

## Q. What is the Worldwide Church of God and who is Herbert Armstrong?

*You are always mentioning these two, but what is the significance? You seem to believe that this Church is the true Church, yet you are sometimes critical of them. Why?*

**A:** There are thousands of churches professing Christianity, but none of them agree on anything relating to the Lord Christ, whom they profess to follow. Almighty God didn't leave an open-ended selection process to choose the Church that suits the individual. Instead, He made it very clear to whom He would give His Holy Spirit for the purpose of guiding His True Church in the way of righteousness, just as a Good Shepherd would. The Good Shepherd, of course, is the Lord Christ.

At the end of His ministry here on earth, He appointed a shepherd to feed His flock. He chose this man because **he loved Jesus more than all the others**. He was one of those decent, honourable men that we can't help but admire. He was an outstanding and resolute man, whom the Lord Christ trusted implicitly; so much so, that at their very first meeting, Jesus renamed him the 'rock' or in the Greek, 'Petros'. Hence his name was changed from Simon to **Peter** (Anglicized). This is the account in **John 21:15-16** "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, **do you truly love me more than these?**" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "**Feed my lambs.**"<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "**Take care of my sheep.**" Shepherds take care of the sheep, and the Lord Christ chose Peter because he was a man **who loved more than all the others**. Real love is a quality that can't be faked, though many try. But it's by their fruit that you will know them. So we can see that God chooses His own shepherds to take care of His sheep. This is as true today as it was at the time of the great stress that came upon His followers in that age.

It just so happens that with Jesus' departure, severe persecution of the faithful began in earnest by the satanic spirit realm, whom Paul describes in **Eph 6:12** as being **not** of flesh and blood. They were whipping up a frenzy among the religious elite of that time, which happened to be the Jewish leaders who had the most to lose by this new Christianity that was threatening to decimate their ranks. The rulers of the heavenly realms (as Paul describes them) had a big investment already in Judaism, and had turned it into a farce. Under these satanic auspices, the Jewish rabbis had added burdens on the common people, which they would **not** obey themselves. Like Satan and his demons, they became hypocrites who never wanted to see anyone elevated above them. It was in this political climate that Peter became the shepherd of the flock.

In time, the persecution became even more severe as Satan and his rulers spread their influence to the Roman Empire, and convinced the authorities that Christianity had to be wiped out. Without any reason or any form of logic, these pagans started rounding them up for slaughter in the gaming arenas. Oddly enough, the Romans would tolerate any form of religion as long as it was pagan, and not Christian. Strangely enough, Judaism was tolerated, at least in the early stages of the exposure to the Roman Empire. In Christ's day the Romans left the Jews alone and didn't interfere. In an occupied country, it was almost as if the Jews were a law to themselves.

Long before the persecution of Christians got underway with such organized slaughter by the Roman Empire, Titus had a severe altercation with the Jews in 70AD – 40 years after Christ's departure. The Jews had rebelled against Roman rule, and the rebellion had to be suppressed. The outcome was sheer slaughter, but **not** because of Titus. The Jews had retreated to the Temple Mount to make a last stand and Titus threatened siege. But he beseeched them to abandon their rebellion and guaranteed them safe passage out of there. So many have blamed the Romans for the destruction of the Temple, but it was the Jews who burned it down themselves. On the Temple Mount it was systematic and satanic chaos as Satan marshaled all his forces to insert mob rule and frenzy. The Jews were looting the Temple and killing one another for their looted treasures from the Temple. In their madness they had hoped to escape with their treasure and resettle elsewhere and enjoy a long and rich life.

Titus was left with no option other than to besiege the Temple Mount. But even before this happened, satanic influence had inspired the burning of the Temple, and it went up in flames. Titus was appalled that such a beautiful building had been reduced to a burnt-out shell. What sort of a man was Titus? Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes him like this:

"But as for the **tyrants** themselves, and those who were with them, when they found that they were encompassed on every side, and, as it were, walled around, without any means of escaping, they desired to treat with Titus by word of mouth. **Accordingly, such was the kindness of his nature, and his desire of preserving the city from destruction, joined to the advice of his friends....**" (*Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 6, ch. 6, V323-4*). Even Titus' friends were conciliatory.

And do you know who was standing there with the Jewish nation at that time, and opposed to the tyrants on the Temple Mount? It was **Simon (Peter)** and **John (V326)**. Josephus says they had good hope of a pardon since they had nothing to do with the rebellion, and neither did the Jewish population in general. They actually did survive until after the rebels on the Temple Mount were slaughtered, but then Titus received orders to destroy the entire city. We'll get to the recorded fate of Peter and John in a moment.

Josephus describes the Jews holding the Temple Mount as **'tyrants'**. This is how the Christ saw those of the religious elite who considered themselves above the rest of the Jewish people. It's tempting to engage in the same harangue of them as the Christ, but this is not the purpose of this account. The account is to show that the Romans were blameless in the destruction of the Temple. Titus confirms this:

"It was **unwillingly** that I brought my engines of war against your walls; I always prohibited my soldiers, when they were set upon your slaughter, from their severity against you. **After every victory I persuaded you to peace**, as though I had been myself conquered. **When I came near your temple, I again departed from the laws of war**, and **exhorted you to spare your own sanctuary**, and **to preserve your holy house to yourselves**. I allowed you a quiet exit out of it, and security for your preservation; nay, if you had a mind, I gave you leave to fight in another place. Yet have you still despised every one of my proposals, **AND HAVE SET FIRE TO YOUR HOLY HOUSE WITH YOUR OWN HANDS**. And now, **vile wretches**, do you desire to treat with me by word of mouth? To what purpose is it that you would save **such a holy house as this was, which is now destroyed? What preservation can you now desire after the destruction of your temple?** Yet do you stand still at this very time in your armor; nor can you bring yourselves so much as to pretend to be supplicants even in this your utmost extremity. **O miserable creatures!** What is it you depend on? Are not your people dead? Is not your holy house gone? Is not your city in my power? And are not your own very lives in my hands? And do you still deem it a part of valor to die? **However, I will not imitate your madness**. If you throw down your arms, and deliver up your bodies to me, **I grant you your lives**; and I will act like a mild master of a family; what cannot be healed shall be punished, and the rest I will preserve for my own use."

