

BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

*Will the Great Tribulation
Begin in 2015?*

THE REVELATION

CHAPTER I

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,

Do You Like to be Corrected?

Be honest with yourself!

Do you actually like to be corrected?

The Passover Plots

What was the first Passover plot?

*Which plots have Islam and the Greco-Roman
faiths perpetuated about Passover?*

BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

**BIBLE NEWS
PROPHECY**
Radio



Dr. Bob Thiel

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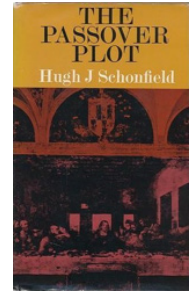
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WILL THE GREAT TRIBULATION BEGIN IN 2015?

Can the Great Tribulation begin in 2015? Can the Great Tribulation begin in 2016? Can the Great Tribulation begin in 2017?

No, it cannot.

Not according to Bible prophecy.

While sorrows and tribulation are prophesied to happen prior (Matthew 24:4-12) to the “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21), the Great Tribulation (the final times of the Gentiles) itself cannot start in 2015 nor prior to 2018.

Related to every individual year beginning in 2008, I have denounced false prophets as well as those that speculated on each of those years when they were much too close to that date/year to be possible.

At this moment it is now impossible that the Great tribulation can begin in 2015 or 2016 or 2017. 2018 is the earliest possible start date, with a later date more likely at this stage.

Although Jesus laid out a sequence that is recorded in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 that He tied to part of the Book of Daniel, for many reasons almost no one will know when the Great Tribulation will begin.

For many reasons, it is clear that the world’s churches will not know when the Great Tribulation will begin. In the past several years, it has also become clear that most who claim to be in the Church of God (COG) will not know as well.

Many who profess Christ do not even believe in a coming Great Tribulation as many believe it was over by 70 A.D.

Yet, there will be one. Jesus’ disciples specifically asked Him how to know when this would happen (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)--and He responded with details.

Blood Moons

Ignoring what Jesus taught, some have claimed that blood moons in 2014 and the expected ones in 2015 may mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Well, blood moons did not mark the start in 2014 nor will they mark the start in 2015.

The only ‘moons’ that Jesus referred to in the New Testament, were in Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24, and Luke 21:25. And these were taught by Jesus to occur after the Great Tribulation.

While some type of a blood moon is prophesied to precede the final Day of the Lord (Acts 2:20), the one prophesied does not happen until a couple of years AFTER the Great Tribulation will begin.

(That being said, it is possible that the deal of Daniel 9:26 could be confirmed near the time of a regular blood moon, but that is not a biblical requirement.)

There is No Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Many in the evangelical/fundamentalist Protestant world the “great tribulation” will come 3 ½ years or immediately after what they call the ‘rapture.’ Some have pointed to 2015 and some to 2016 for this.

Sadly, millions have been improperly taught that Jesus will return prior to the start of the Great Tribulation and the last trumpet blast and they will be raptured into heaven. This ‘rapture’ belief is contrary to Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:29-31 and the Apostle Paul’s in 1 Corinthians 15:50-52, which show that Jesus returns at the last trumpet. The last trumpet comes years AFTER the start of the Great Tribulation.

I saw one famous promoter of this view say, years ago, that the next prophetic event that would be fulfilled would be this ‘rapture.’ Thus, he discouraged people from heeding the words of Jesus to watch many other signs (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, Daniel 9, Daniel 11). Those who believe in a pre-tribulation ‘rapture’ will not possibly know when the Great Tribulation will begin as they are not expecting to possibly be part of it.

What the Bible teaches is the abomination of desolation will be standing in the holy place (Matthew 24:15) and then a decree will be issued (Zephaniah 2:1-3), so the faithful will flee to the wilderness (Revelation 12:14-16). As heaven is not a wilderness, there is not pre-tribulation rapture.

Additionally it may come as surprise to people who have actually studied the Book of Revelation, but pre-tribulation “rapture” proponents tend to falsely claim that the church is not mentioned in Revelation from chapter 4 through chapter 18, because it had been raptured away. Yet, the Bible is clear that Satan makes war on the Christians who do

not go to the place in the wilderness (Revelation 12:17; 13:7-10) and the saints who go through it have a certain patience (Revelation 14:12), thus the church is clearly involved in the Great Tribulation.

Mystery Babylon is Not in Iraq

Some well known Protestant proponents of the pre-tribulation rapture view also believe that the physical city of ancient Babylon is destined to become the Babylon the great of the Book of Revelation.

The ancient city of Babylon, which is in the Iraqi region, has not had any religious prominence for millennia.

Geography itself eliminates ancient Babylon from being the prophesied one. Ancient Babylon was built on a plain. Yet, the “Babylon the great” of Revelation is related to the city of seven mountains/hills (Revelation 17:9). It is also shown to have a history of persecuting true Christians, which simply has not been the case (in any major way) from ancient Babylon.

All should understand that the Book of Revelation specifically does refer to cities with titles other than the original ones (e.g. Revelation 11:8) and that it often adds a descriptive word (like Mystery) before the term Babylon (e.g. 17:5), that none should insist that ancient Babylon is the logical location. Furthermore, the Old Testament refers to a northern power as “the daughter of Babylon” (cf. Jeremiah 50:41-43; Zechariah 2:6-7) that resembles the Babylon of Revelation—thus a different type of Babylon is prophesied to exist in the end times.

It needs to be understood that since the people of God are specifically warned to flee from “the daughter of Babylon” in the North (Zechariah 2:6-7) as well as the Babylon of Revelation (18:2-4), it makes sense that it is not necessary for Babylon in Revelation it to be the ancient Babylon location (ancient Babylon is also almost directly due east, and only to the slightest degree north, of Jerusalem). Thus, any Protestants who teach that the ancient city of Babylon must be the Babylon of the Beast of Revelation appear to be in error.

Those who believe that ancient Babylon must be rebuilt for biblical prophecies to be fulfilled will be waiting for something that is not biblically required.

The Identity of the King of the North

Many Protestant prophecy preachers have claimed that while the Beast is likely European, that the final King of the North is Russian.

Yet, because the sea of the ten-horned Beast of the Sea in Revelation 13:1-10 is the Mediterranean Sea (cf. Daniel 7:1-3; Joshua 9:1; 23:4; Ezekiel 47:13-16), the King of the North (Daniel 11:40) must be European. This European King of the North will be disturbed by a power in the direction of Russia (Daniel 11:44-45) that includes Russia (Jeremiah 50:41-43), hence that is another reason why the King of the North is not Russian.

Jesus taught that it would be time to flee prior to the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21) when the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel appeared in the holy place (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). As this is related to actions by the King of the North (cf. Daniel 9:27; 11:31), those who think this King of the North is Russia will not understand this key event.

It should also be mentioned that some Protestants have taught that the ten-horned beast is only a system, not a person and that the two-horned beast is a only system of two kingdoms and is not a person. Those not looking for individuals will not believe the individuals are fulfilling end time prophecies.

Identity of the Final Antichrist

A common Greco-Roman prophetic misunderstanding is the teaching that the King of the North, the ten-horned Beast, is the final Antichrist.

While that leader is opposed to Christ, since he is primarily a political-military leader (Revelation 13:1-10) he is not THE Antichrist.

Now the two-horned Beast of Revelation 13:11-16, is primarily a religious leader, who is further described as the False Prophet (Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). As all the verses in the Bible that use the term “antichrist” are referring to religious leaders including false prophets (1 John 2:18-22; 4:1-3; 2 John 7), it is the two-horned Beast who is THE Antichrist.

In the Continuing Church of God, we believe that all false ministers are “antichrist.” However, we also believe that in the end, one individual will arise to be the final Antichrist. This is consistent with the position of some possibly affiliated with the Church of God in the Middle Ages as well, and that the final Antichrist is the False Prophet/the two-horned beast of Revelation 13.

The King of the South and the Final Antichrist

Some Protestants have contended that the final Antichrist will be Islamic with ancient Babylon as his capital. While the

Bible tells of a leader rising up in the Arabic, Nubian, and Turkish lands that will rule a confederation, that leader is referred to as the King of the South (Daniel 11:40-43).

The final Antichrist is associated with the great city of “seven mountains” (Revelation 17:9) “which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Revelation 17:18). Many Catholic, Protestant, and Church of God scholars have properly identified that city as Rome. The final Antichrist will support the European King of the North (Daniel 11:39-40) Beast power (Revelation 13) who will defeat the King of the South (Daniel 11:40-43).

While Islam is anti-Christ’s divinity, etc., the final Antichrist will not be a Muslim leader. He will feign a more compromised form of Roman Catholicism, but eventually will allow it to be betrayed (Revelation 17:15-17).

Drying of the Euphrates River

One current televangelist has claimed that the next prophetic event is that the Euphrates river would dry up. However, since that does not happen until after the start of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6:9) and then the time of scorching heat (Revelation 16:8-12), those that believe him will not know when the Great Tribulation will begin. The focus of this particular televangelist’s program is end time prophetic matters, but he is teaching many things contrary to the Bible.

A Jewish Temple is Not Necessary

Some in and out of the Church of God believe that a Jewish temple must be built before the Great Tribulation can begin, despite the fact that the Philadelphia era of the COG did not hold that view.

This rebuilt Jewish Temple view is based upon two faulty beliefs.

One is that since animal sacrifices must begin in order to be stopped (cf. Daniel 9:27; 11:31) that a Jewish temple is necessary for those sacrifices to be made. The reason this view is faulty is that the Bible is clear that a physical temple is not necessary for sacrifices to be made. Ezra 3:2-6 shows that sacrifices were made simply on an altar before the foundation of the second Jewish temple was laid. Additionally, I have communicated personally with representatives of the reconstituted Sanhedrin and the Temple Institute who confirmed that the Jews are willing to sacrifice on an altar only and do not believe that they must have a temple built first.

The other faulty belief has to do with the definition of the ‘temple of God’ in the New Testament. Even though the Apostle Paul repeatedly tells Christians that they are the

‘temple of God’ (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16), many have concluded that a Jewish temple is the ‘temple of God’ in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. The New Testament is clear that the priesthood was changed after Jesus came, and hence that is not a reference to a future Jewish temple. It would have to be a reference to a group of Christians and/or a building once used by Christians (the Church of God on Jerusalem’s Western Hill, also called Mt. Zion, was built upon the foundation stones used in the last Jewish temple by Christians in the first century and this is a possible location).

Those who insist that a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem must be built prior to the start of the Great Tribulation will not believe it will begin before then. Since such a Jewish Temple is not biblically-required, it is not likely to be built, hence those that hold that view are subject to being deceived.

Matthew 24:14 Will Be Fulfilled

One of the steps that triggers the end has to do with proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom:

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)

Various Catholics, Protestants, and even many in the COGs believe this has happened, but that is not the case. Nor will it be completed in 2015 or 2016.

Few seem to realize that it is partially because of the reach of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom that the King of the North will become angry and begin persecution (cf. Daniel 11:29-35; Matthew 24:15-20) that lead to the start of the opening of the fifth seal of Revelation 6:9-11 and the start of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21).

Preterists Do Not Expect the Great Tribulation

Many in the world believe that there is no future Great Tribulation and that the events of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and events through the end of the first century fulfilled those prophecies. This is known as a preterist view. The term preterist comes from the Latin term praeter, which conveys that something is past or beyond. Preterists view many future prophecies as fulfilled in the past.

Here is a quote from a famous Protestant scholar, the late Alfred Edersheim concerning what he felt happened in 70 A.D.:

[The] tribulation to Israel [was] unparalleled in the

terrible past of its history, and unequalled even in its bloody future. Nay, so dreadful would be the persecution of that, if Divine mercy had not been interposed for the sake of the followers of Christ, the whole Jewish race that inhabited the land would have been swept away.

