**Jews: Behold Your God**

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*[Unless otherwise stated, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has been used for reference, but common modern words such as you for ‘thou’, ‘thee’ and ‘ye’ have been substituted, so that readers not familiar with the KJV Bible may find it easier to read. Mostly the New King James Version (NKJV) translation has been used as an alternate]*

Bible prophecies indicate that incredible catastrophic events are about to explode on the world scene. The very first event is the Third World War and its aftermath in which one fourth of mankind (more than 1.8 billion people) will lose their lives (Revelation 6:8). It will be followed by the Great Tribulation described by Jesus in these terms: “21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.” (Matthew 24:21-22).

When all these catastrophic events are over perhaps only about a 100 million people might survive. But there is a guaranteed way to come out alive through these events. This booklet describes the actions a person must take to obtain the true God’s help in coming out alive through the great end time catastrophes. But to do so one must know the true God.

Before God's kingdom is set up on earth, many prophecies have to be fulfilled. One prophecy yet to be fulfilled is given in Isaiah 40:9: "O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, behold your God."

In this prophecy, Zion represents God's people in these end times. God's people who bring good tidings or news of the establishment of God's soon coming kingdom on earth (prophesied in Daniel 2) and the coming of the Messiah in full power and glory (as the Jews have always envisioned the Messiah would come) are told to lift up their voice and reveal the true God to the cities of Judah, meaning those Jews who do not know the true God.

This book is written in fulfillment of this prophecy.

**CONTENTS**

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 – Are we Living in the End Time 7

Chapter 2 – Fulfilled Prophecies are Proof of The Almighty God 12

Chapter 3 – Prophecies After the Flood 29

Chapter 4 – God’s Promises to Abraham 44

Chapter 5 – Prophecies Fulfilled by the American and British Peoples 54

Chapter 6 – God in Total Control of the Earth 70

Chapter 7 – God Controls the Daily Affairs of Humans 80

Chapter 8 – Is Another Scripture Also the Infallible Word of God? 92

Chapter 9 – Prophet Like Moses 108

Chapter 10 – What is Salvation? 116

Chapter 11 – Sequence of End Time Events 134

Chapter 12 – How God Reveals Himself in the Bible 150

Chapter 13 – Who Was Jesus Christ? 159

Chapter 14 – Proof that Jesus was the Messiah 171

Chapter 15 – Did Jesus Really Die and Live Again? 181

Chapter 16 – Messiah’s Misunderstood Mission 217

Chapter 17 – Did Jesus Break the Law? 228

Chapter 18 – Who Killed Jesus 238

Chapter 19 – Prepare Yourself to Meet the Soon Coming Jesus Christ 242

Chapter 20 – Are Animal Sacrifices Required 254

Chapter 21 – Is Circumcision Required for Salvation 268

Chapter 22 – Has God Abandoned the Jews 272

Chapter 23 – Jews: Behold Your Awesome God 294

Suggested Reading 303

**INTRODUCTION**

In all the world’s religions, only one holy book dares to prophesy about the future in enormous detail, and that book is the Holy Bible. Many Bible prophecies indicate we are living in the end times. The world is prophesied to go through horrifying catastrophic events, the end result of which was prophesied by Isaiah the prophet.

Isaiah 24:1-6 wrote: “1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof. 2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. 3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord has spoken this word. 4 The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. 5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws [God’s laws delivered through Moses], changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore has the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned [due to nuclear weapons], and few men left.”

When all the catastrophic events are over, few men will be left alive.

But before God allows catastrophic events to engulf the world He always issues a warning through His prophets. God declared through Amos the prophet: “7 Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

Jesus Christ also prophesied in Matthew 24:14, “14 And this gospel [meaning ‘good news’] of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [of man’s age] come.” That good news message has been preached for decades now.

The end of man’s age is coming, because the return of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God is around the corner. Before God's kingdom can be established on earth, many prophecies have to be fulfilled. One prophecy yet to be fulfilled is given in Isaiah 40:9: "O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, behold your God."

Implication of this prophecy is that many Jews do not know the true God and He needs to be revealed to them before they can become a part of His Kingdom.

God’s purpose in revealing mankind’s future through prophecy is to encourage the righteous to persevere in their righteousness in order to receive their awesome reward [also revealed in this book], and to warn those who persist in doing evil that they will perish unless they repent of their evil ways and change. But above all, prophecy delivers a MESSAGE OF HOPE, a message that the WORLD WILL NOT END, but a REAL UTOPIAN WORLD USHERED IN BY GOD’S KINGDOM IS AROUND THE CORNER.

This book reveals the identity of their true God to those Jews who do not know Him so that they can take advantage of His protection to come out alive through the end time catastrophic events and become part of His worldwide Kingdom.

**Chapter 1**

**Are We Living in the End Time?**

[Since this is a message for the Jews, for prophecies in this chapter we will restrict ourselves to the Old Testament of the Bible, the Jewish scriptures mainly].

If the world is living in the end time, then we need to know what the phrase “end time**”** means. And what are the implications of the end time for each of us?

Daniel the prophet prophesied about the end time and gave specific conditions that would prevail in that time. Here are the signs Daniel gave in Daniel 12:1, 4 (KJV version of the Bible has been used with modern words used for archaic words such as ye, thou, thy etc, unless otherwise specified): “1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and at that time your people shall be delivered …4 But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased .”

1) The first sign that Daniel gave that we are living in the end times is that ‘many would run to and fro’, implying a time of incredible global travel and communications. With the age of jet travel we are living in such a time and this prophecy is being fulfilled.

2) The second sign in Daniel 12:4 was that in the end time ‘knowledge would increase.’ We are already living in a time when knowledge is exploding and doubling every 18 months.

3) The third sign in Daniel 12:4 was that all prophecies were ‘sealed till the time of the end’. But when the end time would be near, these prophecies would be revealed. We understand all of Daniel’s prophecies today indicating they have been unsealed. Details about what the prophecies reveal will be provided later. This is the strongest proof that we are actually living in the very end time.

4) The fourth sign was given in Daniel 12:1 that “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” And God’s people shall be delivered out of it. This means that man would possess weapons such that all life could be destroyed on earth. Man now has the capability to destroy all life from the earth many times over, which he has never before possessed in his history. There can be no stronger proof that we are living in the end time.

5) The fifth sign is mentioned in Malachi 4:5-6 which states that before the Day of the Lord, God would send a person in the power and spirit of Elijah the prophet to restore the true doctrines religion. How this prophecy has already been fulfilled will be explained later. The man who fulfilled this prophecy died on January 16, 1986. It proves that we are very far along in the end time. In fact we are in the time that can be characterized as the end of the end times.

6) Daniel 11 also indicates some signs of the end time. Verse 40, 41, 44 states, “40 And at the time of the end shall the King of the South push at him: and the King of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown…44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him:”

These verses talk about a King of the North and a King of the South and powers in the east and north or northeast. These directions are taken from Jerusalem as the center. So the king of the North means a European power. The king of the South means an Islamic power and the northeast means Russia allied with other powers in the east. We see these alliances forming or powers working to form them.

In the north we have the European Union working towards an alliance with Germany as the head. We see Islam surging. A likely leader to fulfill the role of the King of the South could emerge in the near future. In the east we already see Russia and China working on an alliance to contain American/British power. But in this prophecy Russia and its allies battle with Germany as King of the North.

7) Daniel’s interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and his image also gives us some clues about the end time. Daniel 2:41-45 states, “41 And whereas you saw the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas you saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

“44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

The ten toes of the image represent the last kingdom before God sets up His kingdom on earth by breaking this kingdom to pieces. The ten toes represent an alliance of ten kings. The kingdom shall be partly strong and partly weak. Such an alliance is forming in Europe in the European Union. These details are impossible to miss. There is no doubt that we are in the days of this alliance forming in Western Central and Eastern Europe. It is taking shape before our very eyes. So we are living at a time when God is about to intervene in human affairs to set up His kingdom. That means we are living in the very end time prophesied by Daniel the prophet.

***Unfulfilled Prophecy***

Before God's kingdom is set up on earth, many prophecies have to be fulfilled. One prophecy yet to be fulfilled is given in Isaiah 40:9: "O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, behold your God."

In this prophecy, Zion represents God's people in these end times. God's people who bring good tidings or news of the establishment of God's soon coming kingdom on earth (prophesied in Daniel 2) and the coming of the Messiah in full power and glory (as the Jews have always envisioned the Messiah would come) are told to lift up their voice and reveal the true God to the cities of Judah, meaning Jews worldwide.

Every devout Jew would be offended if anyone was to tell him that the true God needs to be revealed to him. He will be indignant because he believes he knows the God of his fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the Jewish scriptures, the Old Testament. And yet this prophecy says that God’s people are to shout to the cities of Judah, to reveal the true God of the Old Testament to them. This means that they are in fact rejecting the God of the Old Testament. They do not understand who He is.

Many catastrophic events are prophesied for the end time, but God promises protection to any human being who fulfills certain conditions. But to fulfill those conditions, that person must know the true God. That’s why it is now time to reveal the true identity of the God of the Old Testament to the Jews. That is the prophecy He wants His people to fulfill. This booklet is being written in fulfillment of this prophecy.

The author himself is a Jew by ancestry.

***Where the Jews and the World Misunderstand the Bible***

Many Jews are liberal in their outlook. The founder of atheistic communism was a Jew named Karl Marx. Many of them in Russia embraced communism. The main reason is that they no longer believed in the God of their scriptures. They believe God of the Torah and the prophets made many promises to His people which were never kept. So they gave up on the God of their fathers.

The truth is that the God of their fathers kept all His promises, but the Jews just did not know where to look. The world also has not known where to look for the fulfillment of God’s promises.

The Jews themselves and the world believe that the Jews are the descendants of the tribes of Israel. That is completely true. But what they and the world don’t understand is that they are not the only descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel. In fact the first time the word Jew(s) is mentioned in the Bible, they are at war with Israel. 2 Kings 16:5-6 says, “5 Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah KING OF ISRAEL came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz [the king of Judah or the Jews], but could not overcome him. 6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath….”

Though it is quite plainly stated in the Bible, the world does not understand that originally the twelve tribes were one kingdom under kings Saul, David and Solomon. But in the days of King Rehoboam the son of Solomon the kingdom split up into two kingdoms. The northern ten tribes came to be known as the House of Israel and the southern kingdom came to be called the House of Judah. The House of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and much of the tribe of Levi as king Jeroboam of the northern Kingdom had put the Levites out from being priests for the two idols he had set up as gods. So many of the Levites came and settled in the southern Kingdom.

The word Jew is derived from the word Judah. Since Judah was the son of Jacob or Israel, all Jews are Israelites, but all Israelites are not Jews. The descendants of the northern ten tribes were never known as Jews.

About two centuries after the kingdom split up, the House of Israel was carried away captive by the Assyrians and removed from their land. Only the House of Judah remained in its land. The northern 10 tribes came to be known as the “lost ten tribes” because they became lost from view in history. They lost their identity as the House of Israel.

Then 135 years later the Babylonians carried the House of Judah also captive to Babylon. However most of the Jews retained their identity as Jews. Seventy years after the Babylonian captivity began, some Jews returned to Jerusalem and their homeland beginning with the decree of Cyrus the king of Persia.

So the reason the Jews themselves and the world misunderstand the Bible is that all think that the Jews are the descendants of the entire twelve tribes of Israel whereas they are in fact descendants mainly of the tribe of Judah with some from the tribes of Benjamin and Levi.

The reason why many Jews and many in the world lost faith in the Old Testament is that they do not see that the God of the Old Testament kept all His promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Joseph and David. That’s why many Jews embraced atheistic communism.

The truth is that the God of the Jews, the God of the Old Testament has kept each and every one of His promises in all their intricate detail. So it’s time first to restore the Jews’ confidence in their scriptures and their God. The key to understanding how God fulfilled all His promises is locating the descendants of the “lost ten tribes,” the northern kingdom known as the House of Israel.

**Chapter 2**

**Fulfilled Prophecies are Proof of The Almighty God**

PROPHECIES FULFILLED BEFORE NOAH’S FLOOD

The great question all of us face is: How do we prove whether the holy book of a religion is inspired by the supreme Creator God and is the true word of God? What criteria can we use to test the divine inspiration of a holy book?

The only real acceptable criterion must be a demonstration of the power of Almighty God in the pages of the holy book. This means that in the pages of the holy book God must have told us that He would do numerous great things (not just one, two or three events because they can come true by mere coincidence) well in advance and brought them to pass exactly as foretold.

Actually the God of the Old Testament Himself provided us the criteria we should use to test that He is the Almighty. Speaking through Isaiah, He challenges doubters to prove Him: "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'..." (Isaiah 46:9-10, NKJV).

God Himself says that prophecy is proof of the true God. He challenges gods of all other religions as well: "Let these idols come forward and foretell the future for us. Let them declare the meaning of these past events that we may reflect on it; let them predict the future to us that we may know what it holds. Declare what is yet to happen; then we shall know you are Gods" (Isaiah 41:22-23, *Revised English Bible*).

If God prophesied many great events in the pages of Old Testament and we can prove from history that ALL of them came true exactly as prophesied, then we have proof that the words of the Old Testament are inspired by the supreme God. Then we will know for sure that He is the Almighty.

Jews have failed to see the fulfillment of all the prophecies and promises. That’s why many of them have lost faith in their scriptures, and in their God. So let’s see if Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled exactly as prophesied or not.

The first prophecy God gave to Adam and Eve was in Genesis 2:16-17 where God told them that they would certainly die if they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That’s why every human being born has died.

***Declaring the End from the Beginning***

Then the next prophecy God gave is stated in Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shalt bruise his heel*.*”

In this prophecy God declared the end of the serpent or Satan’s rule from the very beginning. Satan was prophesied to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, but the seed of the woman shall bruise Satan’s head, meaning put an end to Satan’s kingdom. The woman’s seed was Jesus Christ which will be proved later. Satan did bruise His heel by having Him put to death. The prophecy about the Seed bruising his head will be fulfilled after God’s kingdom is set up and Satan and the demons are removed as rulers of the earth.

***Curse on the Earth***

The next prophecy God pronounced was a curse on the ground which is still being fulfilled today.

After Adam and Eve had disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God pronounced a sentence on them in Genesis 3:17-19 (NKJV): “17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had their food provided for them. They just had to tend the Garden. But after they disobeyed God’s instructions, they were expelled from the Garden of Eden and had to produce their own food by toil and hard work. It has not been easy for humanity to feed itself since then. Many have starved to death in the history of mankind, and many don’t eat to the full every day even today, despite our so-called matchless advances in technology. We are always trying to play catch-up in feeding all of humanity. It will continue to be our condition until our Creator returns to earth, rules over all of humanity and lifts this curse.

Humanity has suffered from the ravages of this punishment throughout its history. And usually God does not have to intervene to make lives difficult for us. With Adam and Eve humanity chose to go its own way rather than obtain all its instructions from God. It is our own ways, and our wrong agricultural practices that bring this curse on us. But God prophesied this and this prophecy has continued to be fulfilled throughout man’s history.

***Prophecy about Cain***

One of the earliest prophecies about the future of a man in the Bible was about Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve who murdered his righteous brother Abel. After the murder God pronounced a curse on Cain, meaning predicted his future course of life, which is stated in Genesis 4:8-12(NKJV):

“8 Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11 So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”

Here is evidence that this prophecy about Cain’s future came true as prophesied.

After God pronounced the curse on Cain, he complained about the severity of his punishment. Verses 13-15 state: “13 And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." 15 And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.”

The mark God set on Cain has been misunderstood, but Deuteronomy 32:8 (NKJV) explains what happened: “8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam [that is Cain from the other sons of Adam], He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.”

The mark on Cain was simply a land boundary marker God set between Cain and the other descendants of Adam so that they would live separately and develop their own civilizations. Then verse Genesis 4:16 states: “16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.”

Thus after separating from the other future descendants of Adam, Cain went away and traveled to the East. The details of what Cain and his descendants did are provided by the Jewish historian Josephus. [Jews regard Josephus as a traitor for having collaborated with the Romans in the siege of Jerusalem, but that does not mean that the history he wrote was unreliable. The authenticity of what he wrote could have been called into question by many Jewish scribes and historians of his day. Falsifying history would have put his life in jeopardy with the Roman emperor. So he had to be truthful in the history he wrote]. He states in *Antiquities 1.1.2* that Cain “wandered over many countries.” Thus Cain became a vagabond as prophesied. The reason he became a vagabond was the curse pronounced on his agricultural pursuits. God had said to him: “12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you.”

The reason Cain’s agricultural pursuits were cursed is provided by Josephus. He states in *Antiquities 1.2.1*: “But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects, but was wholly intent upon getting; and he first contrived to plough the ground.” Josephus further says that he was “a covetous man’ and “forced the ground.” In other words, Cain used farming methods that depleted the soil. He would use land for raising crops for a few years. Then when the soil got depleted, he would move on and raise crops on new soil. When that soil got depleted, he would be forced to move on to new land. That is why he became a vagabond on earth.

The problem with Cain was that he did not want to raise animals as he probably did not want to take the trouble of looking after them and cleaning up after them. The reason he became angry with his brother Abel was that Abel brought to God an offering of the best of his animals because he raised animals. Cain brought an offering of the grain and fruits and vegetables he raised. But God rejected Cain’s offering because God required an offering of animals and not of grain, fruits and vegetables. So Cain got angry with his brother because his offering was accepted, but his was rejected. That is why he murdered his brother.

Then after Cain was punished for murdering his brother, he began to hate God. In his rebellion he would not raise animals which would have helped maintain the fertility of the soil he used for agriculture. (This trait was passed on to Cain’s descendants through Ham after the Flood. Ancient Israel had to deal with it in the days of Joseph in Egypt because shepherds were an abomination to them). Instead his agricultural practices depleted the soil and he was forced to till new land. Since Cain had to produce his own knowledge by trial and error, he did not know that his agricultural pursuits came to nothing because of lack of animal manure.

This story was repeated wherever he wandered on earth. He was forced to live by hunting and gathering. But he also had no good weapons for hunting. The clean animals like deer were too swift for him to hunt. So his descendants had to resort to hunting unclean slow animals like elephants, mammoths, bears and others to make a living. They also began to live in caves. Thus Cain and his descendants began to live a degenerate lifestyle, becoming wanderers and vagabonds on earth. Archaeology has provided evidence of this.

Finally when he was unable to make a comfortable living on the earth, he decided to move near the other descendants of his father Adam. Josephus again describes what happened in *Antiquities 1.2.2*: “And when Cain had traveled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode; where also he had children. However, he did not accept of his punishment in order to amendment, but to increase his wickedness; for he only aimed to procure every thing that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be injurious to his neighbors. He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rapine and violence; he excited his acquaintance to procure pleasures and spoils by robbery, and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness. He first of all set boundaries about lands: he built a city, and fortified it with walls, and he compelled his family to come together to it; and called that city Enoch, after the name of his eldest son Enoch.”

Josephus shows that Cain after wandering the earth for more than a century came back and settled near the other descendants of Adam. He built a city fortified with walls and began to make a living by robbery, plunder and violence. He began to steal from the other descendants of Adam, forced them to pay tribute or he threatened them with violence. He fortified his city with high walls for protection. Because of his robberies, crimes and violence, he and his descendants began to be hunted. That’s how he became a fugitive. Thus each and every prophecy pronounced on him was fulfilled, providing us proof that it was indeed Almighty God who pronounced such a curse on Cain and brought it to pass on him and his descendants, precisely as prophesied.

***The Flood***

But Cain’s story does not end there. People before the Flood had very large families. Many children were born to Cain, and the non-white races originated in Cain’s line of descendants. Cain’s descendants continued in his way of robbery, violence, plunder and imposing tribute on others by force. One of his descendants named Lamech became a very powerful man in the world and ruled by imposing tribute on others by force. It was inevitable that Lamech and Cain would eventually clash because of trying to extract tribute from the same peoples. This clash eventually led to war between them in which Lamech killed his ancestor Cain. This is also indicated in Lamech’s statement to his two wives in Genesis 4:23 (NKJV): “23 Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me.” According to Jewish tradition, it seems that the great man Lamech killed for wounding him was his ancestor Cain.

After Cain’s violent death, his descendants continued in his way. Genesis 4:17-24 provides Cain’s genealogy to the 7th generation which lived in the period just before Noah’s Flood, the last of which died in the Flood.

After Enoch the son of Cain, the names of the next 3 descendants of Cain are listed simply because they were part of the genealogy of Lamech. They did nothing significant to which God wanted to draw our attention. But when the Bible comes to Lamech, seven verses are devoted to seven key individuals in his family: Lamech himself, his two wives Adah who was racially white, and Zillah [name means dark] who was negroid black, his sons Jabal, Jubal, Tubalcain and his daughter Naamah. These were seven world famous individuals in the generation just before the Flood. That’s why their names are mentioned.

Paganized version of their story has come to us in the myths of various nations such as the Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Indian myths. These individuals deified themselves as gods and demanded to be worshipped by the people. Lamech was worshipped as the god Zeus, Adah as Hara, Zillah as Demeter, Jabal as Hercules, Jubal as Apollo, Tubalcain as Vulcan and Naamah as the goddess Athena.

They lived the way of Cain, forcing others to pay tribute to them or face violence. Also notice that Lamech had two wives that the Bible recognizes: Adah and Zillah. He apparently was the first bigamist in the history of mankind. But the myths tell us that he had many wives, mistresses and took other women as he chose. He and his descendants specially took white women of the line of Seth, the son of Adam, as they chose.

The Bible describes this condition in Genesis 6:1-2 (NKJV): “1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God [the Hebrew word used here is Elohim, the correct translation of which is gods] saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

The sons of gods referred to here are Lamech and his descendants who had deified themselves as gods. They took as many of the fair women of the line of Seth as they chose. These were interracial relationships. The result of these interracial marriages and relationships was violence in the extreme. The whole earth became saturated with violence. This condition is described further in Genesis 6 and what God decided to do about it.

“5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”

The Bible says that because of the evil ways of Cain’s descendants, all of humanity had become corrupt and every intent of the thoughts of each and every human being was only evil continually. As a result, the earth had become saturated with violence. All had become corrupt except Noah and a small part of his family.

Because Noah walked with God, God decided to destroy all of humanity in a Flood and save only Noah alive with his 3 sons and their 4 wives. So God instructed Noah to build an ark to save his family and animals of each kind. These instructions continue in Genesis 6:13-22:

God of the Bible prophesied about the Flood in Noah’s day and brought it to pass. Only an Almighty God could gather such quantity of water to cover the highest mountain tops to a depth of 22 ½ feet. That does provide strong evidence that the God of the Bible is indeed the Almighty God.

PROOF OF NOAH’S FLOOD

God rejecting historians, archaeologists, evolutionists and others label the Biblical account of the Flood a myth. Yet if such an unprecedented event did occur, we should find stories or traditions of such an unforgettable catastrophe. Here than are the proofs of Noah’s Flood.

*Proof #1 - Universal Flood Traditions*

When we examine the historical testimony, we find that all peoples, including primitive people, relate the occurrence of a Flood. Here are some examples from the Summary of Flood traditions in many countries in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE) which provide unanimous testimony to the Bible story.

“The Babylonians and Assyrians have preserved accounts of the Flood on clay tablets that match the Biblical account most closely and are exact in many details. These, therefore, are the most important of the traditions. The first account has come down to us only through the 4th century Greek historian Berosus. An earlier and far more important tradition was found inscribed on clay tablets in Babylon, which were discovered by George Smith in 1870 and filled as many as 180 lines. This account is known as the Epic of Gilgamesh. Both traditions give vivid accounts of the building of the ark, the dimensions of the ark, coming of the Flood, preservation of Noah and his family and the ark finally coming to rest in Armenia.”

All Flood stories, however, have pagan embellishments to one degree or another and differ from the Biblical account. An Egyptian legend of the great Flood is mentioned in Plato's Timaeus, from which only a few shepherds escaped.

The Greek tradition pictures their “Noah” building an ark to escape the waters. Later he is described as sending out a dove twice to check that the waters had abated, before setting foot on land again.

The traditional founder of Chinese civilization is represented as having escaped from a Flood because man had rebelled against heaven and despised the supreme power of the universe. Those preserved with him were his wife, three sons and three daughters.

ISBE states about traditions of the American Indians: “Among the American Indians traditions of the Deluge were found by travelers to be widely disseminated. Mr. Catlin says, "Among the 120 different tribes which I visited in North, South, and Central America, not a tribe exists that has not related to me distinct or vague traditions of such a calamity, in which one, or three, or eight persons were saved above the waters upon the top of a high mountain" (quoted by Wm. Restelle in Biblical Sac. (January, 1907), 157).”

The Peruvian version of the legend is that one man and one woman were saved in a box which floated on the flood waters for hundreds of miles. The Mexican account states that one man, his wife and children were saved in a ‘ship which sailed safely over the tumultuous waters which overwhelmed the earth.’ The Polynesians from the South Pacific maintain that a Flood overwhelmed all but eight people.

“The Indian [Flood] tradition,” according to William Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible: Comprising its Antiquities, “appears in various forms. Of these, the one which most remarkably agrees with the Biblical account is that contained in the Mahabharata. We are there told that Brahma, having taken the form of a fish, appeared to the pious Manu (Satya, i.e. the righteous, as Noah is also called) on the banks of the river Wirini…Brahma now announces to Manu the approach of the Deluge, and bids him build a ship, and put in it all kinds of seeds together with the seven Rishis, or holy beings. The Flood begins and covers the whole earth. Brahma himself appears in the form of a horned fish, and the vessel being made fast to him he draws it for many years and finally lands on the loftiest summit of Mount Himarat (i.e. the Himalaya). Then by the command of God, the ship is made fast…By the favor of Brahma, Manu, after the Flood creates the new race of mankind, which is hence termed Manudsha [Manusha] i.e. born of Manu. The Puranic or popular version is of much later date, and is, according to its own admission, ‘colored and disguised by allegorical imagery.’ “

Since after the Flood all nations were one family (that of Noah) before they separated, we should expect all of them to have ancient traditions of such a spectacular event as the Flood. And that is exactly what we find.

Think about it. If the Flood had not occurred, would all human families have preserved an account of that event? It is too preposterous to believe that people even in remote tribes, many living in primitive conditions, would have retained knowledge of the event if it had not occurred. All people certainly would not have been deceived into believing the story if it were not true. No people can dream up such an event.

*Proof #2 - Mention of the Ark*

Despite denials from God rejecting historians, archaeologists and scholars that the Flood ever occurred, the ark has held great fascination for mankind.

Ancient writers have indicated that people in ancient times knew of the ark’s location. Ancient Jewish historian Josephus recorded that a great number of ancient historians commented on the subject. He writes in *Antiquities of the Jews I, III, 6*: “Now all the writers of barbarian histories make mention of this flood, and of this ark; among whom is Berosus the Chaldean [who lived in the third century B.C.E.]. For when he is describing the circumstances of the flood, he goes on thus: "It is said there is still some part of this ship in Armenia, at the mountain of the Cordyaeans; and that some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away, and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischiefs." Hieronymus the Egyptian also, who wrote the Phoenician Antiquities, and Mnaseas, and a great many more, make mention of the same. Nay, Nicolaus of Damascus, in his ninety-sixth book, hath a particular relation about them; where he speaks thus: "There is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyas, called Baris, upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the Deluge were saved; and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore upon the top of it; and that the remains of the timber were a great while preserved.”

Then much later in Antiquities, Josephus writes about events within his own lifetime. In book 20, chapter 2.2, he tells of a king who, when he was about to die, bestowed on his son a country in Armenia, of which he further states: “There are also in it the remains of the ark, wherein it is related that Noah escaped the Deluge, and where they are still shown to such as are desirous to see them.” Here is a plain statement that the ark still existed in first century A.D.

Reports of the ark have persisted through the years. An expert on the Flood, the historian, Dr. Aaron Smith of Greensboro, has patiently collected all the flood stories he could find. His collection comprises 80,000 works in 72 languages about the Deluge. About 70,000 of these mention the wreckage of Noah’s ark. If the Flood did not occur, why would so many nations’ ancient traditions mention the ark?

*Proof #3: The Geologic Evidence for the Flood*

Look at the Bible description of the Flood in Genesis 7:11: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* explains the meaning of the terminology “the fountains of the great deep were broken up": "…There were corresponding gigantic upheavals and shiftings of the earth's crust which caused the oceans' floors to rise and break up their reservoirs of subterranean waters."

This comment indicates that due to volcanic eruptions, gigantic quantities of underground water were released, and some new geologic strata were formed on the earth. The geologic evidence of enormous volcanic activity during the Flood is provided by huge areas in many parts of the earth being covered by immense lava flows. The Columbia Plateau in the northwestern United States is a tremendous lava outpouring, covering an area of about 200,000 square miles to a depth of several thousand feet. Other parts of the United States that were covered by lava outflows include Idaho, Oregon, and California.

In fact, much of the world is covered in plateaus of hardened magma. Two million square miles of Canada is covered by lava flows, which is known as the Canadian Shield. Around the world some of the most famous outpourings include Iceland, India, Siberia, parts of South America, the rift valley in Africa, and the Sierra Nevada. In India the Deccan Plateau is an example. It is estimated to be more than 10,000 feet thick. These plateaus indicate that the entire earth was undergoing vast volcanic activity and geologic changes to its surface.

Most of the islands of the world were formed as a result of Noah’s Flood. Many of the islands such as the Hawaiian Islands, Easter Island, Tonga Island and the famous Galapagos Islands are ocean peaks that are remnants of volcanoes. The island nations of New Zealand and Japan are formed by volcanic mountain chains.

Sedimentary rocks (which are formed by settling down of mineral matter, mud and silt in water) and sea shells are found on the tops of most of the world’s mountains, including Mount Everest (Odell N.E.; *The Highest Fossils in the World*; Geology Magazine’ 104:173-74, 1967; and Thompson I. National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Fossils. Alfred A. Knopf, NY., 1997.) Many people hiking into the mountains have reported finding fossilized seashells, fish and other aquatic creatures. This proves that these strata in the world’s highest mountains were under water at one time in the past, just as the Bible says. One would not expect to find fossils of seashells, fish and sea-life on the highest mountains unless they were under water at one time.

Thus geologic evidence indicates that the earth went through a catastrophic event involving water and a tremendous amount of volcanic activity. The evidence agrees with the description of Noah’s Flood in the Bible.

*Proof #4: Fossil Evidence for Noah’s Flood*

Finding remains of massive numbers of mammals and other creatures together in many areas worldwide would provide proof that they were buried suddenly in a global catastrophe. Here are some examples of fossil graveyards:

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* provides such evidence of the Noachian Flood: "Among these evidences one of the most convincing is to be found in the cave of San Ciro at the base of the mountains surrounding the plain of Palermo in Sicily. In this cave there was found an immense mass of the bones of hippopotami of all ages down to the fetus, mingled with a few of the deer, ox and elephant.

"Evidently the animals furnishing these bones had taken refuge in this cave to escape the rising water which had driven them in from the surrounding plains and cooped them up in the amphitheater of mountains during a gradual depression of the land.

"Similar collections of bones are found in various ossiferous fissures, in England and Western Europe, notably in the Rock of Gibraltar and at Santenay, a few miles South of Chalons in central France, where there is an accumulation of bones in fissures 1,000 ft. above the sea, similar in many respects to that in the cave described at San Ciro, though the bones of hippopotami did not appear in these places; but the bones of wolves, bears, horses and oxen, none of which had been gnawed by carnivora, were indiscriminately commingled as though swept in by all-pervading currents of water" (1915, "*Deluge of Noah*"). Since the carnivores had not made attempts to eat the herbivores, this shows that a great catastrophe had brought all these diverse animals together.

Another example is an outcropping at Agate Springs in northwestern Nebraska: "What remains of the hill covers about ten acres. This bone bed was accidentally discovered in 1876. It contains the bones of rhinoceroses, camels, giant wild boars, and other animals, buried together in a confused mass as only water would deposit them.

"It is estimated that the bones of about nine thousand complete animals are buried on this one hill…Hence, it is likely that many times that number of animals were brought together at this hill and buried there by the action of water…This is a fact that is most important. Animals of every kind died in great numbers and were buried almost instantly" (Alfred Rehwinkel, *The Flood*, 1951, p. 183). The fact to be emphasized is that this massive deposit of many kinds of animals was obviously made by a huge amount of water.

One of the greatest fossil graveyards is Alaska. Professor Frank C. Hibben writes: "In many places the Alaskan muck blanket is packed with animal bones and debris in trainload lots."

"Within this mass, frozen solid, lie the twisted parts of animals and trees intermingled with lenses of ice and layers of peat and mosses. It looks as though in the middle of some cataclysmic catastrophe…the whole Alaskan world of living animals and plants was suddenly frozen in mid-motion in a grim charade" (Frank C. Hibben, *The Lost Americans*, New York; Apollo Editions, 1961. pp. 90, 91).

The animals include millions of wooly mammoths, mastodons, bison, horses, wolves, bears and lions, all hopelessly entangled! Another author counted 1,766 jaws and 4,838 meta-podials from ONE species of bison in a small area near Fairbanks, Alaska, alone.

Hibben continues: “Seemingly, no animal was spared…"The young lie with the old, foal with dam and calf with cow. Whole herds of animals were apparently killed together, overcome by some common power," (ibid, p. 170).

He further states: "Throughout the Alaskan mucks, there is evidence of atmospheric disturbances of unparalleled violence. Mammoth and bison alike were torn and twisted as though by a cosmic hand in godly rage," (Frank C. Hibben, *The Lost Americans*, New York: Apollo Editions, 1961, p.177).

The Alaskan massacre of mammals is just one case in point. Much of North America’s wild animals would have made modern Africa’s big game preserves look like a children’s petting zoo in comparison. The largest known members of the elephant family, the Imperial mammoths thundered across vast areas of western North America; the mastodon made northeast New England its home, and further north, the wooly mammoth roamed the wide countryside. Besides the giants of the elephant family, the woolly rhinoceros, giant ground sloths, giant armadillos, bear-sized beavers, saber-toothed tigers, camels, antelopes, giant jaguars ALL made North America home. Then, suddenly, all these creatures perished. The fossil record provides abundant evidence of this mammal destruction.

But mammal massacre is not only a North American phenomenon. To differing degrees, all continents on earth bear testimony to this sudden catastrophic destruction. Across the vast stretches of Siberia, the same type of mammalicide is evident as in Alaska. Africa’s immense population of wild animals is a mere shadow of its former self. Fossils in South America bear similar testimony to extinction of strange large animals. Europe and Asia were struck by a similar catastrophe destroying vast herds of mammals.

World-known British zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson, discussed the Siberian remains in a popular magazine article some years ago: "The greatest riddle…is when, why and how did all these assorted creatures, and in such absolutely countless numbers, get killed, mashed up and frozen into this horrific indecency?" (Ivan T. Sanderson, "*Riddle of the Frozen Giants*," Saturday Evening Post, January 16, 1960, p. 82.)

The worldwide destruction of mammal life is clearly evident in the Shiwalik Hills in the foothills of the gigantic Himalayas. In the nineteenth century, remains of living and extinct animals were found in great abundance.

Geologist D. N. Wadia describes the finds in D. N. Wadia, *Geology of India*, 2nd edition, London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1939, p. 268: "The sudden and widespread reduction, by extinction, of the Siwalik mammals is a most startling event for the geologist as well as the biologist.

"The great carnivores, the varied races of elephants belonging to no less than 25 to 30 species...the numerous tribes of large and highly specialized ungulates [hoofed animals] are to be seen no more in an immediately succeeding age" (ibid., p. 279).

European evidence of the worldwide massacre is provided by a great fossil graveyard is Geiseltal, Germany, where more than 6,000 types of fossil vertebrae, including insects, mollusks, and plants are found. Millions of creatures are buried.

The earth today has only a small number of the immense types of mammals that roamed the earth providing evidence that many animal species became extinct in a global catastrophe. And most remarkable of all, ONLY LAND MAMMALS became extinct in any appreciable numbers. Sea and plant species are basically the same today as in pre-catastrophic times.

Anthropologist P.S. Martin writes: "Survival of the small, includes survival of the pelagic [water-living creatures]…the Pleistocene-Recent boundary cannot be recognized by marine guide fossils…At no time in the Pleistocene was there massive marine extinction...Nor were the largest mammals of the world, the cetaceans [water-living mammals such as porpoises], affected by late-Pleistocene extinction.

"Finally, late-Pleistocene extinction is not evident in the plant kingdom (P. S. Martin, "*Prehistoric Overkill," in Pleistocene Extinctions*, edited by P. S. Martin and H. E. Wright, Jr., New Haven: Yale University, 1967, pp. 78, 79).

But why is this so? Why were ONLY land-living, air-breathing, mammal species exterminated? Why did plants seem to survive the catastrophe and grow back into the same species? The answer should be evident. Many land-living, air-breathing animals and birds life died in the Flood. Only those in Noah’s ark survived. All sea-life survived the Flood. And plant life, though devastated by the Flood was able to grow back quickly after the Flood. Thus the fossil record provides solid evidence for Noah’s Flood, and agrees completely with its detailed description in the Bible.

*Proof #5: Was Noah’s Ark Big Enough*

Many scoffers argue that Noah’s ark was not big enough to carry the huge number of animals and their food supplies for more than a year. Therefore, they dismiss the Genesis Flood account as a myth. But take a look at the figures.

Noah did not have to take two of every living creature on board the ark. The specific requirement for the creatures to be taken on board is stated in Genesis 6:19-20 (NKJV): “And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind…"

From these instructions it is clear that there were three requirements for the type of animals that were to go into the ark. They were to be 1) air breathing, 2) living on land, and 3) the Biblical kind, that can interbreed. He did not need to carry any sea creatures in the ark.

For estimating the numbers of animals that Noah had to carry in the ark, the Biblical kind should be understood. It is not the same as species. The Biblical kind is a much broader concept than the species. Many species can be included in a single Biblical kind. The word ‘kind’ is probably closer the modern term ‘genus,’ and in some case the larger unit, the ‘family.’

For example, The Canidae (canine) family includes about 14 genera of dog like animals. These include the dog, coyote, wolf, dingo, jackal, the African wild dog etc. Noah was not required to take the hundreds of species of canines constituting this group. He had to take only the few “kind” that represented all these species. After the Flood, these kinds would reproduce all the species that make up the Canidae family.

Thus, the ark was not required to carry every species of animals, possibly numbering in the millions. Noah had to take along only every Biblical kind numbering in the few thousands.

Many critics argue that it would have been impossible for an eight person crew to care for tens of thousands of animals. The truth is that labor savings methods could have been incorporated into the design. Therefore the animals would have required very little care once in the ark. For example, Noah could have designed self-feeding, self-watering and self-cleaning systems. The cages of smaller animals could have slanted floors for moving animal wastes into a gutter where it could dry and become inert and odorless, or be composted by bacteria. The stalls for larger animals could have been designed with slatted floors allowing wastes to collect and become dry. With these devices, the waste would not require human handling.

Food could have been loaded into a chute or container on the side of the cages and the animals could self-feed. Extra food could have been loaded in bins nearby. Such techniques are used today in the livestock industry to reduce labor costs. Water could also have been piped into self-filling bows or troughs. Rainwater cistern system could have been used to collect water.

With properly designed systems, most of the animals would have required very little if any care once loaded onto the ark. Studies from the livestock industry have shown that a few people can care for tens of thousands of animals. The ingenuity of ancient people should not be underestimated. The pyramids of Egypt and the seven wonders of the ancient world have not been duplicated since.

The next question is: Was the ark large enough to accommodate all the animals? It is a misconception that the ark was a small vessel. The ark was at the minimum 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. The capacity of the ark was the equivalent of 569 modern railroad stock cars. That would make a train more than 5 ½ miles long. It was probably the largest sea-going vessel ever built until the late 1800's when metal ships were first constructed (John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, 1998 edition, p.10).

The estimates of the average size of animals vary from a small animal like a rabbit to about the size of an average sheep. Being conservative with the calculations, take the average size of the animals on the ark to be that of a sheep.

John Woodmorappe (*Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, 1996, p.7) estimates that the number of animals that Noah needed to take with him in the ark would have been between 2,000 and 16,000.

Whitcomb and Morris on the other hand in their book, *The Genesis Flood*, estimate that approximately 35,000 animals were placed on board the ark (this would account for the sevens – not seven pairs – of clean animals that were carried aboard the ark). Now be more conservative and allow for 5,000 more animals (for a total of 40,000) that may have become extinct after the Flood or may have been improperly excluded from the Biblical ‘kind.’ Here then are the space requirements calculations for carrying the animals aboard the ark.

The average space occupied by an average sheep is about 11.125 ft3. Here we have taken the average size of the animals to be the larger sheep rather than rabbit.

The Volume of the ark = 450x75x45 cu.ft = 1,518,750 cu.ft.

The percentages of space occupied in the ark if there are 2,000 animals is only 1.5%; if 16,000 animals were to be carried aboard the ark it is 11.7% and if 40,000 animals were to be carried aboard the ark, the most conservative estimate of the number of animals and their size, the percentage of space occupied by the animals would only be 29.3%, or just a little more than 1/4th. The rest of the space would be available for other uses in the ark, such as for interior fixtures, living space for Noah’s family, their baggage or other things. All the animals could actually fit in only one deck and a portion of the second deck of the ark.

Thus when we look at the evidence honestly, we can only conclude that Noah’s Flood was a fact. The Almighty God did really drown that world because of its wickedness, corruption and violence. But above all, Jesus Christ affirmed in Luke 17:26-27 that Noah’s Flood was a fact. He stated: “…as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.”

***Prophecy About Destruction of the Earth***

Now see another prophecy at the time of the Flood still being fulfilled today.

When God informed Noah of His intention to destroy all flesh on land, the Bible states in Genesis 6:12-13 (NIV): “12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.”

Did you catch that? God said He was also going to destroy the earth along with mankind. This was a further curse on the earth in addition to the curse in Adam’s time. Both these curses are still in effect today. That is why we see the crust of the earth broken up, resulting in all the violent volcanic, earthquake, flood, draught, tsunami, hurricane and tornado activity resulting in human death and destruction. Much of the earth remains covered in permafrost, and the geology of the earth has also produced large desert and mountainous areas which are not accessible for food production. Only about 10-15 percent of the earth’s land mass is cultivatable.

Further evidence of the destruction of conditions on earth which were conducive to good human health is that life span of human beings decreased from around 1000 years before the Flood to about 70 years today. Conditions on earth are simply not conducive to human health and longevity. We age and grow old quickly and die.

What caused the life spans of human beings to decline after the Flood? After the Flood the earth was very different. Changes in the climate, composition of the atmosphere, loss of water canopy, changes in the geology of the earth, kind of radiation reaching the earth, along with possibly genetic changes wrought by God and other natural factors were responsible for a rapid decline in the life spans of humans and animals. These changes in the earth that shortened human life spans and the destructive forces of nature such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, floods, draughts, tornadoes, only about 10-15 percent of the earth’s land being cultivatable are ongoing fulfillment of God’s prophecy that He would destroy man and the earth.

Only an Almighty God who has total control over the universe, the earth and everything in it could prophesy these great events before and at the time of the Flood and continue to uphold His prophecies for nearly 6,000 years now. Such prophecies are recorded only in the Bible, proving that its words are backed by the power of Almighty God. No holy book of any other religion can make that claim and prove it with prophecy.

**Chapter 3**

**Prophecies After the Flood**

***A Major Prophecy About the Races***

Not only did God prophesy about the future of humanity in general, He also foretold the future of the three broad races, white, black and yellow on earth. This is how this came about.

Noah himself was racially white, along with his wife and 3 sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. But his 3 sons married women of different races. Shem married a white woman, Ham a black negro woman and Japheth an oriental looking woman. That is how the different races originated after the Flood.

About 45-50 years after the Flood, Noah returned to the activity of growing a vineyard and producing wine. This probably was the first vineyard after the Flood and Noah was probably returning to this activity after many decades. So he perhaps forgot the potency of wine and inadvertently got drunk. As a result when Noah was unaware of his surroundings, somehow he became naked in his tent. Canaan the younger son of Ham then committed a perverted act with his grandfather Noah.

Notice verse Genesis 9:24: “And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son [that is, Ham’s younger son Canaan] had done unto him.” When Ham came to the tent he merely looked on or “saw the nakedness” of his father (vs. 22)! He immediately told his two brothers and they covered him, as described in verse 23: “And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness.”

After this incident, what Noah said is recorded in verses 25-27: “And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”

Here Noah pronounced a curse on Canaan. Canaan was punished for his sin! A superficial reading of these verses may lead one to conclude that Noah was striking out against Canaan in anger. His words were not uttered in uncontrolled emotion. Noah here was directly inspired by God to make these statements. He was speaking a MAJOR PROPHECY about the races that would affect the fortunes of all peoples after the Flood. Peter the apostle said: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the holy Ghost [spirit] (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Noah’s prophecy concerning the races has proved true through all generations since the Flood and is still being fulfilled today.

Let’s analyze this prophecy. The descendants of Shem are today located mainly among the Semitic and Northwestern European peoples. The descendants of Japheth are found among the Latin, Slavic, and Oriental peoples. Remember Japheth himself was white but had married an oriental woman. So some of his descendants would be born white, some oriental and some mixed looking. And the descendants of Ham are found primarily among the dark races in parts of India and black African peoples.

Now notice what God said about the future status of each of Noah's three sons in world-wide terms. First, Shem: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ..." This expression shows that the knowledge of God would be preserved among the descendants of Shem – a prophetic fact true to this day. The knowledge of the true God has been preserved among the sons of Shem while the descendants of Ham and Japheth have received their little understanding of God through Shem's offspring! God’s blessings also imply material prosperity.

Next, Japheth: “God shall enlarge Japheth.” This means that they would spread out and experience great growth in population. The proof of fulfilment of this prophecy is the fact that the greatest concentrations of earth's population exist in the Orient. Yet they would live under the influence of Shem, which is what is meant by the next phrase "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem!”

Lastly, the descendants of Ham except for Canaan are not mentioned in the prophecy. The descendants of Ham, the black race, were not given any special blessings. Many countries descended from him are some of the poorest nations on earth, and live in squalor, poverty and disease. The descendants of Canaan were destined to be "servants of servants" in this world. Presumably it is Canaan’s children scattered among nations after Joshua drove them out of the land of Canaan throughout Asia, Africa, North and South America, as well as in Europe that have been reduced to the general status of servants. In nearly every nation they would constitute the lowest classes.

But why did God not pronounce any blessings on the descendants of Ham? It has to do with Canaan’s sin, which earned him the curses, and Ham’s personal attitude under the influence of his Negro wife, the pre-Flood Naamah, the daughter of Lamech which earned him no blessings from God. In pre-Flood society the charge to make the world one race through interracial marriages was led by the dark descendants of Cain, particularly those of Lamech and Zillah. Naamah was their daughter. They successfully achieved this goal because they were the leading mighty and technologically advanced people of that world. If they had achieved similar success after the Flood, they would have continued on the same path of forced interracial marriages, and the result would have been the same: the world would have become one racially, socially, culturally, and of one pagan religion led by the black descendants of Ham.

In fact, after the Flood, the descendants of Ham, Cush and Nimrod, started on precisely that same path. They rebelled against God and Noah and separated themselves from the other descendants of Noah to build their own society and religion opposed to the true God. Then they went about building a great empire to bring the entire world under their control. Cush and Nimrod were also forcing interracial marriages. They would have achieved the same goal as before the Flood of making the world one religion, one society, one race, if they had not been stopped by direct intervention from God. This intervention came in the form of confusing the language of mankind at the Tower of Babel which led to races being separated. And then Nimrod was executed by Shem for his many crimes, probably at God’s command.

Canaan’s descendants also followed their ancestor in committing sexual perversions. That is why God gave the laws to Israel in Leviticus 18 against sexual perversions and incest. This is confirmed by Leviticus 18:27: “(For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled.)” In addition, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were descendants of Canaan (Genesis 10:19), who perished when God rained fire and brimstone on them for their sexual perversions. Later God decided to destroy the Canaanites utterly and give their land over to the Israelites. Some of them escaped destruction and fled to other nations.

Now think of the significance and impact of this prophecy! Years before the Tower of Babel, God foretold the status of the white, yellow, and dark races for all future generations. So Noah’s prophecy given soon after the Flood, now about 4,300 years ago is still being fulfilled today proving that the words of the Bible are backed by the power of Almighty God who declares great events and then continues to bring them to pass in precise detail over thousands of years.

To appreciate why God of the Bible gave further prophecies, we should first briefly understand man’s history for the first 2,000 years from the pages of the Bible. The author has reconstructed that history in his two books titled “*Satan vs God: From the Beginning to the Flood*” *Volume 1* and “*Satan vs God: From the Flood to Abraham’s Call” Volume 2*. The second book covers the period from the Flood till the time God began to deal with Abraham. This brief history in the next chapter has been condensed from the two volumes.

***Conditions after the Flood***

Noah, his wife, his 3 sons Shem, Ham and Japheth were all racially white. Shem had married a white wife. But Japheth married an oriental looking wife, a descendant of Cain, and Ham had married the negro Naamah, the famous daughter of Lamech, also a descendant of Cain. So the 3 basic races, white, black and oriental, were preserved through the Flood.

After the Flood, Noah instructed his family in God’s way of life. But Naamah who was worshipped as a goddess herself before the Flood instructed her black children in the way their family had lived and ruled the world before the Flood. Japheth’s wife instructed her children in the way of life of ancestor worship that her family followed before the Flood.

Then the incident between Noah who inadvertently got drunk and Canaan the son of Ham and Naamah occurred. This led Noah to pronounce a curse on Canaan, and prophesy about the future of the three races of his family.

Before the Flood Lamech had ruled almost the entire world! Because of interracial marriages, the world had become filled with violence. God wanted to prevent one man from ruling the world again and prevent interracial marriages because it led to violence. So God gave Noah a plan to colonize different areas of the earth. This would separate the various races, and each would develop their own civilization, and not try to force their rule over others.

Noah took a ten year long journey with his sons to different areas to explore lands to send colonies to. While they were gone, Ham’s son Cush, which means black, probably seduced and raped or had an illegal relationship with the strikingly beautiful young white Semiramis, a great granddaughter of Japheth. She became pregnant and the black Nimrod was born to her as a result of that relationship.

When Noah returned from his journey, he refused to let Cush interracially marry Semiramis, and because he was already married to his black sister possibly with straight hair and had children by her. He simply was not going to allow conditions to develop as they had developed before the Flood due to forced interracial marriages.

At that time wild animals multiplied faster than human beings and began to threaten the tiny human population. Nimrod the physically powerful young son of Cush and Semiramis rose to the occasion and began to protect humans from wild animals. He began to organize hunting parties to hunt and kill wild animals which drove them away from human populations. Thus Nimrod began to be looked upon as a savior of mankind.

Noah then began to implement God’s plan and send out colonies to different areas of the earth. But Cush, Nimrod, Semiramis, and Shem’s son Asshur and a majority of humanity rebelled against God’s colonization plan. They refused to go to their assigned territories. Instead they separated from Noah and those loyal to him and went to the land of Shinar in modern day Iraq and set up their own civilization. Thus after the Flood this rebellion against God and Noah was led by the black part of the human family, though they had white and oriental followers as well.

These rebels began to hate the true God and in rebellion set up their own god, the Sun-Fire-Serpent god. They developed their own pagan worship system, and set up a very high tower as a sanctuary for worship and began building a city. Cush and Nimrod became the high priests of the god they had set up.

Cush and Nimrod were also basically rebelling against not being allowed to marry whomever they wanted, mainly white women. Now that they were free from Noah’s influence, they again began to force interracial marriages among those who followed them.

Just as Nimrod’s great grandfather and Cush’s grandfather Lamech had done before the Flood, they too began to develop plans to rule all of humanity, and make the world of one race, one religion [their religion] and one society, under their control. To accomplish that they would probably have to assassinate Noah, his loyal son Shem and those with them who would refuse to come under their rule.

When God saw their plans, He decided to intervene. He confused the language of mankind and destroyed the tower (Genesis 11:1-9). Because of confusion of language men could no longer freely communicate with anyone else except those of their own race. So they were forced to separate by race and move away from the city they were building.

After the destruction of the Tower and confusion of language, Cush, Nimrod and Semiramis began to pick up the pieces of their empire. Their goal to control the entire world population still remained. At that time the population of the world had reached only 5,000. Slightly less than half that number were loyal to Noah and Shem and had started going out in colonies as instructed by them. But they had not travelled far. So the population of the world was still concentrated around the Middle East, in and around the land of Israel, Iraq, coasts of Egypt and the Mediterranean in Europe.

The destruction of the tower and the confusion of language were not lost on those in the Cush and Nimrod camp. They knew that the destruction of their project was from God, and they noticed that the language they could understand was only of those of their race, according to the division Noah had made for colonizing the earth. This caused a division in the Cush and Nimrod camp. Asshur the white son of Shem separated himself and built Nineveh to the north of the cities Cush and Nimrod were building. This is described in Genesis 10:10-12: “10 And the beginning of his [that is, Nimrod’s] kingdom was Babel [meaning Babylon], and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city of Rehoboth, and Calah. And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.” However, Asshur and his descendants at that time still were part of Nimrod’s empire, and worked with him, under his rule.

For the efficient working of people on their projects of building cities, places of worship and growing food, Cush [the Menes of Egypt and known as Manu in the Indian scriptures] had organized all the workers in their camps according to the tasks performed by them, as he had determined what ‘aptitude’ they had. But this division of labor was rigid. Those working on growing food would always remain on agriculture and would not be allowed to change their work to construction and building. Those assigned the task of keeping the cities clean would always attend to that task. Cush and Nimrod enforced their rigid division of labor on all. The people could not choose what tasks they wanted to perform according to what they enjoyed or had an aptitude for or aspired for. Such division was passed along to the children also as they grew up.

Thus the system Cush had originated which he and Nimrod enforced became highly oppressive. The people could not get away from it though many longed to do so, because of the fear of being killed for their rebellion. But others still did not forget the deliverance brought to them by Nimrod from wild animals and remained loyal to him, accepting their oppressive division of labor.

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus describes the result of the policies of Cush and Nimrod in *Antiquities I, IV, 2*: “He [that is Nimrod] also gradually changed the government into Tyranny…seeing no other way of turning men away from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power…” This was the nature of the merciless, brutal, oppressive, freedomless regime that was developing in Babylon, the area from which Nimrod ruled.

We see the continuation of this horrible and oppressive system in the development of the rigid caste system in India and to some extent in Egypt. The straight haired dark Indians were Cush’s descendants. Raamah the son of Cush mentioned in Genesis 10:7 is none other than the Rama of the Ramayana who was deified by his descendants. And Nimrod is being worshipped in India as Krishana. Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana glorify the caste system developed by Cush, the father of both Rama and Nimrod.

Cush, Nimrod and Semiramis continued to develop their worship system opposed to the worship of the true God. At this time for the first time in human history Nimrod introduced live human and infant sacrifices in his worship system. The live humans being sacrificed were probably captives who rebelled against Nimrod’s religion.

Some evidence of human and infant sacrifices instituted by Nimrod can be found in the practice of Sati in India before the 19th century A.D., which is the practice of the wife jumping alive into the fire that is cremating her dead husband and immolating herself. Such evil practices are glorified in the Hindu scriptures. The British had to outlaw the practice of Sati in India to end it in the 19th century.

Other evidence of infant sacrifice by burning alive comes from the Bible itself. Nimrod was later deified as the god Baal. The Canaanites were Baal or Nimrod worshippers and infant sacrifices, i.e. burning them alive in the fire, was one of their practices. That is why God ordered the Israelites to exterminate them. But part of the population of ancient Israel ended up adopting their practices.

Can you imagine the hideous religious practices of these pagans? How would you feel if you were forced to give up your infant to be burnt alive as a sacrifice to the pagan god Baal or the Sun-fire-serpent god? Such was the tyrannical rule of Nimrod.

And Cush and Nimrod continued to promote and force interracial marriages. Evidence of forced interracial marriages can be found all over the world. Much of Japhethites, the ancestor of the Oriental peoples had joined Cush and Nimrod in their rebellion. Evidence of their mixing with blacks can be found in South and Southeast China, Tibet, Nepal, Southeast Asia, among Native Americans in north, but particularly South America. Many in the pure white line of Arphaxad were lured to become priests. They were also forced to mix with the black and yellow races. Their mixed descendants are the Brahmins of India and others are mixed among the Egyptians. Later interracial mixing has also continued to occur.

*Rebellion against the Rule of Cush and Nimrod*

At that time there was movement between the camps of Noah and Cush and Nimrod. Some escaped the camp of Cush and Nimrod to join up with Noah’s camp, while others who had gone out in colonies came and settled in Cush and Nimrod’s camp. One such person was Magog, the ancestor of the Chinese people, the son of Japheth. He and his descendants had gone out as colonists as instructed by Noah. They were allotted the land of China and were given maps by Noah on how to get there. This is not fiction. These maps were made by the Creator Himself and given to Noah as proved in the second volume of the author’s book on ancient history.

Magog and his children took the north route to get to China over many centuries. But because of the cold conditions during their journeys Magog decided with a part of his children to seek out the camp of Cush and Nimrod, as he had heard they were building cities to live in and life was more comfortable.

Magog soon got a taste of the brutal and oppressive conditions there. He objected to the forced interracial marriages of his descendants with the blacks. As a result he was imprisoned by Nimrod. This eventually led most of the descendants of Japheth to rebel against the rule of Cush and Nimrod. As this resistance from the Japhethites got stronger over the years, Cush saw the handwriting on the wall. He departed for Ethiopia with his children with frizzy hair along with Semiramis to the land allotted to him by Noah according to God’s plan. Nimrod tried to maintain his empire in Babylon alone, but as the children of Japheth got stronger and stronger, he too was forced out and went to Egypt. Two years later his father Cush disappears from Egyptian history, presumably murdered by his illegitimate son Nimrod and his mother Semiramis.

For the next 28 years Nimrod and Semiramis continued to propagate their pagan religion among the descendants of Ham in Africa, as well as the Canaanites. Nimrod likely also travelled and propagated his religion among the other sons of Cush with the straight hair who were still around the Middle East, but were destined to end up in India according to the allotment made for them in God’s colonization plan. He also had started making inroads into Italy, Spain and areas along the shores of the Mediterranean in Europe where some of the fairer descendants of Japheth had settled at that time. He was now beginning to make inroads into areas where Shem was active. At this stage God decided Nimrod should be executed for his many crimes including live human and infant sacrifices. This is the first execution ordered by God in the history of mankind.

At that time Nimrod was in Egypt. Shem immediately set about the task. He came to Egypt from Europe and convinced 70 princes in Egypt and surrounding areas to join him in bringing Nimrod to justice. Nimrod wasted no time and attacked Shem and those with him as soon as he got word. Nimrod and his forces were defeated and he fled to Italy. Shem followed him and found him after a year, executed him, cut off his body into pieces and sent the pieces to different areas of the population which was still all mainly in the Middle East as a warning against apostatizing. Noah was still alive and well at that time and would live about 150 more years.

Thus after the Flood, the black portion of the human family led the rebellion against God. Now perhaps we can appreciate why God prophesied the future of the 3 races through Noah the way He did. Even after the Flood, the black portion of the human family ruled a majority of mankind. But over the centuries they were to lose their influence. If God had continued to let them materially prosper and rule the rest of mankind with force, they would have driven all of humanity away from the true God, and forced everyone to marry interracially. The result would have been the same as before the Flood: worldwide violence, corruption and bloodshed.

After Nimrod was executed, a fear fell on the entire world population, which at that time was small and concentrated largely in and around the Middle East and southern Europe, around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. They could no longer openly worship their false Sun-fire-serpent god for fear of being executed. After Nimrod’s execution, Semiramis fled to the delta region of Egypt, and from there to Babylon. The world population at that time was only around 90,000.