And what was the response of these vile wretches, who were loaded with booty from the Temple they robbed and burned? Titus was still willing **to grant them their lives**. But this wasn't enough, they wanted to keep their plunder, and this would not have been possible through surrender. So they refused this offer and proposed their own. And it was this that sealed their fate:

3. To that offer of Titus they made this reply: That they could not accept of it, because they had sworn never to do so; **but they desired they might have leave to go through the wall that had been made about them, with their wives and children; for that they would go into the desert, and leave the city to him**. At this Titus had great indignation, that when they were in the case of men already taken captives, they should pretend to make their own terms with him, as if they had been conquerors. So he ordered this proclamation to be made to them, That they should no more come out to him as deserters, nor hope for any further security; for that he would henceforth spare nobody, but fight them with his whole army; and that they must save themselves as well as they could; for that **he would from henceforth treat them according to the laws of war.**" (*Josephus, Wars, 6:6:2:345-47*)

Well, Peter and John were stuck right in the middle of all this, and they were on the side of the Jewish nation – **but opposed to the rebellious priests and their armies** who had plundered the Temple and then burned it down.

As for John, he wanted food, together with his brethren, in these caverns, and begged that the Romans would now give him their right hand for his security, which he had often proudly rejected before; **but for Simon, he struggled hard with the distress he was in, till he was forced to surrender himself**, as we shall relate hereafter; **so he was reserved for the triumph, and to be then slain; as was John condemned to perpetual imprisonment. And now the Romans set fire to the extreme parts of the city, and burnt them down, and entirely demolished its walls.**

I haven't included the horrific conditions described in the siege of the whole City of Jerusalem, but in the above passage we find that **Peter struggled hard with the distress he was in**. After capture Peter was **reserved for the triumph**, the parade where armies exhibit their captives and their plunder, after which, the captives are put to death, sometimes in the most excruciating of circumstances. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified just as His Lord and Master was. And it's very likely that this occurred in Rome and possibly along the Appian Way. This was **in accordance to the laws of war** that the Romans adhered to. **The laws of war** were much harsher than they are today, you will notice! Titus had **not** wanted to apply the **laws of war** that he was obliged to observe, because he was basically a decent man by the standards of the day.

Just after Jesus appointed him as shepherd to His flock, Jesus mentioned that Peter would follow Him in the means of His death. **John 21:17-19** "The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." <sup>18</sup> I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you **and lead you where you do not want to go.**" <sup>19</sup> **Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.** Then he said to him, **"Follow me!"** Peter was led where he didn't want to go, all right. He didn't want to go to Rome. In signifying **the kind of death Peter would glorify God**, Jesus said, **"Follow me!"** In view of the circumstances, you can see the stupidity behind the claims that Peter was the first pope of Rome. He was in Jerusalem before he was captured, and then transported to be paraded and executed. How could he have been the first pope? So any time anyone thinks they have problems, just remember what these Apostles went through, and by this means console yourselves.

But Peter's death did glorify God when he went as a sheep to the slaughter, just as the Lord Christ did. And of course, both these men were shepherds and they gave their lives for the sheep.

John, however, did survive **in perpetual imprisonment** on the tiny Isle of Patmos, and 30 years later he received the Book of Revelation from the Mighty Christ Himself. Jesus also predicted that John would survive and remain alive in **John 21:20-22** "Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") <sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he asked, "**Lord, what about him?**" <sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "**If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.**" <sup>23</sup> Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

Josephus specifically mentions that those holding the Temple Mount against the Romans were **priests** along with their armies of mercenaries. There were very few priests of the Priesthood Tribe at that time; most were merely people who had gained the priesthood through simony. In other words, they bribed their way into the priesthood. Why would they do this? Josephus records that Titus answered this himself:

**"It can therefore be nothing certainly but the kindness of us Romans which hath excited you against us; who, in the first place, have given you this land to possess; and, in the next place, have set over you kings of your own nation; and, in the third place, have preserved the laws of your forefathers to you, and have withal permitted you to live, either by yourselves, or among others, as it should please you: and, what is our chief favor of all we have given you leave to gather up that tribute which is paid to God with such other gifts that are dedicated to Him; nor have we called those that carried these donations to account, nor prohibited them; TILL AT LENGTH YOU BECAME RICHER THAN WE OURSELVES, even when you were our enemies; and you made preparations for war against us with our own money; nay, after all, when you were in the enjoyment of all these advantages, you turned your too great plenty against those that gave it you, and, like merciless serpents, have thrown out your poison against those that treated you kindly." (Josephus, Wars, 6:6:2:333)**

Like all demonics, these evil creatures loved wealth and power, and they used their wealth to seize more power, just as Titus says. These mad cravings typified the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time. These priests had bribed their way into the priesthood **because of their love of money** (just as Jesus said), and there was no better place to get it than from the people and with full authority from the Roman Empire. And you can bet that they used this to maximum advantage! And as Titus said, "**Until they became richer than the Romans themselves**". In the finish, they had two options: their wealth or their death! And they refused to abandon their wealth to save their lives!

And what a legacy they left behind for future generations. As a result of their rebellion, Judaism became hated throughout the world, but particularly so in the Mediterranean countries that were controlled by the Romans. And who was it that got sucked into the net? It was those who **resembled** Judaism and **were obedient to the Laws of God – the Christians**. Since they kept the Sabbath Day holy, it was relatively easy to identify the enemy. As far as the Mediterranean nations were concerned it was a Jewish religion, founded by a Jew, and therefore they were all Jews. And Jews were now the enemy of the Roman Empire. And this is what the Scribes and Pharisees inflicted on all of Christendom through their greedy, viper-like ways.

But to be fair to the Roman Empire, it was Emperor Constantine of Turkey in the fourth century that proclaimed Christianity to be the official religion and outlawed paganism. What is

more, he allowed Christianity to be practiced according to the desires of the individual, and unintentionally split it between the East and West. The Easterners held to the teachings of their Jewish Master, while the West chose to go the way of repudiating anything to do with Judaism, and sneeringly referred to all others as Judaisers. The western part of the Roman Empire adopted their own day of worship, which was Sunday, and abandoned the keeping of the Passover, replacing it with a former pagan observance of Easter. All the Holy Days of God were abandoned and substituted with quasi-pagan observances masquerading as Christian.

