man's last century. He said that God would make known what's happening and what's going to happen in man's last years, in the day of His wrath, He requested that God remember mercy and hide His people in a place of safety.

Notice that he mentions this will be in the last years—in the midst of those last years. But your Bible says the Church was going to sleep. They weren't going to be doing the work of God, and He would have to revive His work in the midst of those last years.

And, yet, people heard Mr. Armstrong say the true gospel hasn't been preached in this world for 1950 years. They merely snicker, wonder, doubt, or accuse at this. Where does Mr. Armstrong get the idea he's the only one who's preached it in 1950 years? Out of the Bible!

What did we just read there in Revelation 3? Did He say that of the Sardis Church He gave them an open door; that they were small in number, and that yet He opened the doors that no one could close? He didn't say that at all about them. He didn't open a door getting this work done until the Philadelphia Church [*Era*]. That's what your Bible says.

No one knew the key of prophecy. No one even knew about Israel. Why, the Sardis Church never could have preached the gospel around the world as a witness. Neither could the Church of Thyatira, or any other Church. They didn't have the key of prophecy given to them.

They didn't know the key of David, 'spoke of in **verse 7**, so how could they have possible preached the warning? How could they have known what was going to happen? Your Bible says the gospel wasn't preached until the midst of the last years in the Philadelphia era.”

End of Quotes

Added Comment: Technology was not available until the 1930s for radio—primitive then, but continued to be developed to where the gospel could reach the world with only one man by the advancement of radio and television, and printing press.

Astonishment at What God Did—and Now Does

In those early years of the latter 1030s until the early 1960s, the Work of God was very small. From there it grew until the death of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. As already made known, Jesus Christ begin using this tiny Church to support the Work that Christ Himself is doing by using those Recorded Works of Mr. Armstrong on the Church of God, Faithful Flock, Websites.

The following Scripture describes this tiny Church (**Luke 12:31**) as an astonishment for those who know about this claim:

Habakkuk 1:5

v. 5 “Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe (*Habakkuk 3:1-3; Isaiah 29:14*), though it were told you.”

The next verse (**verse 6, duality**), reveals this work will be taking place at the time the Revived Holy Roman Empire will begin its formation and to its finally coming into full existence (***Revelation 9., 13.***).

In Summary

There is much more that could have been written in the ongoing history of God’s Church during the past millennia. However, what has been written here should enable one to see the additional proof that true to the promise of Jesus Christ, His Church would always exist without fail:

Matthew 16:18

v. 18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter (*petros, a small rock*), and on this ROCK (*Petra – huge Rock, I Corinthians 10:1-4*) I will BUILD My Church (on Himself), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

A Summary of the Work in this Age

Jesus Christ was the Messenger who brought the Message of God to this earth (***Malachi 3:1; Mark 1:14-15***). He proclaimed that message for three and one-half years. Then He was crucified. Shortly before His crucifixion, He prayed to His Father:

John 17:4-5

vs. 4-5 “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

The Apostles of the First Century

Then it became the responsibility of His chosen apostles to carry on with the work until the persecution and deception became so great Christ closed the door somewhere around the middle of the first century.

Matthew 10:1, 5-7

v. 1 And when He had called His disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

vs. 5-7 These 12 Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying, “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

Perplexity Regarding the Church Fleeing

Mr. Armstrong was perplexed how all of God's faithful people would come together to go to the place of safety, and wrote about it:

"Now how, I don't know. If what we, uh what we picture, we are all in one place. We are all in Pasadena. God picks us up and takes us off to some other place on earth. But listen, the Church is all over. The Church is over in the Philippines, the Church, part of it individual members but no organized church in Japan. The Church is down in Malaysia, the Church is in Singapore, the Church is in South Africa, the Church is in Australia, the Church is in New Zealand, the Church is in the islands of the Pacific, the Church is in Canada and the United States, the Church is in England and the Church is all over Europe, the Church is in different places all over Africa, the Church is up in Scandinavia.

