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BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

Korea in Prophecy:
Any Witness?

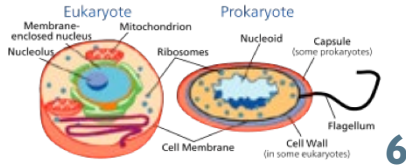
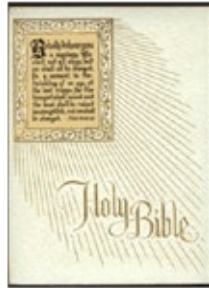
Who is the
Man of Sin?

The Canon of the
New Testament

Disproving Evolution
as the Origin of Life



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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 3 Who is the Man of Sin?** Is the “man of sin” in 2 Thessalonians 2 the Beast or the False Prophet? What does the Bible really teach?
- 6 Disproving Evolution** as the Origin of Life Many wish to believe that life randomly sprang up. But what does the Bible and real science show?
- 9 The Canon of the New Testament** Many try to claim that the Church of Rome canonized the New Testament, but really was it not first known in Asia Minor by Church of God leaders?
- 17 Overcoming is Important** The Bible does not teach that we need to do nothing. It teaches that God’s people are to be overcomers.
- 20 Korea in Prophecy: Any Witness?** Korea has been in the news a lot in 2013. The Bible reveals the origins of the Korean people and their role in prophecy. What is God’s plan for the Koreans?
- 28 The Fall Holy Days** This article has information about the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day.
- 35 When are God’s Biblical Holy Days?** Here is a calendar of God’s Holy Days from 2013 through 2017.

Back Cover: Internet and Radio Where people can find the message from the *Continuing Church of God*?

About the Front Cover: Many wish to display military strength in this age. While war is the sad temporal destiny for many, there will be peace in the age to come.

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FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF: BOB THIEL

WHO IS THE 'MAN OF SIN'?



1630 Depiction of Beasts of Daniel 7

The Apostle Paul wrote the following about the man of sin, the son of perdition, in 2 Thessalonians 2:

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; 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. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

Who is this man of sin?

Is this the King of the North of Daniel 11? Is this the Beast of the sea of Revelation 13? Is this the Beast of the earth of Revelation 13, also known as the False Prophet? What does the Bible actually teach? (Here is a link to a related YouTube video titled Who is the Man of Sin?)

Recently and apparently related to some of my writings, someone wrote that the “man of sin” of 2 Thessalonians 2 was the two-horned beast of Revelation 13 and this was obvious to those who understand prophecy.

The problem is that the individual overlooked scriptures which identify who this man of sin actually is and seemed to mainly rely on tradition.

Let the Bible Interpret the Bible

When possible, Christians should always look at other related passages of scripture so that the Bible will interpret itself. So, it is to the Bible we should look and not to traditions of men.

The Bible shows that this is the first Beast and that the second Beast (called “another beast below”) causes the world to worship the first Beast:

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea...3... And 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. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”...8 **All who dwell on the earth will worship him**, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world...11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and **he had two horns** like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 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. (Revelation 13:1, 3, 4, 8, 11-12)

Since the man of sin exalts himself above all that is called

God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) and the second beast causes the world to worship, not himself but instead, the first beast (Revelation 13:11-12), the man of sin must be the first Beast. Is the description in 2 Thessalonians 2 describing the false prophet (also known as the two-horned beast and final Antichrist)? While various ones have various opinions, doctrine is to come from the Bible:

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

So what does scripture teach?

To answer that, first let's look at the verses in the New Testament that use the term "false prophet," which are below:

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Revelation 16:13-14).

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Revelation 19:20).

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

However, it seems that the description of the King of the North in Daniel closely fits the description of that man of perdition:

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. 37 He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. 38 But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he

shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things (Daniel 11:36-38).

Notice that the King of the North exalts himself above all the gods. This includes the god of fortresses, which (as I have long suggested) is apparently the Roman (Catholic) god. And this exaltation would also have to include being above the two-horned beast of Revelation 13.

Furthermore, notice that the two-horned beast of Revelation 13 gets people to worship the first beast and that it is the first beast that Satan has given great authority to:

1 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...

2 The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority....

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. **And authority was given him** over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 **All who dwell on the earth will worship him**, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world...

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and **he had two horns** like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 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. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 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 who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed (Revelation 13:1,2,6-8,11-15).

Notice clearly that the two-horned beast (who is THE false prophet, cf. Revelation 19:20) gets people to worship THE FIRST beast, the ten-horned beast (with accompanying signs). Hence the two-horned beast is NOT putting himself above all gods as he has people worship the ten-horned beast. And it is the ten-horned beast who is granted "great authority," not the two-horned beast.

There is simply no verse that says that the second beast

gets the worship that the first one does. The false prophet clearly promotes false worship, as opposed to being the object of it himself. While popes have long let people kneel down before them, I have found no scriptures that indicate that the false prophet tries to make himself the object of worship.

The Old Testament clearly concurs. Notice something that Daniel also wrote:

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 (Daniel 7:24-25).

It is the ten-horned beast who speaks the pompous words against God, he is the one who exalts himself above all that is called God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Also notice that in the Bible, people are warned against worshipping the first beast:

9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation (Revelation 14:8-10).

2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image...10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain (Revelation 16:2, 10).

Even if the image is related to the Catholic Church (which to a degree it is), notice that it is the beast and HIS image and HIS kingdom that they worship and warned against is warned as opposed to mainly that of the false prophet. The beast is clearly above the false prophet and is the one who exalts himself above all that is called God.

If we let the Bible interpret itself, it suggests, that the description in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 fits very closely to the first beast, the King of the North, and not nearly as closely

the second beast, the false prophet.

Notice that the first beast also fulfills the following:

15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." (Revelation 17:15-18)

Notice that the harlot (the ecumenical Church of Rome) is devoured at this time. This is one additional way that the first beast, the ten-horned beast does not regard the desire of women as Daniel 11: 37 mentions (with the harlot church symbolized by a woman in Revelation 17) and exalts himself above all that is called god.

This destruction of the harlot also suggests that the man of sin, the son of perdition in 2 Thessalonians 2, is not the false prophet, but the ten-horned beast, and he and his supporters have the power and are taking actions on his behalf.

However, since the false prophet is still alive at this stage (Revelation 19:20), it appears that he either is a captive of the ten-horned beast or that he also betrays his church. But I strongly suspect the latter (as the second beast clearly promotes the worship of the first beast per Revelation 13:12)--he is complicit in the betrayal of the Church of Rome--which is another reason that I teach that the false prophet is a type of anti-pope.

Believe What the Bible Teaches

Because we in the *Continuing* Church of God rely on the Bible, we "have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed" (2 Peter 1:19, KJV).

We know that the New Testament teaches that the man of sin "exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

That the Old Testament teaches that the King of the North "shall exalt and magnify himself above every god" (Daniel 11:36).

That the New Testament also teaches that "All who dwell on the earth will worship" (Revelation 13:8) the first Beast, the

ten-horned beast (Revelation 13:1).

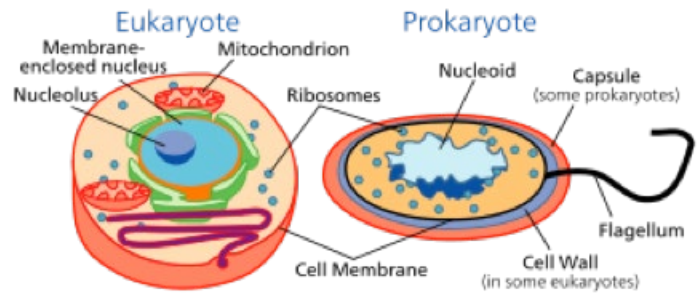
This worship is not directed towards the false prophet. And the Bible teaches that the false prophet, the second beast of Revelation 13 “causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast” (Revelation 13:12).

Read it for yourself in your own Bible.

Even though people will likely worship both beasts, the descriptions in the Bible that describe the ten-horned beast/King of the North are much closer to the man of sin discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 than any descriptions about the false prophet.

Those who truly understand prophecy and who prayerfully study the word of God for doctrine should realize this.

DISPROVING EVOLUTION AS THE ORIGIN OF LIFE



Simplification of the Two Main Types of Cells

By Bob Thiel

Just how solid is the foundation of the theory of evolution? Is it based on improbabilities as its critics suggest and some supporters admit, or is it absolutely impossible? Is God's existence more logical?

Probabilities

Some who claim evolution is improbable point out the fact that various amino acids (which always occur 50:50 in nature in the levo and dextro forms) must have for some unknown reason, only congregated in the levo forms which are the only forms in living proteins.

These would then have had to line up in liquid in a particular sequence for certain proteins, including genes, to be produced. This improbability has been estimated to be so high that it could not have been expected to happen by chance (also, even having amino acids in sequence would not cause them to form the necessary proteins without some type of external catalyst).

On the other hand, some supporters of evolution point out the belief that since there are vast numbers of stars, and probably several planets per star, there are enough possible random sequences to overwhelm the probability in favor of such improbable occurrences.

One version of this theory, embraced by some who believe aliens inhabit other planets, is known as the Drake Equation. Of course, those who make this argument must realize that the probability of any planet other than Earth having what it takes to support life is remote (the Drake Equation, which was developed based on assumptions in the 1960s, vastly overstates the number). But once again those supporters tend to point to evolution as at least a possibility.

Thus both sides tend to argue that the laws of probability support their position.

Life

If it is granted that the necessary chain of amino acids randomly exists, what will occur?

Why nothing, because amino acids of themselves are not alive. Furthermore, they would also have to have lined up with the occurrences of various other biological materials such as lipids and carbohydrates, and that also combined at the correct time. But that still would not make anything alive.

Instead of accepting this reality, hard-line evolutionists then claim that it was possible that there was some change in the atmospheric conditions of the Earth (or some other planet whose life somehow ended up on Earth) that allowed the non-living to somehow come alive. While true scientists do not doubt that there have been different atmospheric conditions on Earth throughout its history, there is no scientific proof that any atmospheric condition could cause non-living matter to become even a primitive live cell (and the available evidence suggests that the Earth has not had the type of atmospheric conditions to cause non-living matter to come alive).

Actually it is impossible for the non-living to become alive as it violates the scientifically accepted law of biogenesis (life only comes from life).

A Series of Impossibilities Should Lead One to Realize the Existence of God

Even if we allow the possibility of spontaneous primitive life to have occurred, what would happen?

The primitive life would have to die.

Part of the reason for this is that even a single-cell is so complex, and so full of various biological subsystems, that scientists have learned that many systems are essentially necessary for life to exist or continue. Science recognizes that living organisms must be self-contained, eat, digest, and reproduce to continue to exist.

There are basically two type of cells, prokaryotes and eukaryotes. Prokaryotes are mainly bacteria, and eukaryotes almost everything else. They both have membranes, ribosomes, organelles of digestion, and DNA containing nuclei. Eukaryotes contain 21 amino acids, and they all need

to be in the right places and in the right proportions for life to exist.

