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Essays for *A New Philadelphia Apologetic*

Commentary — From the Margins *A New Philadelphia Apologetic*

When I began to reread prophecy and write what I was reading in 2002, I completed the initial draft of *A Philadelphia Apologetic (APA)* in two and a half months. By the fall of 2004, I knew that *APA* needed to be updated, and I began to rewrite chapters, but I did not get far before I realized that enough information was coming from typological exegesis that I needed to add to what I had just written. However, the demands of writing for numerous websites prevented me from returning to *APA*. Those demands remain. Thus, to satisfy both the demands for new pieces on my home website, and to finally return to *APA*, I have opted to use the *Commentaries* to produce the essays that will become chapters; so the serialized edition will remain as it presently is until enough *Commentaries* have been written for a new published edition. At that time, the serialized chapters will be replaced by the published edition.

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Chapter Two *Forty Years Ago*

Allusions, says Jakobson, are signs
that produce an imbalance between signifier
& signified, resulting in signified surplus,
analogous to overfilling a wine glass,
the resulting spill staining the source text
in a disordered or unstructured way.
Perhaps that's what happened to the Bible—
it's been so stained by spills of red wine
it's not the book my forefathers read—
[from "Us or Them"]

1.

On Thursday of the second full week in January 2002, about 10:12 CST, as I was pulling into the parking lot of Southeastern Illinois College where I was to teach a class, a thought that again seemed to have substance—a thought like the one experienced when I was initially drafted into the Body of Christ—said, *It's time to reread prophecy*. The thought obscured all other thoughts, including ones of getting out of the pickup and getting to class. For the second time in my life, a thought seemed to be a thing, seemed to have actual substance, and for several minutes I sat wondering exactly what had happened. I knew what, but why? I was unbelieving of what I seemed to hear and think at the same time. What I didn't then know was that forty years earlier, apparently to the day, hour, and minute, an Advanced Prophecy seminar at Ambassador College was told by Garner Ted Armstrong that all prophecy was understood, that there would be no new revelation.

With a dynamic radio voice and an advertising background, Herbert Armstrong, beginning in 1934, built a worldwide ministry on explicating biblical prophecy, but by the fall of 1961, he knew that he had gotten things wrong. He realized that he did not understand what he thought he understood; so he scheduled a prophecy seminar for the following spring semester at his Ambassador College, Pasadena, California. He required all of his top “evangelists” in the region to attend this Advanced Prophecy seminar, and he taught its first session himself. And at this first session, he said everything was on the table. Every idea would be explored. He said that the newly formed Worldwide Church of God had to get prophecy right, and that it did not have prophecy right because world events were not turning out as he believed they should [he had previously called his ministry “The Radio Church of God”]. But that was the only session of this Advanced Prophecy seminar he directed. The second session was led by his son, Garner Ted, who said his dad was just suffering from some doubts, that biblical prophecy was understood, that they had it right, and that there would be no new revelation. And the culture within the Armstrong fiefdom was such that whatever Garner Ted said was unassailable. The top evangelists sat on their hands for the remainder of the seminar.

It would have taken Garner Ted about twelve minutes to arrive at saying there would be no new revelation—it took twelve minutes for Garner Ted to kill the work his father had spent three decades building. In just twelve minutes, the last divine Breath of the endtime Elijah’s second attempt to resuscitate the corpse of Christ was lost. Forty years would pass before this endtime Elijah would begin His third and ultimately successful attempt to breathe life into the dead Body.

The Worldwide Church of God’s greatest growth years occurred after 1962. Money poured in; membership increased thirty percent a year; corporate jets were purchased; antiques were acquired; the undersized but posh Ambassador Auditorium was built; and Herbert Armstrong hobnobbed with minor world dignitaries—all after the work of God was spiritually dead. It wasn’t God who was blessing the Worldwide Church of God. It was the prince of this world; for concealed within the secrecy of the corporate structure were serious transgressions of the commandments.

Within Christendom, prophecy is a suspect discipline, made all the more suspect by the antics of prophecy pundits such as Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong. Prophecies either were fulfilled, or they cannot be well understood. They are vague, and are often interspersed in narrative accounts about real events. Thus, long ago and for cause, they became the domain of the cultic fringe ... despite its denials, the Worldwide Church of God was a cult that splintered into hundreds of slivers following Hebert Armstrong’s death, with most of these slivers two decades after Armstrong’s death still clinging to his teachings as if he, not Christ, were the endtime Elijah who will turn the hearts of children to the fathers, and the hearts of fathers to their children (Mal 4:6).

Mostly unknown sects of not just Armstrong’s fiefdom but of every fringe on the shawl of Christianity proclaim the fulfillment of some prophecy with every newscast. A natural disaster here and one there, and this sect or that one proclaims the end of the age has come upon humanity, the practice beginning two millennia ago. But the essence of the Christian message is that the creator of humanity came as the man Jesus, died and was raised from the dead, and will return as the promised Messiah who will put an end to the world as it is today. Even sects and denominations that teach a realized eschatology having the kingdom of heaven being here on earth today, teach that a new heaven and a new earth are to arrive at the end of this age. So the assurance of Christianity is that life as human beings presently know it will end at some specific moment in the future.

As I sat in the pickup in January 2002, unbelieving of what had occurred, I suspected “*It’s time to reread prophecy*” meant that it was time for me to begin writing about prophecy. The splintered Sabbatarian Churches of God were not powerfully delivering the two-house warning of a generation earlier. My prophetic understanding was within the mainstream of the Churches of God, so I suspected the command I received was to make a better case for the two-house warning than was being made. Although the two-house warning had been publicly made for decades in one of the most poorly crafted books ever published, a book that was the plagiarized work of another, a book that does not even justify being named, the two-house warning had fallen on hard times as it should have for that two-house warning is not of God and never was of God.

What about forty years earlier? As I sat in the parking lot of Southeastern Illinois College, I knew nothing about what happened that spring semester in 1962, which began with promise at Pasadena’s Ambassador College, then the educational arm of the most

visible administration, in North America, of the Churches of God. After a lunar time cycle (a significant unit of time for the faculty of Ambassador College) of prophetic events not occurring as radio evangelist Herbert Armstrong had proclaimed to the nation, and for nine years, to the world, Armstrong was convinced that he had prophecy wrong, the admission of a now mature Christian. But having prophecy wrong was not something that an international evangelistic work based upon a particular prophetic understanding wanted to admit; hence, the scheduling of the Advanced Prophecy seminar for that spring semester and Garner Ted saying all was known, that nothing new would be revealed, that the Church would go to a place of physical safety in 1972.

Why didn't the senior Armstrong teach more sessions? Why did he leave teaching the class to his son? But of more interest is why did the so-called evangelists who heard both that *the Church didn't understand prophecy* and that *all was known* quietly sit through the remainder of the semester, or so Ray Dick told me after reading the initial draft of *A Philadelphia Apologetic*, completed in March 2002. Ray Dick was then (in 1962) in Fourth Year Bible, taught by Al Portune, one of the senior men in the Advanced Prophecy seminar. Ray gave me the names of the men in the Advanced Prophecy seminar. Although most of the men are now dead, I sought confirmation of what I was told from Garner Ted Armstrong and from Roderick Meredith, senior evangelist for the Living Church of God. Garner Ted in three most gracious letters written during the summer and fall of 2002 neither denied or confirmed the story. Roderick Meredith, however, seemed to confirm the entirety of the story. Of attendees who remain alive, Leslie McCullough and Dibar Apartian were also in the seminar.

There is a little more to the story of Garner Ted (on behalf of the Church) rejecting revelation during that spring 1962 semester. On a Friday morning near the end of semester, Al Portune presented to the fourth year Bible class information coming from the Advance Prophecy seminar. Ray Dick was certain what had been said was wrong, so over the weekend he gathered Scripture passages and he presented what he had gathered to Al Portune at eight o'clock Monday morning. Fourth Year Bible was at eleven. Al Portune was late coming to class. When he arrived, he had additional Scriptures supporting the position Ray Dick had presented to him that morning, the position being, I believe, that the armies surrounding Jerusalem when the Mount of Olives splits occurs three and half years earlier than when Armageddon happens. But when Garner Ted on Thursday of that week learned what Al Portune and Ray Dick were discussing, Garner Ted pulled Ray out of class. With his entourage and a cowered Al Portune in tow, he threatened Ray with expulsion from Ambassador College a couple of weeks before Ray graduated if Ray didn't recant. I don't believe Ray ever forgave himself for knuckling under.

(Ray Dick kept his prophetic understanding to himself for decades. However, his understanding appeared in an article published by Dixon Cartwright's *The Journal* in 2001. The [article](#) is still on-line as of 2005.)

I can't say what I would have done if I had been in that Advanced Prophecy class forty years earlier. I don't know if I would've been like Joshua and Caleb, or if I would've sat on my hands, deferring to the authority of the instructor. The decision wasn't mine to make, then. I was a fifteen year-old high school junior, who knew to keep the Sabbath but was unwilling to do so.

Like the vast majority of humanity, the so-called evangelists who sat on their hands and on their courage that spring semester, 1962, will have their history assigned to them. Today (2005), Roderick Meredith's history is being assigned to him following the shooting spree in the [Wisconsin](#) congregation of the Living Church of God. There is little Meredith can do to avoid the label of cultmeister. He is being defined in terms of greater Christendom, and most of those senior men in Pasadena in 1962 will be forgotten within a few generations. Most will leave behind no inscribed record of themselves. Only Herbert Armstrong's legacy will survive; for he had the courage to stand visibly for what he believed, even if his prophetic understanding was askew. Actually, his record as a teacher of prophecy who *got it right* is dismal at best. His work has been tried by fire and found wanting. He is presently ridiculed for his opulence, but it isn't this generation that will define him. Rather, he will be defined within the historic perspective of those who left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the temple in the Jerusalem above (Gal 4:26). Whether he is one of the many who left off rebuilding the temple to build homes for themselves will be revealed upon Christ's return, for he will be included among those who left spiritual Babylon. This does not, however, mean that when his judgment is revealed, he will necessarily be among the chosen. That is a matter for Christ Jesus alone to decide.

Daniel's prophecies were sealed until the time of the end. They could not be understood earlier than the generic period identified in Scripture as "the time of the end." Ellen G. White and Herbert Armstrong and any number of other pundits didn't live in that generic period so it's foolishness to look to these pundits for understanding of endtime prophecies. And it is equally foolish to listen to the prophetic understanding of anyone now, myself included, if it is not the time of the end. But if humanity in the ebb of time has arrived at this generic endtime period, then the Elijah to come (the glorified Christ Jesus working through human beings) will restore all things, including revealing prophetic events, for a sealed prophecy is worthless unless it is unsealed. A proof of the Most High's sovereignty is fulfilled prophecy. An even greater proof is His ability to seal a prophecy so that the revelation cannot be understood, then to unseal the revelation shortly before the event occurs. Faith now enters the domain of prophecy. The unsealing will come through the generation of an additional text, and the validity of that additional text becomes a matter of faith. The sheep hear the voice of the true Shepherd. The wild sheep listen to no voice but their own. And the goats betray the sheep that follow them.

Some disciples in every generation since Calvary have expected Christ Jesus' return to occur within their lifetimes, as is appropriate. One single long night of watching began at Calvary, the night of the second day of the spiritual creation week. However, the two analogies do not work as one shadow, but form a play of shadows—

- Solomon wrote that God "has made everything beautiful in its time. Also he has put [עליון or 'owlam] into man's heart; yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end" (Eccl 3:11), with *owlam* variously translated into English as /eternity/ or the /world/. The world or the creation conceals the things of God from the natural mind, so that the beginning and end cannot be known.
- Jesus said He was "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13).