Well, how we going to go? Who's going to pick us all up on a roof? Brethren it's time for us to begin to think a little bit about that. Because, definitely the Bible says we are to be given the two wings of a great eagle to go into a wilderness into our place."

Revelation 12:13-14

v. 13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

v. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for three and one-half years, from the presence of the serpent.

The Laodicean Church Era

Comment by Mr. Armstrong: "The "remnant" left behind will constitute the seventh and last era of God's Church – the "Laodicean" Era – which will last but a very short time."

Revelation 12:17

v. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The following is another excerpt from the writings of Mr. Armstrong about the Laodicean Church Era in 1983 speaks of the timing of the Church of the Laodiceans becoming an entity:

"The Laodicean Church are those who are going to come, they're going to find a leader, someone is going to lead them, and the Church will not rise up and will not be actually formed until after we have gone into a place of protection, and after our work is finished and our time is over. It's not going to be contemporaneous with us. It will come after us. Now, I have never said that before." End of Quotes

A further comment: Up to this time it is only the spiritual condition of the Laodiceans that has been witnessed. In a few short years the baton will be passed from the Philadelphia Era of God's Church to the Laodicean Era of God's Church that will by then have become an entity.

At this time, the true and faithful members of the Philadelphia will have left for the place of safety. It would appear Christ will not be using the Laodiceans to do the Work. If so, it will be a lackadaisical work (**Revelation 3:15**).

The Ten Virgins

A/CC, Lesson 53, "Notice what has happened, since 69 A.D., to the preaching of the true message of God's coming kingdom. Instead of proclaiming that message worldwide, the Church as a whole went to SLEEP! Only briefly, as during the days of Peter Waldo, the Church stirred in her slumber, but did not fully awaken to do the Work of God.

The parable in Matthew 25 EXPLAINS this long slumber. Turn to it and read through the first 13 verses. The "virgins" represent the members of God's Church through the ages. The Apostolic Age expected Christ's return momentarily:

1 Thessalonians 4:15 "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep." (RSV).

But when He did not immediately appear, they grew drowsy, lost their first love. **Revelation 2:4** "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love." And went to sleep on the job. For nearly 1900 years God's Church continued to slumber and sleep. Then in 1934, a voice on the radio began to proclaim that the intervention of Christ in the affairs of this world is near:

Matthew 25:6 "And at midnight (the midnight hour) there was a cry made (by Jesus Christ through His beginning use of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong), 'Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him (make preparation).'" [1934-1986, cf. Luke 1:76-79, Malachi 3:1]

The Philadelphia Era of the Church of God began to zealously DO Christ's Work! **Matthew 25:7** "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps (progressive)."

1. But at the end of the Work of "Philadelphia," will many lack a sufficient supply of "oil" (the Holy Spirit)?

Matthew 25:8 "And the foolish said unto the wise, 'Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.'"

End of Quotes.

A Needed Insert of Explanation

Who are the Five Foolish Virgins?

The following gives the answer to the identity of the five foolish virgins.

Foolish, Greek, ‘moros’

Jesus Christ used this Greek word outside of the parable in **Matthew 5:22; 7:26; 23:17, 19**; also **Matthew 25:2, 3, 8**. These places refer to:

- 1) People who are in danger of the lake of fire.
- 2) People whose spiritual lives do not have a solid foundation.
- 3) People who are blind, religious hypocrites.

To none of these people would God give His Seed of Begettal of His Holy Spirit. Now to understand whether they ever had God’s Holy Spirit.

Matthew 25:8 “**And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out** (Greek: *extinguished, are put out, are quenched*).”

Did they once have God’s Holy Spirit? A qualified yes! This will be explained later both in Scriptures and in the parables. With the end-time for this age approaching Jesus Christ woke up the Church in 1934 after almost 1900 years of being asleep (*as explained earlier*), to give a final warning that would reach the world and the leadership of it before the demise of the House of Joseph and the other tribes of Israel that is now very close at hand.

To accomplish this enormous task there would be a need of calling many thousands of people who would become members of the corporate Worldwide Church of God. This of necessity would require the need of a college, later two other colleges, to teach young women and men upon graduation to be employed in the administration, and young men to become pastors over large and ever growing churches.