Spontaneously alive lined-up amino acids/proteins (with other substances coincidentally there) would die because:

1. All living organisms need biological structures such as organelles and membranes. Within the membranes they contain intracellular water-soluble components. Without a membranous structure, the proteins would ultimately diffuse and destroy the living organism. Living organism must be somewhat self-contained.
2. All living organisms need nourishment and direction. Since randomness would not have created the biological structure known as a DNA-containing nucleus (or some primitive equivalent), the cell would die. Even if it had some type of nucleus to provide direction, the nucleus would have to have come into existence with ability to determine what to eat and how to find food, another impossibility.
3. Proteins cannot survive without DNA and DNA cannot exist without proteins, hence there is no way both happened at the same time.
4. Even if the cell had all the above with simultaneous protein and DNA, it would die, because there would have been no reason for it to have spontaneously generated a digestive system in order to utilize the food.
5. Even if evolutionists are granted all the improbabilities and impossibilities this article discusses, the primitive life would quickly die out as there would have been no reason for it to have spontaneously generated an ability to reproduce, nor would it have any innate ability to do so.

Let's look at this in a slightly different way:

1. If all the amino acids were to align (as improbable as it would be), it will not become alive. So that step is impossible.
2. If this primitive cell were to somehow become alive, it would die. Why? Because cells contain intracellular water-soluble components, and it is a fact of physics that water-soluble components will dissipate/destroy without a membrane. Thus, going beyond this step is impossible.
3. If this cell did have a membrane, what would happen next? It would die. Why? Because it would not have the innate ability to deduce that it needed to eat as it did not form with a nucleus. The nucleus is the part of the cell that contains DNA and other instructions.
4. Presuming it is in liquid and it runs into food, what will happen? Yes, it will die. Why? Because it was not

randomly formed with digestive ability, it will not be able to digest and utilize the food. Thus, going beyond this step is impossible.

5. Presuming it was randomly formed with a nucleus and digestive abilities, what will happen? It will die out. Why, because it would also have had to be randomly formed with the instructions that it needed to be able to reproduce as well as the ability to do so. Evolution as the origin of life is not just improbable, it is impossible.

Life could not have originally evolved!

It is in the Bible that we are told that when God made life He intended it to reproduce (Genesis 1:11, 28, 29).

The idea of an 'intelligent design' by a Spirit being is the only explanation that does not defy scientifically provable knowledge--for all other explanations result in something that must die out.

Proteins cannot of themselves reproduce--they need DNA. "DNA cannot exist without proteins, and proteins cannot exist without DNA" (Pietzsch J. Understanding the RNAissance. c. 2003. <http://www.nature.com/horizon/rna/background/understanding.html> viewed 05/05/12).

DNA can basically do nothing of itself, it needs proteins. Does any scientifically rational person actually believe that they randomly developed and got together at the same time for life as we know it to exist without Divine intervention?

The answer should be obvious. No.

By the way, God apparently expects humans to realize that He exists through various aspects of His creation. Notice:

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:20).

Thus since life could not have randomly sprung forth, eaten, and reproduced; only a different type of entity (God) could have caused it to begin.

Charles Darwin Admitted that Details Could "Absolutely Break Down" His Theory

It may be of interest to note that Charles Darwin, the human credited for the so-called scientific development of the theory of evolution (and to be technical, evolution is a

model and not a scientific theory), wrote the following in his book *The Origin of the Species*:

If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down (Darwin C. *The Origin of Species*. In Chapter 6, Difficulties on Theory. Cricket House Books LLC, 2010, p. 124).

And although he did not believe that was demonstrated to his satisfaction when he wrote that, the truth is that cellular life was simply much more complex than he at that time realized.

Thus, even Charles Robert Darwin's writings contain an admission that he understood that additional complexity would disprove his theory (perhaps it should be noted that the discovery of DNA would seem to qualify as sufficient complexity that he was unaware of). Of course, scientists know that random amino acids also do not come with DNA. And while this was not known at Darwin's time, this is known now.

Darwin himself seemed to acknowledge that life could not have started on its own. He seemed to, some degree, rely on the biblical account in the Book of Genesis as he wrote:

There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, **having been originally breathed by the Creator** into a few forms or into one (*The Origin Of Species By Charles Darwin*, 2nd and subsequent editions).

Thus, apparently Darwin recognized the impossibility of life starting on its own without a Creator (God).

Sadly, many of today's scientists will not admit the obvious.

No randomly occurring series of improbable and impossible events could have ever done that. Thus, the foundation of evolution is beyond being highly improbable. The foundation of evolution is completely impossible. Only the acceptance of a Creator God is logical to explain life.

And all the pointing to evolutionary "evidence" still does not prove that life began from non-life and somehow evolved to its present stage. The scientific evidence simply disproves evolution as the origin of life.

Christians realize:

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

The facts of physics and biology clearly support that and disprove evolution as the origin of life.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



By Bob Thiel

The Greek term 'kanon,' which is called canon in English, meant 'measuring rod.' The main use of the term canon now has to do with a body of 'accepted' sacred writings (i.e. those writings that passed the measure).

Two Basic Views

There are two basic views of the canonization of the New Testament. There is the view of those who believe that the Bible itself should be trusted (which means that the canon was truly complete by the time of the Apostle John) and there is the view of those that prefer to accept a humanly progressive historical explanation based on various councils.

The Church of Rome, most scholars, and most Protestant groups believe that it took Greco-Roman councils to determine the books. We in the Continuing Church of God believe that view, while true for the Greco-Roman churches, is inconsistent with the Bible and overlooks the reality that the Church of God in Smyrna demonstrated that it had the complete canon in the 2nd century and that it truly had been finalized by the Apostle John in the late 1st century. The fact that it took until the 16th century Council of Trent for the Church of Rome to issue a final definitive position on its view of the canon does not change the facts that the Church of God had the true and complete canon from the time that the Book of Revelation was written and distributed.

Peter, John, and Paul

The Bible does not in one place lay out all the steps of how the NT canon was finalized. Yet by relying on the scriptural position that all scripture is profitable for doctrine (2

Timothy 3:15) and that "precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:10), it becomes clearer how the NT canon came about.

Looking throughout the entire Bible is how the true Church determines its doctrines. On the other hand, the Catholics of Rome and, to some degree, many Protestants & Eastern Orthodox accept the concept of 'progressive revelation' through tradition (a concept that would be opposed to 2 John 9) which means essentially that they did not care of certain parts of the Bible. And that they rely on various human hermeneutics for that interpretation. The Roman Catholic rely on Papal interpretation and early Catholic writers, while certain Protestants tend to rely on Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other Protestant writers. Eastern Orthodox leaders tend to rely on traditions as found in writings of those they consider to be early "fathers."

Between them, Peter, John, and Paul wrote 21 of the 27 books of the NT (plus, between them, they personally knew all the other NT writers). The Bible also suggests that Peter, John, and Paul all had roles in the process of finalizing the NT canon. Even though many Catholics believe that the Catholic Church "gave the Bible to the world," the Catholic Church admits that it wrote none of the books of the NT (though it claims Peter as its original leader).

2 Peter 1:20-21 tells us:

"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"

Thus the Bible teaches that God gave scripture to humans. 2 Peter 1:15 demonstrates that Peter intended for God's teachings to be remembered--and since he was writing at the time, this (as well as common sense) suggests that preserving canonical writings would be the way to accomplish this.

Thus, the Bible is not any church's book in the sense that any church has authority to change it, add to it or subtract from it--"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; 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" (Revelation 22:18-19). On the contrary, God gave the Book to the Church so that its members should accept it, submit to it and live by every word of it (Matthew 4:4).

Paul wrote:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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 (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

These verses show that it was necessary to know what ALL SCRIPTURE was. Otherwise, the man of God could never be complete, etc. Thus, the New Testament canon must have been finalized by the end of the first century A.D.

Paul makes basically the same point in Ephesians 6:13-17:

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

If the proper NT canon would not be known for 300 or more years, then this would result in an incomplete word of God, which would represent a broken sword of the Spirit. Since a broken sword is of little value “and the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), it makes no sense that there would not have been a reliable NT canon that the true Church of God recognized.

Furthermore, the Bible clearly teaches that the faithful, at least in Thessalonica, understood that Paul’s teachings were scripture:

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 2:13-14a)

It should also be noted that the Bible teaches:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

It would not be possible for the word of God to be sharper than any two-edged sword if it was dulled because the true Church (the COG) did not know what it was! The word of God could also not be much of a discerner of thoughts if the word of God itself had not been properly discerned.

The Bible clearly shows that there were false teachers in NT times that should not be relied upon (e.g. 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 4:1), including some with false writings (2 Thessalonians 2:2). The fact that the Catholics and certain heretics held differing views of which books were in the NT canon until around 400 A.D. has no real effect on what the COG knew and taught.

Bringing The Books Together

As Paul and others realized that Christ would probably not return in their lifetimes, they took steps to make sure that all the information needed by Christians would be written down. It is possible that Paul may have also encouraged Luke, his traveling companion (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24), to write both the Book of Acts and the Gospel According to Luke. This way whatever teachings had not been written down, that were necessary, finally did get preserved through writing.

Notice what Luke was inspired to write:

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke is making it clear that this writing is to set down in order the narrative, (scripturally approved oral tradition) for the purpose of making what should be **known as a certainty**.

Paul specifically wrote:

Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come--and the books, especially the parchments (2 Timothy 4:11-13).

Mark, scripture reveals (1 Peter 5:13), spent time with Peter.

Various theologians believe that he (Mark) brought those

books and parchments to Paul, who, presumably with consultations with Peter and possibly John, made the final canonization decisions on all that was written until that time. In his second epistle, Peter refers to Paul's writings as scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16), which provides even more of a scriptural basis for this position. John also wrote, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9)--you cannot abide in the doctrines of Christ by having the true Church changing which books contain the true doctrines. Revelation 22:18-19 itself suggests that God had John then finalize all that would be scripture.

John, believed to be the last of the original twelve apostles to die (as well as the last to write any of the books of the New Testament), is the logical one to have known and preserved the New Testament canon. Historians are basically unanimous in noting that John died in Asia Minor at Ephesus. The writings of early historians such as Eusebius and others make plain that during the second and third centuries, it was the churches in Asia Minor, which had had John's direct guidance, that had best (until the early third century) preserved the practices of the original Jerusalem Church. It is from Asia Minor that the Byzantine family of New Testament texts originated, which is the text officially preserved in the Greek world.

Not too long before writing 2 Timothy, Paul also wrote:

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).

It is a fact that there must have been some confusion about the canon when Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians or people would not be shaken by words or letters that were purported to be from him. And while that could be dealt with through visits while he was alive, Paul must have known that what constituted scripture must be known prior to his death. This is what most likely led to his call for Timothy to send for Mark to bring the books and the parchments--as this was a matter that needed to be resolved quickly. Even the *Catholic News Service* is accepting that at least the Gospels were known in the first and second centuries. Notice the following from a 2007 news story:

The Bodmer Papyrus XIV-XV, handwritten in Greek around the year 200, contains "about half of each of the Gospels of Luke and John," Cardinal Tauran explained. "With this new precious papyrus, the library of the

pope possesses the most ancient witness of the Gospel of Luke and among the most ancient of the Gospel of John," he said...

Before the Bodmer documents were discovered in Egypt in 1952, it said, biblical scholars relied on references to the Gospels in the writings of the early church theologians to assert that by the year 100 the Christian community had accepted only four Gospels as inspired texts.

The Bodmer Papyrus XIV-XV, containing the last two Gospels, the newspaper said, provides concrete evidence that the four Gospels were circulating among Christian communities as a complete set by the year 200, although the twin papyrus containing the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark has not been found. (Wooden Cindy. American's donation lets pope peruse oldest copy of St. Luke's Gospel. Catholic News Service. POPE-PAPYRUS Jan-23-2007 (630 words) xxxi <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0700433.htm>).

