

A MESSAGE TO THE WORLD LEADERS

The Gospel of Jesus Christ can become lost in a world saturated with information. Here is a message you cannot afford to ignore or loose.

Two thousand years ago, John the Baptist, a prophet of God, delivered this message to the people of Israel: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" (Mat.3:2). He was followed by Jesus Christ who told them that the Kingdom of God was already in their midst, meaning that He, Jesus Christ, represented that Kingdom (Luke 17:21, margin).

Those who have repented and accepted this message, have received God's unshakable promise that they will inherit eternal life and become priests and kings in the Kingdom of God.

Rev 1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: 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,

Rev 1:5 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,

Rev 1:6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Rev 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

1 Cor 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

1 Cor 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

1 Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Cor 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Cor 15:54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

1 Cor 15:55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

1 Cor 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

1 Cor 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Th 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

1 Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

1 Th 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

1 Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Th 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

These passages, cited in their entirety for your convenience, express the basic message that Jesus Christ brought to this world: human beings have been placed on this planet for a transcendental purpose – eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

A call to repentance is a call to a life of righteousness. Those who respond to this call have God's unshakable promise that they will receive eternal life in His Kingdom at the resurrection of the dead.

This promise will be fulfilled shortly. The world is in the throes of the greatest revolutionary change ever: a change of leadership in every nation of the world. New kings and priests will take over and install a rulership according to the law of God. The current world difficulties and realignments are a prelude to that event.

This message concerns that change! It is a call to repentance to every leader in the world. God will not change the leadership of any nation before He gives them a chance to repent. Jesus Christ is telling everyone that it is not too late to respond to His call. He is giving you the chance to receive an inheritance far greater than the one you currently possess. He said:

"The last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen" (Mat.20:16).

"The last" meaning that you are among the last people to be called to repentance in this age, and "the first" that you will be among the leaders in His eternal Kingdom. Make sure therefore that you are not only called, but also chosen.

This work is not being done in the name of any existing church or religion, but in the name of God and Jesus Christ. Since all preach sectarian messages, which have torn the world apart for millennia, it was necessary to raise an independent work that carried the divine message unadulterated by current doctrines and ideologies.

We expect no credit and no recompense for our work. We do not do this for profit, but because the Almighty has laid this burden upon us and shown us that this message must go out to the world while conditions still permit it. The Scriptures are telling us that those who preach the true Gospel to the nations at this particular junction in world history will pay a high price for their efforts. An unbelieving world brought up on a diet of cynicism and deception cannot bear to hear sound knowledge and will avenge itself on those who preach it. Be that as it may, we are privileged that the Almighty has called us to fulfill His purpose.

The fact that we have no affiliation with any existing church or religion, that we rely solely on the Bible and the Holy Spirit for guidance, that we impose no burden on anyone, should give you an indication that this kind of work is not possible outside the guidelines of the Holy Spirit.

When talking about His servants, Jesus Christ said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Mat.7:16). We say: know us by our fruits!

Your repentance and conversion are between you and God; we are merely the facilitators of this process. We keep no personal records and no files aside from our mailing lists and such as are required for legal purposes. Those who wish to have their names removed from our mailing list, we will sadly oblige.

Having made our work and ourselves known to you, it is now up to you. We declare, on the revelation of God Almighty, that there is no other work on earth that preaches the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God in this end of the age. It is not hard to find out if our claim is true. All you need is open up your Bible and check that what we preach is according to the Scriptures. Do the same with all who claim to be God's ministers.

It will cost you nothing if you take up this challenge, but it could cost you your inheritance if you ignore this call from Jesus Christ.

May God Almighty be your guide and help you take the right decision, for it is not only your salvation that is at stake, but that of your people too.

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"Better a poor and wise youth
Than an old and foolish king
who will be admonished no more" (Eccl-4:13).

ARE YOU IN THE RIGHT RELIGION?

Few things in the world are more important than being in the right religion. The quality of your life and your future are determined by the answer to this question. But how would you know if you are in the right religion? And is one with no religion better off as so many people carelessly believe and foolishly proclaim these days?

There are many ways of determining which is the right religion and which is not, some more reliable than others, but there is one simple test that is sure to always give you the right answer. If you go through life and fail to see a higher purpose to it, and if the thought of death terrifies you, then you are not in the right religion.

Recently, a priest and a nun of a certain denomination were confessing in a televised interview that they refused to even contemplate death because, "death is a such a dreadful thing." The priest, a former high prelate in his church, now in retirement, went on to say how lonely he felt at times and how terrified he was that when his time came there may be no one to hold his hand. He served in one of those religions that forbid their priests to have a family.

As I was watching and listening to them, I was struck by the emptiness in their lives. After spending their lives at the altar, there was nothing positive that they could say about life, nothing that they could look forward to in the end. Death hang as a foreboding calamity over their heads, something they would have avoided at all costs if they could.

Now if these people who served in a supposedly Christian denomination, who were spiritual beacons to others, ended up with such a depressing view of life and death, what condition must their followers be in?

Religion is supposed to give people a transcendental purpose in life that cannot be grasped by the normal physical senses. A purpose that becomes apparent only through the exercise of one's innermost thoughts and meditation on the Word of God. It is like a window being opened in your mind by the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

It is the thoughts that determine the quality of one's life and the possibility of one's salvation. That is why the founders of Christianity placed so much emphasis on the need to purify and control one's thoughts and set them on the right path.

2 Cor 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

2 Cor 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling

2 Cor 10:5 down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

2 Cor 10:6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Mat 15:17 "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the

Mat 15:18 stomach and is eliminated? "But those things which proceed out of the mouth

Mat 15:19 come from the heart, and they defile a man. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Mat 15:20 "These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

What these passages are telling us is that the feelings of our heart determine the quality of our thoughts and the manner of our speech. They make us holy or they defile us; they set us on the road to salvation or on the road to perdition. Apostle Paul amplified on these thoughts when he said:

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.

Phil 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

In comparing the lives of Jesus Christ, of His Apostles, and other holy men down through the centuries, who have given their lives for the goal set before them, with the lives of the priest and nun who were terrified at the thought of death, one wonders what did they ever learn during their life in the convent? What did they meditate upon in their solitude, in their prayer, when they walked in their garden that they ended up with such an uncertain state of mind?

What is even more puzzling is that their religion has turned death into an extraordinarily complicated and expensive affair, with almost bankrupting expenses for the survivors. Luxuriously polished coffins, expensive pomp and ceremonies, meals, drinks and other paraphernalia, which the dead may never have seen in their life, are lavishly expended in the name of the dead. They spend more on dressing up and fare welling a corpse than they do on the living; nothing of the simplicity of the burial of Jesus Christ, in whose name they supposedly do these things. And then they end up being terrified of even the thought of death. Where is the logic in all of this? Is this not hypocrisy?

Compare that with the example of Jesus Christ. As He hung up on the cross, knowing that His time had come, He laid His soul into the hand of God and said: "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30). Luke added another little detail to this scenario: "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last." (Luke 23:46).

These are not the words of a desperate person who feared death. He did not lament the loss of His life, and was not terrified to lay His soul in the hand of God. He behaved and spoke as One who knew what He was doing.

John 10:17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it

John 10:18 again. "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Apostle Paul had a refreshing attitude towards death too and did not panic when his end approached.

Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Phil 1:22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I

Phil 1:23 cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with

Phil 1:24 Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

Phil 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing

Phil 1:26 for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

Phil 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries,

Phil 1:28 which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

Phil 1:29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to

Phil 1:30 suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

Phil 2:1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like minded,

Phil 2:2 having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Phil 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Phil 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who,

Phil 2:6 being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself

Phil 2:7 of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Phil 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Phil 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above

Phil 2:10 every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that

Phil 2:11 Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Phil 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

Phil 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Phil 2:14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

Phil 2:15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Phil 2:16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not

Phil 2:17 run in vain or labored in vain. Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Phil 2:18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.”

We could have quoted only the first few verses to prove our point, but as you can see, the entire passage makes a powerful case that this life has a higher purpose, and that there is nothing to fear about death if one has the right relationship with God. Read this passage again and ponder on the wonderful message that it conveys and the great promises that lay in store for those who believe. For as you can see, the Apostles were not terrified of death either. They saw it as a necessary step towards a more fulfilling life in the eternal Kingdom of God. And if that was true of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, it is true of their followers, and it is true of you and me if we believe.

1 Th 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

1 Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

1 Th 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

1 Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Th 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Now can you see the difference between the right religion and the wrong one? One offers hope and release from the fear of death; the other brings sorrow and terrors of death.

Jesus Christ made this unshakable promise to those who believe.

John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Well, do you believe it? You should, for it is true! It is all a matter of belief! When you die, your body perishes, but your soul retains your mind and your beliefs, and it is these that determine your destiny at the time of God's judgment. The Almighty holds your soul in store until the day of resurrection (Rev. 6:9-11), then you are given a new body - a spiritual one – that shall never die, if, and only if, you believe. Belief of course implies obedience to God's laws, repentance of your sins, baptism, laying on of hands, and receiving of the Holy Spirit.

That is why you need to be in the right religion – one that implants the right thoughts in your mind, the right feelings in your heart, preaches the right path of salvation, and gives you the power to change your life through the Holy Spirit. That is the religion of Jesus Christ, the Man who said that if you believe in Him, even though you die, you shall be raised and live forever. Not like the religions that leave their practitioners terrified of death, not knowing what life is all about?

The wisest man who lived before Jesus Christ, said this about life and death.

Ecc 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment, And the day of death than the day of one's

Ecc 7:2 birth; Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And the living will take it to heart.

Ecc 7:3 Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.

Ecc 7:4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

As you grow old you don't need to be held in bondage by fear of the last act of your life. Look upon that event with joy, as the pinnacle of your life, when the crown of real and eternal life is being placed on your head. But for that you need to be in the right religion!

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Ecc 7:5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Ecc 7:6 For like the crackling of thorns under a pot, So is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

While the world leaders talk of a new era of peace, progress and prosperity, the signs of the times point to a different reality. You need to be informed and take the right decisions if you are to survive the trying times ahead.

When we began the work of witnessing the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations a little while ago, we received a flood of revelations about biblical mysteries and prophecies, some of which have remained closed for thousands of years. At the same time, we discovered that the forces of darkness were more prevalent, powerful and determined to prevent this work from achieving its goal than we imagined. On the one hand, we were blessed with spiritual gifts and insights beyond our imagination, while on the other we experienced extreme difficulties and trials. We lost one person!

We did not expect that a pioneering work of this nature would draw in such a swift and savage reaction from the ungodly forces of this world. But now we realize that this is not a work for the fainthearted. We are no different from those who have come in the name of Jesus Christ before us.

The work of God has never been welcomed by this world, yet rather than discourage us it has given us confidence that we are on the right path. Indeed, we are happy to join the ranks of those who have suffered persecution for the Word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ. After all, the prophets of old, our Lord, the Apostles, and many of their followers, have suffered severe persecutions and death, yet none lost their faith or heart. As Jesus Christ said:

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

Throughout history, this has been the fate of all true Christians. Those who preach that Christianity is a religion of the privileged preach a false gospel. The judgment of God is about to fall upon the world and upon those who have misrepresented His Gospel. Our role is to warn the world that the great Day of the Lord is at hand.

Isa 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Isa 13:7 Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt,

Isa 13:8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.

Isa 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.

Isa 13:10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

Isa 13:11 "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Isa 13:12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Isa 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

A need for change in world leadership is both required and unavoidable. Leaders of nations have failed to bring peace and prosperity to this world, while leaders of religions have failed to provide moral leadership and spiritual enlightenment. That is why after the day of the Lord, after the Great Tribulation, there will be a change in both kingship and priesthood.

Rev 5:8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the

Rev 5:9 saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Rev 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

The rewards for those who abandon their life of indulgence and dissipation for one of righteousness and holiness are such that cannot be compared with anything that we know at present.

"As it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'" (1Cor.2:9).

Since the beginning of the world God has allowed human beings to experiment with every form of government, social organization and economic system that they could think of. Now, as this age is drawing to a close, it is clear that this has been a lesson in disappointment and failure. The world has learned that its ways lead to death and that only governments and social systems based on the laws of God can maintain proper living conditions and a dignified way of life for all people.

Humanity is now at the crossroads. Since it cannot continue the way it has so far, it must choose between the way of God or the way of destruction. The warning delivered by God to ancient Israel is now more urgent than ever and valid for the whole world:

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live." (Deut.30:19).

The lesson the world leaders should have learned, but which they seem incapable of learning, is that no matter how hard they try, without God they cannot achieve a harmonious, peaceful and prosperous society. Much has been said about the so called "new world order" and its promise of peace, progress and prosperity, but its proponents have never mentioned God in their deliberations. That is why you can be sure that this experiment will have the same ignominious end as all the previous ones.

The prevailing anti-God philosophy and attitude in the world are fast bringing this world to the edge of the abyss. The current world difficulties and realignments are a prelude to the most awesome event this world has ever witnessed – a world conflagration of such intensity that the survival of life on earth will be at stake.

Mat 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Mat 24:22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

A certain journalist wrote recently: "Terms like turmoil and chaos... lose effect through repetition. And in a world beset with problems, there is a school, taking advantage of weariness with Armageddon forecasts, that argues along the lines of, 'let them sort out their own muddle, it won't affect us'. But even setting aside issues like nuclear safety and common humanity, a plunge into the abyss in a part of Eurasia [or other parts of the world] could engulf us all." (A. Clark, "A Eurasian Breakdown Could Engulf Us All", *The Sun-Herald*, Dec. 29, 1991).

The world cannot enter the new age in its present condition. Man's rule on earth will give way to the rule of God at the conclusion of six thousand years and the advent of the Millennial Kingdom. God's overall plan for mankind is paralleled by the days of the week. The first six days, representing six thousand years, are for man to work and rule, but the last day, the Sabbath, represents a sabbatical rest for the earth. After the destruction and pollution that it has endured since man was placed on it, the earth certainly needs such a rest.

The countdown to the Millennial Kingdom has already started. A famous theologian named Usher, who lived some three centuries ago, calculated that the creation of the world took place in the year 4004 B.C.. Many biblical scholars believe that he was correct in his calculations. Prophetic fulfillments that match those predicted for the end of this age attest to this fact too. This means that in a few short years we will have the end of six thousand years and the dawn of a new civilization.

It is not a mere coincidence that at this particular juncture in world history, life is being threatened from several directions. People who know little about biblical prophecies talk about the precarious condition of life on this planet. This correlates well with the prophecies of Jesus Christ who, two thousand years ago, foresaw a calamitous end for this world. Are we not living in those days now? How much worse must things get before humanity realizes that it is heading towards catastrophe?