- The natural mind, because the world conceals the beginning and the end, cannot know Jesus regardless of how often the natural mind hears the name uttered, and the deeds of Jesus related. Only the person born of Spirit and whose mind is not set on the things of the flesh (Rom 8:5-8) can “know” Jesus.
- John wrote, “Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).
- Jesus said He would love and make Himself known to the person who has His commandments and who keeps them (John 14:21).
- The natural mind is consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) and is unable to keep the commandments, but the person born of Spirit has been set free from sin and death (Rom 8:2) “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in [disciples], who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (v. 4).
- To know Jesus sets a person free from sin and death in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in this person, and when “set free” this person will keep the commandments that, in turn, keep the person free from bondage to sin and death; thus, the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in this person through this person keeping the commandments.

Paul wrote, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Rom 1:18-20). Therefore,

- The visible things of this world reveal the invisible things of God, including His power and His nature; hence, what conceals the beginning and the end [Christ Jesus is both] from the natural mind also reveals the power and nature of God “to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).
- What is natural precedes what is spiritual (1 Cor 15:46); so a person’s mature natural mind will precede the same person having a mature spiritual mind, just as the person’s human birth precedes this person’s spiritual birth.
- As there was a first Adam, a man of red mud, there is a last Adam, a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). Between this first Adam and “the last Adam as a life-giving spirit” is the man Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of woman, baptized in water, received the Holy Spirit [Πνεύμα Ἅγιον], and died on the cross at Calvary.
- The natural body of Jesus put on immortality after being raised from the dead, but the natural body suffered no decay in the grave. Likewise, the Body of Christ that died as Jesus died in the mid 1st Century CE will suffer no decay throughout a single long night that began at Calvary and extends until Jesus returns to fight on a day of battle (Zech 14:3-4).

In his gospel, the Apostle John wrote, “In the beginning was the [Λογος – *Logos*], and the [Λογος] was with [Θεον – *Theon*], and the [Λογος] was [Θεος – *Theos*]. ...And the [Λογος] became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14). Grammatically, *Theos* and *Theon* are both “God,” but are not the same entity. The creation conceals the Λογος, the man Jesus, who is the beginning of the creation through being its Creator (v. 3), from the natural minds of humankind. Inevitably, the People of the Book will have the Father [Θεον] being the creator of this world because the existence of the Λογος is not known to those who have not been born of Spirit. The person who is of the Book and who perceives *Elohim* and *YHWH* to be linguistic icons representing a single entity has not been born of Spirit. Likewise, the person of the Book who would have the Creator of this world being the Father lacks spiritual understanding and has not been born of Spirit. Hence, the person of the Book who uses the icon *Allah* or *Yah* to represent the Father [Θεον] lacks spiritual understanding. This world has concealed from the person knowledge of Christ Jesus, the beginning and the end of this world—and because the person does not know Jesus, the person is not “saved,” but is part of the mass of humankind to be born of Spirit at a latter time [either before Jesus returns or in the great White Throne Judgment, the eighth day of Sukkot].

If the person does not know Jesus as demonstrated by the person not keeping the commandments but nevertheless expects “Jesus” to catch the person up to heaven, the person has a rude awakening coming. Flesh and blood cannot enter heaven. But it isn’t in not being bodily Raptured into heaven with the associated personal disillusionment where the greatest danger lies for so-called Christians; it is in these “Christians” returning to the faith once delivered (Jude 3), with the faith to which they return being the faith delivered by Hellenistic philosophers as the Trojan horse they would use to win an empire from the Romans ... it was not just prophecies that were concealed by God in a play of shadows, but the very plan of salvation. Without knowledge of Christ Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, no person of the Book can understand the beginning or the end of this creation. And without taking understanding from Scripture through using the things of this world to reveal the previously concealed things of God, no person of the Book, especially the person caught up in “the struggle,” can understand the prophecies of God. For the visible man Jesus, the historical figure used to spread murder and mayhem across six continents, is a “thing” of this world that has been used to conceal the things of God from all who have natural minds. Yes, the “Jesus” everyone knows is not the beginning and end of what God has done and will do, but rather, a dark cloud that conceals the Jesus who was born of Mary from the world, and even from the People of the Book.

Jesus does not and will not manifest Himself to anyone who does not have and does not keep His commandments. And He is the same today as He was yesterday and as He will be tomorrow. The disciple who keeps the least of the commandments and teaches others to do likewise will be called great in the kingdom of God (Matt 5:19), whereas all teachers of lawlessness will be denied when their judgments are revealed (Matt 7:21-23). Two paths, one chosen by the Elect, one followed by those consigned to disobedience. The first path is the narrow path, the seldom traveled path that makes all the difference; it is hard to find, a faint parting through the cares of this world, an invisible way out of spiritual Babylon, that single kingdom of this world that becomes the kingdom of the

Father and His Son (Rev 11:15) halfway through the seven endtime years. However, every person begins on the other path, the broad path, the way that's easy to follow even when the going is difficult. This is the road followed by the sons of disobedience; this is the road along which humankind labors as chained slaves, predestined to die in sin and to be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment, where those who "sinned without the law will also perish without the law" (Rom 2:12) while those who were without the law but did by nature what the law requires will have their conflicting thoughts accuse and even excuse them when judged (vv. 14-16). It is while traveling along this road that those who will be firstfruits turn from sin, repent and are baptized in John's baptism, and then demonstrate love for God by beginning to keep the commandments while still on this road leading to death. This is what was concealed in Jesus saying, "For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt 11:13-15). The twelve that Paul baptized at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) had been baptized into John's baptism, which is for repentance. The person who has repented keeps the commandments. The Law and the Prophets lead to repentance—they prophesy until there is personal repentance. So by repenting, the person finds the way to Jesus.

The person traveling the broad path remains on the broad path until after there is true repentance, which causes the person to keep the commandments. Only then can the person know Jesus, and be known by Jesus.

- Every person is predestined to labor along the wide path as a bondservant to the prince of this world, who makes this broad path personally attractive to those who might otherwise escape. It is especially attractive to his servants who appear as minister of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15).
- Jesus said of John, "This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, / who will prepare your way before you"" (Matt 11:10).
- John points the way to Jesus; John is the one who makes straight the way of the Lord (John 1:23). And the way to Jesus is through repentance, where a narrow, faint path leads away from the broad road.
- Only those individuals who turn from disobedience and are baptized with John's baptism find the way to Christ Jesus. And because the Holy Spirit empowered the twelve at Ephesus, those who are baptized with John's baptism [i.e., repentance] will receive the Holy Spirit without the necessity of it being directly transferred. They will be as three thousand were (Acts chap 2), and as Cornelius was (Acts chap 10) which suggests that rebaptism would be appropriate where full repentance did not precede baptism.

Note well the following: **The model for salvation that was established in the 1st-Century Church that would have the Holy Spirit being received prior to repentance after a representative group was baptized by the Holy Spirit forms the copy and shadow of the endtime third part of humanity (Zech 13:9) that will receive the Holy Spirit when it is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) when the single kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the father and His Christ (Rev 11:15; cf. Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15-19). Every person will then be born of Spirit prior to personal**

repentance; thus, this third part of humankind must, necessarily, live through the last three and a half years of the seven endtime years of tribulation. And the promise is that all who [endure](#) shall be saved (Matt 24:13). All who live through these last three and a half years will have overcome the old dragon, Satan the devil, who when cast to earth, comes as the true Antichrist, claiming to be Christ and requiring all to take the tattoo of the cross to buy and sell (do business). Thus, those who [endure](#) to the end will be those whose faith in God overcame their perceived need to buy and sell; will be those who trust God to preserve their lives rather than trust their lives to a failed and failing economic system.

Again, the present model for receiving the Holy Spirit is found in the second covenant (Deu chaps 29-31), where when in a far land [or on the broad road] a person—whether physically circumcised or uncircumcised doesn't matter—turns towards God and by faith begins to obey His voice in all that He commands in the book of Deuteronomy. This obeying by faith all that God commands is hearing Jesus' words and believing the One who sent Him (John 5:24). Nothing else qualifies as hearing Jesus' words and believing the Father. Nothing short of having the law of God and keeping His commandments will cause Jesus to make Himself known to the person (again, John 14:21), and nothing short of keeping the commandments reveals to man and God that the person knows Jesus (1 John 2:3-4). Therefore, repentance in the form of keeping the commandments marks the narrow path that leads to Jesus and from Jesus to salvation. There is no other way to God other than through Jesus. All People of the Book are expected to come to God through Jesus, for the person who by faith has repented and now lives by the commandments must still profess that Jesus is Lord and believe that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:6-13, especially v. 9).

A person cannot call on the name of Jesus while armed with an Uzi or an AK-47 or an M16. The person must first turn from the ways of this world and be baptized with John's baptism, which ends the condemnation of the Law and the Prophets and begins the restoration of all things. The Body of Christ is restored to life through many disciples being baptized with John's baptism, then with these many disciples journeying down the narrow but straight path that leads to Jesus where they will be born of Spirit. Not until they reach Christ Jesus will they be born of Spirit, and not until they are born of Spirit will life return to the collective Body of Christ. And today (2007), very few disciples have found Jesus although hundreds of millions claim that distinction while actively engaged in disobedience.

Today, repentance and demonstrated love of God through obedience by faith precede being born of Spirit, and no "Christian" repents of disobedience by attempting to enter into God's rest on the 8th-day. No true "Christian" Church makes treaties with the nations of this world, nor participates in the affairs of this world. The kingdom of God is not of this world, nor from this world (John 18:36). Visible *Christendom* has no more connection to Christ Jesus than does Islam, which sincerely believes that Jesus was a prophet. Both belief paradigms form avenues of the broad road, lined with crusades and pilgrimages, holocausts and mass martyrdom. Visible *Christendom*, the Christianity of the cross, represents the belief paradigm of the scoffers who would rule Israel from the Jerusalem above if they could—because they have said, "We have made a covenant with death [the cross], and with Sheol [hell] we have an agreement, when the overwhelming

whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter” (Isa 28:15), God will make justice the line and righteousness the plumb line (v. 17) with which the *Christianity of the Cross* will be beaten down and become a sheer terror to those disciples against whom God has issued a decree of destruction. Yes, God has issued a decree of destruction against visible *Christendom*.

Paul wrote that from the same lump, God makes one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable usage (Rom 9:21) ... “God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory” (vv. 22-23). The person who has made a covenant with the cross is not the one whom God has prepared for glory. Rather, it is the circumcised and uncircumcised person who, by faith, keeps the precepts of the law that has been prepared beforehand to be with God. When Christ Jesus returns, outside the heavenly city of Jerusalem will be the dogs [false believers] and sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood (Rev 22:15). And the person who would attempt to force his or her way into the kingdom on another day other than “the rest of God” loves and practices falsehood.

2.

Herbert Armstrong never understood about being born of Spirit as evidenced by his senior ministers, especially Gerald Waterhouse, claiming that he was the Elijah to come. Spiritual birth and Elijah restoring all things, while not initially seeming to be related, actually are jointly linked in the resurrection of the dead Body of Christ.

For five plus decades (1930s-1980s), Herbert Armstrong taught that a person would not be born of Spirit until the person receives a glorified body when Jesus returns to reveal judgments. Evangelical Christianity teaches that a person is born of Spirit when the person accepts Jesus as his or her personal savior. The truth lies between these two extreme positions, and is most easily seen by working backwards from the end of the age ... on the 12th of Abib, two days before He would be delivered up to be crucified, Jesus taught in the temple, delivering perhaps His most memorable teachings and parables, and when He was going away from the temple, His disciples pointed out to Him the buildings of the temple. He said to His disciples, “Truly, I say to you, there will not be left one stone upon another that will not be thrown down” (Matt 24:2).