To make a difference in the minds and thinking of the thousands of people to become members of the Church, and others to become an active part of the Work of God, Jesus Christ began drawing all of them by His Holy Spirit out of the world were set apart by His Holy Spirit to be in them.

In this manner Christ would accomplish His will of doing the end-time work, just as He had done with physical Israel under the leadership of Moses in leading them out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

Isaiah 63:11-12

vs. 11-12 “**Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, ‘Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, who led them by the right hand of Moses, with His glorious arm, dividing the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name . . . (cf. I Corinthians 10:1-4)’**”

The Apostolic Age of the Ephesian Church Era

Jesus Christ put His Holy Spirit within the MANY He chose to support His apostles in the Apostolic Era of God's Church (**Isaiah 63:11**). Many thousands came to be members in that early Church era. Toward the end of their ministry the churches began to desert the apostles as they did in 1995.

The Apostle Paul wrote in the closing part of his life to Timothy about the falling away from the Church:

II Timothy 1:15 “. . . all those in Asia have turned away from me.”

The Apostles Peter, Jude, and John also wrote of the churches in that time falling away from the truth of God and returning to the synagogue of Satan (**Acts 20:25-31; Revelation 2:1-7**).

The End-Time Warning to Mankind

Realizing the enormous task that would be needed to accomplish the warning from Jesus Christ to mankind in this end-time, Jesus Christ raised up many thousands of people who would be needed to support His late Apostle throughout the 52 years of his ministry and put His Holy Spirit in them this possible.

As it was with the apostolic age, when Mr. Armstrong died Jesus Christ removed His Holy Spirit from all the many thousands of people for there would no longer be a need for them. Realizing the rapid advances in technology when Christ would re-open the door to the Gospel the work there would only be the need of a few dedicated members.

In the interim Jesus Christ permitted Satan the Devil to use an appointed apostate pastor-general to begin deceiving the membership by dismantling the laws and doctrinal teachings that Christ had used Mr. Armstrong to restore with His Church claiming it was no longer needful to obey them.

Ironically, the hundred thousand members, plus, eagerly accepted what they called, “The New Teachings” (*meaning no or few laws of God to be obeyed*)! They walked away from those laws and teachings they had previously accepted, zealously believed, and practiced, thus, fulfilling the prophecy of the end-time falling away (**II Thessalonians 2:1-4**).

With the removal of God's Holy Spirit, Satan's power of spiritual darkness then descended once again upon them (**Colossians 1:13**). They returned to the world and back to the synagogue of Satan (**Revelation 3:9**). Most completely rejected the teachings of God! Others only in part while developing their own churches. All of them in one way or another rejected God's apostle, Mr. Armstrong.

The Time to Flee for Protection

In time to come they will be knocking at the door to go to the place of safety, but too late—it has been closed to them as the following Scriptures make known.

Matthew 25:10-12

v. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came (*not yet—progressive, Matthew 24:42; 25:13 – His invisible presence with interventions to make possible His elect people to be able to go to the place of safety*), and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut (*cf. Genesis 7:16, God closing the door to the Ark; the same in the place of safety*).

v. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, “Lord, Lord (*an urgent anguished cry*), open to us!” But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

Here Jesus Christ is saying that He does not know them as His true Elect as the following Scriptures make known.

Matthew 7:21-23

v. 21 “Not everyone that says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

v. 22 “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (preached) in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’”

This was true while they were being used to pastor churches during the life of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, but having developed their own churches with beliefs contrary to what they once believed while in God’s Church while Mr. Armstrong was alive, they were no longer known by God.

v. 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you (*as My true Elect*); depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (*rejecting God’s government, His apostle, and accepting pagan teachings in their churches*)!’”

God the Father Had Not Begotten Them

It is needful to understand they no more had the Holy Spirit of begettal from God the Father in them than did those in the apostolic age nor Israel of old. Jesus Christ only placed His Holy Spirit in them to accomplish His will for the time needed and no longer.