After he had sent out all the colonists, Noah left Armenia and took a 115 year long journey to visit the colonists he had sent to inquire about their welfare. When he reached Egypt, he saw that his descendants there were living a degenerate life style. He spent 50 years there, countering the pagan teachings of Cush, Nimrod, Semiramis and his own son Ham who by that time had been thoroughly corrupted by his wife Naamah. Noah’s work with the Egyptians was to lay the foundation of Egypt’s greatness in the centuries following.

Meanwhile Semiramis fled to Babylon and had an illegitimate son with Ninus II the son of Asshur and named him Horus. She soon returned to Egypt with her young son and reigned there. Horus then became the ruler in Egypt. She continued to develop and propagate her pagan religion from there.

Because of the fear of being executed for propagating paganism, Semiramis now began developing her Mystery religion, which later would become known as the Babylonian Mystery Religion. In this religion they outwardly worshipped objects such as trees, and creatures such as the bull, but those initiated in the mysteries knew exactly what they were worshipping. Bull worship was Nimrod worship and tree worship (which has come down to our time as the Christmas tree) was actually worship of Semiramis. Since Nimrod was worshipped as a bull or calf, his mother Semiramis would obviously be worshipped as a cow. That is the origin of cow worship among the Hindu Indians.

Only those initiated in the mysteries knew what really they were worshipping in animals, objects and idols. Those not initiated in the mysteries just followed the priests for their concocted reasons in their worship of animals and objects without really knowing what they were worshipping. Over the centuries even the priests forgot what they were actually worshipping. But they continue to follow traditions and worship cows, trees and other objects even today.

It seems at this time Satan and the demons for the first time understood the very first prophecy given in the Bible in Genesis 3:15 (NKJV): “And I [that is God] will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed, it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

This is actually a prophecy of the woman’s Seed coming to earth to redeem mankind from death, making eternal life possible. That promised Seed was Jesus Christ. Satan bruising his heel was understood to mean that Satan would cause Him to be put to death. But He would bruise Satan’s head by defeating him and ending his rule on earth.

It seems Satan then immediately began developing a counterfeit religion through Semiramis centered around this prophecy. Nimrod was already considered a savior of mankind for having saved humans from wild animals. Now Semiramis deified him as the promised Seed of the woman sent to save mankind. She said he had been killed to save mankind. She then deified herself as the Mother of the Savior and began to be worshipped. So worship of the Madonna and Child originated with Semiramis soon after the Flood. It did not originate with the birth and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere tells us that Mary is to be worshipped in any way. Worship of the Madonna and Child in mainstream Christianity is an ancient tradition going back above 2000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, foisted on Christianity by the great false Church based in Rome.

All the false worship traditions, customs and festivals such as Christmas and Easter of modern Christianity are nowhere even mentioned leave alone required in the Bible. Our modern word Easter comes from the name “Ishtar” which was the Assyrian name of Semiramis. Worship of the Trinity, the cross, hot cross buns of Easter, colored eggs and rabbits, the tree of Christmas, worship of the bull, calf and cow, worship of the Sun god on Sunday, worship of relics, start of the new year in the dead of winter, all originated with Semiramis soon after the Flood and have been foisted on a gullible Christianity by the false Church. Worship of idols had originated before the Flood and remained an important part of the religion originated by Semiramis.

*Assyrian Conquests*

Not only did innovations in pagan religion increase and flourish under Satan’s guidance through Semiramis, the religion began to be enforced on other people. The main instrument to accomplish this after Nimrod’s death was Asshur, the son of Shem, and his descendants. After Nimrod’s death, the Babylonians who were mainly Japhethites mixed with other peoples and the Chaldeans who were descendants of the white Arphaxad were active in Babylon whereas the Assyrians [whose modern day descendants are the Germans] became active in consolidating power north of them in the cities they had built.

Much of the world population was still living around the Middle East and coasts of the Mediterranean and had not moved too far away. Asshur, the ancestor of the Assyrians then under the generalship of his son Ninus II began conquests of the nations around to impose tribute on them. And they had also begun building a fortified city, Nineveh, with very high and thick walls to protect themselves. The conquests took 17 years enabling the Assyrians to put many peoples under tribute.

The Assyrians were extremely brutal in their conquests. Ninus II had some rulers murdered with all their children so as to leave no heir. Here is what Diodorus of Sicily the ancient historian writes in his “*Historical Library*” Book II, chapter 1, p. 100 about Ninus II:

“Ninus therefore, the Assyrian king, with the prince of Arabia, his assistant, with a numerous army invaded the Babylonians then next bordering upon him: for the Babylon that is now [that is, in the time of Diodorus] was not built at that time; but the province of Babylon had in it then many other considerable cities, whose inhabitants he easily subdued (being rude and unexpert in matters of war), and imposed upon them a yearly tribute; but carried away the king with all his children prisoners, and soon after put them to death…

“Being thus strengthened, he invaded Media [i.e. the Medes, the descendants of Japheth], whose king Pharnus coming out against him with a mighty army was utterly routed, and lost most of his men, and was taken prisoner with his wife and seven children, and afterwards crucified.”

After 17 years of conquests when the Assyrians had become masters of that part of the world, they lived in their well-fortified cities with Nineveh their capital and tribute was brought to them on a yearly basis by all of their subject nations. The only way people could get away from the oppression of the Assyrians was to move away from them. And they did move away, led by God in their migrations to the places He had allotted them in His colonization plan given to Noah.

But the brutal treatment of other rulers by the Assyrians was not forgotten. They planned and plotted against the life of Ninus. As mentioned earlier, Ninus II had a son named Horus with Semiramis. The year Ninus II finished his conquests, Semiramis left Egypt permanently and came and settled in Babylon. She continued to develop and spread her Babylonian Mystery religion from there. She literally committed fornication with the kings of nations around, which included most nations still living close by, which became a means also to spread her religion. That is why myths of all peoples have so much in common because all peoples followed Semiramis’ religion.

Ninus II could not be brought to justice by conquest because of the well-fortified city Nineveh he lived in. So the kings around hatched a plot with Semiramis. Remember Semiramis herself was a Japhethite, and most of the kings brutally treated by Ninus II were Japhethites. Semiramis now renewed her relationship with Ninus II and could easily move in and out of Nineveh. Ninus II again became very fond of her and probably married her this time.

Then Semiramis probably played a prank on Ninus II and asked him to give her royal authority for 5 days. She held a sumptuous banquet for the army commanders and the nobility so that all her subjects could observe that she ruled. These commanders and the nobility included many from among the provinces that Ninus II had conquered and were now allied with the Assyrians. She then secretly committed Ninus II to jail. Then she carried out Ninus II’s plans and invaded Armenia in which she was successful. She then had Ninus II assassinated and ruled in his place. Thus though Ninus II could not be conquered because of his highly fortified capital city, he was brought down by intrigue.

This brought Horus, the illegitimate son of Ninus II and Semiramis back from Europe and a struggle followed between him and his mother for the throne of Assyria. After many years Semiramis fled to Armenia and was slain in a battle with her son Horus.

*Assyrians and Abraham*

Even after the death of Semiramis, the Babylonian Mystery religion she had developed had taken deep hold over the people. As mentioned earlier, the pure white descendants of Arphaxad the son of Shem had been lured through financial incentives to become priests of the pagan religion. They settled among the ancestors of the Indian Cushites, or Kassites or Kshatriyas, where they are known as the Brahmins today, and among the Egyptians, Babylonians and in Italy. They propagated the pagan religion of Semiramis as enforced by the Assyrians, or through cunning craftiness in Italy and Europe where enforcement was not possible. In Italy where Noah had settled, these priests convinced the people that they were honoring Noah, but cunningly taught the Babylonian Mystery religion, telling the people that Noah himself had preached that way.

Besides the priests who had dispersed among different peoples, there were other descendants of Arphaxad living in Mesopotamia. The Assyrians began to bring them into subjection. Because of the treacherous ways of the Assyrians, all these peoples were forced into living the way of lying, deceit, trickery and intrigue. They were forced to abandon the way of truth and served other gods.

Joshua 24:2 records: “And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” This shows that Abraham’s father served other gods and idols and not the true God. Later we have the example of Jacob learning the ways of trickery from his mother Rebecca who came from that area and tricked his brother Esau and his father Isaac out of Esau’s birthright and blessing. We learn of the trickery of Laban the brother of Rebecca in his dealings with his nephew Jacob. We see the competitive dealings between the two wives of Jacob, the sisters Leah and Rachel. It was the treacherous influence of the Assyrians that had turned away these descendants of Arphaxad from the pure ways of God. They are the only ones who had retained the knowledge of the true God. But through financial incentives to become priests of the pagan religion and from pressure from the Assyrians, all descendants of Arphaxad had also turned away from the true God.

So after the Flood, a great struggle was waged between the pagans and those loyal to Noah and Shem to impose their religion over all of humanity. Paganism won out and all of humanity was corrupted and began to follow pagan worship practices. The Assyrians began to impose the pagan religion by force on descendants of Shem. In about 400 years after the Flood, all of humanity once again turned away from worship of the true God.

This is the world into which the 3 sons of Terah, Haran, Abraham and Nahor were born. Terah and Nahor had turned away from the true God to serve other gods. At this time Noah had passed away, but Shem was still alive. There can be no doubt that Haran and Abraham went and visited Shem in the Danubian Valley where he lived in his old age, and learnt about the true God from him. In the early years of Abraham, they had respite from Assyrian oppression because Horus and his mother Semiramis were engaged in a struggle to gain or maintain control of the Assyrian Empire. But after gaining control of the Empire, Horus began imposing the pagan religion on all peoples. Haran and Abraham were bound to come into conflict with Horus and his governors and lesser Assyrian rulers. Jewish and Arab traditions tell us that Horus persecuted Abraham.

The Bible records that Haran and Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. This was also the place where the Chaldean priests, the descendants of Arphaxad lived. The Chaldean priests had knowledge of the eclipses of the sun and moon and had learnt astronomy from Noah. So they could predict the movement of the celestial bodies. To gain hold over the people they falsely taught that they could communicate with the Sun and Moon gods who would tell them about their movements. But Abraham countered their teaching, having possibly learnt astronomy directly from Shem. He began to argue and teach that the sun and moon could not control their own motions, but were subject to the laws of the supreme God. Their movements could be predicted. So the sun and moon were not gods, but that there was a Supreme God who governed their motions. He proved that the creation was proof of the existence of the true Supreme God. This brought Abraham into conflict with the Chaldean priesthood as described by Josephus the ancient historian. The Chaldean priesthood visioned their lofty status in society slipping away. So Josephus records that they raised a tumult against Abraham.

At this time probably Haran and Abraham refused to pay tribute to the Assyrians. One of their lesser rulers Count Sattan came against them to enforce tribute. In this battle Haran the older brother of Abraham died. Abraham had to flee for his life to the Danube Valley with his wife Sarah. But he had to leave his Assyrian wife Susanna and their son Achim behind as the Assyrians would not harm one of their own.

After a few years when Count Sattan died, Abraham decided to return to his former home in Ur of the Chaldees to be with his wife Susanna and their son Achim. But God changed Abraham’s plans from then onwards. God appeared to him for the first time, called him and gave him a command and a new plan for his life. This is recorded in Genesis 12:1-5 (NKJV):

“1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.”

For about 2,000 years since the creation of Adam and Eve, God worked with all of humanity in general. But twice all of humanity had turned its back on Him: once before the Flood and now in about 400 years after the Flood. All except Abraham, Lot, Abraham’s wife Sarah and Shem, who was still alive, had turned away to worship other gods. God then decided to no longer work with all of humanity. He decided to create a model nation as mentioned in His promise to Abraham, with which He would work, bless that nation for the entire world to see as an example and learn from. Just as before the Flood God found Noah to be completely loyal to His way of life and worked with him to save humanity through the Flood, He now chose to work with one man, Abraham, who remained loyal to Him after the Flood when the rest of humanity had succumbed to paganism. The next set of great prophecies and promises of God relate to Abraham and his descendants.

These prophecies were not after thoughts. All this was thought out and planned even before the foundation of the world. In Deuteronomy 32:8 Moses states: “8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.” This states that when God gave inheritance to the sons of Adam, He did it according to the number of children that would be born to Israel after the Flood. This means the inheritance of the nations was planned even at the time of Adam and Eve, meaning it was already pre-planned. So when Abraham was asked to go to the land of Canaan, he was asked by God to go to his inheritance which the descendants of Canaan had usurped in the rebellion against God’s colonization plan.

Abraham was completely obedient to God and did not question why He asked him to go to Canaan. He simply obeyed God’s instructions and departed.

**Chapter 4**

**God’s Promises to Abraham**

God appeared to Abraham for the first time and gave him a command and a new plan for his life. This is recorded in Genesis 12:1-5 (NKJV):

“1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.”

It is to be noted in these promises that all peoples on earth shall be blessed materially and spiritually through Abraham’s descendants.

Abraham was completely obedient to God and did not question why God asked him to go to Canaan. He did not argue with God to bless him in the land where he was rather than asking him to go to a strange land. He simply obeyed God’s instructions and departed.

God later began to add more details to His promises. Genesis 13:16 adds (NIV): “16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.” This means descendants of Abraham will increase greatly in population.

God then further expanded the scope of His promises to Abraham in Genesis 17:1-7 (NKJV): “1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Now the promises include instead of one nation, many nations being formed from the descendants of Abraham, and he becoming an ancestor of kings. Also God promised him all the land of Canaan in which he was a stranger.

Later when Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, God’s promises to him became *unconditional*. The account is stated in Genesis 22:11-12, 15 -18 (NKJV): “11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me…15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate [the correct translation should be gates] of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

This time the promise of Abraham’s descendants possessing the gates, meaning narrow land and sea passages of access to enemies’ lands and strategic islands around the world is added.

*Promises to Abraham Passed on to Isaac and Jacob*

God then reconfirmed His covenant or unconditionally binding agreement [meaning Abraham had to do nothing more, but God was binding Himself to do His part and perform His promises to Abraham] with Abraham’s son Isaac and his descendants in Genesis 26:1-5. Then in Genesis 27:26-29, 28:1-4, 10-14, 25:9-12, the covenant and the promises were reconfirmed with Abraham’s grandson Jacob.

In confirmation of God’s promises to Jacob, many additional interesting details are revealed. First of all, Jacob received the birthright, which naturally belongs to the firstborn. Esau the firstborn sold the birthright to his younger brother Jacob for bread and stew of lentils.

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* explains that the birthright was "the right belonging naturally to the firstborn son...Such a person ultimately became the head of the family, the line being continued through him. As firstborn he inherited a double portion of the paternal estate...The firstborn was responsible for...exercising authority over the household as a whole" (1979, Vol. 1, "*Birthright*," pp. 515-516).

Isaac pronounced the following blessing on his son Jacob in Genesis 27:28-29 (NKJV): “28 Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!"

Isaac also let Jacob know that the promises of Abraham were being passed on to him in Genesis 28:3-4 (NRSV): “3 May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you may become a company of peoples. 4 May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham." Here Jacob is promised that his descendants will become a company of peoples, meaning many nations.

God then revealed through Jacob what the birthright and the blessing entailed in Genesis 28:14 (NKJV): “Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God promised that peoples and nations would serve the descendants of Jacob and bow down to them, meaning they will be the foremost nations on earth. They would spread around the world in all directions, north, south, east and west, from the Middle East. They would multiply greatly in numbers, as the dust of the earth. These are not idle words. When we consider what God has in store for humanity for eternity in the universe, descendants of Jacob will literally multiply in numbers as the dust of the earth and the stars in heaven.

*Jacob Passes on God’s Promises to his Twelve Sons*

Before Jacob’s twelve sons, God had passed on His promises to Abraham to one son, preferring him over the other son. Abraham’s promises were passed on to Isaac instead of Ishmael. Then Isaac passed on Abraham’s promises to his son Jacob instead of his older son Esau. But then God began to pass on Abraham’s promises collectively to all the twelve sons of Jacob. Among the twelve sons of Jacob, God chose out two sons for special national blessings.

In Genesis 35:11-12 (NKJV) God promises Jacob: “Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; *a nation and a company of nations* shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." Here God promises Jacob that a great nation and a company or commonwealth of nations would proceed from him.

That part of God’s promise Jacob then passed on to his two grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph in Genesis 48:14-19 (NKJV): “14 Then Israel [Jacob’s other name] stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, 16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." 17 Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

So God’s promise to Jacob that a great nation and a commonwealth of nations would proceed from him is conferred by him on his son Joseph’s two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. This way, the birthright that conferred a double portion of the paternal estate was given to Joseph. However, not all dimensions of the promises to Abraham would go to Joseph. Judah received a very important promise of great physical and spiritual dimension.

Through Jacob God prophesied in Genesis 49:10 “the scepter [ruler’s staff] shall not depart from Judah.” That prophecy pointed to the dynasty of Israel’s future king David, a descendent of Judah, and also to Jesus, a descendent of Judah and King David as the Messiah, and ruler of the earth as King of Kings.

1 Chronicles 5:2 clarifies these two promises: “…Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's.” Thus the birthright promise of great material blessings and to become a great nation and a company or Commonwealth of Nations went to the descendants of Joseph, but the promise of rulership went to the descendants of Judah.

*Details of Promises to Joseph and Judah*

When Jacob was close to death, he called his twelve sons together and prophesied what would happen to descendants of each of them in the last days, meaning our time. These blessings provide more details on the birthright promise to Joseph.

Genesis 49:1 states: “1 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days.” Then Genesis 49:22-26 (*New Century Version*) states: “22 "Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall. 23 Archers attack him violently and shoot at him angrily, 24 but he aims his bow well. His arms are made strong, and his strength from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel. 25 Your father's God helps you. God Almighty blesses you. He blesses you with rain from above, with water from springs below, with many babies born to your wives, and many young ones born to your animals. 26 The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of the oldest mountains, greater than the good things of the long-lasting hills. May these blessings rest on the head of Joseph, on the forehead of the one who was separated from his brothers!”

This prophetic blessings pronounced on Joseph's descendants "in the last days" mean that they will live in a very fertile, well-watered highly fruitful land. They will be a people “whose branches run over the wall” means they will expand their territory by being a colonizing people. At times they will be attacked by their enemies but they will remain strong and victorious through God’s miraculous intervention and help.

Their population will continue to grow steadily, enjoying blessings of great herds of livestock, bumper crops due to climate favorable for agriculture, and extensive mineral resources to support a robust economy. They will receive these blessings "in the last days," meaning in our time.

God’s promise of the scepter [or kingship] to Judah would be fulfilled through the descendants of King David. After David planned to build a temple for God, He made a covenant with David which provides details of the promise of that kingship as stated in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (NKJV): “"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name [which was fulfilled by David’s son King Solomon], and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." Here God promised David that his dynasty would last forever.

*Summary of God’s Promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*

God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and King David can now be listed as follows:

1) God promised incredible material blessings of resources of the earth and riches to all of Jacob’s descendants, but primarily to Joseph’s sons Ephraim from whom would come the company or commonwealth of nations and to Manasseh from whom would come the single great nation. These blessing would be theirs in the last days, or our time.

2) Descendants of Jacob would possess the gates of their enemies.

3) All nations would be blessed materially and spiritually through the descendants of Jacob.

4) The chief ruler would come from Judah through king David, with an everlasting dynasty.

*Fulfillment of the Promises*

All these promises of God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were major prophecies. To see how all these incredible promises have been fulfilled, we must first identify who the modern descendants of Jacob are. Fortunately various Church of God organizations have published excellent books and booklets on the subject. For comprehensive proof that white Americans are mainly the modern descendants of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the son of Jacob or Israel, and the British are the modern descendants of Manasseh’s brother Ephraim the reader may refer to the following five free booklets:

1. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; by Herbert W. Armstrong, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

2. *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*; published by the United Church of God, available at www.ucg.org.

3. “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future,*” eBook published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

4. *America and Britain in Prophecy*, by David C. Pack; published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

5. *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*; published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

For detailed proof of where the other tribes of Israel are settled, the best source is “*America and Britain in Prophecy*” by David Pack. From his book, here is where the modern descendants of the other tribes of Israel can mainly be found:

Reuben – France

Simeon and Levi – Prophesied to be dispersed among all the tribes of Israel. Largest portion of Levi or the priestly tribe lives among the Jews.

Judah – The Jews worldwide, with a branch in Irelend.

Zebulun – Holland

Issachar – Finland

Dan – Primarily Ireland and Denmark

Gad – Switzerland

Asher – Belgium

Naphtali – Sweden

Benjamin – Norway, Iceland and among the Jews

[Much proof of the modern identity of the twelve tribes of Israel has been added by the Israeli scholar Yair Davidy in his books “*The Tribes: The Israelite Origins of Western Peoples*”, “*Ephraim*” and “*Lost Israelite Identity*.”]

Here is how God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have been fulfilled in the American, British and Jewish people.

1) God promised incredible material blessings of resources of the earth and riches. This promise has been fulfilled in the descendants of Jacob in our time which are the people of the USA, British Commonwealth Nations, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavia, the Benelux countries and the Jews.

2) The nations of the earth would be blessed through them both materially and spiritually. The world has indeed been materially blessed through them by trading with them, and the British have been the engine of the world’s economy in the 19th and the Americans in the 20th century. The French too made significant contributions.

The world has also been spiritually blessed through them because the Savior Jesus Christ was a descendant of Judah, the son of Jacob. In addition, the knowledge of the true God has been preserved through them and propagated by the British and the Americans translating the Bible in virtually every language on earth and making it available to the world.

3) God also promised to bless those who bless them and seek their welfare, and curse those who curse them and seek their destruction. When the catastrophes that are soon to engulf the entire world are all over, we will see that this promise will have been fulfilled, and we will continue to see its fulfillment throughout God’s Kingdom into eternity.

4) The patriarchs were promised that their descendants would multiply as the stars and the sand on the seashore in number. They already number more than 500 million today. But true fulfillment of this prophecy will go on throughout eternity.

 5) The promises included the land where the patriarchs roamed. The Jews today possess that land. But the true fulfillment of this prophecy will be in God’s Kingdom when descendants of Jacob will possess all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates rivers, as promised in Genesis 15:18. Eventually Israelites will fill much of the world with fruit, meaning with their population (Isaiah 27:6, “6 He [God] shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”)

6) In Genesis 17, when Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord changed his name to Abraham and promised that he would become the father of many nations and of kings. Today, the Israelite nations, the Jews, the Arabs, the Turks and many other nations we may not fully know are all descendants of Abraham, including obviously all their royalty. So this promise has been fulfilled.

7) Abraham’s promises were passed on to his son Isaac, who then passed on the promises to his son Jacob and not his brother Esau. Many more prophetic details were further added to the promises. Isaac pronounced the following blessing on Jacob in Genesis 27:28-29: “28 Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you.”

Here instead of merely the land of Canaan, the promise of land is expanded to include the fatness of the earth, meaning lands that are richest in agriculture and mineral resources of the earth. Just look at the lands possessed by the British, American, French, Scandinavian and Benelux peoples to see how this promise has been dramatically fulfilled. And nations of the world have bowed down to and served the British through their colonial empire.

8) Then Isaac also let Jacob know in Genesis 28:3(NRSV) that his descendants would become a company of peoples, meaning many nations. Jacob passed on these promises to his 12 sons. The company of peoples promise has been fulfilled in the nations descended from the 12 tribes of Israel in Europe, and the Jews worldwide.

9) When passing on these promises to his sons, Jacob singled out Joseph and his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim that they would become a great nation and a commonwealth of nations. Their descendants are the peoples of the USA and the British Commonwealth of nations. There has been no other single greatest nation on earth than America and the greatest Commonwealth of Nations than the British Commonwealth who have been closely allied ever before in the history of mankind.

Joseph was given the birthright of the firstborn which is a double portion of a father’s inheritance. Joseph’s two sons Manasseh and Ephraim actually became two tribes, each receiving their separate inheritance, thus obtaining a double portion of their father’s inheritance.

The birthright people were also promised they would be famous on earth and possess the richest resources of the earth. At the zenith of their power, the British and the American people constituted only 4% of the world’s population, but possessed about 70% of the world’s agricultural and mineral resources.

10) Then when Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, God’s promises to him became unconditional. In Genesis 22:11-12, 15 -18 the additional promise that Abraham’s descendants would possess the gates, meaning narrow land and sea passages of access to enemies’ lands was added. This incredible promise has been fulfilled in the British and American peoples who at the zenith of their power have possessed almost every major gate and strategic island on land and sea such as the Suez and Panama canals, the Rock of Gibraltar, the Khyber Pass, Hong Kong, the islands of Malta, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Singapore the Falklands Islands and virtually every other gate around the world. Outcome of the Second World War hinged on the possession of these strategic gates. Most of the world’s commerce also passes through these gates. Even the Strait of Bosporus has been possessed by the Turks, the descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham.

11) In prophesying the future of Joseph’s descendants, Jacob stated in Genesis 49:22: “22 Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall.” A people "whose branches grow over the wall," or beyond their original borders, certainly means that they will be a colonizing people. There have never been such a colonizing people in the history of man as the British and American peoples. Thus this prophecy stands fulfilled about 3,500 years after it was given.

12) And finally, the promise of the scepter, meaning the chief ruler would come from Judah through King David, with an everlasting dynasty. Today, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain sits on that throne in unbroken dynasty from King David. In God’s kingdom, Jesus Christ, also a descendant of King David, will be the chief ruler over the earth, occupying that throne for eternity. What an incredible way for God to fulfill His promise and continue to have this prophecy come true throughout eternity?

But from the founding of ancient Israel as a nation after the Exodus from Egypt around 1443 BCE till God began to bestow His blessings on Israel around 1800 A.D., there has been a time gap of more than 3,240 years. God gave many detailed and incredibly intricate prophecies to chart the future course of Israel and Judah after coming out of Egypt till these prophecies would be fulfilled in these ‘last days’. It makes for a story more thrilling than fiction, and shows God’s Almighty power in fulfilling all the prophecies over a period of more than 3,000 years.

A people can fulfill one or two prophecies by mere coincidence, but when a people fulfill hundreds of prophecies, then probabilistically we can be absolutely certain of the identity of those people as the one whom the prophecies were written about. If Britain and America fulfill hundreds of prophecies about Ephraim and Manasseh and Israel, then there can be no doubt in our minds that they are in fact the descendants of those patriarchs. We will look at these intricate prophecies next.

**Chapter 5**

**Prophecies Fulfilled by the American and British Peoples**

From the time Israelites came out of Egypt till the ‘last days’ when God’s unconditional promises to Abraham would be fulfilled, God gave incredibly intricate prophecies which the house of Israel would fulfill along the way for over more than 3,000 years. When blessing Joseph’s sons, Jacob said in Genesis 48:16, “The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” Jacob’s other name was Israel. So most of the prophecies concerning Israel apply to the British and American peoples.

Here is a brief description of only some of the incredible prophecies fulfilled by the British and American peoples:

1) *The Northern Kingdom (House of Israel) would be lost from world view*.

After the reign of David’s son Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The northern Kingdom was known as the House of Israel and the southern Kingdom as the House of Judah. The descendants of the House of Judah are still known as the Jews today. But the identity of the descendants of the northern Kingdom was not known. They became known to history as the ‘lost ten tribes.’

The reason was that in Exodus 31:12-17 God instructed Moses that His Sabbaths were to be a sign between Him and Israel forever. A sign is something that identifies. The Sabbath is a perpetual reminder of God as the Creator and who His people are. As long as Israel kept the Sabbath, they maintained their identity. That is why the Jews have maintained their identity as “God’s people” throughout their history. But king Jeroboam of the northern Kingdom of Israel abandoned God’s Sabbaths. When they lost the identifying sign, they became lost to history as God’s people.

The other prophecies indicating that the House of Israel would lose its identity are:

Deuteronomy 32:26 where God warned Israelites through Moses: “…I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men.”

Isaiah 8:17 says: “And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides His face from the House of Jacob [whose other name was Israel].”

2) *House of Israel would lose its language, which was Hebrew*.

This was prophesied in Isaiah 28:11 where God says He will speak to this people of Israel “11 …with… another tongue.” They now speak English, French, Dutch and the other north European languages.

3) *House of Israel would lose its national name*.

Isaiah 62:2 states: “2…You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.” This prophecy has already been fulfilled because the Israelites are known by different names today such as the British, Americans, French, Swiss, Dutch, Scandinavians, Belgians etc. The Jews are still known as Jews today.

4) *Birthright blessings of national prosperity would be withheld 2,520 Years*.

After Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, the blessings on his descendants had become unconditional promises from God.

When Israel came out of Egypt, God through Moses told them that there were conditions to receiving His blessings. In Genesis 17:1-2 God told Abraham to walk before Him and become blameless and He would confirm His covenant with Him. When Abraham walked blameless, God did confirm His agreement with him. Similarly, for Israel to receive the promised blessings, the conditions were laid down in Leviticus 26, and also the consequences if they did not fulfill the conditions.

Leviticus 26:3-12 states: “3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, 4 then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. 7 You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. 8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. 9 'For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. 10 You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. 11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.”

So the conditions God laid down for Israel to be blessed were to keep God’s commandments and statutes, which is what Abraham was required to do to have the agreement with God confirmed. However, if Israel failed to fulfill the conditions to receive the blessings, curses would follow. The curses are stated in the rest of Leviticus 26. God continues from verse 14 onwards:

“14 'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, 15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, 16 I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.”

The history of ancient Israel after it was set up as a nation shows that she refused to keep God’s commandments. So they did not receive God’s blessings but were cursed with terrorism and fighting with all the nations around them. They even rejected God as their king and asked for a human king to be set up over them by Samuel the prophet. When their human king David obeyed God, Israel greatly prospered, and even in the early days of King Solomon when he obeyed God. But 1 Kings 11:1-4 says King Solomon loved many strange wives, marrying seven hundred and keeping 300 others as mistresses, and when he was old, they turned his heart towards other gods so that his heart was not perfect with the God of his fathers. Such disobedience kept Israel from continuing to receive God’s material blessings.

Things became progressively worse with Israel and Judah for refusing to keep God’s commandments. God sent prophets to warn the nations, but they refused to repent. So God could not confer the blessings on them that He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But the blessings to Abraham were promised unconditionally. God would then fulfill the prophecy given through Jacob to confer the unconditional blessings promised in the last days, meaning in our time. In doing so a further incredible prophecy had to be fulfilled that is stated in Leviticus 26:18, “18'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.”

In prophecy, a time refers to one year. So seven times would be seven years. With 360 days in a year [in the Hebrew calendar], seven years then would equal 2,520 days. But another principle of prophecy is a day being equivalent to one year in fulfillment of prophecy, as given in Numbers 13 and 14 when ancient Israelites were punished for forty years from entering the Promised Land, for the forty days they went and spied out the Promised Land, but refused to go in and possess it. Thus seven years or 2,520 days of punishment of withholding the unconditional birthright blessings would in prophecy equal 2,520 years of punishment.

The ten-tribed northern kingdom of Israel did not repent throughout the period of their kingdom at the preaching of the prophets. So God carried out His prophecy of punishing them by withholding the birthright blessings for 2,520 years. The ten tribes were carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 722-721 B.C. Then 2,520 years after that would bring us to the year 1800-1801 A.D. When the seven times duration or 2,520 years of punishment of withholding the birthright ended in 1800-1801 A.D., God began to confer the unconditionally promised blessings on the descendants of Joseph, USA and British Commonwealth nations as well as the nations of northwestern Europe. That is when Britain began building its empire and America burst forth into national greatness.

5) *Prophecies concerning David’s Throne*

The story of how God kept His promise to David that his dynasty will continue unbroken till the return of the Messiah is an incredibly fascinating one. These prophecies are explained in detail in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “*United States and Britain in Prophecy*.”

i) *Descendants of David to rule over the House of Israel not Judah* - After the reign of David’s son Solomon over Israel, David’s descendants ruled over only the House of Judah (the Jews) and not the House of Israel till King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried Judah captive. But God prophesied in Jeremiah 33:14: "…thus says the Eternal: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."

Descendants of David were prophesied to rule over the House of Israel and not the Jews. After Judah’s captivity, David’s descendants have never ruled as kings over the Jews who have been known as Jews, but have ruled over descendants of the House of Israel, in Britain.

ii) *Prophet Jeremiah transplants David’s Throne* – Jeremiah’s commission from God is stated in Jeremiah 1:10 (NKJV), “10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To ROOT OUT and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To BUILD AND TO PLANT."

Jeremiah prophesied about the end of Judah’s kingdom during the reign of the last kings of Judah. He was thus used to “root out” David’s throne from Judah and to BUILD and to PLANT it in the Kingdom of Israel. And that throne had to be planted within a generation according to God’s promise to David, or in Jeremiah’s lifetime.

After most of Judah was carried captive to Babylon, the remnant of Judah decided to go to Egypt for protection even though Jeremiah warned them not to do so. This is recorded in Jeremiah 43:5-7 “ [And so Johanan] “took all the remnant of Judah…even men, and women, and children, **and the king’s daughters**…and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah [Jeremiah’s scribe, or secretary]. So they came to the land of Egypt.”

Here we see that the only “remnant” left for Jeremiah’s mission of transplanting the throne of David was the king’s daughters. The fascinating story of how Jeremiah did this is told in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “*United States and Britain in Prophecy*” and an electronic booklet titled “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future*” published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

Briefly the story is this. King David was a descendant of Judah’s son Pharez. But Pharez had a twin brother Zarah. When King Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Judah, a son of the king of the Zarah line of Judah who reigned in Ireland was visiting Jerusalem. This prince was acquainted with Tea-Tephi, one of King Zedekiah’s daughters. Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem he married her. From Egypt, Jeremiah took this royal party to Ireland where the prince ascended the throne of Ireland over a part of the descendants of Israel. Thus a daughter of the Pharez line of Judah was grafted into the Zarah line of Judah in Ireland. This is how Jeremiah fulfilled the second part of his commission about David’s throne: TO BUILD AND TO PLANT.

iii) *Daughter to be used to Transplant David’s Throne was prophesied*

The fact that a daughter would be used to transplant David’s throne was also prophesied, in addition to many other detailed prophecies.

The truth of PLANTING and the REBUILDING of David’s throne was revealed in prophecy given in a “riddle and a parable” through the prophet Ezekiel.

First Ezekiel is told to speak a riddle, and then a parable. The riddle is found in Ezekiel 17 verses 3 to 10. Then beginning in verse 11, the Eternal explains its meaning. A great eagle came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar. This is explained to represent King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who came to Jerusalem and took captive the king of Judah. The cropping off of the cedar’s young twigs and carrying them to a land of traffic is explained to picture the captivity of the king’s sons. “He took also of the seed of the land” means Nebuchadnezzar took also of the people, and the mighty of the land of Judah. He “set it as a willow tree. And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature” means the Jews were given a covenant whereby, although they were ruled over by the Chaldeans, they might live in peace and grow. The other “great eagle” is explained to represent Pharaoh of Egypt.

Thus the riddle covers the first half of Jeremiah’s commission. Now notice what is revealed concerning the second part – the PLANTING of David’s throne! It comes in the parable, verses 22-24: “Thus says the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar.” From God’s own explanation we have learned that the cedar tree represents the nation of Judah; its highest branch is Judah’s king. The riddle told us Nebuchadnezzar took the highest branch – the king. The parable now tells us God – not Nebuchadnezzar, but God – will take of the highest branch. Not the branch, but of the branch – of Zedekiah’s children. But Nebuchadnezzar took, and killed, all his sons.

God, through his prophet Jeremiah, is now going to take of this highest branch and “SET IT (verse 22). “I will crop off from the top of his young twigs A TENDER ONE, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent,” continues the Almighty. The twigs of this highest branch represent the children of King Zedekiah! Certainly a young tender twig, then, represents a DAUGHTER!”…and will PLANT it.” Symbolic language could not be more plainer in saying that this young Jewish princess is to become the royal seed for PLANTING again of David’s throne? Where? “…upon an high mountain and eminent,” says the Eternal! A “mountain” in symbol always represents a NATION.

“In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it,” answers the Eternal. David’s throne now is to be planted in Israel, after being thrown down from Judah. After this Hebrew princess is “planted” on the throne, now in Israel, lost from view – that throne is to BEAR FRUIT. She is to marry, have children, and her sons are to continue David’s dynasty!

Israel had already been independent in Ireland for four centuries. Israel in Ireland already had a kingly line onto which Zedekiah’s daughter was grafted. The Irish Israelites were an ancient colony and had not gone into Assyrian captivity.

iv) *Healing of ‘breach’ between the Pharez and Zarah lines prophesied*

The Bible mentions a mysterious ‘breach’ that occurred in the days of Judah (Genesis 38:28-30).

Judah was the father of twin sons. The firstborn was royal seed, for through him the scepter promise was to be carried down. It seems the midwife knew twins were about to be born. It is recorded that just before birth one of the twins ‘put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, ‘This came out first’. But the child drew back his hand and the other was actually born first.”

The midwife exclaimed, “How have you broken forth? This breach be upon you: therefore his name was called Pharez,” meaning “breach”. The other twin was named Zarah.

This strange occurrence was recorded in Bible history because this breach was to be healed between the sons or their descendants at some future time?

History shows the descendants of Zarah became wanderers, later migrating to Ireland. But meanwhile, the Pharez-David-Zedekiah line possessed the scepter (rulership) – was HIGH – exalted. The Zarah line, feeling it rightfully should possess the scepter, and some day would, was LOW, abased – so far as royal power was concerned.

Now consider another prophecy given in Ezekiel 21:25-26 (KJV) “And you, profane wicked prince of Israel [Zedekiah], whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus says the Lord God; remove the diadem, and take off the crown [from Judah, as did happen, through the first half of Jeremiah’s commission]; this [the crown] shall not be the same: ***exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high***.”

“Remove the diadem, and take off the crown,” means that the crown was removed from king Zedekiah of David’s dynasty. “This shall not be the same,” means that the diadem is not to cease, but a change is to take place. “Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high,” means that King Zedekiah of Judah, who is high is to be abased. He is to lose that crown. House of Judah has been “high” while the House of Israel has been “low” – these many years without a king (Hosea 3:4). The Pharez line has been “high”; the Zarah line “low.”

This prophecy thus points to the breach between the Pharez and Zarah lines of the Jews (descendants of Judah) being healed with the Zarah line possessing the scepter over the House of Israel through marriage with the Pharez line.

v) *David’s throne was prophesied to be overturned three times*

Ezekiel the prophet continues his prophecy of Ezekiel 21 in verse 27: “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more [overturned], until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” The diadem and the throne were to be overturned. Not once, but three times. It was to be overturned by abasing Zedekiah, the house of Judah and the Pharez line, and exalting the house of Israel, and one of the Zarah line! The first of the three overturns was performed as the first half of Jeremiah’s commission, by rooting out the throne of David from Jerusalem.

“And it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him,” means that the throne would be no more overturned after the third overturn, and will be given to Jesus Christ, whose it is by right.

The prince and husband of the Jewish princess Tea-tephi ascended the throne of his father. The son of this king and the Jewish Princess continued on the throne of Ireland and this same dynasty continued unbroken through all the kings of Ireland. It was then overturned the second time and transplanted in Scotland, from where it was overturned the third time and moved to London, England, where this same dynasty continues today in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Thus the three overturns of the throne prophesied in Ezekiel 21:25-27 have been fulfilled.

vi) *Ephraim settled exactly where prophesied to settle*

If God kept His promise to David, the throne of David was to be planted ‘in the mountain of the height of Israel’ (Ezekiel 17:22-23: “I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: 23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it). We should find it in the leading nation of the descendants of Ephraim, the birthright holders.

The precise location where Ephraim was to settle was also prophesied in the Bible.

The prophet Amos wrote in Amos 9:8-9 “Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom [house of Israel – Judah had not yet sinned], and I will destroy it [the kingdom, or government, not the people] from off the face of the earth…For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

This prophecy says that the ten-tribed house of Israel (not Judah) was to be sifted among the nations, losing their identity. It was during this time that the children of the house of Israel were to “abide many days without a king” (Hosea 3:4). Although many of them were still scattered among various nations in the first century A.D., a portion of them had become established in a definite location of their own by Jeremiah’s time – 140 years after their original captivity.

In prophecy, the holders of the birthright are distinguished from Judah (the Jews) by various names: “Ephraim,” “Joseph,” “Jacob,” “Rachel” (Joseph’s mother), “Samaria” (their former capital), “Israel.”

According to Hosea 12:1: “Ephraim…follows after the east wind.” An “east wind” travels west. Ephraim must have gone west from ancient Assyria. When the Eternal swore to David that He would perpetuate his throne, He said: “I will set his hand [scepter] also in the sea” (Psalm 89:25). The throne is to be “set” or planted “in the sea.”

Through Jeremiah the Eternal said: “Backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return you backsliding Israel, says the Lord (Jeremiah 3:11-12). So in these last days, messengers are to go “toward the NORTH (of Jerusalem where Jeremiah prophesied) in order to locate lost Israel and proclaim the warning message. So the location, we now find, is toward the north, also west, and in the sea.

In Jeremiah 31:10, the message is to be declared “in the isles afar off” and is to be shouted in “the CHIEF OF THE NATIONS” (verse 7). So, finally, today, as in Jeremiah’s day, the house of Israel is in the isles, which are “in the sea,” the chief of the nations, northwest of Jerusalem, a coast-dwelling, and, therefore sea-dominant people. Certainly there can be no mistaking that identity.

Take a map of Europe. Draw a line due NORTHWEST of Jerusalem across the continent of Europe, until you come to the sea, and then to the islands in the sea! This line takes you directly to the British Isles! So prophecy shows us where the prominent nation from the northern ten tribes can be located in our days.

For fascinating and much more thrilling than fiction details on Jeremiah’s “planting” and the present location of “lost” Israel and David’s throne, please read the United Church of God eBooklet titled “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future*” and Mr. Armstrong book *"The United States and Britain in Prophecy"*.

*6) Prophecies concerning wanderings of the House of Israel*

i) *Tribe of Dan prophesied to leave clues about wanderings of the House of Israel*

The Israelites were prophesied to leave highway signs or waymarks along the trail they traveled from the land of ancient Israel after being deported by the Assyrians. Speaking to Ephraim, the ancestor of the British people, God through the prophet Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 31:20-21: “20 Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord. 21 "Set up signposts, make landmarks; set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went.”

In Genesis 49:17, the patriarch Jacob blessing his sons prophesied what would befall them. He said about his son Dan: “Dan shall be a servant by the way.” Another translation of the original Hebrew can also be “Dan shall be a serpent’s trail.” It is a very significant fact that the tribe of Dan named every place they went after their father Dan. It started way back when they had just settled in their land. Joshua 19:47 records: “…the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it…and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.”

Judges 18:11-12 records that the Danites took Kirjath-jearim and “called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day.” Then the same company of 600 armed Danites captured Laish and “called the name of the city DAN, after the name of Dan their father (verse 29). This shows how the Danites left their “serpent’s trail” by the way as signposts by which they can be traced.

In Hebrew the vowels are not preserved. So for Dan, if we leave the vowel a out and substitute another vowel, the Danites could be identified with names that could be spelled as “Dn”, meaning Den, Din, Don, or Dun in addition to Dan.

During the time of ancient Israel, the tribe of Dan occupied two different areas in the Holy Land. One part lived on the seacoast, and the other colony occupied the northernmost area. That is why Israel’s boundary is listed in the Bible as from Dan to Beersheba.

When the Assyrians defeated Israel, the seacoast Danites sailed away in their ships to Ireland. Irish history shows that the new settlers in Ireland were the “Tuatha de Dananns”, which translates to “Tribe of Dan.” They left their sign posts in names such as Dans-Laugh, Dan-Sower, Dun-dalk, Dun-drum, Don-egal Bay, Don-egal City, Dun-gloe, Din-gle and Dunsmor.

The northern colony of Danites, however, was captured by the Assyrians along with the other nine tribes. They settled and later traveled from the land just west of the Black Sea and northwest of the Caspian Sea. They left their “serpent’s trail” in names of rivers such as the Danube, Dneiper, Dniester and the Don in Europe. From there they migrated further west, finally settling in Denmark, which means “Dan’s mark.” So the tribe of Dan has left a “serpent’s trail” as prophesied by Dan’s father Jacob, in his blessing of Dan. This enables us to piece together the wanderings of the northern ten tribes of Israel after their captivity and deportation at the hands of the Assyrians.

ii) *Part of Israel were to take their name from Isaac, the father of Israel*

God promised that Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, would leave the track of his name on history. Genesis 21:12 states: "In Isaac your seed shall be called." Ancient written Hebrew didn't include vowels, so the written letters for Isaac were the SC or SK sound.

After the Assyrian captivity, those Israelites migrating north around the Black Sea to Europe were called Scythians. Initially, the eastern branch between Persia and China were called the Sakka or Saka. Later in Europe they became Sacesones (sons of Saka) and finally Saxons —settling in England and later America. The SK/SC sound is found yet today among descendant nations of some of the tribes: Scotland, Scotia, Scandinavia, etc.

PROOFS OF IDENTITY OF ISRAEL FROM SECULAR HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Besides Bible prophecy, we can also prove from secular history, archaeology and other means that the British and American peoples are in fact the descendants of Israel and Joseph. Let us look at this evidence.

*Name Tracks*

King Omri ruled the house of Israel in the early 800s B.C., about 160 years before the fall of the northern kingdom (1 Kings 16). The Assyrians used his name to refer to the whole nation. In the Assyrian language Omri was called Ghomri or Khumri, and in London we find a historical record of the house of Israel under subjugation to Assyria. The famous Black Obelisk, prominently displayed in the British Museum [the author has seen this Black Obelisk], includes a pictorial record of King Jehu of Israel paying homage to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser. The inscription translates as: "The tribute of Jehu son of Khumri." And the Assyrians referred to the land of Israel as mat bit-Khumri —"land of the house of Omri."

Variations of Omri as a national name can be tracked initially as Ghomri or Khumri in Assyrian clay tablets, then Gamir, Gamera or Gamira, Cimmeri or Kimmeroi, as Cimmerians across Europe, and finally as the Cymry or people of Wales in Britain today. The Cimmerians were later called Celts and Gauls in northwestern Europe by the Greeks and Romans. Remember, these linguistic transformations took place over hundreds of years and hundreds of miles.

Anne Kristensen, a respected Danish linguistic scholar, reached the conclusion that the Cimmerians (who later became known as the Celts) can positively be identified as the deported Israelites.

Dr. Kristensen writes: "There is scarcely reason, any longer, to doubt the exciting and verily astonishing assertion propounded by the students of the Ten Tribes that the Israelites deported from Bit Humria, of the House of 'Omri, are identical with the Gimirraja of the Assyrian sources. Everything indicates that Israelite deportees did not vanish from the picture but that, abroad, under new conditions, they continued to leave their mark on history" (*Who Were the Cimmerians, and Where Did They Come From?: Sargon II, the Cimmerians, and Rusa I*, translated from the Danish by Jorgen Laessoe, *The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters*, No. 57, 1988, pp. 126-127).

It is also not a coincidence that those of Britain call themselves “British.” This name comes from the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word b’rith means “covenant” and the Hebrew word ish means “man.” Combine the two words (“British”) and the meaning would appear to be obvious—“Covenant man.” It is through the British people—colonizing around the world—that God fulfilled His covenant promise to Abraham.

*Emblem or Ensign Tracks*

For our second key, let’s look at emblem or ensign trail. Throughout history, ensigns have differentiated between families, clans, tribes, countries and nations. These identifying emblems or symbols, often displayed on flags, heraldry shields or clothing, generally featured animals, humans, weapons and other items. They identified friend from foe during battle or routine interactions. Scripture and historical accounts record the emblems used by each of the tribes of Israel, and evidence additional proofs of the identity of their descendants.

Genesis 49:22-24 records: “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob…”

In this scripture, Joseph—the father of Ephraim and Manasseh—is likened to a fruitful bough or branch, most likely an olive branch. Joseph is also described as being shot by archers. Later, Joseph’s descendants are further described in Deuteronomy 33:17: “His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (Deuteronomy 33:17).

With these descriptions divided between both sons, Manasseh’s primary emblem was that of an olive branch, and his secondary emblem a cache of arrows. Also attached to Manasseh’s ensign was the number 13, since he was the thirteenth tribe. Ephraim’s primary emblem was an ox, with his secondary emblem being a unicorn (*Symbols of Our Celto-Saxon Heritage*, Bennet, 1976).

It is interesting that one major identifying sign, showing the correlation between the royal family of Britain and Judah’s royal line, is found in Britain’s emblem.

Ephraim’s coat of arms was the unicorn and Judah’s was a lion. In addition to this, the ensign for David’s royal lineage was a lion wearing a crown, as well as the Star of David. After the kingdoms divided, the kingdom of Israel, led by Jeroboam (an Ephraimite), selected the unicorn as their national seal. The kingdom of Judah selected the kingly lion. In modern times, these emblems have carried over into Britain’s coat of arms—which features a lion wearing a crown—and a unicorn! The union of the national emblems of Israel and Judah represents the connection of the royal Pharez line, the bloodline of King David, to the Zarah line of kings in Britain.

Recall that Manasseh’s two emblems incorporated an olive branch and a cache of arrows. Another fascinating insight into the identity of the British and American peoples is that the American seal has an eagle carrying an olive branch and arrows. While the American seal depicts thirteen stars to reflect the original thirteen colonies, Manasseh was in fact the thirteenth tribe of Israel. This is clear evidence linking America with the symbols described in the Bible for Manasseh.

All these significant, yet little known facts evidence additional proofs of the identity of the British and American peoples today.

*Archaeological tracks*

For our third key to the identity of the British and American peoples, let’s look at the archaeological evidence. The Behistun Rock inscriptions comprise one of the great archaeological breakthroughs that unlocked many of the other finds. They are found on a cliff face over 100 meters above the valley floor in the Zargos Mountains of modern Iran along the road from Baghdad to Tehran. A massive inscription and bas relief carving of King Darius I of the Persian Empire (586-521 B.C.), this find shows images of the peoples Darius I had conquered. It describes his victories in parallel accounts in three languages: Old Persian, Susian (Elamite) and Akkadian (Assyrian or Babylonian). It is still there today.

In 1835, Sir Henry Rawlinson investigated the parallel inscription. It provided missing keys, unlocking the ancient languages of Assyria and Babylon, never before understood. One of the provinces listed in the inscription was “Scythia,” or “Saka,” as it was pronounced in the Persian language. The Babylonian version of this term was Cimmerians and written as “Gimiri,” meaning “the tribes.” Israel was often referred to as the “lost tribes.”

Sir Henry's younger brother and eminent scholar George Rawlinson clarified how important the inscriptions were to reading the Assyrian tablets excavated from Nineveh in the mid-1800s, thus connecting the lost 10 tribes to the Scythians or Sacae and Cimmerians: "We have reasonable grounds for regarding the Gimirri, or Cimmerians, who first appeared on the confines of Assyria and Media in the seventh century B.C., and the Sacae of the Behistun Rock, nearly two centuries later, as identical with the Beth-Khumree of Samaria, or the Ten Tribes of the House of Israel" (George Rawlinson, note in his translation of *History of Herodotus, Book VII*, p. 378).

Thus, the Behistun Rock inscriptions are a vital clue on the trail of the wandering tribes of Israel.

*Language tracks*

For our fourth key let’s look at the language tracks the tribes of Israel have left in history. Randy Stiver, a Church pastor of the United Church of God wrote in the *Vertical Thought* magazine for youth dated January-March 2007:

“All 12 of the ancient tribes of Israel spoke Hebrew, and many of the Middle Eastern languages were closely related to it.

“Linguistic studies from the late 1700s through the late 1900s have found clear and direct connections between Hebrew and the Celtic or Gaelic languages still maintained in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man. Going a dramatic step further, many of those studies focused on the remarkable and fundamental commonalities between Anglo-Saxon English and Hebrew. The same connection can be seen in the core words for most of the northwest European languages as well. This is not surprising since those languages were fundamentally the same until about A.D. 500 when the modern nation-states first began to form.

“An interesting recent study in 1981 by Professor Terry Blodgett from the University of Utah titled "Phonological Similarities in Germanic and Hebrew" can be downloaded from http://www.originofnations.org/. This is but one of the many studies that link modern northwest European, English and Gaelic languages to the parent Hebrew language that leave a tribe tracker an imprint to follow.”

*Art History Tracks*

Other evidence that the Scythians – Cimmerians who migrated to Britain, Scandinavia and other countries of northwestern Europe had a common culture is provided by art history. Randy Stiver writes:

“The Scythian-Cimmerian art forms clearly reveal a common culture. Hard art pieces (gold, silver, bronze, stone, pottery, etc.) survive for modern archaeologists to find. Ditto with many Scythian-type artifacts. One of the great collections of Scythian-Sacae art resides in the Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg, Russia. These pieces define the characteristic Scythian animal style…

“Scythian and Celtic art was fundamentally the same from the borders of China (where certain of the Sacae harassed the Chinese frontiers for several centuries) to the British Isles. The animal style links wandering Israelites together.

“Celtic art styles assumed the Scythian influence in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. as the Cimmerians migrated across Asia Minor into Europe to link with their early Celtic relatives. Thus art history, when you know what to look for, provides another trail for the tribe tracker.”

Thus we see that besides Bible prophecy, the descendants of Israel can be traced from the name tracks, emblem or ensign tracks, archaeological tracks, language tracks and art history tracks they left around the world till they finally settled in Britain, northwestern Europe and finally in North America.

Some argue that white Americans cannot be the descendants of one man Manasseh as they have migrated from all nations of Europe. The author himself faced this doubt before becoming a member of God’s Church and again when the infiltrators in God’s Church raised this argument. But what finally convinced him is that it is probabilistically impossible for all of God’s promises and prophecies about Jacob’s descendants to have been fulfilled in one people by mere coincidence.

The reasons we believe that white Americans are the descendants of Manasseh was the prophecy by Amos the prophet when God said in Amos 9:9: “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel [which refers to the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh in prophecy] among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

According to this prophecy, God was to bring the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh as well as the other ten tribes through many nations to the lands they finally settled. He would further bring the descendants of Manasseh later through many nations to their land in America.

It is also a fact that many Americans belonged to whole communities in their various countries indicating they had a common relationship in their countries of origin. Whole communities left England, Germany (the ancient Assyrians who had carried the House of Israel captive) and other nations and migrated to America. This means many of Manasseh lived together in the nations they settled before finally moving to America.

As Amos’ prophecy says, God commanded the House of Israel to sift through the nations. He says it is His doing. He herded the descendants of Manasseh from various nations and they were stirred up to leave their nations to come to America. An example of how God stirs up the spirit of people to do certain things is provided in Ezra 1:1-3:” 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled , the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying , 2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he has charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.”

Just as God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to send the Jews back to build the Temple in Jerusalem, through the centuries He stirred up the descendants of Manasseh to leave their countries and migrate to America. That is how most Americans are descendants of Manasseh. Besides their modern emblems match those of the ancient tribe of Manasseh.

Can such incredible and intricate prophecies for the end time stand fulfilled in the British and American peoples, and they not be the people about whom these prophecies were written and promises made? And all these prophecies have not been fulfilled in any other people on earth in the history of mankind. Only the blind, the diabolical liars or the insincere fail to acknowledge these events that provide overwhelming, probability-defying evidence that they are the descendants of the patriarchs Jacob and Joseph.

Probabilistically it is impossible for one people to fulfill all these astoundingly intricate prophecies and promises of God to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David by mere coincidence. But the fact that the American, British and Jewish people fulfilled them all means that we can be absolutely certain that they are the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim the sons of Joseph, and Judah respectively.

The God of the Bible has demonstrated through fulfillment of these incredible prophecies and promises to one man and his descendants that He is the Almighty God who has total and complete control over everything in the universe because He has created it all. No Jew should ever doubt that the God of the Old Testament did not keep His promises to the patriarchs. He has kept each and every one of His promises in precise detail thus demonstrating that He is the Almighty and that the Old Testament scriptures are His true inspired Word.

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob demonstrated that not only does He have control over the affairs of Israel but also has total control over the affairs of all mankind. He did that by prophesying about the rise and fall of great empires. Jews perhaps are familiar with the fulfillment of these prophecies. But they have not understood the detailed fulfillment of prophecies given to Daniel because they were sealed till the time of the end as stated in Daniel 12.

But we are now living in the end time. So most of these prophecies have been fulfilled in their minutest detail. This should give Jews more confidence in their scriptures and in their God.

We will examine these prophecies next.

**Chapter 6**

**God in Total Control of the Earth**

After God dealt with Israel and she proved unfaithful to Him for over more than 850 years of dealings since the Exodus from Egypt, almost all of them ended up as captive slaves. But God then began to deal with Gentile nations through His prophets to show that He has control over all of them and all of humanity and sets up rulers or brings down whomever He wishes. This was made abundantly clear through Daniel the prophet to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

***Prophecies about Major Empires on Earth***

A remarkable prophecy recorded by Daniel is his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 of his book. In the second year of his reign the Babylonian king had a dream that troubled him greatly which none of his counselors, wise men, magicians or astrologers could explain. But Nebuchadnezzar was convinced that his dream was of great importance (Daniel 2:1-3).

The *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 39, 46 says his dream gives us a "disclosure of God's plan for the ages till the final triumph of Christ" and "presents the foreordained succession of world powers that are to dominate the Near East till the final victory of the Messiah in the last days".

Daniel records the event in Chapter 2 of his book as follows (NKJV):

“1 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 2 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

“4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." 5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation." 7 They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." 8 The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9 if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation." 10The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

“12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. 14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. 16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,18 that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”

After God had revealed the dream to Daniel, he was taken to the king by Arioch the King’s captain to explain the details of the dream: Daniel 2 continues in verse 27:

“27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said…28…there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these…31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

“37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

“41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that his Babylonian Empire was represented by the head of gold (verses 37-38). The silver, bronze, and iron and clay parts of the image represented three powerful empires that would follow Babylon (verses 39-40).

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream occurred around 600 B.C. Daniel’s interpretation of the dream provided an astonishing preview of the great empires that would dominate history of the civilized world from the time of Nebuchadnezzar right down to the return of Jesus Christ to earth in our time. This was history of the next more than 2,600 years foretold in advance.

Daniel’s interpretation of the dream was that the Babylonian empire was to be followed by another empire, represented by the chest and arms of silver. Two arms of silver would represent the two divisions of the empire. History shows that the Babylonian empire was succeeded by the empire of the Medes and Persians founded by Cyrus the Great when he conquered Babylon in 539 BCE. Its two divisions were the Median and Persian arms of the empire. It ruled over all the territory of the Babylonian empire and more, and held sway in the Near and Middle East for about two centuries.

The Medo-Persian Empire was succeeded by the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great and his successors. It swallowed up all the territory of the Medo-Persian Empire and conquered more. It was represented by the belly and thighs of bronze in Nebuchadnezzar’s image. It lasted for about 265 to 300 years, until it was conquered by the Roman Empire. The belly represented the empire when it was united under Alexander and the thighs represented its two dominant divisions later, the northern division based in Syria, Babylonia and territory up to India (the Seleucids), and the southern division based in Egypt (the Ptolemies).

The Roman Empire that succeeded the Greco-Macedonian Empire was tough and ruthless as iron is tough. It ruled all the territory of the Greco-Macedonian Empire in the Middle East, and is represented by the legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s image. The two legs of the empire represented its two divisions with their capitals at Rome (the western leg) and Constantinople (the eastern leg).

The Roman Empire was crushed in 476 A.D. But Daniel’s prophecy mentioned in verse 44 that “…in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.” This part of the prophecy says that Jesus Christ will set up God’s kingdom in the days of the kings represented by the ten toes. This means that though the Roman Empire was crushed in 476 A.D., there would be later resurrections.