As the Passover Lamb of God, a Lamb appropriate to the size of the household of God (Exod 12:3), Jesus was “penned” in Jerusalem so He wasn’t going far, certainly not much farther than the Mount of Olives which was on the edge of the city. So as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, to which He returns when He fights on a day of battle (Zech 14:3-4), His disciples came to Him and asked privately when the stones of the temple would be thrown down “and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age” (Matt 24:3). His disciples did not ask about world conditions between then and when Jesus returns. They asked more narrowly focused questions: when would the temple be destroyed and how would they know when this age ends. And Jesus’ answer is to these narrowly focused questions—

- When Jesus was taken before the chief priests and the whole council was seeking false testimony against Jesus and none was found, two men finally came forward and said that Jesus claimed He was able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days (Matt 26:59-61).
 - In Mark’s account of those who bore false testimony, the witnesses said, ““We heard him say, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and in three days I will build another, not made with hands””” (14:58). About this, the false witnesses testimony did not agree—what they agreed upon and what was true is that the temple of God would no longer be a stone building of granite and marble, but a stone building constructed of disciples.
 - Thus, the stones of the temple that would be cast down were first the granite and marble blocks of the temple Herod built; however, the “Wailing Wall” remains as foundational stones, one atop another, of this physical temple that Roman soldiers did not cast down (ca 70 CE). One stone remains on another to this day. So the physical temple in Jerusalem was not the temple which Jesus primarily referenced.
 - The principle temple of which no one stone would remain atop another is the temple not built with hands, but the temple built without hands, the temple constructed from “living stones” (1 Pet:4-5). Paul identifies disciples as the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17).
 - Therefore, beginning in the 1st-Century, when many came in His name to lead many astray (Matt 24:5), enough disciples were lead astray that not one living stone remained on another of the temple of which Paul laid the foundation (1 Cor 3:10-11). All fellowships in Asia left Paul while he yet lived (2 Tim 1:15). Jewish converts were seeking Paul’s life (Acts 21:20-22, 27-31). Only Luke remained with Paul when Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, telling Timothy to come to him soon, bringing Mark with him (2 Tim 4:9-11).
- At Paul’s first defense in Rome, no one came to stand by him. All deserted him (2 Tim 4:16). Not one living stone stood on the foundation Paul had laid. All of the living stones of the temple not built with hands had been cast down.

The curtain separating the Holy of holies from the rest of the sanctuary was torn, top to bottom, when Jesus died (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The earth shook. Rocks were split. Tombs opened. But there is no record of blocks of granite and marble being cast down from the temple when Jesus died. So the temple Jesus destroyed was not then physically destroyed, but destroyed as though ending the marriage covenant that made Israel the holy nation of God (Exod 19:5-6). Yes, Jesus destroyed the temple [and temple covenant] made with hands by submitting to be sacrificed as the Passover Lamb of God, and yes, He built another temple after three days when He breathed on ten of His disciples and said, ““Receive the Holy Spirit”” (John 20:22). So 70 CE is less important as the date when the stones of the physical temple were cast down as it is the date after which the living stones of the temple not built with hands were cast down, for the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46) and the visible reveals the invisible (Rom

1:20). Hence, the “living stones” of the spiritual temple were not cast down until after Rome sacked Jerusalem, but the *many who came in Jesus’ name to lead many astray* began their work of undermining and levering before Jerusalem was sacked. As a result, all *living stones* were cast down when the Body of Christ died, crucified on the cross with Christ Jesus, with institutionalized lawlessness the cause of the Body’s death.

The temple of God is not a building constructed with human hands, but an edifice constructed of Spirit. Its foundations are the teachings of the Apostle Paul as Jesus revealed Himself to Paul. The disciples who are of *Philadelphia* are pillars in this temple (Rev 3:12). They rest on the foundation Paul laid, and reach upward to the support the roof, the endtime harvest of God. Therefore, no stone could remain atop the foundation Paul laid until the pillars of *Philadelphia* were erected. And as the temple of God is not a physical structure, the Church at Philadelphia is not a physical fellowship: the Philadelphia Church is a spiritual fellowship. The Congregation in the Wilderness was the physical assemblage of physical Israel and as such is directly comparable to physical assemblages of spiritual Israel such as the Latin or Greek or Reformed Church. The spiritual assemblage of spiritual Israel, however, is not a denomination that physically meets together, but a mindset shared by disciples who may well not have met physically and not even know one another physically.

When Jesus answers His disciples’ question about when the temple will be cast down, Jesus took His answer outside of this physical realm and placed it in the spiritual realm, where the temple of God is not constructed through the labor of human hands. Thus, disciples should expect to find His answer about the sign of His return and the close of this age to be like His answer concerning the casting down of the stones of the temple. His answer will not be about physical things [analogous to the physical temple], but about spiritual signs [analogous to the spiritual temple].

- Jesus said that wars and rumors of wars are not a sign of the end of this age (24:6), nor are famines and earthquakes in various places (v. 7).

Let’s again pause for a moment. What is the foremost concern of today’s prophecy pundits? Wars and rumors of wars, correct?

Have you listened to any of today’s prophecy pundits? What are they discussing? War with Iran, Islamic nations acquiring nuclear weapons, fundamentalist Muslims spreading radical Islam—are not today’s visible prophecy pundits primarily concerned with wars and natural catastrophes? Again, Jesus said, concerning wars and rumors of wars, “See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet” (Matt 24:7). So, are not today’s visible prophecy pundits—the Perry Stones and Hal Lindsays and the various Sabbatarian Churches of God of this world—looking at the very things about which Jesus said not to be alarmed? They are, indeed! They do what Jesus said not to do. They are, therefore, all false.

Wow! There are so many prophecy pundits looking at wars and rumors of wars that to paint the many as false leaves brush marks into which some will slide to escape being so labeled, thereby continuing their deception into the seven endtime years. It was easy to identify false prophets when one only had to look at whether the pundit inserted Rome, the Roman Empire, or the Roman Church into endtime prophecies—all who do are unarguably false. There is nothing they can say to justify their addition of Rome to Bible

prophecies. The issue is cut-and-dried, a clichéd expression that still well expresses the finality with which those who add Rome to Scripture are judged; for inevitably, they look for the coming of wars to fulfill Bible prophecies, with their favorite war being a United Europe under the control of the Pope invading the Middle East. But a United Europe under the Pope has already invaded the Middle East in the First and Second Crusades after the 1st post-Christ millennium. So these endtime prophecy pundits who insert Rome in Scripture are merely many little *Peters* crying, “Wolf, wolf,” when the howls they hear are their neighbors’ beagles baying at the moon.

The prophecy pundit that identifies Islamic nations as the king of the South, and European nations as the king of the North has no spiritual understanding and little imagination, for this pundit would again have the Cross fight with the Crescent in yet another crusade to recover present day Jerusalem for Trinitarian Christendom.

Identifying false prophets who look for physical events to fulfill endtime prophecies is actually easier than it first seems, for those who look at wars and natural disasters also insert Rome into Scripture, with few exceptions. All of the churches in Asia had left the Apostle Paul while he yet lived because even Paul could not convey the necessity of looking upward rather than outward, of being spiritually minded rather than physically minded. Paul wrote to the Philippians, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with **minds set on earthly things**” (3:17-18 – emphasis added). Paul was spiritually minded. He instructs the Philippians to keep their eyes on him, not on those who teach according to the flesh, with minds set on earthly things such as money (*cf.* 2 Cor 11:7-15 – Paul establishes the “Christian” example for doing the work of God by not taking support from the saints at Corinth).

The mind that is set on earthly things is set on war and rumors of wars as well as on the concerns of the belly, such as famines and natural disasters. The mind set on earthly things is the mind of the prophecy pundit who teaches that the eleven horns of Daniel chapter seven are eleven Roman emperors, Augustus through Domitian, that 1st-Century Rome’s great crime was its emperor worship, that the last three and a half years of Daniel 7:25 and of Revelation 13:5 are the last three and a half years of Domitian’s reign when he demanded that the whole world worship him [scripturally, these periods are not the same three and a half years: taken together, they form the seven endtime years]. The mind set on earthly things inevitably has the iron legs of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw being the divided Roman Empire, and has the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven being the Roman Empire, or the Holy Roman Empire, or the Roman Church when, again [and said loudly], Rome is not mentioned in biblical prophecies whereas Babylon, Persia, and Greece are. The mind set on earthly things cannot believe that Rome doesn’t belong in biblical prophecies such is this mind’s natural hatred of Rome. The mind set on earthly things cannot grasp that with Jews and Jewish converts wanting to kill Paul and with all in Asia leaving Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome, and finally all but a handful abandoning Paul before he was slain, the Body of Christ died in the 1st-Century. The “young Christian Church” that overthrew the Roman emperor-worship cult was the philosophical Trojan horse that Greeks constructed to win an empire they could not

defeat with swords and spears; it was not built on the foundation that Paul laid in heavenly Jerusalem. Rather, its foundation was laid in lawlessness, with disobedience as its walls, and world domination its desired crown. But the Chinese Empire was at this same time as large and as powerful as the Roman Empire. And next year, some prophecy pundit whose mind is set on earthly things will likely say that the two legs of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw was the Roman Empire and the Chinese Empire, such is the grasping at shadows of these many false prophets.

Returning now to Jesus' Olivet discourse: Jesus said that all the physical things that would happen—famines, earthquakes, wars, the rise and fall of nations, including Rome—were but the beginning of birth pains through which Israel would deliver sons of God (Matt 24:8). **Everything that physically occurs to humankind is not a sign of Jesus' coming and of the close of the age. And this is what the many false prophecy pundits cannot comprehend; this is what the natural mind cannot comprehend.** To the many false prophets, the recent rise of militant Islamic fundamentalism must be a sign of the end of the age. The global dislike of the United States must be a sign of the end of the age. The British losing the Suez Canal and the United States losing the Panama Canal must be a sign of the end. The creation of the United Nations must be a sign. Social Security numbers, global positioning satellites, imbedded computer chips, GM's On-Star navigational system, global warming, British and American troops in Iraq—all must be signs of the end. But Jesus said, Not so. He said that all of these physical things were merely the beginning of the labor pains through which the last Eve would give birth. The hard labor pains of actual child birth would see,

- Jesus' disciples delivered into tribulation, put to death, and hated by all nations for His name's sake (Matt 24:9).
- Jesus' disciples would fall away, betray one another, and hate one another (24:10).
- From Jesus' disciples would arise many false prophets to lead many astray (24:11).
- Within Jesus' disciples lawlessness would increase and the love of many would grow cold (24:12).

If a person were to stop right here, an argument could be made that all of the above occurred in the 1st-Century before Domitian perished. But that would be an argument based on physical events, and it is difficult to make the case that 1st or 2nd Century hatred by all nations was a sign of Jesus' return, or that the growing Jesus movement in the 2nd-Century was based on disciples falling away, betraying one another, and having their love grow cold.

But it is the next thing Jesus told His disciples that separates the false prophets from those who have been called to do the work of restoration:

- With the above four points occurring, Jesus said that the one who [endures to the end](#) shall be saved (24:13). And this is the first “good news” that follows His disciples being put to death, hated by all nations, falling away, betraying one another, led astray by false prophets, returning to lawlessness, having their love grow cold.

- This good news [gospel] of the kingdom—what good news does Jesus reference if not the good news of the preceding sentence—would be, Jesus said, proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations (24:14).
- After the good news that all who will *endure to the end of the tribulation into which Jesus' disciples are thrust* is delivered to the world, the end of the age would come.
- Thus, the sign of the close of this age is the tribulation into which Jesus' disciples are delivered and the worldwide proclamation that those who endure shall be saved.
- But the gospel delivered to the world by the visible Christian church is not a message about enduring to the end, but a message about the person Jesus of Nazareth. So the only sign Jesus gave of His coming has not yet happened.