This explains the meaning of the closing part of the following parable:

Matthew 22:14

v. 14 “ . . . **For many are called but few are chosen** (*cf. 20:16*).

Please read the booklet, ‘*Many are Called but Few are Chosen*’ from the Church of God faithful flock website (www.cog-ff.com), for a complete understanding of this subject.

It is only the bare few in comparison that God the Father has drawn to Himself through Jesus Christ to become His begotten children, a little, little Church (**Luke 12:32**).

End of the explanation of the identity of the foolish virgins

ACC Lesson 58 Continues with the Five Wise Virgins

2. Are the five unprepared [*foolish*] "virgins" told to go and figuratively BUY a supply of the Holy Spirit?

Matthew 25:9 “**But the wise answered, saying, ‘Not so; lest, there be not enough for us and you: but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’**” [*Too late, the Church has fled, now the Famine of the Word, Amos 8:11-12*]

Does **Revelation 3:17-18** show that the typical Laodicean also belongs in this category?

Revelation 3:17-18 “**Because you say, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing’; and know not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire** [*Great Tribulation*], **that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that thou may see.**”

COMMENT: These members of God's Church can still be born of God if they do as Christ instructs. But they will have to PROVE their spiritual dedication to God by overcoming in the midst of the Great Tribulation – very likely through martyrdom! **Matthew 25:10-12** indicates that SOME of the end-time "foolish virgins" will not yet be "ready" when Christ arrives.

[**Important Note:** Mr. Armstrong came to believe the five foolish virgins who were once part of the Church were never converted (*cf. Matthew 7:21-23*). The wise virgins, being the Laodiceans, were converted, but not counted to be worthy to taken to the place of safety, having to win their salvation as martyrs (**Revelation 6:9-11**.)]

Matthew 25:10-12

v. 10 **And while they (*foolish*) went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage** [*the five wise virgins—as they repent during the Great Tribulation. Progressive—the forthcoming marriage to take place when Christ returns*]: **and the door was shut.**



vs.11-12 Afterward came also the other (foolish) virgins, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us.” But He answered and said, “Verily, I say unto you, I know you not (*never begotten by God’s Holy Spirit*).”

Luke adds understanding to what was said in Matthew:

Luke 13:23-30

vs. 23-24 Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there FEW that will be saved?” And He said to them. “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for MANY, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

v. 25 “When once the Master of the house has risen up, and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from (*they no longer represent Jesus Christ therefore they are not recognized as belonging to Him*).’

v. 26 “Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets (*they did while pastoring during the life of Mr. Armstrong*).’ “But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you (as elect members of Christ), where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity (*having rejected true teachings and God’s apostle*).

v. 28 “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out (*from being in the 1st Resurrection*).

vs. 29-30 “They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

ACC Lesson 50 continued—In spite of Christ's warning and the constant repetition of the message by the Philadelphia Work over a period of years, is the spiritual condition of the "Laodiceans" just LUKEWARM – neither hot nor cold, not really stirred up about overcoming?

Revelation 3:15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot.”

COMMENT: The name LAODICEA is Greek. It means "**the (self-) righteous people.**" It is significant that the ancient city of Laodicea lies a great ruin today – and like Sardis it is COMPLETELY DEAD! (*It is recommended at this point that you go back and review your notes over page 10 of Lesson 44.*)

4. WHY will the Laodiceans find themselves in such a pitiable state?

Revelation 3:17

“Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?”

COMMENT: They will have been self-deceived. They "know not" that they themselves are "the ones pitiable and beggarly and blind and naked" (*according to the original Greek*). They THOUGHT they HAD made proper preparation for the return of Christ. They will say, "**I HAVE BECOME rich (physically and spiritually) . . . and have need of NOTHING.**"

The ancient city of Laodicea was famous for its money transactions and its soft wool. Laodicea was almost a synonym for soft, luxurious living. Not far from the city was a pagan temple with a great MEDICAL school.