The details of these resurrections are provided in other prophecies revealed to Daniel. In fact, the Roman Empire is also represented by the fourth beast in the prophecy in Daniel 7 (NKJV) which states:

“1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. 2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.”

Students of prophecy have long understood from history the empires that these beasts represented. The lion represented the Babylonian empire, corresponding to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar’s image. The wings being plucked off and then lifted up from earth and made to stand on two feet like a man is talking about King Nebuchadnezzar’s ordeal mentioned in Daniel 4 when a beast’s heart was given to him and he ate grass like an ox for 7 years because he boasted that by his mighty power he had won the kingdom and made Babylon great.

Daniel continues: “5 And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

The bear represented the Medo-Persian Empire, which in Nebuchadnezzar’s image was represented by the chest and arms of silver.

Daniel 7 continues: “6 After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.”

The leopard represented the Greek Empire of Alexander and his successors, corresponding to the belly and thighs of bronze of Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

Then verse 7 continues: “7After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. 9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated…11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame…13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. 15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

“16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' 19 Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. 21 I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

“23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. 26 'But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'28 "This is the end of the account…”

The ten horns of the fourth beast in this prophecy indicate that after the Roman Empire was destroyed in 476 A.D., there would be ten resurrections of the Empire right down to the return of Jesus Christ to earth. Then another little horn came up among the ten horns with a mouth speaking pompous words against the Most High, meaning God, before whom the first three horns were plucked up by the roots. Verse 25 says: 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.”

A horn in prophecy represents a king or ruler, and one speaking against the Most High means it is a false religious power. There has been only one religious power in the territory of the Roman Empire whose head wears a crown, which has persecuted God’s true Church through the centuries, and has actually changed times and laws; and that is the head of the false Church based in Rome.

This false Church has persecuted God’s true Church through centuries, martyring hundreds of thousands. It has also changed times. It has given the world a different calendar from God’s calendar, the Gregorian calendar. It has changed the beginning of a day from sunset to the middle of the night, beginning of the year from spring to the dead of winter, the beginning of the week from Sunday to Monday. It has changed God’s laws, the Ten Commandments and holy days by doing away with the seventh day Sabbath, instead worshipping on Sunday, the day of sun worship of the pagans; deleting the second commandment that prohibits worshipping images or idols; doing away with God’s seven annual holy days and foisting pagan holidays such as Christmas and Easter dressed in Christian garb on Christianity. So history clearly points out who the prophesied little horn is!

Now notice how this little horn fulfilled Daniel’s prophecies.

The first three resurrections of the Roman Empire after 476 A.D. were those of the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. These three horns or kingdoms were uprooted at the behest of the pope (the little horn of Daniel 7:8) as prophesied in Daniel 7:8. The reason the pope encouraged rulers and generals to drive these kingdoms out of Rome was that they held beliefs different from those of the Roman Church. The word uprooted is also significant. These barbarian peoples were completely driven out of Rome. Hence they were not allowed to take root in the Roman lands.

After the three successive kingdoms ended, the next seven resurrections would be called the Holy Roman Empire. The reason was that the pope of the Roman Church would crown the emperors of these kingdoms as holy Roman emperors and protectors of the False Church. In 554 A.D. Emperor Justinian began the first resurrection. This was followed by that of Charlemagne who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 A.D.

The 3rd resurrection was that of Otto the Great who was crowned in 962 A.D. The 4th resurrection was that of Charles V of the Hapsburg Dynasty, crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1530 A.D. The 5th resurrection was that of Napoleon from 1804-1814 A.D., and the 6th resurrection occurred when Garibaldi united the little kingdoms in Italy by 1870 and then Mussolini signed a secret concordat with the pope and declared his rule as the Holy Roman Empire, including the African territories of Eritrea and Somaliland as parts of his kingdom. The Hitler-Mussolini Axis was part of the sixth resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

The seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire, which is also the 10th resurrection of the Roman Empire, is yet in the near future and is represented by the tenth horn of Daniel’s fourth beast and feet and ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image. This indicates an alliance of ten rulers. In the days of these kings Jesus Christ will return, smash this kingdom and set up God’s kingdom which shall never be destroyed, as indicated by the words in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and also in Daniel 7:13-14, 26-27.

Further prophecies in Daniel 8:1-21 provide more details about these empires and identify the Medo-Persian and Greek empires by name.

Thus we see that God prophesied the succession of great empires ruling the Near and Middle East, and brought it to pass exactly as prophesied. The odds of any human being foreseeing these events on his own and predicting them correctly defy reason. Daniel said: “…There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). But remember, we today are and will soon be witnesses to the fulfillment of this prophecy when ten rulers will unite in Europe to set up the tenth resurrection of the Roman Empire, which is the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. It calls itself the Holy Roman Empire because the great false Roman Church will be involved in its resurrection.

***God Even names King Cyrus Century and a Half in Advance***

God through Isaiah the prophet prophesied about the coming of a Persian king named Cyrus century and a half in advance who would let the Jewish captives go free and rebuild Jerusalem.

Isaiah 44:28 (NKJV), “28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." '

Isaiah 45:1, 13, “1 Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut…13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, says the Lord of hosts.”

In this remarkable prophecy God named the ruler a century and a half in advance and said what he would do. The British Museum contains the cylinder of King Cyrus of Persia, dated to 538 B.C. which records a description of his conquest of Babylon and his policy of tolerance for the religions of his subject peoples. The Bible records Cyrus’ decree allowing the Jews taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to return to their land and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. Through the fulfillment of this prophecy God of the Bible again demonstrates His total control over the lives of people and affairs of mankind.

***Rise of Arab and Ottoman Empires Also Prophesied***

The rise of the Arabs as a great empire, and then the Turks as a great empire have also been prophesied in the Bible.

The Arabs are the descendants of Ishmael the son of Abraham. God in His blessings on Ishmael stated in Genesis 17:20 (NKJV) states: “20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you [Abraham]. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

The promise to Ishmael is repeated through his mother Hagar in Genesis 21:17-17 (NKJV), “17 And God heard the voice of the lad [Ishmael]. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

The descendants of Ishmael never became a great nation until the Islamic Empire founded by Mohammad. After the successors of Mohammad, the Umayyad Caliphate ruled from 661 – 750 A.D which was followed by the Abbasid Caliphate which ruled from 750 A.D till 1258 A.D.

At the time of the Abbasids Europe lay in the Dark Ages while the torch of civilization in preserving literature and scientific learning in the form of knowledge of mathematics, chemistry, physics, medicine, geography and astronomy was kept burning by Islam. Thus God fulfilled His promise to Ishmael to make him a great nation, the greatest on earth during the zenith of its power.

The Turks are descendants of Isaac’s son Esau or Edom. They too became a great nation during the time of the Ottoman Empire. Their dominion was also prophesied in the Bible.

Genesis 27:39-41 states, “39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, your dwelling shall be [other translations add ‘away from’ here] the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; 40 And by your sword shall you live, and shall serve your brother [Jacob]; and it shall come to pass when you shall have the dominion that you shall break his yoke from off your neck.”

Thus the descendants of Esau were also to have dominion or rule, but they were not to be the ‘greatest nation’ of their time. The Ottoman Empire has not been the greatest Empire of its time whereas the Arab empire of the descendants of Ishmael was. But the Ottoman Empire was a great Empire. They did have dominion as prophesied in God’s promise to Esau.

***God of the Bible is Sovereign over the Entire Earth***

In the astonishingly accurate fulfillment of these detailed prophecies, the God of the Bible demonstrates His Almighty power and that He rules not only in Israel, but is Sovereign over all the kingdoms of men, and appoints over them whomever He wills. When King Nebuchadnezzar’s heart was lifted up with pride because of the greatness and might of the Babylonian kingdom he had built, he was abased by his mind being turned into a beast for 7 years. Daniel thus describes the lessons he learnt to his successor Belteshezzar in Daniel 5:18-21(NKJV):

“18 O king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor: 19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride , he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appoints over it whomsoever he will.”

**Chapter 7**

**God Controls the Daily Affairs of Humans**

God of the Bible prophesied about great empires and has demonstrated His almighty power to bring them to pass. Some might argue that God could fulfill prophecies about great empires, but He cannot control the day to day workings of those empires, or the lives of kings and individuals. To convince such skeptics God gave remarkably detailed prophecies in Daniel 11 which have been fulfilled precisely. Let’s look at these prophecies verse by verse and see how God assured that they were brought to pass. The verses are quoted from the NKJV:

***Incredible Prophecies in Daniel 11***

Daniel 11, **Verse 1**: “Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.”

The first year of Darius was 539 BC. The ‘I’ referred to here is God’s angel.

**Verse 2**: “And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.”

Daniel received this vision in the third year of Cyrus the Great (Daniel 10:1). God said that four more kings would reign after Cyrus. Actually there were at least 12 more Persian kings after Cyrus, but the first four were the important ones.

The “three more kings” were Cambyses (530-522 BC), the elder son of Cyrus, who secretly killed his younger brother Smerdis after inheriting the throne, Pseudo-Smerdis (522 BC) an imposter who passed himself off as Cyrus’ younger son, and Darius I (522-486 BC). After the imposter was discovered, the Persian nobles rejected Pseudo-Smerdis in favor of Darius I.

The fourth king Xerxes (the husband of Esther) who was the strongest and richest of them all invaded Greece. He reigned from 486-465 BC.

**Verses 3-4**: “Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.”

This verse introduces King Alexander the Great. Alexander’s father, King Philip of Mecedonia planned a great invasion to conquer the Persian Empire with an army mainly of Greeks. But he died before the plans could be completed. His son Alexander took over his plans and invaded the Persian Empire. He defeated the Persian army at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C. (Daniel 8:2, 5-6). Then he swept down into Egypt. Then in a final battle at Arbella (331 B.C.) he crushed the Persian Empire. From there Alexander marched on a conquest all the way to India, sweeping all rulers before him. Alexander certainly “ruled with great dominion and did according to his will” as prophesied.

Here is how Daniel 8:4-8 (NKJV)provide details about the rise of the Persian Empire represented by a ram, and its crushing by Alexander, represented by a he-goat:

“3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

“5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. 8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.”

Both Daniel 11 and Daniel 8 indicate that Alexander’s kingdom would be broken up and divided into 4 divisions, but not to his posterity. Now see how this verse was fulfilled.

*A Manual of Ancient History* (Student Series) by Rawlinson says: "Cut off unexpectedly in the vigor of early manhood [in his 33rd year, June, 323 B.C.], he [Alexander] left no inheritor, either of his power or of his projects" (p. 237). Alexander’s infant son was murdered in 310 and an illegitimate brother assassinated in 317. Thus Alexander had no descendants or blood relatives to succeed him.

Then an attempt was made to hold the empire together jointly in the name of Alexander’s nephew and unborn son. But that attempt failed. Then Antigonus, one of Alexander’s generals, made a bid for power. But he was unable to consolidate his position. In the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BCE, the coalition of Seleucus, Lysimachus and Ptolemy defeated him and he died in that battle. That is the meaning of the phrase “for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.”

By 301 B.C. four divisions emerged out of the Kingdom, each ruled by one of Alexander’s generals, just as prophesied. They were:

1. Ptolemy (Soter), ruling Egypt, part of Syria and Judea.

2. Seleucus (Nicator), ruling Syria, Babylonia and territory east to India.

3. Lysimachus, ruling Asia Minor.

4. Cassander, ruling Greece and Macedonia.”

Cassander and Lysimachus were the two weaker of the four generals.

The other two, however, ruling in Syria and Egypt respectively expanded their rule and territory and engaged in two centuries of conflict and struggle in the Middle East. It is these two kingdoms, one north of Jerusalem (The Seleucid empire in Syria), the other south (the Ptolemies of Egypt) that Daniel 11 primarily focuses on in the next several verses.

**Verse 5**: “Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.”

The king of the South mentioned here was Ptolemy I. The phrase “one of his princes” refers to Seleucus Nicator, who originally served as a general under Ptolemy. While Ptolemy was tied up in war after Alexander’s death, Seleucus gained control in the north, and founded the Seleucid dynasty. And, as verse 5 says, this dynasty actually wielded more power than the king of the south. Seleucus ended up with Alexander’s far-eastern territory, all the way to India. His western boundary included the region known as Syria today. He also ruled the areas known anciently as Assyria and Babylon.

From this point on in the prophecy, the angel focuses on Egypt under the Ptolemies, known as the ‘King of the South’ and Greater Syria under the Seleucids, known as the “King of the North.

**Verse 6**: “And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.”

Both kingdoms remained hostile to one another. In 285 BCE Ptolemy I died. Meanwhile Antiochus II (called Theos) came to the throne in Syria. In 260 he initiated a war with the King of the South. The war was terminated in 252 when the two powers attempted an agreement whereby the daughter (Bernice) of the King of the South, Ptolemy (II) Philadelphus, was to marry the King of the North. Antiochus II divorced his wife Laodice. (George Rawlinson, *A Manual of Ancient History*, pp. 251-252.) But neither Antiochus Theos nor Bernice could retain that power. After Ptolemy Philadelphus died in 247 BC, Antiochus II promptly gave up Bernice and retook Laodice as his wife. But still angry from being banished years earlier, Laodice stayed with Theos long enough to conceive and then had her husband poisoned, thus securing the throne for his and her son, Seleucus II. She then tracked down Bernice and had her assassinated as well, squelching any hope of the Ptolemies to have a descendent on the Seleucid throne in the north. Fulfillment of these detailed prophecies indicates that God can raise any human beings to fulfill any purpose He wishes.

**Verses 7-9**: “But from a branch of her roots [meaning from Bernice’s parents, or a sibling] one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail. And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North. Then the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.”

Soon after Laodice killed his sister Bernice, Ptolemy III sought to avenge his sister’s death. Rawlinson says: "Ptolemy Euergetes [the III, eldest son of Philadelphus (p. 272) and therefore Bernice's brother, a branch of her roots] invaded Syria, B.C. 245, to avenge the murder of his sister, Bernice...In the war which followed, he carried everything before him" (Rawlinson, *ibid*., p. 252).

Ptolemy III attacked the king of the North [Seleucus II] and captured the capital city of Antioch. He carried back with him immense wealth and many idols and vessels that Persian Emperor Cambyses had taken from Egypt in 526 BC.

Ptolemy III continued to rule till his death in 221 BC, nearly six years after the death of Seleucus II in 226 BC, thus fulfilling the words “he shall continue more years than the king of the North”. Seleucus II had attempted an attack on Ptolemy III, but returned to Syria when his attempt failed, thus fulfilling the prophetic words “Then the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.”

**Verses 10-12**: “However, his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife. And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy. When he has taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.”

After their father’s death, the sons of Seleucus II (Seleucus III and Antiochus III the Great) assembled great forces and attacked the king of the South to recover their Port and fortress Seleucia. Seleucus III reigned for only 3 years because he was poisoned. But Antiochus III did “overwhelm and pass through,” recovering his fortress Seleucia and conquering Judea. But he gained control of Judea only for a short time.

Antiochus III returned to his fortress, but his taking Judea stirred up strife. It enraged Ptolemy IV, the king of the South. He retaliated and defeated the much larger army of Antiochus III at the battle of Raphia. He killed tens of thousands of Syrian troops and retook Judea to Egypt.

Even though Ptolemy IV won the battle, he did not consolidate the victory for Egypt, thus fulfilling the words ‘he will not prevail’. He made a hasty peace with Antiochus III and returned to debauched living in Egypt.

**Verses 13-16**: “For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment. And in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South; also certain violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall. So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist. But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.”

Ptolemy IV died in 204 BC, and his infant son, Ptolemy (V) Epiphanes came to the throne. The Egyptian provinces were in turmoil because of the terrible rule of Ptolemy IV. So Antiochus III formed a coalition, assembled a great army and attacked Egypt in 201 BC. He made an alliance with Philip (V) of Macedonia and others; and according to Josephus, many Jews sympathetic to him joined him against the king of the South. That was in fulfillment of the phrase “certain violent men of your [Daniel’s] people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision.” But the Egyptian general Scopus crushed this rebellion (v. 14).

Then the king of the North (Antiochus III) responded with another invasion. He captured the fortified city of Sidon in 198 BC, where Scopus surrendered. After capturing Sidon, Antiochus defeated Egypt at Mount Panium in 198 BC and took complete control of Judea (the “Glorious Land”).

**Verse 17**: A clearer and better translation of this verse is provided in the Revised English Bible: “He [the king of the North, Antiochus III] will resolve to advance with the full might of his kingdom; and, when he has agreed terms with the king of the south, he will give his young daughter in marriage to him, with a view to the destruction of the kingdom; but the treaty will not last nor will it be his purpose which is served.”

After having defeated Scopus, Antiochus III wanted to control all of Egypt. With this goal in mind, he gave his daughter Cleopatra (not the Egyptian queen of 31 BCE) to Ptolemy V in marriage. Rawlinson says on page 254, "Coele-Syria and Palestine promised as a dowry, but not delivered." He hoped that she would act in his interests. But she sided instead with her husband, frustrating her father’s purpose and thus fulfilling the words “nor will it be his purpose which is served.”

**Verses 18-19**: “After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

When Antiochus III realized that his purpose in Egypt was frustrated, he began a campaign against islands and cities of Asia Minor and the Aegean. He also gave asylum to Hannibal of Carthage, the enemy of Rome. Hannibal assists Antiochus in landing in Greece, bringing him into conflict with Rome. The ruler who brings the reproach of defeat in Asia Minor and the Aegean coasts to an end is the young Roman general Scipio who defeated Antiochus at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BC. The Romans deprived him of much of his territory, and took several hostages to Rome, including Antiochus’ son. In addition, Rome imposed heavy tribute upon him.

Antiochus returned to his fortress Antioch in disgrace. Unable to pay the heavy tribute demanded by the Romans, Antiochus tried to plunder the Temple of Belus in Elymais within his own kingdom. This enraged the people so much that the local forces killed him, thus fulfilling the words “Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

**Verse 20**: “There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.”

After Antiochus III’s death, his son Seleucus (IV) Philopater was also unable to pay the taxes to Rome (apocryphal book 2 *Maccabees* 3:7-40). He sent Heliodorus, a Jew, to plunder the temple at Jerusalem. But Heliodorus obtained nothing. Seleucus later poisoned by Heliodorus was thus killed ‘but not in anger or in battle.’ Heliodorus then assumed control with the support of other Syrian officials who were tired of the excesses of the Seleucid rulers.

**Verse 21**: “And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.”

In the place of Seleucus IV, his younger brother, the infamous Antiochus (IV) Ephphanes arose to whom the Syrian officials supporting Heliodorus would not give the honor of royalty. Antiochus Epiphanes had earlier been taken as hostage to Rome. But by flattery he enlisted the aid of neighboring king Eumenes II of Pergamum and officials at home in forcing out Heliodorus and obtained the throne (ruling from 175-164 BC.) “He astonishes his subjects by an affectation of Roman manners” and “good natured profuseness” [flattery] (Rawlinson, *Manual of Ancient History*, p. 255).

**Verse 22**: “With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.”

Those who opposed Antiochus Epiphanes, including Heliodorus were swept away by him. The prince of the covenant referred to here is the Jewish high priest. Verse 22 is saying that Antiochus would even go so far as to murder the Jewish high priest. History confirms that Onias III was high priest in Judea at the time, and that Antiochus put him to death in 172 B.C. According to Rawlinson (*Manual of Ancient History*, p. 255), Jews “were driven to desperation by the mad project of this self-willed monarch.” Antiochus IV appointed a Hellenistic Jew who changed his name to the Greek Jason as the replacement high priest. But only after 3 years he was replaced by another Hellenizing apostate named Menelaus.

**Verses 23-24**: “And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people. He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.”

After the Jews made a treaty with him, Antiochus Epiphanes acted deceitfully with them. Even though he had only a small number of supporters in the beginning, he eventually gained a large following through deceit and flatteries and became strong. He entered Galilee peaceably. Then only as a temporary ploy to gain support among the masses, Antiochus took from the rich and gave to the poor. Then he did what his fathers or forefathers had not done. Rulers before him had typically treated the Jews well. But Antiochus IV far exceeded his fathers in his ruthlessness and cruelty toward the Jews. He also imposed unbearable taxes on the Jews. Much of this struggle between the Jews and the Syrian kingdom is recorded in the apocryphal book of *Maccabees* (in the Hebrew Bible).

**Verses 25-27**: “He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. Both these kings’ hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time.”

In this case, Antiochus IV was stirred up to war with Egypt by his nephew Ptolemy VI, the son of Ptolemy V and Antiochus IV’s sister Cleopatra. Rawlinson, pages 255-256, says, "Threatened with war by the ministers of Ptolemy Philometor [now king of the south], who claim Coele-Syria and Palestine as the dowry of Cleopatra, the late queen-mother, Antiochus marches against Egypt...B.C. 171" (pp. 277-278). But he was met by his nephew leading another immense army from Egypt.

But Ptolemy VI did not stand, for his own trusted officers plotted against him. Antiochus IV was victorious at Pelusium. Continuing in Rawlinson, p. 278: "After his victory at Pelusium, Antiochus advanced to Memphis, and having obtained possession of the young king's person [Ptolemy Philometor, king of the south], endeavored to use him as a tool for effecting the entire reduction of the country." In 174 BCE, both these kings sat at a banquet. Antiochus pretended to ally himself with the young Ptolemy, against his brother, Euergetes II, but each was trying to deceive the other. Their lies did not prosper and the outcome would be as God predetermined it.

**Verse 28**: “While returning to his own land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land.”

Antiochus while returning to Syria in 168 BCE with great plunder from Egypt, encountered another Maccabean insurrection. Verse 28 says his heart was moved against the “holy covenant,” meaning the Jewish worship system. “He shall do damage” means Antiochus looted the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem of many golden vessels and massacred many Jews. Greek historian Polybius mentioned that he “despoiled most sanctuaries.”

**Verses 29-30**: “At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus [the actual word used is Kittim, which is Hebrew for “western lands,” here meaning Rome] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.”

In verse 29, God prophesied of a third campaign by Antiochus into Egypt. But this one did not fair well for him like the previous two successful ones. He was cut off by a Roman fleet from Cyprus. Popillius, the commander of the Roman fleet forced Antiochus IV to accept surrender terms in which he had to end his campaign against Egypt and restore the island of Cyprus to Egyptian rule. On returning home through Judea, Antiochus IV vented his frustration and anger on the Jews. He plotted with leaders inside the temple, showing favor to those who rejected the Jewish religion and adopted the pagan Greek (Hellenistic) customs, but persecuting those who remained loyal.

Antiochus did his utmost to destroy the Jewish religion, by passing laws that forbade its practice. He forced some to violate Jewish laws, and murdered them if they refused. For example, Eleazar, an aged scribe was forced to open his mouth to eat swine’s flesh. He refused, and himself went to the rack and was flogged to death. In another case, two women who had circumcised their children were publicly paraded around the city and then hurled down headlong from the wall. Others who had gathered together in a cave to keep the Sabbath day secretly were betrayed and all burned together. A mother and her seven sons were tortured one after the other and killed in the presence of the governor for refusing to eat swine’s flesh.

**Verse 31**: “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.”

This verse refers to the horrid events of 168 BC which are described in 2 Maccabees 5:11-15. Antiochus Epiphanes thought Judea was in a revolt. So he mustered his armed forces and entered Jerusalem and killed 80,000 men, women and children. He then defiled the Temple by setting up a statue of the Greek god Zeus (Rawlinson, ibid. p. 255) [the “abomination of desolation”] in the holy of holies – the holiest inner most place in the Temple - and sacrificed a pig on the temple altar. He stopped the daily sacrifice and tried to stamp out the Jewish religion completely.

**Verses 32-35**: “Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they shall fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purge them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”

Antiochus IV corrupted the apostate Jews with flattery and rewards for forsaking their religion and adopting Hellenistic culture. Many Jews succumbed to his persecution and rewards for apostasy.

But the time frame of the prophecy changes in verse 32 and has a dual aspect. It refers to people who knew their God at that time, the Maccabees, [who were the patriotic followers of Judas Maccabeus of the Hasmonian priestly dynasty and were determined to continue to keep God’s law] and later the Christians.

The Maccabees resisted Antiochus Epiphanes and his successors. When an officer of Antiochus came to the city of Modein to enforce Antiochus’ decree concerning idolatrous worship, Mattathias, the leading priest slew him. Then Mattathias fled to the hills and led a band of guerrillas. Thus began the Maccabees revolt against Antiochus

Mattathias was helped in his cause by his five sons, particularly Judas, nick-named Maqqaba (Aramaic for hammer, from which the name Maccabees is derived). Many of these patriots died for the cause. But their heroism ultimately drove the Syrians out of the country.

In their dual aspect, these verses also refer to the true Christians and the Church, prophesying their coming mighty works of instructing many and converting them to Christianity, and their persecution by sword, flame, captivity and plundering. When they are persecuted, God would help them with a little help (which would include God’s holy spirit, giving them tremendous strength to remain faithful even when faced with martyrdom), but would allow many to be martyred to test and try them and purge them. Others would infiltrate the Churches by intrigue. Some of the true Christians would be martyred, to purge them, refine their character and make them spiritually white or pure. This would go on till the time of the end, meaning the return of Jesus Christ.

Verse 35 refers to the “time of the end.” This means that the previous verses were prophecies that applied to the contests between the Seleucid and Egyptian dynasties, and later to the Seleucids and the Jewish patriots, the Maccabees. Thus we have seen that these verses have been precisely fulfilled in history, from the rule of Cyrus the Great to the time of the Maccabees.

**Verse 36**: “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”

The prophecy now shifts to New Testament times. In 65 BCE Rome took possession of Syria [hence Judea as well] which became a Roman province. The Roman emperor now became the king of the North. Verse 36 is an apt description of Roman emperors who did according to their will, instituting emperor worship, thus exalting themselves above God. The phrase “shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished” means that the Roman Empire will persist in some form or another right till the very end, when Jesus Christ shall return and God’s wrath on the Roman Empire will be completed.

**Verse 37**: “He shall regard neither the God [correct rendering is ‘gods’] of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above them all.”

The Roman emperors did not regard their old Roman gods. The phrase they also did not have “a desire for women” indicates that the emperors were either homosexuals (14 of the first 15 emperors were actually homosexuals), or exalted themselves above the Babylonian god Tammuz for whom women wept. Roman emperors did not regard any of these gods because they instituted emperor worship and magnified themselves above all these gods.

**Verses 38-39**: “But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses [or forces, KJV]; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.”

The Roman emperors demanded worship of the emperor as well as the empire itself because of its strength. Standards were idolatrous emblems of empire/emperor worship. In addition, enormous defense expenditures made Rome the strongest military power the world had ever seen till that time, thus fulfilling the prophecy “he shall honor the god of forces”.

But then, beginning with Constantine the Great in 313 AD, Roman emperors began to honor a god, the pope of the false Church based in Rome, that his fathers did not know, with gold, silver, precious stones and other pleasant things.

Later Roman emperors, and after that rulers of later resurrections of the Roman Empire began to act against the strongest enemy states and religious institutions on behalf of the foreign god [the papacy, which was of Babylonian origin, the original Babylonian Mystery Religion]. They acknowledged the papacy as a god and worked to advance its glory. They caused the popes to rule over many peoples, and divided the land for the benefit of both church and state. The pope calls himself the Vicar of Christ, meaning “in place of Christ.” Thus the pope calls himself a ‘god’ in place of Christ.

Verses 36-39 covered the centuries from the beginning of Christianity in the early Roman Empire to the origin of the Catholic Church and the Catholic-dominated Holy Roman Empire with its seven resurrections right down to our modern times. The seventh resurrection is yet in the near future.

Thus we see a demonstration of God’s Almighty power in first prophesying these events and then fulfilling them unerringly. Individual kings, queens and generals are mentioned and what each would do. All these prophecies have been fulfilled. All this is ancient history. It would serve no purpose in our time to record all this other than to convince the skeptic beyond a shadow of doubt that God of the Bible has total and complete control in the affairs of men. God can raise men and women, foretell what they would do centuries in advance, and bring it to pass unerringly demonstrating His total control over the lives of individuals, including kings. Besides being a demonstration of God’s Almighty power, fulfillment of such intricate and detailed prophecies is also proof that the Bible is the true inspired word of God. Each and every word in it is God inspired and can be relied upon. Book of no other religion dares to prophesy like this the fulfillment of which can be proven by history.

Now the remaining verses of Daniel 11 move to the time frame called “the time of the end”, yet in the future, to the time of the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

**Verses 40-45**: “40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south [which from other prophecies will be an alliance headed by an Islamic power] push at him: and the king of the north [which since the time of the Roman Empire has always been the Roman Empire or the Holy Roman Empire] shall come against him like a whirlwind , with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. 44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. 45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

These verses describe yet a future war between the King of the North, a European alliance headed by a military dictator, in all likelihood a German, and the King of the South, an Islamic alliance. The King of the North defeats the King of the South. He will then likely set up his regional headquarters in the holy land, but mobilization of the Kings of the East will trouble him. He will go forth in his fury to destroy them. But God prophecies that he shall come to his end at the second coming of Jesus Christ, and no one will help him.

Unerring fulfillment of these prophecies proves that there is an Almighty God who has complete control over the daily affairs of men and can do whatever He pleases. It also proves that the Jewish holy scriptures are indeed the infallible word of God.

**Chapter 8**

**Are Other Scriptures Also the Infallible Word of God?**

There is only one way to learn new truth: Keep an open mind. Be willing to listen or read with an open mind, gather all the evidence, weigh the evidence without any bias or preconceived ideas and then come to a conclusion.

We have proved that the Jewish Scriptures are indeed the infallible word of God. Could scriptures of other religions also be the infallible word of God? The only way to prove that is the way we have proved the Jewish scriptures to be the infallible word of God; in the way God Himself challenged the skeptics in Isaiah 41:21-22 to do so. And the challenge to other religions and their idols was to foretell the future, not 1, 2 or 3 times but numerous times, and bring it to pass. The other test is that there should be no error of fact, science, history or geography in the scriptures. History and archaeology have also proved the Jewish scriptures to be accurate. So let us apply these tests to see if the scriptures of another religion are also the infallible word of God. Keeping an honestly open mind is critical to understanding the truth.

There are two types of religions in the world. One type are not based on the existence of an Almighty God. Budhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Taoism etc. fall into this category. The second type of religions are based on the existence of a supreme God or multiple gods in the case of Hinduism. Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity fall into this category. But the holy books of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism do not contain any prophecies. Therefore these religions fail God’s test that they are backed by His Almighty power.

Besides the holy book Judaism, the holy book of another religion also contains much prophecy. And that book is Christianity’s New Testament of the Bible.

**Why Jews Have not Understood Prophecy**

Though prophecies in the book of Daniel were sealed till the time of the end, it implies they would be revealed in the end time. These prophecies have already been revealed, but not to Jewish religious leaders. They have been revealed to a Jew, but not to any leader of Judaism. The reason simply is that the keys that unlock the prophecies of the Old Testament are found in the New Testament, and the keys that unlock prophecies of the New Testament are found in the book of Daniel and the other prophets. Prophecies in the Bible can be understood only if the Old Testament and the New Testament are read as one complete book.

***Prophesied Elijah has Already Come and Gone***

The prophecies in the book of Daniel and the other prophets were not revealed to an ordinary Jew. God sent a Jew as a prophet in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet as prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6 to reveal all the prophecies. And the Jews in the state of Israel have been well acquainted with him, but did not recognize that he was the prophesied Elijah to come. That man was Herbert W. Armstrong, Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God, who passed away on January 16,1986.

Malachi 4:5-6 states the Elijah’s commission: “5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse [translated as ‘destruction’ in the Complete Jewish Bible].

From the reading of this prophecy no one would be able to recognize who would fulfill the role of Elijah the prophet. Would he be a great psychologist or a great religious leader who would preach a convincing message of “putting father back as head of the family” or a message about bringing families together or ‘Focus on the Family”? Many preachers and psychologists preach such messages. So this prophecy cannot be understood by reading only the Old Testament. The key to understanding this prophecy is found in the New Testament.

*Proof that Herbert W. Armstrong was the Prophesied Elijah God Sent*

How do we prove that Herbert W. Armstrong was Elijah the prophet God sent as prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6?

Malachi also wrote in 3:1-2: “***1*** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me...”

This means that one in the spirit and power of Elijah would come in the end time to prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

In the New Testament Jesus Christ unlocked the key to recognizing who the Elijah would be through his commission. Jesus’ disciples asked Him in Matthew 17:10-13: “10… Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. 12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed [wished]…13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”

Because this prophet was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, he would fulfill the role that Elijah the prophet fulfilled in ancient Israel. In Elijah’s time Israel had departed from the true God and had started worshipping Baal and other pagan gods. In the entire nation only 7,000 were left who had not worshipped Baal. Elijah came and restored worship of the true God in ancient Israel.

John the Baptist came and prepared the way for the first coming of Jesus Christ. But when Jesus discussed this prophecy with the disciples, John the Baptist had already come and been beheaded by Herod. He could not have restored anything after his death. This means that the prophecy Jesus gave was about an end-time Elijah that would come and prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus Christ by restoring all things, meaning the truths concerning the true God, all the true doctrines and the right way to worship God. Malachi 4:5-6 also prophesied that the Elijah would come just before the Day of the Lord. And the Day of the Lord is in the end time. It is the last one year of the three and a half year long Great Tribulation, meaning of which could be understood by what is to mentioned to happen in it in the New Testament.

So the modern Elijah would fulfill a similar role. He would restore correct worship of the true God in spiritual Israel, which is God’s true Church.

What are the “all things” Jesus referred to that one coming in the spirit and power of Elijah would restore? Just as the original Elijah restored worship of the true God in ancient Israel, and one in the spirit and power of Elijah before the first coming of Jesus Christ, meaning John the Baptist restored the worship of the true God in the correct way, another prophet in the spirit and power of Elijah would be sent before the second coming of Jesus Christ to restore the worship of the true God in the right way.

There was no New Testament Church when the original Elijah or John the Baptist came. So they could restore the worship of the true God only based on the understanding provided by the prophets before them. But for the end-time Elijah, the restoration of all things would also additionally require restoring all the doctrines laid down by Jesus Christ and established by the apostles in the original Church, the knowledge of which had been lost over the centuries.

And the Elijah to be sent in the end time is twice mentioned by Jesus Christ as more than a prophet in Matthew 11:9 and Luke 7:26: “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.”

In Church rankings only an apostle ranks higher than a prophet as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28: “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.” Mr. Armstrong thus was more than a prophet in Jesus’ words because he was an apostle as well. It was necessary for this Elijah to have the rank of an apostle as well because he would be required to restore and establish doctrine as only apostles could establish doctrine.

This end-time commission of an Elijah-like prophet was so important that in August-September 1917, Mr. Armstrong was appointed to fulfill this commission through a dream to his wife Mrs. Loma Armstrong which he described in Volume 1 of his autobiography, pages 203-205.

In the dream Mrs. Armstrong was with Mr. Armstrong and saw a solid mass of brilliant stars filling the sky and then vanishing. She realized these were angels. Then 3 angels appeared and one of them put his arm around both of them. The angel told them that Christ was really coming in a very short time.

Mr. Armstrong writes: “At that time, we had been going quite regularly to motion-picture theatres. She asked the angel if this were wrong. He replied Christ had important work for us to do, preparing for His coming – there would be no time for “movies.”

Yes, Mr. Armstrong was specifically commissioned to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth. He restored all things as Jesus prophesied about the end-time Elijah who was also an apostle.

James describes in James 5:10 the mark of a true prophet of God: “10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.”

The mark of a true prophet of God is suffering and patience. Mr. Armstrong endured a great deal of suffering patiently to found the Philadelphian era of God’s Church, as described in his two volume autobiography, available free of charge from the Philadelphia Church of God at its web site www.pcog.org.

Mr. Armstrong mentioned several times that he spent 28 years in grinding poverty. In his autobiography he described how many times there was no food in the house with little children, housing was always a problem, much of the time he usually had only one threadbare suit to wear and the family was clothed with mended used clothing, how he had to battle ministers and wolves in sheep’s clothing who had entered the Church and tried to destroy it in its infancy.

He had to struggle to start Ambassador College. After that effort was successful and God’s Church started growing Satan was implanting tares in the Church regularly. Then these infiltrators led rebellions in the early 1970s and late 1970s when leading evangelists and ministers caused splits and led away thousands of members from the Church. At one time they induced the state of California to put the Church in receivership, impound all its assets and take over the Church. But Mr. Armstrong’s explanation through advertisements in the Wall Street Journal of what the Attorney General of California was doing was illegal led to the lawsuit being withdrawn and the receivership proceedings ended. This was another attempt by Satan that could have destroyed the Church.

God built the modern era of His Church through the blood, sweat and total selfless sacrifice of Herbert W. Armstrong. Surely no man with his own intelligence and strength could have overcome all the obstacles that Mr. Armstrong overcame. These are proofs that God Himself was leading His end-time work through Mr. Armstrong. His lifelong suffering for the sake of God’s work proves that he was a true prophet of God.

*Prophecies Fulfilled by Herbert W. Armstrong’s Life*

Further proof that Herbert W. Armstrong was the one sent in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet and an apostle by God is provided by the fulfillment of many prophecies in his life that the end-time Elijah and apostle was to fulfill.

1) *Elijah the Prophet*

We have already seen that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi the prophet as coming before the dreadful day of the Lord which is the last one year of the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. He also fulfilled Jesus Christ’s prophecy that he would restore all the doctrines and truths to God’s true Church before His return to earth. He restored more than 20 major doctrines or truths to God’s Church.

2) *Preaching the Gospel as a Witness Unto All Nations*

One of the major prophecies fulfilled in our time, of course, is Matthew 24:14, which states: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” It all started with Mr. Armstrong. He first of all restored the knowledge that the gospel is about the reestablishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and started preaching it. It went global beginning in 1953 when it began to be preached in Europe after having been preached only in the North American continent.

Since Mr. Armstrong’s death, though the Church has divided into different organizations, all those that adhere to what was restored through Mr. Armstrong still continue to preach the same gospel around the world. Though the funds available to all the Church of God groups are a fraction of what was available to Mr. Armstrong, because of the Internet, the reach of the gospel message has increased manifold. The gospel message is accessible to more people than ever before at even lower cost. It has truly gone global because at least some people on earth in every country understand English and can read the gospel message. In addition it is available in all other major languages of the world.

3) *Fulfilling the Prophecy that One Man Would Start and End an Era of the Church*

God founded the modern era of His Church through Mr. Armstrong. The modern era which we identify as the Philadelphian era began with the preaching of Mr. Armstrong around the fall of 1928 and ended with his death on January 16, 1986. Then began the Laodicean era of God’s Church! This is indicated by certain prophecies.

Zechariah 4:9 states: “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it.”

Mr. Armstrong told all the Church members that he fulfilled this Zerubbabel office. His entire ministry is testimony to the fact that Mr. Armstrong built the house, which is a symbol for an era of the Church, by restoring all things. Mr. Gerald Flurry, pastor general of the Philadelphia Church of God explains this prophecy in his booklet *Malachi’s Message* (available free of charge at www.pcog.org) on p. 59:

“When the Bible refers directly to Christ doing the building, it is usually stated as “not made with hands” (2 Corinthians 5:1), or something is accomplished “without hands” (Daniel 2:45), or “a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands” (Hebrews 9:11).

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it …” (Zechariah 4:9). This verse is clearly talking about a “hands-on” operation.

“It twice mentions hands, designating a starting and finishing of a project. The *Anchor Bible Commentary* says “hands” is literal, and expresses participation in temple building. That is, it was built through a human being with “hands,” not built “without hands”—as Christ does it without the use of a human instrument.

“Mr. Armstrong wrote a letter to the Church on March 19, 1981. Here is an excerpt from that letter: “Zerubbabel built the second temple to which Jesus came the first time. John the Baptist prepared the way before the FIRST coming. But WHO was to build the SPIRITUAL temple to which Christ shall soon come the second time? Who was to prepare the way before His Second Coming?

“Remember, God does things in DUAL stages. As Zerubbabel built the first temple of MATERIAL stone, wood and other materials, he was a forerunner or type of one through whom Christ would raise up or build the SPIRITUAL TEMPLE—His Church of our time, prior to the Day of the Lord and Christ’s Second Coming. As John the Baptist prepared the way in the PHYSICAL wilderness of the Jordan River for the first coming of the HUMAN Jesus (both man and God), then coming to His MATERIAL temple, and to His PHYSICAL people Judah, ANNOUNCING the Kingdom of God to be set up more than 1,900 years later, SO God would use a human messenger in the SPIRITUAL wilderness of 20th-century religious confusion, to be a voice CRYING OUT the gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD, about the SPIRITUAL CHRIST, coming in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY to His SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, to actually ESTABLISH that spiritual KINGDOM OF GOD.

“Brethren, HAS THAT BEEN DONE BY THIS CHURCH?

“Did God raise up a one-man LEADERSHIP to be used by Him in building this spiritual TEMPLE and in proclaiming after 1,900 years the true GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ALL THE WORLD—to even go to kings and heads of nations (Revelation 10:11)—in bringing the Church back to the FAITH ONCE DELIVERED (Jude 3)?

“HAS THIS HAPPENED, IN YOUR DAYS, AND HAS GOD BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT AS A PART OF IT?

“HAS ANYONE ELSE DONE IT?”

“Did Mr. Armstrong think one man would and did fulfill this prophecy? Absolutely! He speaks of “one,” “a human messenger,” “a voice,” “a one-man leadership”—and then ends by asking, “HAS ANYONE ELSE DONE IT?”

“Mr. Armstrong continued: “God has never removed a man called to a specific leadership or assignment or commission until his mission is COMPLETED.” Did Mr. Armstrong complete his mission? Did he finish “this house,” “restore all things” and “turn the hearts of the fathers”? He most certainly did!

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of THIS HOUSE; his hands shall also FINISH it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you” (Zechariah 4:9). “House” is a very common word in the Bible. In the Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, where “house” is used, the scriptures cover 13 PAGES. The word “temple” in the same book covers only ONE FOURTH OF A PAGE. “Temple” is not used here—and “temple” is not nearly as common in the Bible as the word “house.”

“The word “house” can mean an “inner part”—or only a part of something greater. It’s a name given to human bodies as being frail and transitory (Job 4:19). The word is used as “tent” (Genesis 27:15; 33:17). It is used as the “house of the spider” (Job 8:14). It’s applied to wealth, property and all that belongs to a family. All uses of this word are very temporary (like a Church era). The word temple is used in a more permanent way or to indicate a very long period of time. For example, the word “temple” often applies to ALL SEVEN CHURCH ERAS. It also applies to ETERNAL LIFE.

“The subject is “this house” and IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SEVEN CHURCH ERAS (Zechariah 3:7-8; 4:2, 10; Revelation 1:20). If we put all the scriptures together, it could just as well be called “this era.” And Zerubbabel did finish it. Mr. Armstrong not only laid the foundation, as we often say today—HE BUILT THE WHOLE HOUSE. When he died, the PHILADELPHIA ERA WAS COMPLETED. He restored all things (Matthew 17:10-11). No more foundational doctrines need to be added to the house. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS WALK IN Mr. Armstrong’s FOOTSTEPS…**Primarily, we just need to maintain the “house” and do God’s Work.”**

So Mr. Armstrong did lay the foundation of this house, the Philadelphia era of God’s Church, and also finished it.

The Philadelphia era ended when he passed away on January 16, 1986. But he had completed building the ‘house.’ His task was to ‘restore all things’ to God’s Church, meaning the doctrines and other truths about God’s way of life Jesus Christ taught to the original apostles. So no more doctrines would need to be added. There were many controversies raised by tares or infiltrators in the Church about doctrines along the way. But when Mr. Armstrong died all doctrines had been settled so that the Church now knows that we have all the truths concerning doctrines for God’s Church. The house has been completed. And since all doctrines have been restored, there is no need for another apostle to be sent in the end time to restore what has already been completely restored, and none is prophesied to come.

4) *Mr. Armstrong’s Coming and Passing Away Were Prophesied*

There are two prophecies that pointed to Mr. Armstrong’s death, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

The first prophecy is Zechariah 4:9, which has already been explained. It states, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you.”

When the task of finishing the house, or restoring all the doctrines to the Church had been completed, Mr. Armstrong died.

Another prophecy that Mr. Armstrong’s death fulfilled is 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (NKJV): “1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness [or iniquity] is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Here is how this prophecy was also about Mr. Armstrong’s death.

In these verses Paul was explaining to the Thessalonians to not give up their normal lives and just wait for the return of Jesus Christ. He explained that Jesus Christ will not return to earth until there will be a falling away from the faith, meaning God’s Church, for only God’s Church has the true faith. In addition, Jesus Christ will not return until the ‘man of sin’ who causes the falling away is revealed.

As most prophecies in the Bible are dual, this prophecy is also dual. Usually duality means that there has been a former fulfillment of prophecy in ancient times, and there will be another greater fulfillment in the time of the end. But there is also another duality that characterizes many prophecies. There is one fulfillment of such prophecies in the world at large, and another fulfillment in God’s Church. This prophecy in 2 Thessalonians is one such prophecy with a fulfillment in the world and the Church.

The “man of sin to be revealed” mentioned here sits in the temple. Temple in prophecy means God’s Church, as well as the physical temple at Jerusalem. This means that ‘the man of sin’ in the end time will be in God’s Church, as well as another one in the world whom Jesus Christ will destroy at His coming. Revelation 19:20 describes this ‘man of sin’ in the world as the false prophet, whom Jesus Christ will destroy by having him thrown alive in the lake of fire.

This prophecy shows that “the man of sin” in the Church will actually cause the ‘falling away’ from the Church. And the ‘man of sin’ had to be revealed in the end-time. We have already seen the dramatic fulfillment of this prophecy in the Church. If Mr. Armstrong knew the beliefs Joseph W. Tkach Sr. held in secret, he would have never appointed him pastor general. But the “mystery of iniquity” that was working with Joseph Tkach Sr., meaning those helping him, was so well hidden that most Church members and Mr. Armstrong had no clue about it. If he knew, he would not have appointed Joseph Tkach Sr. as pastor general and his successor in the Church.

But now read verses 7-8 again: “7 For the mystery of lawlessness [or iniquity] is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed…”

Verse 7 says “only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” This means that the “mystery of iniquity” (or the synagogue of Satan – Revelation 3:9) that was at work in the Church during Mr. Armstrong’s time was actually restrained by Mr. Armstrong. He had to put down 2-3 major rebellions in the Church, and would not allow these tares or infiltrators to change any doctrines. He restrained their influence. Then verse 7 says that “he [meaning Mr. Armstrong] who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” Mr. Armstrong restrained the working of this “mystery of Lawlessness.” But then he was taken out of the way by death. Then the “mystery of iniquity” perpetrated by the synagogue of Satan within God’s Church under Joseph Tkach Sr’s stewardship began to work openly. Thus the ‘man of sin’ in the Church was revealed.

No man in his life and death can fulfill so many Bible prophecies and not be the man these prophecies mention. It is simply impossible for a man to fulfill all these prophecies by mere coincidence. So we can be certain that Mr. Armstrong was the prophesied Elijah and apostle to come who came and restored all truths to God’s Church in the form of major doctrines and prepared the way for Jesus Christ’s second coming.

**New Testament Prophecies Unlock Old Testament Prophecies**

Let us take another look at Daniel's prophecies. First of all, Daniel 12:4, 9-10 mentions that the prophecies were sealed till the time of the end. But in the end time, none of the wicked shall understand the prophecies, but the wise shall understand. We should, therefore, expect the wise to understand all prophecies. This implies that the wise have an understanding of the true God as well, who reveals these prophecies to them.

Let us now look at the prophecy in Daniel 7:7-8 (NKJV): "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." Vs. 8: "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."

Daniel did not understand this prophecy. So he asked one of the angels standing by to explain it to him. Here is the angel's explanation in Daniel 7:23-25 (NKJV): "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and laws. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."

The angel's explanation says that from the fourth kingdom (which we know was the Roman Empire) ten kings will arise. Another king (perhaps lesser in stature, because he is pictured as a little horn) will arise among them and will subdue the first three of the ten. This king, pictured by the little horn will speak blasphemous words against God, persecute the saints of God, and intend to change times and laws.

Many questions arise from this explanation given by the angel. What kind of a different king is this little horn that speaks blasphemous words against God and uproots the first three kings of the Roman Empire? Who are the saints of the Most High persecuted by this king? Are they Israelites or Jews who are particularly religious or some other people? What are the times and laws that this king intends to change? It is difficult to identify the little horn from the information given by the angel in Daniel. The prophecies were sealed till the time of the end any way.

This prophecy, however, has been understood. It was first understood by Herbert W. Armstrong in the 1930s. But this prophecy could not have been understood without help of the clues given in another scripture - the New Testament of the Bible. Here then are the clues that helped Mr. Armstrong understand this prophecy.

Revelation 13:1-3 describes a seven-headed beast (NKJV): "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast."

Revelation 13:11-12 describes another beast: "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

Further clues to the identity of the little horn of Daniel 7 are given in Revelation 17:1-15, 18 (NKJV): " 1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." 3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. 7 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

“9 Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10 There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. 12 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful." 15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues….18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

There are many clues in these scriptures. First of all woman is the symbol for a Church in the New Testament. The true Church is called the bride of Christ, as Israel was called the wife of the God of the Old Testament. The woman in Revelation 17 is a great harlot, meaning it is a false Church. The woman or Church is also named MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT. This means that this false Church is simply the ancient Babylonian Mystery religion masquerading around as Christianity. After the Babylonian empire was conquered by the Medes and Persians, the Babylonians migrated and settled in Italy. The woman is also called that "great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." The city in Italy that reigns over the kings of the earth is none other than Rome. So this woman is a great false Church based in an enclave of Rome, the Vatican City. Thus the woman stands identified as the Roman Catholic Church.

The saints are identified in Revelation 17 as the martyrs of Jesus. That means the saints are members of God's true Church founded by Jesus Christ.

The seven headed beast of Revelation 13:1-3 with ten horns gets its power, throne and authority from the dragon or the devil. Since this beast has a lion's mouth (lion represented the Babylonian Empire in Daniel 7), bear feet (bear represented the Medo-Persian empire in Daniel 7), leopard's body (a four-headed leopard represented the Hellenistic empire of Alexander with its four divisions in Daniel 7), it means it has the strength and characteristics of all these empires. The strength of the lion is in its mouth, of the bear in its paws, of the leopard in its cunning, craftiness and speed. That is why this beast has these characteristics. It rules much of the territory of all these empires. Since this beast has the characteristics of the previous three empires, it represents the empire that came after them, in the same general territory, hence the Roman Empire. The beast of Revelation 13 received a deadly wound. This signifies the fall of the Roman Empire. But the deadly wound of the beast was healed. This means that the Roman Empire was resurrected. The ten horns then represent ten resurrections of the Roman Empire.

The beast of Revelation 13:11-12 has two horns like a lamb (Lamb is another name for Jesus in the New Testament) and speaks like a dragon (another name for the devil, Revelation 12:9). Thus this beast masquerades around as Christianity, but speaks like the devil. So this beast is a false Church as well. Horns are a symbol of authority or rulership. This beast has two horns. That means this beast is an ecclesiastical (religious) as well as a civil authority. We earlier identified in Revelation 17 the false Church as the Roman Catholic Church. The pope is the religious head of this church. But he is also the head of the Vatican State and sits on a throne as king. Thus the two horned beast that looks like a lamb but speaks like the devil is none other than the Roman Catholic Church. This two horned beast is pictured as exercising the authority of the first beast. From history we know that the Roman Catholic Church exercised the authority of the 'Holy Roman Empire' to bring the subjects of the empire under its religious authority. It exercised the authority to force the empire's subjects to become Catholics. This again identifies the first beast as the 'Holy Roman Empire.'

Prophecies foretell the future. Daniel's prophecies were given in the time of the Babylonian empire. That is why his prophecies included 4 beasts that identified each of the 4 empires to come. But the prophecies in Revelation were given to the apostle John in the time of the Roman Empire. Therefore the beasts in his prophecies refer only to the Roman Empire. The other three empires were already past history.

Since the great harlot is pictured as riding the seven heads of the beast of Revelation 17, this beast therefore also represents the 'Holy Roman Empire'. But we have seen that the Roman Empire in Revelation 13 is pictured as the beast with ten horns, meaning it will have ten resurrections after it receives its deadly wound. The great harlot riding the seven heads means that the great false Church will ride the last seven resurrections of the 'Holy Roman Empire'.

With the understanding of the symbols in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 we are now in a position to understand the prophecy given in Daniel 7:7-8. We had already identified the fourth beast as the Roman Empire. The ten horns as we have seen in the interpretation of the beast of Revelation 13:1-3 are the ten resurrections of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire represented by the fourth beast was destroyed in 476 A.D. That is when it received the deadly wound of the beast in Revelation 13. But this empire was to be resurrected ten times as shown by the ten horns.

Horns in prophecy are a symbol for authority or a ruler. The first three resurrections were the kingdoms of the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. These were to be uprooted by the little horn of verse 8. The little horn is none other than the Roman Catholic Church. At the urging of the popes, these three kingdoms that followed Arianism (which was opposed by the Roman Church as it did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity) were plucked up. Then the empire was restored by Justinian in 554 A.D. That is when the deadly wound of the beast of Revelation 13 was healed. From then on the resurrections of the empire were called the "Holy Roman Empire", because the little horn (the pope) crowned its emperors or recognized them as 'Holy Roman Emperors'. These are also the seven heads of the beast that the great whore of Revelation 17 rides. Justinian's restoration was followed by Charlemagne (crowned in 800 A.D.); Otto the Great (crowned in 962 A.D.); Hapsburg Dynasty (Charles V crowned in 1530 A.D.); Napoleon's Empire (1804 - 1814 A.D.); Italy and Germany, ending in the Hitler-Mussolini axis from 1870 - 1945 A.D. The last and final resurrection is yet to take place, very soon. It will be a union of ten rulers in Europe, represented by the 10 toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and ten horns on the seventh head of the scarlet beast of Revelation 17. In the days of these kings Messiah will return and set up God's kingdom as interpreted by Daniel in Daniel 2:44 (NKJV), “44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

The saints that the little horn of Daniel 7, the two-horned beast of Revelation 13 that looks like a lamb but speaks like the dragon, and great whore of Revelation 17 persecute are none other than the martyrs of Jesus, or members of God's true Church.

The little horn of Daniel 7 was also prophesied to speak pompous words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws. The Roman Church has done both these things, fulfilling these prophecies. The Church calls itself the Catholic, meaning 'Universal' Church. The popes claim that they are the Vicars of Christ, meaning they are in place of Christ. They claim that they now have the authority to bind and loose any laws, meaning change any laws. This Church changed the Sabbath to Sunday by its own authority. Those are very pompous words. God has not given anyone the authority to change the Ten Commandments. But the Roman Church has changed the Ten Commandments. It has done away with the Sabbaths and God's commanded holy days. Instead it has foisted Sunday worship and pagan holidays such as Easter and Christmas on Christianity. So it has changed laws.

This Church has also changed God's calendar. God's days begin and end at sunset. The world's days that this Church has originated begin and end at midnight. God's months begin with the new moon. The world's months begin and end according to a man-made calendar. The calendar the entire world now uses was approved by pope Gregory, hence known as the Gregorian Calendar. God's new year begins in the spring. The new year that this Church has foisted on the world begins in the dead of winter. God's calendar is based on a 19-year cycle. The Gregorian calendar is based on a four-year cycle. Thus the little horn has certainly thought to change times as well.

A very interesting part of the prophecy is given in Revelation 17:10: "There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come." This prophecy was understood by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in the late 1930s. At that time five resurrections of the "Holy Roman Empire" had fallen: those of Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto the Great, the Hapsburg Dynasty, and Napoleon. The one that then existed (the 'one is') was that of Hitler-Mussolini. And one has not yet come. That will be the tenth and final resurrection of the "Holy Roman Empire" consisting of an alliance of ten rulers in Europe.

The prophecies of Daniel 7 have been understood in these end times by a wise man, as prophesied in Daniel 12. No other man from Judaism, mainstream Christianity or any other religion has understood them. And no other holy books except the Jewish Scriptures and the Bible have any prophecy at all. But Mr. Armstrong, a Jew could not have understood them without the prophecies in Revelation 13 and 17. The prophecies in Revelation 13 and 17 provide very important clues that unlock the prophecies in Daniel 7. The only right conclusion one can draw from this is that the same God inspired both prophecies: those in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17. Using our criteria given by God Himself in Isaiah 41:22-23 to judge which God is the true God, and which scriptures are His true and inspired word, we reach the inescapable conclusion, therefore, that both the Jewish scriptures (which Christians call the Old Testament) as well as the New Testament are the inspired word of God.

To get a detailed explanation of the prophecies in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17, you may read a booklet titled "*The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor or Soon-Coming Reality?*" published by the Living Church of God, available free of cost at the Church's web site: www.lcg.org.

God used John the apostle to canonize the New Testament and then write the last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. John writes in Revelation 22:18-19 (NKJV), “18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

This signifies that with the Book of Revelation the canonization of the New Testament is complete. We do not need to add any more books to it. And since from the fulfillment of prophecies in this last book we have proved that it is backed by the power of Almighty God, we can be confident that the entire New Testament that precedes it is inspired and backed by the power of Almighty God as John stamped God’s authority on all its books by canonizing them.

**Sequence of End-time Events**

But these prophecies in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17 are not the only prophecies in the Old Testament. There are many other prophecies given in the prophets, psalms and other writings, and the Torah itself. At least one third of the Jewish scriptures are prophecy. But Jewish leaders do not properly understand these prophecies, particularly the time sequence in which they are to be fulfilled.

But just as prophecies in the book of Daniel could not be understood without the clues provided in the book of Revelation, these other prophecies also cannot be understood without the clues and additional details provided in the New Testament.

Between one-fourth and one-third of the entire Bible is prophecy and nearly 90% of these prophecies pertain to the end-time and beyond. Most of these prophecies are yet to be fulfilled. Since we are living in the end-time, it means that the events pictured by these events would also be revealed. In fact, the exact sequence of these end-time events has been revealed to the author, which will be described later.

The author also fulfills a prophecy given by Moses. He fulfills the office of a prophet, which explains why the sequence of end-time events was revealed to him. Proofs that he fulfills the office will be provided next.

**Chapter 9**

**Prophet Like Moses**

Around the time of Jesus the Jews were expecting the Messiah to appear because of the 69 weeks prophecy in Daniel 9:25, which states, “25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks…”

John the Baptist came at that time and was baptizing people. The Jews who were expecting the Messiah to appear wanted to know who he was. So they asked him. This is how the apostle John 1:19-25 records the conversation, “19 And this is the record of John [the Baptist], when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Are you Elias? And he says, I am not. Are you that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then said they unto him, Who are you? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What say you of yourself? 23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptize you then, if you be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet...”

Besides the Messiah mentioned in Daniel 9:25,Jews were familiar that two other prophets were prophesied to come in the future. One was Elijah the prophet mentioned in Malachi 4:5-6 quoted earlier. Moses also prophesied that another prophet like him would come. This is mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (NKJV): “15 The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall hearken; 16 According to all that you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

In this regard, the author must now simply state that this is the office he has been appointed to by God. The fact that he has been appointed to the office of a prophet was not revealed to him first, but to others from whom he learnt about it more than a decade later.

The office of the prophet described by Moses was certainly fulfilled by Jesus Christ Himself as described by Peter in Acts 3:19-23 and by Stephen in Acts 7:37. What we did not realize was that just as the role of Elijah was fulfilled by three prophets, there would be a triple fulfillment of the role of Moses as well. The role of Elijah was fulfilled by the original Elijah, then John the Baptist and then by Mr. Armstrong. The role of Moses was fulfilled by the original Moses, and then Jesus Christ Himself, and finally now there has been its third fulfillment.