The above is certainly an inaccurate and twisted view of what happened compared to what Jesus taught in Matthew 24. Preterists tend to overlook the fact that Jesus said that the sun and the moon would be darkened immediately after the tribulation and that He would return (Matthew 24:29-31). Since Jesus has not yet returned, there is no possible way that the Great Tribulation was over nearly 2000 years ago.

Despite the obvious errors, certain Protestants and modern Catholics take the preterist view.

Notice the following from a bishop-approved Catholic priest:

THE GREAT TRIBULATION. The definite article used refers to something which had been mentioned before and was presumed to be known. In chapter I. 9 and II. 10, St. John states it and warns the Christians in Asia of its coming. He calls it the "hour of temptation" in II. 10. It is bloody persecution. In this verse, the stress placed on "the great one" points to the imperial persecutions, especially to the last one under Diocletian. This scene is then in the fourth century, when the Roman persecutions had been abolished. "The great tribulation" had passed away to return no more, and since then the Church had grown to grand proportions. (Kramer H.B.L. The Book of Destiny. Imprimatur: +Joseph M. Mueller, January 26, 1956. Reprint TAN Books, pp.181-182)

Although some modern Catholics consider that the Great Tribulation was finished by the fourth centuries, this was not the position of many that they call saints. Of course, those who believe that the Great Tribulation has occurred are not expecting it to come.

Martin Luther wrote:

About this book of the Revelation...I miss more than one thing in this book, and it makes me consider it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic...I can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it. (Luther, M. Preface to the Revelation, 1522)

The Lutheran Church takes the position that the Book of Revelation is not prophetic, which is also consistent with the preterist view. Lutherans are not expecting the Great Tribulation to start.

Those who hold to a preterist view also do not seem to

think that they need to heed Jesus' words to:

36 Watch therefore, and 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)

To a major degree, the preterist position is now the view of the Church of God, Seventh day (CG7), the group that the late Herbert Armstrong considered as part of the Sardis era. Jesus warned that era "if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you" (Revelation 3:3). This will happen to all preterists, whether part of any claimed Church of God or not.

Most Prophecy Watchers Will Not Recognize the Signs

The Apostle Paul warned that in the last days, perilous times would come:

3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We seem to be in those perilous times.

With all of the natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, related food shortages, recessions, and emerging pestilences in the past few years, perhaps this would be a good time to show people that these are to start PRIOR to the "great tribulation."

The disciples asked Jesus the sequence of end-time events:

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3)

Notice what Jesus taught in response:

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then they will

deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 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.

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 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 (Matthew 24:4-21).

Thus, recent items such as earthquakes, economic turmoils, and food shortages should, at most, be considered as related to "the beginning of sorrows" (which may or may not yet have started in their final intensity) and not the "great tribulation" itself. The "great tribulation" does NOT begin until verse 21. And while "tribulation" is involved in verse 9, this seems to be referring the persecuting tribulation that true Philadelphia Christians will face just prior to the great tribulation. But when the sacrifices stop and the abomination is set up (Daniel 9:27; 11:31), it will be time for the faithful to flee.

A big problem, even among Protestants and Catholics who believe in a coming Great Tribulation, is that certain Greco-Roman leaders believe that Matthew 24 is directed mainly towards Jews and not true Christians, hence, they are quite confused about how they themselves could be affected. Actually, one of the problems among the Protestants is that since many have rejected the Ten Commandments and seventh-day Sabbath, they assign prophetic verses that must clearly apply to Christians, such as Revelation 12:17;14:12 and Matthew 24:20 to Jews (or sometimes to "Jewish Christians") as it does not seem to occur to them that Jesus' followers would imitate Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1) and keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

Since the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) first affects the descendants of Jacob (particularly, Ephraim and Manasseh) and the Laodiceans (Revelation 12:17), it would be expected that the USA and some of its Anglo-allies may well be first weakened during the "beginning of sorrows."

What About Daniel?

One reason that the Great Tribulation will not begin before 2018 at the earliest (and that is likely too early) is that one known as the final King of the North needs to rise up.

In Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, Jesus specifically referred to an event in the writings from the Prophet Daniel as the SIGN to know when to flee.

The sign had to do with actions of a prince (Daniel 9:27) who will become the King of the North (Daniel 11). Here is that sign:

31 And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. (Daniel 11:31)

The "him" is the final King of the North. He also makes a deal in several verses prior with the King of the South of Daniel 11:27.

This helps prove that the Great Tribulation cannot start before there is an actual King of the South and an actual final King of the North.

The Bible also shows that a prince, who will later become that King of the North will first confirm a deal (probably a peace deal) with Israel in Daniel 9:27 three and one half years before it is broken:

26... And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:26-27)

The latter sentences in Daniel 9:27 are referring to the same event as Daniel 11:31. Because the deal in Daniel 9:27 has still not been confirmed, the Great Tribulation, which begins in Daniel 11:39 and Matthew 24:21 cannot start for at least 3 ½ years from now.

It should also be noted that for sacrifices to stop, they must first start. The Jews currently have a suspended legal right to sacrifice and are ready to begin when the courts in Israel allow them to—but the courts have declared that the current political situation does not allow it. Yet, a 'peace deal' may be what the courts will partially rely on to grant the legal right for animal sacrifices to resume.

It may take a regional or other war in the Middle East to trigger this deal. Thus, watching events in the Middle East may give us clues as to when the deal of Daniel 9:27 will be produced and/or confirmed.

Brief Sequential Prophetic Summary

Since the Great Tribulation cannot happen in 2015, what are some specific events to look for which occur prior to the Great Tribulation?

The basic sequence is that certain sorrows and troubles will continue (Mark 13:7-8).

The 'peace' deal of Daniel 9:27 will be confirmed. A King of the North and a King of the South (Daniel 11:27) will arise.

Animal sacrifices will begin (cf. Daniel 9:27). (Note: It is possible that the King of the South could arise up prior to Daniel 9:27 or even after the sacrifices resume as could the King of the North).

The gospel then will have been preached enough to the world as a witness for the end to come (Matthew 24:14). This seems to be related to the 'short work' of Romans 9:28.

Jewish sacrifices will be stopped (Daniel 9:27).

The abomination of desolation will then be set up (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14) because of actions of the King of the North (Daniel 9:27; 11:31). The most faithful expect to continue to tell what is happening until they are somehow stopped (cf. Amos 8:11-12).

A decree is to be issued (Zephaniah 2:1-3) and then the most faithful Philadelphians will flee per Jesus' statements in Matthew 24:15-19 and Mark 13:15-18.

Bolstered by the Antichrist, then the Great Tribulation will begin (Matthew 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20; Daniel 11:39, 12:1b).

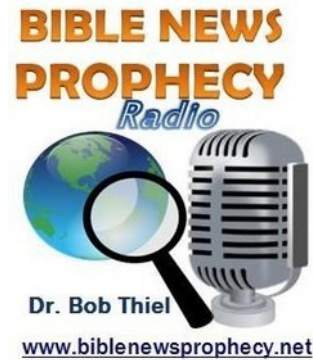
About a month or so less than 2 ½ years later, the sixth seal will be opened, there will be a 'blood moon' and a darkened sun (Revelation 6:12; Joel 2:30-31), then the 144,000 of Revelation 7:1-8 will be sealed.

Shortly thereafter, the seventh seal will be opened (Revelation 8:1-6) and year long Day of the Lord (Isaiah 34:8) will begin with trumpet blasts, plagues, etc. (Revelation 8:7-13; 9:1-21; 11:13-14). Then at the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15) Jesus will return to establish the millennial kingdom.

The Great Tribulation should begin about 3 1/2 years after the peace deal (Daniel 9:27) is confirmed, and right after the King of the North tries to proclaim peace and safety (1 Thessalonians 5:3) to throw people off (cf. Daniel 11:24) for his invasion plans. But the Philadelphians will tell what he is doing which causes him to persecute (Daniel 11:29-36).

As signs that take time, like the confirmation of the deal in Daniel 9:27, there are clear biblical signs which prove that the Great Tribulation cannot begin in 2015.

INTERNET RADIO & MOBILE APP



By Bob Thiel

We in the Continuing Church of God have recently had another door opened to help proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the world as a witness (2 Corinthians 2:12; Matthew 24:14). This 'door' is utilizing the internet to have a continuous type of radio presence.

This project was set up by *Continuing Church of God* members in New Zealand. It streams our Bible News Prophecy channel YouTube videos into a radio stream, as well as plays messages recorded by some in the Continuing Church of God around the world.

Shirley Gestro, who worked a lot on this project, reported, "I will be listing our station on all the internet radio directories, so people can find us."

Jesus taught:

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

"These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": 8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. (Revelation 3:7-8)

In the Continuing Church of God we attempt to go through whatsoever doors appear to be opened for us. For the past couple of years, this has included utilizing the internet, YouTube videos, printed literature, personal contact, traveling lectures, and regularly being a guest on outside radio. We also consider that each time someone volunteers to translate our materials into an additional language, this is a 'door' to reach people.

Now, with our own internet radio, we have another door to reach people through.

Here are the URLs for the internet and a related mobile app:
<http://www.biblenewsprophecy.net/>
<http://www.biblenewsprophecy.net/mobile-radio>

25 FAULTY VIEWS IN THE LAODICEAN AND FRINGE CHURCHES OF GOD



Laodicea has many ineffective structures

By Bob Thiel

Are all Church of God (COG) groups the same? Are the prophetic doctrinal differences between the Continuing Church of God and other groups significant?

What are the ramifications of the answers to those questions?

First it must be pointed that all the COG groups are not the same.

Jesus told that at the time of the end there would be a remnant of the Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia churches around (Revelation 2:18-29; 3:1-13). He also taught that the Laodiceans, the more numerically dominant, would be around at the end (Revelation 3:14-22).

Jesus taught that they had different issues to deal with. Jesus only promised to protect the Philadelphians (Revelation 3:7-13) from the 'hour of trial' (the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord).

The Book of Revelation shows that the truly faithful church will be protected (Revelation 12:14-16, but that other Christians will have to endure the 3 ½ years of trial (Revelation 12:17).

Jesus also warned the Laodiceans that they needed to repent or face rebuke and chastening (Revelation 3:14-19).

Since Laodiceans represent the bulk of Christians in the time of the end, there must be reasons that they will not

see all of what is happening prophetically and what will truly lead to the start of the Great Tribulation.

Within the Laodicean churches of God, there are a variety of prophetic positions that are held which will prevent them from knowing when the Great Tribulation will begin. Although I am including them under Laodicean, some of these groups are 'fringe' groups meaning that I am not certain that they truly are Church of God, despite the fact that they claim to be.

Twenty-five of those wrong views are listed below:

1. Many COG groups do not officially teach and/or do not believe in the idea of Church eras related to the Churches of Revelation 2 & 3 even though they sometimes teach about the churches of Revelation. Many take more of a preterist (past/historical) view of those churches, despite the fact that many statements made to them had to have future prophetic ramifications (e.g. Revelation 1:19; 2:22; 3:3; 3:10). Because various ones do not teach certain prophetic aspects of this, most do not see their own problems and will have to go through the Great Tribulation.
2. The Laodicean groups do not believe that the Gospel of the Kingdom still needs to be preached to the world as a witness per Matthew 24:14, do not really make that a high priority, and/or do so in a manner which demonstrates they have insufficient love for the truth (cf. Jeremiah 48:10; Psalm 33:4), hence do not have or lead the real Philadelphian work. As only the Philadelphians are promised to be protected from the hour of trial that will come on the whole world, the Laodiceans will not understand when Matthew 24:14 is fulfilled or when to flee per Matthew 24:15.
3. One common COG view is that God has no prophets now and will not have any until the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are empowered. This downplays how God works (cf. Ephesians 2:20) and that the Bible states, "Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).
4. Another view is that the Great Tribulation cannot begin until the King of the North invades the King of the South in Daniel 11:40. This view overlooks the fact that since the Great Tribulation is the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), that it begins with the USA and its Anglo-Saxon allies like the United Kingdom getting invaded (cf. Daniel 11:39). Some of the groups cling to this sequential error, because

it was once held by the late Herbert W. Armstrong, who changed his view by 1979 (Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Time We Are In, Now*. Pastor General's Report-Vol 1, No. 15, November 20, 1979). Since the King of the North will eliminate those of the strongest fortresses (the USA, Canada, etc.) in Daniel 11:39, prior to invading the King of the South in Daniel 11:40, those who hold to this view will not know when the Great Tribulation will begin until after it has started.