Naturally, Laodicea produced some famous SKEPTIC philosophers! The MODERN "Laodiceans" will be products of this MODERN age of skepticism, unbelief, creature comforts, medicine and permissiveness. They are too close to the ways and false gods of this world to get really "shook up" about God's truth until finally shaken out of their lukewarmness by having to suffer in the Great Tribulation!

5. Will Christ be showing LOVE to these people by allowing them to suffer so?

Revelation 3:19

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent . . .”

Hebrews 12:6-11

“For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chastens not?

“But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards (illegitimate) and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

COMMENT: The Laodiceans actually have been begotten of God's Spirit. Their lamps are lit:

Matthew 25:8

And the foolish said unto the wise, “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out., but are "going out" (see margin of your Bible) because the supply of "oil" (the Holy Spirit) has not been continually replenished and increased [it was removed from them after serving their purpose; further, they were never begotten by God's Holy Spirit].

Christ does NOT WANT to cast off these people. ***Revelation 3:16*** should be translated: **"I AM ABOUT TO spue you out," NOT "I WILL spue you out."** He stands ever ready to receive the **OVERCOMERS** – to give them eternal life and rulership with Him (***verses 20-21***).

Revelation 3:20-21

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

6. How might a "Laodicean" recognize his spiritual condition in advance of the Tribulation?

Luke 6:26

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

But will the world HATE whoever is a dedicated believer in, and doer of, God's Work?

John 15:19-20

“If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you, “The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.”

What else does Christ say, through the Apostle Paul?

1 Corinthians 10:12

“Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

2 Corinthians 3:5 “Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God.” RSV.

End of Quotations

The History of God’s True Church

The writing of Jesus Christ through the Apostle John to the Laodicean Church Era brings to an end the Seven Church Eras (*Revelation, chapters 2 and 3*). However, this does not bring to an end the Church of God for it is an ongoing Church. Jesus said it would never die—never come to an end in this age nor in the ages to come.

In this end-time there are three Church eras that exist:

1) The Sardis Era – virtually dead – but a few will walk with Christ in white, questionable whether these few were in the early years of this era, or here at the end-time. If at the end-time indications are they will have to endure the Great Tribulation for there is no promise of protection for them in their letter from Christ (***Revelation 3:1-6***). Realizing the deadness of the Sardis era, very probably the few died before this century.

2) The Philadelphia Era – faithful (***Revelation 3:7-13***).

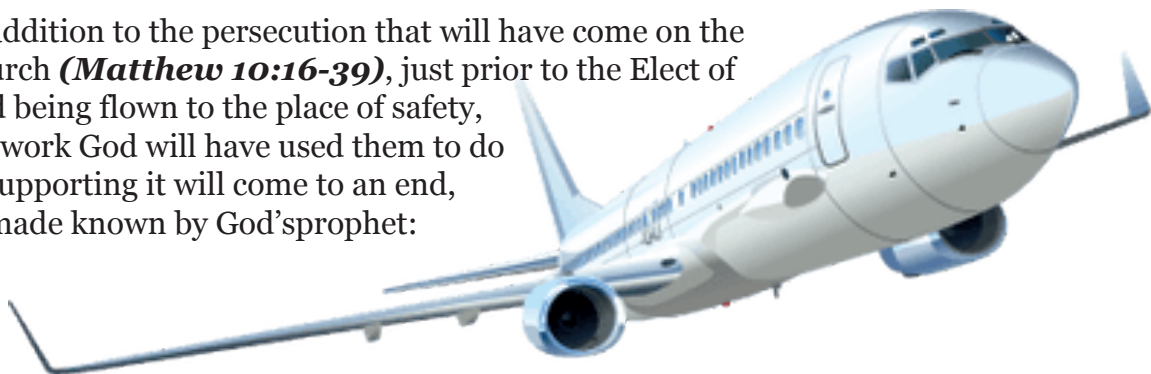
3) The Coming Laodicean Era, the self-righteous people (***Revelation 3:14-22***).