It is illogical, historically, that the true Church of God could have existed for over 300 years without knowing what books were part of the New Testament canon or not--this would contradict 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which cannot happen since "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Surely the leaders of the true Church, as well as their followers, had to know. For any to conclude that Peter and John had nothing to do with the canonization of the New Testament does not square with what the Bible seems to be teaching on this subject. Nor does it make much historical sense.

I perhaps should add that I have been criticized for writing about this in the past, and hence should perhaps address those objections here. The main objection is if the original NT Church did not have the full NT until John finished it, how did it function? Well, the truth is that the original NT Church had John and the original apostles who knew what the teachings of the true Church should be since they, plus Paul, were taught directly by Christ. Furthermore, this also is consistent with scriptural record that Peter, Paul, and John all had some role in the canonization before they died to insure that there would not be disputes over the books for true Christians.

For others that is another matter. As even the Catholic Encyclopedia admits:

The most explicit definition of the Catholic Canon is that given by the Council of Trent, Session IV, 1546... Since the Council of Trent it is not permitted for a

Catholic to question the inspiration of these passages. (Reid G. Canon of the Old Testament. Transcribed by Ernie Stefanik. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III. Copyright © 1908 by Robert Appleton Company. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York)

This would seem to mean that the Roman Catholics did not really finalize their canon in an explicit and clear way (including the Old Testament) until 1546. Would God have wanted humankind to wait 14-15 centuries before knowing which books are from Him?

God Provides What We Need

The *a fortiori* principle also demonstrates that God provided copies of the Scriptures to the church. Since Jesus taught that God provides food for the birds and people are worth more than birds (Matthew 6:25-34), it is logical that God will provide proper (and complete) spiritual food for people.

Why?

Because Jesus also taught that the word of God was more important than food, "But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' " (Matthew 4:4).

Also notice Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7:7-12:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Jesus is showing that as decent parents know to not give their children rocks or unclean meats, God provides good things to his people, especially when they ask Him.

It is simply inconceivable that no one in the early Church asked God what Scripture was legitimate to believe and God left that to the Roman Catholic Church to decide 300 years later.

Also, notice Paul's writing:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:14-17).

Since God sent preachers throughout history, God demands faith (Hebrews 11:6), and hearing comes by the word of God (Romans 10:17), there must have been a reliable word of God. A reliable NT canon would have been part of it.

Why Was it John Who Finalized the Canon?

The Old Testament Book of Isaiah prophesied that the LORD's disciples would bind up and seal the Bible. Notice the following:

Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples (Isaiah 8:16).

While other portions of this article have shown that various of Christ's disciples were involved, the above verse suggests that there would be no additions "to the law and to the testimony" (an expression for the Bible, see Isaiah 8:20), after those disciples were gone. Isaiah is thus indicating that the original disciples would have finalized the New Testament--that would include people such as Peter, Paul, and John.

As the longest surviving of the original apostles, John would have seen more problems with false teachers professing Christianity than possibly all the other apostles. Since John wrote the last books of the New Testament and was the longest surviving disciple, the Old Testament clearly supports that he would be the final one to bind up the testimony and seal the law.

The New Testament also suggests that disciple John finalized the Bible through his writing of the Book of Revelation:

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; 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 (Revelation 22:18-19).

While it is possible that he is only referring to the Book of Revelation when he penned the above, as the last New Testament writer, it would seem that God had him put in the above statement to show that the Bible, and not just Revelation, was finalized. Since “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10) and Jesus is the Word (John 1:1, 19), it makes sense that Revelation 22:18-19 is, at least in a sense, referring to the fact that none were to add to the word of God (and that is consistent with other scriptures, such as Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32) . And that this was the last intended book of the canon for the Church age.

Even some Protestant theologians understand that Revelation 22:18-19 supports the concept that the canon was then finalized. Notice what is stated in Matthew Henry’s Commentary:

Rev 22:6-19

It is confirmed by a most solemn sanction, condemning and cursing all who should dare to corrupt or change the word of God, either by adding to it or taking from it, v. 18, 19. He that adds to the word of God draws down upon himself all the plagues written in this book; and he who takes any thing away from it cuts himself off from all the promises and privileges of it. This sanction is like a flaming sword, to guard the canon of the scripture from profane hands. Such a fence as this God set about the law (Deut 4:2), and the whole Old Testament (Mal 4:4), and now in the most solemn manner about the whole Bible, assuring us that it is a book of the most sacred nature, divine authority, and of the last importance, and therefore the peculiar care of the great God (from Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

Interestingly, in all of his epistles John repeatedly warns about false ones who try to influence Christians (1 John 2:4; 2:18-19; 3:10; 4:1; 2 John 7; 3 John 9-19). Hence, this may be part of why God had John write the passage in Revelation 22.

John also wrote:

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21:25).

This statement, combined with his writings in Revelation 22:18-19, show that only certain things needed to be written and only certain writings accepted as scripture. Thus, it is logical to conclude that he, the last of the original apostles,

finalized the NT canon (cf. Isaiah 8:16).

But why else would John have been the one?

John was the last of the original apostles that Jesus, while on the Earth, personally selected. And although the first proper baptisms in Ephesus were apparently done by Paul (Acts 19:1-6), it is John who was there later. Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that John was in charge of the church at Ephesus:

...the Apostle and Evangelist John lived in Asia Minor in the last decades of the first century and from Ephesus had guided the Churches of that province (St. John the Evangelist, 1910).

It is important to note that the Church of Ephesus is the first of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 1:11 as well as the first of the seven in Revelations to receive an individual letter that ends with “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (see chapters 2 & 3).

Since these Churches are shown to those whom Christ walks in the midst of (2:1), it is logical that the first one would have received the entire, properly canonized, NT. The one that John personally oversaw. The same John who wrote that nothing should be added or taken away from the word of prophecy. The same John whose disciple Polycarp became in charge of the Church at Smyrna (the second of the seven churches of Revelation).

Doesn’t it make sense that before John died that he would pass on his knowledge of which books should be part of the New Testament canon? And does it not make sense that this would be to Polycarp, the one who appeared to be his most faithful disciple?

Furthermore, John even records that Jesus told him to write Revelation as a book and send it to the Churches in Asia Minor. Look what Jesus said:

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea” (Revelation 1:11).

Thus it is clear that the last book of the New Testament was sent to the seven churches in Asia Minor, including Smyrna!

The simple truth is that the Church in Asia Minor did have the canon to both the Old and the New Testaments (more

information can be found in the article in the April-June 2013 edition of this magazine titled The Canon of the Old Testament).

Another reason it is logical to conclude that the Church in Asia Minor would have the entire New Testament is because most of the New Testament was written to or from church leaders in Asia Minor.

There are a total of 27 books in the New Testament. At least 9 books of the New Testament were directly written to the church leaders in Asia Minor. The ones clearly written to those in Asia Minor include Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy (Timothy was in Ephesus), Philemon, 1 Peter, 3 John, and Revelation. According to The Ryrie Study Bible John's Gospel, 1 Corinthians, 1 & 2 John, and possibly Philippians, were written from Ephesus. In addition to these 14, there seem to be more as 1 & 2 John and 2 Peter, and possibly Jude may have also been mainly directed to one or more of the churches in Asia Minor.

The Book of James was written to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). Some of them were in Asia Minor. Others according to the historian Josephus were "beyond Euphrates". It is also likely that some others, were written at least partially from Asia Minor. Acts, for example, specifically has a portion written to Christians in Ephesus.

So probably 14 to 20 New Testament books were written to or from Asia Minor (plus it has been *claimed* that all four gospel accounts were as well, though this is less certain, though one or more other than John may have been).

There is only one book written to those in Rome (it never mentions any of the so-called Roman bishops), with 2 to Corinth, 2 to Thessalonica, and 1 to Crete (Titus), a total of 7 letters not sent from nor addressed to those in Asia Minor.

What this clearly shows, is that although there were Christians in various areas, the focus for the New Testament writers were the churches in Asia Minor. And interestingly, the last book of the Bible is specifically addressed to the churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 1:4,11). It was in Asia Minor that the NT canon was originally formed.

From Outside The Bible: Those with Church of God Doctrines Originally Had the Bible

Much, though not all, of what comes to us about the Bible in the second century comes from leaders, in Asia Minor, such

as Polycarp, who was one of the earliest post-NT writers.

Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians (circa 110-135 A.D.) is written in the manner of one quite familiar with the New Testament as it starts out similar to some of Paul's writings.

Notice the portion of Charles Leach's book, Our Bible: How We Got It (1898) where he discusses Polycarp's epistle:

In the whole Epistle, which occupies but ten minutes to read, we find the language of Matthew, Luke, John, and the Acts of the Apostles; of the Epistle of Peter; and of Paul's Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Thessalonians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, and Titus. Here, then, we get a link in our chain which connects us to the actual writers of the New Testament, and assures us, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the contents of our New Testament were in the hands of the men who lived before the last of the Apostles were dead.

Actually, there are many more books than that--all the New Testament books are quoted from or alluded to in Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians.

This clearly demonstrates that Polycarp had to have had a complete NT canon.

Why?

Because Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians is so short, that to actually quote or allude to all of the accepted books of the NT, he really would have needed to be familiar with the entire New Testament.

In addition, Polycarp made it clear that those he wrote to he and they had to have the correct Bible otherwise he would not have written:

For I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you; but to me this privilege is not yet granted. It is declared then in these Scriptures, "Be ye angry, and sin not," and, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." (Polycarp. Letter to the Philippians. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1as edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885).

Note that Polycarp quoted a verse that is in the New Testament, when he used the term Scriptures.

Perhaps it also should be mentioned that there is a document known as the *Harris Fragments* (ca. 2nd or 3rd century) that

also discusses Polycarp. Basically it stresses that Polycarp's connection with the Apostle John, indicates he was baptized at age 18, suggests he was appointed bishop of Smyrna by John, and that he died at martyr's death at age 104. Here are some translated quotes from the *Harris Fragments*, with one addition from me in {}:

There remained [---]ter him a disciple[e ---] name was Polycar[p and] he made him bishop over Smyrna...He was... {an} old man, being one hundred and f[our] of age. He continued to walk [i]n the canons which he had learned from his youth from John the a[p]ostle (Weidman, Frederick W. Polycarp and John: The Harris Fragments and Their Challenge to Literary Traditions. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame (IL), 1999, pp. 43-44)

By mentioning the term "canons," the *Harris Fragments* seems to be suggesting that John passed the knowledge of the proper books of the Bible to Polycarp--and that would seem to be the case.

Furthermore, it was one of Polycarp's successors (Melito) who listed the books of the Old Testament around 170 A.D. Melito wrote:

I accordingly proceeded to the East, and went to the very spot where the things in question were preached and took place; and, having made myself accurately acquainted with the books of the Old Testament, I have set them down (Reid G. Canon of the Old Testament. Transcribed by Ernie Stefanik. *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III*. Copyright © 1908 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight . Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

As the scholar Wace points out:

"The expressions "the Old Books," "the Books of the O.T.," shew clearly that the church of Melito's time had a *New Testament canon*".

Wace also noted that Melito's other writings show that he must have accepted the Gospel according to John as scripture, as Wace wrote:

"Melito held the same theory concerning our Lord's age as Irenaeus and other Asiatics, derived no doubt from John viii. 57. The whole passage shews that Melito believed strongly in the atoning efficacy of Christ's death, and looked on Him as the sacrificial lamb. The

word he uses is *amnoV*, as in the Gospel".