5. At least two of the larger COG groups believe that the final configuration of the Beast power in Revelation 17:12-13 MUST consist of exactly ten or eleven currently defined nations. This is faulty for many reasons, including the fact that the Greek terms for 'nations' is not in those passages and the passages are telling of a time of two future reorganizations. Reorganized kingdoms do not always stay within prior borders and that is likely to be the case in the future. While the European Union may well lose some member nations (like the United Kingdom), to insist that the final configuration must have ten or eleven nations is not consistent with the Bible. Additionally, the historical position of the Philadelphia portion of the COG (under Herbert Armstrong) taught in at least a dozen documents (Plain Truth, Good News, Tomorrow's World, booklets, Co-worker letter, Bible Correspondence Course) that the ten could consist of ten nations and/or groups of nations (as opposed to single nations). Unless the number reduces to that, those who insist on the Beast configuration having either ten or eleven nations will not possibly realize that the Great Tribulation will begin unless they repent of that view.
6. At least one claimed COG group insists that the King of the South will be Iran. Since Iran is primarily east of Jerusalem, its geography has basically eliminated that. Those that insist on Iran first being that type of power will not possibly realize that the Great Tribulation will begin until it is too late.
7. Some have insisted that the final King of the South will be from the nation of Ethiopia. This is partially based upon a mistranslation in the KJV version of the Bible as well as a position that the late Herbert Armstrong held. However, he changed his position in the 1960s and 1970s to an Arabic-Muslim confederation. Those who insist that the final King of the South must be Ethiopia will not possibly realize that the Great Tribulation will begin until it is too late.
8. Several COG groups clearly misunderstand Daniel 9:27, the second half of which ties in with Daniel 11:31 and Jesus' words in Matthew 24:15. Those who misunderstand it will not have a proper pre-warning of what is happening nor likely know when the Great Tribulation will begin.
9. One or more groups also teaches that the Great Tribulation can begin within the next year or so. As the Great Tribulation does not begin until approximately 3 ½ years after the deal of Daniel 9:27 has been properly confirmed (and this has not happened yet), it is not possible for the Great Tribulation to begin prior to 2018. And 2018 is likely too soon as the deal is most likely to be confirmed in the Fall of the year (cf. Leviticus 23:24; 1 Corinthians 15:52).
10. At least a couple of COG groups have been repeatedly proven wrong about their dates for the start of the Great Tribulation and the return of Jesus Christ. Those who rely on the leaders of those groups really do not understand biblical prophecy and will not know when the Great Tribulation will begin unless they repent.
11. Certain groups teach improper interpretations of the 1335, 1290, and 1260 days of Daniel 12 or have other problems with parts of that (most COG groups) that they will not understand when the Great Tribulation will start. Herbert Armstrong changed his view on this by 1979 and many never understood the change.
12. Most COG groups fail to understand Habakkuk 2:2-8 and hence are not properly getting the warning out to the USA and UK. One group did teach it, but has backed off because of what appears to be internal politics. The rising 'time bomb' of USA debt is something that needs to be pointed out and Habakkuk 2:2-8 points out the biblical threat that this poses. It should be proclaimed and we in CCOG are doing it. Many do not realize that Habakkuk 2:6 is related to the start of the Great Tribulation, and is one of the reasons for the attack against the indebted descendants of tribes of Joseph.
13. Many COG groups have various 'Elijah heresies.' Because of this, they will not be able to recognize the final Elijah. Some think the final 'Elijah' must have been the late Herbert Armstrong, despite the fact that he has been dead since 1986 and the timing of that death disqualifies him according to his writings (*Mystery of the Ages*. 1985,

p. 349). Some improperly think that either there is no final Elijah or that he is the church, and not an individual, which goes against Jesus' teachings on the subject in Mark 9:12-13

14. Many groups do not understand the differing persecutions (and other matters) to come in Daniel 7:25, 11:30-39, Matthew 24:9-22, and Revelation 12:14-17, hence when the prophesied wave of persecution initially hits the Philadelphians primarily (and not them), they will not see this persecution as evidence that the Great Tribulation is about to begin. The old Radio Church of God (see Good News, January 1960) specifically applied the persecuting scriptures of Daniel 11:32-35 to the end time Philadelphian church, which is correct.
 15. A number of COG groups do not teach that there is a physical place of safety to flee to (despite what Revelation 12:14-16 teaches), hence those holding that view will not be inclined to flee towards one just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation (cf. Matthew 24:15-20).
 16. Most 'independents' (people not truly affiliated with an actual COG group) do not believe that they need to 'gather together' prior to the time to flee despite what Zephaniah 2:1-3 teaches. Hence, it is not likely they will be inclined to flee together when a group they are not part of does just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation (cf. Revelation 12:14-17).
 17. At least one COG group erroneously believes that the abomination of desolation of Daniel 11:31 occurs after the King of the North invades the King of the South in Daniel 11:40. Since this is the wrong sequence, those who hold to that position will not understand when the Great Tribulation will begin.
 18. At least one group totally misunderstands various prophecies in Haggai and Zechariah and expect a type of reunification that is not prophesied. Those who rely on this and other misinterpretations will not know when the Great Tribulation will begin.
 19. Several COG groups teach that the man of sin who sits in the temple of God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) is the Antichrist, not the Beast of the Sea (Revelation 13:1-10). Yet, it is this Beast of the Sea, the final King of the North (Daniel 11:35-36). So, when this happens, those who hold to the wrong position will not understand its prophetic ramifications. The identity of the 'son of perdition' is important to understand in the end times.
 20. At least one claimed COG group teaches that the 'man of sin' is the current leader of the group called Grace Communion International. This absurd position also partially leads to many other misunderstandings, and will mean that Matthew 24:15 is misunderstood.
 21. A few teach that a Jewish temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt before Jesus returns. While this is remotely possible it is not required (the 'temple of God' in the New Testament has to do with Christians or a Christian location, not a modern Jewish one). Since this will likely not happen as a few sometimes teach, those who hold to that position will apparently not understand when the Great Tribulation will begin.
 22. At least one group teaches that the ten kings are to be in charge of ten regions around the world as opposed to being a primarily European power (cf. Revelation 17:12-13; 13:1-10). Insistence upon this means that such a group could not possibly understand when the Great Tribulation would begin.
 23. At least one or two large groups teach that the first verse in the Daniel 11 sequence relating to the beginning of the Great Tribulation is Daniel 11:40. Instead they should teach that it begins with Daniel 11:39, which is shortly after Daniel 11:31—which is also consistent with the start of the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). Those who hold to the Daniel 11:40 position as the start will not understand when the Great Tribulation will begin.
 24. The leader of at least one group has claimed that the Great Tribulation could begin within a year for the last 6 or so years. Since he does not recognize why this is in error, those who follow him will not truly know when the Great Tribulation will begin.
 25. At least one group teaches that the Beast is not a European. Since the Beast power will arise in Europe (cf. Daniel 9:26-27), those who do not understand this will not realize when the Great Tribulation is about to begin.
- It should be noted that certain leaders in Laodicean COG groups who were once part of the old Worldwide Church of God, confirmed to me personally that I was biblically correct on basically all the above points, despite the fact that their respective churches hold to several of the errors pointed out above.
- Those who rely too much on a compromised ministry

(Ezekiel 34:7-10) to teach them prophecy that is not truly in accordance with scripture need to realize that according to Jesus' words in Revelation 2 & 3 and Luke 21, only relatively few Christians will be protected from the hour of trial that will come upon the whole world. Those who will not listen to the faithful in the ministry will also share that fate (cf. Ephesians 4:11-16).

Unless the Laodicean groups and/or individuals repent as Jesus urges them to in Revelation 3:19, they will not possibly know when the Great Tribulation will begin (Matthew 24:21) nor know to flee prior to that start (Matthew 24:15-20).

COG groups that rely on misplaced tradition (recent or older) above the Bible for many aspects of their prophetic views are going to learn too late that they do not have the "sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19, KJV).

Jesus told the Laodiceans that they needed to change in many areas (Revelation 3:17-19), but He also taught that because they did not think they needed to that they would suffer (Revelation 3:14-16).

There are also more prophetic differences that other COG groups have from the Bible. The reality is that without the right emphasis on the final phase of the work, holding the truth and the Bible in sufficiently high regard, practicing Philadelphian love, and ignoring one anointed for a double-portion of God's Spirit (reminiscent Elisha), the COG groups that ignore prophetic warnings are doing so to their peril.

While some discount prophecy, notice what Jesus admonished His faithful to do:

29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and 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 21:29-36)

Are we not a lot closer to the end now than when Jesus stated that? Watching is something that Jesus taught His followers should do throughout the entire church age.

Properly paying attention to prophetic events not only helps one to be ready for Jesus, but is also intended to be a reflective exercise to get Christians to examine their lives enough to change as they should. Should you not be watching world events as properly explained in the light of Bible prophecy?

The various Laodiceans will not properly understand end time prophecy, and that will contribute to them NOT fleeing when they should (cf. Matthew 24:15-21; Revelation 12:14-17).

The Laodiceans have wrong ideas about the Great Tribulation, are not promised protection from it, and will (along with those of Sardis, and apparently some of Thyatira per Revelation 2:22) have to go into the Great Tribulation and be subject to death and persecution (Daniel 7:25b; Revelation 12:17).

Do not be misled by those who do not truly understand key end-time biblical prophecies.

While many act like the *Continuing Church of God* is like the scores of claimed COG groups, the prophetic reality is that we are unique. We do possess the Philadelphia mantle and truly stand for the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE



TEST NUMBER I

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Preface: This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 that began under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Various portions have been updated for the 21st century (though much of the original writing has been retained). It also has more scriptural references, as well as information and questions not in the original course. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural references are to the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson Publishing, used by permission. The KJV, sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version is also often used. Additionally, Catholic-approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.

This examination is given to help you better understand your Bible.

You are now reading the QUESTIONS SECTION. It CONTAINS the INSTRUCTIONS and the QUESTIONS you will be

asked. Note that there are 79 questions and that they are numbered consecutively 1, 2, 3 etc. Note also that there are four possible answers given under each question. These are labeled A, B, C, D. ONLY ONE of these four possible answers is considered to be the RIGHT one!—the other three are false unless stated otherwise.

YOU ARE TO SELECT THE ONE RIGHT ANSWER FROM AMONG THESE FOUR POSSIBLE ANSWERS.

You are to repeat this process for each of the questions asked. This comprises your test. (Generally speaking, the incorrect answers are false ideas which are taught and believed about the subject.)

Our objective is to give all who have determination to know God's Word the opportunity to understand the true meaning of the Bible.

By the answers you give to our examination questions, you help show if you have the desire to learn and are doing your best. We are here to aid just such people and we are thrilled to do so.

The final judge as to whether you know your Bible and are living by it will be God Himself. He is the One you had better seek to please. It is He who is able to give you eternal life.