Having been warned by God to flee from the plagues to befall the House of Joseph (***Revelation 18:4-5; Jeremiah 51:45***), the little, little, Church of the Philadelphia Era (***Revelation 3:7-13***) that it now is will in the next few short years fly to the place of safety (***Jeremiah 51:50; Matthew 24:15-16***).

There they will be protected from a time of trouble such as this world had ever witnessed to the place Jesus Christ will have prepared for her (***Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21-22; Revelation 12:14***).

The Work of the Philadelphia Era to End

In addition to the persecution that will have come on the Church (***Matthew 10:16-39***), just prior to the Elect of God being flown to the place of safety, the work God will have used them to do in supporting it will come to an end, as made known by God’s prophet:



Daniel 12:7

v. 7 Then I heard the man (angel) clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it will be for three and one/half years; and WHEN the power of the holy people, has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

This speaks not only the heavy persecution of God's people but also a lack of employment therefore no longer able to tithe and give offerings to support the work of God. In the interim, Jesus Christ continues to use His little flock to support the continued work of God (***Habakkuk 1:5***)—*the preaching of the Gospel and the Ezekiel Warning* message—a last ditch effort of warning in particular to Manasseh, America (www.cog-ff.com).

Manasseh Used for the Work of the Gospel

It is from this nation alone that the work of God has been able to reach out with its warnings of what is to occur within the very next few short years just as it has since its beginning in 1934. No other nation would have permitted it—including *Britain, (Manasseh)*.

America is still the super-power nation of the world and because of it all the nations of Israel are yet under her wings of protection. When she is conquered and enslaved so will all of the other nations of the house of Jacob be conquered and enslaved having no real power to withstand the blitzkrieg attacks of the modern day Assyrians—Germany—the lead nation of the ten to make up the Roman Empire (***Revelation, chapters 13.; 17.***) The coming time of Jacob's trouble will have been brought about by World War III (Jeremiah 30:5-7). Scripture also defines this as the Great Tribulation in which billions of mankind will experience horrible deaths including some of God's true people to be martyred (***Revelation 6:9-11***).

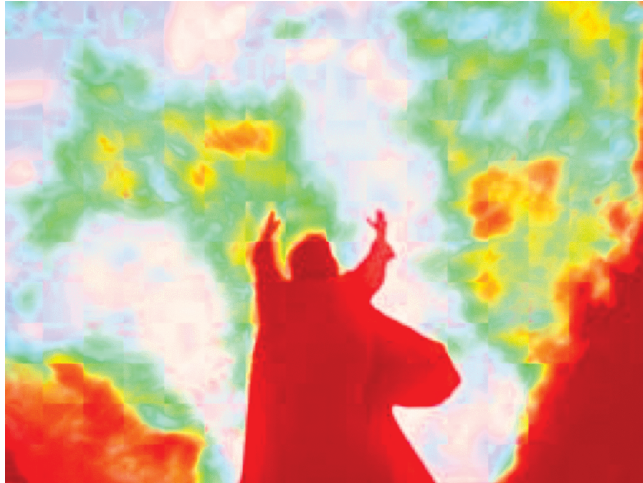
The only areas of this world that will be spared from the horrors of the Great Tribulation will be in the area where Petra, Jordan is located (*cf. Daniel 11:41*). There the faithful and true people of God will dwell while awaiting the return of Jesus Christ back to this earth.

The Two Witnesses

After the departure of the elect of God to the place of protection from the horrors of the Tribulation having taken place, Jesus Christ will then raise up two special men to basically fulfill a dual role of that of Moses and Aaron (*perhaps in the spirit and power of Moses, God's lawgiver, and Elijah, proclaiming the true identity of God, cf. Matthew 17:3*), of witnessing to the Beast and the False Prophet of the Roman Empire, saying, "Let God's people go!" (*Who will then be enslaved throughout the nations of Europe*)."

Revelation 11:3-6

vs. 3-4 “And I will give **POWER** to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth (*Zechariah 4:2, 3, 11, 14*).



v. 5 And of anyone wants to harm them, **FIRE** proceeds from their mouth (*cf. II Kings 1:10-12, at the word of Elijah*) and **DEVOURS** their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

v. 6 “These have **POWER** to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have **POWER** over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire (*as did Moses and Aaron*).