If any nation was to be conquered in those ancient days, then the best possible conqueror was the Roman Empire, because they were at least governed by laws established by the Roman Senate and not just a single dictator. What is more, whenever the Romans conquered a nation they rebuilt it better than before. What nation does this remind you of today? Amazingly, there was Titus – a pagan – and he’s virtually showing compassion and love towards his enemies. Now this says something! The Roman Empire lived under a type of democracy that was unique in the world at that time. Because they were so generous, few people found fault with them, and their laws were designed to ensure this. They actually offered a way of life, and they also allowed religion to be freely practiced according to one’s faith: pagan, Christian or otherwise! But the Roman Empire was a hard taskmaster against the recalcitrant, and didn’t hesitate to destroy any nation that defied them.

In time, of course, tyrants arose and became Emperors of the Roman Empire; Nero, Tiberius and others were maniacs, and had little regard for the opinions of the Senate by which they were supposed to be moderated. Tyrants are always quick to get rid of the opposition.

By the time of Emperor Constantine, all of Christianity was familiar with the Book of Revelation that had been given to John around 100 AD (probably 96AD). And this was addressed to Seven Churches in Asia Minor (Turkey). This was not a good omen to the Western Christians of the Empire, that the Judaisers of the East had the ear and favour of God. It was just too obvious to them, and a major campaign had to be mounted to discredit them, or Rome would lose control of Christianity. They needn’t have worried; the Western nations were onside and continued to be for centuries. Rome’s evangelical work reached throughout all of Europe and beyond. And to a greater or lesser extent, Rome controls the direction of Christianity in all its forms. Dutifully, the whole world of Christianity observes the day appointed by Rome as the day of rest, they observe Easter, All Hallows day, Saints days, Christmas, and the Pope is the recognized authority of all Christianity. Well, almost!

There are a handful of churches that are hostile to the Vatican, and engage in a whole lot of name calling and accusations against them, but oddly enough, they still worship on the Catholic ‘sabbath’, observe Easter and Christmas, and reject God’s Laws. But somehow they claim to be different from the Catholic Church, and invariably claim themselves to be the true church. Out of the hundreds or thousands of these churches around the world, the notable difference they claim between themselves and the Catholics is that they don’t worship the **Blessed Mary**. They are right in this, in that the Blessed Mary is not a deity, but do they refer to Jesus mother as the **Blessed Mary** as instructed by God? No, they shun such a title because of their hostility to the Pope and the Catholics. Yet the angel Gabriel appeared and declared her Blessed state, Mary later confirmed that **all generations would be called Blessed (Luke 1:48)**. This was also confirmed **by the Holy Spirit in Elizabeth** (mother of John the Baptist) (**V41**).

So these hundreds or thousands of churches don’t even get that right! As for the Catholic Church, in view of the conduct of all the churches, none are better or worse than the others. Every last one of them are false Christianity. But God had in mind to revive the True Church in the last days, and to set the stage for the fulfilment of the Book of Revelations that is addressed to Seven Churches in Turkey. Turkey is 99% Muslim (or thereabouts), and obviously, Muslims are not going to be a part of God’s true Church (I hope you have learned enough to know this!). But the time will come when all the Book of Revelation is fulfilled, and the Seven Churches will play a major part in its fulfilment. Notwithstanding, God has planned

to prepare a people for this very fulfilment of prophecy; people who will be directed to the very places of the Seven Churches addressed in the Book of Revelation.

These people are not going to magically appear. They are presently in preparation to fulfil this very role. They may not know it, but they would have if they had truly believed God. So who are they? We don't have to guess, and we don't have to speculate. God has already identified them by the divine miracle of prophecy.

It concerns **a certain shepherd** that God prophesied would appear before the Sons of Jerusalem took control of the Holy Land by force. In a passage of prophecy that would now be familiar to readers of this website, God has this to say: **Zech 12:1** "This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: <sup>2</sup> **"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling.** Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. <sup>4</sup> On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. **"I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations.** <sup>5</sup> **Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'**" As you can see from emerging events around the world and in the Middle East, Judah and Jerusalem are in trouble. Every nation is joined **against Judah (the Israelis)** and wants to solve the problems with Islam by sacrificing the Israelis. But God plans to make Jerusalem an immovable Rock that will injure anyone that comes against it. It's then that the **leaders of Judah** will admit that **THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM ARE STRONG because the LORD Almighty is their God.**

**But before all this,** in accordance with God's timescale, He announced that **He would raise up a shepherd.** And this prophecy immediately precedes the one above concerning the Sons of Jerusalem. And this is an exact representation of the sequence. The shepherd was sent first and immediately before **the end** that Jesus spoke of became reality. This shepherd **never** saw it all unfold, and it's just as well, because the reality is totally contrary to all he envisaged.

So what did God have to say concerning this shepherd and what was his role? It was given in parable form, and the prophet had to act out the part of this shepherd: **Zech 11:15-17** "Then the LORD said to me, **"Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd.** <sup>16</sup> **FOR I AM GOING TO RAISE UP A SHEPHERD OVER THE LAND** who will **not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs.** <sup>17</sup> **"Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!"**

True to His Word, God did raise up a shepherd **over the land – the land** where the sheep graze, and which sheep would these be? These are the **'lost sheep of Israel'** – the Ten Tribes that abandoned the Holy Land and Jerusalem, and went far away. Wherever this **shepherd was raised up is the land** where the **'lost sheep of Israel'** dwell – specifically in prophecy! It's no coincidence that this shepherd was raised up in the land of the mighty **Ephraim** – the mightiest nation on earth. After Judah, Ephraim is the most prevalent Tribe spoken of in prophecy. In fact, it was under Ephraim's influence (through their leader Jeroboam) that the northern Ten Tribes rebelled against God and abandoned God's City Jerusalem. Today, they are trying to abandon Jerusalem again in order to secure peace with the Muslims – **the nations that surround the Holy Land.**