Your eagerness to study and to make the most of your opportunity is what really counts. The exact grade you might make is not too important to you or to us. Naturally, however, we expect a somewhat high percentage of correct answers from you.

Answer as many questions as you can without referring to the previous lessons you have studied. If you find any difficult questions, then refer to the lessons. We expect you to do so!

Notice that these questions are divided into four parts—corresponding to the four lessons. We advise you not to cover more than one lesson at a sitting. Take sufficient time to understand each question.

Here are two EXAMPLES TO SHOW YOU HOW to answer the questions:

Read the first question of this test. The right answer to select, of course, is "C." Here is the second example: Notice question number 2 on the next page. The correct answer is "B." That is all there is to it! It is very simple and fast.

The procedure is always the same. Now continue with question 3 in the same manner...

Why Study the Bible?

1. This course of Bible study begins with world's present condition because
 - A. there is no other logical way to start a Bible study course.
 - B. prophecy is the only important subject to study.
 - C. this will help make the Bible more meaningful to your life, now.
 - D. human beings would never understand it any other way.
2. What do great scientists say will have to be done to prevent world annihilation?
 - A. The United Nations as such must be improved.
 - B. A powerful and effective World Government must be set up.
 - C. World Communism must be destroyed.
 - D. Buddhism must rule.
3. What is the basic CAUSE of world wars and all human suffering?
 - A. The lusts of human nature.
 - B. People don't realize it is necessary to make special preparations to meet calamities.
 - C. Dictators' inability to settle disputes.
 - D. False political ideologies such as Communism and Fascism.
4. World suicide is possible for the first time now because
 - A. modern man has never had such destructive desires before.
 - B. multiple nations can now produce weapons of mass destruction, such as atomic and hydrogen bombs.
 - C. for the first time national leaders are seeking world dominion.
 - D. the churches are not guiding world affairs.
5. Why are symbols sometimes used in Revelation to picture the final world-shaking events?
 - A. Partially because at the time the Bible was written—the modern weapons God knew that humans would invent in our day.
 - B. To make it impossible for anyone to ever understand these prophecies.
 - C. So people could put their own human interpretations on these symbols.
 - D. So people could never really feel sure of exactly how these prophecies would work out.
6. Which of the following corresponds to the pattern of God's 7,000 year plan?
 - A. The process of evolution.
 - B. The millennium.
 - C. The 7 day week.
 - D. The 7 last plagues.
7. What is the "time of trouble" at the end of this age to be like?
 - A. It will be a terrible but local disaster to fall on the Jews only.
 - B. It is a time of literal, physical distress on all nations such as this world has never witnessed.
 - C. It will be like a great many other world calamities of the past.
 - D. It is really on a symbolical idea signifying the mental unrest and spiritual hunger of modern man.
8. What does God say about the actions and decisions which seem right to great world leaders and to the people in general?
 - A. They are the pathway to eternal life.
 - B. They end in death.
 - C. They have little real effect on the world because God has predestined all events
 - D. We are not to question what our leaders think or do, but just follow them and trust God.
9. In what respect did the actions of men at the tower of Babel parallel conditions today?
 - A. They were experimenting with hydrogen and cobalt bombs in order to preserve peace in the world.
 - B. People were trying to keep their families together.
 - C. Humans began to fear God and really obey His commands.
 - D. Leaders were trying to make a great name for themselves and unite the world under human authority.

Here's Good News ...

10. Genesis 11:6 proves that when human beings attempt to create one world, learn to speak one another's languages and pool their combined wealth and scientific knowledge-
 - A. they might fail unless they cooperate with all the churches and religious sects and act upon their advice and moral principles.
 - B. they could ultimately achieve a utopia through a united world government.
 - C. nothing would be restrained from them and they will ultimately destroy themselves.
 - D. God would bless and guide their efforts, and their movements to create good will among men would culminate in establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.
11. What does God reveal about man's knowledge of the way to peace?
 - A. Man does not know the way to peace.
 - B. Humankind is on the right track and just needs more time to find out.
 - C. Peace can only come through a union of the world's churches.
 - D. The goal of improving economic conditions around the world will lead to peace.
12. What conditions did Paul prophesy for the end of this age before Christ returns?
 - A. Moral conduct would be improved through the world-wide efforts of the churches, but a real revival would be needed.
 - B. A time of true world revival and spiritual preparation for Jesus' return.
 - C. A time of peace and happiness through the efforts of men—an outstanding example being the United Nations.
 - D. Men would be traitors, truce breakers, a covetous of the wealth of other people and nations.
13. Who alone can intervene and permanently stop all war?
 - A. A great human religious leader who acquires the backing of the nations and all the churches.
 - B. Jesus Christ, because he paid the full penalty for war—suffering and death.
 - C. The United Nations, backed decisively by all its member nations.
 - D. The World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church working together to bring real pressure on nation leaders everywhere.
14. Which one of the following four statements is false?
 - A. There are many modernists who scoff at the need for Christ to return to save the world from total destruction of human life.
 - B. Jesus has his witnesses declaring from house to house that he has already returned.
 - C. At Christ's return the world will be as in the days of Noah—not suspecting that sudden destruction lies ahead.
 - D. There are ministers who preach the false doctrine that Christ might return any minute.
15. Within a century and a half after Christ, the wayward "paganized Christian" churches began to teach that Christ's 2nd coming
 - A. was a Jewish fable and should be condemned as rank heresy.
 - B. must be believed if Christians are to be saved.
 - C. needed to be preached with more vigor to the Gentiles.
 - D. contain the world's only lasting hope for world peace.
16. Nearly 2000 years ago Jesus Christ came
 - A. to establish a world-ruling kingdom only among the Jews in Palestine.
 - B. as a human philosopher.
 - C. as an idealist to reform the world through His churches.
 - D. as a messenger sent from heaven bearing a message about God's government.
17. What information did the angel reveal to Mary before the birth of Jesus?
 - A. That Jesus would rule on David's throne and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.
 - B. That Mary, herself, was immaculately conceived.
 - C. That the churches which her Son would found would reform this world.
 - D. That Jesus was not a Jew.
18. The gospel which Jesus preached is the good news
 - A. about the "Israel Message."
 - B. that God is the Supreme Ruler and will soon intervene in world affairs to establish His government/kingdom on earth.
 - C. that the churches will reform the world.
 - D. that Christians go to heaven if they believe that Jesus is the Savior.

19. Biblical “repentance” means
- to believe in Jesus Christ.
 - to do penance.
 - to change your ways and to begin to do what God commands.
 - to follow your conscience.
20. History proves that the original inspired true Church of apostolic times believed
- that Jesus would not return to this earth again.
 - that the Church is the Kingdom.
 - that the duty of Christians is to enforce Christianity on the world.
 - that Jesus would literally return to set up His Kingdom here on earth.
21. What will the earth be like when God’s Kingdom is established?
- The Jews will control the world.
 - The earth will become desolate for a thousand years.
 - There will be peace, prosperity and happiness.
 - The world will be the same as we see it today.
22. What does the phrase “the Kingdom is at hand” mean?
- That the Kingdom was being set up in the hearts of men.
 - That the Kingdom would be established in Palestine during the ministry of Christ.
 - That the time is “at hand” for us to repent so that we may qualify to enter the Kingdom.
 - That the Kingdom would be restored by the Apostles through the Church.
23. What one thing does God say He will always do before He intervenes in world affairs?
- He will reveal His plans to His servants—the prophets—as a witness.
 - He will send plagues on the world.
 - He will try to convert the world.
 - He will inspire revival meetings in the churches.
24. Which one of the following four statements is false?
- That the gospel was sent first to the Jews.
 - That Jesus came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God.
 - That Jesus began His ministry in Galilee.
 - That the Kingdom of God is a sentimental “feeling” in men’s minds.
25. Which one of the following four statement is false?
- The gospel message includes the knowledge of God’s government and laws.
 - The gospel is only a message about the person of Jesus Christ.
 - The gospel includes the message about the territory and the subjects or citizens of the Kingdom of God.
 - The gospel makes plain who is to be the Supreme Ruler over the nations.
26. The gospel of the Kingdom of God
- was not meant to be literally understood.
 - has always been preached by the popular churches.
 - was not meant to be preached except to the Jews.
 - was preached by the apostles and ministers of Jesus during apostolic days to both Jews and Gentiles.
27. According to the Bible
- Christ will not return until after the millennium.
 - Jesus Christ will come again just before the millennium.
 - Jesus Christ came the second time as the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost—and hence has been here ever since.
 - Jesus came secretly in 1914 at the end of the world.
28. After the Jews in Rome rejected the gospel, what message did Paul continue to preach to the Gentiles?
- A Pentecostal message about “tongues speaking” and the healing power of God.
 - Only a message about Christ as Savior.
 - The gospel of the Kingdom of God.
 - The teaching that Christians should attend the church of their choice on Sunday to observe the Lord’s Supper or mass.
29. Jesus prophesied that in the last days of this age
- the gospel of the Kingdom of God would be preached in all the world for a witness.
 - the nations will be able to establish peace through a world organisation.
 - all the churches would unite in an “ecumenical movement” to form one true body of Christians as in apostolic days.
 - Russia would be converted.

30. The Bible warns that before the second coming of Christ,
- that true Church leaders would take an active part in politics to bring peace to the nations.
 - that not enough people would be interested in revival meetings.
 - that the majority of people would turn to the true Jesus.
 - there would be an apostasy, a falling into error, among those who claimed to be part of the true church.
31. The last trumpet which is to be blown at the return of Jesus Christ
- will be heard only by the saints, but not by the world.
 - will not be heard by the world.
 - is not the same as the seventh trumpet mentioned in Revelation.
 - is the same as the seventh trumpet mentioned in the book of Revelation.
32. Which one of the four statements is false?
- At Christ's return a tremendous noise will rend the air.
 - A secret rapture of the saints will occur before the visible return of Jesus.
 - The resurrection of the dead in Christ will occur at Christ's second coming.
 - Armies will be gathered together to resist the authority of Christ at His return.
33. Those who really understand the prophecies
- will be caught unprepared when the "Day of the Lord" begins.
 - will know the exact day and hour of Jesus' return.
 - will know very near the time when God will intervene to strike the unsuspecting inhabitants of this earth.
 - will have been raptured away prior to "the Day of the Lord."
34. The prophecies foretold that Jesus Christ will return
- after a fixed sequence of events to save the world from annihilation.
 - secretly in 1914 and would be ruling among His enemies.
 - after the British Commonwealth and the United States are fully converted and become the Kingdom of God.
 - before the start of the Great Tribulation.
35. Christ commanded His followers of today
- to spread the doctrine that Jews are mostly communists.
 - to influence politics so that the churches could dominate the nations.
 - to support the prohibition movement.
 - to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness.

How Christ Will Stop World Suicide

36. The way to know what the nations around us will do in the times just ahead is to
- listen to the news commentators' ideas.
 - trace bible-named nations down through history to the present and then check what Bible prophecy says they will do.
 - heed what the leaders of the nations say they are going to do.
 - read all the pamphlets you can find on what the various religious denominations are going to do.
37. Satan is
- temporary ruler of this earth by the permission of God.
 - of equal power with God.
 - a myth.
 - only our own carnal nature—not an actual being.
38. What will show that the return of Christ is very close?
- World-wide peace because of world observance of Bible teachings.
 - The conquering of the world by Russia.
 - The triumph of American and British arms over a belligerent world.
 - The arising of ten kings/special rulers in Europe.
39. What will be the immediate purpose of Christ's second coming?
- To set up centers of relief for the aid of all who have been afflicted by climate and wars.
 - To rule the nations with a rod of iron and usher in the millennial kingdom.
 - To immediately establish new churches.
 - To establish a new league of nations.