Moses and Aaron before the Pharaoh

Historical duality will in this coming time be repeated. It will come to be as it was in the time of Moses and Aaron who repeatedly appeared before the Pharaoh of Egypt seeking the release of Israel who was in bondage to the Egyptians.

Repeatedly, the Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let them go—though plague after plague was brought on them until Egypt was destroyed (*Exodus 10:7*). During this coming captivity of Israel the Beast will justify his refusal due to the sins of Israel:



Jeremiah 50:33-34

vs. 33-34 Thus says the LORD of hosts: “The children of Israel were oppressed, along with the children of Judah; all who took them captive have held them fast (*as did the pharaoh of Egypt*); they have refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is His name. He will thoroughly plead their case (*Armageddon*), that He may give rest to the land (*of Jerusalem and Judea*); and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

Jeremiah 50:7

v. 7 ‘All who have found them (*bought and enslaved*) have devoured them; and their adversaries said, ‘We have not offended, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.’”

The Death of the Two Witnesses

After the three and one/half years their witness to the Beast and False Prophet will have been finished. Then Jesus Christ will remove His protection from them.

Revelation 11:7-10

v. 7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit (*cf. Revelation 13:1, 11; 17:8; 9:1-2*) will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.



v. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Gomorrah, where also our Lord was crucified (*Jerusalem*).

v. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will SEE (*via satellite television*) their dead bodies three and a half days, and NOT allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

v. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will REJOICE over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these Two Prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

The Two Witnesses Resurrected Back to Human Life

Then—a startling thing will happen!

Revelation 11:11-14

v. 11 Now after three-and-a-half days the BREATH OF LIFE from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and GREAT FEAR fell on those who saw them.



v. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

Without doubt, this will have terrified the people with dread not knowing what other destruction they might bring on them! And it did come—though from God Himself:

vs. 13-14 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake 7,000 people were killed, and the rest were afraid, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

The 3rd woe is the final blowing of the seventh trumpet signaling the return of Jesus Christ back to this earth and the seven plagues being poured out on mankind (**Revelation 16:1-21**). And to end this age will be the battle of Armageddon.

The Coming of Jesus Christ

Preparation is now in its final stage for the return of Jesus Christ to return to earth as KING of Kings and LORD of Lords:

Revelation 11:15-19

v. 15 Then the 7th angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

v. 16 And the 24 elders who sat before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:

v. 17 “We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

v. 18 “The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the nations that they should be judged (*Armageddon, Psalm 2*), and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

v. 19 Then the Temple of God was opened in heaven, and the Ark of His covenant was seen in His Temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

At this time Jesus Christ will return to this earth and bring to an end this age during the battle of Armageddon. At the same time, He will have His angels to bring to Himself His Resurrected Bride. He will then begin His supreme millennial reign and rule over all nations (***Matthew 24:31-32; Revelation 11:15-19***).

At the same time, Jesus Christ and His Bride will begin setting free all the peoples of the tribes of Israel from their harsh and brutal captors:

Jeremiah 30:8-9

vs. 8-9 ‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke (*of bondage*) from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them.

But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.”

It will be at this time that God’s true Church will begin its phenomenal growth as Christ made known by the following parables.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

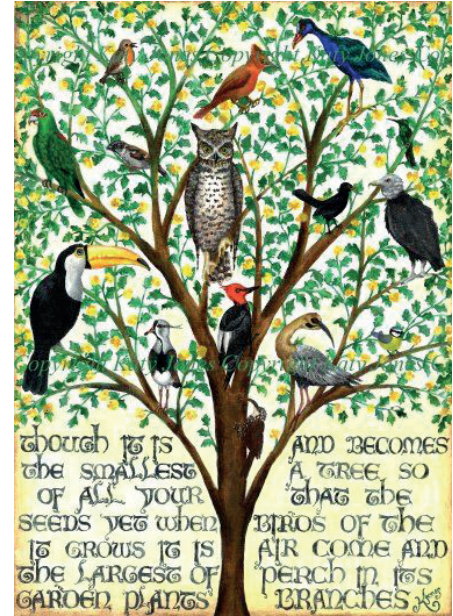
During this age, Jesus Christ likens His true and faithful Church to the size of a mustard seed, *the smallest of all*—hardly worth considering by the world and its churches due to it being so very small and appearing for the most part to be ineffective in the world’s eyes, disrespected, and persecuted.