Everybody knows that the USA is the melting pot of all the Tribes of Israel. They are made up of English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Germans, Dutch, Spanish, French, Swedes, Poles, and from

all the nations of Europe. In fact, all 12 Tribes are represented in the USA as a homogenous group. They also have an ample number of people who are *not* of the Tribes of Israel. This is reflected in this description of him: **Hos 7:8-10** "**EPHRAIM MIXES WITH THE NATIONS**; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over (soggy on top).<sup>9</sup> **Foreigners sap his strength**, but he does *not* realize it. **His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice.**<sup>10</sup> **Israel's arrogance testifies against him**, but **despite all this** he does *not* **return to the LORD his God or search for Him.**" Ephraim abandoned God long ago and have *not* **returned to Him**, even though they are well acquainted with the pseudo-worship of Him, **but they will not obey Him! Their own arrogance towards God testifies against them. Ephraim is the lost sheep of Israel.** At a later time, Ephraim will become aware that **returning to God** requires more than lip-service! In fact, it's fair to say that no-one **returns to God** unless they follow God's instructions for doing so. And God's instructions for returning to Him are very explicit, and this instruction is found in **Mal 3:7-9** "**Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,**" says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?'<sup>8</sup> "**Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.**" But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "**In tithes and offerings.**<sup>9</sup> **You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.**<sup>10</sup> **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house."**

Oddly enough, the WCG (Worldwide Church of God) did pay tithes, **but not to God!** They had *no* authority to collect God's tithes – it's **Levi that collects the tithes (Heb 7:9)**. No church has the authority to collect God's tithe! This authority was given to the Tribe of Levi, and in the Levite Book of the Messenger – the Book of Malachi – God actually mentions a man, and calls him prophet '**Levi**' (**Mal 2:4-7**) and identifies him as a servant of God. John the Baptist was a servant and a prophet of God, and he was also a Levite, just like his parents. Jesus spoke of another just like him, and so did Moses. This messenger '**Levi**' is to precede the True Messenger (**Mal 3:1**) in preparation for the Kingdom of God. And it's this '**Levi**' that collects the tithe. So the WCG and their offshoots are halfway there. They kept God's decrees, whereas the House of Israel has not – a point made by God in **v7** above, but they still haven't returned to God. Firstly because they haven't paid God's tithe to His messenger, and because they have never had the **Testimony of Jesus** – which is the **Spirit of Prophecy (Rev 19:10)**. **Instead of the Spirit of Prophecy, they chose the prophecies of men!** And this was very, very foolish!

**Before Ephraim's head became sprinkled with gray**, and long before he begins waking up to this and finally beating his breast, **God raised up a shepherd over them.** As always, God's Work begins small and unobtrusively, and this was the case with this shepherd. But the flock entrusted to his care, drawn from the broader flock of the '**lost sheep of Israel**', grew in number until finally it passed 140,000. This buoyed their hopes that they are the 144,000 mentioned in the Book of Revelation. But the numbers were obviously wrong, because God specifically says these numbers were exact numbers and were derived from **12,000 from each of the Tribes of Israel** – with the exception of Dan (the Irish vipers of the Tribes of Israel). In place of Dan, God gave a double portion to the Tribe of Joseph. Dan will not be a part of the God Family of Immortals – the Bride of Christ. As an interesting aside, **Rev 7:4-8** mentions Manasseh, the eldest son of Joseph, but **Ephraim** is identified by his father's name – **Joseph**. **Ephraim** is *not* a prophet like his father Joseph, but like Joseph, **Ephraim** will be instrumental in **rescuing** (*saving* if you prefer) the rest of the House of Jacob (Israel), but only after he repents and beats his breast: **Jer 31:19** "**After I strayed, I repented**; after I came to understand, **I beat my breast.** I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth."<sup>20</sup> "Is not **Ephraim** my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD.<sup>21</sup> "**Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the HIGHWAY, the road that you take.** Return, **O Virgin Israel**, return to your towns."<sup>22</sup> How long will you wander, O unfaithful daughter? **The LORD will create a new thing on earth – a woman will surround a man.**" **A woman** (spoken of in **Rev 12:14** – the **House of David** gave birth to the Male-child) will surround **a man** (*the man*

*is Ephraim*). This **woman** will establish the **Kingdom of God** and the **House of David**. David ruled over the 12 Tribes of Israel, and the two ruling Tribes were **Judah and Levi**. This '**woman**' (as in '**Bride**') **will surround Ephraim and protect them**. Signposts will be set up, **and a highway for our God established: Isa 40:3-5** "A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; **make straight in the wilderness A HIGHWAY for our God**.<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.<sup>5</sup> **And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.**" These are the very words used by John the Baptist when he began his ministry.

Well God raised up a shepherd, but he was no John the Baptist! But never-the-less this shepherd fulfilled the purpose of his calling! He established the Church of God and taught obedience to God's Decrees and Laws that God gave to His servant Moses – which are mentioned in **Mal 4:4**. These were brought to remembrance and the flock of the Church obeyed them. This was a good starting point, and one that was well-pleasing to God.

But at the very outset, God describes him as a foolish shepherd: **Zech 11:15-16** "Then the LORD said to me, "**Take again the equipment of a FOOLISH SHEPHERD**.<sup>16</sup> **FOR I AM GOING TO RAISE UP A SHEPHERD OVER THE LAND** who will **not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs**. In time, he was not concerned with the lost, the young, the injured, or even the healthy, he was only concerned about himself and the religious empire he was building and the notoriety he so enjoyed. Before long, he was busily collecting the tithe (which he had no right to do), and he **refused** to live like Jesus, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul or any of the other men of God. He became lavishly ostentatious and far from humble. He sought the company of celebrities and world leaders, and looked more and more like a **tyrant**. He had long since repudiated the Lord Christ's specific instructions to the Apostles about being like the Gentiles and lording it over others. He became exactly like a Gentile and actively lorded it over others, and threw out anyone who objected. Before long this madness prevailed throughout all the ministry and '**Church government**' became the most important aspect of their teachings.

Secure in the belief that this was the true Church, the flock went along with it, and especially when they were convinced that Herbert Armstrong was Zerubbabel, Levi, Joshua and what all! A word out of place could get them cart-wheeled out the door! Their leaders had become **tyrants** and had to be obeyed, just like the Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's day.