40. How would Christ conquer the kings or dictators who come against Him?
- By first taking a world-wide vote to determine the will of the people.
 - By gently persuading them that He would be a better ruler than they.
 - By smiting their armies with His angelic armies.
 - By peaceably showing the world leaders they are not following God's way, and thus obtain their willing submission to Him.
41. The final "Day of the Lord" in prophecy is
- a time God supernaturally intervenes in world affairs.
 - Sunday.
 - well understood by all churches.
 - Saturday
42. At the blowing of the 7th or great trump
- Christ will return to heaven.
 - Jesus will return from heaven.
 - all fighting will immediately cease.
 - the nations at once surrender to Christ's armies.
43. What does the Bible teach that the end-time descendants of Assyria, the Germanic peoples of central Europe, will do?
- Establish the true religion and spread it around the earth.
 - Support the USA in a coming fight against Asian nations.
 - Be on the forefront of bringing in true world peace.
 - Destroy an ungodly/hypocritical nation.
44. People will ultimately begin to think more about religious matters because of
- A lessening of war tension throughout the world.
 - Ecumenical preachers along with signs and lying wonders.
 - Increased prosperity giving them more leisure.
 - An increased teaching of the Bible in schools.
45. Which natural force is prophesied to occur in the Book of Revelation and cause humans to curse?
- Wind.
 - Another flood, as in Noah's day when people were wicked.
 - Scorching high heat from the sun.
 - Cold weather.
46. The 7 last plagues or vials/bowls will punish
- the United States only.
 - Russia only.
 - a union of nations in Europe only.
 - all the world.
47. Armageddon is
- the place where the nations will gather to fight against Christ.
 - the place where the nations will fight Christ.
 - the place where Christ will establish His world rule.
 - the location where Britain and the United States will fight Russia.
48. In prophecy, the modern name for the area occupied by "Gog" and "Magog" is
- Germany.
 - Asiatic Russia, Mongolia and China.
 - Africa.
 - Turkey.
49. The term "winepress," associated with events in the "Day of the Lord," has to do with
- a pressing out of the juice of actual grapes.
 - a transformation of the saints to immortality.
 - a pressing out of the blood (destruction) of the evil people who come against Christ.
 - a judgment of the good people of the earth.
50. After Christ makes Jerusalem the capital of the world, many people will
- go up to it and say "teach us of His ways."
 - go up to it and say "we want no more of Your law."
 - be prohibited from coming to it.
 - not be interested in going there.
51. In Revelation 17:12 the Bible describes?
- Ten horns that are ten currently existing nations that will get together.
 - Ten horns that are ten kings who do not yet have a kingdom, but will somehow arise.
 - Ten horns that are ten languages rising in power.
 - Ten horns that are ten Arabic leaders rising in power.

52. We know the “Beast of the sea” is to be a great military leader because
- the word “Beast” in the Bible always stands for a man of peace.
 - the Bible says “the Beast” is a great military leader of the Russians.
 - the Bible shows the world will marvel at his warring accomplishments.
 - we have read this in booklets put out by different non-religious groups.
53. As a result of Christ’s victory over the nations of the earth, their great military leader will
- of his own accord repent and become a good citizen.
 - be shown the lake of fire and be told to repent.
 - repent reluctantly and be given another chance.
 - be cast into the lake of fire.
54. The time will come when great natural disturbances will
- destroy only a few of the world’s remaining large buildings.
 - make most of this earth desolate.
 - have no effect on world commerce.
 - cause the inhabitants of the “great city”—“Babylon”—to learn at once to fear God and turn to Him.
55. The great world military leader will increase his power by
- throwing his support strongly to the Godless Russian atheistic group.
 - keeping himself strictly free from religious entanglements.
 - lending support to all religious denominations whatever they might be.
 - associating himself with a great world “religious” leader.
56. Russia will
- be defeated by the United States with the aid of Great Britain soon, so will be in no shape to fight Christ.
 - never be defeated by Christ.
 - be among those to be defeated by Christ’s armies.
 - within two years cease to exist as a nation because of internal revolution.
57. What could be called World War III
- will not happen as humans have learned the lessons of World War I and World War II.
 - will be a war between Iran, Russia, and Israel.
 - will be a war between the USA and Asia.
 - will begin with an attack by a German-led European power against the USA and/or UK.
58. The nation or group which Christ will establish as a model for the earth will be
- the remnant of modern-day Israel.
 - the Jews only.
 - a Gentile nation.
 - Russia.

How to Study the Bible

59. Why do so many church denominations always have so many different, but supposedly Biblically correct answers to one Bible teaching?
- Because they often rely more on tradition and not what the Bible actually teaches.
 - Because the Bible was written to be understood differently by different denominations.
 - Because some denominations have the power to change the teachings of the Bible.
 - Because the Bible gives several contradictory answers to the same question.
60. Which of the following do most people like best?
- To be told the truth even though it hurts.
 - To be flattered.
 - To be criticized.
 - To admit their errors and weaknesses.
61. Which kind of book gives us the right answers to all the following questions?—how human beings originated? where humanity is going? how to live happily and successfully? and what the future holds for us?
- Books written by various denominations.
 - Books on evolution and science.
 - “Success” books written by various authors.
 - The Bible.
62. All the scriptures in the Bible were written by
- various early religious groups.
 - historians who were not religious.
 - men inspired by God.
 - Jews who wanted to gather together the primitive traditions of their people.

63. In their search to understand the meaning of the Bible, human beings have often
- twisted and wrested God's Word to include their own traditions.
 - always drunk the true meaning out of the scriptures.
 - accepted gladly all its doctrines.
 - never been cut by God's Word—the Bible—because it is soothing and agreeable to them.
64. People can learn to really understand the Bible if they
- accept what the religious leaders say.
 - study all the various kinds of religious literature they can find.
 - attend their different churches regularly.
 - turn from their way when they see the Bible says their way is wrong.
65. Which one statement in the following four statements is true?
- God's spiritual knowledge contained in the Bible cannot be understood simply through any of man's five senses, but must be divinely revealed.
 - The Bible is well understood by most people.
 - If you just say you are going to repent, that is all that is necessary—then God will supernaturally open your eyes so you can understand the Bible!
 - All you need to do in order to really understand the Bible is to study hard.
66. Can one continue doing as he/she has in the past if he/she wishes to understand the Bible, or must he/she
- begin to attend various meetings of religious denominations in order to gain a better grasp of "what they think is right"?
 - start to set a better attendance record at the church he/she has always attended in the past?
 - begin to contribute more liberally to the church into which he/she was born?
 - begin to live by the Bible principles which are proved to him/her?
67. Who has actually been responsible for the increased correct knowledge of the Bible?
- God, who ordained that it would occur in these "latter days."
 - Better worldly Bible scholars.
 - The public, whose interest in the Bible has been increasing.
 - Organized denominational Bible study groups.
68. It has been possible to better understand the Bible
- ever since the development of the printing press.
 - in these last days of this age, just before Christ returns.
 - ever since missionaries have gone to far countries.
 - since various churches have been working more closely together and often exchanging ministers on Sundays.
69. How should you study?
- Do it lazily at the end of a hard day's work.
 - Take it easy, knowing Christ might not come tomorrow.
 - Let several days go by without studying, then try to do it all in one day.
 - With zeal.
70. Can a student understand the Bible by his/her own effort, or should he/she
- become discouraged and quit—instead of waiting for forth coming lessons which would likely clear up the matter?
 - go to his/her former minister and ask him/her to explain the passage which is not grasped immediately?
 - ask God in prayer that He would divinely help him/her to understand the truth as he/she reads it?
 - obtain denominational religious material and try to work out the passage with the aid of it?
71. Why should you set a definite time apart each day for the study of your Bible?
- So you can show yourself approved unto your neighbor.
 - So your habit can be consistent, so you will be rewarded according to your spiritual advancement at Christ's coming.
 - So you can try to argue your former fellow church men out of their beliefs.
 - So you that you can go from "house to house" to spread your newly found knowledge.

72. Which one of the following four statements about the Bible is correct?
- It reveals the definite, logical, overall plan of God for this earth and for its inhabitants.
 - It reveals itself as a book which has many good ideas, but does not point out any great purpose for man's existence.
 - It is a book which is written with great literary style, but is valuable for nothing else.
 - It has an Old Testament and a New Testament—neither being related to the other.
73. How should one spend the time which he/she has set aside for religious purposes?
- Use all for "philosophizing" on what the Bible says, and not look in the Bible to see what it actually says.
 - Use all for study.
 - Set aside a definite amount of time for each of three things—prayer, study, meditation.
 - Use all of it for prayer.
74. In studying the Bible, you should
- study closely the reference that has been given, paying no attention at any time to the surrounding verses.
 - notice briefly the contents of the verses around the ones you are to study.
 - always only entire books of it.
 - read what some outside "authority" has to say on the section.
75. The easiest way to keep from forgetting the knowledge you have learned is to
- read the Bible material at infrequent intervals.
 - frequently skim over the main points of it rapidly in a review and associated with recent knowledge you have learned.
 - review material at infrequent intervals by reading it out loud.
 - try to recall as much of it as you can thirty days after you heard it.
76. Important Bible principles will not be grasped fully unless you
- make them agree with the doctrines of your (possibly) former denominations as they were taught to you as you grew up.
 - wait for several days after you have read the new material before thinking of it again.
 - study only small isolated sections of the Bible and think of each one separately as having no connection with any other part of the Bible.
 - make it a point to review mentally the latest Bible material you have learned and connect it with previously learned material of the like nature as soon as possible.
77. Important passages may be most easiest fixed in mind if they are
- underlined so they can be easily reviewed.
 - always written down 20 times in succession.
 - repeated word for word ten times.
 - not thought of in relation to other passages which deal with similar material.
78. Which book, besides the Bible, will be of the most value to you in your study of the Bible?
- A Bible commentary.
 - A Bible dictionary.
 - A concordance of the Bible.
 - A Bible atlas (for maps).
79. In what way can a Bible concordance aid you in understanding the Bible?
- It will bring related material together and possibly also help enable you to find the Bible's own explanation of its symbols.
 - It will give complete descriptions of cities and countries.
 - It will give a history of the different nations you find mentioned in the Bible.
 - It will give you detailed explanations of Bible verses.
-

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Keep this question section. File it in your notebook at the end of the Lessons it covers. Review these questions now and then. Why? Because the review will give you the opportunity to impress the true answers more firmly upon your mind.

Also, a review of the three false answers given here for each question will aid you to realize more clearly some of the false ideas which you may have taken for granted. You will thereby grasp and retain the truth much better when it is presented to you.

ANSWERS TO TEST 1:

1- C	10- C	19- C	28- C	37- A	46- D	55- D	64- D	73- C
2- B	11- A	20- D	29- A	38- D	47- A	56- C	65- A	74- B
3- A	12- D	21- C	30- D	39- B	48- B	57- D	66- D	75- B
4- B	13- B	22- C	31- D	40- C	49- C	58- A	67- A	76- D
5- A	14- B	23- A	32- B	41- A	50- A	59- A	68- B	77- A
6- C	15- A	24- D	33- C	42- B	51- B	60- B	69- D	78- C
7- B	16- D	25- B	34- A	43- D	52- C	61- D	70- C	79- A
8- B	17- A	26- D	35- D	44- B	53- D	62- C	71- B	
9- D	18- B	27- B	36- B	45- C	54- B	63- A	72- A	

Grade Yourself:

Simply count the number of questions you missed.

Your grade percentage will be next to that number below:

1-99	9-89	17-78
2-97	10-87	18-77
3-96	11-86	19-76
4-95	12-85	20-75
5-94	13-84	21-73
6-92	14-82	22-72
7-91	15-81	23-71
8-90	16-80	24-70

Do You LIKE TO BE CORRECTED?