The world has reached the saturation point as far as population is concerned. The environment simply can no longer support the ever-increasing population. It has been estimated that within a generation the world population will double, then in less than a century it will double again. It will then continue to double within an ever-reducing cycle.

One scientist remarked that if the world survives to reach that level, life conditions would become so miserable that death would be preferable to life. Well, for millions of people even now merciful death would be preferable to a hellish life. For those dying of starvation and disease in Africa and elsewhere, the question of survival is no longer an option, but dying with dignity is. A quicker death would be preferable to the slow, agonizing wasting they experience, all while watching their loved ones go through the same process.

About a decade ago, when images of starvation emerged from Africa, the world moved quickly to provide humanitarian aid. Now many more millions are starving on a far wider scale, but few want to hear of it anymore. Images of starvation on television screens draw only cursory looks these days. Some television stations will not even broadcast such programs anymore. They have become unpopular, they have lost their shocking value, and they no longer pull audiences.

What would it be like when every country and every city in the world has doubled in size? The environment is already dying. Can the world support such an increase when many resources are already in short supply? Can the world afford not to turn to God while He may still be found? Perhaps it is already too late.

What were considered alarmist predictions a few decades ago, not only have been fulfilled, but exceeded many times over. We are now learning about world problems that only a few years ago were unheard of. A decade ago no one knew of AIDS. Half a decade ago there was no talk of the thinning of the ozone layer. These problems alone pose catastrophic dangers. AIDS is threatening to destroy the regenerating power of many nations. The thinning of the ozone layer is posing a threat to the vegetation and the microscopic marine organisms, the very support of life on earth, in addition to whatever harm they may do directly to human beings.

In February this year scientists raised the alarm when they discovered that the depletion of the ozone layer is much worse than previously thought:

"New finding of ozone depletion were so alarming, the scientists said, they decided to release them before completion of the data analysis in late March. "Everybody should be alarmed about this," said Michael Kurylo, a research manager at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). "We're seeing conditions primed for ozone destruction. It's in a far worse way than we thought." (*SMH*, Feb. 5, 1992).

Apocalyptic times are well and truly upon us, yet people do not repent so that God may spare the world of these cataclysms. Can you see now why the sun is scorching the earth, and human beings suffer as a result?

"And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory." (Rev.16:9).

Governments are unable to address these problems because they require painful solutions. The people that elect them are more concerned with the pain of hunger than with restoring the ecological balance. Difficult problems are often postponed and left for the next government to solve with the result that little is achieved. Often they prefer not to raise such concerns in public at all. Out of sight is out of mind. No one realizes that these problems will get much worse and will not be solved unless and until people turn to God.

How many people remember the events of 1991? Aside from the Gulf War and the ecological and social disasters that it created, how many know that in terms of natural disasters 1991 broke almost every record since record keeping began more than a century ago?

The US Congress allocates an annual percentage of its budget every year for emergency situations, to help those nations that suffer calamities and natural disasters. By May 1991, the sum allocated for the entire year was already exhausted.

There were droughts, famine, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, mudslides, etc., too many to be listed. Who remembers, for example, when approximately a third of China and nearly three quarters of Bangladesh were covered by floods? Or the repeated volcanic eruptions in Japan and the Philippines that caused damage over huge areas? Or the torrential rains in the heights of South America, where it seldom rains, that caused mudslides that covered entire communities?

How many people know that large tracks of the USA and Australia, the breadbaskets of the world, suffered the worst droughts on record?

Preoccupation with the Gulf War and events in the former Soviet Union meant that most of these disasters passed unnoticed. As Jesus Christ said: "For as in the days before the flood [of Noah] . . . when they did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mat.24:38,39). To compound the misery caused by natural disasters, were those caused by human folly. The year began with

the madness of the Gulf War, and finished with the collapse of that bastion of atheism, the Soviet Union.

People believe that communism failed. Communism never failed, atheism did! Communism never failed because it has never been tried. What they practiced in the Soviet Union and its satellite nations was not communism but a parody of it. It is a satanic ploy to undermine every good idea that comes from the Bible. True communism will work in the Kingdom of God.

Soviet communism failed, but so has American capitalism. Such is the vulgarity of capitalism that at a time when a company like General Motors is closing down dozens of factories and laying off thousands of people, it grants its retiring Chairman an annual pension of \$US1.2 million. The Chairman of Chrysler, who has an allocated salary of \$4.5 millions, went to Japan with President Bush to lecture the Japanese on work ethics. When it was pointed out to him that the Chairman of Toyota, a much more successful company, earns a fifth of his salary, he stormed out of the meeting and left Japan indignant.

No social conscience on the part of those who clamber their way to the top. No Christian concern for one's fellow human beings from the leading citizens of the, supposedly, number one Christian nation on earth. Has no one ever told these people that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God" (Mat.19:24). Even at the retiring age they still do not think of the purpose of life and what lies beyond this temporary existence.

Where are the spiritual leaders of that nation? What have they achieved? Why are they silent in the face of such blatant greed and exploitation? Or are they part of the same mentality?

The country wonders why its economy is faltering so badly. Unfettered capitalism is just as unchristian as totalitarian communism. Soviet communism has collapsed; now watch for the collapse of capitalism. Those who believe that the USA will once again dominate the world as it used to, or that Great Britain will rule the waves as during the height of its empire, have some surprises coming their way.

This author grew up behind the "Iron Curtain" where a great part of his education involved indoctrination about the "glorious future the Soviet Union was leading the world into". It was a trial by fire that few people have known. The communists justified destroying everything and everyone who opposed their march towards a God-less "utopia", but instead of paradise, it became a Devil's nightmare.

Out of that atheistic nightmare, God had to bring someone at enormous personal sacrifice to preach His Gospel to the world, because those who had it all the time made a mockery of it by turning it into money making venture.

The Soviet Union collapsed into ashes leaving a cauldron of ethnic tensions and unfulfilled dreams that threaten to draw the world into the end-time catastrophic conflict. The chaos left behind by that collapse is only now becoming apparent. God alone knows what three hundred million people will do with their nuclear weapons when wide scale starvation takes place. There are repeated warnings in the Bible that He will "bring disaster from the north and great destruction" (see our next article).

At a time when the world is facing the test of survival, few people understand that there is a connection between current problems and the spiritual decline of the world. Even the Churches of God, who once prided themselves in their ability to understand the prophecies of God, have fallen silent. At a time that their input is needed more than ever, they are engaged in an internecine war that is sapping their strength from within.

Once again, as it has happened throughout history, God has raised people from the lowest levels of society to do His work. The message that John the Baptist delivered to ancient Israel, prior to the coming of Jesus Christ, is now being delivered to the whole world, just in time for His glorious return to this earth.

Mat 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
Mat 3:2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Mat 17:9 Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

Mat 17:10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"
Mat 17:11 Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things."

So repent, for the Kingdom of God is truly at hand. Things are being restored before your very eyes.

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"He who is often reprov'd, and hardens his neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Pr.29:1).

DANIEL'S END TIME TEN-NATION 'BEAST-POWER' REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME

Few prophecies have been trumpeted with more vigor than those of Daniel about a ten-nation 'beast-power' that is supposed to rise up in the end-time in central Europe under the leadership of Germany, and trample the world under its feet, particularly the Anglo-Saxon people of Great Britain and the USA.