Here then are the special events that parallel the life of Moses with that of the author that prove that he has been appointed to the role of the prophet mentioned by Moses.

1. Moses’ life was miraculously preserved. The author’s life too has been miraculously preserved over the past more than 50 years. Attempts have been continuously made on his life since the age of ten. By now perhaps hundreds if not thousands of attempts have been made in almost every possible way, including attempts at poisoning, beating to death, trying to bury him alive, trying to inflict him with HIV and shooting to death. But God has continued to miraculously preserve him all these decades.

2. God made Moses’ face to shine among the Israelites. God has made the author’s face to shine about a dozen or so times in public places to indicate the role of the prophet he was being called upon to fulfill.

3. As God used ancient prophets as an example to the Israelites to dramatically demonstrate certain key elements of prophecies such as Isaiah going barefoot and naked (Isaiah 20:2-4), God has used the author to demonstrate the true diabolically deceiving and lying nature of Satan and the demons by allowing his thoughts and what they palm off as his thoughts to be broadcast 24 hours a day. This is an event unique in the history of mankind. That is proof that he holds the office of a prophet.

What Satan broadcasts as the author’s thoughts are sometimes his thoughts but many times they are what Satan and the demons inject into his mind. These thoughts are diabolically designed to make the objects of the thoughts hate him with their whole being. Invariably these are thoughts designed to be the most damaging to the author and make people want to destroy him. Sometimes when the author knows that a horribly damaging thought is about to be injected into his mind, he is able to block it out. But Satan or the demon broadcasts such thought anyway as his thoughts to destroy normal good relations of the author with the object of the thoughts. Such damaging thoughts can part virtually the very best of friends if one is not aware that these are Satan’s thoughts and not the individual’s own.

God has allowed Satan and the demons to do so to illustrate to human beings how they are the source of much of our thoughts which lead us to follow ways that are contrary to God’s ways. All the filth and evil that Satan and the demons broadcast as the author’s thoughts are slander and lies which indicate who the real source of all such evil is. Many people act on such evil thoughts that pop into their minds and hurt themselves and others by their actions.

The only way for us to discern whether the thoughts coming into our minds are our own or injected by Satan is to know God’s law and ways from the Bible. If the thoughts are contrary to God’s ways, we can be certain that Satan or a demon is the author of them. God has allowed this experience as a warning to the world that dealing with Satan will part the very best of friends and allies. It will lead to destruction. We will see that happen in the very near future when allies will part and war to virtually destroy each other.

All the unusual experiences of prophets of God are designed to teach humanity some lessons or issue warnings. If the author was so evil in his thoughts as Satan and the demons try to project him to be by broadcasting his supposed thoughts, it would serve no purpose for humanity. The author himself would suffer because no one would want to associate with him. But it would not benefit humanity at large. But if these thoughts demonstrate the true diabolically evil nature of Satan and the demons because they are broadcasting lies to divide human beings and turn friends into enemies, then humanity is being warned not to deal with Satan and the demons. That indeed is the warning God is giving to humanity through this experience. But humanity will not pay heed as prophesied events will soon prove. Therefore, Satan and the demons broadcasting the author’s thoughts is a prophetic warning to the world.

The author is issuing God’s warning to the world. But by broadcasting lies as his thoughts, Satan and the demons try to destroy his credibility so that people will not pay heed to his warning. They want humanity to annihilate itself. So they don’t want the world to believe what the author is saying about the way individuals can come out alive through the Great Tribulation. Billions will not pay heed to the warning. But Revelation 7 assures us tens of millions will, and save themselves.

4. God has used the author for another unique event in the history of mankind. Every week God’s angels broadcast his weekly prophetic messages to every human being in his or her own language, currently delivered at 9.00 a.m. USA Eastern Standard Time. The author delivers his messages in English. But every human being can hear them in his or her own language. That is also proof that he holds the office of a prophet.

5. James 5:10 tells us: “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” God here points out the marks of a prophet. They suffer affliction and have to endure it patiently for a long time. Mr. Armstrong often pointed to his 28 years of enduring poverty. He certainly fulfilled this identifying mark of a prophet. The author too has endured poverty for nearly the entire 40 years of his working life. So as there were certain parallels between the lives of the ancient Moses and Elijah, such as fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, there have been parallels between the lives of those fulfilling their roles in our time.

6. Mr. Armstrong battled forces outside and inside the Church and endured suffering and poverty to build and protect God’s Church. The author has battled forces of German masqueraders inside and outside and those allied with them for the protection of Israelite nations of America and British Commonwealth nations for all his life since the age of ten. That is when they began making attempts on his life, first in India and then in the USA. Being a member of the small Sikh religious minority in India, but which contributed disproportionately to the British Indian Army that battled the Germans in both world wars, he was targeted by German allies in India. They began making attempts on his life because he showed much academic promise. Then in about a year of coming to the USA in 1981 he had diagnosed that the real cause of the economic problems of the USA and British Commonwealth nations at that time was the “so called free-trade” in which everyone was free to export their goods and services to the USA while barring access to American and British goods and services as much as possible. That was an immediate threat to the party and fun the hostile nation within our nations, consisting of Americans of German descent and their allies, was having and making it possible for the Germans and their global allies to loot American and British wealth. The hostile nation was able to get him kicked out of his Ph.D. program in Marketing at Northwestern University so that he was left without the means to get a secure teaching job. Then they prevented him from getting a decent job all his life in the USA. They destroyed all his attempts at succeeding in self-employment. His business ideas have been stolen and others have become billionaires using those ideas while he has lived most of his life in poverty, having to depend on the kindness of family and friends quite often to sustain him. So he has suffered for more than 33 years for the sake of our Israelite peoples while in the USA and more than 50 years in total. As Mr. Armstrong suffered much of his life for the “Church”, the author has suffered most his life for the sake of our “State,” meaning America and the British Commonwealth nations.

7. There have been other parallels between the lives of the ancient Elijah and Moses and those fulfilling their roles in our time. Elijah restored the worship of the true God in ancient Israel and protected the nation from the worshippers of Baal wiping out all knowledge and worship of the true God. The end-time Elijah restored the worship of the true God in spiritual Israel, His true Church, by restoring all the true doctrines, and the knowledge of the true gospel of the Kingdom of God. He prevented the ‘Synagogue of Satan” from watering down the doctrines all his life.

God used Moses to deliver ancient Israel from economic and physical slavery in Egypt. God has used the author to deliver modern Israel (America and British Commonwealth nations) from a form of economic slavery and also a form of physical slavery from being forced with threats to life or other harm to do things against their will and interests. Here is how God used him to accomplish this:

a) His constant preaching, teaching and battling so-called free trade single-handedly for 14 years finally focused the attention of the U.S. Federal government to look into the merits of what he was saying. It led to the discovery of the hostile nation within our nation and discovery of the conspiracy to destroy our Israelite nations from within. His preaching against free trade and the U.S. auto industry for not competing effectively had earlier forced the hostile nation to slow down its decline as too fast a decline could have led to the discovery of its existence within our borders. But when the hostile nation was discovered, corrective action was taken based on the solutions proposed in the author’s model of economic development and international trade. It saved our nations from economic collapse at that time.

b) Discovery of the hostile nation within our nations also led to the discovery of how this hostile nation had taken over all leading positions in most sectors of the economy, government and academia. Our people of true Israelite descent had been relegated to lower positions of serving those in higher positions occupied by people from the hostile nation. This was a form of economic slavery. And then our Israelite people could be threatened to do things against their will and interests, making them *de facto* slaves. The discovery of the hostile nation freed us from this economic slavery. It also led to our economic recovery at that time.

c) Discovery of the hostile nation also led to the discovery of its activities and how it was engaged in murdering and destroying true Israelites. It led to the discovery of medical murders, population control through abortion, the solving of the mystery of so many missing children and adults, denial of justice to Israelites because the hostile nation had infiltrated law enforcement and the judicial system. All these types of clandestine murders in the future were halted.

d) When the author realized that it was so easy to murder people by poisoning them by giving wrong prescriptions or in restaurants, he saw a potential disaster for our nations. So he prayed to God to intervene and save Israelite nations from this potential catastrophe. After his prayer, apparently the hostile nation sent out a call to murder as many Israelites as possible by poisoning them or by other means. The main targets were IT professionals, scientists, serving and retired top military officers, statesmen, business and political leaders. The order also went out for spouses who had married Israelite spouses to murder them and their own children. These orders were carried out. But God answered the author’s prayers and intervened to prevent these attempts from succeeding. This intervention probably saved tens of millions of lives in America alone, and probably additional millions in British Commonwealth nations.

If God had not heard these prayers, the U.S. economy could possibly have been destroyed with the murder of most IT professionals. It would also have led to an immediate attack on our nations and certain defeat in war and national slavery.

8. There have also been other parallels between what God used Moses to accomplish, and what the author’s contributions have been. Moses was used by God to reveal His strong nation building commandments, statutes and judgments to Israel. The author’s major contributions have also been in areas that contribute to nation building. These have included a model of economic development and beneficial international trade that is now generally accepted by all nations, and significant contributions to natural healing, preventing sickness and maintaining general good health. Contributions in both areas have had a very high impact on the prosperity and general well-being of our nations.

9. The mark of a prophet is prophesying future events or understanding and giving a correct interpretation of prophecy. Besides Jesus Christ no man has understood prophecy better than Mr. Armstrong. Daniel the prophet and John the apostle who wrote prophecies did not understand them because they were sealed till the time of the end. But when the end time came, understanding of prophecies was given to Mr. Armstrong. He explained what the various beasts in the books of Daniel and Revelation meant. After Mr. Armstrong, an understanding of the sequence of end time events has been revealed to the author. A key element of the sequence of end-time events was revealed to him by an angel in 1998 during the Feast of Tabernacles in Vail Colorado. Since then the author has written his detailed booklet titled “World in Bible Prophecy.” He did not consult any one or rely on others’ writings to do so. His main commission in the end time is stated in Revelation 10:11, “…"You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." He has written his booklets on prophecy in fulfillment of that commission.

10. Mr. Armstrong used to complain about not being able to get sufficient sleep. He also talked about contact with demons. Perhaps he realized that demons were buffeting him to keep him humble just as the apostle Paul had been buffeted by a messenger of Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7). Peter may also have had a similar experience. That seems to be implied by Jesus’ statement in Luke 22:31: “…Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” The author too battled a demonic messenger of Satan intensely for about 19 years. He still buffets him, but he is no longer physically troubled as he was before. It may simply be the mark of a prophet or leading apostle of God in the case of Mr. Armstrong, Paul and Peter.

11. Moses and Elijah communicated with the Lord. In our time prophets have not had the privilege of communicating with God face to face. But angels have communicated many messages to the author. That perhaps is also unique in our time within God’s Church. He has not seen any of the angels, but they have communicated with him unambiguously. We know the most treacherous time for God’s true Church still lies ahead. Perhaps God will use angels to convey lifesaving messages to His Church during these times. He also has had the privilege of seeing Jesus Christ in a dream in which He was angry with him and corrected him before he could make a drastically wrong decision. Perhaps not unlike the way the Lord was angry with Moses on a couple of occasions.

12. And finally just as God revealed to the world that the author had been called to fulfill the role of a prophet, it was revealed to the world that he had also been given the status of a king. The author does not know exactly how this was revealed to people, but his guess is that they perhaps saw him crowned as a king in a dream, or in a vision.

The status of a King is necessary because of the commission he has been called to fulfill, which as mentioned earlier is stated in Revelation 10:11, “…"You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." If he is being called on to prophesy about kings as an equal, then he must have the status of a king.

God’s Church is called God’s holy nation in 1 Peter 2:9, “9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” The author believes he has been given the status of a king of God’s holy nation so that he can talk to kings of the world’s nations as an equal.

**God’s Commission Concerning Cities of Judah**

Let’s read God’s commission to His end-time prophets concerning the Jews as stated in Isaiah 40:9, "O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, behold your God."

Zion in prophecy is God’s Church. So this commission to His Church in the end time is to show to the Jews who their real God is. Many Jews are mistaken about His identity. They think they are worshipping the God of their fathers. But how can they worship Him properly if they don’t know His true identity?

It is an extremely humiliating experience for one to learn that one has been deceived all one’s life about the true God. But the truth is that almost all of humanity has been deceived in one way or another. All religions that are not based on the Bible are obviously deceived because they do not have the truth of the word of God. Since we have proved that the New Testament is inspired by and backed up by the power of Almighty God, the Jews have only a part of the truth. And that is the reason they do not know the identity of the God of the Old Testament. Mainstream Christianity is also deceived about its religion because it practices its religion based on pagan traditions rather than on the instructions in the Bible. God calls those who understand the truth “a little flock” in Luke 12:32.

But we will prove the identity of the true God from the scriptures that are backed by His authority. All Jews should pay heed to the prophets who were prophesied to come in their scriptures, the Old Testament of the Bible.

Worshipping the true God is extremely important in these dangerous times. Catastrophic events are prophesied to begin soon. That’s why it’s so important to pay heed to what God’s Church preaches about Bible prophecy. The very first event is the Third World War in which one-fourth of human beings will lose their lives. But the true God promises to protect those who worship Him. How can one worship a God that one does not really know?

Not only can a person not understand prophecy from just the Old Testament scriptures without clues from the New Testament scriptures, the picture of what is salvation is also hazy from the Old Testament. The salvation God of Israel is offering not only to the Jews, or only to the Israelites, but to all of humanity cannot be understood without the New Testament.

So next let’s understand the salvation God is offering to all of humanity. It is a great motivator than the ideas of salvation Jewish religious leaders currently have.

**Chapter 10**

**What is Salvation?**

Salvation offered by various religions that believe in a supreme Creator God differ from one another.

Islam believes salvation means going to paradise [also called Gardens] and living forever and enjoying all the pleasures of the flesh: wine, women, food and song. And this salvation is available only to males. No such paradise is available for the female half of humanity. Those who are not granted access to paradise, burn in an everlasting hellfire. Though they feel the torture and agony of the hellfire, they are not totally consumed. So they continue to endure this torture forever.

Hindus believe that human souls are immortal and get their chance for salvation when they come in human form. If they do not qualify for salvation in their human life, their soul at death then transmigrates into the body of another creature. It transmigrates into 8.4 million different creatures – such as animals, birds, insects and the tiniest of creatures – before getting another chance to be born as a human being to get another chance for salvation. This cycle of transmigration continues until the immortal soul qualifies for salvation. Salvation then is being merged into the Great Soul that is God from which it had originally separated.

Salvation in Sikhism is the same as in Hinduism. Hinduism claims that you can take different paths to salvation whereas Sikhism maintains that the path to salvation is meditation, non-attachment and to sing the praises of the Eternal Creator God. The ultimate goal is to end the cycle of birth and death and merge with the Creator God. Being born as a human being is an opportunity to do that. Those who pursue materialism are unable to do so. They must go through the cycle of birth and death as one of the 8.4 million species of creatures before they will get another chance to be reincarnated as a human being and earn salvation.

We will not discuss further the salvation offered by these religions. All believe in the Creator God, but their scriptures have not provided proof that their words are backed by the power of Almighty God. They contain no prophecy. So the salvation offered in these religions is mere philosophies of men, or even worse, they are the diabolical deceptions of Satan the devil.

We will discuss salvation according to Judaism and Christianity as their ideas are supposedly based on the Bible.

***Salvation According to Judaism***

Judaism, except for the Messianic Jews, has only the Old Testament of the Bible and does not believe in Jesus Christ and the New Testament. Hence the salvation that the Jews believe in is different from the salvation the Christians believe in.

Jews believe that they are God’s chosen people according to the Covenant God made with them at the time of Moses after they came out of Egypt. Exodus 20:2 (NIV) states: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Deuteronomy 7:6 (NIV) states: "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

The Covenant was made with the people as well as their descendants in Deuteronomy 29:10-15, " 10 You stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, 11 Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in your camp, from the hewer of your wood unto the drawer of your water: 12 That you should enter into covenant with the Lord your God, and into his oath, which the Lord your God makes with you this day: 13 That he may establish you today for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto you a God, as he has said unto you, and as he has sworn unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15 But with him that stands here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day:”

For the Jews salvation is collective for the nation of Israel rather than personal and individual. The salvation of the individual is connected with the salvation of Israel. Judaism believes based on many prophecies in the prophets that just as ancient Israel was saved out of Egypt, Israel will again be saved from its enemies to freely live in its land, restored to greatness as a nation with a new covenant between God and Israel, restoration of the Temple and sacrifices and its worship system, and all nations living peacefully under the God of Israel.

Jeremiah 31:7-14 (NKJV) describes the restoration of Israel to greatness:

“7 For thus says the Lord: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O Lord, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!' 8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the one who labors with child, together; a great throng shall return there. 9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.

“10 "Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.' 11 For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he. 12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the Lord – for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all. 13 "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. 14 I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord."

In verses 31-34 God promises to make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the House of Judah:

” 31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Jews expect God to restore them collectively to greatness as a nation when the entire world will look to them for spiritual guidance. This is prophesied by the prophets as well.

Micah 4:1-4, “1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken…”

Zechariah 8:20-23, “20 Thus says the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: 21 And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying , Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. 22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. 23 Thus says the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

Moses mentioned this in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 (NKJV):

“1 "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

“6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. 7 Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8 And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today. 9 The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, 10 if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

A belief in the afterlife through a resurrection has developed with the writings of the prophets and in the psalms.

Daniel the prophet mentions the resurrection in Daniel 12:2-3, “2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

Ezekiel 37:21-28 mentions David again being set up as King over Israel and the Temple being established:

“21 And say unto them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince forever.

“26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

The Sadducees in Jesus’ days discussed the resurrection with Him and He corrected their ideas about it. The discussion is mentioned in Matthew 22, Mark 12 and Luke 20.

Matthew 22:23-32, “23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection [whereas the other sect, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection], and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

However the ideas of the Jews [except the Messianic Jews who believe in Jesus Christ] about the afterlife and the resurrection are still hazy because their understanding is based on the writings of the prophets. Jesus’ disciples understanding of the afterlife based on the Old Testament was also hazy until Jesus clarified it for them. That is why Jesus mentioned in Matthew 13:17: “For verily [or truly] I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men [Luke 10:24 adds ‘kings’] have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.”

With only the Old Testament scriptures as a guide, the disciples had only hazy ideas about eternal life and the resurrection, and the reestablishment of Israel as a great nation on earth. But the resurrection and the kingdom of God were indelibly ingrained in the minds of the apostles and Jesus’ other disciples when they saw Jesus Christ after His resurrection and explained the kingdom of God to them. [I hope some Jews don’t stop reading here because they don’t believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It will be proved in this book. Don’t reach a conclusion until you ‘hear’ or read about the whole matter.] They saw and understood what the prophets, righteous men and kings had desired to see but had not seen them.

Thus salvation for the Jews means God forgiving their sins, restoring their national blessings as a great nation with the Temple built in Jerusalem and the world coming to worship God in Jerusalem and seeking spiritual guidance from the Jews.

***Salvation According to Mainstream Christianity***

Christianity has over 2,000 major denominations and then further more than 30,000 groups within them because they have differences of beliefs among themselves. But one thing is common to all of Christianity: the centrality of Jesus Christ to salvation.

Christians believe that “23 …all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). As a result they believe they are all subject to the death penalty because Romans 6:23 says, “23 …the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Salvation for the Christian is forgiveness of his sins so that he can qualify for eternal life. All have sinned. But because Jesus Christ was the Creator and God of the Old Testament who created everything, His life was more valuable than all His creation put together. The God of the Old Testament emptied Himself of His divinity and came to earth as the human being Jesus Christ. He lived a sinless life and did not earn the death penalty. But He died so that He could pay the death penalty on behalf of all His creation. Because He paid the death penalty, all of humanity’s sins can be forgiven and they can now qualify to receive eternal life as a free gift as stated in Romans 6:23. Salvation for the Christian therefore is having his sins forgiven and receiving the free gift of eternal life. But that is where the differences between different Christian denominations begin.

The first major issue dividing Christians in their beliefs is how they can qualify to receive eternal life, and how many will qualify to receive it. Some believe only a few qualify whereas others believe many will qualify. Christians also believe there is some time limit before which people can accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of their sins. After that time limit there will be judgment. Those who qualify to receive eternal life will receive it. Others will not.

Some believe that since Jesus Christ paid the death penalty for all sinners we are no longer required to keep the Law (the Old Testament Law of Moses). Yet they are blinded to the fact that any violation of the Ten Commandments automatically exacts a penalty. The penalty is quick when we violate the last six commandments that have to do with our relationships with fellow man. The penalty takes some time when we violate the first four commandments that deal with our relationship with God.

The second major issue dividing Christians is “what is the form of eternal life the Christian qualifies for?” Some believe the immortal Christian is a physical human being who never dies, whereas others believe that the immortal Christian receives another type of body, a spirit body.

Then the third major issue causing some division among Christians is “What happens when the Christian receives eternal life?” Much of Christianity agrees on this. They believe that those who qualify to receive eternal life go to heaven where God dwells. It is supposed to be a place of unspeakable joy and happiness. There is some disagreement on what we are supposed to do when we get to heaven. Some believe that we will spend eternity on the clouds plucking our harps and enjoying celestial music. Others believe that we will gaze on the face of God for eternity and find unsurpassable joy in doing so. There is not a line in the Bible that says that’s what Christians will do for eternity once they attain salvation.

Thus we see that mainstream Christianity does not get all its ideas on salvation from the Bible. Many have been borrowed from ancient paganism.

As proof that the reward of the saved is heaven Christians cite the following scriptures:

John 14:2 “2 In my Father's house [which is in heaven] are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

2 Corinthians 5:8 “8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord [Who at present is seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father].”

Philippians 1:21-23 (NIV) “21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.”

Philippians 3:20-21 (NKJV) “20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

Revelation 21:4: “4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Revelation 22:1-5 (NKJV):“1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

According to mainstream Christianity this supposedly describes heaven.

As further support, they cite several other experiences of godly men in the Bible.

2 Kings 2:11, “11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

As Jesus hung on the cross, He told one of the criminals hung with Him in Luke 23:43 (NKJV), “43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

According to mainstream Christianity the wicked are punished by being sent to hell and tortured there for eternity. They cite the following scriptures in support for their belief:

Matthew 10:28, “28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Revelation 14:9-11, “9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.”

2 Thessalonians 1:4-9, “4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure: 5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

Revelation 19:20, “20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Luke 16:19-31, “19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

“22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and you are tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

“27 Then he said, I pray to you therefore, father that you would send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham says unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

Mainstream Christianity does believe in some sort of hell, but there is wide disagreement over it. It is impossible to reconcile the idea of a merciful Creator God whose basic character is LOVE for His creation tormenting sinners for eternity in the worst possible way in an ever-burning hell, but their bodies never really being consumed.

**Do These Concepts of Salvation Make Sense**

Do you know that all religions which believe in a higher power believe that salvation is only for their religion? Catholicism believes that salvation is only for Catholics. All others will burn in hell for eternity without being consumed. Protestants believe that Catholics don’t get their beliefs from the Bible. Hence it is not true Christianity. They believe they are the true Christians and salvation is only for them.

The Jews believe that they are a chosen people and they will be the leading nation on earth. They believe salvation is only for them.

Islam believes that salvation is only through Islam, and very few will qualify. All others will burn in hell forever.

Sikhs believe that salvation is only for Sikhs, the pure. Hinduism believes that salvation can be obtained through good deeds by anyone, but by worshipping their gods, who are the true gods. Then there is the German nation, which now openly acknowledges that Satan is their god. They believe that they are a special creation and are the only ones who have the divine spark in them. They are the only ones who can escape the human body that entraps the divine soul in them. Rest of humanity is mere creatures like animals and insects. When they die, that will be the end of their lives. But the Germans will escape this physical body and obtain salvation.

Now consider these ideas of salvation.

Islam offers an idea of paradise where one can enjoy all fleshly pleasures forever. Those in paradise will be able to eat, drink, listen to great music and enjoy sex all day long for eternity. They will have nothing else to do. Can you imagine spending eternity enjoying pleasures of the flesh with nothing else to do? But this reward is offered only to a tiny portion of male half of humanity. Can you imagine God creating humanity male and female and then offering salvation only to one half of His creation? And since only a few will qualify for this salvation, most of the rest of humanity will be tormented forever in an ever-burning hell. Can you imagine a Creator God creating His creation and then subjecting most of it to be tormented forever in pain and suffering? What a sadist God is pictured to be in Islam? Salvation in Islam thus does not make sense.

Now consider salvation offered by Hinduism and Sikhism, which is essentially the same in both religions. The goal or salvation offered to the Hindu and Sikh is to have his immortal soul be free from the cycle of birth and death as 8.4 million different creatures and merge with the great supreme soul from whom he was originally separated. Ask what purpose could God have had in creating creatures, have them go through birth and death through 8.4 million species of creatures till finally they can be born as a human being to obtain the chance to qualify for salvation through good deeds, and or worship of the Creator God and finally merge with Him? Why would God separate something from Himself (the so-called immortal soul) to create living creatures and then have them merge with Him? And why should the immortal soul be put through the horror of living life as 8.4 million creatures before getting the chance to qualify to merge with the supreme God? And it may not qualify for this ‘reward’ even in hundreds of such chances. It would be condemned to go through the same cycle one more time. The god of Hinduism appears to be a sadist as well.

Salvation in Judaism is only for the Jews. But their ideas of salvation are hazy. There are many unanswered questions. Where does the resurrection mentioned by Daniel the prophet in Daniel 12 and by Ezekiel the prophet in Ezekiel 37, which is a vision of the whole house of Israel being resurrected to physical life, fit in in the Jewish scheme of salvation? Such issues are still unresolved in Judaism. Can you imagine all those of the House of Israel who have ever lived being resurrected to live as human beings and then having children and this continuing forever. Eventually humanity will run out of land on earth. Would God design such a plan guaranteed to ultimately lead to destruction? Again ideas of salvation in Judaism are hazy because they only have the Old Testament to rely on.

Jesus Christ’s statement to His disciples explained why their understanding of the afterlife based on the Old Testament was hazy until Jesus clarified it for them. He said in Matthew 13:17: “For verily [or truly] I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men [Luke 10:24 adds ‘kings’] have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.” The Old Testament simply does not give a complete picture about God’s plan for humanity as explained in the pages of the Bible. That’s why Jewish ideas on salvation still remain hazy.

However, from the ideas of salvation as interpreted from the Bible, it seems that mainstream Christianity may not be faring any better than Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism. Does the idea of going to heaven and gazing at God’s face for eternity, or alternately plucking harps on clouds and listening to celestial music for eternity sound appealing to anyone? Eternity is a very very very long time. It is never-ending. John MacArthur in his book *“The Glory of Heaven”* p. 49 said that if this is all they are to do forever, then the prayer of many could be: “Please God, don’t take me to heaven yet…I haven’t even been to Hawaii!”

And then there is hell to contend with. Can you imagine God creating humanity where a large portion will end up in hell tortured for eternity? And the agony will be felt deeply by even those in ‘heaven’ because they are sure to have some relatives, possibly their own children or spouse or parents, consigned to hell for eternity. Thus the idea of going to heaven as salvation or being consigned to hell does not make sense. It is not appealing to most.

***Salvation According to the Church of God***

The problem with mainstream Christianity’s idea of going to heaven or hell at the end of one’s life is that it is based on an incorrect interpretation of the various passages in the Bible. We will not go into a detailed proof of this in this book because proof has been provided in detail in the United Church of God booklet *“Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?”*  It is available free of charge to read download or order a printed copy at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org. All literature provided by God’s Church is free of charge, without cost or obligation.

Essentially confusion arises because the Bible mentions 3 heavens and 3 places called hell. The 3 heavens are, 1) The earth’s atmosphere, 2) Where celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, stars and galaxies are located, and 3) Where God’s throne is located. In interpreting some of the passages mainstream Christian denominations confuse one with the other.

Similarly in the Bible 3 kinds of words are translated as hell, 1) The grave (translated from the Hebrew word *sheol* or the Greek word *hades*), 2) place of restraint or imprisonment for the angels on earth (translated from the Greek word *tartaros,* mentioned only once in the Bible), and 3) Lake of Fire (translated from the Greek word *gahenna*, referring to the Valley of Hinnom in Israel).

The truth according to the Bible as proved in the booklet is that humans do not go to heaven on death. Jesus’ plain statement in John 3:13 is, “13 And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” If no man has ascended to heaven, then humans do not go to heaven at death. Thus heaven cannot be the reward received by any who have died.

Many believe that they will go to heaven at death because Matthew mentions the Kingdom of Heaven’ many times in his gospel. For example, Matthew 5:3 states, “3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” He is the only writer who uses the term ‘kingdom of heaven.’ For the same situation Luke and other writers use the term ‘Kingdom of God.’ Luke 6:20 states, “Blessed be you poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” When using the term ‘kingdom of heaven’ Matthew does not refer to God’s kingdom being in heaven. It is not in heaven, but of heaven because at present the King [Jesus Christ] resides in Heaven.

These and many other passages interpreted by mainstream Christianity to support its belief that the reward of the saved is going to heaven are explained in detail in the booklet.

The booklet also thoroughly explains that the punishment of the incorrigibly wicked is not to burn in hell (*gahenna* or Lake of Fire) and be tortured forever. A merciful Creator God would not create beings with a plan of salvation that could potentially torture them forever. But the Bible does mention a real hell fire or Lake of Fire into which the wicked will be cast who do not repent of their sins and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment of the death penalty on their behalf. These wicked will burn up and be consumed in the fire. Their death is permanent and will last forever. Such people are not tormented forever in the Lake of Fire. Their lives are just extinguished which lasts forever.

Salvation thus according to the Bible as understood by the Church of God is NOT going to heaven as a reward. Nor is the punishment being tortured forever in a burning hell. The punishment definitely is burning in a fire and the body and soul being consumed together (Matthew 10:28, “28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*gehenna]*). Once the body and soul are consumed and turned into ashes, there is no more torment.

In contrast to the ideas of mainstream Christianity about Christians going to heaven or hell, God’s Church believes in the return of Jesus Christ to earth very soon to set up the Kingdom of God. At His return, the saints that God has called through the first 6,000 years of man’s history will be resurrected to eternal life as God’s literal sons and daughters with a body like that of Jesus Christ Himself, and will reign with Him on earth.

This is stated in 1 John 3:1-2, “1 Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him [meaning have a spirit body like that of Jesus Christ]; for we shall see him as he is.”

1 Corinthians 15:47, 49 say the same thing, “47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Our reward is **not** going to heaven with Jesus Christ but reigning on earth with Him. This is stated in Revelation 5:10, “10 And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

Revelation 20:4-6, “4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death [that in the *gahenna* fire] has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

***Thus salvation according to the Church of God is for humans to be changed or born as God’s literal immortal sons and daughters through a resurrection from the dead and enter the Kingdom of God as co-rulers with Jesus Christ on earth first and then in the universe for eternity (Deuteronomy 4:19).***

***God’s Plan of Salvation for All Mankind***

Now that we have explained from the pages of the Bible what salvation is, does the Bible explain if only a few qualify for salvation, or only Jews or only Jews and Israelites qualify for salvation, or almost all of humanity will qualify for salvation?

The Bible commands all Jews, Christians and all of humanity to keep the Sabbath holy and to keep God’s seven annual holy days mentioned in Leviticus 23. The so called Christian holidays such as Christmas, Easter [mentioned once in the KJV which is a mistranslation for the word for Passover], Valentine’s Day, Halloween, Lent etc. are not even mentioned in the Bible. So these are not commanded festivals but are pagan holidays foisted on Christianity by the false Roman Church. The only commanded festivals are those mentioned in Leviticus 23. Those are the only holy days Jesus Christ and the apostles kept. Christmas, Easter etc as Christian festivals did not exist in their time.

Is there any significance to the Sabbath and the seven holy days God commands all people to keep? Nothing God commands is ever without significance. So there has to be deep significance to the only holy days God has commanded Israel and all of Christianity to keep. And there is. But that significance cannot be understood from the Old Testament alone. It cannot be understood without the New Testament. That’s why Jews do not understand the true significance of the holy days they keep year after year.

The truth is that the Sabbath and these seven annual holy days picture God’s plan of salvation for mankind. This plan of salvation is explained in great detail in the United Church of God (UCG) booklet titled “*God’s Holy Day Plan: Promise of Hope for all Mankind*”, available free of charge at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org. Since the subject will require a great deal of space, the details will not be provided here and the reader can obtain them from the UCG booklet. But brief outline is given below.

First of all the weekly Sabbath pictures the duration of God’s Plan for salvation of mankind. Peter the apostle said in 2 Peter 3:8, “8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Without this scripture the duration of God’s plan could not be understood as pictured by the seven day week.

Six days of work picture the 6,000 years God has allotted mankind to rule itself according to the choice Adam and Eve made. But then God will provide a Sabbath rest for mankind from the pain and suffering for the next 1,000 years of His Kingdom as pictured by the seventh day Sabbath. Proof that the duration of God’s kingdom will be 1,000 years is provided by Revelation 20:4, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Then the first holy day is the Passover which pictures the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God for the sins of mankind.

The second festival is the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread which pictures the putting away leaven [which symbolizes sin] out of our lives. Sin is defined as transgression (violation) of God’s Law (1 John 3:4). This means humanity is required to keep the Law of Moses, except the sacrificial and ceremonial laws. Later we will explain why keeping the sacrificial and ceremonial part of the Law is no longer necessary.

The third holy day is called the Feast of firstfruits which pictures God calling into His Church only a limited few (saints) called the firstfruits to God during mankind’s first 6,000 years of history. This means that God is not offering most humans their one and only chance for salvation during the first 6,000 years. They will get their chance to qualify to receive eternal life later. Those among the firstfruits who qualify to receive eternal life by overcoming sin, never denying Jesus’ name and doing God’s work of preaching the good news of the remission of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the establishment of God’s kingdom will receive eternal life through the first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ.

The fourth holy day is the Feast of Trumpets which pictures the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the resurrection of the saints to eternal life as immortal sons of God. The fifth holy day is the Day of Atonement which pictures the putting away of Satan and the demons as rulers on earth and reconciliation of God to man.

The sixth festival is the Feast of Tabernacles which pictures the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ with the resurrected saints on earth as kings and priests. In God’s Kingdom God will pour out His holy spirit on all humans who will receive their chance to qualify for eternal life.

The seventh festival is called the Last Great Day and pictures the resurrection of all of humanity to physical life (this is the second resurrection) to receive its true one chance to qualify to receive salvation, which is to be resurrected as God’s immortal sons and daughters and rule in God’s Kingdom. This means that all those who died without knowing the true God will be resurrected and taught God’s way of life and can qualify to receive eternal life. Most of humanity will qualify and receive eternal life.

Although God will in His great mercy extend the opportunity for salvation to every human being born, what happens to those who don’t qualify to receive eternal life because they refuse to repent of their sins and lifestyles that are contrary to God’s way of life? All of them will be resurrected to physical life. This is the resurrection “to shame and everlasting contempt” spoken of in Daniel 12:2. This is the third resurrection mentioned in the Bible.

The Bible reveals that, rather than be tortured forever in an ever-burning hell, their lives will simply be permanently extinguished. They will cease to exist, and will be as though they had never been. Even their memory will be forgotten (Revelation 20:15; 21:8).

These incorrigibly wicked, along with Satan and the demons who led the final rebellion of humanity will all simply be consumed as the earth is set on fire to cleanse it. The fire will keep burning to finally consume the earth itself (2 Peter 3:7, 10-12). They shall be ashes under the soles of the feet of the righteous (Malachi 4:3).

After Jesus Christ and the saints (the firstfruits) have brought salvation to all of humanity on earth, then the entire universe is available to rule for all of humanity together now glorified as sons of God. In fact God has already allotted the stars and planets to various nations to rule after they become sons of God. Moses prophesied this in Deuteronomy 4:19, “19 And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord your God has divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”

When God’s plan of salvation for all of humanity is complete, humanity will get to see God the Father whom no human has ever seen, because He will live with mankind, who will then have become His literal immortal sons and daughters just as Jesus Christ is His Son now. After all God is reproducing Himself to have an everlasting relationship with His children. This is prophesied in Revelation 7:17, “15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.”

Revelation 21:1-5, “1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

As we have seen from the pages of the Bible, God has a dynamic plan for humanity. Humans will be able to see and meet the supreme God personally, look at Him as long as they want. He also has a dynamic future planned for them which includes ruling the universe with Him. That means no scarcity of anything. They will be given spirit bodies that will not be subject to the limitations of time and space. And they will have gained victory over death. There are other exciting things God has planned for us which we don’t yet know (1 Corinthians 2:9, “9 But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him”).

To learn more about what is salvation according to God’s Church, obtain a free copy of the UCG booklet titled “*What is Your Destiny*?” The way to attain salvation is explained in the United Church of God booklet titled “*The Road to Eternal Life*” available free of charge and without any obligation at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org.

Now we see why Jews still have hazy ideas about salvation based only on the Old Testament scriptures. The Old Testament scriptures are incomplete in explaining prophecy, salvation, the resurrection and many other concepts. These concepts cannot be understood without the New Testament. Neither can these concepts be understood only from the New Testament scriptures. Certain details for many concepts are available only in the Old Testament scriptures. That’s why mainstream Christianity’s ideas about salvation are equally hazy. Therefore one must use the complete Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to form one’s beliefs.

Now from the complete Bible let’s look at the sequence of prophesied end-time catastrophes. Perhaps Jews can then realize the urgency in getting to know who their true God is.

**Chapter 11**

**Sequence of End Time Events**

In the end times, descendants of Jacob are prophesied to go through the greatest time of trouble ever in their history. This time of trouble was prophesied by Daniel 12:1 (NKJV): "At that time Michael [the archangel] shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people [Israel and Judah]; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book."

Jeremiah also prophesied about the same time of trouble for Jacob in Jeremiah 30:6-7 (NKJV): "Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

Hosea 5:5 mentions that Israel [meaning America and British Commonwealth nations] and Judah [Jews in the state of Israel] will fall together in the end time (King James Version): "And the pride of Israel does testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them."

This prophecy is describing the soon coming military defeat of the USA, British Commonwealth nations and the state of Israel in a war at the hands of a German led alliance in Europe, which will be allied with the Islamic and Catholic worlds. This will result in national slavery for these nations, and the period of great tribulation for a 'time, times and half-a-time' (A time in prophecy equals one year of 360 days, so this period equals three-and-a-half years in prophecy, or 1,260 days) mentioned in Daniel 12:7.

The German alliance with the Islamic nations is mentioned in Psalm 83:1-8, “1 Keep not silence, O God: hold not your peace, and be not still, O God. 2 For, lo, your enemies make a tumult: and they that hate you have lifted up the head. 3 They have taken crafty counsel against your people, and consulted against your hidden ones. 4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. 5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against you: 6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; 8 Assur [whose modern descendants are the Germans] also is joined with them: they have helped the children of Lot.”

When the ancient kingdom of Judah fell at the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Jeremiah warned the rulers and the people about the soon coming military defeat and captivity. God also wants to warn the USA, British Commonwealth nations of Britain, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand and Israel about the soon coming military defeat. But God always provides a way of escape for those who repent of their sins and turn to Him. That is why the message of warning is going out to the USA and British Commonwealth nations. That is why the message of warning needs to go out to Judah (the Jews worldwide) as well. But people can repent of their sins only if they know the true God. That is why the true God needs to be revealed to Judah. And that is the reason God’s Church is working to fulfill the prophecy in Isaiah 40:9.

Besides the time of Jacob’s greatest trouble there are many other end-time prophecies concerning many nations in the world in the Jewish scriptures. It is impossible to put all these prophecies in proper time sequence from the information given in the Jewish scriptures. That is why no one among those following Judaism have been able to put all these prophecies in proper time sequence. Without knowing precisely when Jacob's time of unprecedented trouble will come, Jewish people will lightly treat the warnings to them.

But all these prophecies have now been understood with the proper time sequence of their fulfillment. This understanding could not have been obtained from the Jewish scriptures alone. These prophecies could not have been understood without the gospels, writings of Paul the apostle, but specially the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation actually puts all end-time prophecies in proper time sequence. The sequence is revealed in the form of messages of the seven seals.

The author has written a detailed booklet titled “*World in Bible Prophecy*” describing the sequence of end-time events with detailed references which explain many Old and New Testament prophecies. The booklet is available free of charge to read or download at his web site www.ChurchofGodMessage.com. That booklet should be read to get a complete picture of prophecies that are soon to be fulfilled. Here is the sequence in outline form:

End of the end time prophecies have been put in proper chronological sequence for us in the Book of Revelation in the Bible. Prophetically, today we live in the time called the time of “delay no longer” as stated in Revelation 11: 6. Thus there is no longer any delay in fulfillment of end of the end time prophecies.

1. PROPHECY ALREADY DRAMATICALLY FULFILLED

After the world entered the period of no longer any delay the next event to follow in sequence was recorded in Revelation 10:11(NKJV): "And he said to me, "you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues [meaning in many languages], and kings." This event has already been fulfilled by the author’s weekly messages at 9.00 a.m. every Saturday USA Eastern Standard Time being broadcast by God’s angels to every human being in his or her own language. One has to simply tune one’s mind to hear the messages and the person will hear them every week in his or her own language. The remaining prophecies are described in time sequence in the messages contained in the seven seals of the Book of Revelation, beginning in Revelation 6:1.

Five alliances that will play important roles in world events include: a) German led European Alliance of ten rulers or nations (called the ten horns), known as the Beast or King of the North; b) The American, British and Jewish Alliance, known as the House of Israel and House of Judah; c) The Roman Catholic Church worldwide, with the leader known as the False Prophet, the Little Horn, or another Beast; d) Islamic Alliance with much of Africa, with its leader known as the King of the South; and e) The Eastern Alliance known as the Kings of the East.

2. THE GREAT THIRD WORLD WAR AHEAD – FIRST 4 SEALS

The next prophesied end-time event that can now begin at any time will be the Great Third World War that will make the Second World War look like a battle in comparison. This event is described by messages contained in four symbolic seals (Revelation 6:1-8). The first seal with its rider on a white horse symbolizes religious deception; the second seal with its rider on a red horse, the great world war itself, which will be followed by wide spread famines as a result of the war, as symbolized by the rider on a black horse of the third seal. The famines are usually followed by disease epidemics soon after as symbolized by the rider on a pale horse of the fourth seal.

As a result of these four conditions and wild animal attacks on human beings, one-fourth of mankind will be destroyed. That means more than 1.75 billion people are going to die in this global war and its aftermath.

3. THE MILITARY DEFEAT OF THE USA/BRITAIN/ISRAEL ALLIANCE

The next prophesied event will be the military defeat of the alliance between the USA, Britain and the modern Jewish state of Israel as pictured by the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9. The military power that will defeat them will be an alliance of two powers: a Europe-centered alliance led by a German dictator called the Beast or the King of the North in prophecy. This alliance will have the support of ten kings or rulers in Europe. Allied with the beast will be the Islamic world (Psalm 83). The Islamic world may be led by a religious-military dictator at this stage called the King of the South, but it is not necessary that an Islamic leader be in place for the prophecy to be fulfilled. The leader called the King of the South could emerge later. But allied with the Beast would be many other nations, that have been awed by the military might of the beast, and have been bewitched by the incredible miracles the pope will work to deceive the world.

However, between the Third World War and the defeat of the American, British and Jewish alliance, certain prophesied events have to be fulfilled. These events could take place in a matter of months when famine conditions and disease epidemics prevail in the world as aftermath of the Third World War. These events include:

a) The Jews in Israel will have set up an altar in Jerusalem and instituted animal sacrifices again.

b) The pope of the Roman Church will start working miracles at some stage and the Roman Catholic world would be energized and bewitched and would be more willing to obey him.

c) The pope's plans will be to make a great image or idol to honor the Beast, or as a symbol of the “Holy Roman Empire” perhaps just like Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s image (Daniel 2). He plans to set it up in Jerusalem and to make Jerusalem his headquarters. This is described in Revelation 13:12-14: "And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him [This beast is the "Holy Roman Empire"], and causes the earth and which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast…”

d) The pope will demand that the idol he has set up be worshipped, and that the world worship on Sunday and not on the Sabbath day. This is a demand to set the stage for persecution of God’s true Church that does not worship idols and worships on the Sabbath day and not on Sunday, and also to enforce the Roman Church’s religion on the world.

e) An alliance of Islamic nations, mainly Arabs and Turks, will also be forming. At this point a military dictator might have emerged in the Islamic world but not necessarily. This Islamic dictator in prophecy is called the 'King of the South.' The nations in this Islamic alliance are mentioned in Psalm 83:1-8. These nations will be allied with Assyria, or modern Germany. Occupation of Jerusalem along with the Roman Church will be one of their goals because of the Islamic 'holy places.

Remember don’t expect all this to be taking place right now though the groundwork is being laid. It will take place after the Third World War and its aftermath, and can take place in a matter of months to administer the deathblow to the American, British, Jewish alliance, not the entire people.

f) To force the Jews in Jerusalem to comply with the pope's demands to let him set up the image in Jerusalem, the forces of the European military dictator along with his Muslim and Catholic alliance partners will most likely lay an economic siege to the state of Israel, America and British Commonwealth nations. This economic siege may last for 390 plus 40 days as indicated in Ezekiel 4:1-17. This will cause further famine conditions in these countries, after the world war will also have taken its toll. The Jews may then negotiate with the pope, the beast and the Islamic leader to allow the pope to set up the idol in Jerusalem, and allow the Islamic leader to set up his religious regional headquarters in Jerusalem. But the plans of the Beast, the pope and their alliance partners are to launch a final attack on the USA/Britain/Israel alliance, defeat them militarily and make them captive slaves.

g) At this time, ten rulers in Europe make a decision to give all their power and authority to the Beast. This is mentioned in Revelation 17:12-13: "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. They are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast." These may not actually be ten existing rulers, but may be appointed as rulers by the European Community over ten regions in Europe carved out of member nations.

These rulers could even be appointed after the military victory over the American, British and Jewish alliance. They give their total allegiance to the beast and put all their power at his disposal.

h) The beast and his alliance partners are now ready to war with the American, British and Israeli Alliance.

Events now begin to move at lightning speed. To force the Jews to stop their sacrifices and vacate their altar to allow the Roman Church to set up its idol or image and offer its own sacrifices, Jerusalem or Israel is now surrounded by the joint European and Islamic armies as prophesied in Luke 21:20. Jews in Israel are forced to thus give in. The Roman Church then forcibly stops the Jewish sacrifices and the pope then sets up the image to the beast in Jerusalem and probably offers a sacrifice to it. Once he has done that, the beast and his alliance partners then immediately begin their attack on the USA/Britain/Israel Alliance with a pre-emptive nuclear strike.

i) By this time, in 45 days, most of God's true Church will have gathered in Jerusalem and will in 30 days flee to the place of safety after the image was set up by the pope. The battle to administer the deathblow to the American, British and Jewish alliance is over in 30 days (Hosea 5:7) and the USA/Britain/Israel will be defeated militarily, their populations taken captive as slaves and sold around the world. The Jews will be sold mainly to the Greeks.

In this war, one third of the population of the USA and Britain will be destroyed in a pre-emptive nuclear strike, one third will be killed in the war that follows, and one third will be taken captive and sold as slaves around the world (Ezekiel 5:1-2). Similarly, two-thirds of the population of the state of Israel will also be destroyed in the siege and famine conditions leading to the war, and the war itself (Ezekiel 5:12 and Zechariah 13:8-9). The remaining one-third will be removed from the state of Israel and sold to the Greeks as slaves (Joel 3:6).

4. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

After the military defeat of the US/Britain/Israel alliance, the three and a half year long Great Tribulation begins as pictured by the 5th seal (Revelation 6:9-11). It is a time of unprecedented trouble for the American, British and Israeli slaves and the remnant of God’s Church that was not taken to the place of safety. They are hated by all nations with deep hatred born of envy and satanic influence (Matthew 24:9). The goal of the nations is to obliterate their name from the face of the earth by murdering all of them (Psalm 83). The nations that hold them captive treat them extremely harshly. As a result of this harsh treatment, many of the slaves will die. Only one-tenth of the population of these nations will survive the Great Tribulation, and that too because Jesus Christ will return to earth and rescue them.

Just before the war that defeats the American, British and Jewish alliance, and perhaps soon after the pope starts working miracles, two of God's prophets (or witnesses) will begin warning the world to repent of its sins, and not to mistreat their captives, or they are going to suffer the wrath of God. Some will not heed, but the two witnesses will bring God's plagues on them (Revelation 11:3-12). That will act as a restraining force to some extent on the world mistreating their American, British and Jewish slaves.

The beast in the meantime, heavily influenced by Satan has had his mind changed (Habakkuk 1:11, Daniel 8:23-24). He aids the Islamic alliance and others to war with the other nations of Israel, which include France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavian and Benelux countries. As a result of these wars and further events of the Great Tribulation and the 'Day of the Lord' (In Bible prophecy a prophetic day equals a year) only one-tenth of the population of these nations will likely come out alive through the Great Tribulation.

5. BREAK-UP OF THE BEAST'S ALLIANCE WITH THE ISLAMIC ALLIANCE AND NATIONS OF THE EAST

After two years of the defeat of the U.S./Britain/Israel alliance, trouble begins to brew in the Beast's alliance with the Islamic alliance and other nations in the East that were allied with him in the cause to defeat the American, British and Jewish alliance. Perhaps because of the high-handedness of the Beast (most likely a German) and the pope, the leader of the Islamic Alliance (by this time a leader would be in place, known in prophecy as the King of the South) will begin to "push at" the Beast or King of the North, and commits some war-like acts. This 'pushing at' takes place over a six month period. But this break-up provides some relief to the slaves in the Islamic and other nations (Hosea 6:1-2).

Nations in the East will have been aware of the break-up taking place between the King of the North (the Beast) and the King of the South (leader of the Islamic alliance). They will already have been engaged in diplomatic activity well before that, and will have formed an alliance. This alliance will most likely be led by Russia. Even a few months before the break-up between the Kings of the North and the South, the eastern nations will have begun making military preparations to serve their own economic, political and military interests.

6: GREAT EARTHQUAKE AND METEOR SHOWERS – 6TH SEAL

Close to the end of the two and a half years of the Great Tribulation a great worldwide earthquake and frightening meteor showers signal the coming start of the terrible events of the “Day of the Lord,” the one year of God’s wrath on the nations as pictured by the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-17).

7. SEALING OF THE 144,000 AND PROTECTION FOR MILLIONS

Near the end of two and a half years of the Great Tribulation, when the “Day of the Lord” is about to begin, God sends angels to seal 144,000 of the physical tribes of Israel (The American, the British, Jews worldwide –including those held captives - Switzerland, Ireland, the Benelux countries and Scandinavian countries minus the Danes) who were engaged in warning the world that the religion of the Beast and the False Prophet is a false religion of the devil and warning the world not to take part in it by worshipping the image or idol of the beast or they will be destroyed (Revelation 7:1-8). These 144,000 will later be changed to immortal beings (which will include about 40,000 of the slaves) in the first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. Besides these, millions who did not give in to the false religion, did not worship the image of the beast or take his mark will be guaranteed protection during the events of the next year, known as the Day of the Lord (Revelation 7:9-17). God will guarantee that they come out alive through the Great Tribulation and serve in His temple when Jesus Christ sets up God’s kingdom.

8. THE 'DAY OF THE LORD' BEGINS WITH THE ATTACK OF THE KING OF THE NORTH ON THE KING OF THE SOUTH

FIRST 4 TRUMPETS OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (Revelation 8:1-12)

The 'Day of the Lord' is the last one year of the three-and-a-half year long Great Tribulation. It is the time of God's wrath and punishment on non-Israelite nations for their mistreatment of their Israelite captives and for their own sins, and Israelites who worshipped the image of the Beast and gave in to the false prophet’s religion. They will not have heeded the warning of the two witnesses of God.

The first event in the 'Day of the Lord' is the attack of the King of the North on the leader of the Islamic Alliance, or the King of the South for his "pushing at" him through perhaps some war-like acts such as using the oil weapon (Revelation 8:1-12). In this war, the King of the South is defeated, and the King of the North loots the North African countries in the Islamic alliance (Daniel 11:40-45). Those in the east of the holy land escape the same treatment. A great deal of the population of the Islamic countries is destroyed in this war.

At the end of this war, the Beast sets up his regional headquarters in the holy land, where the pope had already set up his headquarters more than two and a half years earlier.

9. ATTACK OF THE BEAST ON THE EASTERN ALLIANCE COUNTRIES

FIFTH TRUMPET OF THE 7TH SEAL (Revelation 9:1-11)

When the Beast attacks the Islamic countries, the countries in the eastern alliance see an opportunity. They had already been making military preparations. When they see the beast engaged in war with Islamic countries, they begin preparing for war with the beast. The news of these plans reach the Beast and he goes in great fury to destroy them (Daniel 11:44).

The beast makes a pre-emptive strike on the nations of the east with biological weapons. But the beast is not able to control the effect of the biological weapons, and the entire world is affected by the germs. Quite likely the Eastern Alliance also has matching biological weapons and uses them. The pain and suffering will be so horrible that people will seek death, but will not find it. The effect of these biological weapons lasts 5 months (Revelation 9:1-11). But God will provide supernatural protection only to the 144,000 who were sealed by Him and tens of millions of others because of their repentance during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 9:4).

10. COUNTERATTACK OF THE EASTERN ALLIANCE COUNTRIES ON THE BEAST

6TH TRUMPET OF THE 7TH SEAL

At the end of the five months, the Eastern Alliance countries counterattack the Beast and his global allies with a 200 million man army. In this war, one-third of the world's population is destroyed (Revelation 9:13-18). This war is going to result in more than 1.6 billion dead in the war itself, and perhaps many more in its aftermath. The Beast's Europe-centered alliance is going to suffer terribly in this war. Their own nations are going to be devastated with Germany suffering the most. But the Germans are not completely destroyed yet as a large part of their army will be in Jerusalem and around it with the German dictator himself being there.

11. RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST AND DEMAND FOR SUBMISSION TO HIS RULE AND RELEASE OF ISRAELITE SLAVES

7TH TRUMPET AND ITS FIRST FIVE BOWLS OR PLAGUES

After the war between the Beast and the Eastern Alliance, matters have come to a stage where the Beast and the Eastern Alliance are contemplating using all weapons at their disposal against one another. If this was allowed to happen, all living things could be destroyed from the earth. But precisely at this time Jesus Christ returns to earth with a great trumpet blast and like lightening flashing from the east to the west to put an end to man’s madness under Satan’s influence. The whole world will see this event (Revelation 11:13-18; Matthew 24:26-27).

At the return of Jesus Christ, all the saints of God who remained faithful to the end of their lives during the 6,000 years of man’s history will be resurrected to eternal life and will accompany Jesus Christ. This is the first resurrection.

Jesus Christ first preaches the gospel of the Kingdom of God through three mighty angels. One angel announces the good news of God’s Kingdom on earth. The second angel announces the judgment of the great whore, the Roman Catholic Church, and the third angel announces God’s judgment on those who receive the mark of the Beast (Revelation 14:6-11). Jesus Christ also demands that the nations release their Israelite slaves. The nations do not repent, and do not want to release their Israelite slaves. As a result Jesus Christ pours out His plagues on the nations. These 5 plagues include a loathsome, foul smelling sore upon those who had the mark of the beast; the Mediterranean Sea and then rivers and springs of water around the world turned to blood; mankind scorched with great heat; and the throne of the Beast and his kingdom become full of darkness (Revelation 16:1-11).

These plagues make the nations hopping mad, and Satan and his demons also arouse them to war with Jesus Christ (Revelation 16:13-14).

12. NATIONS ATTACK JESUS CHRIST WITH A MASSIVE ARMY GATHERED AT ARMAGEDDON

6TH AND 7TH BOWLS OR PLAGUES OF THE 7TH TRUMPET

Because of what they suffered from the plagues that Jesus Christ poured on them, the nations gather at Armageddon (or 'Hill of Megiddo') to attack Jesus Christ. A massive army perhaps more than a hundred million strong is gathered from all around the world. This will be the largest concentration of armies in one battlefield in the history of man (Revelation 16:12, 16). Then they go to Jerusalem for the attack, where Jesus' headquarters are located. But the nations are defeated and their armies totally annihilated. This is the 6th bowl or plague, described in Revelation 16:12-16.

The annihilation of the world's armies is described in Zechariah 14:12: "And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: 'Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.'"

The result of this war is that the blood flows out from the soldiers in the army, making a huge river of coagulated blood, bodies and weapons of soldiers that is about four feet deep and 184 miles long (Revelation 14:19-20).

Not only are the armies of the nations that came to Jerusalem destroyed, Jesus Christ further pours out His wrath on the nations for having sent their armies to attack Him. There is a massive, global earthquake the like of which the world has never before experienced in its history. All the cities and mountains are leveled, ocean floor rises so that there are no more islands left. There is a massive loss of human life. In addition, there is a great hail, and huge hailstones each weighing 100 pounds fall on human beings and kill them. This is described as the 7th bowl or plague of God’s wrath poured out on the nations (Revelation 16:17-21). The end result of all this is that very few human beings are left alive (Isaiah 24:6). The population of the earth left alive as a result of the earthquake and the hail perhaps could be less than 100 million.

But there is a great positive outcome from the earthquake. More land becomes available for cultivation. The deserts disappear; mountains and plateaus are leveled and become fertile land. Even the land under the permafrost becomes available. More fresh water becomes available all over the world, and because the floor of the oceans rises in many places to form land, the mineral wealth of the oceans becomes available for man's use.

With the greatest ever earthquake and the plague of great hail, the 1,260 days of the Great Tribulation will end.

The 1,260 day count started after the 30 days of the war that defeated the American, British and Jewish alliance and ends when the plague of great hail from heaven is poured out.

13. RESCUE OF THE SLAVES AND THE MUCH LARGER SECOND EXODUS

After the nations are subdued, Jesus Christ’s first task will be to rescue the American, British and Jewish slaves.

His promise is that this task will be accomplished in 45 days. That is the meaning of the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days mentioned in Daniel 12:7, 11-12. These days mean 30 days of the war, 1260 days of the Great Tribulation and 45 days to get to all the slaves and rescue them.

All the surviving slaves will be brought to Jerusalem and the Land of Israel (Isaiah 11:11-12, 15-16; 43:5-6; 49:22-23). This Exodus will be much greater than the first Exodus of ancient Israel from Egypt (Jeremiah 23:7-8).

14. JESUS CHRIST BRINGS THE CULPRITS TO JUSTICE

Jesus Christ will then bring the culprits to justice who led by Satan brought all these catastrophes on earth. When the ten rulers who supported the Beast and gave him their power realize that the wondrous miracle working pope was a false prophet and preacher of lies, they turn on the Roman Church - described as the 'great whore' in Bible prophecy. They burn the entire leadership and the clergy alive that they can lay their hands on (as this clergy would have caused some members of God’s Church and others who resisted their false religion to be burnt alive). Not one will be left alive (Revelation 17:16-18).

Jesus Christ's next task is to bring the perpetrators of this worldwide carnage to justice. The Beast and the false prophet - the pope of the Roman Catholic Church - are captured alive and thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20).

Next is the turn of the Edomites (some of whose descendants live in Turkey, parts of Jordan, perhaps others in the Middle East and Central Asia, and Palestinians), the Europeans and all others who occupied Israel. For their part in enslaving the Israelites (the Americans, British and the Jews of Israel) and mistreating them and killing many, and for warring with the other nations of Israel (France, Switzerland, Ireland, the Scandinavian and Benelux countries) after the defeat of the USA/Britain/Israel alliance, they are to be utterly destroyed. Not one Edomite, or any of the occupiers of the holy land will be left alive. This destruction will come at the hands of the former American, British and Jewish slaves now rescued (modern descendants of Joseph and Judah of the Bible) (Obadiah 1:15-16, 18).