In this parable of the shepherd and the sheep, the sheep represent human beings – which should be perfectly obvious. Just as when Jesus spoke of the 'lost sheep of Israel', He also was speaking of human beings: **Jer 50:4-7** "**In those days, at that time,**" declares the LORD, "**the people of Israel and the people of Judah together will go in tears to seek the LORD their God**.<sup>5</sup> **They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces toward it. They will come and bind themselves to the LORD in AN EVERLASTING COVENANT THAT WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN**.<sup>6</sup> "**MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LOST SHEEP; their shepherds have led them astray** and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill **and forgot their own resting place**.<sup>7</sup> Whoever found them **devoured them; THEIR ENEMIES SAID, 'We are not guilty, for THEY sinned against the LORD, their true pasture, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'**" When you have **THE ENEMY** saying that they themselves are **not guilty** because **THEY – the flock** – have sinned against the LORD, then this is a severe indictment of the flock! In the interests of brevity, we won't even try to cover everything mentioned in these verses, but it's speaking of '**that time**' when the people of Israel will seek to go to Zion (Jerusalem) and a time when they will **bind themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten**. At that time, '**my people**' **HAVE BEEN lost sheep**, and they will return to **their true pasture** – the Holy Land!

Herbert Armstrong, the founder of the WCG, didn't much care for his flock, as long as they kept him going in the lifestyle to which he was accustomed. As for the rest of God's flock – the House of Israel and Judah, he rather gleefully pronounced the Great Tribulation on them, as well as all those in the Church who didn't obey him. Some people may feel that it was a minimal fault, especially those who had worked their way into the inner circle by stealth. Such people also caught the disease of wanting to feel important and having authority over others. But the average member, whose only desire was to serve God became entrapped knowing that this was surely God's true Church, the only real Commandment-keeping Church, and the only one that honoured and observed God's Annual Holy Days – and therefore they couldn't leave. It was as if their feet (*like a sheep's hoofs*) were torn off. This is a parable, and it has a deeper meaning – one that is not so obvious.

The Apostle Paul provides the answer, in the sixth chapter of the Book of Ephesians. Paul begins by talking about **the real enemy**, who are *not* **flesh and blood. These enemies are the rulers of the heavenly realms**, and also called **the spiritual forces of evil**. And they are very real! He then goes on to speak of **putting on the full armour of God to combat these forces of evil. Eph 6:10-17** "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> **Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.** <sup>12</sup> For **our struggle** is *not* against flesh and blood, **but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, **so that when the day of evil comes**, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> **Stand firm then**, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> **AND WITH YOUR FEET FITTED WITH THE READINESS THAT COMES FROM THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.** <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation **AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.**" There is a very good reason for emphasizing this last sentence. **The sword is the symbol for the Word of God** and this is a vital part of the parable of the foolish shepherd. **The Testimony of Jesus** is also described as **a two-edged sword that comes out of Christ's mouth: Rev 1:16** "In His right hand He held seven stars, **and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.** His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."

So the prophecy about the foolish shepherd has this to say: **May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!"** *So what do you suppose the sword is that struck the arm and the right eye of Herbert Armstrong? It was THE SWORD of the Testimony of Jesus! This is the purpose of a parable, to cloud the meaning until the time comes to understand it.* No-one from the dawn of time has understood this – **except Jesus, and those to whom He gave the Spirit of Prophecy.**

So how do we know that this refers to Herbert Armstrong? The answer to this is perhaps the most miraculous part of the parable. God had to use a way of identifying this man **by name**, yet concealing it from everyone except His servants the prophets. His servants had to be able to prove this from God's Word to everyone who still had some vestige of God's Holy Spirit left. To God, of course, it represented no challenge to write such a parable, but if a human being was tasked to do it, then it would be a real challenge. How do you name someone without actually declaring their name? Well, the answer is **through a parable**, which gives clues like a cryptic crossword puzzle. And this is how God wrote it: **"May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!"** So who do we know who was a shepherd over God's flock, and that had a withered arm? Personally, I know of no-one! But then, this is a parable. And the meaning is something other than that indicated. Here's a riddle: If I said a certain man developed **a withered arm**, and then asked, **'What was his arm like before it withered?'** the logical answer would be **'a strong arm'**. And this is the answer to the parable: **strong arm** or **Armstrong**. Through this parable, God identified him by name! And in order to dispel all doubts, God added one other identifying feature – his

right eye would be totally blinded. And this just happens to be true. **Herbert Armstrong was blind in his right eye** after he became totally worthless. **And most people in the WCG knew this**, but hardly anyone else did. **So this parable was for the WCG!**

As for how he became worthless, it was his lying prophecy! Not only did he plagiarize most of his prophecies from others, he lied that he was the author of it all. No doubt if he were alive today, he would be claiming no such thing, because the falsity of it all is now evident. Up until about 1975 when one of his articles on '**1975 in Prophecy**' was shown to be nonsense and withdrawn from publication, he had the Church totally convinced that he was right in all his prophecies. At that time, people were becoming disenchanted, and by 1980 people were leaving in droves, and ministers were being sacked in wholesale fashion. Mercifully, Armstrong died in 1986, but not before he tried to convince the flock that he had done all the research and there was nothing left to do. One of his final acts was to publish the essential '**18 truths**', which were on a par with his prophecies, complete and utter nonsense, because he once again reinforced his 'Church government' routine.

But he appointed a successor, **a man who wouldn't outshine him**. Armstrong always liked to be above the crowd of those he considered inferior (he was an apostle – and don't forget it!!!) Sheer and utter craziness! But his successor was a very cunning man. He had no understanding of the Bible; in fact, he had no understanding of anything. He didn't have God's Holy Spirit, but he was an accomplished charlatan. He was a grand-master of the elementary, and the one sermon I saw on a tape sent to me, was just sickening for its overuse of elementary verses and total lack of any sort of substantial truth. It was all a sham until he could get his hands on the assets of the Church. He managed to get everything in his name, and then he upped and died. Naturally enough, his mad son was the beneficiary of the will, and the sole owner of all the assets. What a surprise!

So how worthless was Herbert Armstrong? God's scattered flock in the Church (those who still remain faithful to God) can testify that his lunacy drove them away. Some few began to see that 'Church government' was a fabrication of Armstrong to empower himself, just like the Gentiles do! How they could get this so wrong is beyond belief. This is what Jesus said: **Matt 20:25-28** "Jesus called them together and said, "**You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.**"<sup>26</sup> **NOT SO WITH YOU. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,**<sup>27</sup> **and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**"

I can tell you this, at the first sign of someone trying to lord it over others and making himself appear **great** or **first** over his brothers and sisters, is when I view them with deep suspicion. This is the mentality of the **Scribes and Pharisees, and they were demon-possessed**. That sort of tyranny might have worked in the WCG, but it has no place among God's flock, and it won't be tolerated in the Kingdom of God. To be sure there will be government in the Kingdom of God, but it will not be in the hands of such cretins. Perhaps now the reader might understand that God despises those who think too highly of themselves, because this is the very start of them becoming **tyrants**.