Bob Thiel and Dibar Apartian (Evian, France, 2008)

By Dibar Apartian (originally published in the *Good News* magazine, July 1980)

Be honest with yourself! Do you actually like to be corrected?

Hardly anyone does. Receiving correction in the right attitude is one of life's most difficult responsibilities.

But a truly converted Christian should like — and even welcome — correction. It helps him or her grow. It's easy, of course, to see someone else's faults, but it is not so easy to recognize our own mistakes. We often resent being told about our shortcomings, especially if we see that the person who corrects us has his own problems to overcome.

The purpose of life is spiritual growth and change. But such growth is impossible without reproof and correction. "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17, Revised Standard Version).

What is reproof? What is correction? Do these words have clear, specific meanings to you? Check your dictionary and learn their definitions, because both are necessary for our "training in righteousness."

Every one of us must study the Bible with an honest desire to be taught and corrected by it. Unfortunately, some in

the Church have a self-righteous attitude when they read the Bible or hear a sermon. They are convinced that the admonishment applies to someone else and not them. So Bible study loses its effectiveness as far as they are concerned.

God says, “He who heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof [or correction] goes astray” (Prov. 10:17, RSV).

Are you on the “path to life,” or are you going astray because you reject reproof? I have often heard Christ’s apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong, say that he asks God regularly for correction. Why don’t we all pray the same prayer? Remember: The more you are converted, the more you will welcome correction.

“Wash me thoroughly”

Some of us think we get too much correction, but God gives us exactly what we need. However, we all have a tendency to give more correction than we should! It’s a matter of attitude — we need a converted, Christian attitude, based on love.

To receive correction in the right spirit, you must be willing to admit you are wrong — and that’s hard for the carnal mind to do. Get down on your knees and ask God to help you see your faults. Ask Him to change you, and then be willing to change.

Look how David pleaded his case in Psalm 51. He first acknowledged his guilt. “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,” he asked God (verse 2). But how did he expect to be washed and cleansed by God? By correction and reproof — and chastisement if necessary.

“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom Create in me a clean heart, o God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me” (verses 6, 10-11).

David wanted to be corrected, even though it meant making a serious effort and undergoing suffering. He was ready and willing to accept God’s correction, no matter how it came and however unpleasant. He was indeed a man after God’s own heart.

How often do you ask God for correction and reproof? Do you expect it to come only from Him and never from a human being? I’ve heard people say, “If correction came from God, I would accept it, but I wouldn’t listen if it came from some man.”

This reasoning is totally wrong. When you ask God for correction, you must be willing to accept it, no matter how it comes to you.

Paul’s conversion

Before his conversion, the apostle Paul didn’t realize that he was on the wrong track. He believed he was doing God a service by persecuting the Christians. Proud of his background and learning as a Pharisee, he followed the way that “seemeth right unto a man.” When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned, “Saul [whose name was later changed to Paul] was consenting unto his death” (Acts 8:1).

Here you see a powerful, influential man witnessing a murder — and approving of it! Shortly thereafter, he was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” when he went to the high priest to ask of him “letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way [Christianity], whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

Filled with this hatred and convinced he was doing the right thing, Saul was on his way to Damascus when God struck him down. What happened then? What was Saul’s attitude when corrected? What were the first questions he asked of God? “Who art thou, Lord?... what wilt thou have me to do?” (verses 5-6).

These beautiful questions will lead anyone God is calling to true conversion if they are asked honestly and their answers applied. Saul wanted to do what was right in God’s sight. Until then, in his ignorance, he was on the wrong course. But upon God’s calling, he sought correction. From that time on Saul never again persecuted the Christians. In fact, he himself became one of the most persecuted Christians.

Was it easy for Paul to be corrected that way? He had to learn all over how to serve God, to turn the other cheek, to be a Christian. He was probably ridiculed and scoffed at by his former friends. But nothing stopped him from wanting to do God’s will.

Change what needs to be changed

When you are corrected, don’t look for excuses to reject the admonishment. For instance, if the person who corrects you needs to change, himself, your task as a Christian is to admit where you are wrong and change. The other person’s need for correction does not solve your particular problem, nor does it justify your attitude. “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17).

For some time now, Mr. Armstrong has been telling us that the Church, as a whole, is not ready for Christ's return. Do you grasp the seriousness of this warning? It means that you and I have not accepted correction as we should have — and that we have not changed enough! Consciously or not, most people are too lazy to make the effort to change. Life has become routine for them and they get into a rut. They vegetate. But vegetating is not growth in a Christian life. If you don't grow, you go backwards.

Unfortunately, some of God's people can't see their own problems. In their self-righteousness, pride or sometimes blindness to their own faults, they don't allow God to show them how to change. They are not willing to pay the price to change!

The patriarch Job paid dearly to learn this lesson. But he learned it well and in the end was more blessed than before. Just like him, we must learn to tell God: "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me" (Job 42:2-4).

Can you pray like that? Have you learned to accept correction in order to say to God: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (verses 5-6)? That is the attitude we must have to enter God's Kingdom!

How to give correction

It is said that no one is able to command unless he first is willing to submit to orders. In like manner, before you can correct anyone properly, you must be willing to receive correction. Whether you are giving or receiving correction, you must have understanding, humility and love — without compromise.

If the task of correcting someone falls on your shoulders, be sure you yourself are not guilty of the same faults. Set the right example. As God says, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

Do you know what a proud person is? One who does not seek correction. He thinks of himself as better than others. He suffers from self-righteousness. God opposes such a person. When correcting someone, always apply the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Whether at home or at work, with friends or among strangers, be honest and true, "In all things shewing

thyself a pattern of good works" (Tit. 2:7). Be genuine, not a hypocrite. You can neither give nor receive correction properly if you are a hypocrite.

Paul wrote, "If you are sure that you are a guide to the blind [and every member of God's Church is in some ways a guide to the spiritually blind]... a corrector of the foolish [the foolish are those who do not believe in God or God's Word], a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth — you then who teach others, will you not teach yourself?" (Rom. 2:19-21, RSV).

These strong words are meant to change and correct everyone of us, to train us in righteousness. Giving correction to others is an important responsibility.

Conversion is change

Obedience to God is synonymous with wanting to be changed and corrected by Him. Growth spells conversion, and it results from applying the teachings you learn.

Beseech God, "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10:24). It takes courage to pray this way, but a begotten child of God must have courage.

Christ said that unless we become like little children, we shall not enter God's Kingdom. But why? What childlike qualities does Christ desire in adults? Children are more teachable and adapt better to change. They put their trust in those who are watching over them, and they usually do what they are told, even though they may not always agree with it. Christians must be like this. The degree of your conversion is determined by how well you respond to correction.

The ancient Israelites didn't like correction. They wanted change, all right, but only in their own way — not God's. They didn't care for His authority and laws. They wanted to be like other nations who were cut off from God, free to do as they pleased, even though it meant suffering and death!

Imagine! God was their Ruler, their King and their Protector. He was their Counselor and Teacher. But they rejected Him, preferring to be slaves to sin. Even when the prophet Samuel warned them what would happen to them, they refused to listen. "They said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:19-20).

Do you wish you were free like other people — free to do what you want? You would only be a slave to sin! We were called to be God's people — not like "other people." We have to be malleable in His hands. How sad that some of

God's people leave the Church because they want to be like "other people," rejecting correction because of pride, stubbornness and vanity.

Be grateful when you are corrected. Accept reproof with humility and make the necessary changes. Afterwards, forget the mistakes God has forgiven. Don't burden yourself with a guilt complex, which can only hinder your growth. God is always willing to forgive you if you accept correction and change.

"He who hates reproof will die," says God. That's an awesome warning. But He adds, "He whose ear heeds wholesome admonition will abide among the wise" (Prov. 15:10,31, RSV).

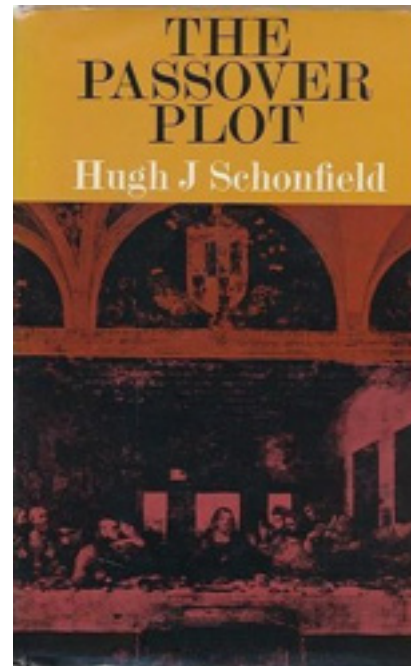
Notice: If you heed admonition you will live with the wise. The wise are those who listen to God's counsel, submit themselves to His authority, accept correction and live by His every word.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). They will be members of God's immortal spiritual Family.

These are God's words, and they cannot be broken. If you hate correction, you will die. But if you love correction, you will live forever! What's your choice?

Editor's note: The late evangelist Dibar Apartian was a dear friend to myself and family. About the last thing he told me before his death was that he loved me. He always was one to encourage me to provide correction to our mutual former association, though those that were part of that group did not heed it as much as they promised to.

THE PASSOVER PLOTS



By Bob Thiel

Have you heard of the book *The Passover Plot*? Was Jesus really killed and resurrected? What was the first Passover plot? Have there been other 'Passover plots'?

What does Islam teach? Was there a real Passover plot many centuries ago? Who have most who claim Christianity been affected by changes allegedly to Passover? What does this mean for Christians today?

The Book titled *The Passover Plot*

Back in 1965, there was a best-selling book titled *The Passover Plot* by Hugh Schonfield. Here is some information related to it:

According to Schonfield's analysis, the events of the Passover, which are presented in all the Gospels, but inconsistently, are most accurately presented in the Gospel of John. His reading of that Gospel convinced him that John's account, though probably filtered through an assistant and transcription in John's old age, suggests that Jesus had planned everything. Among other things, so that he would not be on the cross for more than a few hours before the Sabbath arrived when it was required by law that Jews be taken down, so that one of his supporters, who was on hand, would give him water (to quench his thirst) that was actually laced with a drug to make him unconscious, and so that Joseph of Arimathea, a well-connected supporter, would collect him off the cross while still

alive (but appearing dead) so that he could be secretly nursed back to health. Schonfield suggests that the plan went awry because of a soldier's actions with a spear. Schonfield gives evidence of a high-ranking member of the Sanhedrin who was one of Jesus' followers, likely the Beloved Disciple who is otherwise obscure, and notes several instances in which knowledge of or access to the Temple was available to one or more of Jesus' followers. He identifies this follower as John, the source of the Gospel many decades later whilst living in Asia Minor. He suggests that this Apostle, and Joseph of Arimathea, were responsible for events following the Crucifixion, and that it might have been this Apostle (an 'undercover Disciple', as it were) who was seen (by those who did not know him) at the Tomb on the morning of the Resurrection. (The Passover Plot. Wikipedia, viewed 03/15/14).

Allegedly, Jesus was seen for a few times after the pretended killing of Him and this is the proof of the resurrection that various ones believed according to the lies above about Passover. Only one who does not believe the Bible could accept the falsehoods in The Passover Plot.

Notice something else about it:

The church of Christ was founded upon the conviction that Christ was raised from the dead (Acts 4:10-12). Were these duped disciples, or were they diabolical deceivers? The New Testament presents the earliest disciples as believing in the fact of the resurrected Christ, which historical event was the center of their preaching. Accordingly, R.A. Torrey says, "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is mentioned directly 104 or more times in the New Testament" (What the Bible Teaches. 1898. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998, p. 159)...