A later leader in Asia Minor, Polycrates of Ephesus, claimed that he had the complete Bible (circa 193 A.D.):

I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have met with the brethren throughout the world, and have gone through every Holy Scripture...I did not bear my gray hairs in vain, but had always governed my life by the Lord Jesus (Eusebius. The History of the Church, Book V, Chapter XXIV, Verses 2-7 . Translated by A. Cushman McGiffert. Digireads.com Publishing, Stilwell (KS), 2005, p. 114).

Other scholars, such as the late James Moffatt, have recognized that the church in Asia Minor had the canon first:

Was not the Apostolic Canon of scripture first formed... in Asia Minor? Was not Asia Minor ahead of Rome in the formation of the Apostolic, Episcopal, ministry?... The real thinking upon vital Christianity for centuries was done outside the Roman Church (Excerpt of James Moffatt's review, p.292. In: Bauer W. Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, 2nd ed. Sigler Press Edition, Mifflinown (PA), 1996).

But what about Jerusalem? There is a 10th-11th century Arabic Islamic manuscript that has one chapter that reports about those considered to be Judeo-Christians. Shlomo Pines translated much of that chapter into English. the translation of one section of it (the term "Christian" below refers to apparently Latin supporters) about something that seems to have happened in Jerusalem in the 130s A.D.:

(71a)...(And the Romans) said: "Go, fetch your companions, and bring your Book (*kitab*)."(The Christians) went to their companions, informed them of (what had taken place) between them and the Romans and said to them: "Bring the Gospel (*al-injil*), and stand up so that we should go to them."

But these (companions) said to them: "You have done ill. We are not permitted (to let) the Romans pollute the Gospel. In giving a favourable answer to the Romans, you have accordingly departed from the religion. We are (therefore) no longer permitted to associate with you; on the contrary, we are obliged to declare that there is nothing in common between us and you;" and they prevented their (taking possession of) the Gospel or gaining access to it. In consequence a violent quarrel (broke out) between (the two groups). Those (mentioned in the first place) went back to the Romans and said to them: "Help us against these companions of

ours before (helping us) against the Jews, and take away from them on our behalf our Book (*kitab*).” Thereupon (the companions of whom they had spoken) fled the country. And the Romans wrote concerning them to their governors in the districts of Mosul and in the Jazirat al-‘Arab. Accordingly, a search was made for them; some (*qawm*) were caught and burned, others (*qawm*) were killed. (As for) those who had given a favorable answer to the Romans they came together and took counsel as to how to replace the Gospel, seeing it was lost to them. (Thus) the opinion that a Gospel should be composed (*yunshi`u*) was established among them...a certain number of Gospels were written. (Pines S. The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity according to a New Source. Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Volume II, No.13; 1966. Jerusalem, pp. 14-15)

Now this is important for many reasons.

The first is that it shows that the companions (those who distanced themselves from the Romans/Latins) had the Gospels and likely all the other books of the New Testament.

Second, it shows that those who were inclined to compromise with the Romans did not.

Third, it shows the beginning of so-called “Christians” getting the State to persecute true Christians--which should make it clear to true believers of the Bible which group was faithful.

Fourth it shows that those associated with the Romans developed false gospels, which is probably why it took a while for the Greco-Romans to get their NT straightened out.

And fifth, since there was communication between those faithful Christians in Asia Minor and Judea during this time (and later, see Melito. From the Book of Extracts. Cited in Eusebius. The History of the Church, Book IV, Chapter XXVI. Digireads.com Publishing, Stilwell (KS), 2005 edition. p. 90), this indicates that it was the faithful in Asia Minor as well as those that did not wish to compromise with the Romans in Judea that had the canon in the second century.

Nazarenes

Notice that around the end of the 4th century, the “Nazarenes” (people who held Church of God doctrines like the Sabbath) knew that they had the scriptures and that they came from God, not a Greco-Roman council. Jerome wrote that the Nazarenes stated:

...God has given us the Law and the testimonies of scriptures. (Jerome, cited in Pritz R. Nazarene Jewish Christianity. Magnas, Jerusalem, 1988, p. 63)

The Catholic Bishop and saint Epiphanius similarly taught about the Nazarenes:

For they use not only the New Testament but also the Old (cited in Pritz, p. 33)

Catholics basically teach that their saint Jerome put together the Bible and that because of it their church gave the world the Bible, but notice the following from a Catholic priest and scholar:

Now, while many believe that because of the *Latin Vulgate Bible* by Jerome, that the Catholic Church gave the world the Bible, those who espouse that view overlook the question of where Jerome got his information. Based on records in Latin and other languages, Scholars Ray Pritz and the Catholic Priest Bagatti both concluded that Jerome got some of his information on the Bible from the Nazarenes and from various synagogues (Pritz, pp. 49-53; Bagatti, Bellarmino. Translated by Eugene Hoade. The Church from the Circumcision. Nihil obstat: Marcus Adinolfi, 13 Maii 1970. Imprimi potest: Herminius Roncari, 14 Junii 1970. Imprimatur: +Albertus Gori, die 26 Junii 1970. Franciscan Printing Press, Jerusalem, 1971, pp. 84-85).

It is a fact that Jerome did deal with “Nazarene Christians” who kept the Sabbath, etc. (Jerome. Letter 112 to Augustine, Chapter 4). Jerome also wrote that he was friendly with at least:

“one of the Hebrews that believed” (Translation by Priest Bagatti of Jerome, Epistula CXXV, Chapter 12. Patrologia Latina (22, 1079). The edition by J. P. Migne, c. 1886, p. 1079).

Thus, it is logical to conclude that Jerome got some of his information from people who held to Church of God doctrines.

Therefore, then it would appear that the often heard claim that the Roman “Church gave the world the Bible” neglects to mention that their church most likely got the Bible from those in the true Church of God, also known as the Nazarenes in Asia Minor and in Jerusalem!

This seems to be indirectly acknowledged by some modern scholars. Notice a 21st century account by Gerd Theissen:

Therefore we can advance the hypothesis that above all those writings entered the canon on which the Christian communities of Asia Minor and Rome could agree. (Theissen G, Translated by John Bowden. Fortress introduction to the New Testament. Fortress Press, 2003, p. 178)

Taking this a step further, even those who later compromised in Asia Minor apparently recognized that they knew of the complete canon and thus they (and probably others) influenced the Church of Rome.

Conclusion

It is clear that Peter, John, and Paul, who wrote nearly all of the books of the NT between them, all had a role in determining and finalizing the NT canon. It is also clear that God would want His people to know His word as both the Old Testament and NT teach (Deuteronomy 8:3; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). And, as Polycarp, Melito, and Polycrates show, the Church in Asia Minor must have had it. And probably later, that it became obvious that Roman Catholic leaders knew which were the proper NT books.

And while it is true that “the Church gave the world the Bible”—it was the church established by Christ through the apostles Peter, Paul, and John and their successors that did so. The Church of God which Polycarp and others were part of.

It is logical that God would have the entire NT in place before the death of the last of the original apostles. And that the Apostle John would have been the last apostle in charge of the Church in Ephesus, the first of the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3. It is logical that the true churches that followed (including at Smyrna, the second church listed in Revelation 2 & 3) would have knowledge of what had been canonized as scripture. And that is, in fact, what the historical record demonstrates happened.

This paper has received some harsh criticism from those that do not believe they need to live “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4) or that the Bible interprets itself (Isaiah 28:10). But since the Bible teaches that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine...so the man of God may be complete...” (2 Timothy 3:16,17), it makes sense that those who believe the Bible would use it to establish doctrines, such as to provide insight as to how the Bible canon was finalized.

Those who do not wish to accept that may wish to remember that Paul also taught “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4).

OVERCOMING IS IMPORTANT



(Drawing by Everkinetics)

By Bob Thiel

Are Christians just to “come as they are” and remain the same. Or are they to grow, change, and overcome.

But overcome what?

Christians are told to overcome evil. Let’s see what the Bible teaches:

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

1...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1)

Evil can overcome and sin can ensnare us, but Christians are to overcome evil with good. We are to overcome the world:

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)

Traditionally, we have been taught that specifically in the world, we must overcome Satan, society, and self. Satan is “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV). He is a deceiver (John 8:44). We have to fight against him and other wicked spirits:

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

Notice how we are to handle this:

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Satan is also “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and from the time of Adam and Eve he has had influence on human society.

Many obey the wishes of society or their own flesh rather than God. The Apostle Paul wrote:

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. (Romans 6:16-19)

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice;

but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Free from Indwelling Sin 8 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 7:14-8:2)

To overcome, Christians are to be diligent:

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:2-11)

Jesus will supply you what you need if you are diligent. Overcomers from the different churches of Revelation are promised rewards:

1...Ephesus...7 To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Revelation 2:1, 7)

8...Smyrna...11 He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:8,11)

12...Pergamos...17 To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. (Revelation 2:12,17)

18...Thyatira...26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' — as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:18, 26-28)

1...Sardis...5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Revelation 3:1,5)

7...Philadelphia... 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. (Revelation 3:12)

14...Laodicea...21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 3:14, 21-22)

Thus, there are various rewards promised to those who overcome.

Pray, study the Bible, meditate, fast, and live life as a Christian (see also [Living as a Christian: How and Why?](#) and/or the video version [Living as a Christian: How and Why?](#)).

If you have a problem to overcome, pray.

But you probably are telling yourself, I have done that before and still have not overcome.

So, then what should you do?

Pray.

And if that does not seem to help enough, then, pray more.

The Apostle Paul wrote that Christians are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). It may be for whatever problem you need to overcome you may need to pray more than you have.

I will also add that if you are on your knees praying that, at least for many problems, stops you from engaging in the improper behavior you need to overcome. Remember that although God's thoughts are not your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9), the Apostle Paul wrote:

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

Try to honestly see yourself as God sees you. Be willing to understand that you do need to change. The Apostle Peter wrote:

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:17-18)

The Bible teaches that you can overcome:

36 As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:36-39)

Overcoming is a step in building godly character. It needs to be part of the Christian life.

KOREA IN PROPHECY: ANY WITNESS?



Flag of Korea, 1889

By Bob Thiel

While there has been a great increase of interest in Western religion within Korea (mainly the area of South Korea), the reality is that true Christianity is almost completely unknown there.

So why write an article about Korea?

Three scriptures immediately come to mind:

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen (Matthew 28:19-20).

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10)

Now all the above apply to every nation and peoples. But there is something different about the Koreans.

In my opinion, overall,:

... they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Romans 10:2).

There is a certain zeal among the Koreans I believe that God can use in these latter days.

There has only been a limited witness to Korea, and because of that, I believe that not enough knowledge of the truth of God is in Korea.

This article will briefly discuss where the Koreans came from and what is expected to happen to them.

Where did the Koreans Come From?

The Bible teaches that all peoples descended from Adam and Eve:

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living (Genesis 3:20).

This would include those now considered to be Korean, as well as all other groups and races of humans.

Noah had three sons. And one of them, Japheth, is believed to be the father of the oriental races, which would include the Koreans. The Bible teaches:

The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations (Genesis 10:2-5).