In religious circles, Satan's agents have a field day. Polished performers sway their congregations with meaningless, emotional nonsense, in order to give the impression that they are 'angels of light'. They literally drench the congregation with emotional rhetoric and then tell them all they're 'saved' because of what he said. This is a favourite ploy to gain the confidence and respect of the congregation. The fact that it's a pack of lies means nothing to them. Satan also appears as an angel of light, and he's been a liar and a murderer from the beginning. So don't be fooled by outward appearances, check their record, test their fruits, and look past their outward show of righteousness.

Those who don't teach according to the Word that we teach have no light of dawn. No enlightenment at all, and those who follow them are headed for a long dark night. And what we teach is Bible prophecy through the Spirit of Prophecy, and Bible prophecy is vastly different from the prophecies of men.

Did God make a mistake in calling this foolish shepherd? No, this man was everything God expected him to be, and he fulfilled the prophecy perfectly. Just as God predicted, he became worthless for any purpose. And the truth is that Herbert Armstrong couldn't be any other way even if he wanted to. **He had to fulfill that prophecy!** What is more, by his conduct Armstrong demonstrated the meaning of *worthless*, and this gives us the means to identify others who are equally worthless. So as far as service to God is concerned, Christianity is awash with such people. As Jesus said, after you have done all that is required of you, consider yourselves **unprofitable servants**: **Luke 17:10** "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, '**We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.**'" The KJV uses the term '*unprofitable servants*'.

So why did God plan thousands of years ago to identify a man whom He would call as a shepherd? And why was this shepherd molded and shaped to be what he was? The reason is that he wasn't just called to be a shepherd, it was necessary for him to prepare the flock, and this required him to reach them with a message. And this was accomplished. A base of believers was prepared. But this doesn't include them all, but only those who remained faithful to God. So what about those who turned away and went again back to the dogs vomit of their former life? Well, provided they **never committed the unpardonable sin**, and provided they didn't **completely extinguish the Spirit of God** they received at baptism, **they still have a future**. Oddly enough, one qualifies the other. God doesn't hold anyone guilty for what was done in ignorance, but willfully sinning against God's Holy Spirit is unforgivable! But we are *not* talking about the weakness of the flesh, because these things God can forgive and *does* forgive. We are talking about repudiating God's Word and refusing to believe it. In other words, we are talking about the state of one's mind. People make their own choices and God judges them by the same measure they use. If they reject God, then He rejects them. When confronted with the Spirit of Prophecy, one either believes God or they condemn themselves. But those who speak against the Spirit of Prophecy have no life left in them. **This is the unpardonable sin!** God sends His **messenger** to deliver God's Truth (and warning), and anyone who doesn't listen is condemned, **and especially those who speak against it!** Depending on the severity of their rejection, *some few* may be redeemed from death if they go *willingly* and give their lives for their friends, and by so doing prove their belated love of God. And this will *not* include *accidental* martyrdom! The key word is *willingly*. God considers that those who speak against the Testimony of Jesus – the Spirit of Prophecy – have *none* of the down-payment of the Holy Spirit left in them. They have extinguished it, and hence they can't accept the teachings of His messenger. Such people would betray their brothers and sisters in an instant! They can never be trusted, and God won't accept them under any circumstances. You'll be judged by every single word you utter in this regard!

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist? John was rather shocked that the Lord Christ had requested baptism of him, and said that he needed to be baptized by the Christ. This is the account in **Matt 3:13** "**Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.**"<sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, "**I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?**"<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; **it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then John consented.<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, **and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him.**<sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased." Jesus said that it was right and proper to be baptized by John in order to fulfill all righteousness. Later, and just before his death, John was told that Jesus' disciples were baptizing, and John concurred that this also was right and proper. This is the full account of this, and it contains many things that are worthy of comment, but we'll have to defer most of it for now:

**John 3:22-36** "After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, **and baptized**.<sup>23</sup> Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.<sup>24</sup> (This was before John was put in prison.)<sup>25</sup> An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing.<sup>26</sup> **They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan – the one you testified about – well, He is baptizing, and everyone is going to Him."**<sup>27</sup> To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.<sup>28</sup> You yourselves can testify that I said, '**I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of Him.**'<sup>29</sup> **The Bride belongs to the Bridegroom.** The friend who attends the Bridegroom waits and listens for Him, **and is full of joy when he hears the Bridegroom's voice.** That joy is mine, and it is now complete.<sup>30</sup> **He must become greater; I must become less.**<sup>31</sup> "The One who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. **The One who comes from heaven is above all.**<sup>32</sup> **He testifies to what he has seen and heard, BUT NO ONE ACCEPTS HIS TESTIMONY.**<sup>33</sup> **The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.**<sup>34</sup> For the One whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.<sup>35</sup> The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.<sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, **but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.**"

There is another important snippet of information in the next verse: **John 4:1-3** "**The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John,**<sup>2</sup> although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.<sup>3</sup> **When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.**" John's baptism was very important at that time, and Jesus left off baptizing and went back to Galilee. Jesus wanted to ensure that this was clear to all, and in the Book of Luke we read this: **Luke 7:28-30** "**I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**"<sup>29</sup> (All the people, even the tax collectors, **when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN BAPTIZED BY JOHN.**<sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and experts in the law **rejected** God's purpose for themselves, **because they had NOT been baptized by John.**)" **Without John's baptism, no-one accepted Jesus' Testimony, and this is so today!**

Baptism is a symbol, and represents a firm commitment. It's a symbol of a declaration that the person being baptized is willing to give up his or her life. It's not enough to make a commitment to a Church and their doctrine – which is inevitably wrong where the **Testimony of Jesus** is concerned – but the commitment must be made to the **Testimony of Jesus** and all that it entails. And you cannot receive the **Testimony of Jesus** from anyone other than **the one appointed by God**. This is the man who must precede the Lord Christ and prepare the Way for Him.