Germans, the human instigators of all this carnage too will be brought to justice by Jesus Christ in His own way.

The end result of their punishment will be that so few Germans will be left alive on the earth that a little child will be able to write their number (Isaiah 10:17-19). The number of Germans who survive will perhaps be in the teens, or a few dozen, living in a few villages. But after centuries they will eventually grow into a nation during the millennium (or 1000 - year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth) (Isaiah 19:23-25).

15. GOD’S KINGDOM ESTABLISHED AND MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

After all the nations are subdued and there is no more opposition from human rulers to the rule of Jesus Christ, God’s kingdom is established on earth. The establishment of God’s Kingdom is celebrated with a great feast and marriage of the Lamb. This is when Jesus Christ symbolically marries His Church, the saints collectively, who have been resurrected to eternal life. The marriage of Jesus Christ is mentioned in Revelation 19:6-9.

16. SATAN BOUND AND IMPRISONED

Finally, Satan, the original instigator of all evil on the earth is bound and imprisoned in solitary confinement in the abyss for the 1000 years of God's Kingdom on earth (Revelation 20:1-3). The demons are also imprisoned in the ruins of Rome, Italy (Revelation 18:2, 10). No human being will live there.

After the removal of Satan and his demons from rulership of the earth, Jesus Christ will rule as King of kings [kings refers to the resurrected saints of God] and Lord of lords [the lords also refers to the saints] in God’s Kingdom (Revelation 11:15). The saints of God who were resurrected to eternal life at Jesus Christ's return to earth will also reign with Christ as kings and priests (Revelation 5:10) for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). The world will at last begin to live in peace, great abundance and prosperity.

17. ONE MORE UGLY WAR

Initially not all of humanity will submit to the rule of Jesus Christ and the saints. After Jesus Christ has settled the American, British and Jewish slaves and the other tribes of Israel in the holy land and will have been ruling over the nations for anywhere between a decade or so up but more likely about two generations (about 50 years), the Israelites will start becoming prosperous due to God’s blessing. But their prosperity and living in unwalled, unprotected villages will give perverse thoughts to the survivors of the Russians and Chinese and their Persian, Indian and South East Asian allies.

These nations will hatch a nefarious scheme to take over and loot Israelites in the holy land. They will attack with a huge army. But Israelites will not need to fight. Jesus Christ will destroy this army. The nations in the army will begin fighting each other, and Jesus Christ will bring on them rain, hail, fire and brimstone (Ezekiel 38:22).

Ultimately only one sixth of the army will be left alive (Ezekiel 39:2) to carry the tale of its defeat back to the nations and make their rulers aware that Jesus Christ who rules in Jerusalem is indeed the Almighty, the true Son of God. Ezekiel the prophet tells the whole story in chapters 38 and 39 of his book.

18. ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO NATIONS OF THE WORLD

After this incident, the nations will finally acknowledge that the God of Israel is the true Creator God and will finally be willing to listen to Him. Perhaps at this time, in the Jubilee Year (that is the 50th year) after God’s Kingdom will have been established, a division of countries for all the surviving nations will be made. Remember, the greatest ever earthquake in the history of mankind will have altered the surface of the earth. Mountains and islands will have disappeared. Much more land will have become available for man’s use. The earth’s population would have recovered somewhat.

Just as Noah divided the land between nations soon after the Flood and sent out colonies, perhaps Noah will again be charged with the task of informing all peoples about division of the earth into countries for all nations, and they will be asked to move to their respective allotted lands. Probably very little actual movement will be required as most peoples will already be in theeir allotted lands. This time there will be no rebellion against God’s plan as there was in Noah’s day after the Flood. All peoples will go to their respective allotted countries.

19. HOW GOD WILL SOLVE HUMANITY’S PROBLEMS

To solve humanity’s problems, God will

a) Set up one world government (Isaiah 9:6-7, Micah 4:1-3) with no more war (Micah 4:1-3);

b) Change every human being’s heart by giving everyone His holy spirit (Joel 2:8);

c) Nature of wild animals changed (Isaiah 11:6-9);

d) Reeducate the entire world (Zechariah 8:22-23; Micah 4:2-3; Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 11:9);

e) Transform the earth from scarcity to abundance (Amos 9:13, Isaiah 31:1-2, 6-7; 41:18-20);

f) Perfect global economic system based on free enterprise, with perhaps only 10% tax on the increase; no healthcare costs as Jesus Christ will supernaturally heal all the sick; no more war and related expenditures, and

g) One world language making sharing of knowledge worldwide very easy.

20) FINAL HUMAN CONFLICT

After the 1000 years of God’s kingdom are finished, Satan is released from solitary confinement for a short season. He will first go to the demons to see which ones will be still willing to follow him after being away from his rule over them. Perhaps some of them will have made up their mind to not repent and change their ways and will join him. He will then go to deceive the nations one final time to attack Jesus Christ and the saints at Jerusalem.

The Russians and the Chinese will be deceived by him and will come to Jerusalem for the attack. Fire from heaven will devour this army. Satan and the demons who joined him will be imprisoned, this time in the fire that will be burning at Jerusalem. Their fate is now sealed.

21) ALL OF HUMANITY RESURRECTED TO PHYSICAL LIFE

Immediately after this final Satan influenced tragic conflict, God’s plan now begins the process of offering salvation to all human beings who have ever lived. All human beings who have ever lived and were not called, did not receive their chance for salvation. They are all now resurrected to physical life. This is described in Revelation 20:11-13.

All these human beings will be given God’s holy spirit, taught God’s way of life and their conduct after their resurrection will be judged according to the books of the Bible to determine if they choose God’s way and thus qualify for eternal life. They will live in God’s Kingdom with its abundance, prosperity, peace and harmony and will be able to contrast the fruits of living God’s way of life vs. living Satan’s way of life which they did in their former life. Happily most of humanity will embrace God’s way of life and qualify to receive eternal life as God’s literal sons and daughters.

The physical resurrection is also described in Ezekiel 37:1-14, 26-28. Jesus Christ also mentioned the second resurrection in Matthew 10:20-24, 12:41-42. Isaiah 65:20-25 points to these physical humans living for 100 years. This would allow sufficient time even for those who lived more than 900 years before the Flood to make changes to their life and character.

22) GOD’S SEVEN ANNUAL HOLY DAYS PICTURE GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION FOR ALL MANKIND

God’s seven annual holy days picture God’s plan to offer salvation to all of mankind. This cannot be understood from the Old Testament alone. Further light Jesus Christ and the writings of the apostles shed on the subject clarified the significance of the seven annual holy days of ancient Israel mentioned in Leviticus 23.

23. FATE OF THOSE WHO REFUSE TO REPENT AND CHANGE

Although God will in His great mercy extend the opportunity for salvation to every human being born, some will still refuse to repent and accept God’s way of life. The Bible reveals that, rather than be tortured forever in an ever-burning hell, their lives will simply be permanently extinguished. They will cease to exist, and will be as though they had never been. Even their memory will be forgotten (Revelation 20:15; 21:8).

These incorrigibly wicked, along with Satan and the demons who led the final rebellion of humanity will all simply be consumed as the earth is set on fire to cleanse it. The fire will keep burning to finally consume the earth itself (2 Peter 3:7, 10-12).

24. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

After the present earth is consumed, God will then create a new heaven and a new earth (2 Peter 3:7, 11-12); Revelation 21:1-3, Isaiah 65:17, 66:22) and God will dwell among former human beings now made immortal as His literal sons and daughters.

25. NEXT, THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE

God has promised all things, meaning the entire universe, for man to inherit (Revelation 21:7; Hebrews 2:6-8; Deuteronomy 4:19).

God said through Isaiah the prophet about the earth in Isaiah 45:18: “For thus says the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he has established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.” If God created the earth to be inhabited, He certainly would not have created more than 100 billion stars each with their planets in more than 100 billion galaxies in the universe to lie waste and empty. He created them to be inhabited at some time like the earth.

The picture is quite clear. After God’s plan of salvation for mankind on earth is complete, there will be a new beginning. What has been accomplished on earth, God’s sons will then accomplish in the rest of the universe, which Satan and the demons disqualified from doing.

Truly, as Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (NKJV): "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit."

26. THERE IS A WAY OF ESCAPE

The author has used only the sure words of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19) to show what will happen in the world in the very near future. Prophecy also declares there is a way of escape from these catastrophic events.

Only one group in the world is promised protection throughout the entire three and a half years of the coming Great Tribulation: members of God’s true Church with the Philadelphian attitude as described in Revelation 3:7-11 (NKJV), “' 7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 8 I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name…10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

Millions of others besides members of God’s Church will survive, but when the 7 billion population of the world is taken into consideration, the percentage surviving may be 1% or less. Those are very poor odds of surviving the troubles that lie ahead. The best chances of survival are promised for members of God’s Church who keep God’s word, meaning all His commandments and doctrines, have not denied that they worship the true Jesus Christ of the Bible, persevere in doing God’s work of warning the world of the coming catastrophes and proclaim the most wonderful news of the return of Jesus Christ to earth and establishment of the Kingdom of God, and endure to the very end while diligently doing these things. So the choice to become members of God’s Church and do God’s work to receive protection, or to stay in the world and watch along as events unfold and be engulfed by them along with everyone else is entirely yours.

If you would like to become members of God’s true Church, you must first learn more about God's way of life and then make your choice. You can do so by reading the literature published by the United Church of God. All literature is offered free of charge upon request. It can also be read online, or downloaded at the Church's web site www.ucg.org. You can write to the United Church of God at: United Church of God, Post Office Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254, USA. In the USA you can also request literature on the phone by calling us toll free at 1-888-886-8632, or from anywhere in the world at 1-513-576-9796. You may also request a free subscription to our monthly magazine “The Good News” at www.ucg.org.

The Church also has ministers available to visit almost anywhere in the world to answer any questions you may have or counsel for baptism to become a member of God's true Church.

As you can see, this time sequence for end time events cannot be constructed from prophecies in the Jewish scriptures. But the book of Revelation helps to put all end time events in proper time sequence. However, details for many of the events have to be obtained from the books of the prophets. One cannot escape the conclusion that both the Jewish Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible have been inspired by the same God and are His infallible word. Therefore, from now on we will freely use both the Old and New Testaments of the complete Bible to prove any doctrine or address any issues.

From this sequence of end-time events, the urgency to reveal the true God to Judah and the whole world should be evident. Next we will look at how God reveals Himself in the complete Bible.

**Chapter 12**

**How God Reveals Himself in the Bible**

Since we have proved that the entire Bible is the true word of God, and we cannot get a complete picture on any subject until we use the entire Bible, we should refer to the entire Bible to learn about God.

To obtain a thorough understanding of this subject, the author recommends reading two excellent booklets prepared by the United Church of God that directly address the question of who the true God is. The booklets are: *"Who is God?"* and *"Jesus Christ: The Real Story"*. Both are available free of charge at the United Church of God web site: www.ucg.org.

God tells us in Isaiah 45:5: " 5 I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me.” Isaiah 46:9 (NKJV) also says: "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me." These scriptures tell us there is only one God, and there is no other God besides Him.

Moses also said in Deuteronomy 6:4: " 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." For the Jews this declaration by Moses is very clear. There is only one God. That’s why they have ruled out the possibility that Jesus could be the Son of God. That would make Him equal with God when Moses declared that there is only one God.

Some New Testament statements also seemingly lend support to their belief.

First of all Jesus Himself quoted Moses in Mark 12:29, “…Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord…”

Paul also declared in 1 Corinthians 8:4, “…we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.” Also 1 Timothy 2:5, “5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus…”

We need to understand some principles on Bible research. First, we need to understand who or what God is from the pages of the Bible and not from some ideas of men. The complete Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, should be our only source for understanding how God has revealed Himself to us.

The second principle of Bible research is that the Bible interprets itself. To understand the meaning of Isaiah 45:5 and 46:9 and Deuteronomy 6:4 we must look at other scriptures that shed light on how God is one.

The third principle is that we must not look at scriptures in isolation to research a subject. All scriptures on the subject must be examined together to reach a conclusion. Many Christian denominations get all their doctrines based on just a few Scriptures taken in isolation leading to error. For example, some denominations are based solely on speaking in tongues, or how God's name is pronounced.

***Two Gods Revealed in the Old Testament***

Using our principles of Bible research, let’s look at other scriptures in the Old Testament that shed light on who God is.

The book of Genesis records how God created everything. Before creating man God states in Genesis 1:26, “26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:”

Why did God use the plural expressions ‘Us’ and ‘Our” in this verse? And the word translated God throughout Genesis 1 is the plural noun Elohim which denotes more than one God (referring to the true God) or god (referring to other gods than the true God, such as idols). The translators also felt that the appropriate translation here should be the plural expressions ‘Us’ and ‘Our.’

This points to the likelihood of two or more Beings as true Gods.

*How the Word “Elohim” is Used*

The singular form of Elohim is Eloah which means “Mighty One”. So Elohim means “Mighty Ones.” Elohim was used in Genesis 1:26. The same word is used in Genesis 3:22 when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil". Here again the word ‘Us’ is used indicating two God Beings.

At another critical time in man’s history, the time of Noah’s Flood, both God Beings were involved in making the decision jointly.

Genesis 6:5-8 states, “5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.”

The word used for Lord and God is YHWH here meaning the Word who later became Jesus Christ. Thus this is the God Being YHWH making these observations. But then the word Elohim is used in verses 11-13 which are translated God.

Genesis 6:11-13, “11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

The Lord (YHWH) had made the observations that the earth had become corrupt but that Noah walked with God. But now both God Beings [Elohim] are involved in the decision to destroy the world in a global Flood and save Noah. Here God the Father confirms the decision YHWH had made.

Later there was another critical time in man’s history when both God Beings were involved in making a decision jointly. This occurred when mankind built a tower in rebellion against God. This is stated in Genesis 11:5-7 (NKJV),” 5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

Here the statements are being made by the Word [YHWH], translated Lord, but then in verse 7 the word “Us” is used again indicating that the Father was also involved in making the decision to confuse the language of mankind. These examples illustrate the perfect unity that exists between the two divine Beings in making decisions.

*Meaning of the Hebrew Word echad*

The Hebrew word translated “one” in Deuteronomy 6:4 to mean “God is one” is *echad*. In Strong’s Hebrew dictionary, *echad* (no. 259) and its root word *achad* (no. 258) can besides the number one, also mean united as one, first (in importance), alike, alone, together or unify. With these possible meanings the translation of Deuteronomy 6:4 in addition to “The Lord our God is one Lord” can also be “the Lord our God is first in importance”; “The Lord our God is God alone” [meaning all others are idols and not God]; “The Lord our God is united as one”; “The Lord our God is one in unity”.

The correct meaning should be determined by the context in which the word is used. For the context, read verses 4-5, “4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” When we consider verse 5, the context would indicate that the word echad implies that God is to be “first in importance” or be “top priority” in our lives. The translation “The Lord our God is God alone” also fits the context.

Moses revealed the existence of two God Beings in the very first book Genesis. He could have been mentioning how the two God Beings are one. So the translation “The Lord our God is united (or unified) as one” could fit the context as well, meaning that the two God Beings are perfectly united in purpose and are of the same mind. That’s why Jesus said in John 10:30, “I and My Father are one.”

Thus all these different translations of Deuteronomy 6:4 would mean that two God Beings are mentioned because none of the translations limit God to just one Being.

Other Old Testament prophets also indicated there are two God Beings.

King David was a prophet (Acts 2:30) who was inspired by God’s holy spirit. He declared in 2 Samuel 23:2, “2 The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue.” David revealed the existence of two God Beings in the psalms.

He writes in Psalm 110:1, “1 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

Here David is declaring the existence of two Lords. Actually this was a prophetic vision David saw which showed the Lord, that is God the Father saying to David’s Lord [the future Jesus Christ] to sit at His [Father’s] right hand until He makes His [Jesus’] enemies His footstool.

This prophecy was fulfilled after Jesus’ sacrifice, Who now sits at the Father’s right hand. Peter the apostle identified the two Lords in Acts 2:32-36, “32 This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted…34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he says himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make your foes your footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Thus Acts 2 and Psalm 110 together make it clear that there are two Lords, God the Father and Jesus Christ as His son.

David also describes two God beings prophetically in Psalm 2, as a Father and a Son while talking about God's kingdom. Psalm 2:7-12 (NKJV): "I will declare the decree; The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession...Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are they who put their trust in Him."

People can be blessed only if they put their trust in God. Therefore, the Son being talked about here is also God, and the one talking about the Son obviously is God. God is prophetically declaring that He would beget a Son who will receive the nations for His inheritance. So two God Beings are being discussed in this psalm as well.

Not only to David the prophet but the existence of two God Beings was also revealed to Daniel the prophet in a vision. He writes in Daniel 7:13-14, “13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they [the angelic host] brought him [the Son of Man] near before him [the Ancient of Days]. 14 And there was given him [the Son of Man] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

Many times in the New Testament Jesus called Himself the Son of Man. The kingdom that will last forever and ever is identified as God’s Kingdom which Jesus Christ will rule and shall never be destroyed. Revelation 20:4-6 also talks about God’s kingdom, “4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Of course God’s Kingdom lasts forever and Jesus Christ will remain King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14 and 19:16). Deuteronomy 4:19 shows that God’s kingdom will extend to the universe after God’s plan of salvation is complete on earth.

The writer of the book of Hebrews confirms the fulfillment of the prophecies of David and Daniel about Jesus Christ the Son of God in Hebrews 1:1-8, “1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, You are my Son, this day have I begotten you? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he brings in the first begotten into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he says, Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom.”

John 1:1-3, 14 also confirms the existence of two God Beings involved in creation, “1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made…14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

When we put all these Jewish Scriptures together, we conclude that they mention two God Beings. And the New Testament scriptures also show the existence of two God Beings, though scriptures quoted earlier had said, “God is one.”

***How is God One?***

We see that both the Old Testament and the New Testaments declare God is one. But both the Old and New Testaments also reveal the existence of two God Beings. How can we reconcile these scriptures? How can two God Beings be one?

Jesus said in John 10:30, “30 I and my Father are one.” How are God the Father and Jesus Christ one?

Let’s see examples in the Bible that show how two or more beings can be one.

The very first example of oneness in the Bible is the union of a man and a woman in marriage. When God created the institution of marriage He said in Genesis 2:24: “: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

In marriage two beings become one flesh. They still exist as two separate beings, but they have joined together to form one unit. They have become one family. They also become one as they produce children, adding to the family. For example, George Jones marries Sally Smith and become the one Jones family, but still two separate beings, Mr. George Jones and Mrs. Sally Jones. They then have children John Jones, Sara Jones, David Jones and Jennifer Jones. They are all separate human beings but all part of the Jones family. So now many have become one.

A human family is the clue to understanding how God the Father and Jesus Christ are one, though separate Beings. The word translated God in the book of Genesis in almost all places is the word Elohim. Genesis 1:26 states: “26 And God said, Let us make man in our image…” Here God is using the pronoun “us” to describe Himself instead of the pronoun “me”. This means the word God is a uniplural noun like the word family which includes more than one person. The English word God then does not imply just one Being, but more than one Being shares that common name as the family name Jones is shared by many in our example.

So God is a family name which at present is shared by two members. We identify these two members separately as God the Father, and the other member as Jesus Christ. Now John makes perfect sense when he said in John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” That is how Jesus Christ and the Father are One. To make it easier to understand with our example of the Jones family, we could call God the Father as Father God and Jesus Christ as Jesus God, if we apply God as their last name. That is what Muslims and the Koran and other religions fail to understand, but is very clear when one studies the Bible very carefully.

The Bible provides other examples of oneness, the Church being one. The Catholic Church is one Church but has more than a billion members. In the same way a denomination of a Baptist Church is one Church with many members and the Church of God is one Church with many members.

Paul the apostle compared the Church to the different individual parts of one human body in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NKJV). He writes: "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Paul here describes many individual members become one in a Church when they are baptized into the Church and receive God’s holy spirit.

Not only does the New Testament provide an example of oneness in the Church, but the Old Testament also provides an example of oneness in the ancient nation of Israel. Judges 20:1, 8-11 (NKJV) state: "So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the Lord at Mizpah…So all the people arose as one man ... So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man." Here the entire nation of Israel came together as “one man” in unity and purpose to deal with a villainous act committed by men of the tribe of Benjamin. All these men were individual citizens of the nation of Israel. But they became one in unity and common purpose.

So these examples of oneness in the Bible and the uniplural noun Elohim teach us that the word God, like the words family, Church and nation, is a word for a single entity with two or many members. And that entity can add members and still remain one entity. So God in the Bible means the Family of God at present composed of only two members; Father God and Jesus God. But this family can and is destined to expand, as a human family can expand by reproduction.

The Biblical truth is that God is reproducing Himself through human beings to add many sons to His family. John the apostle described man’s potential to become sons of God like Jesus Christ in 1 John 3:1-3: “1Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [that is Jesus Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him [with a body composed of the same spirit]; for we shall see him as he is.”

John could not have made the potential of man clearer. Man’s potential is to become literal immortal sons of God as Jesus Christ is the Son of God. God’s plan is to have human beings be born into His family as His literal sons and daughters and brothers of Jesus Christ. And when we become Sons of God, we shall be like Jesus Christ, meaning have a spirit body and powers like those of Jesus Christ. But before we can realize that potential, we must become one among ourselves and one with God as Jesus Christ is one with God, totally united in love, faith, direction, thinking, attitude and purpose.

In John 17 Jesus Christ prayed to the Father to accomplish this in God’s Church with the power of His holy spirit. Verses 20-23 (NKJV) state: “20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Yes, the purpose of all members of God’s Church is to become one with one another in unity, purpose, faith, attitude, direction and love, joined together by God’s holy spirit, and then become one with God the Father and Jesus Christ as They themselves are one. There is not an iota of mistrust or misunderstanding between them and Jesus Christ is totally subservient to the Father. The Father has total faith and trust in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ has complete trust in God the Father. That’s how they are one. That is how God’s family will have many sons or children, all united as one close knit family. And all of God’s family will bear the name God just as all members of the Jones family bear the name Jones. Man’s incredible potential is to become literal gods, as sons of God just as Jesus is God, and also Son of God. ***Son of man is a man. Therefore a son of God must be a God***.

Jesus Himself confirmed that He was divine and that is man’s potential as well. He said in John 10:32-35: “32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, for a good work we do not stone you; but for blasphemy; and because that you, being a man, make yourself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken 36 Say you of Him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the world, You blaspheme; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

Jesus here quoted Psalm 82:6 to show that man’s potential is to be called gods, or become gods as children of God and affirmed that this scripture is the infallible truth and cannot be broken. Here Jesus also plainly said He is the Son of God. A Son of God has to be God.

This does not mean that we will have the same power as Jesus Christ or that we will have equal power. Two or more human beings do not have equal power. But they are equal as they are all human beings. In the same way we will not have the same power as Jesus Christ. But we will be His equal brothers and sisters because we will all be immortal children of God.

**Chapter 13**

**Who Was Jesus Christ?**

A remarkable prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 states: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Immanuel means "God with us." The Son born of a virgin who would be God and be with men could only mean one thing: the human virgin would conceive miraculously through God and not man. That is why He would be God. This was a prophecy and had to be fulfilled.

No Israelite has ever been recorded to have claimed that he was born of a virgin, not conceived through man, except for Jesus. No other Jews who claimed to be the Messiahs ever dared to claim that they were born of a virgin. They would be laughed to scorn and their mothers and fathers would nail their lie and dissuade them from making such a claim. Why then should it be hard for us to believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be: the Son of God because He was miraculously conceived by God through His holy spirit, born of a virgin, who fulfilled this prophecy. He is the only one in Israel's history who claimed to have fulfilled this prophecy. No other Israelite has dared to make this claim. Why then should it be difficult for some to not believe the only Man who claimed to have fulfilled this prophecy?

Let’s understand from the scriptures who Jesus claimed to be and what His disciples and others thought of Him.

***Is Jesus God?***

In Luke 18:19: “19 …Jesus said unto him, Why call you me good? None is good, save one, that is, God.”

Jesus in this statement told a ruler that no man is good. Only God is good. In this statement Jesus also implied that He was a man, which was a statement of fact that He was a man. In many scriptures He called Himself the “Son of Man.” Examples include Matthew 11:19: “The Son of man came eating and drinking…”; Matthew 12:8: “For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day”, and above 80 other times in the New Testament.

When we put these two facts together, that Jesus was a man, and that He told the ruler that man cannot be good and that only God is good, we may conclude that Jesus was a mere man and not God.

But Jesus’ other statements and the writings of the apostles leave no doubt that Jesus was also God. Jesus thus claimed to be both God and man. The fact is that Jesus was both God and man.

When Jesus came to earth, He gave up all His power, but not His divine nature and came as a physical man. So He was a mere man when He came to earth as Jesus Christ, but retained His divine nature. He retained His divine nature because God the Father gave Him the holy spirit without measure as stated by John in John 3:34 (NKJV): “For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him.” God’s holy spirit is what imparts God’s divine nature to any being.

Jesus boldest claim that He is God is recorded in John 8:58: “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was I Am.” Jesus here was revealing His identity as the actual One whom the Jews knew as God of the Old Testament. He was saying that He existed before Abraham and that He was the same Being as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Who told Moses in Exodus 3:13-14 that His name was “I AM WHO I AM.” That’s why the Jews tried to stone Him for blasphemy.

In Isaiah 42:8 Go said, "I am the Lord [YHWH], that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images."

If the God of the Old Testament would not give His glory to another, and Jesus was claiming to be the I AM, it means they are one and the same Being.

Dr. Norman Geisler, in his book *Christian Apologetics*, concludes: "In view of the fact that the Jehovah of the Jewish Old Testament would not give his name, honor, or glory to another, it is little wonder that the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth drew stones and cries of 'blasphemy' from first-century Jews. The very things that the Jehovah of the Old Testament claimed for himself Jesus of Nazareth also claimed" (2002, p. 331).

Dr. Geisler goes on to list some of the ways Jesus equated Himself with YHWH of the Old Testament. Let's notice some of these.

Jesus said of Himself, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). David, in the first verse of the famous 23rd Psalm, declared that "The Lord [YHWH] is my shepherd." Jesus claimed to be judge of all men and nations (John 5:22, 27). Yet Joel 3:12 says the Lord [YHWH] "will sit to judge all ...nations."

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Isaiah 60:19 says, "The Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory." Also, David says in Psalm 27:1, "The Lord (YHWH) is my light."

Jesus asked in prayer that the Father would share His eternal glory with Him: "O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5 - NKJV). Yet Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV) says, "I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another."

Jesus spoke of Himself as the coming bridegroom (Matthew 25:1), which is how YHWH is characterized in Isaiah 62:5 and Hosea 2:16.

In Revelation 1:17 Jesus says He is the first and the last, which is identical to what YHWH says of Himself in Isaiah 44:6: "I am the First and I am the Last."

There is no question, therefore, that Jesus understood and claimed Himself to be the Lord (YHWH) of the Old Testament.

***Miracles Testimony to Jesus’ Divinity***

Jesus said, "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (John 10:25 - NKJV). The works He did were miracles that only God could do. His miracles are the most powerful testimony that He was God. No other man or founder of any other religion has done the kind of miracles that Jesus performed. But the Islamic writers say that Jesus Christ did these miracles by the power of God and also quote Jesus in John 5:30 where He states: “I can of mine own self do nothing…” So He could not be God. But they ignore the fact that Jesus Himself cited miracles as evidence that He was the Messiah or Savior of the world that was prophesied to come. They also ignore verse 28 of John 10: 28 And I give unto them [that is His disciples] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” Only God can give eternal life, proving that Jesus Christ was divine.

Then Jesus made another statement that incensed the Jews: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). That is, the Father and Jesus are both divine. Again, there was no mistaking the intent of what He said, because "then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him" (verse 31).

Jesus countered, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews responded, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God" (verses 32-33).

The Jews understood perfectly well what Jesus meant. He was telling them plainly that He was divine or a God being.

The Gospel of John records yet another instance in which Jesus infuriated the Jews with His claims of divinity. It happened just after Jesus had healed a crippled man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. The Jews sought to kill Him because He did this on the Sabbath, a day on which the law of God had stated no work was to be done (which they misinterpreted to include what Jesus was doing).

Jesus then made a statement that the Jews could take in only one way: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." And what was their response to His words? "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath [according to their interpretation of it], but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:16-18). Yes, Jesus claimed Himself to be a divine Being, meaning God.

***Jesus claimed authority to forgive sins***

Jesus claimed to be divine or God of the Old Testament in various other ways.

When Jesus healed one paralyzed man, He also said to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5 - NKJV). The scribes who heard this reasoned He was blaspheming, because, as they rightly understood and asked, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (verses 6-7).

Responding to the scribes, Jesus said: "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts?...But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home" (verses 8-11, NRSV).

The scribes knew Jesus was claiming an authority to forgive sins that belonged to God only. Again, the Lord (YHWH) is the One pictured in the Old Testament who forgives sin (Jeremiah 31:34).

***Christ claimed power to raise the dead***

Jesus claimed yet another power that God alone possessed—to raise and judge the dead. Notice His statements in John 5:25-29 (NKJV):

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live...All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

There was no doubt about what He meant. He added in verse 21,"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will." When Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead, He said to Lazarus' sister, Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Compare this to 1 Samuel 2:6 (NKJV), which tells us that "the Lord [YHWH] kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up." So Jesus made it quite clear that just like God the Father He can resurrect human beings to eternal life. Thus He made many statements claiming that He was God.

***Opinion of the Apostles***

Now look at the opinion of the disciples about Jesus’ nature! They understood Jesus to be the Creator, hence God!!!

Hebrews 1:1-3 states (NIV): “1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

Thus the book of Hebrews tells us that the Son or Jesus Christ is the Being through whom God created the worlds and who "sustains all things by his powerful word" (verse 3, NRSV). Only God could be the Creator of the universe and all things in it and also possess the power to continue to sustain it.

John confirms in John 1:1-3, 14 (NKJV) that Jesus was the divine Word through whom God created the universe. He writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made…And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

The Greek word Logos is translated as Word here. Logos means "the expression of thought" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, "Word"). This means that the Word was the spokesman of the family of the two God Beings. John is stating that a God Being he calls the Word was with the other God Being before anything came into existence. The Word then created everything. He then came in the flesh as Jesus Christ and dwelt among us.

Paul states plainly in Ephesians 3:9 (NKJV) that "God ...created all things through Jesus Christ." He writes of Jesus in Colossians 1:16 (NKJV): "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."

The Old Testament presents God alone as Creator of the universe (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 40:25-26, 28). When Christ’s disciples said that Jesus is the One through whom all things were created, they were clearly saying that Jesus is God.

Jesus claimed to be all that God is, and the disciples believed and taught it. They understood that Jesus was "the express [exact] image of His [God's] person" (Hebrews 1:3) and "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), and that "in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9, NRSV).

They understood precisely who He was and still is from His own words and actions. There was no question in their minds. They had seen Him prove it again and again with miracles. They would be martyred for their conviction.

Those who personally knew and were taught by Jesus, and who then wrote most of the New Testament, are thoroughly consistent with Jesus' statements about Himself. His disciples were monotheistic Jews. For them to agree that Jesus was God, and then to give their lives for this belief, tells us that they had come to see for themselves that the claims Jesus made about Himself were so convincing as to leave no doubt in their minds.

Matthew the apostle opens his gospel with the story of the virgin birth of Jesus quoting from Isaiah 7:14, "'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23). Matthew is making it clear that he understands that this child is God—"God with us."

John is likewise explicit in the prologue to his Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

Some of them called Him God directly. When Thomas saw Jesus’ wounds, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Paul refers to Jesus in Titus 1:3 and 2:10 as "God our Savior."

The book of Hebrews is most emphatic that Jesus is God. Hebrews 1:8, applying Psalm 45:6 to Jesus Christ, states: "But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.'" Other parts of this book explain that Jesus is higher than the angels (1:4-8, 13), superior to Moses (3:1-6), and greater than the high priests (4:14-5:10). He is greater than all these because He is God.

***Jesus Christ: 'The Rock' of the Old Testament***

Paul the apostle leaves absolutely no doubt that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament who led Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. He writes in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (NKJV), “1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

David called the God of the Old Testament His Rock in Psalm 18:2, “2 The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust…”

Moses also called the God of the Old Testament ‘Rock’ in Deuteronomy 32:4, “4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

Thus Paul understood Jesus Christ to be the God of the Old Testament.

***Jesus accepted honor and worship***

Jesus demonstrated His divinity when He said in John 5:23 (NKJV): "All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father." Over and over again Jesus told His disciples to believe in Him as they would believe in God. He said in John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."

In fact, Jesus allowed people to worship Him on many occasions without forbidding such acts, further proving that He was God, hence worthy of worship. A leper worshipped Him (Matthew 8:2). A ruler worshipped Him with his plea to raise his daughter from the dead (Matthew 9:18). When Jesus had stilled the storm, those in the boat worshipped Him as the Son of God. Matthew 14:33 (NKJV) states: “Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him saying, of a truth you are the Son of God.”

A Canaanite woman worshipped Him (Matthew 15:25). When Jesus met the women who came to His tomb after His resurrection, they worshipped Him, as did His apostles (Matthew 28:9, 17). The demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes, "when He saw Jesus from afar...ran and worshiped Him" (Mark 5:6). The blind man whom Jesus healed in John 9 worshipped Him (verse 38).

The First and the Second of the Ten Commandments forbid worship of anyone or anything other than God (Exodus 20:2-5). Barnabas and Paul were very disturbed when the people of Lystra tried to worship them after their healing of a crippled man (Acts 14:13-15). In Revelation 22:8-9, when John the apostle fell down to worship the angel, the angel refused to accept worship, saying, "You must not do that!...Worship God!" (Revelation 22:8-9, NRSV). Yet Jesus accepted worship and did not rebuke those who chose to kneel before Him and worship. This proves that He was also God in addition to being man.

Jesus really left us no middle ground!!!

The renowned Christian writer C.S. Lewis observes: "You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." (*Mere Christianity*, 1996, p. 56).

**Was Jesus Originally Created?**

We learn from John 1:1-3 that the Word existed with God the Father before the creation of anything. Does that mean that the Word has always existed or did God the Father originally create Him?

To answer this question, let us first consider who was Melchizedek?

Melchizedek is first introduced to us in Genesis. After Abraham rescued his nephew Lot, Melchizedek met him: “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God” (Genesis 14:18).

Then David in Psalm 110 sheds further light on the identity of Melchizedek. In the first verse David talks about both God the Father and the Word: “The Lord said unto my [David’s] Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” It is Christ who now sits at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

Now notice verse 4: “The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” Here the same Lord is speaking of David’s Lord that He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. This certainly identifies Melchizedek as the Word. The book of Hebrews provides further strong evidence of the identity of Melchizedek.

Consider Melchizedek’s attributes described by Paul: “For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God…Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abides a priest continually” (Hebrews 7:1, 3).

The title “King of Righteousness” cannot apply to any human being for “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Only a divine Being can properly bear this title.

Melchizedek’s next awesome title is “King of Peace.” That too cannot apply to human beings, because fallible human beings do not know the way to peace (Romans 3:10, 17).

Then verse 3 describes Melchizedek as being “without father, without mother, without descent [or genealogy], having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abides a priest continually.” This means Melchizedek’s priesthood never ceased. The only high priest who could fit this description was the Word. He had no physical human parents. “Having neither beginning of days” seems to imply that He has always existed.

And the phrase “made like the Son of God” means that He was not yet the Son of God, that is, until He was begotten by God the Father.

Melchizedek could not have been the Father because he was the "priest of the Most High God." He could have been only the eternal, preexistent Word who later became Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

These attributes of Melchizedek seem to imply that the Word always existed along with God the Father. But to understand if the Word always existed, or was at some point created by the Father, we need to analyze other Scriptures.

One of the basic principles for understanding the Bible is that we must consider all scriptures on a subject together. Only then can we come to a complete and accurate understanding of the subject. To understand if Jesus always existed along with the Father, or was at some point created by the Father, we must study all scriptures on the subject.

It is clear from the gospel of John that God created all things through Jesus Christ. Paul confirms exactly what John wrote in Colossians 1:16: "For by Him all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him."

Thus, the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4, 5 and 14, all the angels, all things in heaven, and the entire material universe were created by the Word, who later became Jesus Christ. But before the creation, Jesus Christ was with God the Father, and was Himself God. Both God the Father and the Word planned and thought through the whole creation before actually creating it.

Micah 5:2 states: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

The New International Version (NIV) renders this verse: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

New American Standard Bible renders this verse: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel, His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

This verse states that the Messianic King to come was 'from everlasting.'

The Hebrew word translated 'everlasting' is owlam or olam, which is number 5769 in the Hebrew and Chaldee dictionary of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. It can mean concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally of time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequently as an adverb always, ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, for everlasting, evermore, of old, lasting, long (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the world) plus without end. Therefore the words 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' can mean from so old that we human beings cannot imagine it, or from way before the world began, or from ancient time, or practically eternity. However, 'practically eternity' does not necessarily mean absolute eternity, i.e. without beginning. But let us examine more scriptures to see if the Word has always existed along with the Father.

Colossians 1:15 (KJV) states: "Who [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” NKJV renders this verse: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

If Jesus Christ before His human birth was the image of God the Father, it implies that God the Father had to have existed before Him and the Word then became His image. Someone or something has to exist first before another can become his or its image. If Jesus Christ is the firstborn of every creature, then it implies that He was created before every creature. Firstborn here does not seem to imply firstborn from the dead. By implying 'firstborn from the dead', we are reading something into the text which is not there. So it does not matter if the translation is 'firstborn of every creature' or 'firstborn over all creation', it still means that Jesus was the firstborn.

Revelation 3:14 states: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

NKJV also translates it the same way. So does the New American Standard, American Standard, Revised Standard, New Revised Standard and the New Century Version. But New International Version renders it: "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

The Greek word translated 'beginning' in this verse is *arche*, pronounced *ar-khay*, number 746 in the Greek dictionary of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. It means a commencement, or chief (in various applications of order, time, place or rank); beginning, corner, first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule. While this word may mean chief or ruler, nowhere is this word translated chief or ruler in the entire King James Version. Forty times it is translated as 'beginning' and once as 'beginnings'. It is translated as magistrates in Luke12:11, principality in 2 places and principalities in 6 places. But the context of the verse shows that the correct translation is 'beginning', and 'ruler' is the wrong translation. Before beginning His messages to each of the seven churches, Jesus Christ is revealing something more about Himself that was not previously known before the book of Revelation was given, or to confirm His identity as the God of the Old Testament. Jesus had already revealed Himself as 'the ruler over the kings of the earth' in Revelation 1:5, and the gospels and the epistles had made it abundantly clear in many places that Jesus is the Creator of all of God's creation and ruler over it. Jesus therefore could not have meant 'ruler of God's creation' in Revelation 3:14. Jesus meant to reveal something new about Himself, that He was 'the beginning of God's creation,' meaning that He was the first Being that God the Father created. This confirms that Jesus was created, or as Colossians 1:15 says "the firstborn of every creature."

Here is what Jesus revealed about Himself before beginning His message to each of the seven churches:

Revelation 2:1:"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things says he that holds the seven stars [angels of the seven churches - Rev 1:20] in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks [the seven churches - Rev 1:20].”

Revelation 2:8: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things says the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive:"

Revelation 2:12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things says he which has the sharp sword with two edges:"

Revelation 2:18: "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things says the Son of God, who has his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass:"

Revelation 3:1: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things says He that has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know your works…"

Revelation 3:7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says he that is holy, he that is true, He that has the Key of David, he that opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens:"

Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodicians write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

These messages reveal something new about Jesus Christ, or confirm that He was 'the First and the Last' mentioned in Isaiah 41:4, 44:6 and 48:12 as in the message to the church in Smyrna. Therefore, the translation of Revelation 3:14 as 'ruler of God's creation' is totally out of place in the messages to the churches. It does not fit the pattern of what Jesus Christ was revealing about Himself, or describing about Himself.

Other sayings of Jesus also lend support to His statement that He was 'the beginning of God's creation', or that God the Father started His creation first with Him.

Jesus Christ Himself said in John 14:28, "…my Father is greater than I." And in John 10:29, "My Father...is greater than all." Paul also stated in 1 Corinthians 11:3, "...the head of Christ is God." Jesus is clearly subject to the Father, and God the Father is the undisputed Head of the family.

Jesus stated in John 5:26 (KJV): "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself." Jesus is stating here that God the Father granted to Jesus to have life inherent Himself. This means that if God the Father had not given to Jesus life inherent in Himself, then He would not have been the Self-existent One. God the Father granted that to Him after practically a past eternity of living together when total trust had been developed between them. This then implies that God the Father gave life to Jesus Christ in the first place, long before the world began, or before anything else was created. This means that the Word had not always existed along with the Father, and that God the Father created Him.

Jesus also said in John 8:28: "...but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things." This is a clear statement that the Father taught Jesus Christ before anything was created by the Word. Earlier in verse 26 Jesus had said, "...I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." Clearly there was a stage at which the Word did not know everything, needed to be taught and still learns from the Father. This can only mean that the Word has not always existed with the Father, and that He was created by the Father.

God the Father seems to have carried out the creation in stages. He first created the Word. There was no heaven at that time. The days and nights began with the material creation. So the Word had no 'beginning of days.' He existed before days began. God the Father then taught the Word everything, including His law of love. This could have gone on for a very very long time, and the only words that come close to describing that length of time is past eternity. God the Father had thought through His entire plan of creation well before He created the Word. Then He let the Word plan all the creation in discussion with Himself. The Word learnt from God the Father through this planning process. He had to learn how to create. God the Father taught the Word everything. And He also gave the honor of creating everything to the Word.

The only reasonable conclusion we can reach then is that Jesus Christ was created by God the Father as the Word or Spokesman for the God family. He was the beginning of creation by God the Father.

**Chapter 14**

**Proof that Jesus was the Messiah**

We have proved that the Jewish scriptures are the inspired word of God. We used God’s criterion of fulfilled prophecy to prove that. Using the same criteria we proved that the New Testament of the Bible is also the inspired word of God because many of its prophecies related to the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Church have been fulfilled. So we should be able to rely on every word of the New Testament.

The New Testament is all about Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Since the New Testament is the word of God, we should accept it as a fact when it says Jesus was the Messiah or Christ.

But we still don’t have to accept on blind faith that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. We have proved that the Old Testament is the inspired word of God. So we will examine Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled to prove that He was indeed the prophesied Messiah to come.

***Can Prophecies be Fulfilled by Coincidence?***

One can argue that prophecies by an individual can be fulfilled by coincidence. One individual can fulfill one prophecy in his life by chance. The probability of the same individual fulfilling two prophecies is less. The same individual fulfilling three prophecies by coincidence reduces further exponentially. The same individual fulfilling four prophecies becomes further remote and so on.

The Jewish scriptures prophesied the coming of the Messiah and gave many prophecies about His birth, life, and death that He would fulfill so that we may recognize Who He was. Literally God’s truthfulness and His Almighty Power are at stake if these prophecies were not fulfilled. But as God and Jesus Christ fulfilled all their prophecies about ancient empires and nations, they certainly would have made sure to fulfill their prophecies about the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah. So let’s look at specific Old Testament prophecies that foretold the birth, life and death of the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled.

The apostle Peter confirmed in Acts 3:18: “18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

The UCG booklet: “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” states on p. 16:

“To claim that you are God is one thing—but to convince people that you are indeed what you say you are is quite another. So how did Jesus' closest followers come to be so convinced that they would lay down their lives for that belief?

“Many Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in precise detail by Jesus of Nazareth. Neither the Jews nor the disciples of Jesus understood at the time that Jesus was fulfilling the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament—even though at times He told them this was the case (Luke 18:31; Matthew 26: 56).

“After Jesus was resurrected, He began to help His disciples understand the Scriptures, and the disciples were inspired to declare that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The proof they offered was the very Scriptures [or prophecies] they had not previously understood.”

Then on p 18:

“The New Testament writers cite messianic prophecies from the Old Testament more than 130 times. By some estimates the Old Testament contains 300 prophetic passages that describe who the Messiah is and what He will do. Of these, 60 are major prophecies. What are the chances of these prophecies being fulfilled in one person?

“…the mathematical odds that all of these prophecies could have converged by chance in the events of the life of Jesus are staggeringly minute—to the point of eliminating any such possibility.

“Astronomer and mathematician Peter Stoner, in his book *Science Speaks*, offers a mathematical analysis showing that it is impossible that the precise statements about the One to come could be fulfilled in a single person by mere coincidence.

“The chance of only eight of these dozens of prophecies being fulfilled in the life of one man has been estimated at 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That would be 1 chance in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

“How can we put this in terms we can comprehend? Dr. Stoner illustrates the odds with this scenario: "Take 1017 silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas [with its approximate land area of 262,000 square miles]. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one [that was marked].

"What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man."

“But that is only eight of the dozens of prophecies of the Messiah. Using the science of probability, the chance of as many as 48 of these prophecies coming to pass in one person is 1 in 10 to the 157th power—a 1 followed by 157 zeros (1963, pp. 100-109).

“One or two fulfillments in Jesus' life could be dismissed as coincidental. But when the instances of fulfilled prophecies are counted up, the law of probability quickly reaches the point where mere probability becomes certainty. This is one of the proofs Jesus was the promised Messiah—the messianic prophecies were accurately and precisely fulfilled in Him.”

Many aspects of Jesus' birth, life, suffering and death were prophesied in great detail before they actually happened. Let’s look at these prophecies.

***The Virgin Birth*** – Isaiah 7:14 prophesied, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

Details about the fulfillment of this prophecy are provided by the gospel writers Luke and Matthew. Matthew 1:18-23 (NKJV) states, “18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

The virgin birth was also prophesied at the time when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. Genesis 3:15 (NKJV) stated the curse on the serpent, or Satan, “15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." The woman’s Seed is in the singular meaning one man and not her descendants. Here the curse on the serpent does not state that her Seed would be Adam’s Seed as well, but only the woman’s Seed, thus pointing to a virgin birth of the Messiah who would bruise Satan’s head by remaining sinless and qualifying to remove Satan from the rulership of the earth.

No Israelite except Jesus has ever claimed a virgin birth. That literally excludes everyone except Jesus being the Messiah.

***Descendant of Abraham and King David*** - God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3 (NKJV), “…And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." The same promise is repeated in Genesis 18:18 and 22:18. The promise was passed on to Abraham’s son Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and onto his son Jacob (Genesis 28:14).

Then the promise of the scepter, or rulership was passed on by Jacob to his son Judah in Genesis 49:10, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet…” Since the rulership forever will belong to the Messiah, this prophecy implies that the Messiah would be a descendant of Judah. This was confirmed by Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 11:1-2 to David’s father Jesse, “1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”

Jeremiah the prophet confirmed that the Messiah would be a descendant of David in Jeremiah 23:5, “5 Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Paul the apostle confirmed in Galatians 3:16 that the promises to Abraham were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, “16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.”

Matthew and Luke provide detailed genealogies of Jesus to show that He was a descendant of King David both on his mother’s and father’s side, thus fulfilling these prophecies.

Using probability of one individual fulfilling this prophecy by chance narrow the field to descendants of David only. But at the time of Jesus they would still number millions in the world.

***Messiah to Come from Bethlehem*** - The place the Messiah would come from was prophesied in Micah 5:2 (NKJV), “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

When Herod inquired of the Jews where the King of the Jews would come from, they had no hesitation in referring to this prophecy (Matthew 2:5-8).

This prophecy was very precise. There were two Bethlehems, one in the land of Judah and the other in the land of Zebulun to the north. The prophecy was specific in stating that the Ruler would come from Bethlehem in Judea. That Jesus was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah in Judea is confirmed in Matthew 2:1.

This prophecy narrows the field to less people who could qualify to fulfill the prophecies concerning the Messiah, if we exclude the virgin birth prophecy.

***The Exact Year the Messiah Would Appear was Prophesied*** – Daniel 9:25 (NKJV) prophesied when the Messiah would appear: “25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.”

This prophecy provides the number of years from the time the decree to build Jerusalem would be issued till the appearance of the Messiah as seven plus 62 weeks or a total of 69 weeks. Sixty nine weeks would number 483 days. There is a principle of a year for a day in fulfillment of prophecy. When Israelite spies spied out the land of Canaan for 40 days and refused to go in and possess the land they were punished for 40 years. In the same way the prophesied Day of the Lord will be of one year duration in its fulfillment. So 483 days of this prophecy would equal 483 years till the appearing of the Messiah from the time the decree to build the walls of Jerusalem would be issued.

UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” on p. 21 describes how this prophecy was fulfilled:

“After Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., the Babylonian Empire was succeeded by the Medo-Persian Empire. This empire's kings issued several such decrees that were recorded in the Bible (by Cyrus in 538 B.C., found in Ezra 1:1-2, and by Darius in 520 B.C., described in Ezra 6:8).

“But the one that was issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:11-26) points us specifically to Christ's ministry. Counting 483 years from the 457 B.C. date of this decree brings us to A.D. 27 (keep in mind that because there is no year "0" we have to add one year to the calculation).

“A.D. 27 was a significant year. Jesus was baptized this year and began His public ministry.

“The Jews of Christ's day were certainly familiar with Daniel's prophecy. And regardless of which decree one might choose as the starting point of the 483 years, the time for the Messiah to appear had elapsed during Jesus' day. Messianic fervor was rampant with the realization that the fulfillment of this prophecy was near at hand (compare John 1:41; 4:25).

“If the Messiah was to come, He would have to arrive on the scene just when Jesus did—in the exact year!”

When we consider the fulfillment of this prophecy the individuals who could fulfill these prophecies so far can probably be narrowed only to one individual, Jesus Christ. But let’s continue to see the many other prophecies Jesus fulfilled.

***The Lamb of God*** – When one considers the prophecy in Micah about the ruler to come and the fact that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, one can understand why the Jews in Jesus’ day would think that the Messiah would be a conquering King who would deliver them from Roman rule and restore Israel to a glorious state as a nation. None of these prophecies specifically pointed to the Messiah being a sacrifice for sins. Nobody could have connected the sacrificial system with the sacrifice of the Messiah as the Lamb of God. Other prophecies told about the death and suffering of One, but these prophecies could not be specifically connected to the Messiah. And yet many of these prophecies talked about One Being suffering and then dying for the sins of mankind.

Only when the angel announced the conception of Jesus Christ was it first revealed in Matthew 1:21 that His life would be connected with delivering Israel from their sins. Only after Jesus’ sacrifice was it revealed to His disciples that He was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of mankind. But John the Baptist had declared it to be so.

John the Baptist said of Jesus in John 1:29, “29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Killing of the Passover lambs on the 14th day of the first month in ancient Israel was a prophecy about the sacrifice of the Messiah as the Lamb of God to be sacrificed for the sins of mankind. Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy by being arrested, tried, crucified and dying on the exact day the Passover lambs were sacrificed.

Hebrews 10:4 (NKJV) says, “4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” But verses 12-14 state that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the offering for sin once and for all, “12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”

Hebrews 10:8-10 state, “8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

The author of Hebrews here explains that the sacrificial system God instituted in ancient Israel in the Law was a representation of Jesus' sacrifice that would take away the first, meaning the sacrificial system, replacing it with His sacrifice as the price paid for sin once and for all to sanctify the people.

The life of the Creator was of more value than the lives of all His creation put together. That’s why the shed blood of the Creator could pay for the sins of all His creation. Thus the sacrificial system of ancient Israel, but particularly the Passover lambs were a prophecy about the sacrifice of the Messiah.

***Betrayal, Suffering and Death of the Messiah*** – Many prophecies concerning the betrayal, suffering and death were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The sheer number of prophecies fulfilled now leaves no doubt that all these prophecies could not be fulfilled by one particular man by coincidence. They leave no doubt that Jesus Christ was the prophesied Messiah. Here are some of these prophecies fulfilled by Jesus Christ:

• *Messiah would be betrayed by a familiar friend*. This was prophesied in Psalm 41:9, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." This prophecy was fulfilled by Judas Iscariot as stated in John 13.

• *Messiah would be forsaken by His followers* was prophesied in Zechariah 13:7: "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." This was fulfilled when all His disciples forsook Him and fled when He was arrested (Mark 14:50).

• *The price of His betrayal would be 30 pieces of silver*. This was prophesied in Zechariah 11:12-13: "…so they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me.” This was fulfilled when Judas Iscariot covenanted for 30 pieces of silver with the chief priests to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-15).

• *That Messiah would be put to death with criminals* was prophesied in Isaiah 53:12: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." This was fulfilled when "two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left" (Matthew 27:38).

• *Messiah would be crucified*. This was prophesied in Psalm 22:16: "They pierced My hands and My feet." Remarkably, this prophecy described a form of execution, the crucifixion, which would not come into practice for some 800 years after it was written.

• *Messiah’s body would be pierced*. This was prophesied in (Zechariah 12:10): "They will look on Me whom they pierced". In fulfillment John tells us in John 19:34 that "One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."

• *Messiah would be offered vinegar and gall*. This was prophesied in Psalm 69:21: "They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. This was fulfilled when Jesus was offered vinegar with gall to drink as stated in Matthew 27:34, “34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.”

• *None of His bones would be broken* was prophesied in Psalm 34:20: "He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken." When the Jews came to break the legs of the 3 crucified men, they did not break Jesus’ legs because He had already died on the cross when the Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear, as described in John 19:32-34.

• *People would cast lots for His clothing*. This was prophesied in Psalm 22:18: "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots". John confirms in John 19:23-24 that this prophecy was fulfilled.

• *Messiah would not retaliate* was prophesied in Isaiah 53:7 (NKJV): "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth." Its fulfillment is described in Matthew 27:12-14: “12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.”

• *Messiah would pray for those who would have Him put to death*. This was prophesied in Isaiah 53:12: "He... made intercession for the transgressors." This was fulfilled when Jesus prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34).

Thus we see that the God of the Bible prophesied in detail the manner of the death of the Messiah and all the prophecies were fulfilled in precise detail in the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Probabilistically it is impossible for a particular one man to fulfill all the prophecies by mere coincidence. Therefore we can be certain that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah and He died for the sins of mankind as God foretold.

Despite so many prophecies being fulfilled, some still argue that Jesus contrived to fulfill these prophecies.

***Was fulfillment of Prophecies Contrived?***

Some critics argue that Jesus manipulated events to fulfill prophecies. One example they site is in Matthew 21:1-7 (NKJV) where Jesus instructed His disciples to procure a donkey and its colt to fulfill the prophecy, “5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.' " 6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.”

Another example is given in Luke 22:37-38 (NKJV) in which Jesus made sure that His disciples had swords so that He could be numbered with the transgressors or criminals, “37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." 38 So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

Jesus as God of the Old Testament had prophesied in Isaiah 46:11, “Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass…” So in His life as a human He brought it to pass as He prophesied. So He was fulfilling these prophecies in the way He had prophesied.

But the notion that Jesus manipulated events to fulfill prophecies is so far-fetched. Just imagine as a human being the kind and number events He would have had to contrive to fulfill all the prophecies He fulfilled.

He would have had to manipulate His human ancestry, His place and year of birth, and virgin birth. He would have had to manipulate events with Roman and Jewish authorities to fulfill all the prophecies related to His suffering, crucifixion and death. And what purpose could He have had in manipulating events to fulfill prophecies? All to die a horrible death preceded by terrible suffering? People were willing to make Him King (John 6:15, 12:12-19), but He avoided the opportunity and chose the route of suffering and death. What purpose could manipulating events that would lead to His suffering and death have served? Thus the theory that He contrived to fulfill all the prophecies is sheer nonsense.

Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies to fulfill God’s purpose. He chose to become a humble servant to suffer and die to pay the death penalty for the sins of mankind and “give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). A person of such character could not have been a deceiver, a charlatan or a fake who would manipulate events for personal gain. He had nothing personal to gain by dying.

Peter stated, "...Those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He [Jesus] has thus fulfilled" (Acts 3:18).

Paul confirmed that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" and that "He was buried, and ...He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Jesus fulfilled prophecies foretold 300 – 1000 years ahead of time so that we may believe without any shadow of doubt that He was the Messiah.

***Why Was Jesus not More Direct***

Some wonder why Jesus was not more direct about letting all the people know He was the Messiah. There are several reasons for this. Many had declared they were the Messiah and had gained a following, leading to rebellion against Roman rule. The Romans put down such rebellions and the “would be Messiahs” paid with their lives. So Jesus did not want to cause an uprising against Roman rule.

When He did declare to the Jewish religious leaders that He was the Messiah they accused Him of blasphemy and had Him executed. So letting the public at large know would have resulted in His premature execution.

**Chapter 15**

**Did Jesus Really Die and Live Again?**

The Jews do not doubt that Jesus died because their leaders had Him put to death and made sure that He was dead. The Koran of Islam is the only religion that denies the death or Jesus Christ. The author has answered the statements in the Koran that denied the death of Jesus Christ and are available in his book “Which Religion is True?” It is available free of charge to read online or download at his web site www.ChurchofGodMessage.com. So this will not be treated in depth here.

But the many Jews who practice Judaism deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the Jewish religious leaders asked Him for a sign that He was the Messiah, the duration of His death and then His resurrection was the only sign Jesus gave. Matthew 12:38-40 describes this, “38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Jesus also foretold His resurrection to His disciples. Mark 8:31 states, “31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

Can you imagine what the disciples’ reaction would have been if Jesus had not died and been resurrected after 3 days? Would anyone of them have been willing to lay down his life for his faith in Jesus Christ that He was the Messiah and died for his sins and the sins of mankind? It makes no sense unless Jesus actually died and was resurrected after three days.

So let’s prove from the pages of the Bible that Jesus Christ died and was resurrected according to the scriptures.

**Proofs that Jesus Really Died**

We will look at seven proofs that Jesus Christ actually died on the cross and did not survive it.

***1) The Reliability of the Source***

The first proof of whether the Biblical version of events surrounding the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Chris is true is the reliability of the source. We have already proved that the words of the Bible are backed by Almighty God.

The God of the Bible gave numerous prophesies about the general course of the earth and the curses on it, general future of the 3 broad races, prophesied about the future of individuals such as Cain; predicted the Flood in Noah’s days and brought it to pass; predicted the rise and fall of great empires such as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and Roman Empires and ten resurrections of the Roman Empire and has brought them to pass. God even predicted the rise of the Arab and Ottoman Empires. God promised incredible blessings to Abraham and his descendants Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David and fulfilled His promises by blessing the American and British peoples and in the British monarchy that still occupies King David’s throne. God has fulfilled all these prophecies and promises in precise detail, and many of them continue to be fulfilled to this very day.

Since the entire Bible stands proved as the true word of God, we must accept the account of events surrounding the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ

2***) Crucifixion was an agonizing, excruciatingly painful experience***.

Jesus Christ’s crucifixion and death was a public event witnessed by the Jewish leaders who wanted Him dead, Roman soldiers and officers whose job it was to ensure that He died, common Jewish folk, women among Jesus Christ’s family and friends and even one of the twelve witnessed that He died on the cross and knew where He was laid in a tomb. It was not done secretly in a corner. Even before Jesus Christ was crucified, He went through a trial by the Jews, then by the Roman governor Pilate, then by King Herod who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time. He was severely beaten during these trials and finally scourged, before being crucified. Let’s look at a description of these events in the Bible.

Before His scourging by Roman soldiers, Jesus Christ had suffered beatings and savage treatment at the hands of the Jews (Matthew 26:67-68).

The Sanhedrin then turned over Jesus to the Romans to be tried because the Jewish leaders could not pass the death sentence on any one. After His trial before Pilate, Jesus Christ was given over to Roman soldiers to be scourged before being crucified.