This is the main tenet of what is perhaps the most widely publicized booklet of Herbert W. Armstrong, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. The founder of the Worldwide Church of God linked this prophecy with his "discovery" that the Anglo-Saxon people were none other than the birthright inheritors of ancient Israel, now widely referred to as the lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

The booklet was written when the European Common Market, the backbone of the rising 'beast-power', comprised only of the original seven members, but the author was certain that in a short time it would expand to ten nations. Surprisingly, the booklet is still being advertised and distributed, "free of charge", not by the Worldwide Church of God, which is reportedly on its last legs, but by a number of daughter churches, particularly the Philadelphia Church of God, even though the Common Market, now renamed the European Union, has long since passed the magic number of ten.

Now although I knew little about biblical prophecies when I joined that church in the early 1970s, I had reasonably good knowledge of world politics, and in my calculations I just could not see how Britain and the USA could be devastated by a nuclear attack from a union of ten Central European nations. What puzzled me more was the fact that the Soviet Union - a force to be reckoned with in those days - did not deserve even so much as a mention in this end-time nuclear cataclysm.

After much consideration, I concluded that the author and his church must be wrong and I sent them a letter explaining them why. But my opinion was, as one might have expected, ignored, and the church continued to publish that booklet right up to the death of Herbert W. Armstrong and beyond, only that this 'beast-power' would now rise within the European Union, but still grouped around Germany.

Now it is a well-known fact that Church of God evangelists treat with contempt anyone who disagrees with them, and more so if they happen to be members of their own church. I was disappointed that my attempt at communication with them did not warrant even so much as a rebuttal let alone a reasoned correspondence, but I soon discovered that "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom.8:28). It forced me to reassess my association with that church and end my isolation from the world and family and friends, and the ruinous regime of mandatory tithes and offerings that they imposed on all their members.

I was attracted to that church mostly because they made appeal to reason and intellect, and condemned mainstream Christianity's reliance on tradition and emotion. But I soon discovered that these are the very things that they deny their members once they become hooked on their religion. The one good thing about that church though was that it made more use of the Scriptures than any other church that I knew of. It was through them that I became interested in the Bible. However it soon became obvious that although their ministers make extensive use of the Scriptures, they don't practice what they preach. They seem to use the Scriptures more to justify their preconceived ideas and erroneous practices, than to discover the right Way and the correct teachings of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. As I was to discover later, many of their doctrinal teachings and practices are exactly the opposite of what the Scriptures say they should be. To give you two examples: Apostle Paul said that under the New Testament there are no longer any dietary laws or restrictions on marriages based on nationality or race.

1 Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

1 Tim 4:2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

1 Tim 4:3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

1 Tim 4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with

1 Tim 4:5 thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

1 Tim 4:6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

Not only are there no such restrictions in the New Testament, but those who preach such things are inspired by demons. Yet so deeply rooted are those false doctrines in that church and in its

siblings, that even though its ministers have read those passages hundreds of times they are unable to extricate themselves from them. They go to extraordinary lengths to justify themselves, even to the point of twisting the Scriptures. They have made a virtue out of enforcing these “doctrines of demons” even more rigorously than the Jews.

Of all the fundamentalist churches that we know of, we know of none that do not preach these “doctrines of demons”, or which do not enforce the tithing doctrines that were anathema to the Apostles.

Mainstream churches have dietary restrictions – meat-less days, Easter lent, etc. – and interracial marriage restrictions too. Any wonder that they are all angry with us and reject our preaching.

It is not for noting that of all the religious people in the world, God Almighty has chosen people of no connection with any existing religions, who grew up in an atheistic world, who were not trained to become ministers or priests, the task of preaching His Gospel as a witness to all nations before the end comes. We take the Scriptures at their face value, without giving them our own interpretation or justifying preconceived ideas. We have no ulterior motive, and no interest in turning the Scriptures into a moneymaking venture. We simply follow the examples of Jesus Christ and His Apostles who preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God free of charge.

When I joined the Worldwide Church of God, I had a hunger in my heart for knowledge and was eager to learn about God and the Bible as much as possible. I had recently escaped from the atheistic communist world in which attendance at church services was regarded as a rebellious act – enough to ruin one’s career or even land him in jail.

I went along with what the WCG ministers required of me, all the while studying the Bible and getting myself acquainted with their doctrines and teachings. It was a slow process as my English was rudimentary, yet within about three years I knew fairly well not only what they preached and what their church stood for, but also I began to notice cracks in their edifice. But it was unacceptable for a church member to claim that he saw things better than the ministers, and especially than the two great luminaries of the church – Herbert W Armstrong and his son Garner Ted. So for a long time I pondered on my discoveries and kept them in my heart until they burned me from inside like fire. I truly believed that the WCG was the “one and only true Church of God in the world”, and was greatly disturbed that I saw things differently. I had no desire to end up in conflict with the leaders, of whom I truly believed to be true ministers of Jesus Christ, if perhaps a bit misguided in some minor points. But these were no minor points, but serious doctrinal errors that had a disastrous effect upon their followers. I had no way of knowing then that the Almighty was laying the groundwork for the end-time work of restoring “all things” about the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and then of preaching that Gospel to all nations “as a witness before the end comes”. Eventually we parted company and ended up being not only different but also entirely opposed to each other.

Now coming back to their contentious preaching about the end-time perils of Britain and the USA at the hands of Germany and its allies, they had the whole scenario neatly set up for 1975. It was all explained in a freely available and widely distributed booklet entitled “1975 in Prophecy”.

It was my misfortune to have joined that church five years before that anticipated dreadful end, in the midst of hushed but feverish preparations for the relocation of the church to a place of safety, widely believed to be a deserted ancient town called Petra in the Jordanian desert. I do not know whether the King of Jordan was aware of the droves of Christian guests that were to descend upon his impoverished nation in order to take refuge from the Great Tribulation, but I do not think he would have minded for that was a fabulously wealthy church. It had to be because its “fortunate elect membership” gave everything to that church, as much because of the duty imposed on them as for the fact that their salvation was near and they would not need anything anymore anyway.

In those days, Herbert W. Armstrong spent most of the time flying around the world in his own jet aircraft, visiting as many leaders as would receive him, always with expensive gifts fit for a king. The area of the greatest interest to him was of course the Middle East, in particular Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. Israel, because that’s where the survivors of Britain and the USA would be relocated after the Great Tribulation, Jordan because that was the place of safety for the church, and Egypt because together Israel and Assyria (modern Germany) would form the three pivotal nations in the Kingdom of God. This is where he got that idea:

Isa 19:23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

Isa 19:24 In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria; a blessing in the midst of the

Isa 19:25 land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."

Decades have passed since, and neither the refuge to the place of safety, nor the Great Tribulation eventuated as expected. The only people that have been scattered everywhere are the survivors of Armstrong's empire after it collapsed and split into countless little clones.

Now all of these churches still hold on to the notion that a ten-nation European colossus would rise in central Europe, and destroy Britain and the USA, a belief that became even more firmly entrenched after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. That put us in an invidious position, since we have maintained all along that it would not be Germany but Russia that would lead the end-time ten-nation military power.

Since the European Union expanded beyond the magic number of ten, and shows little inclination of turning against Britain and the USA, and Russia is now a basket case economically, it would seem that both their prophetic understanding and my political instincts were wrong. What then of Daniel's prophecies, for they clearly speak of a ten-nation colossal power that will trigger the Great Tribulation and cause much devastation to the world? (Dan.2:31-45).

Where is that power coming from? Is it still the European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, or some other force that is yet to be identified? We shall let the Bible speak for itself and show you how easy it is to locate where this power is going to come from.