The gospel to be delivered to the world before the end of this age comes is NOT a message about Jesus, nor the announcement of the arrival of Jesus' kingdom, but the more narrowly focused message that every human being who “endures” to the end shall be saved.

Why? Yes, why is everyone who endures to the end saved? What about repentance, professing that Jesus is Lord, bringing forth fruits? Why is enduring tribulation the basis for being saved? Will a Muslim enduring tribulation be saved, it would seem so? That is what Jesus said, isn't it?

It is here, with the only sign of the close of this age, where understanding spiritual birth is required.

Because Herbert Armstrong, Ellen G. White, Perry Stone, and thousands of others who make and have made their livings explicating biblical prophecy have not understood spiritual birth, the only sign Jesus gave of the close of this age has been misunderstood. And without understanding spiritual birth, the focus of these false prophets can only be on wars and rumors of wars, on the return of Jews from Russia, on Arab oil producers accepting payments in Euros, on Iran's nuclear program, on Pakistan having “the bomb.” Thirty years ago, Armstrong fretted about the French having 75 nuclear tipped missiles, and about a Franco-German United Europe sending Britain and the United States into political oblivion. He publicly said that the United States would never win another war. Today, his successors fret about the decline of America's social values [and they have declined] and about America's trade deficit and about China owning so much of America's debt, and his successors predict that America could come to an end any day, that America cannot win another war, that inevitable defeat in Iraq will spell the end of America as a superpower. They sell the same stale loaf of bread that Herbert Armstrong sold half a century ago, and they have been selling this same loaf for so long that their “sales professionalism” far exceeds the value of the product they hawk. Only a new generation reared on the fear of global warming and of cheap energy will purchase the same lie that their parents and grandparents heard on worldwide radio broadcasts forty and fifty years ago.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ... For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will” (John 5:19, 21). So if the Father raises the dead and gives them life, to whom does the Son give life? He cannot very well give life to the dead, for the Father has already raised the dead and given them life. And if the Son cannot give life to the dead, He must necessarily give life to the living.

Continuing, Jesus said, “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father” (John 5:22-23) ... the Father raises the dead and gives them life, but He judges no one. All judgment has been left to the Son, who gives life to the living. Thus, judgment by the Son is the giving of life, or the withholding of life from those whom the Father has raised from the dead. And the question must be asked, what happens to the one whom the Father has raised from the dead and to whom the Father has given life when the Son withholds a second giving of life?

Actually, Jesus partially answers this question in the following: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live” (John 5:24-25).

If the dead could hear, when Jesus was speaking, the voice of the Son of God—and all who heard Jesus speak were then hearing the voice of the Son of God—then “the dead” are those who heard Jesus speak on this Sabbath day when the invalid of 38 years was healed. And if these “dead men” believed the one who sent Jesus, then these dead persons would have life without coming into judgment.

But the Father must raise the dead and give them life—

The Father would give life to those who heard Jesus speak not through a physical resurrection from death, for these *dead men* were physically alive [these are the “dead” whom Jesus said should bury the dead], but through a second birth, a birth by Spirit (John 3:3-8), an additional life given to the dead-but-physically-alive person who heard Jesus speak, an additional life received through the divine Breath of God [Πνευμα Ἄγιον], a life that is not of this world and cannot be seen with eyes or discerned through the physical senses, but a “real” life that makes the dead-but-physically-living person alive spiritually.

A person is born of Spirit when the Father draws the person from the world (John 6:44, 65) and gives to this person life through receipt of His divine breath. This person has now been “raised from the dead,” but this person who has been raised from the dead is not the tent of flesh in which “this son of God” is now domiciled. This new creature is a life within the mind and heart, a life that has not been born subject to disobedience but born free to keep the commandments of God. This new creature is, literally, a son of God, for this new creature has no parent but God the Father. And the Son must give life to this new creature in the form of the mortal flesh putting on immortality.

In Christian dogma, “personhood” is not defined by the actions of the flesh, but by the thoughts of the mind and desires of the heart. Thus, the person is not the body. The

person dwells in the body as the patriarch Abraham dwelt in a tent. And Greek philosophers long ago borrowed the pagan concept of the immortal soul to represent Christian “personhood,” whereas a human being has no spiritual life until born of Spirit, which is a second birth not now received until the fleshly body has reached maturity and is capable of repentance. This gift of a second birth, spiritual life, is of God (Rom 6:23) and is not of human parents.

The physically-living person who hears Jesus’ words and believes the One who sent Jesus does so because the Father has given life to this person, for “the dead” must be made spiritually alive before they can hear the spiritually uttered words of Jesus. Oh, *the dead* can hear the sound that Jesus’ words make as they move air molecules, just as *the dead* saw the invalid healed on the Sabbath day as a self-evident violation of the Sabbath commandment—after all, the man had been an invalid for 38 years; he could have been healed on the following day, the first day of the week, or so *the dead* evidently reasoned. But the renewing Breath of God (Ps 104:30) was “uttered” on the Sabbath, not on the following day when Israel could not enter into God rest (*cf.* Heb 3:16-4:11; Ps 95:10-11; Num chap 14), with the “rest of God” that caused the renewal of the invalid coming through Jesus delivering the Father’s words.

Therefore, in order to hear Jesus’ words and to discern spiritual things, a person must be born of Spirit, and the person born of Spirit who believes the Father passes from death to life without coming under judgment. The Son will automatically give this born-of-Spirit disciple immortality, but will not necessarily give immortality to the flesh of this person while he or she lives physically. The inner new creature born of Spirit and the flesh are separate entities. And except for those who remain physically alive when Jesus returns, the flesh of every born-of-Spirit son of God will return to dust before Jesus returns to reveal judgments (1 Cor 4:5), or as the case might be, lack of judgments for the ones who have passed from death to life.

The fleshly body of the born-of-Spirit son of God belongs to the same world as wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, and false prophets. The born-of-Spirit new creature belongs to the heavenly realm, where all who hear the words of Jesus and believe the Father pass from death to life; all who endure in belief will be saved and will not come under judgment. And **the good news that must be proclaimed to the world as a witness to all nations is that all of humankind will be born of Spirit before the end of this age can come.** And when born of Spirit, there will no longer be Muslim or Buddhist or Hindi. All will be spiritually born People of the Book; all will be of the holy nation of Israel (1 Pet 2:9). Thus, it will not be a Muslim who endures to the end, but a son of God whose flesh was a follower of Mohammad. And the flesh of the one who has spurned swine’s flesh for a lifetime will have an easier time being holy as God is holy (1 Pet 1:14-16) than will the flesh of the one who has eaten every abominable creature imaginable. But the inner, new creature of both must rule the flesh. It is this inner new creature that will pass from death to life without coming under judgment through enduring to the end.

If all of humankind must, necessarily, be born of Spirit prior to the end of this age, then the baptism of the world in Spirit (Matt 3:11) through the Holy Spirit being poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) must also occur before the end of this age.

The physical temple of Herod, constructed of blocks of granite and marble, belonged to the same world as human wars and rumors of wars, as earthquakes and famines, as natural disasters and confederations of nations, as crusades and smart bombs. The spiritual temple, constructed of living stones and constructed by Spirit, belongs to the heavenly realm into which flesh and blood cannot enter to make observations and to take measurements. If someone from this heavenly realm does not come and reveal to human beings what happens and will happen in this heavenly realm, human beings would be utterly ignorant about what occurs among those who reign over humankind through the *power of the air*. But because those who are Jesus' disciples are also the friends of Jesus, the Son has made known to those who hear His voice what is happening and what will happen between now and His return. Disciples who lived in the 1st-Century did not need to know that the *many who would come in Jesus name to lead many astray* would be casting down the *living stones* of the spiritual temple. However, this knowledge is necessary prior to the resurrection of the Body of Christ. Thus, sealed prophecies would be unsealed in the time of the end. And with their unsealing comes knowledge of the [second Passover](#) liberation of Israel.

The tribulation that comes upon Israel and that produces the hatred, betrayal, false prophets and lawlessness that form the backdrop for the good news that all who endure to the end shall be saved begins with the second Passover, when a division of humankind is made apparent by firstborns covered by the blood of the Lamb living while firstborn not covered by the blood of Christ die.

Was it coincidence that I was drafted to reread prophecy forty years after Garner Ted Armstrong told senior evangelists there would be no new revelation, that his dad had it right? The defense of my claim about being drafted is in what I write. My asserting the validity of the claim means nothing of itself. Only when a second Passover occurs can anyone be certain, and for the firstborns of Israel not covered by Christ, it will be too late. They will be found out of covenant when death angels pass over the Church.

If, however, it isn't coincidence that I was drafted forty years to the day from when Garner Ted said there would be no new revelation, then the work of Herbert Armstrong was as he claimed, the restored work of God, albeit the work of an imperfect messenger. But his work was spiritually dead long before it achieved most of its physical success. The greatest amount of opulence came after its spiritual demise ... the work of Herbert Armstrong is now being mocked by many who once supported this self-proclaimed endtime apostle. I won't join in the mocking, for in 1973, in Blythe Arena, I sat on a short section of elevated bleachers behind the speakers' platform when Herbert Armstrong addressed more than 7,000 feast attendees. Before he arrived in the arena, I noticed a padded chair in the front row of seats that wasn't there previously. He entered without fanfare, and took his seat in the chair. A few mothers with infants approached him. He greeted the mothers and patted the infants on their heads, and was generally approachable and accessible to anyone who desired to say hello to him. Most of the attendees didn't realize he was in the building. He didn't have managers or handlers or an entourage. His physical stature was small, and he was easily concealed by the few people standing around him (multiple clusters of attendees had gathered in various locations throughout the arena). Thus, my impression of the man doesn't come from seeing the

opulence in which he lived, but from seeing mothers walk up to him and extend their hands. He seemed to genuinely enjoy contact with “ordinary” people.

The above doesn’t mean that I approve of him living as how he envisioned that glorified saints will live in the kingdom. Nor does the above mean that I now support any of his prophetic understanding. Rather, the above means that I saw a man history will judge more kindly than will the generation that followed him.

On another day at the same Feast and from the same short section of bleachers, I also watched Garner Ted and Stanley Radar with their entourages arrive after the opening prayer, and leave before the closing prayer. Both men didn’t have time to fellowship with those people who were making their lifestyles possible. So while the present generation of in-house skeptics bravely attacks the deceased Herbert Armstrong, determining that he was a plagiarist who was possibly guilty of incest, I will point back to me being drafted to reread prophecy, and to this apologetic. If Herbert Armstrong was not, prior to 1962, doing the work of God, then the forty years to the hour and likely to the minute from when Garner Ted said there would be no new revelation as a length of time is purely coincidental. If the senior Armstrong was, however, prior to 1962 doing the work of God, then the forty years correspond to the length of time that the holy nation that wouldn’t enter the promised land because of unbelief (Ps 95:10-11; Heb 3:19) wandered in the wilderness until dead. This juxtaposition suggests that the Churches of God are today dead.

So that there is never any miss-understanding: the man Herbert Armstrong was either doing the work of God prior to 1962, or the forty years to the day from when his son, Garner Ted, said there would be no new revelation is purely coincidental. The either/or argumentative fallacy does not here apply, for the two positions are absolutes. Either Herbert Armstrong was doing the work of God, or he was not. He could not be almost doing the work of God. And if he was, then Garner Ted killed that work by rejecting revelation, for Armstrong’s prophetic understandings were physical [were of wars and rumors of wars] and did not come to pass. His prophetic understandings were not of God, a reality his detractors have used to label the entirety of his work as false. But this label of falseness is too tightly glued to the entirety of his work if Garner Ted killed his work in 1962. And it would be problematically impossible for the forty years to the day, hour, and minute to be anything but unusually coincidental if Garner Ted did not kill Armstrong’s work on Thursday morning, at about 8:12 am PST (two hours behind Central Standard Time), of the second full week of January 1962.