A Chinese tradition says that Korea came from a small kingdom within China:

Somewhere north of that vast region watered by the Sungari River, itself only a tributary to the Amur, there existed, according to Chinese tradition, in very ancient times, a petty kingdom called Korai, or To-li. Out of this kingdom sprang the founder of the Korean race... Arriving at their city, he became the king of the tribe and kingdom of Fuyu, which lay in the fertile and well-watered region between the Sungari River and the Shan Alyn, or Ever-White Mountains. It extended several hundred miles east and west of a line drawn southward through Kirin, the larger half lying on the west. Fuyu, as described by a Chinese writer of the Eastern Han dynasty (25 B.A-190 A.D.), was a land of fertile soil, in which "the five cereals" (wheat, rice, millet, beans, and sorghum) could be raised. The men were tall, muscular, and brave, and withal generous and courteous to each other. Their arms were bows and arrows, swords, and lances. They were skilful horsemen. Their ornaments were large pearls, and cut jewels of red jade. They made

spirits from grain, and were fond of drinking bouts, feasting, dancing, and singing. With many drinkers there were few cups. The latter were rinsed in a bowl of water, and with great ceremony passed from one to another. They ate with chopsticks, out of bowls, helping themselves out of large dishes. It is a striking fact that the Fuyu people, though living so far from China, were dwellers in cities which they surrounded with palisades or walls of stakes. They lived in wooden houses, and stored their crops in granaries (Griffis, William Elliot. *Corea, the hermit nation*: I. Ancient and mediæval history. II. Political and social Corea. III. Modern and recent history 8th Edition. C. Scribner's sons, 1907, pp. 19,21).

Koreans have their own tradition about where they come from:

Korean legends say that Tangun, who lived in the 2300's B.C., was the father of the Korean civilization. Korea developed by itself until Kija, an exile from China, led about 5,000 followers to Korea in 1122 B.C. He founded a kingdom called Chosen (Hu, Charles Y. *Korea. World Book Encyclopedia*, 50th edition, Volume 11. Chicago, p. 296)

Chosen is also spelled Chosun and means Morning Calm. One of Japheth's son had a name that ended with an "n" (Javan) and it may be possible that the Koreans may have partially descended from one of his descendants.

An account penned in the nineteenth century appears to claim that the Koreans (called Corea below) descended from Gomer through Ashkenaz:

According to the Tartars and Orientals, the Chinese are descended from Tchin, or Gin, the son of Japheth, and brother of Tarag, or Turk, from whom came the Turkmans. Tchin is the Ashchenaz of Scripture, the son of Gomer : and Turk is Toragmah, the brother of Ashchenaz. The Orientals call all grandsons, sons. Another division of the descendants of Aschenaz or Atchinez—as his name was pronounced in the following parts—migrated across the Imaus mountains, now the great Altai and Changai. These people spread to a vast extent, till they reached the Pacific Ocean. They formed the following nations :—

First.—The Issedones, about the river Etchine, on the borders of China and the Desert of Thamo.

Second.—The "Kin Tartars, inhabiting the territory round the north of Corea, and along the shores of the

Pacific Ocean...

Tonkin, Cochinchina, Tciampa, Laos or Schan States, and Cambodia, anciently formed part of the Chinese Empire, the name of which was Tchin, so called from Atchinez, from which the names of nearly all these countries are derived.

(Source: Painter, John Thomas. *Ethnology: or The history & genealogy of the human race: Or, The History & Genealogy of the Human Race*. Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1880 Original from Oxford University Digitized Jul 3, 2006, p. 106)

Some within Church of God circles have also speculated that the Chinese and Koreans have descended from Magog (e.g. *Generations of Japheth*. Church of God News. Chicago District, 1965). On this point, I have not seen convincing evidence—but am simply not sure either way. It is not impossible that perhaps some descendants from Magog intermarried with some of the descendants of Ashkenaz and likely Javan.

Since Japheth means "expansion" (which the orientals have done in terms of numbers) I believe that the oriental races (and some of the Caucasians), including the Koreans somehow descended from Japheth—but specifically through whom is harder to determine. The Korean language was originally written using Hanja (Chinese characters) pronounced in the Korean way.

Koreans Have Been Unaware of the Early History of the Christian Church

Although the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches have had a presence in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) for a long while, the fact is that those churches have made many changes in doctrine that most in Korea do not realize are changes from the early Christian Church (and the Bible). And many were compromises with pagan sun-god religions such as Mithraism.

A leading Protestant scholar (Harold Brown) has admitted:

It is impossible to document what we now call orthodoxy in the first two centuries of Christianity (Brown HOJ. *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody (MA), 1988, p. 5).

In other words, much of what now passes for "orthodox Christianity" did not exist in the first two centuries after Jesus was crucified and resurrected. This is basically

because while there was only one original church, another major group emerged in the second century who changed certain original Christian practices and became what most now seem to feel represent “orthodoxy.” Most people in Korea and elsewhere have been deceived about this and do not understand true Christianity.

Korea Has Had a Limited Witness in the 20th Century

Korea has received a limited witness to the truth. In addition to having Bibles, some of the message of the Church of God has sometimes made its way into Korea.

Herbert W. Armstrong was the leader of the old Worldwide Church of God in the 20th century. And he spoke to many world leaders, including Korean ones. But not to the degree that he wanted to. Here are three reports related to some of his efforts:

On this present trip, we left Pasadena Monday, March 6, flew out to Honolulu, stopped overnight, then Tuesday morning flew (one stop for fuel at Wake Island) to Tokyo. We did not disembark, but Dr. and Mrs. Ohama came aboard our aircraft and flew with us to Seoul, Korea. Dr. Ohama is the leading educator of Japan, and perhaps the leading unofficial adviser to the Government. He has visited both our Pasadena and Texas campuses, and addressed the student bodies. I had never been to Korea before. Dr. Ohama and I had expected to have a meeting with the President of Korea, but, as frequently happens with heads of state, emergency matters came up that prevented. However, I did have a very fine meeting with the Minister of Education and his two chief aides(Armstrong H.W. Coworker letter, March 26, 1972, in Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume 2).

Last Wednesday night, in Bangkok, capital of Thailand, I was given just such an opportunity. I did not know of it in advance. But a banquet was held in a special banquet room of my hotel in my honor. Present were Ambassadors representing the governments of Japan, Korea, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Israel, the President of the University, and Her Royal Highness the wife of the recent Prince Regent of Thailand, and other important guests. I was given a very warm -- even emotional -- introduction, and asked to speak (Armstrong H.W. Coworker letter, September 24, 1973, in Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume 2).

A trip has been planned from Tokyo to Seoul, South Korea, to meet with the President. I was to be

accompanied by the Japanese Minister of Labor, Toshio Yamaguchi. I had become ill and was forced to return to Pasadena from Orr, Minnesota, early in the morning, too ill (Armstrong H.W. Coworker letter, December 9, 1985, in Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume 2).

So, one of the last international trips that the late Herbert W. Armstrong planned before he died (he died on January 16, 1986) he intended to go to Korea and meet with South Korea's President. His old Plain Truth magazine also had a half dozen articles or so that were focused on Korea.

Herbert W. Armstrong may have also spoken to a couple of gatherings that included some leaders from “the Democratic People's Republic of Korea” (North Korea), but again that would be a highly limited witness. Yet since he wrote, “It is now true that this Gospel has been proclaimed within every nation on earth by the Worldwide Church of God (Letter 1/86)” it appears that he believed he did reach North Korea.

Perhaps I should add that because of prophecies involving “the kings from the east” cooperating at the end (cf. Revelation 16:12; Daniel 11:44), I have long felt that somehow North and South Korea would likely be unified (or at least work more closely together) prior to the return of Jesus Christ. The literal translation of Revelation 16:12 is “the kings of the sunrise” and thus this would seem to have to include Korea—which is amongst the most eastern of the nations.

But it could take a battle or more for that to happen. One that may not turn out well for the North Korean leadership.

Yet, caution is advised for any who think that since the USA can defeat North Korea militarily that North Korea would not try to set off a nuclear device (either through a launch or through some other means) that could hurt South Korea or the USA. Jesus spoke of a time of troubles prior to the Great Tribulation (Mark 13:7-8) and North Korea may well fit in with those.

Jesus said to “watch” (Mark 13:37).

Korea Has Had a Limited Witness in the 21st Century

People from Korea visit the COGwriter website regularly, and have also visited the official website of the Continuing Church of God www.ccog.org. We also have one article that has been machine-translated into the Korean language to provide some of the gospel kingdom and warning message to Koreans who may do internet searches in their native

language. South Koreans are relatively heavy internet users and using the internet may be the best way, at this instant, to reach Koreans. Other Church of God (COG) groups have also reached Korea. Despite that, it is unclear if any real COG members are actually living in North or South Korea; however, in the past, I met some people with Korean heritage in one or more COG groups.

So while there has been some witness to Korea, it has been a limited one --especially in North Korea.

Now the Bible makes it clear that the Gospel will be preached into all the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14), thus additional witness will come to Korea. But even then, it may be a relatively limited witness.

It is my hope and prayer that God will move the hearts of one or more who can translate significant portions of the materials of the Continuing Church of God into the Korean language. If so, more of a witness can happen soon.

Koreans Will Need to Make Decisions Based Upon Limited Information

The Bible teaches:

28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth (Romans 9:28).

This "short work" will likely include some witness into Korea (cf. Matthew 24:14).

Hopefully, many Koreans will pay attention to it sooner than later.

God will also raise up two witnesses around the start of the Great Tribulation that some in Korea will listen too (cf. Revelation 7:9-10).

Yet most in the world will not. And sadly, that will include most of the Koreans.

There is a Chinese prophecy dating from the Tang Dynasty (June 18, 618 – June 4, 907) that mentions Korea. It also seems to support the concept of pan-Asian cooperation (although it only mentions three nations) after someone (who is apparently not really trustworthy) rises up in the West:

Beautiful people come from the West. Korea, China and Japan are gradually at peace (Pui-Hua R. Ancient Chinese Prophecies Till the End of the World. AuthorHouse, Bloomington (IN), 2008, p. 85).

All negative forces are subservient...China now has a saint. Even if he is not that great a hero (ibid, p. 89).

The Bible warns of two European leaders (one primarily political and the other primarily religious) who will rise up in the end-time and deceive many. Whatever 'peace' occurs during this time will not last and will end in disaster (cf. Revelation 19:17-21).

It would seem that the "beautiful people" in that Chinese prophecy may be referring to the Beast and his false prophet (the final Antichrist) which apparently will impress peoples in places including the orient. The one referred to as "a saint" will likely be "the false prophet." As a trading nation, Korea will prosper under this system (cf. Revelation 18:11-19).

When people in Korea and elsewhere see the Beast power they will marvel:

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 (Revelation 17:8).

They will marvel because of the great wealth, because they did not think Europe would gain such prominence, and because its leadership will have performed various signs and wonders.

Catholic prophecies suggest that the Koreans will accept the faith that will be called "Catholic":

Cardinal La Roque (c. 18th century): **A regeneration of Faith will appear in Asia** (R. Gerald. The Prophets and Our Times. Nihil Obstat: L. Arvin. Imprimatur: Philip G. Scher, Bishop of Monterey-Fresno, November 15, 1941. Reprint 1974, TAN Books, Rockford (IL), p. 193)

Elizabeth Canori-Mora (died 1825):...Such is the glorious triumph reserved for the Catholic Church; she shall be praised, honored and esteemed by all men. All men shall become Catholics, and shall acknowledge the Pope as Vicar of Jesus Christ." (Connor, Edward. Prophecy for Today. Imprimatur + A.J. Willinger, Bishop of Monterey-Fresno; Reprint: Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford (IL), 1984, p.24)

However, it should be noted that other Catholics have suggested that a faith called Catholic will be that of an "antipope," the False Prophet, the final Antichrist:

Oba Prophecy: It will come when the Church authorities issue directives to support a new cult, when priests are forbidden to celebrate in any other, when the highest positions in the Church are given to perjurers and hypocrites, when only the renegades are admitted to occupy those positions (Dupont, Yves. *Catholic Prophecy: The Coming Chastisement*. TAN Books, Rockford (IL), 1973, p. 115).