Here is Mr. Schonfield's telling presupposition. He opined:

"Our minds are confused by the matter of fact manner of narration....The presentation of what takes place does not distinguish at all between the factual and the legendary, and no criteria are provided to enable us to separate the one from the other. We feel this to be grossly unfair, an imposition on our credulity....

"But we have been persuaded, quite wrongly and in complete disregard of the nature of spiritual folklore, that what is set down in the Bible is to be received as true in the literal and absolute sense of being the very word of God" (p. 41).

Talk about an imposition. Mr. Schonfield argues that since the New Testament contains "the legendary"

it is spiritual folklore. How do we know it is folklore? Because it contains the legendary.

The Passover Plot illustrates every argument that tries to naturally explain the empty tomb. Whether the theory is: the disciples stole the body, the enemies stole the body, Joseph of Arimathea took the body, the women went to the wrong tomb, Jesus revived having merely "swooned" on the cross, every conjecture about the empty tomb has a common denominator. They all deny what the text really says. They all make claims that cannot square with the text. They all presuppose the New Testament documents to be unreliable, but loftily claim to discern a reliable reconstruction from unreliable sources. (Jackson J. Pass Over "The Passover Plot." Copyright © 2014 Christian Courier. All rights reserved. | ISSN: 1559-2235 . <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1189-pass-over-the-passover-plot> viewed 03/15/14)

Some have tried to claim that Jesus did not die after His last Passover observance on earth. Some claimed Judas died, while others claim it only appeared that Jesus died.

I would add that the disciples and others would not be inclined to die for something they knew was false. Yet, history reports that most of the apostles were killed for their faith.

Now sincere Catholics, Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and those in the Church of God reject the premise of The Passover Plot as basically blasphemous. However, most people on earth do not believe that Jesus was resurrected.

Islam and Jesus' Death

If we go back centuries, we will see that Islam had its own interpretation of what happened to Jesus. What Islam teaches could also well be described as another Passover plot. Notice the following:

Muslims believe Jesus was not crucified, but was raised bodily to heaven by God, a belief purported to be found in the Gospel of Basilides, of which, if it existed, no copies survive. Depending on the interpretation of the following verse, Muslim scholars have abstracted different opinions. Some believe that in the Biblical account, Jesus' crucifixion did not last long enough for him to die while others opine that God gave someone Jesus' appearance, causing everyone to believe that Jesus was crucified (majority view). A third explanation could be that Jesus was nailed to a cross, but as his body is immortal he did not "die" or was not "crucified" [to death]; it only appeared so. In opposition to the second and third foregoing proposals, yet others

maintain that God does not use deceit and therefore they contend that crucifixion just did not occur. The basis of all of these beliefs is the following verse in the Qur'an:

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah";- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:- Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise;- —Qur'an, sura 4 (An-Nisa) ayat 157-158...

While most Western Scholars, Jews, and Christians believe Jesus died, most Muslims believe he was raised to Heaven without being put on the cross and God transformed another person to appear exactly like Jesus who was crucified instead of Jesus.

Muslims believe Jesus ascended bodily to Heaven, there to remain until his Second coming in the End days. The identity of the substitute has been a source of great interest among Muslims. One proposal is that God used one of Jesus' enemies. Judas Iscariot, Jesus' traitor, is most often cited, including by the medieval Gospel of Barnabas. The second proposal is that Jesus asked for someone to volunteer to be crucified instead of him. Simon of Cyrene is the person most commonly accepted to have done it, perhaps because according to the Synoptic Gospels he was compelled by the Romans to carry Jesus' cross for him (there is no indication in the Gospels that he volunteered).

Al-Baidawi writes that Jesus told his disciples in advance that whoever volunteered would go to heaven. The following narration recorded in the Qur'anic exegesis of Ibn Kathir is graded as authentic by orthodox Sunni scholars and provides a plausible explanation for the Qur'anic verse related to the substitution of Jesus:

Ibn Abbas said, "Just before Allah raised Jesus to the Heavens, Jesus went to his disciples, who were twelve inside the house. When he arrived, his hair was dripping with water (as if he had just had a bath) and he said, 'There are those among you who will disbelieve in me twelve times after you had believed in me.' He then asked, 'Who among you will volunteer for his appearance to be transformed into mine, and be killed in my place. Whoever volunteers for that, he will be with me (in Paradise).' One of the youngest ones among them volunteered, but Jesus asked him to sit down. Jesus asked again for a volunteer, and the same young man volunteered and Jesus asked him to sit down again. Then the young man volunteered a third time and Jesus said, 'You will be that man,' and

the resemblance of Jesus was cast over that man while Jesus ascended to Heaven from a hole in the roof of the house. When the Jews came looking for Jesus, they found that young man and crucified him. Some of Jesus' followers disbelieved in him twelve times after they had believed in him. They then divided into three groups. One group, the Jacobites, said, 'Allah remained with us as long as He willed and then ascended to Heaven.' Another group, the Nestorians, said, 'The son of Allah was with us as long as he willed and Allah took him to Heaven.' Another group, the Muslims, said, 'The servant and Messenger of Allah remained with us as long as Allah willed, and Allah then took him to Him.' The two disbelieving groups cooperated against the Muslim group and they killed them. Ever since that happened, Islam was then veiled until Allah sent Muhammad." — Al-Nasa'i, Al-Kubra, 6:489 (Islamic view of Jesus' death. Wikipedia, viewed 03/26/14)

It is only by denying the truth of scripture that one can believe that Jesus was not killed and not resurrected.

The Apostle Paul taught that various people would discount the truth about Jesus' death and resurrection:

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

Atheists and others deny the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Apostle Paul writes of those who deny the truth about God:

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools (Romans 1:22)

The Original Passover Plot

Of course, the original Passover plot was the one that improperly arrested Jesus and got Him beaten and sentenced to death.

Here is some of what the Bible teaches about that. Here is part one of that:

3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

12 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" (Mark 14:3-12)

Here is part two of that:

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." 49 Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

50 But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?"

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. 51 And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the

servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. 56 But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin(Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:12-14,19-24)

57 And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, 60 but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward 61 and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66 What do you think?"

They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." (Matthew 26:47-66)

Notice that betrayal combined with false witness was involved in the first 'Passover plot.' The third part involved whipping the crowd up against Jesus so that Pontius Pilate

will allow Him to be killed, and this one actually referred to as something that was plotted:

1 When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. 2 And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. (Matthew 27:1-2)

15 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. 16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17 Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

They said, "Barabbas!"

22 Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

23 Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

25 And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. (Matthew 27:15-26)

12 From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are

not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

15 But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. (John 19:12-16)

So, deceit, mobocracy, and political expedience were all part of the first "Passover plot." It was finalized with the following:

1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13

saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Matthew 28:1-15)

So, the plot to say Jesus was not resurrected ended up being another piece.

Another Passover Plot

This would not be the last Passover plot.

After there were problems because of the Jewish Bar Kochba revolt, as well as sun-god worship influence among the Greco-Romans, the Greco-Romans in Rome, Alexandria, and Jerusalem switched Passover from the evening of the 14th of Nisan to usually the first Sunday after it.

Samuele Bacchiocchi noted that the change to Easter-Sunday and to a weekly Sunday was due to persecution (the new Gentile hierarchy he is referring to are Greek and/or Latin bishops in Jerusalem, which took over after the rebellion was crushed):

The actual introduction of Easter-Sunday appears to have occurred earlier in Palestine after Emperor Hadrian ruthlessly crushed the Barkokeba revolt (A.D. 132-135)...

The fact that the Passover controversy arose when Emperor Hadrian adopted new repressive measures against Jewish religious practices suggests that such measures influenced the new Gentile hierarchy to change the date of Passover from Nisan 14 to the following Sunday (Easter-Sunday) in order to show separation and differentiation from the Jews and the Jewish Christians...

A whole body of Against the Jews literature was produced by leading Fathers who defamed the Jews as a people and emptied their religious beliefs and practices of any historical value. Two major causalities of the anti-Jewish campaign were Sabbath and Passover. The Sabbath was changed to Sunday and Passover was transferred to Easter-Sunday.

Scholars usually recognize the anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the Jewish reckoning of Passover and adoption of Easter-Sunday instead. Joachim Jeremias attributes such a development to "the inclination to break away from Judaism." In a similar vein, J.B. Lightfoot explains that Rome and Alexandria adopted Easter-Sunday to avoid "even the semblance

of Judaism" (Bacchiocchi S. God's Festival in Scripture and History. Biblical Perspectives. Befriend Springs (MI), 1995, pp. 101,102,103).

J.B. Lightfoot himself specifically wrote:

...the Churches of Asia Minor...regulated their Easter festival by the Jewish Passover without regard to the day of the week, but...those of Rome and Alexandria and Gaul observed another rule; thus avoiding even the semblance of Judaism (Lightfoot, Joseph Barber. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations. Published by Macmillan, 1881. Original from Harvard University. Digitized Oct 16, 2006, pp. 317, 331).

It is likely that Telesphorus made this change at the time to attempt to distance himself from the Jews in Rome. If he was the one who did it, and if he thought that this would spare his life, he was wrong as he was later killed by the Roman authorities (circa 136 A.D.). On the other hand, it is perhaps more likely that Hyginus, who was also Greek decided to introduce the Passover Sunday tradition, perhaps to decrease the wrath of the anti-Jewish Roman authorities. Since Anicetus' account (see below) claimed that this practice was began by presbyters who preceded him, it would need to have been no later than the Greeks Telesphorus or Hyginus, as they were followed by Pius who was then followed by Anicetus (it probably did not originate with Sixtus as he preceded Telesphorus, he was not Greek, and he was dead circa 125 A.D.).

The Greco-Romans tried to insist on this date, but Polycarp and Polycrates would not accept the positions of the bishops of Rome who changed the date.

Around 155 A.D. Polycarp of Smyrna went to Rome to deal with various heretics and he tried to persuade the bishop not to switch Passover to Easter Sunday. Irenaeus records this:

And when the blessed Polycarp was sojourning in Rome in the time of Anicetus, although a slight controversy had arisen among them as to certain other points...For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp to forego the observance [in his own way], inasmuch as these things had been always observed by John the disciple of our Lord, and by other apostles with whom he had been conversant; nor, on the other hand, could Polycarp succeed in persuading Anicetus to keep [the observance in his way], for he maintained that he was bound to adhere to the usage of the presbyters who preceded him. And in this state of affairs they held fellowship with each other; and Anicetus conceded to Polycarp in the Church the celebration of the Eucharist, by way of

showing him respect (Irenaeus. FRAGMENTS FROM THE LOST WRITINGS OF IRENAEUS. Translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Excerpted from Volume I of The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors); American Edition copyright © 1885. Electronic version copyright © 1997 by New Advent, Inc).

The Eastern Orthodox realize that Passover was originally observed at night as one of their priests has written:

Our earliest sources for the annual celebration of the Christian Pascha come to us from the second century... The feast, however, must have originated in the apostolic period...According to the earliest documents, Pascha is described as a nocturnal celebration... (Calivas, Alkiviadis C. The Origins of Pascha and Great Week - Part I. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1992. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8504> viewed 11/04/2011)

Over time, instead of being a night time memorial to Christ's sacrifice, Easter became a morning resurrection holiday.

This is known by scholars:

The first Christians celebrated the death of Jesus with a Pascha meal (eucharist) on the lunar date of the Jewish Passover (note 1 Cor. 5:7-8).