The divisions of Armstrong’s work that cling to his prophetic teachings also cling to keeping the precepts of the law. Many disciples within these divisions have mentally journeyed far from the landscapes of their nativity. They have cleansed their hearts, but they do not understand prophecy. Thus, Christ cannot use them to teach the third part of humankind that will be born of Spirit halfway through the seven endtime years. They look forward to a place of physical safety: that place will be the grave for them. If they faithfully continue in their spiritual understanding, they will die physically during the first half of the seven years of tribulation, and they will be resurrected when Christ returns. And with physical death they will be spared the horrors of living through all seven of the endtime years.

My argument is that as the first Elijah took three times lying over the dead body of the son of the widow of Zarephath before breath returned to the body, the last Elijah takes three times lying over His dead Body, breathing into this corpse's nostrils, before divine Breath is returned to the Church. The first time involved Andreas Fischer and the Sabbatarian Anabaptists of the mid-16th Century. The second time occurs in America and extends through the German Seventh-Day Baptists of the 18th Century until Herbert Armstrong was, early in the 20th-Century, called into fellowship with the Oregon Conference of Church of God, 7th-Day [a division of Seventh Day Adventists that did not subscribe to the teachings of Ellen G. White]. The successful third time will occur at the second Passover, when the Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

If the forty years aren't coincidence, then Father and Son are working on a very precise timeline, suggested by Israel leaving Egypt 430 days to the day (Exod 12:41). And the work of God was for decades being done by a flim-flam ad man, who had no formal training and more ego than stature. He had no prophetic insight of his own, but pandered the two-house doctrine into a message about national repentance or loss of freedom. This call to national repentance rang true in an era when the scriptural values of founding fathers were being dissolved in the acid criticism of industrial pollution and individual excess. The American monomyth of the lone individual overcoming the wilderness became both the bait Herbert Armstrong swallowed, and the fuel that fed the radio broadcasts blanketing the nation and much of the world. This monomyth has been attacked by Feminists and Marxists, for this monomyth comes from the spiritual king of Greece, who has flown out of the west to attack the spiritual kings of Persia. Because Herbert Armstrong never understood prophecy, he never understood how greatly he was affected by the Adversary. If he had, he wouldn't have allowed the physical trappings of wealth to divert his commission, thereby sending his work into the grave with him.

If the forty years aren't coincidence, then those who now mock the senior Armstrong need to temper their criticism with the understanding that Father and Son corrected a problem according to their schedule, not ours. Those who mock risk becoming permanently crosswise to Father and Son ... disciples within the Armstrong fiefdom regularly prayed that God would intervene in the affairs of the fellowship. When God did so intervene by ending the mockery of second level administrators trying to undermine the teachings of the fellowship, everyone became Armstrong's judge, with some condemning him to hell and others exalting him to Christ-like status. He is not worthy of either.

My claim of being drafted to reread prophecy is either true or false. I can relate what happened on that Thursday morning, but the truth of the claim will be historically assigned. Until then, a person will have to determine truth by hearing the voice of the true Shepherd, for my claim isn't of having *studied* prophecies until I understand them, but of being a student through which (or to whom) understanding has been given. The claim is simply that I have been given a job to do by the Elijah to come, the spiritual Elijah who will restore all things. Understanding has not come through vision or through apparent supernatural means, but by "rereading" the text that I had read before. Thus, what I write will seem shallow to some, and over-the-top to others, for what I find in Scripture is radically different from what pundits before me found. But the unsealing of a sealed text requires the production of a new text that discloses previously revealed but

secret knowledge. Thus, the case for me being drafted is, really, in whether a second Passover liberation occurs at the beginning of seven endtime years of tribulation. This liberation was foreshadowed by the physical liberation of Israel from Pharaoh, and this liberation will foreshadow the sixth trumpet plague, the liberation of humanity that shortly precedes the Holy Spirit being poured upon all flesh. Many, many prophecy pundits will identify this second Passover liberation of spiritually circumcised Israel as the sixth trumpet plague. They are or will be false prophets. They will recognize the man of perdition as the antichrist, and thirty days after the man of perdition declares himself god, the split Mount of Olives will swallow armies as Christ Jesus fights on a day of battle. The false prophets will now embrace the old dragon as the Messiah: when he is cast from heaven and comes as a roaring lion to devour disciples, Satan will come claiming to be the returning Messiah. The false prophets will mistake Satan, disguised as an angel of light, for Christ Jesus, and they will cause many disciples to accept the mark of death, the tattoo of the cross. Because of them doing so, even the memory of these false prophets will be removed from Israel such is the heinousness of them teaching without being called.

Because I was called to “reread prophecy,” understanding has come piece by piece, not all at once—has come as I “reread” Scripture and found out that what I was previously taught (and sometimes what I have previously written) was wrong, or only partially correct. This does not negate being called to reread prophecy, but places upon me the same burden that is laid upon others: if a person cannot admit that the person is wrong or has been wrong, then the person has too much vanity to enter the kingdom of God.

An apologetic is a formal defense made in speech or writing. The defense herein made is of the claim that I was, indeed, drafted or called to reread prophecy. The evidence to support this claim will be the entirety of this manuscript, not an earlier manuscript or writings of two or three or five years ago. Again, when I was called for this task, my understanding of prophecy was orthodox Church of God, with minor exceptions. I have had to unlearn precept-upon-precept exegesis, the means by which the drunken priests of the physically circumcised house of Israel caused the nation to stumble, fall backwards and be taken captive. The spiritually circumcised house of Israel has also used precept-upon-precept exegesis to cause a royal priesthood to be ensnared and taken captive by the Adversary way back in the 1st-Century. When resurrected from death, many within Israel will again use precept-upon-precept exegesis to send disciples to their physical deaths.

The once steady disciples of Herbert Armstrong now waver about in the winds of doctrine, ever studying but unable even to agree on a calendar. It is as if those evangelists who a generation ago taught precept-upon-precept exegesis built for themselves houses of straw that are, today, ablaze with discord. Every person has a message; has a word of knowledge; has an insight, few agreeing with anyone, even fewer willing to hear any voice but their own. They constitute an army at war with itself, every man slaying his brother while the world watches [until bored].

Historical exegesis, especially as practiced by Trinitarian fellowships, is the bane of good scholarship; for it elevates the traditions of men to the status of Scripture. All belief paradigms are either tradition or text based, with text based paradigms becoming

tradition based after a generation or two. A prophecy that has been sealed and kept secret until the time of the end could not possibly, if the Father and the Son mean what has been inspired, have been understood by someone earlier than that generic period identified as *the time of the end*. Therefore, every reading of that prophecy earlier than this generic period is uninspired and without spiritual value; every reading is of men or demons. Historical understanding is without spiritual relevance. Likewise, Jesus spoke only in figures of speech so that the secret things hidden from the foundation of the world could be disclosed but not revealed. The synoptic gospels record these figures of speech, or parables, uttered not to make meaning plain but to allow every person to hear what the person chooses to hear. Jesus didn't speak plainly to His disciples earlier than the night He was betrayed. The public revealing of what He spoke as the Son of Man comes with His revealing (Luke 17:26–30), but He will do nothing without first revealing the thing through His prophets, who spoke under inspiration of the Spirit or Breath of God. He will, again through the Spirit or Breath, disclose to disciples His revealing prior to when the phenomenon occurs. Thus, denominations that formed around and have fostered the spiritual understanding of church fathers or historic figures only partially understand Scripture at best. Nevertheless, they elevate the traditions they have received and to which they adhere, thereby stopping their ears from again hearing the voice of the True Shepherd. And with their willful refusal to hear His voice, they remain ignorant about their forthcoming nakedness when they as the Body of the Son of Man are revealed. They did long ago what Garner Ted did in 1962.

The Bible is spiritually understood through typology, through the night/day, darkness/light metaphor, which has death preceding life. With life comes judgment, which is today upon the household of God (1 Pet 4:17 — baptism is into the death of the old self, crucified with Christ Jesus). Sin or lawlessness (1 John 3:4) requires death. The man Jesus of Nazareth was sacrificed at Calvary as the paschal Lamb of God. He who had no sin was made sin by taking on the lawlessness of the world, consigned to disobedience for a season (Rom 11:32). Thus, drawn or called sons of disobedience are made holy through the sacrifice of the Lamb. These drawn sons of disobedience are the many who are called (Matt 22:14); they are the invited guests to the wedding supper. But the called sons of disobedience can be likened to the physically circumcised nation that left Egypt. This nation didn't enter God's rest, but was rejected because of unbelief that became disobedience (Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:16–4:11). Likewise, the old self or nature of the called son of disobedience, crucified with Christ Jesus in baptism, must die in a spiritual Wilderness of Sin. The new man, a son of God born-from-above into the same tabernacle or tent of flesh possessed by the crucified old man, will cross the Jordan and enter Judea, a mental landscape determined by Sabbath observance, where he will live as a spiritual Judean. This son of God is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, free nor bond—all of these traits pertain to the tent of flesh. Again, it is the tent that's plumbed male or female, that's physically circumcised or physically uncircumcised (the meaning of Jew and Greek), that's slave or free. The person living inside the tent of flesh, spiritually dead before being born-from-above, was defined by the tent in the natural world; the old self had an intimate relationship with the tent. But the son of God born into this tent is not defined by the tent. Rather, definition comes from the Oedipus-like act of breaking the legs of the crucified old self, of mentally crossing the Jordan, and

living in the mental topography of spiritual Judea, the capital of which is the Jerusalem above. Disciples are to pull the stakes of their fleshy tents, cross into Judea where the new son of God is spiritually circumcised as uncircumcised Israelites under Joshua were circumcised before taking the Passover (Josh 5:2-7). This new son of God will begin living as a Judean, repeated for emphasis for failure to live as Judeans is the error that the greater Church has inherited through historical exegesis.

It took more than thirty years before my crucified old self weakened enough that it didn't define me—and then, it took receiving clean spiritual garments before that old self was gone.

The physical geography of pre-Flood Eden visibly represents humanity's invisible mental topography, with prophecies about, and histories of nations within Eden spiritually pertaining to mental landscapes and mindsets of born-from-above disciples. Many are called to live in spiritual Eden, but few are chosen to live in the garden of God, for this choice is made by the disciple. And to be chosen to live in the garden, the disciple must mentally journey to Judea, then to its capital, the Jerusalem that is from above, then must be crucified with Christ and buried in the garden tomb. Under the second covenant mediated by Moses, the covenant to which better promises were added and of which Christ Jesus is now the mediator [better promises cannot be added to that which has been abolished], *YHWH* placed the choice of life and good, death and evil before the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt (Deu 30:15). This mixed circumcised and uncircumcised nation was to choose one or the other, life or death. The nation could not refuse to choose. And so it is with every disciple. Judgment is today upon the household of God, but this judgment is what the household chooses. Disciples will either live by all that is written in Deuteronomy (30:9-10), or they will mentally live in a portion of real estate outside of the garden of God. Disciples are thrust out of Egypt or sin, and they must follow Jesus from Sinai to the plains of Moab where the second covenant is given. Here choice must be made. Life through crossing the Jordan and living as a Judean; death through returning to Sin and living as a person of "the nations"—if a person does not cross the Jordan, the person is automatically excluded from eating of the tree of life. No one outside of Jerusalem can eat of the tree of life that is at the center of the garden of God.