Herbert W. Armstrong knew that this power would rise up in the north, the reference point being Israel, but concluded that the countries of Europe, grouped around Germany, are located north of Israel. Now in longitudinal terms you can say that Canada is north of Israel too, but that is certainly not what the prophet had in mind.

If you look at a globe and go north from Israel, the only European countries that you will find there are those of Ukraine and Russia. So we don't need to guess which countries these prophecies are referring to, because the Bible tells us exactly where to look for them. Now just because they do not fit our prejudices and preconceived ideas, it does not mean that they would not fulfill their prophetic destinies. American evangelists seem to be obsessed with Germany, ascribing to that nation just about every evil that has befallen this world. They seem to be impervious to the changes that World War Two brought upon this world and the new geopolitical realities that ensued from that war.

In the course of history many nations have moved about and changed their names, yet it is surprising how accurately the Bible still identifies those countries that are named in its prophecies. Notice:

Jer 4:6 Set up the standard toward Zion. Take refuge! Do not delay! For I will bring disaster from the north, And great destruction."

First of all notice that it is God who brings disaster upon sinful people. He also determines where that disaster comes from, not human beings, therefore you can be certain that this prophecy will not fail. The geographical location in the north is reinforced in several other places.

Jer 6:1 "O you children of Benjamin, Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, And set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem; For disaster appears out of the north, And great destruction."

Now how do we know that these prophecies do not refer to Turkey, Lebanon, Syria or even Iraq, as some American evangelists have suggested recently, for these countries are also located north of Israel. Here is the answer:

Jer 6:22 Thus says the LORD: "Behold, a people comes from the north country, And a great nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth.

Jer 6:23 They will lay hold on bow and spear; They are cruel and have no mercy; Their voice roars like the sea; And they ride on horses, As men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion."

The nation in the furthest parts of the earth, north of Israel, is Russia. But how do we know that these prophecies refer to our time and not to the ancient time when Israel was conquered and taken into captivity in far away lands? Here again is the biblical answer:

Jer 30:4 Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah.

Jer 30:5 "For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace.

Jer 30:6 Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale?

Jer 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

Jer 30:8 'For it shall come to pass in that day,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them.

Jer 30:9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them."

The day of the Lord and the time of Jacob's trouble are coming at the end of this age, therefore these prophecies are for the time just ahead of us. This passage also identifies the nations that shall be victims of this power from the north. Three names are mentioned: Israel, Judah and Jacob, in other words all the nations that have descended from the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

When Jeremiah wrote this prophecy, there was no longer a nation called Israel in the Middle East. The Ten Tribes that retained the name Israel (and Samaria) when the kingdom split in two, had been taken into captivity by Assyria more than a hundred years earlier and vanished from history. Judah itself was being surrounded by Babylonian forces, and ended up in captivity shortly afterwards. After the fall of the Babylonian empire many Jews (people of the tribe of Judah) returned to their land, but none of the tribes of Israel or Samaria came back with them.

The two nations, Israel and Judah, were taken into captivity by two different empires: Assyrian and Babylonian respectively. When the Babylonian empire rose, the Assyrian empire, which had occupied the area to the north and west of them, transmigrated in a northwesterly direction, taking along its captive nations, and settled in Europe. Now while H.W. Armstrong popularized this view of history in the beginning, there are now many books on the market that identify those nations as descending from the Ten Tribes of Israel. Great Britain and the USA are said to descend from Ephraim and Manasseh, the two tribes that inherited the birthright bestowed upon them by the patriarch Joseph. Since these countries have dominated the world in the last three centuries or so, and right now find themselves in competition with the countries of the ten-nation power from the north, it adds credence to the notion and the prophecy that Jacob's trouble would come at the end of this age.

It is not mere coincidences that during two World Wars these countries have prevented the world from sliding into chaos and tyranny. During the Second World War the democracies of Europe and Asia had already fallen under the heel of dictatorships. If Britain and the USA had lost that war, we would all be living under one form of tyranny or another.

It is not a mere coincidence either that most of the Bibles in the world, including those in many foreign languages, have come out of these two countries. But the irony is that while they provided hope and spiritual guidance to others, they themselves seem to have fallen into a deep moral and spiritual morass. That is why they will no longer have the strength to withstand the disaster that comes their way from the north. God however says that He will save them in the end.

These peoples together with their sister nations of Europe have maintained a civilized balance in the world for millennia. But now, right at the end, they too fall victims to the insidious power that has deceived and undermined the world from the very beginning. It is Satan's influence that has been behind the great empires of the world, particularly the last atheistic one out of which will rise the great "beast". Notice what Satan told Jesus Christ, and He did not contradict it:

Luke 4:5 "Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."

The disaster coming from the north will fall upon all Israel. That includes modern Israel, Britain, the USA, and the other European nations that have sprang from the ten tribes. It will, in fact, engulf the entire world.

The great day of the Lord, known in the Bible as the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:21), will occur at the confluence between this age and the Millennial Kingdom. Immediately after those days, David will be resurrected (as will be a lot of other people) to become king of Israel once again, only that this time he will be king forever. That is how we know that this prophecy is still ahead of us for that event has not occurred yet.

There are yet more proofs in the Bible that shows that Jacob's trouble does not come from the European Community, but from an alliance led by Russia.

Ezek 38:1 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
 Ezek 38:2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him,
 Ezek 38:3 "and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.
 Ezek 38:4 "I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.
 Ezek 38:5 "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;
 Ezek 38:6 "Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops; many people are with you.
 Ezek 38:7 "Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them.
 Ezek 38:8 "After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.
 Ezek 38:9 "You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."

Ezek 38:15 "Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army.
 Ezek 38:16 "You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes."

Ezek 39:8 "Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord GOD. "This is the day of which I have spoken.
 Ezek 39:22 "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward.

From that day forward not only Israel, but also all nations shall know that the Lord is God, the God of the whole world. Now notice how God says that He will put hooks into the jaws of Gog and Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and bring them against His land whether they like it or not. So it is not an option but a necessity that the Great Tribulation will ensue from the north, from the land of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.

It must be pointed out that at the end of the Millennium there will be another tribulation, but not of the same magnitude as the one at the beginning of it (Rev.20:7-9). We know this from the words of Jesus Christ (Mat.24:21-22), who said that during the Great Tribulation God would intervene to shorten the days so that a remnant may survive. Life must continue for another thousand years, and that is why a remnant must be saved. But at the end of the Millennium this whole world will come to an end and a new world and a new heaven will be established. Life as we know it will come to an end and a new life, eternal and based entirely on the laws of God, will begin for those who are found worthy to be part of the Kingdom of God.

Daniel's prophecy therefore must be fulfilled at the end of this age. When that happens, and its time is truly at hand, you should be at peace with your God for that is the only way by which you can escape the wrath of God. Refuge in mountains or deserted places can neither save you from the devastation of the Great Tribulation, nor guaranty your salvation in the world to come.

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"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
 But the glory of kings is to search out a matter" (Pr.25:2).

WILL THERE BE A NEW TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM BEFORE THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST?

How important is it that a new Temple is built in Jerusalem before the return of Jesus Christ? Fundamentalist Christians are convinced that not only will the Jews build such a Temple, but that this must be profaned by the "abomination of desolation" before Jesus Christ can return to this earth. But is their understanding of the Scriptures correct? Unless you understand what is behind this claim, you could fall victim to one of the most odious deceptions of our time.