As for the meaning of baptism, and what your pledge is all about, Jesus made it very clear in the following verses. Two of the Apostles had hoped for special privileges **and didn't know what they were asking**: **Mark 10:35-43** "Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."<sup>36</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" He asked.<sup>37</sup> They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your Glory."<sup>38</sup> **"You don't know what you are asking,"** Jesus said. "Can you **drink the cup** I drink or **be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?**"<sup>39</sup> "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "**You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,**<sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." From this we get the clear picture that baptism is a pledge of death. **The cup** spoken of is **the cup of Christ's blood** that was prepared for **the Passover**. **The Passover**, you will recall, is about the death angel that slew God's enemies in Egypt, but avoided the homes marked with **the blood of the lamb**. When Jesus said, "Can you **drink the cup** I drink or **be baptized**

**with the baptism I am baptized with?"** He was asking, *'Can you endure the death that I am about to face?'* At that time they were not able to endure it, and they fled the scene – all except Peter, but even his nerve gave out when fear gripped him. Later they were emboldened by a double-portion of God's Holy Spirit and they no longer feared death. So be aware of what is pledged when someone is baptized.

At the time, the two brothers were seeking special privileges; privileges that were not Jesus' right to give – but the Father's. They were still seeing things from a worldly view, because they lacked the **Testimony of Jesus**. This is true of all those who seek vainglory in this life! Such people never understand anything concerning the **Testimony of Jesus**, and neither are they interested. Today, we see such people endlessly quoting elementary verses in the hope of appearing righteous and holy in order to encourage the admiration of others. **The Testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev 19:10)** cannot be understood by them, because they haven't sought the **'baptism of John'**. I would point out that John the Baptist was a very humble man, just as Moses was, and this is the hallmark of God's servants. You can believe this or not: **baptism is a pledge to divest of false teachings – to repent of them – and to believe God's messenger**. John the Baptist was the messenger, and he prepared the way for the True Messenger, **so both are messengers**, and both must be believed. You cannot believe the **Testimony of Jesus** without **first** believing the pledge of John's baptism. To be clear on this, you **cannot** accept the **Testimony of Jesus** without first accepting the **testimony of John**. **Believing the first messenger is the key to believing the second or True Messenger**.

And just to complete the theme of Jesus' response to the two brothers, we should note what Jesus was alluding to. These two brothers were ambitious in those early days, but in later years they would have been appalled at themselves for their overt ambitions over the others. Understandably, the others were very indignant, and Jesus had to explain the principle to them: **V41-45 "When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.** <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles **lord it over them**, and their high officials **exercise authority over them.** <sup>43</sup> **NOT SO WITH YOU.** Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be **first must be slave of all.** <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, **and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" As for the religion of the Gentiles, don't mention this to the Pope, or he'll turn nasty with you! His pompous arrogance is well masked from public view, but like all religious **tyrants**, they demand recognition and admiration. The same can be said of the Archbishop of Canterbury and all those who are ambitious to lord it over others. But the Pope is particularly sensitive to the old adage: *'Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown'* and some popes have found this out the hard way. Being the Pope's food taster can be a very dangerous occupation.

Obviously, this part of Jesus' Testimony was not adhered to by any church, because the very purpose of the church to aspiring leaders is to keep a strong grip on the administration and especially the coffers. *'He who has the gold makes the rules'* is the standard by which they live.

So why did God select a foolish shepherd rather than a wise one? Since this man was prophesied by God to appear, he was indeed a shepherd of God's flock! **What is more, he fulfilled all that was expected of him!** He could **not** have done anything else – because prophecy had to be fulfilled. He seemed to understand that God's message was to the House of Israel, and he identified who these were – more or less! And he brought this to the attention of the 'lost sheep'. He restored the knowledge of the Sabbath and all the Annual Holy Days of God, and revived the knowledge about which animals were fit to eat according to God's laws of clean and unclean meat. He taught many things that strengthened the flock making them acceptable to God. Even the casual reader of the Bible would understand that God does not favour the lawlessness of the vast majority of Christianity so-called. And so, through the efforts of this man, God prepared a people for the role they must play in the

coming holocaust. As God has described it, **Jesus is knocking at your door (Rev 3:20)**, and you must respond or lose your life forever. As a matter of fact, **He counsels you to buy Him gold tried in the fire in V18** and to recognize that you are **wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked (V17)**. This is the message to **all the Churches** just as Jesus repeatedly said. And what was He referring to? Here it is in the complete context: **Mal 3:1-10** "See, **I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me**. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His Temple; the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.<sup>3</sup> He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,**<sup>4</sup> and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.<sup>5</sup> "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, **but do not fear me,**" says the LORD Almighty.<sup>6</sup> "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed."<sup>7</sup> Ever since the time of your forefathers **you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,**" says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, '**How are we to return?**'"<sup>8</sup> "**Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.** But you ask, '**How do we rob you?**'"<sup>9</sup> "**In tithes and offerings.**"<sup>9</sup> **You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.**<sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Yes, you've probably seen the latter part of this passage quoted many times by those who have no authority to collect God's tithe, but did it anyway. And now, anyone who robs God will find themselves **wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked** – and in want of everything in the harshest environment ever inflicted on mankind. A time of trouble so great that the only hope of **returning to God** will mean **death**, and **God will require your life**. At that time, you must go as **sheep to the slaughter**, and give up the only thing you have left – **your life!** Then that may be the only way left to you **to return to God!** So think carefully about these things, because there will be no compromise!

Those who are still wallowing around in the Churches of God are presently **wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked**, but they can't see it – because they are **blind!** They don't have the ears to hear or the eyes to see. They don't have the **Testimony of Jesus** and they have **never** had the **Spirit of Prophecy**, so at best, they are **unprofitable servants**. All they have done is the least that is expected of them!

But this is where Herbert Armstrong became a **worthless shepherd**. He began to speculate on the meaning of prophecy and give his own interpretation of it. He began to plagiarize the false prophecy of others and build on it, weaving a tangled web of delusion. And to consolidate his hold over all the sheep, he began to infer that their 'salvation' was tied to him and his teachings. Those who followed faithfully were guaranteed a '**place of safety**', and those who fell short of the mark were destined for the Great Tribulation. This had the effect of holding the flock captive to his doctrine and giving the impression they were doomed if they had to go through the Great Tribulation. Of course, it was a well-crafted lie and an act of extreme deception. Any astute reader of the Bible should have known that the Church **never** gave birth to the male-child Jesus Christ. Therefore the Church could not be the 'woman' spoken of in **Rev 12:13** "When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the **woman WHO HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO THE MALE CHILD.**"<sup>14</sup> **The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert,** where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, **out of the serpent's reach."** And from this his '**place of safety**' was invented. The **woman** is **not** the Church! Just as John's ministry was **not** the Church! **The Church**

**never gave birth to the Male Child who is Christ!** I know the Churches of God assiduously avoided quoting this verse, because it contradicted their lying fallacy. When asked the question they ducked and weaved all over the place!