Again, for emphasis, the physical geography of the region incorporated within pre-Flood Eden's boundaries is the visible equivalent of an invisible mental landscape that encompasses the mindsets of every human being. How every person (called or not) thinks can be located somewhere on the topographical map of pre-Flood Eden, which stretched from Assyria in the north to Egypt in the south. This is the region ruled by Babylon and king Nebuchadnezzar, who was a visible (and lively) representation of the spiritual king of Babylon. This mental landscape is today ruled by the spiritual king of Babylon, to whom all of humanity has been consigned so that God can have mercy upon all.

The greater Christian Church entered Judea behind the Apostles, but this spiritually holy nation of God would not walk in God's way nor obey His rules; the nation profaned His Sabbaths, and did what the physical nation of Israel did. Typology has the physically circumcised Israelite dwelling in a fabric tent in the Wilderness of Sin representing the disciple's liberated but crucified old-self dwelling in a fleshy tent. The uncircumcised child born to the physically circumcised Israelite while in the Wilderness of Sin now

represents the son of God born-from-above into the tabernacle or tent of flesh of the liberated old-self. This uncircumcised child is physically circumcised after the holy nation crosses the Jordan—except for Joshua and Caleb, the physically circumcised nation that left Egypt dies in the Wilderness, and doesn't cross the Jordan. But once across the Jordan, uncircumcision becomes circumcision (again Joshua 5:2–7) through keeping the precepts of the law (Rom 2:26), and the children are expected to keep the law [covenant] of God. Thus, the physically circumcised nation dwelling in houses of wood and stone in Judea—houses that they did not build—in typology represents the bodies disciples receive upon glorification. The fight led by Joshua and Caleb against the inhabitants of Canaan, necessary before receiving houses the nation didn't build, represents the fight of faith every disciple must make against lawlessness.

To disciples, physical circumcision has no meaning for it is of the body or tabernacle in which the born-from-above son of God dwells. Physical circumcision is equivalent to removing an Arctic entryway to a house, with skin color the equivalent of house paint. A homeowner might gain a few additional square feet of interior living space if an Arctic entryway is removed, but its removal doesn't affect the homeowner. Likewise, one homeowner dwells in a white house, and another homeowner dwells in a red house. The color of each dwelling has no bearing on who the homeowner is. Same for how the house is plumbed. The son of God born into the dwelling of the old-self lives in the dwelling until mature, when this son of God will receive a glorious dwelling of his own. Until then, the son of God must make do with the dwelling in which he was born, and must live within its limitations as this son grows in grace and knowledge.

Physical circumcision is directly analogous to wars and rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes in various places. The Circumcision Faction with whom the Apostle Paul had a running battle throughout his ministry is manifest in endtime false prophets that look for physical nations to fulfill prophecies about Israel, as well as in endtime teachers that emphasize the flesh and the genealogy of the disciple. The two-house warning is a doctrine of the endtime Circumcision Faction, and this teaching affectively bars many disciples from understanding Bible prophecies.

Again, in typology, the physically circumcised Israelite dwelling in a house in Egypt represents the old-self dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh. But this physically circumcised Israelite is a firstborn son of *YHWH* (Exod 4:22), just as born-of-Spirit disciples will be the spiritually circumcised firstborn sons of the Father when the Body is resurrected from death—and the circumcised nation in Egypt did not liberate itself by military means (i.e., physical means). Rather, the nation was liberated from physical bondage by God and by promise (Gen 46:4). The spiritually circumcised nation, the spiritual firstfruits, will likewise be liberated from spiritual bondage to sin by God and by promise. And herein lays the forthcoming difficulty for the greater Christian Church: of the adult Israelites living in Egypt, Joshua and Caleb alone cross the Jordan. The entire nation could have. But because of unbelief (Num 14:11), the nation believed the ten witnesses, not the two, and the nation was condemned to death. The nation then acknowledged that it had sinned against God (v. 40), but it compounded its despising of God through its unbelief by trying to enter God's rest on the day following when the nation should have entered.

Therefore, in typology, the physically circumcised Israelite dwelling in Egypt performs double duty. The physically circumcised Israelite represents the conscious self

of the person who has not been born of Spirit, but who has a relationship with God. Again, when moving from physical to spiritual a physical person represents a self-aware mindset or the “personhood” of an individual just as physical geography represents mental topography. A person in a house now represents *personhood* in a body of flesh. And this is the juxtaposition the Apostle Paul makes that hasn’t been well understood, for the Egyptian in a house now represents the conscious self or *personhood* of the individual who has not been drawn or called by God. Both Egyptians and Hebrews lived in Egypt as today those who have not yet been called live alongside those who have been. Humanity is no longer divided between physically Circumcised and Uncircumcised (Eph 2:14–15); rather, humanity is presently divided between those who have been called by God and those who have not been.

Spiritual birth is not of the flesh and has no fleshly marker or distinguishing characteristic. The physically circumcised Israelite in an Egyptian house represents the conscious self of the called disciple while the law of sin and death still dwells in the disciple’s members (Rom 7:25). Thus, in typology, the physically circumcised adult Israelite in an Egyptian house represents the old self (i.e., the personhood of the drawn and called disciple) in a tabernacle of flesh, consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32). The child born into this household represents the new creature or new self that is born of Spirit. The old self must die before the child inherits the house. If the old self outlives the house, the new creature has no inheritance. Therefore, the new creature must break the legs of the crucified old self, which too many “Christians” were unwilling to do in the 1st-Century and remain unwilling to do in the 21st-Century.

Collectively, in typology, adult Israelites, physically circumcised and thereby physically set apart from Egyptians, dwelling in Egyptian houses represent the greater Christian Church, spiritually called and spiritually set apart from the world. Like the physical nation, holy to God, the spiritual nation, holy to God, dwells in housing owned by a spiritual Pharaoh, the king of Babylon. The fleshy body of every disciple is subject to corruption, to decay, to death, and is too often instrumental in sin ruling over this called Christian. Thus, this called Israelite needs liberated from the law of sin and death (actually, two laws that will be separated when the Son of Man is revealed). When the second Passover liberation occurs, disciples will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to rule over the flesh; disciples will be liberated from indwelling sin and death. However, true liberation from Death, the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, doesn’t occur until the middle of the seven endtime years of tribulation when dominion is taken from this beast. And as the firstborn of the Egyptians were ransomed to liberate the physical nation from physical bondage (Isa 43:3), the firstborn of spiritual Babylon will be given as ransom for the liberation of the spiritual nation from sin (v. 4).

Unfortunately, many endtime disciples will reject what comes next through saying some variation of *My God would never do that!* ... A third of humankind will die in the second Passover liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death, and Israel will be made an acceptable sacrifice to God, the Body of the Son of Man, the Body of Christ, the Body of the Passover Lamb of God. There will now be no condemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1). Liberated disciples, all sons of God, will do what Jesus did in fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law (v. 4) so that the third part of humanity can walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Jesus said, “A disciple is

not above his teacher, or a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master” (Matt 10:24-25). Disciples will walk as Jesus walked; they will also be sacrificed as Jesus was sacrificed. And they will be buried in the garden of God as Jesus was buried in the Garden Tomb.

On the Lord’s day, John sees in vision,

I saw under the altar the [ψυχᾶς] of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brother should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. (Rev 6:9-11)

As disciples were martyred in the 1st-Century, they will likewise be martyred in the 21st-Century.

The Body of Jesus died on the cross, crucified with Jesus in the 1st-Century. Except for a remnant, the resurrected endtime Body of Jesus will be sacrificed as Jesus was sacrificed and as disciples were sacrificed in the 1st-Century. These disciples will physically die in the 21st-Century through barbarism foreshadowed by the Holocaust. Yes, Hitler’s slaughter of six million physically-circumcised Jews anticipates the slaughter of as many Sabbatarian Christians—spiritually circumcised Jews (Rom 2:26-29)—during the first three and a half years of the tribulation.

Western Europe and Germany in particular has vowed that there will never again be a slaughter as there was in the Holocaust, but they cannot keep this vow regardless of how hard they try. The slaughter of spiritual Israel is sure to occur, and those who have taken vows to prevent such a slaughter will try to stop it. Instead of Germany leading a coalition against the United States and Britain to send the English-speaking peoples into national captivity as Herbert Armstrong taught and as his successors still teach (the so-called two-house warning), secular Western Europe will intervene in an attempt to stop the slaughter of Sabbatarians, Jews and Christians, by so-called “good” Christians. But they will find that their backdoor has been left open to Islam’s conversion to Arian Christianity. War will not cease from early in the Tribulation until its end, and the alliances of nations will not be any that today’s visible prophecy pundits have so-far proposed.

Sabbatarian Christians will not die alone once the seven endtime years begin. Most of Observant natural Israel will likewise perish. They are the selected Passover lamb, penned in the Sabbath since Joshua crossed the Jordan on the 10th day of the first month three and a half millennia ago. And the world will rejoice with the death of each Israelite. God delivers Israel into the hands of the man of perdition (Dan 7:25) for the destruction of the flesh so that the Spirit might be saved when judgments are revealed as Paul commanded the saints at Corinth to do with the man who was with his step-mother (1 Cor 5:5). However, those who slay their brothers will be remembered: God keeps track of who does what.

Once disciples are liberated from indwelling sin and death, the Son of Man will be fully revealed (Luke 17:30). The Body of Christ will be revealed; the mantle of Christ

Jesus' righteousness will be laid aside. Grace will end, for it will no longer be needed. The disciple who commits sin after being liberated from indwelling sin and death will commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and this blasphemy will not be forgiven [because Christ is no longer covering the disciple's sins]. Thus, since the lawlessness of the world (of the third part of humanity – Zech 13:9) when coming to God must be covered by death to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law, the martyrdom of liberated disciples throughout the first three and a half years of the Tribulation is necessary to fulfill the requirements of the law that sin must be covered by death. But this is not something “Christians” today want to believe, or to even contemplate. Therefore, the resurrected Body of Christ will have its faith severely tried individually and collectively when faced with martyrdom. Only the remnant that keep the commandments and understands prophecy will cross from the first half of the Tribulation into the second half, where this remnant will be to the third part of humankind as the two witnesses were to the resurrected Body of Christ throughout the first half.

Then the killer: the sixth trumpet plague (Rev 9:15) is the giving of a third of humanity, when all of humankind will be as Israel was in Egypt, the captive firstborn son of God, as the ransom of humankind from Death.

The problem with typology is what is revealed: a third of humanity will die when the greater Church is suddenly liberated from sin at the beginning of seven endtime years; hence, the comparison to the days of Noah, and to the time of Lot. Death will suddenly catch many going about their business as they have year by year. The suddenness of the Flood, or of fire raining down from heaven (baptisms of water and of fire) would not catch humanity unaware if coming after seven endtime years of tribulation. This suddenness with its accompanying surprise can only occur at the beginning of the Tribulation. This is the first hard labor pain of the last Eve giving birth to three spiritual sons.

Following the death of a third of humanity (all will be physical or spiritual firstborns), a fourth of the remaining two-thirds will be given to Death to kill (Rev 6:8), leaving still alive half of those who were alive the day before the Son of Man was revealed. Then another third of humanity will be killed in the sixth trumpet plague, leaving alive one third of those who were alive. But Death will be defeated when the two witnesses are publicly resurrected and the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. With a few exceptions (Rev 13:10 — the number comparable in percentage to the number of men Joshua and Caleb lost after crossing the Jordan), from the middle of the Tribulation on, everyone who dies will take death upon themselves by accepting the mark of the beast. They will have to mark themselves for death through accepting the tattoo of the cross [χξς]. And humanity has arrived at the percentages of the prophet Zechariah (13:7-9). Two-thirds of humanity will be dead. The remaining third of humanity will be refined as silver is refined (by smelting), and tested as gold is tested (under pressure against a touchstone), and this third will say that God is their God, and God will say that this third are His sons. This third represents the spiritual Seth, who is born-from-above when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. About this third, Jesus said (again) that all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13). Salvation is through enduring being refined and tested. And salvation is certain.