For years, the Worldwide Church of God evangelists have visited the Jewish leaders with one question in mind: when were they going to build the new Temple? One evangelist, who was become famous for his prophetic misses, wrote in bold headlines a few months ago that a Temple would be built by the end of 1992. At least he believes in miracles, for no technology in the world can build in a few months what the nation of Israel built in seven years (1 Kings 6:38). He and a host of like-minded evangelists believe that animal sacrifices must take place in that Temple in order that certain prophecies are fulfilled before Jesus Christ can return to this earth.

Now we do not know what the Jewish leaders thought of this phenomenon, but we can imagine their bewilderment at being asked by, of all people, Christian evangelists when they are going to build a Temple to a God and a Messiah in whom they do not believe. What is even more puzzling is that these same evangelists will tell you that the Great Tribulation is imminent and that both the Temple and Jerusalem will be destroyed at that time. They believe that God will allow a Temple to be built in His name only to have it destroyed almost immediately. That is how these people think that God operates - putting His servants to great work and sacrifices only to have them watch their work go up in smoke as soon as it is finished.

So what is the truth? Will there be a new Temple in Jerusalem soon, and if so what purposes will it serve? It is very important to understand what the Bible says on this matter because misunderstanding this prophecy could affect the salvation of many people and lead to enormous expenses being wasted on projects that are simply not needed at this time.

There is no difficulty in finding out the answer to this question. All you need to do is let the Bible speak for itself. But to do that, you need to have a fairly good knowledge of the Scriptures, and being an evangelist or a Church leader these days is no guarantee of that.

Let us first examine the Scriptures that are often quoted as proof that a new Temple must be built in Jerusalem soon:

2 Th 2:1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 Th 2:2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

2 Th 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

2 Th 2:4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

There are a number of unjustified assumptions about these verses that must be addressed.

- First, they do not say that a Temple must be built in Jerusalem, only that the man of sin sits in the Temple of God.
- Second, they do not say that he will be sitting in the Temple of God sometime in the future, but that he was already sitting in that Temple at the time Apostle Paul was writing this epistle.
- Third, they do not say that the Temple of God must be in Jerusalem.

When the Jewish people rejected Jesus Christ, God rejected them as His chosen people and with that He rejected Jerusalem as the place for His Temple. That is why the Jews were scattered abroad, and Jerusalem and its Temple ended up a heap of ruins.

The Christians became His chosen people therefore the Temple of God must be sought among Christians. That is why Jerusalem has been anything but the place for God's Temple for the last two thousand years. What will happen in the future after Jesus Christ returns is another matter. The truth

is that until the Jews repent and become God's people once more, they are in no position to build a Holy Temple to God in Jerusalem or anywhere else.

Now we know that the Jews will repent eventually and become God's people once more, but not before the return of Jesus Christ:

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look upon Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (Zech. 12:10).

They will "look upon" Jesus Christ "whom they have pierced" after He comes back. It is then that God will grant them repentance and they will mourn and grieve for Him as for a firstborn son. Until then the Jews cannot build a Holy Temple for God.

Other Scriptures often used to justify the idea of a Temple in Jerusalem are found in the writings of Daniel.

"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes.

"He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down" (Dan.8:23,11).

The usual questions asked in relation to this verse are: "How could a sanctuary be cast down unless it first exists? How could daily sacrifices be taken away unless they are being performed?"

The problem is that those who ask such questions play a trick on their readers. They quote Daniel 8:23 first then Daniel 8:11. In other words, they put the cart before the horse. They reverse the order of events and make it look as if they are yet to happen when in fact they have occurred long ago. The 'sanctuary' has been cast down and the 'daily sacrifices' have been taken away long ago, as we shall prove.

A major problem with those people is that they do not know history. They always imagine that the events they do not know about must happen in the future. It is a convenient way of masking one's ignorance of the Bible and of history. Hence, we have the situation in which these 'seers' claim that ninety per cent of all the Bible prophecies are yet to occur in the remaining years before the end of this age. According to them nearly six thousand years of human history have passed and only a small percentage of biblical prophecy have been fulfilled while the remaining few years will see an avalanche of them. This comes from people who have built an opulent lifestyle on their professed ability to understand and preach the Word of God.

Their presumption of course is not true, for the vast majority of biblical prophecies have been fulfilled, as have, in large measure, been the prophecies they connect with the Temple in Jerusalem.

Let us analyze the Scriptures they quoted as 'proof' that a Temple must be built in Jerusalem soon and debunk this myth once and for all.

The king that Daniel said would arise in the latter time (8:23) has nothing to do with the Temple in Jerusalem. It is just a careless use of the Scriptures to justify a point that is not there.

The evangelist who used Daniel's writings to 'prove' the need for a Temple in Jerusalem wrote:

"Here again, referring to these last days (Dan.9:26) we see that there must be in existence [a Temple], which shall be destroyed by the evil Beast, and sacrifices which must be performed daily in order to be stopped."

This is a classic example of people reading into the Scriptures what is not there. This is what Daniel 9:26 actually says:

"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined."

Can you imagine a 'Christian' evangelist saying that these things must happen again when the whole world knows that the Messiah was cut off nearly two thousand years ago and that the city and the sanctuary were destroyed shortly afterwards by the people who cut Him off? Talk about deception and people masquerading as ministers of Christ! But let us go on for there is more to come.

"Next, in that epochal book, I referred to Daniel 11:31 which speaks of a tyrant who would arise and pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that makes desolate." I wrote, "Since this was a type of the coming Beast, then he must do the same type of things. For this to occur, a Temple or a sanctuary must exist in our time with a 'holy of holies' . . .

Again let us go to the Bible and see whether Daniel 11:31 says what this man says it does.

"And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."

No mention of the Temple or of the 'holy of holies' here. But what about the words 'sanctuary fortress' and 'daily sacrifices', what do they mean? You will shortly see that they do not mean what this evangelist says they do. His misunderstanding comes from the words, "they shall take away the daily sacrifices." What are these daily sacrifices and when were they taken away? Let us go to the book of Hebrews to unravel this mystery:

"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another - He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

"For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

"Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure..."

"Then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God". He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb.9:24-25; 10:1-2, 5-6, 9-10).

If Jesus Christ put an end to daily sacrifices once and for all through the sacrifice of His own body, how dare those deceivers tell Christians that they must look to Jerusalem for more sacrifices? This is what Daniel meant when he spoke of daily sacrifices being taken away. Jesus Christ was taken away by this "Beast" and with that His daily prayers and worship of God came to an end. No need for a new Temple and no need for animal sacrifices before Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

Moreover, both the Old and the New Testaments say that God does not desire animal sacrifices, but obedience, worship and prayer to Him, something Jesus Christ amply did on a daily basis. .

Psa 40:6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

Psa 40:7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

Psa 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart."

Heb 10:5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

Heb 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; In the volume of the book it is written of Me; To do Your will, O God.'"

A new Temple will be built in Jerusalem during the Millennium, not according to the design of the old Temple, but according to a new design given by God to the prophet Ezekiel (Chapters 40 to 48). Since Ezekiel received that vision, no such Temple has been built anywhere, and the only time it could be built and the sacrifices mentioned there performed again, is during the Millennium.

As they have done with virtually every doctrine and teaching of the Bible these false preachers

have also misrepresented what the Millennium Kingdom will be like. They have failed to see the difference between the Millennial Kingdom and the Kingdom of God. The Millennial Kingdom will be on this earth, but the Kingdom of God will be on a new earth and a new heaven.