Here is a description of the Roman scourging from the United Church of God (UCG) booklet titled “*Jesus Christ: the Real Story*”:

“Death at the hands of Roman torturers and executioners was certain and could come from several causes. Journalist Lee Strobel, in an interview with Dr. Alexander Metherell, describes the death of Jesus from a medical point of view (*The Case for Christ*, 1998, pp. 193-200).

“Jesus had been beaten repeatedly and lashed with a Roman scourge before His crucifixion (Matthew 27:26). The leather scourge, a type of whip, was designed to inflict maximum pain and damage on the victim. It was braided with pieces of bone and metal woven into the ends that tore into the flesh with each stroke. The scourge would rip into the underlying muscles and produce strips of quivering, bleeding flesh.

“Eusebius, a third-century historian, reports that "the sufferer's veins were laid bare, and the very muscles, sinews, and bowels of the victim were open to exposure" (quoted by Strobel, p. 193). Many victims would die from the scourging before they could be crucified.

“The extreme pain, coupled with loss of blood, would often cause the victim to go into shock—his blood pressure would drop and cause fainting, collapse and intense thirst. The Gospels record that Jesus experienced these symptoms on His way to Golgotha. Weakened to the point of collapse, He couldn't bear the weight of the beam He was carrying and a bystander, Simon of Cyrene, was forced to carry it part of the way for Him (Mark 15:21). When He was crucified, He said, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

Pilate then handed Jesus Christ over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

*The Agony of the Crucifixion*

According to Dr. Alexander Metherell, a medical doctor quoted by Lee Strobel in his book “*A Case for Christ*”, p. 196, (as quoted in the UCG booklet)

“In a crucifixion, the Romans typically used iron nails, five to seven inches long and about three eighths of an inch square, driven into the victim's wrists and feet to fasten him to the wooden members.” Nails were driven into the wrists, between the arm bones, because the hands themselves could not support the weight of the body.

“The nails pounded through the wrists would have crushed the median nerve, the largest nerve going to the hand, causing indescribable pain. "The pain was absolutely unbearable," says Dr. Metherell. "In fact, it was literally beyond words to describe; they had to invent a new word: excruciating. Literally, excruciating means 'out of the cross…' Nails driven through the feet would have brought similar pain.

“Because of body weight and the stress produced on the body from being hung by His arms, Jesus Christ’s arms would have stretched several inches and both His shoulders dislocated.

“Dr. Metherell continues with a description of the agonies Jesus endured: "Once a person is hanging in the vertical position...crucifixion is essentially an agonizingly slow death by asphyxiation (which means dying due to inability to breathe normally). The reason is that the stresses on the muscles and diaphragm put the chest into the inhaled position; basically, in order to exhale, the individual must push up on his feet so the tension on the muscles would be eased for a moment. In doing so, the nail would tear through the foot, eventually locking up against the tarsal bones.

"After managing to exhale, the person would then be able to relax down and take another breath in. Again he'd have to push himself up to exhale, scraping his bloodied back against the coarse wood of the cross. This would go on and on until complete exhaustion would take over, and the person wouldn't be able to push up and breathe anymore" (Strobel, pp. 265-266).

That is how excruciating a death by crucifixion is. Jesus was crucified around 9.00 a.m. He was on the cross for about 6 hours and died around 3.00 p.m. But crucifixion is not what finally killed Jesus Christ on the cross.

***3) The Cause of Jesus' Death***

As was common for the victims, many died from the trauma of the crucifixion or eventually suffocated because of inability to breathe normally. Many people assume that is how Jesus died on the cross. But that is not what eventually killed Him.

As with many other aspects of Jesus’ life, God had prophesied many details of His crucifixion and death which will be covered in detail later. God had also prophesied how Jesus would die on the cross. Zechariah the prophet talking about the people of Jerusalem wrote in Zechariah 12:10: "They will look on me, the one they have pierced" (NIV).

This is how John describes how Jesus died in John 19:30-37 (NKJV): “30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. 31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

John’s description of the event makes it appear that Jesus died on the cross and then later was stabbed by one of the Roman soldiers, "bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" (verse 34, NIV). But the problem with this interpretation of events is that once the heart has stopped its pumping action after death, dead bodies no longer bleed like that. So Jesus’s blood could not have been poured out. The explanation is provided in the UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” p.38-39:

“This problem is resolved when we consider many older manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel, which contain words that appear in a few Bible translations but were left out of most modern versions. These missing words tell us the proper sequence of events.

“The *Twentieth Century New Testament*, which includes these words, reads: "And about three [o'clock in the afternoon] Jesus called out loudly: 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani'—that is to say, 'O my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Some of those standing by heard this, and said [mistakenly]: 'The man is calling for Elijah!'

"One of them immediately ran and took a sponge, and, filling it with common wine, put it on the end of a rod, and offered it to him to drink. But the rest said: 'Wait and let us see if Elijah is coming to save him.' However another man took a spear, and pierced his side; and water and blood flowed from it. But Jesus, uttering another loud cry, gave up his spirit" (Matthew 27:46-50).

“The words missing in the modern translations are “However another man took a spear, and pierced his side; and water and blood flowed from it.” These words show the correct sequence of events: that Jesus was stabbed in the side with a spear, uttered a loud cry and then died. Other versions that contain the missing words include the *Moffatt* Translation and the *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*, and various other Bible versions include a footnote or marginal reference noting the omitted words.

“So does Matthew's account conflict with John's? No. Both describe the same events, but from different perspectives.

“Matthew jumps immediately from Jesus' death to a description of the temple veil being torn in half, while John focuses on the fact that, in contrast to the two criminals crucified with Jesus, not one of His bones was broken. John then explains parenthetically how Jesus had already died so that His bones did not need to be broken in fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 34:20 and the symbolism of the Passover lambs, which were to be slain and not have a single bone broken, because His side had been pierced with a spear in fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10.”

*The Final Fatal Blow*

What was this final, fatal thrust like that ended Jesus' life? The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” continues:

“John Lyle Cameron, M.D., explains: "The soldier was a Roman: he would be well trained, proficient, and would know his duty. He would know which part of the body to pierce in order that he might obtain a speedily fatal result or ensure that the victim was undeniably dead...

"The soldier, standing below our crucified Lord as He hung on the cross, would thrust upwards under the left ribs. The broad, clean cutting, two-edged spearhead would enter the left side of the upper abdomen, would open the...stomach, would pierce the diaphragm, would cut, wide open, the heart and great blood vessels, arteries and veins..., and would lacerate the lung.

"The wound would be large enough to permit the open hand to be thrust into it [compare John 20:24-27]. Blood...together with water from the...stomach, would flow forth in abundance. The whole event as described by St. John must, indeed, have happened, for no writer could have presented in such coherent detail so recognizable an event, unless he or someone had actually witnessed its occurrence" (quoted by R.V.G. Tasker, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*: John, 2000, pp. 212-213).

The idea that Jesus didn't really die, that He fainted or was drugged and was later resuscitated as Muslims try to theorize, has no basis in fact when you consider the clear statements that He died. The apostle John had been an eyewitness to that death, having been right there with others as these events unfolded (John 19:25-27).

John writes in John 19:35: “35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.”

***4) The Roman Execution***

Being crucified meant Jesus was condemned to die by crucifixion. A Roman centurion was put in charge of the execution with Roman soldiers to assist him. Romans were very thorough with their executions because Roman law required the death penalty for a soldier failing to carry out the sentence. The Roman centurion and his soldiers were putting their own lives at risk if they failed to carry out the execution of Jesus Christ.

Severity of Roman discipline for failing to carry out the task assigned is illustrated in an example in the Bible. Acts 12:18-19 describes an incident in which king Herod had put Peter in prison. But at night an angel came and brought Peter out of jail. Then the next morning the people wondered what had become of Peter. Herod examined the guard who had no explanation on how Peter escaped. So he had the entire guard executed.

Another incident took place in the life of Paul, described in Acts 16:22-28 (NKJV), when Paul and Silas were put in prison. In this incident there was a great earthquake and the jailor thought the prisoners had escaped. So he took his sword and was about to kill himself when Paul told him, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

Here we see the reaction of the jailor. He knew the sentence for him was death if the prisoners had escaped. So he thought he was better off dead by his own hand rather than be put to death by Roman soldiers.

Therefore, one should not doubt that the centurion and the soldiers charged with the execution of Jesus would have made sure that He did not survive the crucifixion. That was made sure in many ways.

Jesus was crucified around 9 am. Then from 12 noon to 3 pm there had been an earthquake and darkness over the land. The Jewish holy day feast, the first Day of Unleavened Bread was approaching at sunset. So the Jewish authorities who were witnessing the crucifixion wanted the three being crucified to die quickly because they and the people wanted to hasten home to keep the Feast.

Thus because of the darkness in the land, and the approaching holy day, the Jews obtained permission from Pilate to break the legs of the three being crucified to speed up their death (John 19:30-33). The Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two robbers crucified with Jesus, but Jesus was already dead. The reason was that in the darkness, one of the Roman soldiers had already pierced Jesus’s side with his spear. The Roman executioners were experts who knew when a man was dead.

Some have claimed that the Roman soldiers were actually trying to save Jesus’ life by not breaking His legs. Why would the Roman centurion and the soldiers with him try to do that because they knew that in doing so they would be signing their own death warrants?

After Jesus was dead, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged him to give Jesus’ body to him (Mark 15:42- 45). On hearing the request, to make sure that He was dead, Pilate called the centurion charged with His execution to confirm it. Only after the Centurion confirmed it did Pilate give permission to Joseph of Arimathea to take the body. Joseph of Arimathea, a very rich and prominent member of the Sanhedrin certainly knew who Jesus was, that He was dead, and knew that he had laid the dead body of Jesus in his own tomb.

***5) Eye-Witnesses to Jesus’ Death***

The next proof that Jesus died on the cross is that there were numerous eye-witnesses to His death from all walks of life. These eye-witnesses included Romans (the Centurion in Matthew 27:54 and Mark 15:39; soldiers in Luke 23:36-37, John 19:23-24,Matthew 27:35-36), top Jewish leaders including the chief priests (Matthew 27:41-43) who wanted Jesus dead and watched Him die, many common Jewish folk (Luke 23: 27,35) who walked by throughout the time He was on the cross, many women who were His relatives and among those who ministered to Him during His three and a half year ministry (Luke 23:49, Mark 15:40-41, Matthew 27:55-56), Jesus’ own mother, and even John the apostle (John 19:25-27), one of His twelve disciples. They even followed Joseph of Arimathea as he laid Jesus’ body in the tomb (Luke 25:35, Matthew 27:59-60).

So Jesus’ mother, her sister His aunt and other women saw His crucifixion and stayed till He died on the cross. At least two of these women followed when Joseph of Arimathea took His body and laid it in his own tomb so that they could come later to anoint it with spices. All these relatives and friends would have been certain that it was Jesus who died on the cross, not a substitute. All these people would have had to conspire to lie if another man had been substituted for Jesus on the cross. That is so far-fetched.

Joseph of Arimathea, probably the richest member of the Sanhedrin, and thus one of its most prominent members knew Jesus was dead. That is why He begged Pilate for Jesus’s body. He along with Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin had bought spices to bury the body of Jesus. They both knew He had died on the cross. They handled His dead body for perhaps more than an hour, carried it to be laid in Joseph’s own tomb (John 19:38-40).

With so many eye-witnesses from all walks of life to the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the cross, we can be certain that He indeed died and was laid in the tomb. So many people would not have been fooled into believing that He was dead if He had not actually been crucified and died on the cross. The entire event was held publicly from the time Jesus Christ was arrested for the trial. Nobody would have fooled any one by substituting another man for Jesus on the cross. Those who handled His dead body knew it was Jesus’ body.

***6) Jesus Was Laid in a Tomb***

We have already mentioned the Bible verses about Jesus being laid in the tomb. Members of the Sanhedrin were prominent men among the Jews. And Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent member even among these well-known leaders. He was probably the richest among them. He laid Jesus in his own tomb with his own hands, assisted by Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin. They knew Jesus was dead. That is why they laid Him in a tomb. Women saw where Jesus was laid in the tomb. They had watched Him die on the cross and had followed His body till He was laid in the tomb. They rolled a massive stone to cover the entrance to the tomb because they knew Jesus was dead.

People in Jerusalem would have known where Joseph’s tomb was because he was a famous man. The disciples certainly knew about it because Peter and John visited the tomb after 3 days and 3 nights.

The Jewish leaders, the chief priests and the Pharisees also knew where the tomb was in which Jesus had been laid. They too knew He was dead because they had witnessed Him die on the cross. They knew of the sign Jesus had given to them that He was the Messiah. And the sign was that He would lie in the tomb 3 days and 3 nights and then be resurrected. They wanted to make sure that no hoax was perpetrated by His disciples to make that claim. So they posted a guard to guard the tomb 24 hours a day for three days and put a seal on the stone (Matthew 27:62-66).

Thus we see there were many eye-witnesses to the fact that Jesus had died and had been laid in a specific tomb. Only dead men are laid in tombs.

***7) God Foretold Jesus’ Death in Many Prophecies***

The seventh and final proof that Jesus did indeed die on the cross is that God the Father made sure that He died on the cross. God the Father and Jesus Himself foretold His death in many Old Testament prophecies as we saw in the last chapter. If Jesus did not die, then all these prophecies have not been fulfilled. Literally proof of God’s truthfulness and His Almighty Power are at stake. But as God and Jesus Christ fulfilled all their prophecies about ancient empires and nations, they certainly would have made sure to fulfill their prophecies about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter told the Jews in Acts 3:18: “18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

Paul also confirmed that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" and that "He was buried, and ...He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

God of the Bible is a truthful God. Paul the apostle tells us in 1 Titus 1:2 that God cannot lie! He simply does not lie. We have also proved that the Bible is God’s inspired word. It is the truth. God predicted the crucifixion and death of the Messiah, Jesus Christ and brought it to pass in precise detail. Thus we can be sure that Jesus was indeed crucified and died on the cross. Prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment are thus the strongest proof that Jesus indeed died on the cross.

Now let’s look at the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

The Christian religion would not exist without the resurrection because it provides the strongest proof of the salvation that the God of the Bible has promised to believers who endure to the end in the faith. The salvation the God of the Bible offers is eternal life through a resurrection as His literal immortal sons by changing our physical bodies to spirit bodies as He changed the physical body of Jesus Christ to a spirit body through His resurrection, and entrance into the Kingdom of God as rulers with Christ.

Witnessing the resurrection of Jesus Christ transformed the lives of the apostles, and belief in the resurrection is the pivotal event that led to the birth of Christianity.

So let’s begin examining these proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***1) The Reliability of the Source***

The first proof of whether the Biblical version of events surrounding the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Chris is the true one is reliability of the source. We have already proved that the words of the Bible are backed by Almighty God.

The God of the Bible gave numerous prophesies about the general course of the earth and the curses on it, general future of the 3 broad races, prophesied about the future of individuals such as Cain; predicted the Flood in Noah’s days and brought it to pass; predicted the rise and fall of great empires such as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and Roman Empires and ten resurrections of the Roman Empire and has brought them to pass. God even predicted the rise of the Arab and Ottoman Empires. God promised incredible blessings to Abraham and his descendants Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David and fulfilled His promises by blessing the American and British peoples and in the British monarchy that still occupies King David’s throne. God has fulfilled all these prophecies and promises in precise detail, and many of them continue to be fulfilled to this very day.

Since the entire Bible stands proved as the true word of God, we must accept the account of events surrounding the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***2) The Empty Tomb***

The second proof, and one of the strongest ones of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the empty tomb.

We saw in the proofs of the death of Jesus Christ that Jesus’ dead body was placed in the tomb of a man famous in Israel, a prominent and probably the richest member of the 70 person Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea. Women followed the body of Jesus Christ and knew in which tomb it was laid. There was a huge stone rolled to seal the entrance to the tomb so that people could not easily break into the tomb and steal the body. Then the Jewish High priests and other leaders of the Pharisees made sure that the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers. But at the end of 3 days and 3 nights, on that Sunday morning the tomb was discovered to be empty, first by women and then by the disciples.

The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” describes what happened when the tomb was discovered empty on pp 43-44:

“Mark…records for us the detail that three women—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome—approached the tomb before sunrise to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. Finding the heavy stone rolled away, they entered the tomb and were shocked and afraid when they saw "a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side." The man told the women, "He is risen!" and instructed them to go and tell Jesus' other disciples (Mark 16:1-8).

“In the society of the day, the testimony of women was held in such low regard that they were not even permitted to serve as witnesses in a court of law. How remarkable it is, then, that women were the acknowledged discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb!

“Had someone fabricated the story at a later date, as many critics assume to have been the case, the plot surely would have made male disciples such as Peter and John the discoverers of the empty tomb. That it was women who were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb is best explained by the straightforward truth that the women named were indeed the actual discoverers.

“The Gospel writers faithfully recorded what for them was an awkward and potentially embarrassing detail.

“What was the reaction of Jesus' enemies to the disciples' stunning declaration that Jesus was alive again after having been publicly executed?

“Their reaction is very revealing. Did they respond that the disciples were lying, that Jesus' body still lay in the rock-hewn tomb? No. Did they claim that the disciples were hallucinating? No. Instead, they bribed the Roman soldiers responsible for guarding the sealed tomb to spread what they knew was a lie. They told them to spread a cover story, to claim that Jesus' disciples had come and stolen His body while they slept, and that they would cover for the soldiers if they got in trouble with the Roman governor.

Jesus' enemies thus acknowledged that the tomb was empty.

The actual resurrection event and what happened to the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb is described by Matthew 28 in verses 1-10 (NIV): “1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord [Luke says there were actually two angels] came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

“5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The women then went to inform the disciples. When the guards recovered from their fear of the angel whose face shone like lightening and discovered that the stone had been rolled away and that the tomb was empty, the events are then described in Matthew 28:11-15 (NKJV):

“11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. [They reported to the chief priests that though they were guarding the tomb and no one had broken into it for the 3 days and 3 nights, but then there was a great earthquake and two beings whose faces shone like lightening came and rolled away the stone. But they were afraid of the earthquake and could not look at the faces of the angel and fell down on their faces because they were so afraid. But after the beings with the shining faces went away they investigated the tomb and found it empty. These are the events the Roman soldiers reported to the Chief Priests and the elders.]

Matthew continues with the elders’ reaction: “12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

We should realize that the Jews would have no motive to themselves steal Jesus’ body. They wanted it to rot away. They wanted Him dead and eventually forgotten. The Romans had no motive to steal the body either. Stealing the body by either of them would only have fueled more rumors that He had been resurrected.

If the tomb had not been empty, the Jews and the Romans could simply have produced Jesus’ dead body to nip the stories in the bud that He had been resurrected. But they could not produce His dead body.

Roman soldiers with changing guards were guarding the tomb and they would have made sure that no one broke into the tomb to steal the body of Jesus. In addition the disciples had proved themselves to be too cowardly [having forsaken Jesus and fled] to have gone past the Roman guards to steal the body. The women could certainly not have done it.

Then John 20:3-7 (NKJV) describes what John and Peter saw: “3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.”

The linen cloths and the head scarf neatly folded together is hardly the scene that those who wanted to hurriedly steal Jesus’ body would have left behind.

In Acts 2:29 Peter explained the empty tomb to the Jews, "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day." Everyone knew where King David was buried. But Jesus’ tomb was empty. He explained in verse 32: “32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.” It led to the conversion of over 3,000 Jews to Christianity that day.

Thus we see that after 3 days and 3 nights, the body of Jesus Christ was no longer in the tomb. The tomb was empty. The Jewish leaders or the Roman authorities could not produce Jesus’ body to refute the stories of His resurrection. The best response to the stories of His resurrection they could come up with is that His body was stolen by His disciples. But the disciples were too cowardly to have done so. They would have had to fight the Roman guards to steal the body. But no such story has ever been told.

Thus the empty tomb is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***3) Large Number of Witnesses to the Resurrected Jesus***

The third proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that there were a large number of witnesses who had seen the resurrected Jesus.

We have already described in the last proof what happened when women first went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body with spices. They found the stone rolled away, were shocked to see two angels with an appearance like lightning who informed them that He is risen as He said He would.

After the women found the tomb empty and the two angels informed them that ‘Jesus had risen,’ they went to the eleven disciples to inform them of the event. Then John records in John 20:1-10 (NKJV): “1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [which is how John describes himself], and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in.

“6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead [meaning that even at this stage the disciples and the women did not understand the scripture that Jesus would die and rise from the dead after 3 days and 3 nights. It was impossible for human beings to even imagine because such an event had never happened in the history of mankind]. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.”

Till now the women and Peter and John had only seen the empty tomb and the women had heard the angels tell them that Jesus had risen from the dead. But no one had seen the risen Christ.

Then John records how Mary Magdalene who still lingered near the tomb after Peter and John had gone to their homes first saw the risen Jesus. John continues in John 20:11-18 (NKJV): “11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

“15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' [Jesus said this because He had not yet risen to God the Father’s throne in heaven to present Himself and be accepted as the offering for the sins of mankind. This needed to be fulfilled because the waive sheaf offering during the days of Unleavened Bread was a prophecy that He would be the first of the firstfruits.] Then John continues: "18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.”

While Mary went to inform the disciples that she had seen the risen Jesus Christ, Jesus met two other disciples. Luke tells that part of the story in great detail in Luke 24:13-32 (NKJV): “13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

“17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

“25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. 28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

After being seen by these two disciples, they went and told the 11 disciples. Luke continues in verse 33:

“33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.”

Luke continues with the rest of the story, but John also records it in John 20:18-31 (NKJV): “18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. 19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews [Did you notice that the disciples had the doors shut because of their fear of the Jews. This is after they had found the tomb empty. These men certainly would not have had the courage to fight armed Roman guards to steal the body of Jesus], Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

“24 Now Thomas, called the Twin [other translations have Didymus], one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." 26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

When the disciples first saw the risen Jesus, they were frightened thinking they had seen a ghost [spirit]. But Jesus reassured them that it was Him. Luke records what happened in Luke 24:36-48 (NKJV):

“36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things.”

Then John records the third time that the disciples saw Jesus in John 21:1-14 (NKJV):

“1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias [or Sea of Galilee], and in this way He showed Himself: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

“7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. 9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." 11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"--knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. 14 This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.”

Besides being seen by Mary Magdalene, then two disciples, then by all the eleven disciples, Paul the apostle describes other incidents of people witnessing the risen Christ to the Corinthian Church in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV): “3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James [the half-brother of Jesus], then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”

How did Paul have this information? Because he had met many of those who had seen the risen Jesus Christ, and had heard the account from their own mouths! When he wrote his epistle to the Corinthians, many were still alive and what he was writing could be verified from these eye-witnesses.

There were likely many other times Jesus appeared to one or more of His disciples than what is mentioned in the gospels because Luke states in Acts 1:3: “"He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days". Thus for forty days He was seen alive after His resurrection by many women and disciples.

Then later Stephen the martyr saw Him alive at the right hand of God the Father. Then He was seen by Paul the apostle as stated in Acts 9:38 and 1 Corinthians 15:8. And finally He was once again seen by John the apostle as described in Revelation 1:12-18 when he received the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation.

Muslims and others claim that the disciples could be hallucinating when they saw these appearances of Jesus after He was dead. But this nonsense does not account for the fact that these appearances were in different places, different times in front of different people, over 40 days, in different ways including showing many signs as recorded in John 20:31. All these eye-witnesses could not be hallucinating in all these different times and at different places. These appearances were convincing to all His disciples, leaving no doubts in their minds that they were seeing the risen Jesus and not a vision.

Such a large number of eye-witnesses to the risen Jesus Christ is proof that He was indeed resurrected.

Before they saw the risen Jesus these men were hiding in fear from the Jewish authorities behind closed doors as described in John 20:19. Ten of the 11 disciples had run away when Jesus was crucified. But these men were transformed from cowards into men of courage after they saw the risen Jesus and were willing to suffer and die for their conviction that Jesus Christ was crucified, died and was resurrected. That is the fourth proof that Jesus Christ was indeed resurrected which we will cover next.

Question naturally arises: If God really wanted to convince the world that He had raised Jesus from the dead, why did He not let the risen Christ be seen by many many more witnesses around the world? Peter says in Acts 10:39-41 (NKJV): “39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.”

Why only around 500 people chosen beforehand witnessed the risen Christ and not many many more? The answer has to do with God’s plan of salvation for mankind. God is allowing one chance for salvation for every human ever born or will ever be born. If tens of millions had seen the risen Christ and had been converted, they like the true Christians would have faced persecution from, the unconverted. Most would have given in and compromised with God’s way of life under threats of persecution. They would have lost their one and only chance for salvation and would have eternally perished. God plans to give the vast majority of mankind their chance of salvation in His kingdom when Satan will no longer be around to deceive and persecute mankind. Vast majority of mankind will then qualify to receive eternal life. If tens of millions had received their chance for salvation with Satan and the demons still around to influence them, vast majority would have perished. That is why God in His mercy is offering the chance for salvation only to a relatively few firstfruits in this age of man during the first 6,000 years of mankind’s history.

It is more difficult to make it into God’s kingdom at this time. In fact the parable of the ten virgins indicates that only about 50% of those called in the age of man when subjected to persecution will qualify to receive eternal life. But their reward will also be greater as the first resurrection to eternal life is called the better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35). That is why only a limited number of witnesses chosen before of God saw the risen Jesus Christ and not much of mankind living at that time. Mankind still has eternal lessons to learn from human experience under the influence of Satan and his cohort of demons.

***4) Transformed Lives of the Disciples***

Whatever one’s opinion about Jesus may be, one thing is certain. In just three and a half years of preaching He electrified the world and led to the birth of the largest religion on earth. Birth of Islam took place over 22 years of Mohammed’s life from age 40 when he received his first revelation till his death. Hinduism evolved over hundreds of years. Budhism was formed and spread over 45 years of Gautam Budha’s life from the time of his enlightenment to his death. Sikhism developed over 200 years from the beginning of preaching by Guru Nanak around 1496 A.D. to the death of the tenth Guru in 1708 A.D. In contrast only three and a half years of preaching by Jesus Christ electrified and transformed much of the world. The singular event responsible for this sudden transformation was the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

During His life almost no one understood who He was or the message He was trying to convey. Not His followers, family or friends, not His enemies or the Jewish and Roman authorities and not the general population understood Him.

He once asked His disciples “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?” (Matt 16:13). Some thought He was John the Baptist who had returned from the dead; some thought He was Elijah the prophet, or Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. But Peter answered “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Even though this truth was revealed to Peter, He did not fully understand what that meant or what Christ’s mission was. He lapsed into thinking that Jesus was a physical Messiah, a descendant of King David, who had come to deliver the Jewish nation from Roman rule and lead it to glory.

Thus Jesus’s death was an unexpected total shock for them despite the fact that He had plainly told them that He was going to die and rise again after the third day. He said to them in Mark 9:31-32: “The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day. But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.”

The disciples were greatly bothered by Jesus’ talk of being tortured and killed. One time Peter grabbed Jesus and said, “This shall not happen to You! (Matthew 16.22).

Jesus was a mystery to the masses. They asked Him in John 10:24: “How long do You keep us in doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Some thought He was not completely sane. Some said “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him? (John 10:20 - NKJV). Even His physical family was concerned about His sanity as Mark 3:21 (NKJV) states: “When His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind.’”

But still Jesus attracted vast crowds of people. He had healed many, performed many miracles among them. He was a charismatic leader and the common people hung on to His words so that the Jewish religious leaders complained in John 12:19 (NKJV): “Look, the world has gone after Him!”

Jesus was a very interesting speaker, speaking to them in parables using graphic stories from common everyday life events to illustrate His points. The stories sounded very good, but He did not explain their spiritual meaning to the masses. However, He expounded them to His inner circle of disciples. And that is what caused confusion among the general public. So some said He was a good man. Others said He was a religious fraud deceiving His followers (John 7:12). Others said He was demon possessed and some others also claimed that He was a drunkard and a gluttonous man (Matthew 11:19).

Though the common people hung on to His words, they were confused about who He was and about what He said. Matthew 7:28-29 (NKJV) records: “…people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Many would say, “We have seen strange things today,” (Luke 5:26).

The religious authorities and the educated of His day did not view Jesus as an intellectual or a noted political leader. John 9:29 (NKJV) quotes them as mockingly saying, “We know that God spoke to Moses. As for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.” But He stunned the educated with the depth of His learning and understanding, for John 7:15 (NKJV) quotes them as saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

Religious leaders and other members of high society were repelled by the company He kept. A woman of ill repute and a sinner in the city once poured oil over His feet, wiped them with her hair and even kissed His feet. The Pharisees were appalled at the sight and at Him for allowing it for they said in Luke 7:36-39 (NKJV): “This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him.”

The religious leaders accused Him of breaking God’s law. They thought He was trying to throw out the basic 1500 year old constitution of the nation, the Old Testament. They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath when He healed people on the Sabbath, despite His telling them in Matthew 5:17 (NKJV): “Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the prophets, I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

But there was one way Jesus was totally different from any other prophet or founder of any other religion before or since He came. He made an astounding claim about Himself that none of the others made about themselves. Founders of all religions claimed to be mere human beings. But Jesus claimed that He was more than a human being which is what incensed the religious leaders of His day so much that they tried to kill Him. John 5:18 says they tried to kill Him because He “said that God was His Father, making himself equal with God.” They thought this was blasphemy and tried to stone Him saying: “Because You, being a Man, make Yourself God” (John 10:33 - NKJV).

People were sometimes shocked by what Jesus said. John 6:35, 38-41 (NKJV) states: “35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst…38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." 41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

Then Jesus shocked them even further that whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood will have eternal life.

John continues in Verse 47: “47 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

“59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?...The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”

Thus hearing such strange things from Jesus’ mouth, many of Jesus’ followers simply quit following Him.

Consider this: ***Would anyone die for such a misunderstood and maligned man?***

When most of Jesus’ disciples quit following Him, eleven of the twelve had different ideas. John states in verses John 6:67-69 (NKJV): “67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

They believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But as stated earlier, they thought that Jesus was a physical Messiah, a descendant of King David, who had come to deliver the Jewish nation from Roman rule and lead it to glory.

Even after Jesus was executed, all His disciples thought the same thing and said in Luke 24:21 (NKJV), “We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.” As stated earlier, Jesus death was a shock to all His disciples including the eleven.

They had seen Jesus heal the sick, turn water into wine, walk on water, calm a raging storm, feed thousands with a few loaves of bread and fish, and perform many other miracles. Their leader seemed to be invincible to them. They had dared to dream of glory for the Jewish nation and for themselves.

But then they had seen their invincible leader being arrested without a struggle, suffer unbelievable humiliation through trials by the Jewish authorities, the Roman authorities and Herod, and then suffer the shameful and disgraceful public execution through crucifixion. This was a crushing blow for the disciples. The Jewish authorities had triumphed over the man who had sometimes put them down with His words. They would believe that they had been right all along and the man Jesus was a religious fraud and got what He deserved. Now the disciples if not themselves executed would be laughed to scorn by everybody. People would point fingers at them saying these men gave up everything to follow a fraud, a charlatan, a fake Messiah.

In the night before Jesus was crucified, Peter had followed Jesus after His arrest. Onlookers asked Peter if He was a disciple of the half-naked, bruised, beaten, tired and weak man Jesus? Peter cursed and swore and shouted in Mark 14:71 (NKJV): “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” In Matthew 26:70, 74 (NKJV) Peter is stated to have said: “I do not know what you are saying…I do not know the Man!”

Then when the rooster crowed and Jesus looked at Peter, He ran away in fear and humiliation. The rest of the disciples also ran away. One young man, probably the gospel writer Mark was so frightened that He ran away naked, leaving his clothes in the hands of those who tried to grab him (Mark 14:51).

In fact, after His crucifixion and death, the disciples thought they were going to be next. They thought the Jewish authorities were now going to come after all those who had been Jesus’ followers and have them executed. John states in John 20:19 (NKJV): “19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week [this was the 4th day after Jesus had died], when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews…”

Here we see on the fourth day after Jesus was crucified and died, the disciples were hiding behind closed doors for fear that they would be recognized as having been with Jesus and will be arrested and executed. These were very frightened men.

But then there was a sudden transformation in the attitude and behavior of these men. What shocking event had they witnessed? They had seen Jesus killed and laid in a tomb. They knew He was dead. But then they see the resurrected Jesus and finally knew that He was the Son of the living God, and that He was alive. They saw Him alive over 40 days, talked with Him, and He taught them and gave them understanding of the Scriptures.

They had heard Jesus tell them that He would be killed but would rise and live again after 3 days. He had told them that they would be sorrowful at His death, but their sorrow would be turned into joy. They had seen both events happen. He had died and then seen Him alive again as a spirit Being. Nothing like this had happened before in the history of mankind. But the disciples had experienced it. There was no denying the fact for them that Jesus died and is alive again as a spirit Being.

The disciples now understood the very important reasons for Jesus’ life and death, and then His resurrection. They understood that Jesus came to die for the sins of mankind so that man could be forgiven on repentance and then be reconciled to his Creator. Jesus had told the disciples during His time with them in John 11:25 (NKJV): “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” This meant nothing to them when they heard it. But then they had seen Jesus die and live again. Now they understood their potential and that they too would die but live again through a resurrection as the sons of God.

We human beings have not seen a dead Jesus alive again. We may think the disciples perhaps fabricated a tale as Muslims and others claim. But consider what this would mean. If the resurrection did not take place, the disciples would have known it. Would they have been willing to die for a tale they knew to be a lie. Does it make sense?

We might be deceived about a belief and give our money, time and even life for it as many do for their religious beliefs. But can you imagine anyone suffering torture, humiliation, beatings, loss of everything and then die for something they knew to be a lie? What purpose would it serve?

We can reach only one conclusion. The disciples experienced the most unbelievable event of all: they had seen a man die and then live again as a spirit Being. They are our witnesses that the event actually happened.

Peter said in 2 Peter 1:16 (NKJV): “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables…but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” John wrote decades later about the event in 1 John 1:2 (NKJV): “We have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.”

Jesus Himself charged His disciples to spread the word about His life, death and resurrection. Before His death He told them in John 15:27 (NKJV): “And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” Then after His resurrection Jesus told them in Acts 1:8 (NKJV): “And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and to all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

On the day of Pentecost, after the disciples received the holy spirit, they proceeded to do precisely that. There was a sudden transformation in the attitude and behavior of these men. They were no longer afraid of the religious authorities and openly and boldly preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ and remission of sins right at the Temple where the public could hear them. Peter preached his first sermon to all those gathered in Jerusalem from many countries to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. Thousands were immediately convicted and converted.

The preaching brought immediate persecution from the authorities. But the transformation of the apostles is evident in how they now reacted in the face of persecution.

When they had healed a cripple; Acts 4:1-4 states (NKJV): “1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

“5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

“13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." 18 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go…”

Then later the disciples were beaten, and their reaction is stated in Acts 5:17-42 (NKJV):

 “17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." 21 And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"

“24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25 So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" 26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

“33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God." 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

Such is the transformation that took place in the lives of men who had been cowards 4 days after Jesus’ death, before they witnessed His resurrection. The apostles would continue to preach the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins leading to eternal life and the gospel of the establishment of the kingdom of God throughout the rest of their lives leading to growth of Christianity to become the largest religion in the world. Eleven of them would be martyred for this cause. According to tradition even John was thrown in a boiling cauldron of oil, but climbed out of it alive. After witnessing this intervention from God, the ruler who had sentenced him to death let him go.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central event directly responsible for the growth and endurance of Christianity. Transformed lives of the apostles are one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

 ***5. Transformation of Jesus’ Brothers from Skeptics into Believers.***

 Now let’s look at the fifth proof of the resurrection of Jesus, which is the transformation of Jesus’ brothers from skeptics into believers.

We know Jesus’ family did not believe in Him and were concerned about His sanity as Mark 3:20-21 (NKJV) states: “20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21 But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

John plainly states in John 7:5 that: “5 …even His brothers did not believe in Him.”

Further proof that Jesus’ brothers did not believe He was the Son of God is that when Jesus was about to die on the cross, He asked John to take care of His mother Mary as his own mother after His death. John records in John 19:26-27 (NKJV): “26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”

Why would Jesus charge John the apostle to look after His mother after His death rather than one of His half-brothers and Mary’s own sons? The reason is obvious. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God.

But then James saw the risen Christ as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:7. Knowing that his brother died, but then seeing Him alive again transformed James. Now he knew that His half-brother Jesus was truly the Son of God. Now he knew that his brother preached the truth and that the potential of man is to become eternal sons of God through a resurrection.

Not only was James converted but possibly all his other 3 brothers named in the gospels, Jude, Simon and Joses, were also converted. After the eleven apostles had seen Jesus for the last time and ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives, they returned to Jerusalem and Luke records in Acts 1:13-14: “13 And when they had entered [that is Jerusalem], they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and *with His brothers*.”

These verses imply that at least two of Jesus’ half-brothers, possibly all 4 of them continued in prayer together with the 11 apostles till the day of Pentecost when all of them received God’s holy spirit. We know for certain that at least two of Jesus’ brothers were converted and were in the ministry. James wrote the epistle of James and his brother Jude wrote the epistle in the Bible that bears his name.

James was later the head of the headquarters Church of God in Jerusalem and was stoned to death for his belief that his brother was the Son of God and was resurrected after His death. James had lived perhaps 30 years of his life with his brother. After his conversion he then knew that his brother had lived a sinless life and was the spotless Lamb of God who became the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind. If James had seen sins in his brother’s life, he would not have become a convert because if Jesus had sinned, He would not have been the Son of God.

J.P. Moreland describes events in James’ life in his book *Scaling the Secular City*, 1987, pp 178-179:

“Why did these men change? Why did they undergo hardship, persecution, pressure and martyrdom? Consider James the brother of Jesus. Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, tells us that he died a martyr’s death for his faith in his brother. Yet the gospels tell us that during Jesus’ life, he was an unbeliever and opposed Jesus.

“Why did he change? What could cause a Jew to believe that his own brother was the very Son of God and to be willing to die for such a belief? [The Jews believed that there was only one God. That is why the Jews tried to kill Jesus when He claimed He was the Son of God.] It certainly was not a set of lovely teachings from a carpenter from Nazareth. Only the appearance of Jesus to James can explain his transformation.”

***6) Conversion of Paul the Apostle***

The sixth proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the conversion of Paul the apostle. Paul, a young Rabbi and a strict Pharisee was a rising star of Judaism. He did not believe that Jesus was resurrected and considered the new religion about Jesus a heresy. He hated it so much that he was convinced it deserved to be stamped out by any means possible. He made it his personal mission and zealously persecuted the Church of God that had been formed.

He considered the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ a pure fabrication and the new movement that had been built around it contrary to every belief and tradition he held sacred. So he imprisoned the followers of Jesus and caused some to be killed.

Luke records in Acts 8:1-3 (NKJV): “1 Now Saul was consenting to his [Stephen’s] death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.”

After making havoc of the Church in Jerusalem, Paul wanted to do the same in other cities. Luke continues in Acts 9:1-2 (NKJV): “1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”

But as Paul was journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus, something happened. Luke continues: “3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

That experience changed Paul’s life. He had now seen the resurrected Jesus himself as he stated in 1 Corinthians 9:1: “Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord”, and in 1 Corinthians 15: 8-9 (NKJV): “8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

Seeing the resurrected Jesus Christ transformed Paul and changed his beliefs. He threw away everything that he had strived for all his life. He states in Philippians 3:7-8 (NKJV):” 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”

Paul’s overriding aim in life now was “10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Why would Paul be willing to throw to the dogs everything he had striven for in his life if Jesus was simply a dead man who had died a shameful death by crucifixion? It does not make sense at all.

Jesus had charged His disciples in Acts 1:8: “And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” After his conversion, for Paul this preaching of the gospel or good news centered around the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was proof that humans will receive eternal life through a resurrection from the dead.

Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4 (NKJV): “1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you… 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Paul literally staked his life on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was shocked to hear that in the city of Corinth some believers doubted the resurrection of Jesus. He then logically explained how the dead rise again to life in verses 12-20: “12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

Consider: Would Paul have wasted his life if the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a lie? Would he have given up his successful life as a Pharisee for a lie? The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Stor*y” states on page 50:

“Paul was not a man given to vivid imaginations of superstitious people. He was a levelheaded intellectual. Yet he later was prepared to defend his zeal for Christ before hostile mobs as well as governors, kings and other rulers. He was prepared to endure suffering for his beliefs as he describes in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27: “23 Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness…”

In the end Paul was beheaded for his belief that Jesus died, was resurrected and was the Messiah who is now alive and well at the right hand of God the Father. The testimony of Paul and his transformed life is proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***7) Martyrdom of Christians and Existence of the Church over the Centuries***

The seventh and final proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the martyrdom of the original apostles, thousands of early Christians and the birth and existence of the Church.

Traditions tell us that out of the eleven original apostles, ten of them were martyred for their beliefs. Even John the apostle was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but climbed out of it alive through God’s intervention. He was then perhaps banished to the island of Patmos by the ruler. James the half-brother of Jesus and Paul the apostle were also martyred. Then thousands of early Christians died in the Roman arenas and prisons for their belief that Jesus Christ died for the sins of mankind and rose from the dead and is alive to give them also eternal life through a resurrection.

We know Mohammed is not a myth. He was a real person and the main events attributed to him were true because the existence of Islam is proof of that. In the same way existence of Christianity is proof of the main event of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on which it is based. The original apostles and thousands of Christians who believed because of their preaching would not have willingly suffered martyrdom if they knew that the resurrection of Jesus was a lie.

God’s true Church has always existed since its founding in 31 A.D. Over the past more than 1980 years, tens of thousands of Christians have been willing to lay down their lives for their belief that Jesus Christ lived, died for the sins of mankind and was resurrected. Ever since 31 A.D. as each succeeding generation of Christians saw the martyrdom of Christians of the previous generation, they believed the truth of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and many have been willing to be martyred for their faith as well if called upon to do so.

Thus the existence of Christianity and the martyrdom of the original apostles and Christians who believed through their preaching, and then the preaching of the first generation of Christians to the next generation and their willingness to be martyred and so on for succeeding generations is proof that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a true event.

***When Was Jesus Christ Crucified and Resurrected***

In Matthew 12:38, some of the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign to prove He was the Messiah. But Jesus told them that the only sign that would be given was that of the prophet Jonah: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (verse 40).

But how can we fit "three days and three nights" between a Friday-afternoon crucifixion and a Sunday-morning resurrection that mainstream Christianity believes in? Some try to argue that Christ’s statement about "three days and three nights" does not have to cover 3 full days and 3 full nights as part of a day can be counted as a day. Thus they say that Jesus died in the afternoon making the remainder of Friday as one day, then Saturday as the second day and Sunday morning as the third day. But in this time frame only 2 nights, Friday and Saturday night, can be fitted in. Some in Islam, Jews and other non-Christians have scoffed at Christianity because of this obvious difference in Christian beliefs, and what is stated in the Bible.

The problem lies with mainstream Christianity not understanding that an annual holy day is mentioned in the Biblical record, also known as a high day. Let’s carefully study the details provided in the gospels.

Each of the Gospel writers gives an account of the events of Jesus’ crucifixion, death and resurrection, but each presents different aspects that need to be correctly synchronized and harmonized to produce a clear sequence and understanding of what happened. We see that, when each account is considered, the chronological details mesh perfectly proving that Jesus Christ was in the tomb exactly three days and three nights.

For instance, John 19:31 preserves a crucial point that provides insight into the other accounts. The preparation day on which Jesus was crucified is described as the day before the Sabbath. But John clarifies it by stating that this approaching Sabbath "was a high day." This does not refer to the weekly Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday evening) but to the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is one of God's annual high, or Sabbath, days (Exodus 12:16-17; Leviticus 23:6-7), which could—and usually did—fall on other days of the week.

Luke 23:46-53 describe Jesus' moment of death, as well as His hasty burial because of the oncoming Sabbath. Verse 54 then states, "That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near." This Sabbath that drew near was the High Sabbath, the First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which that year in 31 A.D. fell on Thursday. So the women rested on this Sabbath according to the commandment.

Then verse 56 of Luke 23 tells us that the women, after seeing Christ's body having been laid in the tomb, " 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” This work of purchasing and preparing the spices and fragrant oils could not be done on the Sabbath day. So this work was done on Friday after the High day Sabbath on Thursday. Then verse 56 says they rested again on the Sabbath day. So clearly two Sabbaths are mentioned here.

When we consider the details in all four Gospels, the picture of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion, death and resurrection that emerges is this. Jesus was crucified and entombed late on Wednesday afternoon, just before a Sabbath began at sunset. However, that was a high-day or annual Sabbath (the first day of the 7 day Feast of Unleavened Bread), falling on Thursday that week, rather than the weekly Sabbath from Friday evening through Saturday evening. The women saw Jesus’ body laid in the tomb late Wednesday afternoon, then rested on the high day Sabbath on Thursday. Then they prepared spices and fragrant oils on Friday for the proper burial of Jesus body, and then rested again on the weekly Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. Jesus remained entombed from Wednesday at sunset until Saturday at sunset, when He rose from the dead. Thus, when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb on Sunday morning before sunrise, "while it was still dark," she found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Before Sunday sunrise He had already risen. John 20:1 states: “1 Now on the first day of the week [meaning Sunday] Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark [meaning before sunrise Sunday], and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.” This clearly shows that Jesus had already risen before sunrise on Sunday.

Jesus rose late Saturday afternoon around sunset—not Sunday at sunrise—which was precisely three days and three nights after He was placed in the tomb just before sunset on Wednesday. Jesus was not resurrected on Sunday at sunrise as the false Roman Church claims, and mainstream Christianity blindly believes but on late Saturday afternoon.

***Secular Sources Confirm Jesus Christ's Existence***

*Testimony from the Romans*

Many people assume that besides the Bible, Jesus Christ is not mentioned anywhere else in history. But the fact is that other historians do mention the existence of Jesus Christ. UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” on p. 52-53 mentions several sources:

“Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 56-120) was a Roman senator, consul and governor of the Roman province of Anatolia (covering most of modern-day Turkey) as well as one of ancient Rome's greatest historians. Late in his life he wrote a 16-volume history of the Roman emperors, *the Annals*.

“No friend to either Nero or Christians, Tacitus writes that Nero blamed "a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace."

“He goes on to explain that "Christus [Christ], from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty [crucifixion] during the reign of Tiberius at the hand of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome ..." (Annals, 15:44, quoted by Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, 1998, p. 82).”

“A contemporary of Tacitus, Caius Suetonius Tranquillus (ca. 69-140), overseer of Rome's libraries and court official to several emperors, writes that the emperor Claudius "banished the Jews from Rome, who were continually making disturbances, Chrestus [Christ] being their leader" (*Lives of the First Twelve Caesars: Life of Claudius*, quoted by Grant Jeffrey, Jesus: The Great Debate, 1999, p. 163). This banishment of Jews from Rome is mentioned in Acts 18:2.

“Also, "Pliny the younger, the Roman legate of Bithynia-Pontus (what is now north-central Turkey) in the early second century, wrote to the emperor Trajan, requesting advice on how to deal with Christians who refused to reverence Caesar's image. Pliny noted that these Christians met regularly and sang hymns 'to Christ as if to a god' (Letters 10:96.7). The phrase 'as if to a God' suggests that Pliny knew Jesus had been a person who had lived on earth but was reluctant to call him divine" (Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 1987, p. 196).

“From these historical sources, none connected in any way with the Bible, we see references to these facts:

•A group called "Christians" derived its name from "Christus" (Christ).

•This "Christus" was executed during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of Pontius Pilate (Tiberius reigned A.D. 14-37; Pilate held office from 26 to 36 or 37).

•This new movement involved "a most mischievous superstition," quite possibly a reference to Christians' belief that Jesus rose from the dead after His crucifixion.

•This new movement begun by Christians began in Judea and spread to Rome.

•Early Christians considered Christ to be a divine Being.”

*Testimony from Josephus*

Flavius Josephus, a prominent Jewish historian of the first century mentions Jesus twice in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, written A.D. 90-95. He states:

"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works,—a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day" (*Antiquities*, Book 18, chapter 3, section 3).

UCG booklet continues: “While many scholars dispute parts or all of the passage, it is quoted as above by the historian Eusebius as early as 315.

“A second mention of Jesus by Josephus is seldom disputed by scholars. It concerns the martyrdom of James, His half brother: "Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others [or some of his companions;] and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned ..." (*Antiquities*, Book 20, chapter 9, section 1).”

Thus Roman historians and Josephus provide independent verification of the existence of Jesus Christ.

**Chapter 16**

**Messiah’s Misunderstood Mission**

The English word Christ derived from the Greek word Christos and the English word Messiah derived from the Hebrew word mashiach mean “anointed one.” The Jews associated anointing with the ruler as Saul, David and Solomon had been anointed, even though the priests also were anointed. To the Jews Christ and “King of the Jews” were synonymous terms.

These terms and the fact that the Jews expected the Messiah to be a descendant of David as the Pharisees declared in Matthew 22:42 because of God’s promise to David of an everlasting dynasty, the Jews understood the mission of the Messiah to be restoration of the Kingdom to Israel.

The Greek name "Jesus" is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Yehoshua or Yeshua, the English form of which is "Joshua." The name literally means “God is salvation.” Joshua was a common name in Jesus’ day. So the Jews could not associate Jesus’ name with the purpose Jesus came to fulfill “bring salvation to humanity, i.e to save humanity from death thus making eternal life possible.” The angel mentioned this to Joseph the husband of Mary in Matthew 1:21 (NKJV), “21 And she [Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Jesus performed more and greater miracles than any of the great prophets had performed. So the people wondered if Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of David. John 7:31 states, “And many of the people believed in Him, and said, 'When the Christ [Messiah] comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?”

In fact after Jesus had performed a miracle by feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, the people were ready to make Him king by force. But He escaped as described in John 6:14-15 (NKJV), “14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.”

Even after Jesus was resurrected the disciples did not have the complete prophetic picture. They were still focused on the Kingdom of Israel in Acts 1:6-9, “6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

This occurred even after Jesus had been with the disciples for 40 days after His resurrection and opened the scriptures to their understanding. Thus we can hardly blame the Jews of Jesus’ day for having misunderstood the timing of the Messiah prophecies. The prophecies in the book of Revelation were yet to be revealed more than 60 years later.

**Misunderstood Timing of Fulfillment of Prophecies**

There are many prophecies of the establishment of God’s glorious Kingdom on earth in the Old Testament. Micah 4:1-4 is one, “1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.”

No wonder the Jews were looking forward to the establishment of their glorious Kingdom. This was a prophecy for the latter days. Daniel the prophet had prophesied what the conditions would be in the latter days in Daniel 12:4 (NKJV), “4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” These conditions did not prevail in those days.

What the Jews of Jesus’ days did not understand that there were two sets of prophecies. All these prophecies are in the Jewish scriptures. One set of prophecies pertained to a glorious kingdom of Israel and the other set of prophecies pertained to the suffering of the Messiah. The Jews of Jesus’ day including the disciples were focused on the prophecies of the Kingdom only. They wanted to be rid of the Roman yoke. Even when Jesus told His disciples that He would suffer at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders and be killed the disciples just could not comprehend it. Even after Jesus’ death the disciples did not understand them till He explained these prophecies to them and opened their understanding. They then understood the prophecies concerning the suffering and death of the Messiah.

But the disciples still expected the Kingdom of God to be established in their time. Some members of God’s Church were just waiting for the return of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom any time. But Paul had to correct them in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7, “1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work…”

Paul said that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work. So he thought there seemed to be nothing restraining the revealing of the ‘man of sin.’

We are now more than 1,980 years after the days of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God has not been established yet. The problem all along with the timing of the prophecies concerning the Kingdom of God has been that those prophecies were sealed till the time of the end. When the end time came, those prophecies were unsealed and were understood first by the end-time Elijah Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. We have already proved right in the beginning of this book that we are now living in the very end times. The fulfillment of all the prophecies about the Kingdom of God is now at hand.

The Jews of Jesus’ day misunderstood the Messiah’s mission. They did not understand that He had not come to establish the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Israel in their day. He had come to bring salvation to all of humanity as His name Jesus meant “God our salvation.”

When Jesus was on trial in front of Pilate accused of claiming to be King asked Jesus if He was a King. Jesus answered in John 18:36-37, “36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." 37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth…”

**Messiah’s Mission**

The minds of all Jews were focused on the Messiah’s mission as reestablishing the kingdom of Israel. But they did not understand the prophecies about the suffering and death of the Messiah. At the last Passover with His disciples Jesus explained why He came in Matthew 26:26-28, “26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

He had come to sacrifice His body and have His blood shed for the remission of sins for all mankind. John the Baptist put it succinctly in John 1:29, “29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

After His resurrection Jesus Christ explained the scriptures about Himself to the disciples and charged them with a commission as Luke states in Luke 24:44, “44Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Thus at the first time the Messiah came to have His blood shed as the Lamb of God so that all of humanity could receive forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ now makes eternal life possible as Romans 6:23 states, “23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

***Gospel of the Kingdom of God Jesus Preached***

The Jews understood the Messiah prophecies to mean the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. Even after being 40 days with Jesus after His resurrection, the disciples still asked Him, “"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). This was their understanding after being three and a half years with Jesus. This misunderstanding arose because till that time almost all the members of God’s Church were Jews. So they still thought the Kingdom of God meant Kingdom of Israel.

But Jesus had been preaching about the Kingdom of God and not the Kingdom of Israel. Mark 1:14-15 (NKJV) states, ''Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel'"

In Luke 4:43 He said, “43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.”

Not only did Jesus preach about the Kingdom of God, He sent His disciples also to preach the same message in Luke 9:1-2, “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.”

The apostles also preached the same message about the Kingdom of God. Paul did so. Acts 14:22 states, he "strengthen[ed] the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God'" (Acts:14:22). Later, in Acts 19:8, "he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God."

Old Testament prophets talked about the Kingdom of God. David said in Psalm 145:10-13 (NKJV), "All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations."

Daniel the prophet mentioned the coming Kingdom of God in his prophecies. He wrote in Daniel 7:27, “27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

Few of the Jews understood the Kingdom to be the Kingdom of God. They equated the Kingdom of God with the Kingdom of Israel in Jesus’ day. But Jesus came to explain the mysteries of the kingdom to His disciples. When He had told them the parable of the sower they asked Him in Luke 8:9-10, “9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.”

Jesus explained many things that were hazy in the Old Testament prophecies and the Kingdom of God was one of those mysteries.

Even though these mysteries are written about in the New Testament, many in Christianity still misunderstand what the Kingdom of God is. Part of the problem with humanity is that they have read about the kingdom of God for more than 1,980 years now, but it’s still not here. Many in the previous centuries have thought the same thing. So various Christian denominations have come up with their own ideas of what the kingdom of God is. Some say the kingdom of God is within the heart of Christians, or the Church collectively is the Kingdom of God. But that is spiritualizing away what the Kingdom of God means.

Part of the problem is that things have not changed for humanity since the days of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ mentioned that He would return. But He still has not returned. That’s why Christians spiritualize away what the Kingdom of God is.

But the truth is that the Kingdom of God is a real kingdom. A kingdom must have a king, subjects, laws, means to enforce the laws and territory. So the Kingdom of God must possess all these 5 elements. When the Kingdom of God is established on earth it will have all these elements. Jesus Christ will soon return to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords [the kings and lords will be the resurrected saints who will rule with Jesus Christ] to establish the Kingdom of God over the entire earth [the territory the Kingdom of God will rule] and over all nations of the earth [its subjects]. The laws the kingdom will be governed by will be the entire Bible. The laws will be enforced by the government of Jesus Christ and the saints. Thus the Kingdom of God will be a real kingdom and not something ethereal in the ‘hearts of men.’

There are numerous prophecies describing many aspects of the kingdom and how it will solve humanity’s problems.

Daniel the prophet described it in his interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s image in Daniel 2:44-45 (NKJV), “44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands [meaning not the work of humans but of God], and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

As explained in the prophecies in Daniel and the book of Revelation the kingdom that the God of heaven is right now resurrecting itself, the seventh resurrection of the “Holy Roman Empire” in Europe which will be an alliance of ten kings, represented by the ten horns on the 7th head of the beast in Revelation 17 and by the 10 toes in King Nebuchadnezzar’s image. This indicates that the return of Jesus Christ is only a short time ahead.

Daniel 7:13-14, 26-27 mentions that the Kingdom of God will encompass all nations, “13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man [Jesus Christ], coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed…26 'But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion [this is the dominion of the fourth beast and the little horn], to consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'”

We will not go through the numerous prophecies about the Kingdom of God. But the United Church of God offers a free booklet “*The Gospel of the Kingdom*” available at its web site www.ucg.org. It answers many questions that the Jews or other readers might have about the Kingdom of God. I would recommend that the reader read it for a thorough explanation about the gospel [meaning ‘good news’] of the Kingdom of God.

Here are some of the prophecies describing conditions in the Kingdom of God from the UCG booklet (scriptures quoted are from the NKJV):

“What kind of future does God have in store for planet earth? Through His prophets God reveals many specific details of how this world will be transformed in the Kingdom of God. Notice a few prophecies about the marvelous world God has planned for us:

*A world of unparalleled peace*

". . . They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid . . ." (Micah 4:3-4).

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

*Wild animals' nature transformed*

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them . . ." (Isaiah 11:6).

*A world of agricultural abundance*

"'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it . . . They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them'" (Amos 9:13-14).

". . . I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase" (Ezekiel 34:26-27).

*Wastelands transformed*

". . . Waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water . . ." (Isaiah 35:6-7).

*Sickness and disease healed*

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isaiah 35:5-6).

*Mankind given a new heart and spirit*

"Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them…that they may walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

*Nations will learn God's ways*

"Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD…He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth . . .'" (Micah 4:2).

*Jesus Christ will rule the world*

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder…Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end . . ." (Isaiah 9:6-7).

All these prophecies about God solving mankind’s problems that the Jews have seen in their scriptures for the past 3 millennia will be fulfilled. Only the timing of their fulfillment has been misunderstood.

***Restoration of the Government of God***

Jews’ ideas about Satan based on the Old Testament scriptures are also hazy about his impact on humanity. Ezekiel and Isaiah describe his rebellion against the Most High. They know that he provoked David to number Israel. But only the New Testament sheds much more light on his nature and impact on humanity.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 states, “3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost [or perishing in NIV]: 4 In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Here the Bible identifies another god who is blinding the minds of those who do not believe the good news of Jesus Christ, which is the remission of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ making eternal life possible; the offer of salvation which is being born as immortal sons of God and ruling with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God on earth.

Revelation 12:9 identifies this ‘god of the world’ , “9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who *deceives the whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

The ‘god of this world’ now stands exposed. He is identified as Satan the devil, the one who deceives the whole world. So he and the ‘god of this world’ are one and the same being, because the ‘god of this world’ is also engaged in deceiving the whole world about the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he is identified as the serpent of old that deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden into eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Satan is a Hebrew noun meaning "adversary"—the enemy, opponent, antagonist, or foe. The verb forms of the noun mean to "accuse," "slander" and "be an adversary" (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, 1992, "Satan," p. 985).

Devil is the other name for Satan. Devil is translated from the Greek word diabolos, the root from which we get such words as diabolic and diabolical, used to describe something wicked or sinister. Diabolos means "an accuser, a slanderer" (W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, "Devil, Devilish").

The Bible reveals much about Satan’s nature. Jesus Christ said in John 8:44 (NKJV), “…He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Peter the apostle shed further light on his murderous nature in 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV): “8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”

Peter thus declares that the devil is like a roaring lion seeking any human being he can devour, and that he is the cause of our suffering.