Matthew 13:31-32

v. 31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven (*the Church of God in embryo*; ***Luke 17:21*** “*the kingdom of God is among you*”) is like a mustard seed (*a little, little, flock, Luke 12:32*), which a man took and planted in his field (*the world, verse 38*).

v. 32 “Which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown (*begins its growth in the millennium*), it is (to become) greater than the herbs (seeds grown into full size herbs—as they now are in this age) and becomes A TREE, so that the birds of the air come and rest in its branches (*symbolic of the peoples and nations of this world; cf. Jeremiah 31:1;16:19-20*).”



Jesus Christ further defines the parable of the mustard seed:

Luke 13:18-19

v. 18-19 Then He said, “What is the Kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put it in his garden, and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”

The following two parables also shed light on the future of God’s true Church.

The Parable of the Leaven

Leavening is an agent, though very minute in size in its beginning, however, over time it will permeate the dough and leaven the whole lump (*I Corinthians 5:6*). Jesus Christ uses this to speak of His Church long range—a period of time of 6,000 years leading to the first resurrection and the age to come.

Matthew 13:33

v. 33 Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven (God’s Church in Embryo); which a woman took and hid (*world blinded to God’s Master Plan and His perfect Time Table of 6,000 years allotted to this present age and His true people to be called and used by Him*) in three measures of meal TILL all was leavened.

This appears to have the meaning of 6,000 years in three segments of 2,000 years each – in which those who have been called and chosen by God over that span of 6,000 years to be used by Him, along with all others from the beginning of mankind, throughout the millennia unto the coming of Jesus Christ back to this earth; they will then total 144,000 as the Bride of Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 11:4-40; Revelation 7:1-8 ;14:1-5*).

The Parable of the Dragnet

This parable presents an overall view of the events that will take place at the time of the harvest—meaning the time when God will separate His true and faithful people from all

others and will take them to the Place of Safety.

It also connects with the Parable of the Sower, the Tares, and the Synagogue of Satan; all of them to experience the horrors of the **Great Tribulation** (**Matthew 13:30, 40-42**), with the lone exception of those planted in the good earth (**Matthew 13:43; Revelation 3:10; 12:14**).

Matthew 13:47-50

vs. 47-48 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind., which when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels; but threw the bad away.

v. 49 “So it will be at the end of this age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just (at the time of the harvest, verses 30-31), and cast them into the furnace of fire (cf. *Matthew 22:12-14*). There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

All those of the wicked who have never had an opportunity for salvation will have that blessing during the Time Frame of God’s Master Plan of Salvation. And it is pictured as follows:

Continued Growth Within The Church of God

The ongoing Church of God will continue its awesome growth throughout the coming Millennial period of time of 1000 years (**Revelation 20:4-6**). Over that period of time perhaps a billion people or more will be converted and added to the Church of the ever-living God.

Shortly after the end of the of the 1,000 years, the Great Resurrection will take place. The many billions of people who never had an opportunity for salvation during their lifetimes, will be blessed with that opportunity when raised back to human life in the Great White Throne Judgment covering 100 years (**Isaiah 65:20; Revelation 20:5, 11-12; John 5:27; Ezekiel 37.; Daniel 12:2-3; John 3:16-17**). All those who will be converted, and begin living their lives in faithfulness to God during that time period, will also be added to the ever-growing Church of God.

Then there will be the new heavens and the new earth, the New Jerusalem, the Church of God will then become the born again Family of God (**Revelation, chapters 21. 22.;** the Bride of Jesus Christ, **Revelation 19:6-9**).

The End

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