This is the Millennial Kingdom:

Rev 20:2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him
Rev 20:3 for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

And this is the Kingdom of God.

Rev 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Rev 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their

Rev 21:4 God. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Now there is another question that has not been answered – the one about the 'abomination of desolation'. Daniel 11:31 says that "they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolations. There is a time lapse of nearly two millennia here between one event and the other. The daily sacrifices were taken away with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but the 'abomination of desolation' will not be standing where it ought not until just prior to the end of the age. What Daniel 11:31 does not say is that the 'abomination of desolation' will be placed in the Temple's holy of holies.

Where then will it be placed? Let us go to Matthew 24:15.

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), . . ."

Jesus Christ said that this 'abomination of desolation' will be standing not sitting, in the holy place, not on the throne of God. What difference does this make? All the difference in the world!

The question is, since there will be no Temple of God in Jerusalem prior to the return of Jesus Christ where could this holy place be? We know of no one who has ever tried to explain what Jesus Christ meant by the words, "whoever reads let him understand." What is there to be understood? If He was referring to the Temple of God, He would simply have said, 'standing in the Holy Temple', but He knew that this holy place was not the 'holy of holies' in the Temple of God. Where is this place then?

There is a popular proverb which says that people can't see the woods for the trees. Sometimes we fail to see things because they are too obvious. So it is in this case. Everybody in the world knows that the term "Holy Land" refers to the nation of Israel, the place on which Jesus Christ walked when He was in this world.

For a long time we thought that it referred only to the place on which He was crucified – the place on which He shed His blood, but now we realize that we were too restrictive in our definition. The whole land of Israel is Holy Land. And since the Scriptures say that the man responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the "abomination of desolation", that is, the religious figure in authority over those who crucified Jesus Christ (Pontifex Maximus), it means that when he steps foot on that land he profanes it. Daniel Dan 12:11 says that "from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days." If you know when that event occurs you can start counting to find out when this age comes to an end.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT LEADER

How do you know if you have chosen the right person as your leader? The world has turned up side down the values and qualities that make a great leader, but the followers of Jesus Christ are expected to know how to choose their leaders. At a time when the world is wallowing in deception, following the wrong person could cost you your salvation. Here is what you need to know about those whom you choose as your leaders.

Would you choose as your leader one who supported those who killed Christians; who admitted having difficulty in controlling the impulses of his human nature; who converted to Christianity, reached the leadership of the church, and then caused havoc by introducing doctrines that no one has heard of before?

Or would you vote for this man: a non-conformist, in conflict with the leaders, associating with prostitutes and the lower classes, gaining a following for himself then teaching a religion that was in conflict with traditional beliefs?

Would you approve of any of these people as your leader? Can you imagine the media headlines and the furor among the people if persons with such records run for the presidency of the USA? The people described above are, of course, Apostle Paul and Jesus Christ, respectively.

Journalists and those who work for the media, are accustomed to looking for matters that can be sensationalized, commercialized, and trivialized, and more often than not that can be taken out of context to suit their purpose – as we did to prove our point – instead of the substance and intent of the matter that give meaning and purpose to life.

Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and Apostle Paul, a king under Him in the Kingdom of God, could not attain the standards required of those who aspire to the presidency of the USA these days. Which proves that it is easier and safer to become a king in the Kingdom of God than a leader in an earthly republic or kingdom.

If you aspire to become a leader in the Kingdom of God, and announce your candidacy, God the Father and Jesus Christ take note of your intention, and no journalist will hound you and scurry to search your past for misdemeanors that can be publicized.

In the United States of America they don't just choose anyone to lead them – they want angels over there. That is why that country is led so well and things are coming out so perfectly, isn't it?

Recently, a number of unauthorized biographical books were published in the USA about the former President Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy Reagan. They compete in revealing not important state matters of public interest, but the most unsavory aspects of their personal lives. The books became instant bestsellers, brought millions of dollars to their authors and created sensational headlines in the media across the country. They became the topic of discussion in many television and radio programs.

This phenomenon tells us more about the American media and the conditioning of the American public than about the former President's family life. A classic example of irresponsible, sensationalist journalism, that characterizes this paragon of spiritual and moral decay that the United States has become.

The American constitution guarantees individual freedoms, but it cannot guarantee a sense of responsibility. Thus, the freedom of religion becomes the freedom to commit sin and blasphemy, and to worship Satan and other pagan deities, while the freedom of speech becomes the freedom to meddle in other peoples' lives and defile their memory.

President Reagan and his family had no power to redress this gross violation of their private lives except to say that their friends would not buy such books. Of course, a good friend would not want to pry into your past life. The authors, no doubt, embellished and misinterpreted some facts in order to make the books 'spicier' and more titillating to the common taste. That is a general characteristic of those who write this kind of material.

None of us were angels when we grew up (some never grow up), and many of us are repulsed by the foolish things we undertook in the search for thrills and entertainment. But as we mature we should remember the words of King Solomon of Israel, the wisest man who ever lived before Jesus Christ came into the world (IKin.3:12; Ecl.1:16. Luke 11:31), who said:

Ecl 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.

Ecl 11:10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, And put away evil from your flesh, For childhood and youth are vanity.

Ecl 12:1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them. . . "

When we repent, God wipes clean our past errors. And if God forgives and erases our past, should not human beings do likewise? Any human being who does not respect this divine principle reproaches his Maker and commits blasphemy.

Christians do not delve into other people's lives in order to expose their unsavory aspects.

We believe in repentance; we practice it in our lives; we respect it in other peoples' lives; and expect them to respect it in us. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that we must forgive other people's sins not seven times, but seventy times seven (Mat.18:22). In other words, we must forgive others as many times as they request it, as long as they are genuine about it.

It makes no difference what they did in their past life. If they show remorse and ask for forgiveness, we must grant it. Refusal to grant forgiveness is as un-Christian as exposing their sins to the world. When people say that they are sorry for what they did, the matter stops there. No one has the right to meddle any further. True Christians certainly do not do such things.

We know that a person cannot become a 'saint' overnight. The process of repentance and full spiritual attainment is long and painful. It is a difficult struggle to extricate oneself from past sins and errors, and no one has the right to make it more difficult by meddling and exposing to the world what the world has no business in knowing. Even when people relent and go back to their sinful life, it is not for us to judge them and start exposing their sins, unless it has a bearing on other people's salvation.

The Apostles of Jesus Christ gave us an example that we ought to follow. Whenever they spoke of people's personal sins they never revealed their names publicly (See Romans 1 and 2). They mentioned people's names only when questions of doctrine and personal behavior arose that posed a danger to the Church, but even then they did not delve into their private lives anymore than they needed to (See 1Tim.1:20; 2Tim.2:17; 3John 1:9). It is God Almighty and Jesus Christ who deal with such matters, who judge people, not we who are in the bonds of human nature too. For as sure as day follows night, if you expose other peoples sins unnecessarily, you will fall into the same errors before long.

1 John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Ecc 7:20 For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

Mat 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

Mat 7:2 "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Mat 7:3 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

Mat 7:4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

Mat 7:5 "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

When we pray to God, we say, "Father, forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us" (Mat 6:12). If you then expose other peoples' sins, is that forgiveness? For if people have repented and been forgiven by God, and you expose their sins, they could stumble and fall back, and that becomes an unpardonable sin for you. Beware, therefore, of meddling into other people's lives. Never forget these words of Jesus Christ:

Mark 9:42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea."