Yves Dupont {Catholic writer interpreting A. Emmerick}: They wanted to make a new Church, a Church of human manufacture, but God had other designs...The Holy Father shall have to leave Rome, and he shall die a cruel death. An anti-pope shall be set up in Rome (Dupont, p. 116).

Ted and Maureen Flynn (readers and reporters Catholic prophecies): Catholic prophecy warns us of severe problems facing the papacy in these end times...chaos will be within our midst. An Antipope will seize papal authority...It will be those who hold fast to the truths of the faith who will be labeled as the perpetrators of this horrible schism, according to some visionaries (Flynn, Ted and Maureen. *The Thunder of Justice*. MaxKol Communications, Inc. Sterling (VA), 1993, p. 255).

Priest Herman Kramer (20th century): Antichrist will have a forerunner or prophet, who will prepare the way for him...This false prophet possibly at the behest of Antichrist usurps the papal supremacy...His assumed spiritual authority and supremacy over the Church would make him resemble the Bishop of Rome...He would be Pontifex Maximus, a title of pagan emperors, having spiritual and temporal authority. Assuming authority without having it makes him the False Prophet...**Though he poses as a lamb, his doctrines betray him**...His principles and dogmas to be accepted...**it will comprise emperor-worship**...with the persecution of true believers (Kramer H.B. L. *The Book of Destiny*, pp. 318,319).

...Antichrist, if he ever were of or in the Church, shall be an Apostate and a renegade out of the Church, and he shall usurp upon it by tyranny, and by challenging worship, religion, and government thereof, so that himself shall be adored in all the Churches of the world which he list to leave standing for his honor. And this is to sit in the temple or *against the Temple of God, as some interpret. If any Pope did ever this, or shall do, then let the Adversaries call him Antichrist (Annotations on The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians. The Original and True RHEIMS NEW TESTAMENT of Anno Domini 1582 , p. 423).

Thus, the religion of the “beautiful people” “from the West” will be the religion of the final Antichrist. Koreans need to not fall for it, even if it is accompanied by various signs and wonders, which it ultimately will be per 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

Despite outward appearances, the Bible teaches that real Christians are to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Since the witness to Korea has been quite limited, the Koreans will have to make decisions based upon somewhat culturally limited information. However, since many Koreans are zealous people, some of them will likely delve into these subjects more in this age—they need to rely on the teachings of the Bible and not be swayed by outward appearances and pressures. Most Koreans, sadly, will need to wait until the “age to come.”

Hopefully, this article will be helpful for many now.

Repentance for the Nations or You?

Since the Asian nations, like Korea, are prophesied to be involved with Babylon and various wars, what about you, whether you are Korean or not?

Does this mean that you are doomed?

No. God does not require “group salvation.” The Apostle Paul wrote:

...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling... (Philippians 2:12)

Thus, your personal relationship with God is not determined by what your fellow countrymen do.

Can, or will, God help you during the coming tribulation?

Notice the prophecy for this latter time tribulation in the Hebrew scriptures:

29 But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. 30 When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice 31 (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them. (Deuteronomy 4:29-31)

Thus, help from God during these hard times will be available to the truly sincere who really strive for it.

The Koreans Will Be Among the First to Recognize the Falsehood of the Beast

Lest any have the misimpression that the Koreans are not a discerning people, it needs to be understood that the Koreans will be among the first to recognize the falsehood of this European power. But before that, there will likely be increased military cooperation among many of the Asian nations.

The Koreans will finally see that the European Beast power, also called “the King of the North” in the Bible, is not something to be worshiped or trusted.

Why do we of the Philadelphia remnant of the Church of God believe that? Because there are certain verses in both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation that appear to be discussing East Asian nations and the European Beast power.

Notice from the Book of Daniel:

“40 At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. 41 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. 44 But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. 45 And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him (Daniel 11:40-45).

Notice that the end time King of the North (the European Empire) will overwhelm the King of the South (a Moslem empire), but that those from the east and the north shall trouble the King of the North. This appears to be referring to China and Russia, and apparently other Asian nations (including Korea--which is one of the most “eastern” of all nations). And notice that they will be used to help cause the King of the North to come to his end.

And it is likely that by the end, both Koreas would be involved. Korea apparently part of the “kings from the east” or more literally “kings of the sunrise” of Revelation 16:12). It would seem like Korea is likely to support the coming confederation of the east that will have a 200,000,000 man army:

15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. (Revelation 9:15-16)

This will not turn out well for the participants, including any Koreans (cf. Revelation 19:17-21).

However, war is not the ultimate destiny for most Koreans. Deification is.

And even though the Bible shows that the King of the North will lose, certain Catholics are now misled as some of their prophets falsely seem to tell them that the Asians, apparently including Koreans) will be defeated:

Countess Francesca de Brillante (20th Century). “I see yellow warriors and red warriors marching against Europe. Europe will be completely covered with a yellow fog that will kill the cattle in the fields. Those nations that rebelled against the law of Christ will perish by fire. Europe will then be too large for them who survive (Dupont, p. 78).

David Poreus (17th century). “The Great Monarch will be of French descent, large forehead, large dark eyes, light brown wavy hair and an eagle nose. He will crush the enemies of the Pope and will conquer the East.” (Dupont, p.31)

However, as the Bible will be correct (and certain Catholic prophets often shown to be wrong), it will not turn out as the Europeans hope.

Koreans Will Be Affected by the Great Tribulation

Jesus warned about a future time of a great tribulation:

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).

Since this great tribulation affects the whole world, it will affect the Koreans as well.

In Revelation 16, we also see that God will issue punishment to nearly all of humanity after Babylon (the European Empire) falls:

17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great (Revelation 16:17-21).

God sent the punishments to get all men, including Koreans, to repent, but most refused at first:

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

Then What Happens at the End of this Age?

After all these battles and punishments, the tribulation will end. And Christ will return:

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:29-30).

16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

This will usher in a kingdom that will be established for 1,000 years:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6).

And people of many nations, including those of Asia, will be part of this kingdom. Notice:

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb (Revelation 7:9).

After the thousand years are over, there will be problems, and then all will be resurrected:

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 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. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works (Revelation 20:7-13).

It is important to note that all remaining are judged at the second resurrection, but not all are condemned.

When is Salvation Available?

The mainstream "Christian" view correctly teaches that there is salvation in no other than Jesus (Acts 4:10-12), as "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (vs.12).

But what happens to the multitudes in Asia (including North Korea) who have not even heard the name of Christ? What about those who do not respond to Deuteronomy 4:29-31 or the two witnesses, etc.? And what happens to those born before Christ's earthly ministry? Recall that the Bible teaches that after Adam sinned, humankind was blocked from the tree of life as God had it guarded so that humans would not be able to access it on their own (Genesis 3:22-24).

Even the basic Protestant view is that unless one professes belief in Jesus prior to the first death, then salvation will be unavailable. It is perhaps because of the difference between this view and that of the genuine Church of God, that Protestants tend to label the real Church of God as a cult. The fact that our doctrines actually come from the Bible does not seem to stop them from such labeling.

The Continuing Church of God teaches that God is only calling a relatively few during this age with the Day of Pentecost (also called the Day of Firstfruits, Numbers 28:26) partially explaining this. "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

Jesus and the Church of God teach, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). And that will be few at this time, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14), "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14).

Protestants and Catholics tend to feel, correctly, that God uses ministers to preach (Romans 10:14). Yet, the message is not always clear. In Isaiah 6:9-11 God teaches,

"Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate".

In other words, the bulk of the people are not to understand

until after a time of great desolation.

Furthermore, the Bible reveals that God has prohibited idolaters to have proper understanding:

And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, Prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" They do not know nor understand; For He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, And their hearts, so that they cannot understand (Isaiah 44:17-18).

They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god that cannot save (Isaiah 45:20).

Thus, is God going to condemn those who worship idols for what He has not let them understand?

Protestant and Catholic theology tends to say yes. Those in the Continuing Church of God say no.

Unless the idolater has committed the unpardonable sin (which is unlikely) they will be judged as other uncalled people are.

Hence, the billions throughout history in Asia and Africa (and elsewhere) are not condemned to suffer forever for following practices they really do not understand.

Those who were uncalled in this age (including most people and nearly all of the Koreans, including those that have long been dead) will be offered an opportunity for salvation.

And nearly all of them will accept it. We in the Continuing Church of God teach that God will ultimately give every individual an opportunity for salvation--and that nearly every individual will accept that opportunity. All humans, including all Koreans will be called, and the vast majority of Koreans will ultimately be in God's family.

Ultimately that nearly all Koreans will be in the permanent kingdom of God. Notice some of the descriptions from the Book of Revelation:

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their 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.” (Revelation 21:2-4).

This will be the time of real, lasting, genuine peace.

Because of their zeal, I suspect that many Koreans will put Westerners to shame. All should recall that Jesus taught:

29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down **in the kingdom of God.** **30 And indeed there are last who will be first,** and there are first who will be last (Luke 13:28-30).

And this is likely to include many Koreans as becoming first. We in the real Church of God understand that God will offer salvation to everyone in this age or the age to come (Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30).

Although some Protestants and Catholics seem to act otherwise, notice that Jesus did NOT teach that mostly those from Western nations in Europe and North America would be saved--those from the West have no preeminence. Many Koreans are likely to be preeminent over Westerners.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, the wealth of Korean appears prophesied to increase. The Asians, including the Koreans, will most likely be among the first to benefit from the coming European Empire, as well as be among those who see that it is not what it pretends to be.

God apparently plans to allow Korea and others in Asia as part of a coalition of kings from the East (which apparently include the eastern and northern Russians) to put an end to the King of the North's military ambitions.

Just because the whole world (and not just the Koreans) will be deceived by the rising European Beast power, you do not have to be. Hopefully this article has given you some reasons to look at the world and your life and will motivate to come to God now on His terms. To learn more about what happened to Christianity, a good place to start may be The History of Early Christianity page. May God call you today and grant you the understanding so that you will “pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

Sadly, because most in Korea do not strive to know the true God now, God will punish them as well as the other inhabitants on the Earth. And apparently many will also rebel at the close of the millennium, but will not succeed.

However, since God is a God of love, He intends to resurrect all the Koreans and offer them salvation. A salvation that nearly all will accept as nearly all the Koreans who ever lived will be in the kingdom of God. A kingdom without fear or death or sorrow. A glorious and peaceful kingdom. Deification will be available for the Koreans. And that is the prophesied future for nearly all of Koreans.

THE FALL HOLY DAYS



By Herbert W. Armstrong (from *God's Holy Days or Pagan Holidays, Which?*, 1976)

Which Days Should We Keep?...

God gave His Church seven annual Sabbaths...And in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus we find a summary of these annual holy days or set feasts...

Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement

"AND THE Lord spake . . . saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial [not a shadow] of blowing of trumpets, an HOLY CONVOCATION. Ye shall do no servile work therein . . ." (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Here is pictured to us that next blessed event in God's redemptive plan, when Christ shall COME again, in clouds with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (I Thessalonians 4:14-17). It shall be "at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall [all] be changed" (I Corinthians 15:52).