Ephesians 2:2-4 says he works in all the children of disobedience to God, “2 Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan being called the prince of the power of the air means he broadcasts his thoughts, moods, ideas, feelings and attitudes to all humans], the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation [conduct] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath…”

Satan’s evil influence is so pervasive that he "deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). And he achieves this influence on mankind through his lies and deception. Founding different religions with false promises of salvation based on cunningly crafted lies has been one of Satan’s prime strategies to try to devour mankind. In addition he blinds mankind to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Satan at present rules the kingdoms of the world. In his confrontation with Jesus Christ he said in Luke 4:5-6, “5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, all this power will I give to you, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.”

Jesus did not dispute that Satan at present rules in all the kingdoms of the world. Even Daniel the prophet indicated that Satan appoints some of his demons as princes over the kingdoms of the world (Daniel 10:13, 20).

When Satan rebelled against God, God’s government was no longer being administered by Satan on earth. But the Day of Atonement pictures the putting away of Satan after all the sins of mankind are laid on his head and he is imprisoned for the 1,000 years of the kingdom of God (Revelation 20:1-3, “1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.”)

Putting away of Satan is pictured in the Day of Atonement ceremony of the Azazel goat practiced in ancient Israel (Leviticus 16:21-22, “21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”) The significance is explained in the UCG Booklet “*God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*” available free of charge at www.ucg.org).

Kingdom of God thus means that Satan will be removed as ruler of earth and the government of God will be restored.

***Other Ideas about What the Gospel Is***

People and Churches have other erroneous ideas about what the gospel is. Some believe that it is about the person of Jesus Christ and what He did for humanity. So preachers preach mainly about Jesus Christ. Others talk about forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. That certainly is part of the good news. It is the necessary first step for salvation. But the gospel as we have seen is primarily about the establishment of the earth ruling Kingdom of God, replacing human governments of all nations with God’s government.

**Chapter 17**

**Did Jesus Break the Law?**

The common idea in mainstream Christianity is that Jesus did away with the Law of Moses annulling the Old Testament teaching and replacing it with the New Testament. The idea is also widespread in Judaism.

Jacob Neusner, in his book *A Rabbi Talks With Jesus*, explains why Jews as a whole do not follow Jesus and reject any possibility that He could be the Messiah. "Jews believe in the Torah of Moses," he explains, "...and that belief requires faithful Jews to enter a dissent at the teachings of Jesus, on the grounds that those teachings at important points contradict the Torah" (1993, pp. xii).

But both Christianity and Judaism are wrong in their assessment of Jesus’ attitude towards the Old Testament Law. Instead of accepting what religious leaders think about Jesus’ teachings, let’s see what Jesus Himself said in the Bible.

He said in Matthew 5:17, “17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

We see that Jesus declared that we should not even think such a thing that He intended to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but that He came to fulfill it.

Christians then twist the meaning of how He can to “fulfill” the Law” in order to support their erroneous views. UCG Booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” explains on p. 92.

“Regrettably, the meaning of "fulfilling the law" has been twisted by many who claim the name of Jesus but don't really understand what He taught. They say that since Jesus said He would fulfill the law, we no longer need to keep it and the law has no further obligation on His followers.

“Another view of "fulfilling the law" is that Jesus "filled full" what was lacking in the law—that is, He completed it, partly canceling it and partly adding to it, forming what is sometimes referred to as "Christ's law" or "New Testament teaching." The implication of this view is that the New Testament brought a change in the requirements for salvation and that the laws given in the Old Testament are obsolete. But do either of these views accurately reflect what Jesus meant?

“The Greek word *pleroo*, translated "fulfill" in Matthew 5:17, means "to make full, to fill, to fill up, ... to fill to the full" or "to render full, i.e. to complete" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2002, Strong's number 4137). In other words, Jesus said He came to complete the law and make it perfect. How? By showing the spiritual intent and application of God's law. His meaning is clear from the remainder of the chapter, where He showed the spiritual intent of specific commandments.

“Some distort the meaning of "fulfill" to have Jesus saying, "I did not come to destroy the law, but to end it by fulfilling it." This is inconsistent with His own words. Through the remainder of the chapter, He showed that the spiritual application of the law made it even more difficult to keep, not that it was annulled or no longer necessary.

“Jesus, by explaining, expanding and exemplifying God's law, fulfilled a prophecy of the Messiah found in Isaiah 42:21: "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law, and make it honorable."

“Jesus Christ did exactly that, showing the holy, spiritual intent, purpose and scope of God's law. He met the law's requirements by obeying it perfectly in thought and deed, both in the letter and in the intent of the heart.”

Then Jesus Christ continued in Matthew 5:18, “"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Here Jesus equates the permanence of the law to the permanence of heaven and earth and even punctuation marks in the Law will all be fulfilled.

Jesus then states in Matthew 5:19 “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Here Jesus makes it absolutely clear that keeping the commandments in the Law is required to qualify to be in the Kingdom of God. Those who break the least of the commandments will be least in the Kingdom because they will not be in it as other scriptures show (Revelation 21:8, “8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars [breaking some of the Ten Commandments] shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.").

Then Jesus made a startling statement in the next verse, Matthew 5:20, “20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus said that the spirituality of the Pharisees, whom the people looked upon as having reached the pinnacle of commandment keeping and righteousness, was not enough to get anyone in the Kingdom of Heaven [the term is used interchangeably with Kingdom of God by the other gospel writers. The Kingdom of Heaven simply meant that at that time the King was in Heaven].

Jesus pronounced woes on the scribes and Pharisees later to show where the problems in their righteousness lay in Matthew 23:25-28 (NKJV), “25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. In their actions that could be seen by others they appeared to be very righteous in keeping the commandments perfectly, but instituted rules that amounted to extortion. They also kept minor aspects of the Law such as diligently paying tithes of even herbs, but neglected the weightier spiritual parts of the Law.

Then Jesus proceeded to give examples of some of the Ten Commandments in which the scribes and the Pharisees were missing the spiritual intent of the Law while trying to keep merely the letter of the Law.

Matthew 5:21-22 (NKJV), “21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.”

Jesus here pointed out that the intent of the sixth commandment was to curb unjust anger, and not even use derogatory words to put down people as such evil attitudes led to murder.

Similarly Jesus illustrated the spiritual intent of the seventh commandment in verses 27-28, “27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

These examples illustrate what Jesus meant when He said the scribes and Pharisees “cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion [or greed] and self-indulgence.” Not only did Jesus say that the whole Law is to be observed but He clarified that it is to be observed even more strictly than the scribes and the Pharisees did. It is to be observed from the heart. This was in fact the original intent when God gave the Law through Moses as stated in Deuteronomy 5:29 (NKJV), “29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”

When Jesus gave the spiritual intent of the Law He used words such as: “You have heard that it was said to those of old… But I say to you…” Some still argue that Jesus’ intent was to contrast His teaching with Moses’ teaching and changed or modified the Law. But this makes no sense at all. Jesus had just said that we were not even to think that He had any intention of changing the Law and that it was as permanent as the heavens and the earth. How could He be changing the sixth commandment and allowing murder while prohibiting unjust anger and derogatory language; or allowing adultery while prohibiting lusting after a woman. That’s why He said that to qualify to be in God’s kingdom one’s righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus Christ could not be inconsistent for He was the God of the Old Testament who gave the Law in the first place. He declared through Malachi the prophet, “I am the LORD, I do not change ..." (Malachi 3:6).

***Jesus and the Sabbath***

Mainstream Christianity does not keep the Sabbath but worships on Sunday, the day of sun worship. They argue that Jesus annulled the Ten Commandments but then reinstituted nine of the Ten Commandments except the Sabbath command as He mentioned the nine commandments in His teachings. In support of their position of no longer being required to keep the Sabbath they say Jesus is now our ‘rest,’ thus replacing the Sabbath with Himself. Some believe that we are no longer required to rest on any particular day but can rest on any day of the week. But this position of mainstream Christianity is not supported by the Bible.

First of all Jesus Himself kept the Sabbath. Luke 4:16 states, “16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” We see that it was Jesus’ regular custom to worship on the Sabbath day.

Even Paul the apostle kept the Sabbath as stated in Acts 17:2, “2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures…” Paul told members of the Church in 1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV), “1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” Thus just as Christ kept the Sabbath, Paul also kept it.

Now search the New Testament and there is not a single statement of Jesus telling the disciples not to worship on the Sabbath or to worship on Sunday or another day of the week or even any instance of His doing so. So how does mainstream Christianity or the Jews get the idea that Jesus changed the worship day from the Sabbath day to another day of the week?

The answer is that the Jews and mainstream Christianity misunderstand what Jesus’ confrontations with the scribes and Pharisees regarding the Sabbath were about. The confrontations were never about keeping the Sabbath but on how to keep it.

For example, on more than one occasion the scribes and Pharisees confronted Jesus for the miracles of healings He performed on the Sabbath.

One such example is in Mark 3:1-6, “1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he says unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he says unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill ? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he says unto the man, Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.”

Another example is provided in Luke 13:10-17 (NKJV), “10 Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. 12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.”

The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” states on p. 101, “According to the Pharisees, rendering medical attention to someone, unless it were a matter of life and death, was prohibited on the Sabbath. And since none of these healings involved a life-and-death situation, they thought Jesus was breaking the Sabbath. But as the Savior, Jesus understood the purpose of the Sabbath, that it was a perfectly appropriate time to bring His message of healing, hope and redemption to humanity and to live that message through His actions.

“He was rightfully angry at their inability to see that they placed their own traditions and interpretations over the true purpose of Sabbath observance (Mark 3:5). Yet they were so spiritually blind that they hated Him for exposing their distortions of God's commands (verse 6).”

On another occasion there was another confrontation with the Pharisees about the Sabbath. Mark 2:23-26 (NKJV) states, “23 Now it happened that He went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" 25 But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26 how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat, except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

Here the disciples were not harvesting the grain but just taking a little to satisfy their hunger. The Pharisees thought this was breaking the Sabbath. But Jesus told them that what the disciples did was within the spiritual intent of the Law and that God’s Law allowed for mercy in extenuating circumstances.

Then Jesus gave the purpose for which the Sabbath was made in verse 27, “27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

UCG booklet states on p. 104, “The Pharisees had reversed the priorities of the law of God. They had added so many meticulous regulations and traditions to the Sabbath commandment that trying to keep it as they demanded had become an enormous burden for people rather than the blessing God had intended it to be (Isaiah 58:13-14).

“Jesus then claimed to have authority to say how the Sabbath should be observed: "Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (verse 28). Here Jesus takes His rightful place as the One who gave this law of the Sabbath in the first place. For, being the very Creator as we have previously seen (Colossians 1:16; John 1:3), He is the One who created the Sabbath by resting on it (Genesis 2:2-3). Thus it is foolish to argue that Jesus would abolish or annul something that He had personally created for the benefit of every human being!

“What Jesus is in essence saying to the Pharisees here is: You don't have a right to tell people how to keep God's laws. I am the One who gave the laws to man in the first place, therefore I know why it was commanded and how it was intended to be observed.

“When Jesus spoke, it was from the authority He inherently possessed as the great Lawgiver. Jesus never abrogated His own law! But He did most certainly correct these religious leaders' perversions of the law without hesitation. (If you would like to know more about the biblical Sabbath day, request or download your free copy of the booklet *'Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest'* at the United Church of God web site: www.ucg.org.)”

***Judaism Forsook Moses, Christianity Rejected Christ***

We have seen that Jesus and the disciples kept the Sabbath. There was not ever any question or discussion anywhere in the New Testament about not keeping it. Paul the apostle kept it. If Jesus were with us today, there would never ever be a question that He would be keeping the Sabbath. So we have to conclude that mainstream Christianity has forsaken Christ. They do not practice what He taught or follow the example He set.

We have also seen that Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day had corrupted what Moses wrote in the Law. They were not observing the Law but keeping it according to their own traditions and ordinances they had themselves added to the Law. After the Babylonian captivity which Nehemiah pointed out was due to violating the Sabbath command (Nehemiah 13:18), the Jewish leaders wanted to prevent the nation from ever committing this sin again and avoid national captivity. So they added many restrictions, rules and regulations about observing the Sabbath and the Law. Instead of the Sabbath day being a day of joy and happiness it became a burden for the people. Similarly many such burdens were added to other parts of the Law. In doing so the Jews had corrupted the Law of Moses. In effect they forsook Moses. Jesus in His confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders was correcting these corruptions in Moses’ Law. In reality, Jesus and Moses completely agreed with one another. Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament is consistent. He does not change (Malachi 3:6).

We see Jesus kept the Law in the letter of the Law and its spiritual intent and made it absolutely clear that He had not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. He made it clear in Matthew 7:21-23 that without keeping the Law no one will enter the Kingdom of God, “21 Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity [or sin which is defined in 1 John 3:4, “4 Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”)”

Thus the Churches who claim to represent or follow Jesus Christ don’t actually do so. When they say Jesus changed the Old Testament Law they are simply twisting scriptures to support their position. But we have proved them to be flat out wrong. Mainstream Christianity does not follow Christ, but the more than 4,000 year old paganism of Semiramis (Ashtoreth or Astarte or Queen of Heaven of the Bible) and Nimrod (the Baal of the Bible) foisted on it by the Roman Church.

This is not to say that Jesus merely fulfilled the Law by explaining the spiritual intent of the Law in addition to the letter of the Law. There are other ways in which He fulfilled the Law.

***Other Ways Jesus Fulfilled the Law***

What good is a Law if it does not prescribe a penalty for its violation? No one would obey a restrictive law (even though laws are for the overall good of society. But some may find it personally more beneficial at the expense of others, such as stealing, to violate the law.) Violation of God’s Law always leads to pain and suffering in the long run for the violators as well as others in society. That is why the Law prescribed the death penalty for its violation. That’s why Paul says in Romans 6:23, “...the wages of sin is death…”

But Paul continues in verse 23, “…But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul said in Romans 3:23-25, “23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God…”

All of us have sinned and thus incurred the death penalty. But Jesus lived a sinless life. He was our Creator and His life was of more value than all of humanity put together. His sacrifice as the Lamb of God without spot thus fulfilled the requirement of the Law by paying the death penalty for all of humanity.

The writer of the book of Hebrews explains that the sacrifices of Moses’ sacrificial Law could not take away sin. But Jesus’ sacrifice does. Hebrews 10:1-4, 9-14 “1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins…

“9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

***Jesus and God’s Seven Annual Holy Days***

Look up any good encyclopedia about the origins of Christmas, Good Friday and Easter, Valentine’s Day, and other so-called Christian festivals and you will find that each and every one of them originated with paganism. None of these festivals are even mentioned in the Bible. Easter is mentioned in one place in the King James Version of the Bible (Acts 12:4) and scholars agree that it is a mistranslation of the word for Passover. Jesus Christ and none of the apostles ever kept these festivals. They all kept the Sabbath and all of God’s seven annual holy days, never Sunday or Christmas or Easter.

Here are the scriptures where all the Annual Holy Days are mentioned in the New Testament and show that Jesus and the apostles kept them in addition to the Sabbath. All these feasts are described in Leviticus 23 in the Old Testament.

*Passover*: Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 2:41-42; 22:1, 7-20;John 2:13, 23; 6:4; 13:1-30;1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

*Feast of Unleavened Bread*: Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 2:41-42, 22:1,7; Acts 20:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

*Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost*: Acts 2:1-21; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8

*Feast of Trumpets*: Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 11:15

*Day of Atonement*: Acts 27:9

Feast of Tabernacles: John 7:1-2, 8, 10, 14

*The Eighth Day (or the Last Great Day of the Feast)*: John chapters 7-9

As already explained, these seven annual holy days have tremendous significance for Christianity and the Jews. They picture God’s plan of salvation for mankind.

If you'd like to learn more about the true biblical festivals and how they were replaced with holidays that had nothing to do with Christianity or the Bible, request or download the free booklets *'Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep*?' and ' *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind'* at www.ucg.org.

***Jesus' New Commandment***

Jesus said in John 13:34 (NKJV), "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

Some in mainstream Christianity argue that Jesus replaced the Ten Commandments, and that our lives should be guided only by love. So we are no longer required to keep them. This flies in the face of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

But how did Jesus define love for God? John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Then in John 15:10 He said, “10 If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” Jesus is saying that the only way to love Him is to keep His commandments, meaning the Ten Commandments.

But now look closely at what Jesus said in His New commandment, “you love one another; as I have loved you…” Jesus here was not giving a New Commandment about love. Loving one another was already commanded in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18, “…but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”).

Jesus was telling us to love one another as He had loved them by His example. He explained that love in John 15:12-13, “12 This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Jesus Christ loved us so much that He laid down His life for all of us. He asked His followers to love one another as He had loved them with His example. The new commandment was to love each other in the way He had loved us and not just to love one another.

**Chapter 18**

**Who Killed Jesus?**

Hitler justified murdering 6 million Jews in genocide in World War 2, labeling them “Christ Killers”. Was he justified? Germans are hardly followers of Jesus Christ. Now they openly admit that Satan is their ‘god.’ But Hitler was able to brainwash the Germans into believing that the Jews should be exterminated for killing the Savior of Mankind.

For the past more than 1,980 years The Jews have been persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike for being the murderers of Jesus Christ. But were the Germans and Catholics and Protestants right? Were Jewish leaders responsible for Murdering Jesus Christ?

There is no question that the Jewish religious leaders, the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees who perceived Jesus Christ to be a threat to their position wanted Him dead. They arrested Him, held a trial. When He admitted to them that He was the Messiah, they accused Him of blasphemy and condemned Him to death. But since they did not have the authority to execute Him they accused Him before Pilate the Roman governor.

After trial when Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, having found nothing worthy of death in Him twice (John 18:38; 19:4), they insisted that He be crucified. They were even able to manipulate the common people to shout and demand that Pilate crucify Him. And yet Pilate went ahead and sanctioned His execution to please the Jewish people (Mark 15:15, “15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.)”

Colossal injustice was done in the execution of Jesus Christ. UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” states on p. 107:

“The injustice of the arrest, trial and death of Jesus Christ is profound in that no person was ever so innocent, so sinless, so blameless, so undeserving of such punishment. Peter testifies that He "committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). He was the most virtuous man who ever lived.

“Jesus challenged His enemies, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" [Which means He kept the Sabbath and the whole Law] (John 8:46). The centurion, the officer in charge of His execution, was convinced that He had executed a righteous man (Luke 23:47). One of the thieves crucified with Him understood that Jesus had done nothing wrong and didn't deserve to die (Luke 23:41).

“He did nothing to deserve the horrendous death imposed on Him, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). He was, after all, the Son of God, as the centurion recognized (Mark 15:39).

“This was not the injustice of the century, or the millennium, but the injustice of the history of the human race.”

***Who is to Blame?***

So who is to blame for this incredible injustice done to an innocent Man?

When the apostles had begun preaching the gospel and a man was healed, the chief priests put them in prison. But later they were let go because of the miracle done to the man. Then the disciples prayed to God in Acts 4:27-28, " 27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.”

Here the apostles laid the blame for Jesus’ death on everybody, not just the Jewish leaders. They blamed Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentile leaders, the Romans as representatives of the Gentiles and the Jews as representatives of Israel. Both Israelites and Gentiles are blamed for Jesus’ death. But the apostles acknowledged that Jesus died because God had purposed it beforehand.

God had purposed beforehand and prophesied through the prophets that Jesus would come and die for the sins of humanity. Isaiah the prophet had prophesied in Isaiah 53:5-7 (NIV), “5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter…”

Jesus as the God of the Old Testament had inspired the prophets to prophesy His death centuries before He came. It was pre-determined that Jesus would come and die for the sins of all mankind. In this case, the Jewish religious leaders, representatives of the Roman rule, Roman soldiers and the common Jewish people were simply all involved in an event that God the Father and Jesus Christ had pre-determined. Execution of Jesus Christ was pre-ordained. It could not have been avoided. It was God’s plan from the very beginning of humanity’s creation.

But the reason Jesus Christ’s death was necessary was the iniquities of each and every one of us as Isaiah states. If Jesus had come to any people and exposed their hypocrisy and conduct which were far removed from God’s ideal they would all have been incensed at Him enough to have murdered Him.

Jesus Christ knew why He had come into the world. He stated in His prayer in John 12:27 (NKJV), “27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.”

John wrote in John 3:16 (NKJV), “16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Jesus Himself said in John 10:17-18, “17 Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

So the horrible truth that none of us want to admit is that each and every one of us is responsible for the execution of Jesus Christ. We are all guilty. He was executed for our sins to pay the death penalty on our behalf. We are all complicit in His death. His death would not have been necessary if we had not sinned.

Paul the apostle was convinced of his own guilt in the death of Jesus Christ. He said in 1 Timothy 1:15 (NIV), "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst."

***Jesus Killed in Ignorance***

The apostles lay the blame for the unjust murder of Jesus Christ on all of humanity. But they also declare that we all did it in ignorance.

Paul, said of himself in 1 Timothy 1:13 (NKJV), “13 Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Peter the apostle stated the same thing in Acts 3:17-26 (NKJV), “17 Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

The Jews of the world need to admit this. They are not exclusively guilty of the murder of Jesus Christ. All of humanity is and everyone will learn and acknowledge the truth one day. So the Jews and the world need to quit blaming the Jews exclusively for the murder of Jesus Christ. The Jews need not feel any more guilty than any other people on earth for the death of Jesus Christ.

God’s commission to His end-time Church is to proclaim this truth to the Jews. They have not known the God they worship. They have not known and do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament that they profess to worship. He was resurrected, and is alive today, sitting at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

But they have a responsibility now that the truth has been proclaimed to them. They need to follow the advice that Peter the apostle gave to the Jews of his day when they realized that they were responsible for the murder of Jesus as stated above in Acts 3:17-18. Peter followed up with this advice for them next in verses 19-26:

“19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

Peter stated his advice further to the Jews of his generation in Acts 2:37-39 (NKJV), “37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

As mentioned in the sequence of end-time events in chapter 11, before the end-time catastrophic events are over much of humanity will lose their lives. But God does provide a way of escape. And that escape is possible only by accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, repenting of one’s sins, being baptized into God’s Church and doing God’s end-time work diligently.

God’s Church is showing this way of escape to all Jews of the world. It is up to you to act to take advantage of it.

**Chapter 19**

**Prepare Yourself to Meet the Soon Coming Real Jesus!**

We have seen that the coming of the God of Old Testament to earth as Jesus Christ as the Son of God was planned from the very beginning. His death and resurrection were all pre-planned and prophesied centuries before the event. Now Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father waiting till His enemies be made His footstool.

All Old Testament and New Testament prophecies about the sequence of events leading up to the establishment of the Kingdom of God were sealed till the time of the end. But we are now living in the time of the end and the prophecies have been revealed to God’s Church. The author has written a comprehensive booklet explaining these prophecies titled “*World in Bible Prophecy*” available free of charge at his web site www.ChurchofGodMessage.com.

The gospel that Jesus Christ and the apostles preached was about the return of Jesus Christ to earth to establish the Kingdom of God and restore God’s government on earth. Daniel and David prophesied about the establishment of this Kingdom which shall rule the entire earth and shall never be destroyed. Almost all the prophets prophesied about some aspect of what the Kingdom of God will be like.

God's plan for humanity from the very beginning has been "bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10). After the sin of Adam and Eve God planned to reconcile all of humanity to Himself as stated in 2 Corinthians 5:18, “18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ…”

What had separated humanity from God? Isaiah 59:1-2 (NKJV) states why, “1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

Thus we see that humanity’s sins have separated us from God the Father. But we may ask why can’t God simply forgive sins? Why was Jesus Christ’s death necessary for forgiveness of sins?

**Need for the Death of Jesus Christ for Forgiveness of Sins**

Angels were created before man. They are sons of God by creation (Job 1:6, 38:7). But they did not seem to understand the concept of family. Then Satan and his angels rebelled against God. Satan and his demons have been the cause of sin, pain and suffering in the universe ever since.

God the Father and Jesus Christ wanted to teach all their intelligent creatures that they are a family, and are inviting all their creatures to become part of their family. That’s why God created mankind flesh and blood beings with the ability to reproduce.

Humans grow up loving their parents. But as they grow into teens they long to get away from their parents’ control and often wonder if their parents love them when curbing their freedoms. But then when they have children of their own they learn how much their parents loved them and did what was only in their best interests. So God has created mankind flesh and blood beings with the ability to reproduce so that they can understand how much God the Father and Jesus Christ love them.

By creating man, God is trying to show all His intelligent creatures (including the angels) that He and Jesus Christ are a family, the God family, and He is inviting all of humanity to become His family, as His literal spirit born immortal sons. At present there are only two members in the God family; God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. But as stated in Hebrews 2:10, God’s plan from the very beginning of creation of man has been to bring “many sons to glory,” by adding human beings as members of His family as His own literal sons and daughters.

But God WILL NOT have a dysfunctional family, with members bickering and fighting with each other. He wants a perfect family with members that love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and love each other as themselves. The only way God can ensure that He will have such a family is by all His children having His holy righteous character instilled in them?

To truly know God, one must know what God’s way of life is! It is the way of spiritual holiness, righteousness and absolute perfection, which can be summed by one word: LOVE, which is defined as outgoing concern for the welfare of others. It can also be called the way of “giving” instead of “getting”, the way of sharing, helping and serving. God’s nature includes the attributes of PEACE, HARMONY, JUSTICE, MERCY, COMPASSION, HAPPINESS AND JOY towards all those He has created. It is a way devoid of coveting, lust, greed, vanity, selfishness, envy, jealousy, resentment, bitterness, hatred, competition, strife, violence and destruction.

A person needs God’s holy righteous character to live that way of life perfectly. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, describes what God’s righteous character is in his book “*Mystery of the Ages*” p. 69-70: “Perfect, holy and righteous character is the ability in such separate entity to come to discern the true and right way from the false, to make voluntarily a full and unconditional surrender to God and His perfect way – to yield to be conquered by God – to determine even against temptation or self-desire, to live and do the right. And even then such holy character is the gift of God. It comes by yielding to God to instill His LAW (God’s right way of life) within the entity who so decides and wills.”

Even God with His creative powers cannot create His holy righteous character in an intelligent being by fiat. The reason is that it requires the assent and willingness of the being in whom godly character is to be instilled. The person has to let God work with him to instill His character in him.

Satan and the demons lacked God’s holy righteous character. That’s why they rebelled against God. Those human beings who by their own free will and choice let God develop His holy and righteous character in them will qualify to become members of God’s family as His literal immortal sons, just as Jesus Christ today is God’s immortal Son. John says we shall also look like Jesus Christ with the same body as He has. That is God’s purpose in creating humanity. God is reproducing Himself through humanity. Human beings and all other physical creatures can reproduce themselves as flesh and blood creatures. But we cannot reproduce spirit born creatures with godly character. Only God can perform that reproductive process in us.

Despite such scriptures reassuring us, we still cannot comprehend that we shall become gods like Jesus Christ, literal immortal children of God the Father. Our argument against this belief is that Jesus Christ was a God Being before He became flesh, but we were created mere flesh and blood. If God wanted to create us as His literal sons and daughters, He could have simply created us like Jesus Christ. Because we are created as flesh and blood beings like animals, we cannot therefore ever become equal to Jesus Christ as God’s literal sons and daughters.

But we have forgotten that God did in fact create sons composed of spirit before humanity was created. Those spirit beings are the 24 elders and the angelic world. A part of those sons created with spirit bodies rebelled against God. God could not create His holy righteous character in them by fiat because they were created with free will and it requires their exercise of that free will in acquiescing to allow God to create His holy righteous character in them. God has created humans so that they can first allow Him to develop His holy righteous character in themselves before God will give them eternal life.

In believing that by virtue of being created flesh and blood like animals we will always be an inferior creation as compared to the spirit world, we seem to have forgotten that Jesus Christ was also created a flesh and blood human being. To prove to humans that He will convert them to spirit beings God the Father resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ will resurrect us in exactly the same way as spirit beings, to become His immortal sons and daughters.

The reality of the resurrection energized Jesus disciples so that they were willing to die for their belief. They knew that their potential was to become God’s literal sons and daughters like Jesus Christ. That’s why John the apostle wrote about it.

We may still think that we cannot be equal to God because God had no direct hand in creating us. We were born as a result of our parents actions, and not directly created like Jesus Christ was created by God the Father. So we cannot be equal with Jesus Christ. But we are forgetting that we would not have fully experienced the love of a parent for a child if God had a direct hand in our creation and not through the human reproductive process. We also do not realize that the chance of a human sperm fertilizing a human egg by mere chance is almost negligible. This means that God has a direct hand in the conception of a human being, making the near impossible possible. But when a human child is born, its parents know that the child has come entirely from their own bodies. So they deeply love that child. If God had a direct hand in creating flesh and blood human children without human reproduction, we would not have experienced the same level of love for our children. God has allowed us to reproduce without His direct hand in it so that we can feel and experience love for our own children and thus learn how deeply God loves us.

By being equal to Jesus Christ does not mean equal in power, strength and abilities as all human beings are not equal in power, strength and abilities. But they are equal in the sense that they are all human beings.

The Bible leaves no doubt about what the potential of human beings is. It is to become God’s literal sons and daughters with spirit bodies just like that of Jesus Christ. But we had to be created flesh and blood like animals to learn other godly righteous character building lessons. We should not limit God’s creative powers in our thinking. If He could create the Word He certainly can convert flesh and blood human beings into spirit beings with the same spirit composition as Jesus Christ.

The only way humans can become God’s literal sons and daughters is to first develop His holy, righteous, godly character in them. Human beings do that by learning to completely surrender to God and obeying His Law. Obeying God’s law means to not sin, because John describes sin in 1 John 3:4. He writes: “4 Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” The NKJV translates this verse as: “4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

Thus to become members of God’s family, human beings must eventually become sinless as God the Father and Jesus Christ are sinless. If God allowed sinful people into His family, it would become a dysfunctional family. We see the results of a dysfunctional family in what Satan and the demons do on earth. We can never become sinless as physical human beings because our mental and physical capacities are severely limited. Only Jesus Christ remained sinless as a human being because God gave Him His holy spirit without measure (John 3:34). In contrast God has given us only a type of down payment (earnest) of His holy spirit at present (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5). But when we have demonstrated by our attitudes and actions that we want to develop holy and righteous character in ourselves, we will have qualified to become God’s spirit born immortal sons. Then at the resurrection God will change our composition to spirit beings with a full measure of His holy spirit. Then we will have the mental capacity as well as other powers multiplied trillions of times to enable us to remain sinless.

*Why Sinlessness?*

Again, why God has such an emphasis on sinlessness? The answer is quite simple. Any transgression of God’s law, or any form of lawlessness always brings pain and suffering without fail. We cannot have perfect love, peace, joy and happiness when there is any form of sin present in us.

As long as there is even an iota of sin present in any of God’s sons, God’s family cannot live the kind of life God has prophesied in Revelation 21:3-4: “3 "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

That is the kind of family God is purposing and is working to create. He wants a family that does not experience tears, pain, suffering and sorrow which the rebellion of Satan and the demons brought into the universe. And becoming part of God’s family involves our free choice. Each and every human being has to choose to become part of God’s family when God sends that human being His invitation by calling him. Those who choose not to by rebelling against God and His law will not become a part of His family.

*Why Does Not God Simply Forgive Sin?*

Many have questioned the need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to forgive our sins. They have said that God can simply forgive sin if He chooses to. Jesus Christ’s sacrifice is not needed for that purpose.

Can you imagine God simply forgiving a murderer, or a thief for his murder or theft? He can commit another murder or theft and God can simply forgive him again. Can you imagine such a sinner being granted eternal life as God’s son and free to continue in his behavior with God continually forgiving his sin every time? How about the victims? Would their tears, pain, suffering and sorrow ever cease? That is why God hates sin so much. That’s why this argument is so foolish. For the same reason mainstream Christianity’s belief that after the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we are no longer required to keep God’s Law given through Moses has no merit whatsoever. Sin is the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4). If humans are no longer required to keep God’s Law, it means that they can sin and expect to be forgiven their sins. An utterly foolish argument as we have just proved.

Even our legal system should teach us this simple lesson. A judge may let off an offender for a crime the first time by forgiving him. But the second time around the judge will definitely punish the offender. If the same criminal violates the law again, the judge will probably give him the maximum sentence.

A law is designed to deter contrary behavior. Until there is a penalty for violation of the law, the law cannot act as a deterrent to sinful behavior. God cannot have a perfectly sinless family as long as sin remains in anyone. That is why He has prescribed the death penalty for any violation of His Law. Either human beings choose to become sinless with God’s help, or the death penalty will be applied to their violations of the Law. Their lives will be permanently extinguished in the Lake of Fire.

The death penalty has to be paid for all our sins. Otherwise what good is a law if penalty for its violation is not enforced? Each and every human being has sinned. As a result each and every human being has incurred the death penalty. And that penalty could be paid for all only by their Creator whose life was of more value than all His creation put together.

If God simply forgives the sins of each and every human being, He will not have the perfect family He has planned. ***Without the death penalty for sin, humans will not have the need for avoiding sin indelibly impressed on their minds.*** Therefore, to make His purposes stand, He and His son planned the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ.

To fulfill God’s purpose, humanity has to ultimately become perfect and sinless as God the Father and Jesus Christ are perfect and sinless. That’s why God told Abraham in Genesis 17:1, “…I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” But to accomplish that, human beings must have their sins forgiven. To have their sins forgiven, the penalty for sin had to be paid. Only a Being greater than all of humanity could pay the death penalty on behalf of all humans. And that Being, Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, Creator of the spirit world, the entire material universe and humanity, paid the death penalty on behalf of His creation. That is why the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are crucial to Christianity.

If God simply forgives sins, then human beings will continue sinning and expecting their sins will be forgiven. Without the death penalty it was impossible to impress on human beings the deep need to stop committing sin. Without impressing on human beings that the penalty for any violation of God’s laws is death, human beings would not fully understand how abhorrent sin is to God and should be to us and that we must end sin in our lives with God’s help. Those who end it will become sons of God. Those who do not deeply understand the need to end it and continue in sin will have the death penalty ultimately applied to them.

But after death, why was the resurrection of Jesus Christ necessary?

***Why Jesus Christ’s resurrection was Necessary***

The foremost reason for Jesus Christ’s resurrection is the faith and trust for God it develops in us. If God the Father had not resurrected Jesus Christ how could we trust a God who let His Son die without giving Him life again? Jesus Christ’s resurrection assures us that God the Father cares for us and has Almighty power to kill and make alive (Deuteronomy 32:39), and resurrect weak human beings, as Jesus Christ was when He came to earth as a human being, into powerful beings as Jesus Christ is now, as His literal immortal sons. So the foremost reason for the resurrection is that we can totally and completely trust God to fulfill His promises and have faith that He has the power to perform them.

The second reason for Jesus Christ’s resurrection is that He can now live His life in us through his power, the holy spirit. Jesus Christ has experienced life as a human being. So He knows our frame and our frailties and temptations. He knows what it will take for each of us to overcome sin. He literally lives His life through us with the power of His holy spirit to enable us to put on His mind, overcome sin and become more like Him to eventually become the sons of God.

The third reason for the resurrection is that Jesus Christ functions as our faithful High Priest and advocate for us with the Father. He intercedes for us with the Father to forgive us our sins so that we can continue living and overcoming sin and developing godly character. He knows how weak our frame is. When He pleads with God the Father to give us another chance to overcome a particular sin, God the Father listens and grants Jesus’ wish because He has experienced similar temptations in His life as a human being. That’s why He can be a faithful advocate with the Father for us (1 John 2:1-2, “1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.)

Hebrews 2:17-18 (NIV) states: “17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

And fourth, because Jesus Christ lived life as a human being and is also God, God the Father has committed all judgment about our qualification to receive eternal life into the hands of Jesus Christ. And it is Jesus Christ who will grant us eternal life as well. God the Father has given this honor also to Jesus Christ. This is stated in John 5:21-22 (NKJV): “21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”

Finally, one of the most important reasons for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its timing is that God’s offer of salvation to human beings through a resurrection to eternal life has become real to them. It energized Jesus’ disciples. Islam says that salvation means going to paradise. But there is no proof that any such paradise exists. Hindus say salvation is to stop the cycle of birth and death to finally merge with the great soul it calls God. But there is no proof that any of the dead has achieved this salvation. However the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides us proof of the salvation that God offers to human beings. It is proof that God will turn physical human beings into His own immortal sons as spirit beings through a resurrection and has the power to do so. We can therefore trust Him to deliver on the salvation He offers to human beings.

Thus we see that both the death and then the resurrection of Jesus Christ are crucial to God’s plan of salvation for mankind. His sacrifice shows us how deeply God the Father and Jesus Christ love their creation: mankind. John the apostle stated it best when he wrote in John 3:16-17, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

***Renting of the Temple Veil***

God further demonstrated His love for human beings through another event that took place after Jesus Christ died on the cross. UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” describes on p. 115:

“Matthew records several events that took place at Christ's death. One that initially seems insignificant, but was a symbol of major importance, is found in Matthew 27:50-51 (NKJV): "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom ..."

“What did this mean, this event that was so important that three of the Gospel writers mentioned it?

“The temple was divided into two portions, an outer room called the Holy Place in which a number of priests served, and an inner room called the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. This inner room represented God's presence. It was so sacred that the only person allowed in was the high priest, and then only on one day of the year to make atonement for the sins of himself and the people.

“This sacred room, the Holy of Holies, was separated from the rest of the temple by an elaborate and beautifully embroidered curtain. According to Jewish descriptions of the temple, this curtain was truly massive—measuring some 30 feet wide, 60 feet high and three inches thick. Its tearing in two from top to bottom at Jesus' death was a shocking and bewildering event! How could God let something like that happen within His temple?

“Yet God was not only behind this, He deliberately tore the curtain to make a point—that mankind's sins, which had cut us off from Him (Isaiah 59:2), could now be forgiven through Jesus Christ's shed blood.

“Comparing how the high priest had previously only been able to pass through the curtain once a year to offer atonement for sins, Hebrews 10:19-22 explains that a new High Priest, Jesus Christ, through the sacrifice of Himself superceded this ritual for all time and gives mankind direct access to God:

"Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (NRSV).

“The lesson for us is that, following heartfelt repentance, we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Thus because of Christ's sacrifice, we enjoy direct access to the throne of our merciful, loving Creator.”

***Why is Jesus Christ Coming the Second Time***

We have already proved from Bible prophesies that Jesus Christ is soon returning to earth because we are living in the end times. But why is He returning to earth?

Jesus’ disciples knew about His return to earth to establish the Kingdom of God. They asked Him when He will be returning and what will be the signs of His coming. He described the frightening conditions on earth. Matthew 24:3-8, “3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world [age]? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6 And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

Revelation 6:1-8 describes this period called ‘beginning of sorrows’ as the ride of four horsemen (sometimes referred to as the four horsemen of the Apocalypse). This is describing a world war and its aftermath in which one fourth of mankind or more than 1.8 billion people will lose their lives. From then on conditions will only get worse.

Conditions will reach such a stage that Jesus said in Matthew 24:20-21, “21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”

Conditions on earth are going to get so bad so quickly that if not stopped all life would be annihilated from earth. That’s why Jesus Christ will need to return to earth and stop man from destroying himself and all life on earth.

Immediately after verse 22 Jesus then described His return to earth. Verses 23-27 (NKJV), “23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

**THERE IS A WAY OF ESCAPE**

When all these end time catastrophic events are finished, not many in humanity will be left alive. The number could be as low as 100 million or less out of more than 7.2 billion people today. Those are very poor odds of surviving. But prophecy also declares there is a sure way of escape from these catastrophic events.

Only one group in the world is promised protection throughout the entire three and a half years of the coming Great Tribulation: members of God’s true Church with the Philadelphian attitude as described in Revelation 3:7-11 (NKJV), “' 7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 8 I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name…10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

Thus the best chances of survival are promised to members of God’s Church who keep God’s word, meaning all His commandments and doctrines, have not denied that they worship the true Jesus Christ of the Bible, persevere in doing God’s work of warning the world of the coming catastrophes and proclaim the most wonderful news of the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and endure to the very end while diligently doing these things. So the choice to become members of God’s Church and do God’s work to receive protection, or to stay in the world and watch along as events unfold and be engulfed by them along with everyone else is entirely yours.

If you would like to become members of God’s true Church, you must first learn more about God's way of life and then make your choice. You can do so by reading the literature published by the United Church of God. All literature is offered free of charge upon request. It can also be read online, or downloaded at the Church's web site www.ucg.org. You can write to the United Church of God at: United Church of God, Post Office Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254, USA. In the USA you can also request literature on the phone by calling us toll free at 1-888-886-8632, or from anywhere in the world at 1-513-576-9796. You may also request a free subscription to our monthly magazine “The Good News” at www.ucg.org.

The Church also has ministers available to visit almost anywhere in the world to answer any questions you may have or counsel for baptism to become a member of God's true Church.

***What Does God Expect of Us***

After God the Father and Jesus Christ have demonstrated their tremendous love for us, what do they require of us? They want us to return that love. They want us to demonstrate our love for them and for fellow man. And how do we show our love for God?

Jesus said in John 14:15, “"If you love Me, keep My commandments.” And in John 15:10, “If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.”

The only way we can demonstrate our love for God is by keeping His commandments. These commandments include all the Ten Commandments. In fact Jesus told Satan in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God has been recorded for us in the Bible. And that is exactly what God says is a Philadelphian attitude. God promises protection throughout the Great Tribulation to those Jesus says “have kept My word” (Revelation 3:9).

Jesus also said in Matthew 7:21 (NKJV), "21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' “

Those who practice lawlessness are not keeping God’s spiritual Law given through Moses. They will not make it into God’s Kingdom. God requires us to keep His law to make it into His kingdom. No Jew should listen to any in mainstream Christianity who claim that we are no longer required to keep God’s Law after the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It's tragic that many in mainstream Christianity call obeying God’s Law “bondage”. But John stated in 1 John 5:3, “"This is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome." This is how Jesus characterized obedience to Him and His Law compared to the burden living a life of sin is in Matthew 11:28-30, “28 Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Thus the way mainstream Christianity sees as ‘bondage’ is a way of true freedom and rest from the burdens of sin.

Jesus said in John 10:10, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Jesus characterized God’s way of life as entering the narrow gate compared to the wide gate and broad way of doing anything or your own thing, meaning complete lawlessness. He said in Matthew 7:13-14, “13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Jesus does not promise a trouble-free life for He said in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." But He does promise a life of peace, not burdened by sin. And sometimes burdens caused by sin can be unbearable.

**Chapter 20**

**Are Animal Sacrifices Required**

[Note: For the best treatment of this subject I recommend that the reader read the UCG booklet titled "*The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law?*", available free of cost at its web site: www.ucg.org.]

Many issues such as animal sacrifices and circumcision were addressed by Paul the apostle in his epistles. Before his conversion to Christianity, he was a zealous, prominent Pharisee, and well versed in Jewish law and practices. He persecuted the Church of God. But then he was struck by Jesus and converted while on his way to Damascus to persecute the Church of God. Paul did not learn the gospel of Jesus Christ from the apostles, but was taught personally by Jesus Christ. He describes this in Galatians 1:11-20:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation [conduct] in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called my by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not."

Paul was already extremely well versed in the scriptures. But after his conversion, he was taught the gospel personally by Jesus Christ in the wilderness over a three year period. The twelve apostles were taught before Jesus' resurrection. But Paul was taught by Jesus Christ after His resurrection. It was the same gospel that had been taught to the twelve apostles for three-and-a-half years before His death, and over 40 days after Jesus' resurrection. Because Paul was well versed in Judaism, he realized the errors in the religion better than anybody else when he was taught the truth by Jesus Christ. Therefore, he was the most qualified person to comment on and confront the errors in Judaism. That is why he confronted Peter on some of these issues, and also discussed them directly at length in his epistles.

Paul kept God’s Law as the Jews of his day kept it. This would include the Sabbath and all the other commandments because he says in Philippians 3:6 that he was, “6…touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

We have earlier proved that both the Old Testament and the New Testament are the inspired true Word of God. It is the truth. One of the primary principles for understanding a subject from the Bible is that we must consider all the scriptures on that subject, both from the Old and New Testaments. With this in mind, let us research each of the issues from the complete Bible.

***Are Animal Sacrifices Necessary for Forgiveness of Sins and Salvation?***

***A New Covenant Promised***

God had made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David, revealing some details of His plans for mankind. But Israelites were unable to keep their end of the covenant because they violated His Law. Then through Jeremiah the prophet God promised to make a New Covenant in Jeremiah 32:40 (NKJV), "I will make an everlasting [meaning permanent] covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”

Why was a New Covenant necessary? God through Moses had already indicated the need for one. In Deuteronomy 5:29 God lamented, “29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!” Further in Deuteronomy 29:4 (NKJV), “4 Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.”

Under the Old Covenant ancient Israelites did not have a heart that would enable them to perceive the intent of God’s commandments, eyes to see, ears to hear and that would enable them to keep all His commandments. Thus a change of heart was needed that would put godly fear in the heart of God’s people to enable them to keep God commandments.

Other details about the New Covenant and how God would give His people a new heart were provided through Ezekiel 36:27-28, “26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”

In the New Covenant God promised to give His people a new heart by putting a new spirit, His holy spirit, within man. It will take the heart of stone out of them and give them a heart of flesh which will enable them to walk in His Law – i.e. commandments, statutes and judgments.

Then through Jeremiah the prophet God provided further details on how He will enable His people to keep His Law so that they do not break His New Covenant as Israel broke His Old Covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-33, “31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

There is no hint in these verses that there was anything wrong with God’s Law or any change in the spiritual aspects of the Law (commandments, statutes and judgments) [but we will prove what changes were made in the ceremonial and sacrificial part of Moses’ Law] was warranted. In the New Covenant God promised to give the people a new heart through His holy spirit so that they would be able to keep Moses’ Law. Also through the holy spirit God’s law would be written in their hearts and minds and not remain only on tablets of stone. The Law itself would not be changed.

The writer of Hebrews quotes these verses in indicating where the fault lay in the Old Covenant in Hebrews 8:7-10 (NIV), “7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8 But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. 10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

Thus we see that the fault in the Old Covenant was not with the Law but with the people. With their hearts of stone the people simply could not keep God’s spiritual part of the Law (written on tablets of stone) perfectly and sinned. In the New Covenant God’s spiritual part of the Law will be written in the hearts and minds of the people [meaning internalized] and will be able to keep it with the help of God’s holy spirit.

***What is a Covenant?***

A covenant is a long-term binding agreement between two people or peoples. It spells out the commitments and obligations of the parties to each other.

In a divine covenant, God defines the basic obligations that He imposes on Himself and, what the other parties to the covenant are obligated to do. The primary feature of divine covenants is the blessings God promises if the other party holds up its part of the commitment, and curses or punishments if the other party fails to live up to its obligations under the agreement. It is like a constitution that regulates God’s relationship with the people.

*The Old Covenant*

The ancient covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai established the nation of ancient Israel. God gave His Law as the constitution that the nation would be governed by. If ancient Israel obeyed God’s Law, then God promised incredible blessings and prosperity. If they disobeyed then under the terms of the covenant the nation and the people would be cursed and punished. The blessings and curses are spelled out in considerable detail in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Ancient Israel agreed to obey God not only in the words He delivered through Moses. When the Ten Commandments were given the people were afraid of the thunder, lightnings, fire and smoke on Mt. Sinai. So they told Moses, "Surely the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives. Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God anymore, then we shall die.

"For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? You go near and hear all that the Lord our God may say, and tell us all that the Lord our God says to you, and we will hear and do it" (Deuteronomy 5:24-27 - NKJV).

Then verses 28-31, “28 Then the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. 29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! 30 Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31 But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I am giving them to possess.'”

Because of the terror Israelites felt at the awesome power of God displayed on Mt. Sinai, they requested that God not speak directly to them, but that Moses should go and hear His words and then tell them. From that time on the words of God’s prophets carried the same authority as the words God spoke directly.

Peter the apostle confirmed this in 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NKJV), “20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

The words of the Old Testament prophets thus carry the same authority as God’s words. That’s why when the prophets wrote they wrote statements such as, ‘And the word of the Lord came to me” as in Isaiah 38:4, Jeremiah 1:4-5, Ezekiel 6:1-3.

But that authority was given to the apostles later. Acts 4:29-31 notes this: “29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may ***speak Your word***, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they ***spoke the word of God*** with boldness.”

In ancient times covenants were ratified with rituals such as sprinkling of blood or animal sacrifices and kept alive through annual enactment of those rituals to serve as reminders of the ongoing commitment of the parties to the covenant. But the real substance of the covenant was not the rituals but the stipulated obligations and commitments. That is why the Old Covenant had ceremonial rituals and washings, animal sacrifices that served as reminders of sins.

The sacrifices, gifts and rituals however could not make the worshipper perfect because "the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper" (Hebrews 9:9, NIV). The rituals were a reminder that a better and permanent solution was needed to deal with human spiritual weaknesses. The New Covenant would provide that solution by providing spiritual power through the holy spirit and purge the conscience by forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

*The New Covenant*

The New Covenant is a promise of the establishment of the Kingdom of God by the Messiah which will include all of humanity and will rule the earth (Isaiah 9:7, Luke 22:29-30, Revelation 11:15 and Matthew 25:34, “34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”)

Both the Old and New covenants were based on God’s promise to Abraham’s Seed, which is Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:16 (NKJV) states, “16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.”

That’s why the gospel Jesus preached was all about the Kingdom of God (ark 1:14-15) and the repentance, keeping the Law and overcoming of sin that were required to qualify to enter the Kingdom.

Because Jesus remained sinless, He alone qualified to receive all the promises. But through His sacrifice any human can qualify to inherit the promises. And that is the only way to inherit the promises. Peter said so in Acts 4:12 (NKJV), “12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Under the New Covenant those who repent, accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment of the death penalty for their sins and then diligently obey the Law [meaning keep God’s commandments and work to overcome sin] can inherit the promised Kingdom of God.

But we cannot inherit the kingdom of God as flesh and blood human beings. We must first receive eternal life to enter the Kingdom of God. Therefore the New Covenant promised eternal life to enable us to inherit the Kingdom of God. Paul the apostle made this very clear in 1 Corinthians 15:45-53:

“45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [Jesus Christ]. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [seventh trumpet when Jesus Christ returns to earth; Matthew 24:31, Revelation 11:15]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

***Comparison of the Two Covenants***

The writer of Hebrews gives a broad comparison of the two covenants in Hebrews 8:1, 6 (NKJV), “1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens…6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.”

The New Covenant is a better covenant which was established on better promises. Here are the main differences between the two covenants:

1. The Old Covenant was made with ancient Israel. The New Covenant is made with spiritual Israel which according to God’s plan of salvation will eventually encompass all of humanity. Thus the promises of the New Covenant are available to each and every human being.

2. The Old Covenant gave an incredible Law obedience to which would bless the nation. But experience of ancient Israel proved that humans are incapable of obeying God’s Law perfectly because of their stony heart. Only one human being, Jesus Christ, has been able to keep it perfectly. In the New Covenant God promises to give humans a new righteous heart of flesh through the power of His holy spirit to enable them to keep God’s Law.

3. In the Old Covenant the people had a conscience of only keeping the letter of the Law. Under the New Covenant the people are required to keep the latter and the spiritual intent of the Law.

4. The Old Covenant in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 promised incredible material and physical blessings for obedience to God’s Law. But there was no promise of anything beyond the physical life. The New Covenant promises eternal life.

5. The Old Covenant promised ancient Israel a Kingdom in a specific land. Under the New Covenant the Kingdom of God will encompass and rule over the entire earth.

6. The Old Covenant was temporary as we shall see. The New Covenant is permanent and will last forever.

7. In the Old Covenant God spoke through His prophets. Under the New Covenant God spoke through the apostles.

8. The Sinai Covenant's rituals and sacrifices could only remind the people of their guilt for sin and their need for redemption. They could not cancel their guilt because the sinner’s death penalty cannot be paid by the death of an animal as Hebrews 10:4 states, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." Death of a lesser creature cannot pay the death penalty for one greater. However, under the New Covenant Jesus Christ's sacrifice blots out permanently the sins of those who repent and cancels their guilt (John 1:29; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5).

9. Change in the priesthood from the Levitical high priest under the Old Covenant to Jesus Christ as our New High Priest. A change in the Law was made to accommodate this change in the priesthood. In addition, the Levitical priesthood was also changed to Christ’s ministers over the Church. This will be explained later.

10. The Old Covenant had the Levitical priesthood that would help explain the Law to the people. But under the New Covenant the people would have a High Priest (Jesus Christ) who in addition to God’s Holy Spirit will assist them in keeping the Law by living His life in them. This will be explained later.

***An interim arrangement***

Thus we see that The Sinai or Old Covenant is not the complete, final model for our relationship with God. It was a temporary arrangement. The UCG booklet “*The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God’s Law*” explains why on p. 25:

“Though it contained many permanent, eternal principles, many of its figurative benefits, instructive as they were, represented only symbolically the far better benefits included in the New Covenant relationship with God that was established later by Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah.

“As Hebrews 9:9-10 explains, the ritualism of the covenant at Sinai "was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation."

“A future revision of that covenant—particularly in those features linked to the death and mission of the coming Messiah—was promised. God announced through His prophets that with this "better covenant" He would put His laws in the minds of humanity and He would write them on their hearts. He promised to provide—at the individual level—direct access to Him (Hebrews 8:6; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

“It should now be made eminently clear that God was not blindsided by Israel's failures. He anticipated them. From the beginning He revealed hints of a "better" solution to the sinfulness of mankind that could be made available only through the coming Messiah. Those "hints," in the form of various ceremonies, symbols and rituals, are woven throughout the instructions given under the Sinai Covenant.”

Hebrews 8:1013 shows that the Old Covenant has become obsolete: "'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.' In speaking of 'a new covenant,' he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear" (Hebrews 8:10-13, NRSV).

UCG booklet continues: “Only a few decades after Jesus Christ was crucified, and not long after these words were written, the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 and the entire ceremonial and sacrificial system attached to it came to an end. It truly became obsolete.

“Once the sacrifice of Christ was in place, those temple ceremonies and rituals were simply no longer needed. But as Hebrews 8:10-13 clearly tells us, the spiritual laws that God had included in the Sinai Covenant were not disbanded. With the Spirit of God now available, the principles of love that the law so eloquently expressed can finally be written in the hearts of all who repent of breaking them. That is the central promise of the New Covenant.”

***Our Relationship with Jesus Christ our new High Priest***

Hebrews 7 explains the change in the priesthood that the high priest under the Sinai Covenant serving till his death in the tabernacle and later the Temple came from the tribe of Levi from Aaron’s sons whereas under the New Covenant Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and is our eternal High Priest currently serving in heaven at the right hand of the Father with direct access to Him.

This is stated in Hebrews 8:1-2: "The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man" (NIV).

Jesus Christ can also personally assist every person because He experienced life as a human and understands our weaknesses. Hebrews 2:17-18 (NIV) states: "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God…Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." The physical high priest under the Sinai Covenant could not provide such help.

Hebrews 4:15-16 (NKJV) further adds: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

***What was the “Whole” Law***

Paul mentioned "the whole law" in Galatians 5:3. What did he mean?

The Law of Moses had three main categories of laws that served different objectives.

First, the law contains the Ten Commandments and many other commands, statutes and judgments that define sin and what our relationships with God and man should be. These laws reflected God's divine nature of outgoing love (2 Peter 1:4; Matthew 22:37-40). These laws were known by God's servants such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and others long before Moses.

This part of the Law is permanent. It did not originate at Sinai and did not end with Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Paul called this part of the Law as "holy and just and good," in Romans 7:11-14, 22, “11 For sin [referring to the Law that defines sin], taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. 12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good… 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.”

Second part of "the whole law" contains symbolic sacrifices, offerings of food and drink, ceremonial washings and other regulations pointed to Christ's role in solving humanity's problem with sin. These were temporary. Hebrews 9:9-10 explains that they are no longer required after Jesus became the sacrifice for atonement for sin they represented. This part of the law thus became obsolete (Hebrews 8:13).

Third part of the law included regulations for governing the nation of Israel. These included ordinances prescribing punishments for violations of these laws. These laws can still serve as useful examples of sound and godly judgment and provide guidance in governing a nation righteously.

***Why Animal Sacrifices and Rituals no longer Needed***

As already mentioned Hebrews 8:13 (NIV) clearly states that the Sinai Covenant is obsolete: “13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.”

Jesus prophesied that the temple would be destroyed in Matthew 24:1-2 (NKJV), “1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

He knew that the temple-based system of worship under the Old Covenant would no longer be needed under the New Covenant. So He ended it in A.D. 70 when Roman armies captured Jerusalem and completely destroyed the Temple and the priesthood that served in it came to an end.

Hebrews 9:1-10 (NIV) clearly spells out the temporary nature of the Temple worship system: “1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. 2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, 4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. 5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

“6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. 7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.

“9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. 10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations applying until the time of the new order [under the New Covenant].”

These verses clearly explain what was temporary regulations that applied only till the new order under the New Covenant. These temporary regulations included the animal sacrifices which the high priest offered for himself and the people, the food and drink offerings and the ceremonial washings. These have become obsolete under the New Covenant.

These temporary regulations were permanently replaced by Jesus’ sacrifice which is further explained in verses 11-15, “11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”

Notice the last part of verse 15. The animal sacrifices had not taken away the sins of any who had died in the Lord. These included all of God’s prophets and the patriarchs who had God’s holy spirit. Only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was finally able to forgive their sins so that they can receive eternal life.

***Laws that Define Sin Not Changed***

Now notice again that the only part of the Law these verses state applied till the New Covenant were the animal sacrifices and the Temple based ceremonial rituals and washings. No part of the spiritual Law governing our relationships with God and man, the laws that define sin, was done away. Those laws, the Ten Commandments, statutes and judgments are still binding.

That’s why Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill [to fill up the law to its fullest intent and purpose and to become the High Priest and ultimate sacrifice foreshadowed in both the Law and the Prophets]. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:17-18, NRSV).

Paul, also agrees with Jesus when he writes in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [is ‘God-breathed’ in the NIV], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Thus both Jesus [because the Old Testament was the only scripture available when Jesus spoke] and Paul tell us that both the Old and New Testament scriptures are inspired by God and required for Christian development and growth in righteousness.

***Law Concerning Priesthood Changed***

Paul explained in Hebrews 7:11-28 (NIV) why the laws concerning the priesthood had to be changed:

“11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of this priesthood the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. 13 He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

“15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

“18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. 20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, 21 but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' " 22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. 23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

“26 Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.”

Psalm 110:4 actually prophesied the appointment of the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek: “4 The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Another aspect of the Law that was changed concerned the Levitical priesthood. Instead of Levitical priests, God’s appointed ministers were to minister to the spiritual needs of the people. God’s ministers did not have to be Levites.

The qualifications of a bishop or minister of God are stated in 2 Timothy 3:2-8 (NKJV), “2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

There is no mention here of God’s true ministers being from the tribe of Levi.

God empowers His true ministers with His holy spirit so that they can understand and properly discern the spiritual intent of the Law and enable the members to apply it to their lives. In addition they are given special discernment to understand doctrine (Matthew 18:18 and Acts 15:1-29).

Paul also explained in 2 Corinthians 3:6-11: “6 Who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away 8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excels. 11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious.”

Paul here calls the New Covenant ministry as ministration of the spirit which is more glorious than was the ministration of the letter of the Law under the Sinai Covenant.

Thus we see that the Law needed to be amended to accommodate the changes that were required in the priesthood and the ministry to deliver “better promises” of the New Covenant.

**Chapter 21**

**Is Circumcision Required for Salvation**

[Note: United Church of God publishes a booklet titled "*The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law?*" that addresses this issue in detail. It is available free of cost at its web site: www.ucg.org.]

Is circumcision required for salvation?