Generations of physically circumcised Israelites served Pharaoh and prayed to God for liberation from bondage. Likewise, generations of “Christians” have served the spiritual king of Babylon and have prayed to God—and God has heard their pleas (Exod 3:7). But liberation will come with the fullness of iniquity, not before, and will mean that the cloak of Christ Jesus’ righteousness will be laid aside, thereby revealing the Son of Man, of which disciples form the Body. When the seven endtime years of tribulation begin, the only covering for sin disciples will have is their obedience to God, made possible through empowerment by the Holy Spirit. To not believe that disciples can then obey God, fully keeping His commandments, ordinances, and statutes [to not believe will be to transgress the commandments], will be committing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and will not be forgiven. The ten witnesses will testify that obedience to God is too large of a giant to defeat; the two witnesses will assure disciples that they are well able to obey God. And the spiritually holy nation will rebel against God. They will believe the ten, who are as miry clay, the horns on the head of Death, the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven. They will not believe the two. And God will send a great delusion over the rebelling nation (2 Thess 2:11-12), so recently resurrected from death.

But because the spiritually holy nation rebels against God and attempts to enter God’s rest on the following day, the natural branches, broken off until the fullness of the Gentiles have come to God, will be grafted back onto the root of righteousness through the Sabbath. The natural branches will not quit the Sabbath. The spiritually holy nation that loves righteousness will not quit the Sabbath. Only those who rebel against God will attempt to enter His rest on the following day, the 8th-day, Sunday.

3.

At the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) a resolution to the early Church’s second serious conflict was thrashed out with a logic that has since eluded theologians of all traditions, but a logic that left the Body dead within two generations. The conflict revolved around the importance of the flesh: believers who were previously Pharisees contended that a Gentile convert must first become a physical Israelite before the person could become a spiritual Israelite, that physical circumcision must necessarily precede spiritual circumcision. Paul and Barnabas opposed the former Pharisees in “no small dissension” (v. 2). For Paul and Barnabas, any return to physical circumcision was, in this age from cup to cup (Matt 26:27-29), a serious doctrinal error, and confirmation that these former Pharisees never understood what circumcision represented, nor what Jesus taught.

The arguments made by the former Pharisees were not preserved; thus, their arguments must be recreated from Scripture. And these former Pharisees would have argued that “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary” (Ezek 44:9). They would have also argued, “If a stranger shall sojourn with you [Israel] and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you” (Exod 12:48-49). So the former Pharisees would seem to have had Scripture on their side. And this is an important point to remember by those who would argue for *sola scriptura*.

Since Paul's epistles were not then written, let alone considered canonical; since his revelation, the basis for his Aristotelian argument against circumcision in chapters 1 & 2 of his epistle to the Galatians, was not then given the authority of Scripture, Paul and Barnabas could only argue precedent, which is the direction the Council proceeded when Peter stood up and said, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe ... and [God] made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:7, 9). And it is here, where cleansing the heart by faith enters into Christian discourse, that disobedience climbed through the window of liberty to steal life from the Body of Christ.

What the former Pharisees sought from this Council was a decree requiring Gentile disciples to be physically circumcised and ordered to keep the Law of Moses, which isn't one covenant but everything written by Moses; i.e., the *Torah*. And the problem is apparent: the Lord made three covenants with Noah, three with Abraham, one with Ishmael, at least one with Isaac, at least one with Jacob, three with the nation of Israel, and one with Moses, plus others outside of the usual discussion of the Law of Moses. Some of these covenants were ratified by blood. One with Noah was ratified with the rainbow. And the last covenant Moses mediated with the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised nation of Israel (Deu 29:1) was ratified with a song (Deu chap 32).

The former Pharisees didn't realize that copies of heavenly things are purified by blood, but the heavenly things themselves are purified by better sacrifices (Heb 9:23) which include bows in the sky and songs. Thus, covenants ratified by the shedding of blood are copies of heavenly covenants; they are temporary covenants.

There will not be another global flood, for God made this covenant with Noah and ratified this covenant not by blood but by the setting of a bow in the sky. However, the covenant made at Sinai when Moses received the *Decalogue* inscribed on two tablets of stone was ratified by blood (Ex 24:5-8); hence, this Sinai covenant, *from its inception*, was scheduled to be abolished and replaced by a covenant that would have the laws of God written on two tablets of flesh, the heart and mind of disciples. Likewise, the covenant by which Abraham was made the father of many nations (Gen chap 17) was ratified by physical circumcision, which requires the shedding of a few drops of blood. This, then, is a covenant that is a copy of a heavenly thing: spiritual circumcision. The heavenly thing is the "cleansing of the heart by faith." Therefore, the cutting away of the foreskin is the shadow and type of spiritual circumcision, which is promised to Israel by the Moab covenant (Deu 30:6). But receiving this spiritual circumcision requires an action of faith (vv. 1-2), requires hearts to be cleansed by faith.

Without faith, no one can please God, for the actions of humankind at their best are as bloody rags to God, the rags used to catch unfulfilled life (menstrual rags). Israel was given a law that if pursued by faith would have led to righteousness (Rom 9:31-32), but Israel failed to reach that law or covenant, for the nation pursued it through the works of their hands. The lawyers of the nation knew what this law was (Luke 10:25-28), so the law was not hidden from the nation. But the fault was in the people (Heb 8:9), a fault of which God was aware when the Sinai covenant was ratified by blood. Again, the Sinai covenant was ratified to be abolished, for a covenant extends from *cutting* to *cutting*. It was established with blood and it would end with blood after the second Covenant was

finally implemented. The Sinai covenant was established as a rag used to catch a promise that would be sloughed away.

The Moab covenant was ratified by a song, and it is in this covenant where Moses stands as Israel's accuser for all time (*cf.* John 5:45; Deu 31:26-27). It is to this covenant that better promises were added (again, better promises cannot be added to that which was abolished). It was of this covenant that Christ Jesus became mediator. And it is this covenant that, because the nation's clothes did not wear out nor did the sandals wear off the nation's feet (Deu 29:5), God apparently intended to give Israel when the nation left Egypt, not after the forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness. It is this covenant that God would have given to the nation that left Egypt in the Wilderness of Paran if that nation had not believed the ten witnesses.

Although Israel brought their kneading troughs out of Egypt before the dough was leavened, the nation didn't eat bread during the forty years of wandering (Deu 29:6), nor did the nation drink wine or strong drink. Again, the forty years were as forty days (*cf.* Acts 1:3; Deu 1:3 & Deu 5:2-3). And here is repeated a mystery of God has revealed: the old self [Paul's *old man*] is to die between when the Father draws the person from the world (John 6:44, 65) and when the second covenant is implemented; for the old self cannot enter into God's rest because of its unbelief (*cf.* Num chap 14; Heb 3:16-4:11). As long as the old self lives, the second covenant with its promise of spiritual circumcision remains a promise in the future. Understand the significance of this, for every person's day of salvation begins not with baptism of the flesh, when the person comes under judgment, but when the person cleanses his or her heart through faith. All of Israel was baptized into Moses when the nation passed through (1) the sea and was (2) under the cloud (two aspects are involved in baptism, one reason why Paul rebaptized disciples who were only baptized into repentance — Acts 19:1-6). But the fathers of the nation—the old selves of disciples—would not enter into God's rest *while the promise of entering still stood* (*cf.* Heb 4:1; Num 14:1-4, 40-41); therefore, they all died in the wilderness of Sin/Zin, unable to enter into God's rest. Literally, the promise of entering stood on the day the spies returned. The next day was too late. The time for making the decision to enter was brief, one day [one night, actually] in forty years. And for the nation that left Egypt, that one day was the nation's day of salvation.

Baptized disciples who do not enter into God's rest as Joshua and Caleb did, or as new selves born into the tents of the old selves will perish in unbelief—and the new selves must cleanse their hearts with faith before receiving spiritual circumcision. The baptism of a disciple, directly analogous to Israel crossing the Sea of Reeds, is not enough of itself for a disciple to enter into God's rest. Baptism must be accompanied by, or preceded by spiritual birth, for spiritual birth and baptism are visibly foreshadowed by human birth and physical circumcision (a making naked of the Israelite before God). **Then following baptism/spiritual birth, the disciple must by faith cleanse the heart, with the faith necessary to cleanse the heart being of the quality displayed by the patriarch Abraham.** For in Paul's treatise to the converts at Rome, Paul writes that an Israelite is not one outwardly through circumcision made with hands, but one inwardly through circumcision by the Spirit (Rom 2:28-29), that not all of Israel belongs to Israel (Rom 9:6). It is this cleansing of the heart by faith that works to spiritually circumcise the heart.

In the case of Abraham, obedience preceded use of the Holy Spirit, which occurred when the /ah/ linguistic radical, the radical used to express aspirated breath, was added to his name. In the case of the twelve Paul baptized at Ephesus, repentance and the baptism of John preceded receipt of the Holy Spirit. For the resurrected Body of Christ, repentance, baptism, and demonstrated obedience will precede receipt of the Holy Spirit. The 1st-Century model of receiving the Holy Spirit prior to baptism returns in the Tribulation, but contrary to what I have previously written, this model will not return before the seven endtime years begin. It returns when the Body is again alive.

Now, back to what Peter said: *God has made no distinction between natural Israel and Gentiles converts, having cleansed the hearts of those Gentile converts by faith.* Receiving a circumcised heart and mind requires faith of the magnitude Abraham displayed when leaving kith and kin and journeying to Canaan where he sought a city whose builder and designer was the Lord (Heb 11:8-10). A circumcised heart doesn't require physical circumcision, or sidelocks, or fringe, or any physical thing to remind the person of the Commandments, for the laws of God are written on the heart and placed in the mind through receipt of the Holy Spirit. It doesn't require relocating home and business to physical Jerusalem. The ruling of the Jerusalem Council was simplified in the letter sent out:

The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Celicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immortality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts 15:23-29)

What degree of faith is necessary for a Greek living as a Greek to turn to God, profess that Jesus is Lord, and cease living as a Greek, cease eating blood, cease eating meats that were strangled so as to retain the blood, cease eating meats offered to idols, cease frequenting prostitutes, and begin entering the synagogue on the Sabbath day to hear Moses read (Acts 15:21)? Is not the above degree of faith comparable to the faith of Abraham who left home and kin to journey to Canaan, the Promised Land, the visible representation of God's rest? It is, isn't it? And since it is, then do these Greek converts need to do anything more to have their hearts cleansed by faith? They don't, do they?

What about the children of these Gentiles? They will grow up not eating blood or meats strangled or offered to idols, and will grow up in a household shunning all forms of sexual immorality. What degree of faith is required of them to continue doing what they grew up doing? Not much? That is correct, not much. If a child grows to maturity in an environment where the laws of God are kept, the child will keep these laws as part of the expectation of the household. Solomon wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go;

even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). Both Lenin and the Roman Church have similar sayings.

It takes considerable faith to leave kith and kin and the practices of the household in which a child grew to maturity, but no great amount of faith is required to continue doing what the person has always done, and this includes keeping the commandments of God as well as keeping the limited requirements of the Jerusalem Council.