Unless Christ returns to resurrect the dead, we would never gain eternal life if there is no resurrection "then also those which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (I Corinthians 15:18).

Christ directly intervenes in world affairs at the seventh or the last trump (Revelation 11:15-19). A trumpet is a symbol of war. He comes in a time of worldwide war when the nations are angry! As soon as the work of gathering in the firstfruits (pictured by Pentecost) is completed at the end of this present age, then Christ will begin to set up again the tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16) to set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people (Isaiah 11:11) to search out and to find His lost sheep that the ministers of the churches have failed to search out and save during this period (Ezekiel

34:1-14).

Notice exactly when this takes place! "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they [Israel] shall come which were ready to perish...and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah 27:13).

When will Israel be re-gathered? At the sound of the trump at the Second Coming of Christ. Because the churches have forgotten the Festival of Trumpets, many think that the return of a part of the Jews to the Holy Land and the setting up of a nation called Israel now is the fulfillment of this prophecy!

Christ's direct intervention in world affairs will be the next event in the plan of redemption.

And perhaps the glorious Second Coming shall occur, in whatever year it may be, on this very day of the Feast of Trumpets who knows? While we cannot say for certain, yet cannot we see this possibility? The crucifixion was upon the Passover day the very day! The Holy Spirit came, beginning the selecting of the firstfruits of salvation, on the very day of Pentecost. Had not those 120 disciples been observing this annual Sabbath had they not been assembled there in holy convocation could they have received that blessing of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit? Repeatedly Jesus warned us to watch, regarding His Second Coming! Could it be possible that, unless we are observing the Feast of Trumpets, as the first-century Church of God was observing Pentecost, that we shall not be ready, or caught up to meet Him? We do not we cannot, of course say; but we do ask the question. Is it not possible? Let us humbly and willingly yield to walk obediently in all the light.

The Festival of Trumpets is a day of rejoicing and, as the weekly Sabbath, holy unto the Lord (Nehemiah 8:2, 9-12).

Day of Atonement or the Fast

Next, let us read Leviticus 23:26, 27, 31-32 "And the LORD spake . . . saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls [fast]. . . . Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." Wonderful mystery! Atonement with God! Man at last made one with his Maker!

Again, in the 16th chapter of Leviticus, verses 29 and 31, where the symbolism of the Day of Atonement is explained, we find it instituted a holy Sabbath to be kept forever: "And

this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. . . . It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.”

Notice, too, in Leviticus 23:32, the expression “from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.” Every Sabbath keeper quotes this passage to show that the Sabbath begins at sunset. If we believe that, then why not keep the Sabbath that this very text is speaking of the high Sabbath of the Day of Atonement, instituted forever? Are we consistent, when we continually quote this text to show when to begin the Sabbath, and then refuse to keep the very Sabbath referred to?

Meaning Pictured by Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement pictures a wonderful and great event, to take place after the Second Coming of Christ, which the world is in total ignorance of because it has failed to see the true significance of these annual Sabbaths holy unto the Lord. It has failed to keep them as a constant reminder of God’s plan of redemption!

The symbolism is all expressed in the account of the events of the Day of Atonement, as carried out before the crucifixion, in the 16th chapter of Leviticus.

Verse 5 “And he [Aaron, or the high priest] shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering. . . .”

Verse 6 The high priest offered a sin offering for HIMSELF and his house.

Verses 7 and 8 “And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; the one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat” (margin, Hebrew, Azazel).

Now because this has not been understood because there are many different views and opinions and ideas and explanations of this, we here pause sufficiently to go into this in some detail. Let us, therefore, regardless of our own former convictions, study with open minds, without prejudice, proving all things. We want truth!

The key to the whole explanation lies in a correct understanding of the meaning of Azazel. This word does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament. The Comprehensive Commentary has: “Spencer, after the oldest opinions of the

Hebrews and Christians, thinks Azazel is the name of the Devil, and so Rosen. . . . The word scapegoat signifies the goat which went away. “The One Volume Commentary says: “The word ‘scapegoat’ in the AV. is not a translation.” It is merely an interpretation of the supposed meaning by the translators.

True, the English word “scapegoat” signifies “one who bears blame or guilt for others.” But “scapegoat” is an English word, and is not a translation of the Hebrew word Azazel. The word “scapegoat,” and the meaning attached to this English word, is not a translation of the Hebrew word Azazel, and therefore it is not the word inspired originally. Continues the One Volume Commentary: “Azazel is understood to be the name of one of those malignant demons.”

Types of Christ and Satan

These two goats were, of course, types. Notice, it was necessary to be decided by lot, which one was qualified to represent Christ, and which Azazel. Some say BOTH were qualified. The scripture does not say this. Let us not assume it. Now a “lot” is a solemn appeal to God to decide a doubtful matter. It is a sacred religious ceremony. It included a supernatural act of God. That is why lotteries and gambling are of the devil an actual profaning of a holy service appealing to God.

Notice, men were unable to decide which goat was qualified to represent Christ. This involved an appeal to God to decide! “One lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel.” Now one lot was for the Lord this goat typified Christ but the other lot was not for the Lord, did not typify Christ, but Azazel Satan! These words most naturally suggest that Azazel is the name of a person, here contrasted to the Eternal! Notice the contrast one for the Lord, the other for Azazel.

Now the goat which God selected through lot, to represent Christ was slain, as Christ, its antitype was slain. But the other goat selected by God to represent Azazel was not slain, but was driven, alive, into an uninhabited wilderness. It was not a resurrected goat, symbolizing the resurrected Christ, for it never died. The uninhabited wilderness, to which this goat was driven, cannot, as we shall show, represent heaven, where Christ went. Heaven is neither uninhabited, nor a wilderness.

After God designated which goat represented Christ and which Azazel, the high priest (verse 11) killed the bullock for a sin offering for himself, then took the burning coals of fire and the sweet incense into the Holy of Holies, also sprinkling the blood of the bullock before the mercy seat, typical of the throne of God, covering the tables of testimony (the law). This the high priest was required to do in order to purify

himself to officiate, and to represent Christ as High Priest. In the antitype, this was not done, for Christ, our High Priest, had no need of this purification as the typical substitutionary priests did.

Now the Levitical high priest was ready to go out and officiate.

Next, the goat which God selected by lot to represent Christ, as the sin offering of the people, was killed. Thus the sins of the people were borne by the goat, even as Christ, finally, once for all, bore our sins on the cross. But Christ rose again from the dead, and ascended to the throne of God in heaven.

Now, who, or what, from this point on in the Levitical ceremony, typified the resurrected Christ, who went to heaven? Some say the goat representing Azazel. Let us see.

The risen Christ, now at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven (I Peter 3:22), is called what? Our High Priest! What was the earthly type of God's throne? The uninhabited wilderness? No! That is where the live goat went!

The earthly type of God's throne was the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. After Christ died, He went to the heavenly mercy seat interceding for us, as our High Priest. "... Entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6:19-20).

Now, again, who, or what, in the Levitical ceremony of the Day of Atonement, typified the risen Christ, our High Priest, who went within the veil to God's throne in heaven? The one goat had been slain. It represented the slain Christ. It can no longer represent the risen Christ. The slain Christ was not our High Priest, because the Levitical priesthood, with its high priest, did not end until Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven as a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. But the risen Christ was High Priest. Now WHO took this part in the Levitical ceremonies, temporarily re-enacted year by year, on this eternal Holy Day? Why, so obviously a child could see, it was the Levitical high priest, not the goat representing Azazel!

The High Priest Type of Christ

As soon as the slain goat was dead, who went within the veil, presenting the blood of this goat before the typical throne of God?

Leviticus 16:15-16 "Then shall he [the high priest] kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and [now the high priest himself typifying the work of the risen Christ] bring his blood within the veil . . . and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place. . . ."

And so it was the high priest taking blood within the veil, to the mercy seat, which typified the risen Christ figuratively taking HIS blood, once for all, within the veil to the very throne of God in heaven, there to intercede for us as High Priest. Surely this is so plain a child can see.

The slain goat represented the crucified Jesus. The high priest, by taking the blood of this slain goat into the veil to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, a type of God's throne, represented and did the work of the risen Christ, who ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, there interceding as our High Priest. Can we honestly continue to teach that the goat representing Azazel represented the work of the risen Christ? Did this live goat take the blood of Christ within the veil, to the mercy seat?

The high priest going within the veil, into the Holy of Holies, symbolized Christ's return to heaven. The work he did while in the Holy of Holies symbolized Christ's work these 1900 years interceding for us, presenting His shed blood before the mercy seat in heaven. Now, coming back out, symbolizing Christ's return to earth, what did the high priest do?

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 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: and the goat shall bear upon him [Fenton: shall carry upon itself] all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. And Aaron shall . . . wash his flesh with water. . . . And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat [Azazel] shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp" (Leviticus 16:20-26).

The Azazel Goat Not Our Sin-Bearer

Let us get this straight!

Is there justice with God? Is not God a God of justice, as well as of compassion and mercy? Who is the real author of our sins? The devil is the author of them, even as Christ is the author of our salvation. Jesus took our guilt our blame our sins upon Himself as an innocent substitutionary sacrifice. He was an innocent victim. He loved us, and was willing to die for us. Our guilt our sins, were borne by Him, and Him alone and God forgives them when we repent and accept His sacrifice. And yet, is this, if we stop there, full justice?

The real cause the actual author of those sins was Satan the devil. Is it justice for Christ to bear guilt that is not His, while

the devil goes off scot-free? Do you not suppose GOD'S great plan will finally work full justice by placing that original blame and guilt right where it belongs?

Now mark carefully this distinction. Christ bore our guilt. For we have been guilty, even though the devil was the original cause of it all. But justice certainly demands that God place right back on the head of the devil his guilt not our guilt, but his own guilt for leading us into sin. We were guilty, too and our guilt Christ bore yet all our sins belong right back on the devil as his own guilt!

Now notice another point. The Azazel goat carries away the sins of all the people already forgiven. These sins already were fully paid for by Christ's substitute sacrifice, symbolized by the killing of the innocent goat before those same sins were finally laid on the live goat. They had been previously paid for by the death of the slain goat.

The devil is the real author of all sin. Can we, then, be finally made at one with God, as long as this instigator of sin is with us? Can we not see he must first be driven away? And there would not be justice with God unless his own guilt in our sins were placed right back on his head? Is it justice for Christ to bear the devil's guilt, as well as our own guilt, for our sins? Christ has carried our sins, but must He continue to carry them? Should they not be removed entirely from us, and from the presence even of God?

Thus the killing and sprinkling of blood of the first goat visibly set forth the means of reconciliation with God, through the substituted sacrifice of an innocent victim. So finally the sending away of the second goat, laden with those sins, the expiation of which had been signified by the first goat, no less vividly sets forth the effect of that sacrifice, in complete removal of those expiated sins from the presence of God!

Satan the Accuser

Satan is the accuser of the brethren. His power over men is founded on sin. When all these sins, of which he is the author, are laid back on him, after being removed from us by Christ, then Satan shall have lost his claim on us. And no longer can he accuse us!

Thus, finally, as the acceptance of the blood of the first goat (Christ) symbolized complete propitiation, and pardon of Israel's sins, so the sending of Azazel bearing away those expiated sins symbolizes the complete removal of all sins deliverance by the atonement from the power of the adversary.