This question came up before the apostles. Acts 15:1 records, “1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Here certain men from Judea were telling Gentile Christians in Antioch and other cities that they needed to be circumcised in order to receive salvation. This problem was threatening unity in the churches. The apostles then held a conference in Jerusalem to address this issue. After much disputing they all reached a decision that they agreed on and wrote a letter to the Gentile congregations stating their decision:

Acts 15:23-24, “23….The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, You must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment…”

Thus the apostles decided that circumcision was no longer required for salvation.

We have proved that both the Jewish scriptures and the New Testament scriptures are the inspired word of God. Therefore the decision of the apostles, who were mostly all Jews, should be accepted. But Paul’s writings do provide justification for their decision.

Moses had mentioned in Deuteronomy 30:6 (NKJV) that in order to live (eternally) circumcision of the heart was required: “6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

Paul confirmed the same in Romans 2:28-29, “28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

Thus Moses and Paul agree that to live eternally (or receive salvation) true Jews and true Christians are to be circumcised in the heart through the holy spirit. Only circumcision of the heart will enable them to love God with all their heart and soul.

Then in Galatians 6:15 Paul further stated, “15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”

Paul is explaining here that the New Covenant is not about physical circumcision but circumcision of the heart and becoming a “new creation” in Jesus Christ. We become a new creation by receiving the free gift of God’s holy spirit and God writing His law in our hearts and minds and through the power of the holy spirit enabling us to keep it.

No works of any kind could earn for us the forgiveness of sins or the gift of the holy spirit to become a new creation. Peter the apostle explained in Acts 2:38 (NKJV) how we obtain the free gift of God’s holy spirit: "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'”

As already discussed in the last chapter, these aspects of the law that do not define sin are no longer required. The author of the book of Hebrews, most likely Paul the apostle has explained it thoroughly. But when Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians due to the crisis created by Jewish converts the epistle to the Hebrews had not been written.

UCG booklet “*The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God’s Law?*” addresses the main causes of the controversy on p. 64:

“The gentile Christians in the province of Galatia were being enticed to accept circumcision so that fellowship barriers between them and the Jews would be dropped. Jews limited their interaction with gentiles to mostly business activities. Eating together at the same table was banned. Even Peter at first hesitated to go against this taboo (Acts 10:25-29).

“Whoever was enticing the Galatians argued that circumcision is essential to be fully accepted among God's people (the Jews). Circumcision would have opened the fellowship door for gentiles to the entire Jewish community. It also would have removed much of the tension between the Christians and the nonbelieving Jews.

“But trying to resolve that issue with circumcision threatened to create a much greater identity issue. Physical circumcision only identified the Jews as natural descendants of Abraham. God was offering Jews and gentiles alike both justification and salvation as His children through Jesus Christ, not through fleshly circumcision. Protecting their properly perceived identity as the justified children of God was what was at stake.

“Therefore, the purpose of Paul's letter to the Galatians was to make it clear that becoming adopted descendants of Judah (the great-grandson of Abraham from whom the term Jew is derived) through circumcision offered the gentiles nothing in regard to salvation. Even circumcised Jews had to be justified through the blood of Christ and afterward live a Spirit-led life.

“Nevertheless, many of the Christian gentiles in Galatia were impressed (or intimidated) by the circumcision argument. They saw it as a reasonable way to change their ambiguous social identity as neither idolaters nor Jews.

“God inspired Paul to see the whole picture very differently. What the Galatian gentiles were being enticed to accept would have changed their entire perception of how important Christ's sacrifice was to them. It would have clouded their understanding that justification is by the grace of God through faith in Christ's shed blood and the faithful obedience that comes through Christ's indwelling by the Holy Spirit.

“Paul perceived that this change would have tacitly presented circumcision and diligent obedience to the law as the way to obtain eternal life. It threatened to undercut their faith in Christ as their Savior and Redeemer. It could have obscured the fact that by justification through faith they had already obtained a better identity as the children of God and heirs to the promise made directly to Abraham than they could ever obtain through physical circumcision.

“His point was, they did not need to be adopted as Jews to become "sons of God" (Galatians 3:26) and receive eternal life.”

The heart of the matter is that the Law defines sin and prescribes the death penalty for any violation of it. Since all have sinned, all of us have earned the death penalty. The Law cannot forgive sin. Only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes forgiveness of sin possible. Once we have earned the death penalty, no amount of further Law keeping of any kind can forgive sin and cancel the death penalty. No circumcision, animal sacrifices or ceremonial rituals can cancel the death penalty. So what is the point in being circumcised or offering animal sacrifices? The Law cannot give us the free gift of the Holy Spirit without which we are not Christ’s meaning we cannot become members of His Church (Romans 8:9, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”) If we are not Christ’s then our sins cannot be forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ without which we cannot receive the free gift of eternal life and entrance into God’s kingdom.

Paul thus went to the heart of the matter with the Galatians: "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh [i.e., circumcision]?" (Galatians 3:1-2, NRSV).

Accepting the need for physical circumcision, animal sacrifices or any other ceremonial works of the law, would have been a denial of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for justification (which is becoming right with God). It would have substituted physical "works of law" for His sacrifice and help.

UCG booklet states on p. 70: “Paul's conclusion is based on these essential truths:

“Once the death penalty is incurred, law cannot release those who are guilty from that penalty. Therefore, Jesus Christ bore the death penalty for our transgressions at His crucifixion.

“Once we acknowledge through repentance that we have sinned, if we have faith in Christ's death as lawful payment for the death penalty we deserve and commit to now obeying Him with His help, then God reckons us as having "died to the Law"—and, therefore, reconciled to Him.

“For us to be reckoned dead to the law, the law must still be in force. Justification would be meaningless if no law existed to be transgressed.

“Only by having our death penalty forgiven may we become "children of God" and "joint heirs with Christ" of the eternal promise made to Abraham (Romans 8:16-17).

“Circumcision was merely the physical sign that identified the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. Though it had symbolic value for the people of Israel, it provides nothing for justification and is of no use in the cancellation of guilt.

“Therefore, the attraction that some of the Galatians had for the offer of circumcision to solve their relationship problem with the Jewish community—primarily not to "suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12)—was about to threaten their relationship with God.

“It was misleading them concerning what is really important to being accepted as His holy people. That acceptance cannot be earned by any "works of the law"—and certainly not by circumcision.”

The conclusion we can draw is that circumcision is not required for salvation.

Jews are likely to have more questions concerning the Law. The author suggests that they read the UCG booklet “*The New Covenant: Does it Abolish the Law?*” which is likely to answer most of them. It is available free of cost at www.ucg.org.

**Chapter 22**

**Has God Abandoned the Jews?**

There is a concept quite popular in some Christian circles today called the "Replacement Theology." According to this concept God has been replacing the Jews, as His covenant people, with Gentile converts. This idea has its roots in the apostolic times, because an anti-Jewish attitude was affecting the Christian Gentiles in Rome, but later spread to the whole world. The reason was that Rome was at the zenith of its power and the Jews were a subject people. Paul addressed this idea in his epistle to the Romans, but the idea emerged again after his death.

Jesus also addressed the Jewish brothers of His day in Matthew 21:43 (NKJV): "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

Did Jesus mean that most of the Jews from that time on would not inherit the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom would belong to Christians who would be mostly Gentiles? It is truth that hardly any professing Jews are Christians today. So are those Christians right in their belief that God has abandoned the Jews, and has replaced them mainly with Christian Gentiles for inheriting the Kingdom of God?

Before we discuss the apostle Paul's answer to those who hold such a belief, let us set some facts straight, and explain why such Christians are in gross error.

***All Israel are Not Jews***

The Christian world's misunderstanding arises to a great extent from the fact that it considers Jews to be all of Israel, and most of them are not Christians. It is unaware that America, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South African whites, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and all the Jews worldwide are all descendants of Jacob or Israel. These nations consider themselves as Gentiles. So almost all of Israel, barring most of the Jews is Christian. And Israel did not originally get its Christianity from the Roman Church, but got it straight from the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, who were sent to the lost house of Israel, or the 'Lost Ten Tribes.'

***There are More Jews who Are Christians than the World Knows***

We have already proved that God kept His promises to David to provide him a descendant to rule at least one nation of the tribes of Israel from generation to generation in unbroken dynasty. That descendant today is Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom. The world, and even England is unaware that there are many descendants of David living in Europe and North America, descended from the royal families of England and other nations of Europe. All the nobles, the lords are all descendants of King David. And some of them migrated to America. They are all Christians. So certainly there are a number of Jews who are Christians.

***Mainstream Christianity Does not Follow Christ***

A person or group that is deceived does not know it is deceived. Otherwise it would change and follow the truth. The same is true of mainstream Christianity. Some in mainstream Christianity believe that God has replaced the Jews with Gentiles as His covenant people. They do not know that they too are not His covenant people. The reason is that mainstream Christianity - Roman Catholics, all the Protestant, Orthodox, Evangelical churches - disobeys many of God's commandments.

MAINSTREAM CHRISTIANITY’S PAGAN PRACTICES

Many Jews don't believe that Christianity is the true religion because they see mainstream Christianity breaking God's laws. They are right in their assessment that mainstream Christianity is breaking God's Commandments. Therefore mainstream Christianity - Roman Catholicism and various Protestant denominations - cannot be the true religion. But because mainstream Christianity violates God's laws does not mean that true Christianity is not the right religion. Let us discuss some of these issues.

*Idol Worship*

Mainstream Christianity has crosses and pictures and images of Jesus and Mary prominently displayed in the Churches or in stained glass windows, and worshippers bow down to them. Though they may claim that they don't worship these images, but in fact what they practice violates the Second Commandment to not make any idols or images and bow down to them. So Jews are right in this regard that mainstream Christianity breaks the Second Commandment. But the true Church of God does not keep crosses, or images of Jesus or Mary and does not bow down to them. The true Church of God keeps all the commandments of God and lives by every Word of God, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

*Sabbath Vs. Sunday*

If Jews reject mainstream Christianity (Roman Catholicism, Protestants, Orthodox and other churches) from being the true religion because it does not keep the Sabbath holy and therefore breaks the Fourth Commandment, they are right to do so. Mainstream Christianity worships on Sunday which is the pagan day of worship. The true Church of God does not worship on Sunday, but keeps the Sabbath holy from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

*God's Holy Days Vs. Christian Holidays*

If Jews reject mainstream Christianity from being the true religion because it does not keep the commanded holy days such as Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) and the Last Great Day of the Feast, but instead keeps holidays such as Christmas and Easter in which they worship like the pagans, they are justified in doing so. Christmas and Easter are pagan festivals dressed up in Christian garb. They are not even mentioned in the Bible. Jesus Christ and the apostles did not know of the existence of these festivals because they began to be celebrated more than 200 years after Jesus Christ's death. But the rituals associated with these festivals originated in the paganism of Nimrod and Semiramis more than 2000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Instead the true Church of God keeps all the seven holy days (Leviticus 23) commanded by God to be kept forever in the Old Testament.

*Illogical Good Friday and Easter Sunday Tradition*

According to mainstream Christianity, Jesus Christ was crucified on Good Friday evening and was resurrected on Easter Sunday morning at sunrise. Jesus said He would be three days and three nights in the grave. Try and fit three days and three nights between Friday evening and Sunday morning. There is no way this can be done. Hence this mainstream Christianity tradition is illogical, and God is not the author of confusion. If you reject mainstream Christianity from being the true religion because of this illogical belief, you are right to do so.

The true Church of God does not celebrate Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Instead it keeps the Passover with the symbols Jesus Christ commanded, and then keeps the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. The true Church of God also knows the truth about the day of Jesus' crucifixion and His resurrection. Jesus was in the tomb exactly 3 days and 3 nights. This has already been explained in Chapter 15.

*The Mysterious Trinity Doctrine*

This mainstream Christianity’s doctrine teaches that the one Triune God exists in three distinct co-equal Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (sometimes referred to as “Holy Ghost”). But Trinity is a word that does not appear in the Bible. So this doctrine is not based on God’s word, but on human reasoning.

We will not provide a history of the Trinity doctrine and detailed proofs that this doctrine is false because the United Church of God publishes a comprehensive booklet titled “*Is God a Trinity?*” which is available free of charge at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org.

There are conflicts between what the Bible says and the Trinity doctrine. For example, when Christ died, the Trinity ceased to exist. Supposedly, only God the Father and the Holy Spirit existed. This is inconsistent with the coeternal concept of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ prayed to God the Father before His crucifixion. If God is just one Triune Being, then Jesus Christ was praying to Himself.

In Matthew 1:20 we read that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And if the Holy Spirit is indeed a person, Jesus Christ should have been called the Son of the Holy Spirit. However, Jesus continually prayed to and addressed God the Father as His Father and not the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10:32-33; 11:25-27; 12:50). In the Bible Jesus is never called the Son of the Holy Spirit but the Son of the Father. This is clear evidence that the Holy Spirit is not a separate entity but was the agency or power through which the Father begot Jesus as His Son.

Because no one can adequately explain these problems, or how three distinct individuals can be one Being, the Trinity is called a holy mystery to make it appear credible.

*Different Ideas of Salvation*

Mainstream Christianity’s ideas about what salvation is are not supported by the Bible. This has already been discussed.

Jews believe that mainstream Christianity and Gentiles of other religions do not obey God’s commandments, the Law. Hence they are not qualifying to receive eternal life. But the Jews are wrong in this. The many in Christianity believe that God has abandoned the Jews because they do not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah. But the truth is that both sides are wrong. God has not abandoned the Jews or any part of Israel. Neither has He abandoned any other human being, Jew or Gentile, as we will see.

***God's True Church is a Small Flock***

With the above background, now we can discuss what Jesus meant in Matthew 21:43: "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

Jesus clearly said that God's kingdom would not be given to the Jews of His day, but to another nation. Did He mean another Gentile nation such as the Romans or something else? The Romans certainly seemed to think so because they had the greatest empire in their day and had more resources than any other nation to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Paul in his epistle to the Romans set them straight on that notion which we will discuss shortly.

But let’s examine more closely what Jesus said.

Jesus said in Luke 12:32: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." So Jesus here was telling the disciples that God's kingdom would belong to His true Church. Therefore the nation that Jesus was talking about in Matthew 21:43 was not some Gentile nation, but His true Church. I Peter 2:9 confirms that God's true Church is a nation: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

As Jesus said in Luke 12:32, God's true Church has never been millions strong at any time in its history. It has always been a persecuted small little flock, perhaps no more than tens of thousands or at best hundreds of thousands strong worldwide in the best of times. God's kingdom will be given to this nation and not to any Gentile nation.

Peter says in Act 2:39: "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

It is God who calls people into His Church. Nobody can just join the true Church by understanding God’s word using his or her own logic. It is God who opens the mind of the person to comprehend the truth first. In the first 6000 years of man's history till the return of Jesus Christ, God has chosen to call only a few people such that God's Church has always been a small flock. This is perfectly pictured In John 15:16 where Jesus Christ told the disciples: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you..."

So God did not abandon the Jews or Israel, or even the Gentiles. He has simply chosen to call only a few people into His true Church at this time, a small flock. It is simply not God's plan to call the Jews, or most of the world at this time into His Church.

And most of God's true Church has not been entirely Gentile or even mainly Gentile either. It began as mainly a Jewish Church. Many Gentiles were added to the Church, but it was mainly the Gentiles who departed from the faith in order to avoid Roman persecution. In later centuries the true Church has existed mainly among the non-Jewish tribes of Israel, located in France, Holland and the British Isles, from where persecution forced it to settle in northern Italy and later in Eastern Europe and Germany. The descendants of these Israelites continued in membership in these countries though certainly some Gentiles would have continued to be added.

Later it grew in the British Isles and in America. But all these members through the centuries have been mainly the descendants of the 'ten tribes' of Israel rather than Gentiles. Of course, a sprinkling of Gentiles have always been members of God's true Church. In modern times also, the true Church of God has its greatest membership in America, followed by the nations of the British Commonwealth (Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa), with the exception of the Philippines. And the reason God has continued to work mainly with Israel is that many Gentile members have gone astray and consigned themselves to the Lake of Fire.

So God has never really abandoned Israel. He has seldom favored the Gentiles over Israel, but has offered salvation to the Gentiles in addition to the Jews and other Israelites, not in place of them. This will be made clear later.

In fact, God's purpose has been all along to treat everyone equally. His Plan of salvation as pictured by His seven Holy Days offers a chance for salvation to every human being who has ever lived on the earth. Briefly, described below is what the Holy Days picture.

***The Key Steps in God's Plan of Salvation***

God's master plan is to "bring many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10). The specific steps needed to fulfill that awesome plan are pictured in the weekly Sabbath and the seven annual festivals listed in Leviticus 23. God says in verse 4: “"These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations [sacred assemblies] which you shall proclaim at their appointed times." God says these are His feasts, not Jewish feasts. They should apply to all nations. By observing these festivals annually we get a deeper understanding and a reminder of God’s purpose in offering salvation to each and every human being ever born.

Jesus Christ kept these feasts (Matthew 26:17; Mark 1:21; Luke 4:16, 31; John 7:8-10, 14, 37). The apostles and early converts to Christianity, both Jews and Gentiles also kept these festivals and the seventh-day Sabbath (Acts 2:1; 12:3-4; 16:13; 18:4, 19, 21; 20:6; 27:9; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

Furthermore prophecy shows that, after Jesus Christ's return, all nations will keep these festivals (Zechariah 14:16-19). Those who don’t will be punished. Isaiah 66:23 (NKJV) prophesies the same: “…From one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me." These feasts of the Lord will be the laws of the Kingdom of God.

***The Weekly Sabbath***

The listing of God's festivals in Leviticus 23 begins with the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, which lasts from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The Sabbath was instituted as a memorial of creation and a day of rest to worship the true God who created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8, 11).

The Sabbath also is prophetic of the rest God will provide all of humanity. First of all the weekly Sabbath pictures the duration of God’s Plan for salvation of mankind. Peter the apostle said in 2 Peter 3:8, “8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Without this scripture the duration of God’s plan could not be understood pictured by the seven day week.

Six days of work picture the 6,000 years God has allotted mankind to rule itself according to the choice Adam and Eve made. But then God will provide Sabbath rest for mankind from the pain and suffering for the next 1,000 years of His Kingdom as pictured by the seventh day Sabbath. During this time God will make salvation available to all of mankind. Hebrews 4:9 states, “9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God."

Proof that the duration of God’s kingdom will be 1,000 years is provided by Revelation 20:4, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

To learn more about God’s Sabbath, please read UCG free booklet titled "*Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*" available at our web site www.ucg.org.)

***The Passover***

Two of God's festivals: the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are celebrated during the first harvest season, the early spring harvest, in March-April in our modern calendars.

The Passover for the ancient Israelites was an annual reminder that God spared or passed over the firstborn of Israelite slaves, when He slew all the firstborn of Egypt at the time of the Exodus. They were spared because they had put the blood of a sacrificed lamb on their doorposts.

The sacrifice of the lambs without blemish foreshadowed the sacrifice of the sinless Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God without blemish, for the sins of mankind. Every human being has sinned and come short of the glory of God as stated in Romans 3:23. As a result all of us have earned the death penalty, as Romans 6:23 says, 23 …the wages of sin is death.” Jesus sacrificed his life to pay the death penalty on behalf of each and every human being so that our sins could be forgiven. That is what the Passover pictures for the Christian.

***Feast of Unleavened Bread***

The second feast during the early spring harvest season is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, immediately following the Passover. For ancient Israelites it pictured deliverance from Egypt (a type of sin).

During this feast, God commands His people not to eat leavened bread or any leavened products, to put leaven (or yeast) out of their homes for seven days (Exodus 12:19, I Corinthians 5:7-8).

Leaven symbolizes sin. Paul compared sin to leaven, explaining that as leaven spreads through the lump of dough, so sin can affect many areas of our life and spread to others throughout the Church. He stated in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NKJV), “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast [of Unleavened Bread], not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Therefore, this festival teaches and reminds us annually that after our sins have been forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we are not to remain in sin, but to work diligently to put all sinful thoughts, attitudes and actions out of our lives.

The early spring harvest season pictures the very first of the firstfruits. And the first of the firstfruits was Jesus Christ: the only soul that has been harvested for God's kingdom during the first 6,000 years of man’s history. And that was pictured by the wave sheaf offering ceremony during the Days of Unleavened Bread as described in Leviticus 23:10.

***Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost***

This feast is observed on the fiftieth day after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:15-16). On this day in 31 A.D., God's holy spirit was first given to a group of disciples to begin God’s New Testament Church (Acts 2:1-4). Receiving God's Spirit is an essential step to becoming members of God’s family: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

The firstfruits are the first agricultural products that mature and ripen. This feast, therefore, pictures the calling out by God of a few people during the first 6,000 years of man’s history, granting His holy spirit to enable them to understand His laws and live a righteous life to qualify to receive eternal life through a resurrection at Jesus Christ's second coming. The firstfruits will then reign with Jesus Christ for 1,000 years in God’s kingdom.

The Feast of Pentecost, therefore, teaches us that this is not the only time for salvation. In fact, only a relatively few are receiving their chance for salvation during the first 6,000 years of man's history. Calling of the relatively few as the firstfruits is perfectly pictured by the smaller spring harvest. Most of humanity will be called later, as pictured by the much greater autumn harvest.

It is very important to understand that if you believe you are being called now, then God is offering you your only chance for salvation at this time. God holds people accountable for the understanding He gives them. If people are being called, they must respond positively to God's call or they will lose their only chance for salvation.

How then do you know if you are being called at this time or not? The answer is that if what God’s Church preaches about God’s plan of salvation and way of life for mankind appears logical and sensible to you, then God has opened your mind to understand His truth, and you are being called. Otherwise God will offer you your chance later in His kingdom.

***The Feast of Trumpets***

Now we come to the annual Feasts of the greater autumn harvest season, celebrated during the months of September – October. Four Feasts are celebrated during this season. All these four feasts are about the kingdom of God and its establishment. The first of the autumn feasts is the Feast of Trumpets.

This Feast teaches us that Jesus Christ will return to earth in great power and glory at the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15 (NKJV), “15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!") to take over the kingdoms of the world.

Also at this time, the firstfruits – those who are called from the time of the creation of Adam to the return of Jesus Christ – will be resurrected as immortal sons of God and will reign with Jesus Christ in His kingdom. This is the **First Resurrection** which is to eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, “51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [which is the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15]. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Also 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

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

***The Day of Atonement***

The next Feast during the autumn holy day season is called the Day of Atonement. This festival teaches us the need for humanity to be reconciled to God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of all mankind. It also pictures Jesus Christ as our High Priest interceding for us with God the Father.

This feast teaches us that true reconciliation with God is not possible until the author of all of humanity's sins, Satan the devil, is put away. Therefore, the Day of Atonement also pictures the putting away of Satan for 1,000 years during the reign of Jesus Christ, after all of humanity's sins have been laid on his head. Putting away of Satan after laying on of humanity’s sins on his head was portrayed symbolically in the ceremony of the two goats in Leviticus 16:5-21, “21 Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man.”

This festival is celebrated by fasting for 24 hours to draw closer to God, to picture the reconciliation of mankind to Him.

***Feast of Tabernacles***

The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles represents the next step in God's master plan for salvation of mankind and pictures the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4; Matthew 17:1-4; Hebrews 11:8-9), assisted by the resurrected, immortal saints. God's kingdom will establish a new, perfect society, ruled according to God's laws, beginning at Jerusalem and then spreading out to all nations.

God's commandments, laws and ways will be taught throughout the earth. Unlike in our time, during the millennium, each and every human being living will be called by God and receive his or her chance for salvation. Therefore, this feast represents the greater harvest of souls for God's kingdom. Satan and the demons will be imprisoned so that they can deceive the nations no more during the 1,000 years. God's rule will usher in an era of universal peace, prosperity, abundance, happiness and joy.

Isaiah 2:2-4 (NKJV) provides a glimpse of God’s kingdom, “3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

Isaiah 11:6-9 (NKJV), “6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.” See also Daniel 2:35, 44; 7:13-14).

***The Last Great Day***

The seventh feast called the eighth day or the Last Great Day of the Feast is a separate festival from the Feast of Tabernacles which is of 7 days duration. It is called the Great White Throne Judgment.

The Last Great Day teaches us that after the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ, God will offer a chance for salvation to each and every human being who has ever lived and died without being called by God. Revelation 20:11-12 states, “11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books [of the Bible].”

All such human beings including the Queen of Sheba, men of Nineveh, people of Christ’s own time (Matthew 12:41-42) and of Sodom and Gomorrah(Mark 6:11) will be raised from the dead as physical human beings and called by God. That resurrection of thousands of millions of people back to physical life is described in detail in Ezekiel 37:1-14. These are the "rest of the dead" spoken of in Revelation 20:5. This is the **Second Resurrection**, which is to a physical life. They will have their minds opened to understand the truth of the gospel message. They will be given sufficient time to repent and qualify to receive eternal life. It thus pictures a time of the greatest harvest of souls for God's kingdom.

Remember, God "desires all men to be saved" and is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). God’s seven-step plan pictured by God’s seven feasts explains how God will accomplish this.

Each holy day season represents an ever-increasing harvest of souls for God's kingdom. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread during the early spring harvest represented only Jesus Christ receiving eternal life; just one soul being harvested for the kingdom of God, as the first of the firstfruits. The Feast of Pentecost during the late spring harvest season represents the firstfruits being harvested for the kingdom of God during the first 6,000 years of man's history, from the creation of Adam to the return of Jesus Christ. During this time perhaps people in the hundreds of thousands or a few million will have qualified to receive eternal life. The Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day during the autumn harvest season represent the greatest harvest of souls for God's kingdom with tens of billions qualifying to receive eternal life.

The incorrigibly wicked, those who received their calling and chance for eternal life during the first 6,000 years of man’s history, or during the 1,000 years of Jesus Christ’s reign, or during the 100 years (Isaiah 65:20) of the White Throne Judgment but rejected it by not wholeheartedly repenting of their sins and died will be resurrected to a physical life [this is the **Third Resurrection**, to a physical life] to be destroyed in the Lake of Fire: "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14-15; Hebrews 10:26-29; 2 Peter 3:10-12). Our loving God gives everyone an opportunity to have eternal life and wishes no one to perish. But if they refuse, the punishment is the second death, which ends their lives quickly and forever (Malachi 4:1, 3; Matthew 25:46).

***The Three Resurrections***

We also see from the holy days that when we take both the Old and New Testament scriptures together, three resurrections are mentioned in the Bible. Daniel's resurrection (Daniel 12:2-3) to immortal life and glorified state 'shining like the stars forever and ever' is the first resurrection. Ezekiel's (Ezekiel 37:1-4) physical resurrection is the second resurrection. And Daniel's resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2) is the third resurrection to a physical life to then be destroyed forever.

***God has Prominent Responsibility for Physical Jews in His Kingdom***

Most Jews are familiar with Zechariah 8:23: "Thus says the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold from all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

In God's Kingdom the Jews will be highly sought by people of all nations as teachers of God's ways. The reason is that all Israel will occupy the Land of Israel in God's Kingdom. But the Jews will be sought by the nations because they have lived in nearly all nations. So they are familiar with the cultures of almost all nations of the world, and their languages. They will be in the best position to understand the errors in the ways of most nations. When they themselves fully understand God's way themselves, they will be able to explain to the nations the errors in their ways because they will have experienced them.

This is the very reason Paul had a prominent position in Christianity in its early stages. He was familiar with the Jewish culture from the inside, its beliefs and practices, because he was part of that culture. But when Jesus Christ personally instructed him over 3 years, there was no one in a better position to understand where his brethren were going astray. He was also able to answer those who judged in his day that God had abandoned the Jews from His covenant and replaced them with Gentiles. He has recorded all his answers in his epistles, or letters to the churches.

***How Paul Addressed the Question***

Paul’s ministry raised many Gentile Churches. The Gentile churches saw that there were some but not many Jews becoming members in their areas. Most of the Jews remained as non-members. So they, particularly the Romans, felt that God had abandoned the Jews and was replacing them with Gentile converts. They misunderstood Jesus’ words in Matthew 21:43 (NKJV): "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." The other nation Jesus was referring to was His true Church. That’s why Paul was forced to address the issue that God had abandoned the Jews.

As already explained God is calling only a “little flock” as members in His Church during the first 6,000 years of man’s history. That was the basis for Paul explaining why only a few Jews were joining the Church. He explained in Romans 11 why God had not cast away His people (both Jews and descendants of the other tribes of Israel). God sent the apostles to the ‘lost sheep of the House of Israel” meaning the non-Jewish tribes of Israel. Only Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles.

The work of the apostles bore fruit. The non-Jewish tribes became Christian. But we have already seen that Christianity in those nations was hijacked by Satan through the Roman Church so that mainstream Christianity is not God’s true Church. God’s true Church has always been a small flock throughout the centuries as Jesus prophesied.

The Roman Church members should also have realized that not many Romans were becoming Church members either. Many stuck to their pagan ways. It is these members also and their descendants who failed to hold on to the true faith and were absorbed by the Roman Church.

**Why most Jews did not accept Jesus**

When Paul penned his epistle to the Romans, most Jews were refusing to accept Jesus as the Messiah. They were expecting the Messiah to be a king who would help them conquer the Romans and restore Israel to glory. This had become a “stumbling block” for them (Romans 11:9).

Moses, a former general in the Egyptian Army, is a towering figure in Judaism. He had prophesied that God would send a prophet like him (Deuteronomy 18:15) whom the people should hear. They expected that prophet to be a conquering general like Moses and King who would raise a Jewish Army to overthrow the Romans. That’s why they did not accept Jesus Christ as that prophet like Moses or the Messiah.

***Has God Cast Away the Jews***

In the early Church the problem of Christian converts of Gentile and Jewish origin beginning to judge each other had developed. Each group thought themselves superior to the other. The Jews attributed their superiority to their ancestry from Abraham. The Gentile converts of Rome and other provinces invented the idea that the Jews had been replaced as the New Covenant people.

An anti-Jewish attitude was also developing in Rome. The Jews were a subject people and Rome ruled the greatest Empire on earth. Paul wanted to prevent the spread of this attitude that could lead to division in the Church and defeat the very idea that God was rejecting His people Israel. He knew that division could lead to the Gentiles rejecting the faith that the Jews had been brought up in. That’s why he addressed this issue in the book of Romans.

Paul began answering the question in Romans 11 “Has God cast away His people?” He writes (NKJV): “1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! 5…at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace…7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8 Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day." 9 And David says: "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. 10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always."

Paul explains it is by God’s grace that the elect joined God’s Church, but the rest of the Jews were blinded. Then Paul continues:

“11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”

Paul asks “Did the Jews stumble that they might fall?” He answers, “Certainly not!” So the Israelites have not been permanently rejected. At present God is calling only an elect few among them for salvation, but the rest are blinded.

Then Paul goes on to warn the Gentiles not to boast against the Israelites lest they too stumble. He continues:

17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you [the Gentiles], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”

Paul explained to the Romans that they cannot receive salvation in any way different from the Israelites. They must share the same heritage as the Israelites by being ‘grafted’ into the ‘root’ of Israel.

Paul then tells the Romans that God will turn away ungodliness from Jacob and that God’s calling and gifts to Israel are irrevocable. So eventually all Israel will be saved in the future (verse 26).

“25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." 28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”

Paul says God has a plan of salvation so that He might have mercy on all, Jews and Gentiles. At present only a few chosen elect are being called. Israelites have not been rejected because they will get their chance for salvation later according to God’s plan pictured by the seven annual feast days when He will resurrect them with all the dead of the world in the Great White Throne judgment after the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ to give them all their chance for salvation.

The future resurrection to physical life prophesied in Ezekiel 37 is one of the reasons Paul tells the Christian gentiles not to "boast" as if they were replacing the Israelites in God's salvation plan (Romans 11:18). He wanted them to humbly realize that because of God’s mercy they were “grafted” into the natural olive tree of Abraham’s descendants. Paul also stresses that all past promises made to Israel will be fulfilled because "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (verse 29). God never breaks His promises.

Paul again explained to the Gentile Churches that for them to receive salvation they must be ‘grafted’ into Abraham’s family. So Paul wrote in Galatians 3:29: "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

UCG booklet “*The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God’s Law?”* states on p. 92:

“Therefore Paul strongly rejected the idea that God is replacing the nation of Israel—including the Jews of the first century—as His covenant people. Rather, gentile converts are "grafted" into the root of Israel (Romans 11:17-19). The "root" or ancestor of Israel was Abraham, to whom God made the promise that the Messiah would come from his descendants.

“The hope of the gentiles, therefore, lies in sharing the heritage promised to the Israelites, not in replacing them or receiving a different heritage apart from them. As Paul had explained to the Christians of Galatia: "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

“As was explained above, a major factor in Paul's reasoning is that during "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), God is not calling the majority of either Jews or gentiles to repentance. So he argues that the gentile converts should not assume that their calling means that God has "cast away" the physical descendants of Israel (whether living, deceased or to be born in the future).”

Paul also addressed the question of judging each other as well. He told them in Romans 14:10-13 (NKJV), “10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.” See also John 5:22-24.

Paul shows in Romans 2:11-13 (NIV) that God has no favorites in judgment: "For God does not show favoritism. All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous".

Paul explains that God’s judgment is without regard to race or whether they had any previous understanding of His Law. Every person will be judged exactly the same way based on their forgiveness of sins because of repentance and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment of the death penalty on their behalf and subsequent diligent obedience to the Law and overcoming sin. There is no other path to salvation. Therefore Paul stated in Romans 2:1-4 (NIV):

"You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

"Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you towards repentance?"

***Jews and Gentiles United by a Common Inheritance***

Paul again and again stresses in his letters that to inherit God’s promises made to Abraham and the fathers the Gentiles like the branches of a wild olive tree must first be grafted into the root of Israel, which is the natural olive tree that has descended from Abraham.

Paul emphasizes this in Ephesians 2:11-13, NASB: "Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so- called 'Circumcision,' . . . remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ".

The Gentiles were brought near to the promise of the same inheritance available to the Christian Jews! "For He [Christ] Himself is our peace, who has made both [Jews and gentiles] one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation" (verse 14).

What was this “middle wall of separation” that Paul referred to? UCG booklet “*The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God’s Law?*” describes this barrier on p. 107:

“What "middle wall of separation" had to be "broken down" so Jews and gentiles could be reconciled in the "one" body, the Church? In verse 15 Paul describes this wall as the "enmity" that divides Jews and gentiles. Whatever that "wall" was, it was a clear symbol of Jewish-Gentile enmity. Sadly, that "wall" of enmity is often misinterpreted as God's commandments – His law.

“Is that what Paul had in mind in this analogy of a wall that separated Jews and gentiles? Not even remotely! Let's correctly identify the "wall" that vividly symbolized the barrier between the Jews and the gentiles. For that we need to accurately understand a little bit of history and the meaning of two key Greek words that Paul used.

*The temple's "middle wall"*

“In the New Testament the Greek word *mesotoichon*, meaning "middle wall," occurs only in Ephesians 2:14. The Greek word *phragmos*, translated "of separation" or "of partition" (KJV) in the same verse, means a "fence" or "railing" and is sometimes translated as "hedge" (Matthew 21:33; Mark 12:1; Luke 14:23).

“The meaning of these words indicates that Paul's expression "middle wall of separation" refers to some barrier that divides people as would a fence, railing or hedge. Here a brief history lesson is helpful.

“Flavius Josephus was a first-century Jewish historian from a priestly family. In his book *Wars of the Jews* he used both Greek terms—in separate contexts—for a particular balustrade or barrier at the Jerusalem temple (Book 5, chap. 5, sec. 2 and 6).

“Which barrier evoked Paul's comparison to the divisions that existed between gentiles and Jews? It was the wall erected by the Jews to isolate the outer court of the gentiles—the area of the Jewish temple complex where gentiles were allowed—from the inner area around the temple itself, from which all gentiles were banned.

“The *New International Commentary of the New Testament*: The Book of Acts explains: "That no Gentile might unwittingly enter into the forbidden areas, notices in Greek and Latin were fixed to the barrier at the foot of the steps leading up to the inner precincts, warning them that death was the penalty for further ingress.

"Two of these notices (both in Greek) have been found—one in 1871 and one in 1935—the text of which runs: 'No foreigner [gentile] may enter within the barricade which surrounds the temple and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death'" (1974, p. 434).

*Humanly erected barriers*

“Setting up that physical wall in the outer court of the temple was not commanded in the Scriptures. God never issued any order to erect it. To Paul, this barrier erected by the Jews was a fitting symbol of the enmity Jews and gentiles had for each other.

“The literal, physical "middle wall" was demolished when the temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. However, several years before its physical destruction Paul pointed to it as a fitting symbol of the prejudicial ethnic and religious barriers that divide human beings.

“All such man-made barriers must be "broken down" before mankind can enjoy the peace and unity for which Christ died. Yet, to this day, the world is filled with man-made taboos that divide people culturally, religiously, ethnically and nationally.

“Paul is pointing out that in God's plan true reconciliation requires the elimination of barriers that separate people contrary to the intent of the Scriptures. As he had explained to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).”

***History Confirms Paul’s Fears Were Justified***

Perhaps we can now understand why Paul addressed the judging problem between Jewish and Gentile converts in predominantly Gentile Churches in Rome and other areas. If they failed to correctly understand that the reason for God’s calling of Gentiles was that He may have mercy on all, Paul knew they would be headed for disaster.

He explained in Romans 2:1, NRSV, "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things." Both groups would be justified [to be made right with God] on the same basis—through Jesus Christ, not because one group was superior to the other.

The Gentile Churches started out right as "imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea" (1 Thessalonians 2:14). Then the problem of judging each other between the Jews and Gentiles developed. Paul addressed the problem in his letters.

But after Paul’s death and Jewish revolts against Roman rule, anti-Jewish feeling took further hold in Rome. Jews were also expelled from Rome. In addition, because the Romans did not distinguish the Church from Judaism because of keeping the Sabbath and seven annual feasts of God, the Church began to be persecuted along with the Jews. So the idea that God was rejecting His people Israel emerged again which today is known as “replacement theology.”

History proved Paul right. Within less than a century after his death the schism within the Church between Jews and Gentiles that Paul was trying to prevent began to take hold on a massive scale.

Most of the Gentiles rejected the role of Israel in God’s plan of salvation. They began to view themselves as replacement for the Jews. Once that idea took hold of their thinking, they felt they did not have to keep God’s Law any longer. They abandoned the Law of God and the Sabbath, viewing them as Jewish, began replacing the Sabbath with Sunday, God’s Passover with Easter and abandoned the other annual holy days. Not only the Jews were being rejected but anything that was associated with the Jews, including the Old Testament scriptures began to be rejected.

As the Schism developed further, one false Roman Church founded by Simon Magus the magician (Acts 8:9-24) began to dominate over others and worked to bring all other Churches into its fold. It was successful and later this Church came to be known as the *Roman Catholic Church.*

The Church Simon Magus started was never part of God’s Church. After he was baptized in Samaria and rejected when he offered the apostles money to give him the power for people he baptized to receive God’s holy spirit by the laying on of his hands, he started his own counterfeit Church by appropriating the name of Jesus Christ as Savior. But he preached that because of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice and forgiveness we were no longer required to keep God’s Law as all our sins would be forgiven. So he turned the grace of God into license to sin.

Simon was actually never a convert to true Christianity. He had been a practitioner of the Babylonian Mystery Religion of Semiamis and Nimrod. After his baptism in Samaria he migrated to Rome, Italy. That’s where he started his counterfeit Church. That Church never kept God’s Law or the Sabbath or God’s holy days. It kept its own pagan festivals. This Church began to assert itself over other Churches and eventually came to dominate them and absorb them into itself. It later came to be known as the Catholic [meaning ‘universal’] Church. It foisted its pagan festivals on the rest of the Churches. Because of the concept of “replacement theology” members were easy targets for its ongoing deceptions. To absorb more pagans into Christianity, it started keeping more festivals kept by those pagans by giving them its own concocted Christian significance. That is how paganism of Semiramis and Nimrod embodied in Christmas, New Year’s day, Good Friday, Easter, Lent, Valentine’s Day, Halloween became part of Christianity. None of these festivals were part of the apostolic Christianity. That’s why they are not even mentioned in the Bible.

So what Paul was trying to prevent in Christianity actually took place within about a century after his death. The ideas that were taking hold in Paul’s time in Rome took root and grew and are now part of mainstream Christianity to this day.

While Gentile Churches abandoned God’s Law and hence true Christianity preached by the apostles, the Jewish Churches hung on to the truth for a couple of centuries longer. Members who stayed true to the faith scattered due to persecution and sowed the seed for new growth wherever they went. So the true Church has never died down completely as prophesied by Jesus (Matthew 16:18, “…upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”) It has continued throughout the centuries since its founding in 31 A.D. but it has always remained a “little flock.”

***The Corruption of Apostolic Christianity***

The UCG booklet “*The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God’s Law*?” explains on p. 109 how Christianity that the apostles preached got corrupted:

“Almost immediately after the Roman armies destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70, intense prejudice against Jewish beliefs and customs spread like wildfire throughout the Roman Empire. Then, following the deaths of Paul and John, that prejudice led to the first great "falling away" from the New Covenant teachings as explained by Christ's apostles (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

“Before that destructive event, the predominantly gentile congregations raised up by Paul were "imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea" (1 Thessalonians 2:14). They followed the same spiritual way of life the Jewish Christians practiced.

“After the fall of Jerusalem, however, living that way of life became much more difficult. A higher level of faith and courage was needed that many converts did not have. As a result, worldly prejudices against all things Jewish began to enter gentile Christianity. Distorted views of Paul's writings from "untaught and unstable" leaders began to undermine the way of life and pattern of worship that former gentile Christians had copied from their Jewish brethren (2 Peter 3:16).

“From the last part of the first century through the fourth century, the part of the Christian religion given attention by historians accepted dramatic changes. A new concept of "progressive revelation" allowed church leaders to revise doctrine to suit their perceptions of church needs—instead of adhering strictly to teachings handed down by the apostles. The entire way of life taught by the apostles was steadily abandoned until what most considered the Christian religion bore little resemblance to the original apostolic teachings.”

***Conclusion***

In conclusion then, when we see God’s plan of salvation pictured by His seven annual feasts, we see that God has not abandoned anyone, not the Jews, other Israelites or the Gentiles. Those in mainstream Christianity who think that He has abandoned the Jews are not obeying Jesus Christ themselves and are not qualifying to receive eternal life. They are following paganism masquerading around as Christianity. And that tragedy happened to Christianity because they swallowed the wrong reasoning that God had replaced the Jews with Gentile converts. They then incorrectly reasoned that they were no longer required to keep the spiritual part of God’s Law, including the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath and the seven annual holy days. Thus they no longer remained God’s true Churches and heirs of God’s salvation.

Most of the Jews on the other hand did not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah because blindness in part (Romans 11:25) has happened to them as well as the other tribes of Israel (because they are converts to the false mainstream Christianity and not the true Christianity taught by the apostles).

But each and every one will get his or her chance for salvation later during the 1,000 years of Jesus Christ’s soon coming Kingdom on earth or during the 100 years of the Great White Throne Judgment that will follow the millennium.

However, if God has opened your mind, whether Jew, Israelite or Gentile, to understand what God’s Church preaches as the truth, then you can receive your chance for salvation right now and qualify to be in the first resurrection which is a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35).

**Chapter 23**

**Jews: Behold Your Awesome God**

The Jews know the God of their scriptures, the Old Testament to the Christians, as an awesome God, capable of fantastic miracles. He has created everything. That’s why it is so difficult for them to accept that their God is a lesser God to another supreme God. They simply are not willing to accept the notion that there is more than one God Being with one being greater than the other, and their God being the lesser one.

We have already proved in chapters 12 and 13 that two God Beings exist, and their existence was known to prophets in the Jewish scriptures. Those prophets were Moses, David and Daniel.

***How Really Awesome a God Jesus Christ Is***

Many in Islam ask the question, “How can a little God like Jesus also be God?” in order to try and argue that Jesus Christ is not God. And that is the reason even Jews don’t accept Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament, despite Moses, David and Daniel having revealed the existence of two God Beings.

We have shown that Jesus Christ as the YHWH of the Old Testament whom John the apostle calls the “Word” was originally created by God the Father. But then everything else has been created by YHWH of the Jewish scriptures. We should understand that the creator will always be superior to what he can create. Jesus Himself said that His Father was greater than Him. But here is how one can get over the notion that Jesus is a little God by knowing how truly awesome a God Jesus Christ really is.

You can do that by imagining that originally there was only one God, and that God was Jesus Christ. In fact, for about 4,000 years of man’s history that is what the world thought, except for Moses, David and Daniel.

So though a few prophets knew of the existence of two God Beings about 2000 years after the creation of man, the Israelite population knew of the existence of only one God Being, their God of the Old Testament. And that God later came to earth as the God [because He was the Son of God] and Man [because He was Mary’s Son] Jesus Christ.

Did the Israelites have the notion that their God was anything less than an awesome God? They and the world around them which had experienced the incredible miracles God did for ancient Israel believed Him to be an all-powerful God worthy of all worship. They did not know that another God Being existed. In fact, Jesus Christ Himself said that He came to reveal the existence of the other God Being, God the Father in Luke 10:22 (NKJV): “…no man knows who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

The God of the Old Testament was worthy of all awe and honor and worship. The Israelites knew that their God has existed for a time period which we can describe only as past eternity. So He possesses all the wisdom of the ages of man and spirit beings. He has known the thoughts and actions of every creature that has ever been created.

We know that all the spirit and material universe were created by the God of the Old Testament. Before beginning creation, He planned out the creation of spirit beings as well as the material universe.

He first planned out the creation of spirit beings. He possesses all the spirit or energy with which He could create the spirit world and the material universe. He possesses all the wisdom to conceive of the laws that would govern the spirit world and the universe, and the power or energy to sustain those laws.

Then He created the first spirit beings called the 24 elders in Revelation 4, 7 and 14. He planned out what these elders would look like, what attributes each would possess and with what spirit essence they would be created. These elders are pictured wearing crowns of gold. No angel is pictured wearing a crown of gold. This means that the 24 elders have qualified to be called righteous and receive crowns of gold. They therefore must have existed before the angels and had been tested and tried. They must have existed for a very very very long time [perhaps billions, or may be trillions, or even greater number of years] to have qualified to receive crowns of gold.

Then Jesus Christ carried out the next phase of creation with His own power and energy: the creation of hundreds of millions, or possibly billions of angels.

Then Jesus Christ with His own power and energy created the material universe, which may be a few billion years old. He developed the laws of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology to set them in motion to govern the material universe. Laws of physics tell us that energy can be converted into matter and vice versa. All the matter in the universe has been created from energy. Jesus Christ as God possesses that kind of awesome energy. He possesses such an amount of energy that He converted a tiny fraction of it into mass contained in all the planets, stars and billions of galaxies. I hope you can get a glimpse of how awesome a God Jesus Christ really is.

Jesus Christ then created humanity and the animal and plant kingdoms. Since He created humanity, He will always be greater than all of humanity put together, no matter even when tens of billions of human beings qualify to receive eternal life and power greater than any angel. Jesus Christ possesses all this power, abilities and wisdom to have created all these things.

And it is Jesus Christ with His own power and energy who will resurrect every human being to immortal life. He said in John 5:25-29 (NKJV):

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live...All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

There was no doubt about what He meant. He added in verse 21,"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will." When Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead, He said to Lazarus' sister, Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

So Jesus made it quite clear that just like God the Father He can resurrect human beings to eternal life. He will actually resurrect all human beings to eternal life. So our eternal life depends entirely on Him.

And don’t forget. All the spirit and material creation is governed by laws which are sustained by Jesus Christ according to Hebrews 1:3. So He sustains the spirit world as well as the material universe. And that too requires tremendous power. Jesus Christ possesses that kind of power to sustain the entire spirit and material creation.

What else distinguishes God from His creation? God has never sinned in thought or action. He has never violated His laws. Only two Beings in the entire universe can make that claim and probably no one else, possibly even including the 24 elders, will ever be able to make that claim. And those two Beings are God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Ultimately God the Father and Jesus Christ are going to make human beings who receive eternal life incapable of sinning because of the character they will have developed, the power and abilities they will be endowed with. But they will never be able to claim that they have never sinned, for every human being as a human being would have sinned. Angels have sinned. But God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ have never sinned. That is how awesome a God Jesus Christ is.

Here is how you can further understand how truly awesome the God Jesus Christ is. The general view is that all spirit beings, that is the twenty four elders of Revelation 4, and the angels have immortal life, that is, life-inherent in them. They never die. They are immortal. If that is so, then why did Jesus make the statement in John 5:26: "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself."

Does this statement imply that though spirit beings like the angels have life that is not dependent on any kind of spirit food for sustenance and can potentially live forever, it can nevertheless be taken away from them by God and Jesus Christ? Or in other words, the spirit beings besides God the Father and Jesus Christ do not have life-inherent in themselves. They do not have life that can never be taken away from them. God the Father obviously is that kind of life. But God the Father has also given that kind of life-inherent to Jesus Christ. He is self-existent. There is not an iota of mistrust or even its possibility between them. Because of perfect harmony and oneness between them, God the Father has chosen to give that kind of life to Jesus Christ.

This also means that only God the Father and Jesus Christ can set creation in motion, either by creating matter, or supplying the spirit [or energy] that can be used to create matter. The 24 elders and the angels are never mentioned creating in that way. But there is the possibility that the twenty four elders and human beings made immortal, and perhaps God’s holy angels may one day in future eternity qualify to receive life inherent in themselves as Jesus Christ did.

There is one more characteristic that distinguishes Jesus Christ from His spirit or physical creation. He is truly one with God the Father in thoughts, actions and attitude. There is not an iota of mistrust between them. Jesus Christ as the Created One is in total submission to His Father. The Father can trust Jesus Christ completely so that He has granted only Jesus Christ in the universe to have life inherent in Himself. Jesus Christ prays to the Father that we all may become one with Him and the Father as He is one with the Father. This is mentioned in John 10:30 and 17:11. We are far from being there yet. That is how awesome a God is Jesus Christ. He is at one with the Father.

We hope Jews can understand how truly awesome Jesus Christ the God of their scriptures is in power, might and wisdom. He is not a little God, but a truly awesome God whose powers we cannot even imagine. But we will have an eternity to understand His mind and His powers as we learn to work with His material creation. As the Creator, He is and always will be greater than all His creation put together. That is why His life was worth more than all the creation put together, and why His death paid the penalty for the sins of all His creation.

Thus we see that Jesus Christ has all the attributes that we can imagine the God of the Old Testament having. If He is the only God that existed, then He would be capable of creating and sustaining all that exists. He would not need help from another God. He is truly an awesome God, except that only God the Father is greater than Him.

***God Who Emptied Himself of His Divinity***

God has prophesied the kind of life He wants with humanity in Revelation 21:3-4: “3 "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

God desires to dwell with humanity. Can you imagine God trying to dwell with humanity in its current state? They will abuse Him to His face. When He came to dwell with humanity in the form of the man Jesus Christ, humanity collectively murdered Him because they did not like His criticism of their ways. Clearly God would not get the honor and respect He deserves if He came and dwelt with humanity right now.

The problem with humanity is sin. As long as there is even an iota of sin present in any of God’s sons, God’s family cannot live the kind of life as prophesied above and God cannot dwell with human beings unless each and every one reaches that level of perfection.

That is the kind of family God is purposing and is working to create. He wants a family that does not experience tears, pain, suffering and sorrow which the rebellion of Satan and the demons brought into the universe. And becoming part of God’s family involves our free choice. Each and every human being has to choose to become a part of God’s family when God sends that human being His invitation by calling him. Those who choose not to by rebelling against God and His law will not become part of His family.

Again, why does God have such an emphasis on sinlessness? The answer is quite simple. Any transgression of God’s law, or any form of lawlessness always brings pain and suffering without fail. We cannot have perfect love, peace, joy and happiness, a life without tears, pain and suffering when there is any form of sin present in us.

The only way to emphasize the total unacceptability of any form of sin is to prescribe the death penalty for sin. That is what God’s Law does.

Each and every human being ever born except Jesus Christ has sinned and earned the death penalty. So each and every human being is worthy to die. That means God cannot have the family He wants. But to make His family a reality, the awesome Creator God chose to empty Himself of His divinity, come as a human being, live a sinless life and die to pay the death penalty on behalf of all His creation.

We ascribe greatness to a human being who does a selfless sacrificial deed for the benefit of someone. That is another attribute of awesomeness that we can add to how awesome a God Jesus Christ really is. He has demonstrated His love for us the depth of which none of us can ever reach.

***Now Captain of Our Salvation as our Awesome High Priest***

After His sacrifice and resurrection Jesus Christ has regained all the power He had as the God of the Old Testament, and now sits at the right hand of God the Father on His throne in heaven. However He has something more now compared to what He had as the God of the Old Testament. He has experienced life and suffering as a human being and has been perfected by that experience. He has become our perfect captain to lead us and help us gain salvation. Paul states in Hebrews 2:9-10 (NKJV):

“9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Salvation is not available through any other. Peter the apostle declared to the chief priests and Sadducees in acts 4:11-12 (NKJV), “11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Salvation for the Jew, Israelite or Gentile is available only through Jesus Christ. On the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. when the disciples received the holy spirit and Peter spoke to the Jews gathered there, they were convicted in their hearts and asked the disciples what they must do to be saved. Peter outlined the steps in Acts 2:38-39 (NKJV), “38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Here are the steps God outlines for qualifying to receive salvation for any human being:

1) *God’s Call* – The first step on the road to salvation is God’s call. Unless God calls a person, he or she will not understand the truth. But if God has opened your mind to understand and accept what God’s Church preaches as the truth, then God is calling you. He is inviting you to receive your chance for eternal life.

*2) Repentance* – The next step on the road to eternal life is repentance. Repentance is turning away from our previous way of life to serving God and living His way of life as described in His Word, the entire Bible. Repentance is changing from the way of sin which is defined as ‘transgression of God’s Law’ (1 John 3:4) to obeying God’s Law. Repentance is also a gift from God because by a miracle God makes repentance possible (Romans 2:4).

3) *Baptism and Laying on of Hands* – After a sinner deeply repents and now wants to change his way of life, he must then commit to changing his sinful way of life. That commitment is demonstrated by being baptized (by being completely immersed under water) and then God’s true ministers laying their hands on the converted person and praying for him to receive God’s holy spirit. The convert then receives God’s holy spirit. Baptism symbolizes the sinner’s death and burial to his old way of life of sin and resurrection to newness of life, a lifelong commitment to overcoming sin and obedience to God’s Law.

4) *Remission (Forgiveness) of Sins* – After we have repented and accepted Jesus Christ’s sacrifice for forgiveness of our sins, demonstrated our commitment to live God’s way of life in obeying His law by being baptized and receiving God’s holy spirit, then when we ask for forgiveness through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ all our sins and guilt associated with them is removed from us. Literally our slate of sins is wiped clean. God keeps no score of our good deeds and bad deeds. 1 John 1:9 says, “9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

5) *Staying the Course and Enduring to the End* – After we receive God holy spirit and our sins have been forgiven, we become members of the spiritual body of Jesus Christ, God’s true Church. Before we can reach our final destination – eternal life as God’s literal sons in His Kingdom – many miles of road and years to live lie ahead.

God’s holy spirit will change our minds, enabling us to understand the letter and spiritual intent of God’s Law and giving us the spiritual power to keep it. We will grow in spiritual wisdom, knowledge and understanding. We will learn to think and act as God does. The purpose is to have God’s holy righteous character formed in us. Literally Christ’s character is to be formed in us through this process of spiritual growth (Galatians 4:19, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”)

Many trials tribulations and sacrifices will lie ahead on the road to eternal life. But “13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

We will be required to exercise our free will to choose what to do in all of life’s circumstances. God expects us to exercise our free will to remain faithful to His Law and way of life. If we produce fruit pleasing to God, then God will be pleased to grant us eternal life. If we produce no fruit to perfection, then we will not qualify to receive eternal life and our lives will be permanently extinguished in the Lake of Fire.

6) *Resurrection to Eternal Lif*e – At the end of our physical life if the godly holy righteous character of Jesus Christ has been formed in us, then we will qualify to receive eternal life through a resurrection. If we are still alive then our bodies will be changed to a glorious immortal spirit body and we will receive entrance into God’s Kingdom as His immortal sons. If we failed to develop God’s holy righteous character in us, meaning did not produce fruit to perfection, then our lives will be permanently extinguished in the Lake of Fire and even our memory will vanish from the minds of the living.

UCG publishes an excellent booklet titled “*The Road to Eternal Life*” that explains these steps in greater detail. Free copy of the booklet is available at www.ucg.org.

***Help from our Faithful High Priest to Attain Salvation***

Ancient Israel demonstrated that human beings are incapable of keeping God’s Law perfectly on their own. But keeping God’s Law is required to attain salvation. Under the Old Covenant God’s holy spirit was not granted to the people. Only the prophets had it. That’s why ancient Israelites were unable to keep God’s Law. But under the New Covenant God gave His called out ones a new heart through a new spirit, His holy spirit. The holy spirit enables the Law to be written on the hearts and minds of the people.

In addition to God’s holy spirit we have personal assistance available from our faithful High Priest Jesus Christ to enable us to keep God’s Law. This assistance from Jesus Christ is available in many forms.

First of all Jesus Christ lives in us through God’s holy spirit. Paul stated in Galatians 2:20, “20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Judaism during the Old Testament days was a temple based worship system. God was supposed to be dwelling in the Temple in Jerusalem. But in the New Testament members of God’s Church are the Temple of God. 2 Corinthians 6:16 says, “16…for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Thus Jesus Christ dwells in us through the holy spirit personally assisting us to live His life (the way He lived) in us.

Jesus Christ lived a life of perfect obedience to God the Father and Kept the Law perfectly. He knows how to do it and can therefore assist us in doing so. Hebrews 5:8-9 (NKJV) states: “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

Jesus Christ can also personally assist every person because He experienced life as a human and understands our weaknesses and infirmities. Hebrews 2:17-18 (NIV) states: "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God…Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." The physical high priest under the Sinai Covenant could not provide such help.

Only through continuous access to a living faithful High Priest can we obey God in the manner pleasing to Him. Hebrews 4:15-16 (NKJV) further adds: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

As the renting of the Temple Veil indicated we now have direct access to God the Father. We can directly pray to God for help in keeping God’s Law. Jesus Christ then provides us all the assistance we need to obey God’s Law, live His way of life and endure to the end.

***Help Available***

Jews may have many other questions that have not been answered in this book. But help is available from the United Church of God and other Churches of God. Answers to many of the questions may be available from the suggested reading list. In addition answers may be available at the UCG web site www.ucg.org.

In addition, the UCG has dedicated ministers available in any part of the world to answer any questions or for counseling on how to join God’s true Church. We can be contacted at www.ucg.org by email; by mail at United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, USA; or by phone in the USA toll-free at 1-888-886-8632, or from anywhere in the world at 1-513-576-9796.

**Suggested Reading**

All the following literature provide by various Church of God organizations is provided free of cost, without any obligation.

1. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; by Herbert W. Armstrong, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

2. *America and Britain in Prophecy*, by David C. Pack; published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

3. *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*; published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

4. *Malachi’s Message* published by the Philadelphia Church of God available at www.pcog.org

5. *The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor or Soon-Coming Reality?* published by the Living Church of God, available at the Church's web site: www.lcg.org.

6*. World in Bible Prophecy,* available at www.ChurchofGodMessage.com

All the following booklets are published by the United Church of God, available free of charge at its web site www.ucg.org

7. *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy.*

8. “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future,*” an eBook available under booklets.

9. *Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

10. *God’s Holy Day Plan: Promise of Hope for all Mankind*.

11. *Why Were You Born*?

12. *The Road to Eternal Life*

13. *Who is God?*

*14. Jesus Christ: The Real Story*

*15. Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*

16. *The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law*

17. *Is God a Trinity?*