Jesus Christ was born of the Tribe of Judah, and more specifically, the **House of David** and was called ***the Son of David***. Herbert Armstrong must have had a fleeting glimpse of this, because before long he was speaking of the British royal crown as being the kingdom and throne of David. And lo and behold, Herbert later concocted a story that he was in the lineage of the Kings of England. Foolishly, he believed the English crown was an unbroken dynasty and could be traced all the way to Adam. He of course (wink, wink) was of this royal dynasty. Then we find out from his elaborate and tangled web that the Throne of David and the House of David was actually the Tribe of Joseph. But, he assures us, the throne will be overturned, overturned, etc. So in his view, anyone can rightfully sit on the Throne of David – whether of the Tribe of Judah or not. In other words, the Throne of David is not a continuous line of ancestors. And the rebellious northern Ten Tribes who rebelled against the House of David and the City of Jerusalem, suddenly became the House of David, and Herbert Armstrong was a distant heir to that throne by birthright. But this is the result of a tangled web of confusion and madness!

What is more, it infers the lineage of the Lord Christ to be spurious because, according to Armstrong, his presumed dynasty of the English crown, of which he claimed to be an heir, is an unbroken line all the way back to Adam. It may have escaped his notice when he made this pronouncement, that we all have lineage back to Adam. It may also have escaped his notice that the 'lost sheep of Israel' became lost for centuries and little history of them is given in the Bible during this time.

The **House of David** continued for nearly 500 years after Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, rebelled against God and alienated the Ten Tribes who were finally defeated by the Assyrian armies and taken into captivity around 721BC. The **House of David – Judah and Levi** – continued the dynasty of David, and Jerusalem and the Holy Temple built by Solomon were the place where men ought to worship – just as Jesus and all the inhabitants of Judah confirmed (**John 4:20**). Not only was the Throne of David not planted in England by Jeremiah – as was claimed by Armstrong (a theory plagiarized from others), but a true King and rightful heir to the Throne of David appeared on earth far from England and immediately came under threat by the Edomite King Herod. And the lineage of the Lord Christ was confirmed by both Matthew and Luke (both Levites) in **Matt 1** and **Luke 3**. In the aftermath of all this, Armstrong is maintaining that the true lineage of the Throne of David was in England – ***established by Jeremiah hundreds of years before***. His assertions were sheer madness, and bordering on blasphemy! In his view, Matthew and Luke were both wrong – this is the inferred effect of what he wrote and taught. But he was determined to find a link for himself into the royal House of David.

But this was nothing compared to his assertions that the remnants of the lost Ten Tribes living in Europe were the beast power. The principle beast power, he claimed, was Germany (the Tribe of Simeon), and Germany was going to unite ten nations of Europe to destroy the rest of the world. In other words, God's people, the House of Israel, were Satan's brood, and the rest of the world, including Islam, were blameless and innocent. Then it became even more bizarre! He prophesied of a 'United States of Europe', comprising the lost Ten Tribes, were destined to attack 'Manasseh', which he claimed to be the United States of America and take them captive. Apart from the fact that there is nothing in the entire Bible that supports such diabolical reasoning, he fails to show where God ever suggested that the beast power – his '***United States of Europe***' – was destined to be rescued from captivity. God is going to rescue His people Israel – ***all 12 Tribes of them***. Rescue them from what? Themselves? Talk about the old 'bait and switch' routine! He was like a conjuror! What sort of mesmerism induced people to believe this garbage?

Most of the members of the Church that God raised up through the worthless shepherd have now repudiated most of Armstrong's false prophecies, except predominantly, one mad Irishman who still bumblingly attempts to uphold this madness and claims to be the successor of Herbert Armstrong. To add to his madness, he even stated that the man appointed by Herbert Armstrong to replace him was **the man of sin – the beast** – and this man was supposed to be leading – **not** the House of Israel – **but the Church itself!** This '**man of sin**' was sitting in the WCG, he claimed, the very one who is prophesied to do astounding damage, and cause the destruction of many nations is, according to this madman, **leading the Church**. But oops, Joe Tkach suddenly died, and the prophecy failed. Not a problem to this false prophet! He rewrites his book in a flurry of madness and his '**Little Book, delivered to him by an angel of God (Rev 10:1-2, 9-11)**' now becomes an altered book when the angel is proven to be wrong! The man gets madder with every successive year and every successive re-write of his crazy book. But, he insists, he got this book or scroll from the angel, and he has now had to rewrite it about 4 times – **and it's all the angels fault!** Does this sound anything like a prophet of God? Imagine this man being one of the two prophets (**Rev 11:4-6**), who are given enormous power to destroy whole nations! Who would he target? **By his own admission, he would attack the House of Israel!**

So those who were formerly of the WCG and who received God's Holy Spirit by their willingness to obey Him are now on trial for their very lives. God sent you a shepherd, whom you believed for better or for worse, but through him you began a course of obeying God's Laws. Now you must finish the course and keep the faith. What is more, you must prepare yourself to offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice – like sheep to the slaughter, and prove faithful to God even in the face of death.

As Jesus said, He is knocking on the door, but if you don't answer then you will have to do it the hard way. This ministry has almost completed this phase of its work and soon we will be gone to the place prepared for us – out of the serpent's reach – to prepare for the next phase of our journey. Then you will be on your own. Just remember how happily you would have gone to the mythical 'place of safety' formerly promised you, and just remember that it was your own error that led you to this conclusion. Had you exercised the Holy Spirit within you, you would have known that **the Church didn't give birth to Jesus**. The woman is the House of David, **and the House of David was established through the anointing of a Levite Priest and prophet**. We of this Brotherhood welcome you if you are truly dedicated to the service of God, or alternatively, we wish you well as you fulfill your destiny through your pledge at baptism. Above all, be strong and believe God!

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