The sacrifice of the first innocent victim was the means of reconciliation with God, but not yet complete justice.

The driving away of the second live goat shows the final atonement, by placing the sins on their author where they belong, and the complete removal of the sins and their author from the presence of God and His people and thus the complete deliverance of the people from the power of Satan.

Webster says to atone means to set at one. To join in one to form by uniting. We shall not be completely joined in one, and united with God, until this is done.

Before leaving this, notice, too, that after laying both his hands on the live goat, Azazel, Aaron had to wash and cleanse himself before coming in contact with the people. So, too, the "fit man" also had to wash his clothes and bathe himself after coming in contact with the Azazel goat, before he came into the presence of the people. The symbolism is certainly that of having come in contact with the devil!

Notice, now, this act of putting these already expiated and forgiven sins on the head of this live goat does not take place until after the high priest returns from the Holy of Holies within the veil so this typified an act to take place after the Second Coming of Christ to this earth!

But if the live goat represented the resurrected Christ, then the sins Christ bore on the cross were placed by another, typified by the high priest, back on Christ, after His resurrection. Would this make sense? Is the theory of the Azazel goat being Christ consistent? No, but the plain simple meaning does fit at every turn, and IS consistent. The first goat represented the innocent Jesus who died for our sins the high priest represented the risen Christ going within the veil to the mercy seat, or throne of God in heaven, for over 1900 years and the high priest returning to place the sins finally upon the head of the live goat represented the return of Christ who will place the sins He bore on their author, the devil, and who will send him away alive into a desolate uninhabited wilderness the "bottomless pit" or abyss of Revelation 20:3.

In the 19th chapter of Revelation, we have the prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ. At the beginning of the 20th chapter, what is to happen?

Exactly what the 16th chapter of Leviticus shows. The devil is sent away the symbol here used is the "bottomless pit" symbol of an uninhabited desolate wilderness (Revelation 18:2) and he is sent there by a FIT man an ANGEL from heaven. Now the devil is not killed. He does not die. He is still alive a thousand years later after the Millennium (Revelation 20:7).

Now a few points that will come to mind. Both goats were "presented before the Lord." Can Satan be presented before the Lord? Job 1:6 and 2:1 says he has presented himself

before the Lord. Note, too, Azazel was driven away from the Holy of Holies, a symbol of God's presence.

And so the annual Day of Atonement was instituted forever to keep continually before God's children and His Church the plan of redemption, to occur after the Second Coming of Christ.

And we find this annual holy day recognized in the New Testament. In Acts 27:9, when Paul was on his perilous sea voyage to Rome, it is recorded that "when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past. . . ." See the margin in your Bible. The fast refers to the Day of Atonement the 10th day of the seventh month. Now this day could not then have been past on that particular year unless that day was still in full effect and force and existence. Otherwise the Holy Spirit surely could never have inspired those words! Surely this strongly indicates that this day was still in existence and being recognized thus by the Holy Spirit.

Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day

NOW WE come to the festival of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths the sixth festival. Let us notice the instruction concerning this occasion:

"Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter. . . . Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord shall choose: because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice . . . and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Eternal thy God which he hath given thee" (Deuteronomy 16:13-17).

Here is the Festival of Tabernacles, to be kept for seven days, beginning the 15th day of the seventh month of God's sacred calendar. Notice Leviticus 23:33-35: "And the Eternal spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Eternal. On the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein."

On the first of these days is a holy convocations commanded assembly. No work is to be done. ". . . And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. . . . It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month" (Leviticus 23:40-41).

Notice that it is commanded forever.

Here are pictured those final culminating events in God's great plan: after Christ has died for our sins to redeem mankind after He has sent us the Holy Spirit and picked out a people for His Name to become kings and priests through the thousand years after His glorious Second Coming after He has finally restored the redeemed by placing all the sins upon the head of Satan, their real author, and separating both him and the sins from the presence of God and His people, thus finally perfecting the at-one-ment, making us finally joined in one then we are ready for that final series of events, the commencement of the "Marriage of the Lamb," the actual making of the New Covenant, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the reaping of the great harvest of souls for a thousand years.

This festival is the picture of the Millennium!

Pictures the Millennium

To portray His plan, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in ancient Israel as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls. In the Holy Land there are two annual harvests. The first is the spring grain harvest. Second comes the main harvest.

Now notice when the Festival of Tabernacles is to be held "at the year's end" (Exodus 34:22). In this verse the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths is specifically called the "feast of ingathering." The harvest year ended at the beginning of autumn. Just as Pentecost pictures the early harvest this church age, so the Festival of Ingathering or Tabernacles pictures the fall harvest the great harvest of souls in the Millennium!

Today is not the only day of salvation. Today is a day of salvation. Isaiah said so: chapter 49, verse 8. In fact, the original Greek words of Paul in II Corinthians 6:2 should be translated "a day of salvation," not "the day of salvation."

Turn to the book of Zechariah to understand this more thoroughly. In the 12th and 13th chapters we have a picture of Christ returning and the reconciliation of the world commencing. Here the meaning of the Festivals of Trumpets and Atonement is made plain.

Next, notice the 14th chapter. The time is the Millennium. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one . . . there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (verses 9, 11). It is the time when "living waters" salvation, the Holy Spirit "shall go out from Jerusalem" (verse 8). The "waters" are literal as well as figurative. God often pictures His spiritual plan by material events.

In that day, when the earth is safely inhabited, when the Holy Spirit is granted to all mortal flesh, what happens? "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (verse 16).

Gentiles Forced to Keep the Feast of Tabernacles

Notice this 16th verse of Zechariah 14. After Christ returns, the nations mortal Gentiles who have not yet received salvation will come to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles! How could they keep a festival that was abolished at the cross? They could keep it only if it were commanded forever.

And what will happen if they refuse to obey God? "And it shall be, that who so will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." Strong words these!

The nations will be forced to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, from year to year, when Christ is ruling with a rod of iron!

And if the nations still won't obey? ". . . there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen" there are still heathen nations just beginning to learn the way of salvation "that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment . . . of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (verses 18-19).

To receive salvation even the Gentiles will have to keep this festival. Of course, it is commanded forever!

Now we customarily quote Isaiah 66:23, showing that the Sabbath will be kept in the Millennium, as proof we must keep it now. Will we, then, when we read Zechariah 14:16, showing that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept in the Millennium, be consistent by keeping it today?

Can we qualify as a son of God a king and priest ruling with Christ on His throne, assisting Christ at that time, if we now refuse to keep these festivals? Notice that Christ kept the Feast of Tabernacles. The Apostle John devoted an entire chapter of his gospel the seventh chapter to describe what Jesus said and did during the Feast of Tabernacles in the last year of His ministry.

Why Called the Feast of Tabernacles

During the Millennium, the Kingdom of God into which we may be born will rule the nations which are composed of mortal men begotten by the Spirit of God. The billions of

mortal men alive during the Millennium will still be heirs to the Kingdom of God. They will not yet have inherited it as long as they remain mortal flesh, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 15:50). "Ye must be born again" "of the Spirit" to inherit the Kingdom, said Jesus.

Remember that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were merely heirs when they dwelled on earth (Hebrews 11:9). While heirs they dwelled in tabernacles or booths, sojourning in the land of promise. Booths or temporary dwellings pictured that they were not yet inheritors. Thus we read of the Feast of Tabernacles that "ye shall dwell in booths seven days . . . that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 23:42-43). Israel dwelled in booths in the wilderness before they entered the promised land. Those booths pictured that they were only heirs. Even during the Millennium, when the Kingdom of God is ruling over mortal nations, the people will be only heirs to the Kingdom. They must overcome and grow in knowledge and wisdom to inherit the promises.

What a marvelous picture. God says of Ephraim (a type of all Israel) that they will "dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast" (Hosea 12:9). Israel, in the wilderness, was a type of all people who must go through trials and tribulations to inherit the promises. They were wanderers, waiting to inherit the promises of salvation.

The contention, held by some sects, that mortal human beings in the Millennium will remain flesh and blood forever is plainly denied by the Feast of Tabernacles, for the festival itself points toward an eternal inheritance.

Besides, after Jesus gathers the Church to Himself, and after He is seated on His throne where we will be ruling with Him, He will gather the nations before Him and say: "Inherit the Kingdom" (Matthew 25:34).

Yet Another Festival!

Did you notice that the Feast of Tabernacles is only the sixth festival? There is yet another the seventh!

The Feast of Tabernacles is, strictly speaking, seven days long to picture the entire Millennium. Seven is God's number of completeness. Therefore, there must also be seven festivals. Let us notice where it is mentioned: "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord . . . On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you . . . it is a [day of] solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein" (Leviticus 23:34, 36).

This eighth day, technically a separate feast, is called “the last day, that great day of the feast” (John 7:37).

What does this final holy day represent?

Notice what Jesus preached about on that day: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink . . . out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive . . .)” (John 7:37-39).

This was Jesus’ sermon giving the meaning of the last great day!

Now turn to Revelation 20. After the Millennium, what happens? A resurrection! The dead stand before God. This couldn’t include true Christians today, as they will appear before the judgment seat when Christ returns. It couldn’t refer to those converted during the Millennium. They have already inherited the Kingdom during the Millennium, after living out a normal life-span. Those in this resurrection must be those who died in ignorance in past ages! They are not brought to life until after the Millennium (Revelation 20:5).

a time when Gentiles who died in ignorance will be given an opportunity to receive salvation. Ezekiel 16:53-55 makes this very plain. Even those in Israel who died in their sins will be given their first opportunity to understand the truth of God and His way (Ezekiel 37). The prophet wrote that God would pour out His Spirit on those resurrected (verse 14). This is precisely the salvation that Jesus mentioned in His sermon on that great day of the feast in the autumn of AD 30.

This eighth day, which immediately follows the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, pictures the completion of the plan of redemption. It is just prior to the new heaven and the new earth. All parents and children, young and old will be resurrected.

Notice that the “book of life” typifying salvation is opened (Revelation 20:12). Revelation presents the final view of the “judgment day” as the present material heaven and earth are perishing and the faithful are receiving their eternal reward at the throne of Christ. The wicked those who disobey are seen perishing in the lake of fire!

What a marvelous plan! All will have an equal opportunity.

Pictures the Day of Judgment

This is that judgment day mentioned in Matthew 10: 15. It is

WHEN ARE GOD’S BIBLICAL HOLY DAYS?

Holy Day*	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<u>Passover</u>	Mar 25	Apr 14	Apr 3	Apr 22	Apr 10
<u>Unleavened Bread</u>	Mar 26-Apr 1	Apr 15-21	Apr 4-10	Apr 23-29	Apr 11-17
<u>Pentecost</u>	May 19	Jun 8	May 24	Jun 12	Jun 4
<u>Trumpets</u>	Sep 5	Sep 25	Sep 14	Oct 3	Sep 21
<u>Atonement</u>	Sep 14	Oct 4	Sep 23	Oct 12	Sep 30
<u>Feast of Tabernacles</u>	Sep 19-25	Oct 9-15	Sep 28-Oct 4	Oct 17-23	Oct 5-11
<u>Last Great Day</u>	Sep 26	Oct 16	Oct 5	Oct 24	Oct 12

* All Holy Days start the Evening Before at Sunset.

Fulfilling Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20



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The leading pastor in *Continuing Church of God* is a regular radio guest using radio to reach audiences in many areas.

The *Continuing Church of God* also uses printed and electronic magazines, books, and weekly letters to the Brethren to also support Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20