The limited requirements of the Council were addressed to a specific audience as a solution to a specific problem, just as the ordination of deacons to serve the neglected Hellenists widows was the solution to the first serious conflict the Church addressed (Acts 6:1-6). There will be no *next generation* like the generation of the Gentile households that first professed that Jesus is Lord. The next generation will not be without knowledge of Jesus. The next generation will not grow up eating blood and visiting prostitutes. So what is an appropriate action of faith (an act that will cleanse hearts) for the first generation of Gentile converts will not be an appropriate action of faith for the next generation. Rather, the second generation of disciple must go beyond the first generation in deeds; for faith of a comparable quality to that of the first generation’s must be displayed by this second generation. Doing what the first generation did is not enough, for the second generation does not begin where the first generation began. Therefore, **before the hearts of the second generation will be cleansed by faith and spiritually circumcised, this second generation must display faith of the quality of the patriarch Abraham.**

The above is a convoluted way of saying what Jesus told the rich young ruler:

And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not Steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:18-22)

Keeping the commandments is not enough for the person who has grown up in a household or a culture keeping the commandments. No faith is necessary to continue keeping the commandments. For example, the person who has grown up in a household that kept the 7th-day Sabbath needs no faith to continue keeping this transitional representation of God’s rest, but it requires the degree of faith that Abraham displayed for the person who has grown up in an 8th-day fellowship and has grown up eating vermin of all sorts to begin keeping the precepts of the laws of God. For the kith and kin of this second person will *pray for the immortal soul* of whom they believe has come under the spell of *legalism*, little realizing the difficulty of the mental journey this second person undertook. This second person journeyed from the figurative Wilderness of Paran (where the nation that left Egypt refused to enter God rest while the promise of entering stood) to the River Jordan, then crossed the Jordan through baptism, and instead of being physically circumcised as natural Israel was (Josh 5:2-7), this second person was spiritually circumcised through having the person’s heart cleansed by faith.

What about the person who grew up keeping the precepts of the law?

Nothing done by the flesh or by a person who remains flesh is truly good—this is the reality of Jesus’ question about why the young ruler called Him good. Jesus was without sin. If anyone could be called good, it was Jesus. So if being without sin [i.e., having perfectly kept the Commandments] could make a person a “good person,” Jesus would have been *good*. But once born of Mary, Jesus was a man, tempted in all things as all men are. Only God is above temptation; only God is truly good, for only God is incapable of lawlessness. Therefore, for all who are of the household of God (1 Pet 4:17) every act of law-keeping is not an action that represents *goodness*, but an action that represents the expectation of the household. Keeping the Sabbath is the expectation of everyone in the household of Israel. It is not an action that represents goodness, or a cleansing of the heart. Rather, selling all one has, giving the proceeds to the poor, and following Jesus are two actions that approximately correspond to the faith Abraham displayed in leaving home and kin, journeying to Canaan, and believing God about an heir coming from between his loins.

The person who today grew up in a Christian fellowship that has remained in spiritual Babylon can, by faith, cleanse the person’s heart by making the mental journey to God’s rest, the landscape represented by Sabbath observance, with this person beginning to keep the precepts of the law (Rom 2:26). Repentance is turning from this person’s lawless childhood and by faith keeping the commandments. Demonstrated obedience comes from keeping the commandments by faith for a prolonged period—for the patriarch Abraham, demonstrated obedience took 25 years. For most disciples, demonstrated obedience will take 30 or so years, with these years causing the person to no longer be a novice in the faith. Then, and not before then, this person who left Babylon a lifetime ago will be born of Spirit and will receive a circumcised heart and mind.

Again, what I have previously written about being born of Spirit was based on the 1st-Century model that had, following the visible baptism by Spirit of a representation group, all members of that group being born of Spirit prior to baptism. This will be the model [type] for the third part of humankind in the last half of the Tribulation, when the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all flesh; when the world has been baptized in Spirit and into life as the world of Noah’s day was baptized in water and into death. Receiving the Holy Spirit will then precede baptism for everyone. But in this era when the Body of Christ is dead, out of mercy, God has not given His Spirit to many “Christians.” In fact, it is rare to encounter anyone who has actually been born of Spirit. And how will those who have not been born of Spirit know whether they have been, or haven’t been? The truth is that they cannot know until after they have been so born. They cannot comprehend the change that will occur in their received “human nature” until after they have experienced this change. There are no words to adequately describe what occurs when born of Spirit ... too often, disciples equate “accepting Jesus as my personal savior” with being *born again*. Accepting Jesus as one’s savior is good; obeying Jesus is better; but being actually born of Spirit suppresses the person’s desires to do those physical things the person did before such as hunt, fish, engage in sports, recreate, shop, cook, collect things. Even sexual impulses are suppressed. And a psychologist might well diagnose the person as being severely depressed (the “old self” is being crucified and slain, so such a diagnosis would not be improper). But there is an excitement about the things of God that is nearly

all-consuming. Being born of Spirit places the person's mind on God, and on the things of God. The things of this world—"the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions" (1 John 2:16)—are no longer of importance, or really, even of interest. And I speak from experience. The changed mindset is truly greater than can be expressed in the concepts of this world.

The change that comes with being born of Spirit separates a person from the mindset [mental typography] of this world, and mental health counselors cannot grasp how large a change occurs. By this world's standards, the born-of-Spirit disciple no longer grasps "reality," which is true; for the reality of this world is of Satan, not God. The ancient community that produced the Qumran scrolls believed in a dualistic predestination, a "reality" that separated this community from the rest of Hebraic society. This desert community believed they were predestined to goodness as sons of light, while those who were predestined to evil were sons of darkness. This community's concepts of God were on the margins of Judaism, but the community's dualism periodically reappears as a marginalized belief throughout the history of visible Christendom, appearing whenever mainstream theology veers too close to Judaism's salvation by works. Thus, mental health counselors can historically "locate" the mindset of someone who subscribes to dualism [good versus evil], but the mindset of Jesus of Nazareth, for whom the things of this world were of very small importance, got Him killed as will having the mind of Christ get disciples killed throughout the first half of the Tribulation.

The change that comes with being born of Spirit can be seen by comparing my writing before January 2002 with my writing since that January. Compare the subject matter. Compare the amount. Consider how long it takes to produce a piece of writing and multiple that length of time by the number of pieces on websites listed on my [links](#) page. What one will find is that enough words have been written for seventy or more books in five years—and throughout these five years, I have still had to earn a living by either carving wood or teaching, for these words have been given away.

The visible baptism by Spirit that is seen in Acts chapter two and in Acts chapter ten, followed by the explosive growth in the Church, form the shadow and copy of what will happen when first Israel, then the world is invisibly baptized and empowered by the Holy Spirit. These two visible shadows represent what will occur during the seven endtime years, with repentance followed by baptism followed by receipt of the Holy Spirit to occur to Israel at the beginning of these seven years, and with receiving the Holy Spirit to precede baptism to occur to the nations halfway through these endtime years.

Now, considering the person who grew up keeping the Sabbath: before the person who grew up in a household that kept the commandments is born of Spirit, this person needs, by faith, to follow Jesus in a manner similar to how Timothy followed Paul before the person's faith will be counted as righteousness. This person needs to demonstrate repentance and obedience when neither is a far journey for this person; thus, this person needs to additionally literally or figuratively sell all he or she has, give to the poor, and follow Jesus as an evangelist. This is the person who needs to make his or her life's work the mission field for Christ Jesus.

Faith is not of the flesh, so by extension, faith is not of this world but is a gift from God (Eph 2:8); thus, faith is not a result of works (v. 9). But without works, faith is dead rhetoric (Jas 2:17), nothing but hollow words that are so much wind blown slow. And

since faith is not a *thing* made with the hands, a disciple's display of faith can truly please God, whereas everything made with the hands is as unfilled promises.

The relationship between dead faith and the living faith of Abraham that cleanses hearts—the faith of mid-1st Century Gentile converts that caused them to quit living as Greeks and begin living as Judeans—is what the Anabaptist remnant that left spiritual Babylon [Andreas Fischer, his disciples, and others] failed to understand. Like the remnant of natural Israel that left physical Babylon under Ezra and Nehemiah, the Sabbatarian Anabaptists left spiritual Babylon, the single system of world governance of the present prince of this world. But most of the Anabaptists never ventured far from Babylon, and certainly never crossed the Jordan. Thus they were hunted as beasts are hunted until they learned to quietly dwell in the shadows of this world.

After seventy years, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, a remnant of Israel by the decree of Cyrus king of Persia (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3) journeyed across the plains and hills of what is now western Iraq, waded the River Jordan, and again entered the geographical representation of God's rest. Likewise, after twelve centuries [325 CE – 1525 CE], a remnant of spiritually circumcised Israel left spiritual Babylon and began a nearly five century trek back across the traditions of the early Church. And for men like Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Georg Blaurock, the faith required for them to break with the Roman Church and with the fledgling Reformed Church was faith that would be counted to them as righteousness (regardless of their theology). But it was the journey of Fischer into Sabbath observance that caused this early Anabaptist to figuratively cross the Jordan and enter Judea. Few others followed although many had faith that was akin to that of the patriarch Abraham, and was the degree of faith that cleanses hearts.

The faith of a Menno Simmons was of the quality necessary to cleanse a heart, but the faith of a 7th or 8th or 9th generation Mennonite who has been reared in the traditions taught by Menno Simmons is not of the quality necessary to cleanse a heart, for this person needs to, as Mr. Raymond Dick did, spiritually leave kith and kin and mentally journey into keeping all of the precepts of the law, including the Sabbath commandment.

When a son or a daughter of the disciple who by faith left his or her kith and kin and began to keep the precepts of the law comes to the parent to ask the same question that the rich young ruler asked Christ Jesus, the parent needs to give the same answer that Jesus gave—then the parent needs to bring to the young person's attention the Apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy before sending the young person forth into the world to take Christ the lost sheep of the house of Israel. For today's greatest mission field is within the 8th-day Church, that majority of Israel still mired in lawlessness.

The top-down, centralized governmental structure of the derivative splinters of the former Radio Church of God [Worldwide Church of God] effectively stymie personal evangelism and missionary activity. And when personal evangelism is stymied, the organization will die. Thus, these splintered fellowships have, within their institutional patterns, the seeds of their own demise, as do fellowships like the Seventh Day Adventists. For within two generations, few are left who have cleansed their hearts by faith. The organization is spiritually dead. And this is what happened to the 1st-Century Body of Christ ... because of the letter sent from the Jerusalem Conference, the children of Gentile converts journeyed no farther than their parents journeyed. And without a journey of faith of sufficient length to cleanse the heart, these children were not

spiritually circumcised—and without being spiritually circumcised, the laws of God were not written on their hearts and minds. Thus, these children, leaders in the second generation Church, left Paul and returned to Greek philosophy. They constituted the mystery of lawlessness already at work when Paul sent his second epistle to the Thessalonians, and they killed the Body of Christ.

The fellowship that will grow is the one which sends forth second generation disciples as missionaries for Christ Jesus, with each missionary teaching first generation converts to cleanse their hearts by faith. It does no good, say, for a Seventh-Day Baptist household to send forth missionaries who do not teach that the Sabbath is to be kept (i.e., to send their young people out as missionaries with 8th-day Baptists). Likewise, it will do no good for a United Church of God household to send forth missionaries who do not teach that all of the Sabbaths of God are to be kept.

Households of differing faiths cannot truly work together for they do not walk together before the Lord. Participation in a great ecumenical work will not produce the quality of faith necessary to cleanse hearts, for beliefs must be compromised so that all can get along—and a compromised belief is an erasing of faith.

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We can show that the Body of Christ is dead, and will remain dead until fully resurrected through empowerment by the Holy Spirit at the second Passover. We can show why the Body died, and can show within a decade or so when the Body died. But we cannot show when the resurrection begins, and we cannot know with certainty how long this restoration to life takes. Thus, it is enough for now to say that the Body lost its divine Breath late in the 1st-Century, and that visible Christendom from the beginning of the 2nd-Century on has been built on a purloined name and Greek philosophical paradigms. That old dragon, Satan the devil, has truly deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9), especially those who believe they are followers of Christ Jesus. And it is these who sincerely believe that are most dangerous to those of us who actually have been born of Spirit.

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