More often than not, sinful people have few qualms about their sins for they keep repeating them without remorse.

Prov 30:20 This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wickedness."

Exposing their sins means nothing to them. But it is a different story with those who have abhorred their past and embarked on a life of repentance and righteousness. For them, such an act would be devastating.

God annuls people's sins upon repentance and although they still remember their sins (as they should), they have the knowledge and conviction that God has forgiven them and wiped their slate

clean. Without that kind of conviction and hope some people are as good as dead. Those who do not believe in God, in His love, forgiveness and power of salvation, who have lost their hope and faith, easily reach the point in which they can no longer live with themselves and commit suicide. That is Satan's way of solving problems not God's.

When you are in deepest need, when you see no other way out of your problems, turn to God and give Him a chance, for He says that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Only then are you truly beginning to live a worthwhile life.

2 Cor 12:9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Recently, there has also been a spate of publications about the leaders of the Churches of God. They seem to have had no other purpose than to reveal their sins. Indeed, they offer disturbing reading. The problem is that the authors do not deal only with their doctrinal errors but get right down into the gutter, revealing things that no one should want to read about other people's lives any more than he would want to read about his own. That is a satanic ploy designed to destroy the Churches of God and to cause the faithful to stumble and lose their faith. Once again we feel compelled to remind them of the words of Jesus Christ.

Mat 7:3 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?
Mat 7:4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?
Mat 7:5 "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

In the same chapter Jesus Christ gave His followers this warning.

Mat 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.
Mat 7:16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"

If you have something to say about those who lead the Churches of God, if you feel that they are leading the people astray, expose their doctrinal errors, but leave their past sins and private lives alone. The Churches of God represent the body of Christ and if that body has an ill-fitting member, it is for Him to heal or discard that member not for you.

Jesus Christ knows His body better than anyone else. He knows whom He appoints to lead His Churches and for what reason. If you knew the Scriptures, you would know that there is a purpose in everything He does. There is a reason why He allows hypocrites to lead His Churches. Did He not call the religious leaders of His day hypocrites yet He told His disciples to obey them because they sat in Moses' seat? (Mat.23:1-36).

The trials that the Churches of God are experiencing these days are from above and are designed to test the spiritual strength of their members. God does allow such trials to occur from time to time, but woe to those who allow themselves to become Satan's instruments in these trials. It would have been better for them if they were never born.

The members who have taken an easy ride throughout their lives, who have not prayed and worshipped the Almighty in the manner that He expected of them, who have relied on others to spoon feed them on spiritual matters, who have not done their homework and studied the Scriptures, "to show themselves approved before God" (2Tim. 2:15), will not have the strength to resist the wiles of the Devil (Eph.6:11) and will find it hard to stand on their own feet at the moment of their trial. They are likely become the victim of deception and lose their salvation.

The Kingdom of God is for those of strong character, who are able to discern right from wrong, true from false, good from evil, and holy from unholy. Apostle Peter wrote:

1 Pet 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;
1 Pet 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.
1 Pet 4:14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.
1 Pet 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.
1 Pet 4:16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.
1 Pet 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what

will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

1 Pet 4:18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

1 Pet 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."

If you believe that you are a member of one of the seven Churches of God listed in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 2 and 3), you should rejoice in your heart regardless of which Church Jesus Christ has called you to be a member of. Every Church has good and bad within its ranks and Laodicea is no different from the other Churches. Some false preachers have been twisting the Scriptures by using the command that Jesus Christ gave to His people to come out of Babylon (Rev.18:4), as meaning that they must come out of the Laodicean Church.

Jesus Christ has never told anyone to come out of His Churches. To the members of the Laodicea Church who say that they are 'rich and become wealthy' and are neither hot nor cold, He told to, 'buy gold refined in fire' to become rich spiritually, and 'white garments' to cover their nakedness. He did not tell them to come out of the Church! For whichever way the Laodicea Church may be, it is still the Church of God. If Jesus Christ has brought you into one of His Churches, you cannot join another one, and neither should you want or try to.

If you remain close to God, if you do not depart from His ways, you have nothing to fear about. Neither should you worry if you are being disfellowshipped from a church for no fault of your own, or for doing the right thing. A minister or a priest can put you out of his congregation, but no man can put you out of the Church of God. Only Jesus Christ can do that, and you, yourself, if you falter and fall away.

You don't need to belong to any group of people to be in the Church of God. Once you have been baptized, received the Holy Spirit and started on the right track, you are on your own. Your salvation depends purely and entirely on yourself. If you can fellowship with like-minded people, so much the better, but if you cannot there is nothing to worry about.

Study the Bible (Is.34:16; 55:1-3), and meditate on the law of God all the time (Jos.1:8; Ps.119:97).

1 Tim 4:15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

1 Tim 4:16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

Fellowship with Jesus Christ and with His Holy Spirit, for so have the prophets, the Apostles, and all true Christians down through the ages. Beware of the deception, for many false prophets have come into the world, especially now that we live in the last time. Look to no man as your leader, but to Jesus Christ for He alone is a True Shepherd and He will always guide you in the right direction.

John 10:9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."

So do you know Jesus Christ, and does He know you? That is the only thing that matters.

1 John 2:3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1 John 2:4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.""

Heb 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Heb 13:21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."



PRAYER AND BLESSINGS (2)

- Eternal Father, we come before You with great joy and humility, asking You to listen to our prayer not because we are worthy of Your attention, but because we know that You love those who repent and seek Your forgiveness. Alleluia!
- In Your greatness and goodness, You have called us to follow in the steps of Your Son Jesus Christ, and given us the hope of immortality in Your eternal Kingdom. Alleluia!
- Now help us Father be a light to those who seek to come out of the confusion of this world, and a guide to those who want to follow Your ways. Help us grow together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the fellowship of Your Holy Spirit. Alleluia!
- You have given us a great responsibility in taking Your Gospel to all nations. Now we pray that You bless those who hear Your Word and accept Your Gospel. Alleluia!
- We pray for those who respond to this call and join us in this work of love and service to the world. We ask that You heal and strengthen them to overcome the trials and temptations that may come their way from this world that is hostile to Your Word. Alleluia!
- We are grateful to You Father for Your love and mercy, and for the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of Your creation that You have given us. The world does not acknowledge Your great power and wisdom, but we do Father, for You have shown it to us. Alleluia!
- Now we pray that You reveal Yourself to all those who accept Your Word, and turn to You wherever they are in the world. Alleluia!
- Bless us Father, and bless everyone who joins us in this worship and service to You and to our Lord Jesus Christ. Keep us in good health that we may be able to fulfill our duties to the end. Alleluia!
- We offer special prayer for our brothers in Christ around the world who live under difficult circumstances. We trust in You and know that You keep Your Word to bless and protect those who keep Your commandments and follow Your ways. Alleluia!
- We also pray for those who are in authority over us, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." Alleluia!
- Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly". We are grateful to You Father for blessing us abundantly, not with the riches of this world, but with hope of eternal life in Your wonderful Kingdom. Alleluia!
- We ask You to continue to keep us neither wealthy, that our hearts may depart from You, nor poor, that we fall into temptations. Do the same Father to all who understand Your ways, who lay their lives in Your hand, and who worship You in truth and in spirit. Alleluia!
- We honor, worship, and glorify You and our Lord Jesus Christ wholeheartedly, in whose name we always come before You. Amen! Alleluia!