At first there was no annual celebration of the resurrection. Eventually, in the gentile world, the day of resurrection was added to the Pascha festival. That day was Sunday. At the Council of Nicea (325) it was ruled that Easter Sunday would be celebrated on the Sunday immediately following that full moon which came after the vernal equinox. At the same time the Council decided that the vernal equinox would be March 21 in the Julian calendar (Eusebius, Vit. Const. 3.18). (Synder GF. Irish Jesus, Roman Jesus: the formation of early Irish Christianity. Trinity Press International, 2002, p. 183)

From these circumstances we are naturally led to infer, that the early Christians little concerned themselves about the resurrection itself in their paschal festival (Thomas Campbell, Samuel Carter Hall, Edward Bulwer Lytton Baron Lytton, Theodore Edward Hook, Thomas Hood, William Harrison Ainsworth. On the Origin and Celebration of Easter, The New Monthly Magazine, Volume 4, Henry Colburn, 1822, p. 270).

Yet, for compromisers, the Passover changed. And it changed a lot. Because they held it on Sunday, some of the compromisers quickly decided to teach that Jesus was resurrected on a Sunday as partial justification (in their

view) for the change. But this resulted in major changes to the observance of Passover by those who held to the Greco-Roman position.

Those who think that the compromise was only small and should have been acceptable to God should remember that the Apostle Paul warned:

7...Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump (Galatians 5:7-9).

Paul was warning Christians that they should not allow a little compromise with the world (apparently including arguments of friends/acquaintances) should affect them. Paul and the early Christians kept Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. They did not keep Easter.

The Orthodox View

The Orthodox Church reports this brief explanation of the Victor controversy in one of its timelines:

193 A.D. - Council of Rome, presided over by Bishop Victor, condemns the celebration of Pascha on Nisan 14, and addresses a letter to Polycrates of Ephesus and the Churches in Asia.

193 A.D. - Council of Ephesus, presided over by Bishop Polycrates, and attended by several bishops throughout Asia, reject the authority of Victor of Rome, and keep the Asian paschal tradition (Markou, Stavros L. K. An Orthodox Christian Historical Timeline. Copyright © 2003 OrthodoxFaith.com).

What Was Next?

Many decided to make the Roman/Greek change, with probably those in Alexandria the most supportive. Those in Asia Minor mainly refused to switch Passover to Sunday.

Even over a century later, there still were those, even amongst the Romans that wanted to observe it on the 14th of Nisan. This was distressing to Emperor Constantine and had this as an agenda item for the Council of Nicea that he had convened in 325 A.D.:

...the emperor...convened a council of 318 bishops... in the city of Nicea...They passed certain ecclesiastical canons at the council besides, and at the same time decreed in regard to the Passover that there must be one unanimous concord on the celebration of God's holy and supremely excellent day. For it was variously observed by people... (Epiphanius. The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III (Sects 47-80),

De Fide). Section VI, Verses 1,1 and 1,3. Translated by Frank Williams. EJ Brill, New York, 1994, pp.471-472). A Sunday date was selected, instead of Nisan 14 (which can fall on any day of the week).

According to Eusebius' Life of Constantine, Book III chapter 18, the Roman emperor Constantine:

Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way.

I do not recall Jesus indicating that Jews were detestable (He was a Jew) or that He changed the date of Passover. But apparently sun-worshipping Constantine felt otherwise. And the Sunday observance is now known as Easter. But because sun-worshipping practices and the avoidance of practice that were considered to "Jewish" that is really why Easter is observed when it is. Furthermore, Constantine's comment is consistent with why another practice is associated with Easter:

Ham became popular among early Christians as part of their unifying tradition as some other religions do not eat pork or ham. (http://www.kitchendaily.com/read/easter-dinner-ideas-and-the-story-behind-traditional-easter-menu?icid=maing-grid10%7Chtmlws-main-bb%7CdI35%7Csec1_Ink2%26pLid%3D289309 viewed 03/28/13)

The reality is that the compromisers who kept Easter-Sunday wanted to avoid possibly being considered Jewish or part of the faithful Christians so intentionally added eating ham as a direct insult. Yet, the Bible NEVER mentions eating ham as part of any biblical holiday and instead teaches that it should not be consumed. Those who eat ham on Easter should ask themselves why they intentionally do something that Jesus and the apostles would not do.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

1170 At the Council of Nicea in 325, all the Churches agreed that Easter, the Christian Passover, should be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon (14 Nisan) after the vernal equinox (Catechism of the Catholic Church. Imprimatur Potest +Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Doubleday, NY 1995, p. 332).

Notice that the Catholics CLAIM that Easter is supposed to be Passover--many do not realize that. They have gone so far as in Latin to call Easter Pascha resurrectionis. But the Passover WAS NOT A RESURRECTION HOLY DAY!

Further, however, it needs to be understood that Constantine's and Council declarations did not stop everyone from properly observing Passover (it also should

be noted that "all the Churches" did not agree as no bishop from any the faithful churches attended this Council).

Because many did not accept this Sunday decree, a later Roman Emperor decreed the death penalty:

Edicts of Theodosius against the heretics, A.D. 380-394...Theodosius...decreed that...by the death of the offender; and the same capital punishment was inflicted on the Audians, or Quartodecimans, who should dare to perpetrate the atrocious crime of celebrating on an improper day the festival of Easter {Passover} (Gibbon E. Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Volume III, Chapter XXVII. ca. 1776-1788).

Is killing those that followed the example of Jesus and John to observe the Passover on the 14th instead of Easter Sunday a sign of a true Christian leader or a sign of supporting antichrist?

Another Roman Catholic supporter wrote this about the Council of Nicea a few decades later:

Three hundred Fathers or even more gathered together in the land of Bithynia and ordained this by law; yet you disdain their decrees. You must choose one of two courses: either you charge them with ignorance for their want of exact knowledge on this matter, or you charge them with cowardice because they were not ignorant, but played the hypocrite and betrayed the truth. When you do not abide by what they decreed, this is exactly the choice you must make. But all the events of the Council make it clear that they showed great wisdom and courage at that time. The article of faith they set forth at the Council show how wise they were...At that time the whole synodal gathering, welded together from these champions, along with their definition of what Christians must believe, also passed a decree that they celebrate the paschal feast in harmony together. They refused to betray their faith in those most difficult times [of persecution]; would they sink to pretense and deceit on the question of the Easter observance? (5) Look what you do when you condemn Fathers so great, so courageous, so wise (John Chrysostom. Homily III Against the Jews, III:3,4-5. Preached at Antioch, Syria in September, 386 AD).

So it is an article of faith that Roman Catholic bishops had the authority to change the scriptural date of Passover and make it an Easter celebration, even though Constantine said part of why he wanted it to have nothing in common with those he called the detestable Jewish crowd?

But this was simply not the faith of the true second century Christians in Asia Minor as Polycrates testified. The last

words of his response to Roman bishop Victor about changing the date of Passover to Easter Sunday was:

We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord's coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis; and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who fell asleep in Smyrna. Why need I mention the bishop and martyr Sagaris who fell asleep in Laodicea, or the blessed Papirius, or Melito, the Eunuch who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis, awaiting the episcopate from heaven, when he shall rise from the dead? All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have closely followed. For seven of my relatives were bishops; and I am the eighth. And my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven. 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, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said 'We ought to obey God rather than man'...I could mention the bishops who were present, whom I summoned at your desire; whose names, should I write them, would constitute a great multitude. And they, beholding my littleness, gave their consent to the letter, knowing that 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).

So, those who held to the original faith and traditions from the Bible would not accept the change.

Perhaps it should be noted that another 'Passover plot' was to teach that Passover should be on the 15th instead of the 14th of Nisan. This was more of a heresy that 2nd and/or 3rd century Church of God leaders had to deal with—and although this was dealt with back then, some today persist in this heretical error.

Easter is Not a Biblical or Christian Term

Other than Teutonic languages like English and German, most other languages use some version of the word "Passover," like "pascha," to describe their observances.

Easter itself is not a Christian term but comes from paganism:

The English term, according to the Ven. Bede (*De temporum ratione*, I, v), relates to *Estre*, a Teutonic goddess of the rising light of day and spring, which deity...Anglo-Saxon, *eâster*, *eâstron*; Old High German, *ôstra*, *ôstrara*, *ôstrarûn*; German, *Ostern*. April was called *easter-monadh*. (Holweck F. G. Transcribed by John Wagner and Michael T. Barrett. *Easter*. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume V. Copyright © 1909 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, May 1, 1909. Remy Lafort, Censor. Imprimatur. +John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York)

ISHTAR was one of the most prominent of the deities of the Accadian and Assyrian Pantheon. She was the Assyrian goddess of Love. She was the...Ashtoreth of the Jews or Hebrews. She is the planetary Venus, and in general features corresponds with the classical goddess of Love. Her name Ishtar is that by which she was known in Assyria, and the same name prevailed, with slight modifications, among the Semite nations generally. In Babylonia the goddess was known as Nana...

She may be identified with *Eostre* of the Germans, or *Easter*. To this goddess our Saxon or German ancestors sacrificed in April, which was therefore by them styled... *Eostur-monath*, and from thence arose our word *Easter*, which the Saxons retained after their conversion to Christianity, so that our *Easter-day* is nothing more nor less than *Ishtar's day*...The name became attached by association of ideas to the Christian festival of the Resurrection (of Christ), which happened at the time of the passover...The English name *Easter*, and the German *Ostern*, are derived from the name of the Teutonic goddess *Ostera* (Anglo-Saxon *Eostre*), whose festival was celebrated by the ancient Saxons with peculiar solemnities in the month of April; and for which, as in many other instances, the first Romish missionaries substituted the paschal feast." The Council of Nice "ordained (A.D. 325) that it should be kept always on a Sunday." Thus we find that it was originally the festival of *Ishtar*, and occurred on the *Sabatu* of *Elul*, or the festival *Sabbath* of the Assyrians, which occurred in August or harvest time; and that it afterwards became united with the passover or paschal feast of the Jews, and finally adopted by the Christian Church as the *Easter*

Sabbath, changing the date to the spring or seed time, or in April from the harvest month or August. Among the Assyrians it was the feast day of Ishtar and Nergal...

The Phoenician name of Ishtar was Astarte, the later Mendeanean form of which was Ashtar. She was called by Jeremiah, "the queen of heaven," Jer. vii, 18, and xlv. 17-25...she was sometimes called "the goddess of the chase," corresponding to Diana as well as Venus, the goddess of love. Mr. George Rawlinson says: "The worship of Ishtar was widespread, and her shrines were numerous. She is often called the "queen of Babylon"... It may be suspected that her symbol was the naked female form...(Hamilton LLC note. Ishtar and Izdubar, the epic of Babylon; or, The Babylonian goddess of love and the hero and warrior king, restored in mod. verse by L.L.C. Hamilton. 1884 Original from Oxford University Digitized Jun 19, 2007, pp. 207-208)

Paganism...it was precisely in these cults that the worst perversions existed. Ishtar, Astarte, and Cybele had their male and female prostitutes, their Galli: Josiah had to cleanse the temple of Yahweh of their booths (cf. the Qedishim and Kelabim, Deuteronomy 23:17; 2 Samuel 23:7; cf. 1 Samuel 14:24; 15:12), and even in the Greek world, where prostitution was not else regarded as religious, Eryx and Corinth at least were contaminated by Semitic influence, which Greece could not correct. (Martindale, Cyril Charles. "Paganism." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 11. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 17 Feb. 2014 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11388a.htm>>)

Ishtar is pronounced about the same as the English term Easter. Perhaps it should be mentioned that there was an Ishtar gate in ancient Babylon, hence there are a variety of connections between paganism/Babylon and Easter.

Basically, the adoption of Easter was the result of compromise with paganism. Some aspects of the adoption of its non-biblical symbols has been obscured, but some legends may cast some information about it.

Fasts and Lent

The next plot was that the Greco-Romans apparently decided to have a pre-Passover fast.

Since the Bible says that one should examine themselves prior to taking the Passover symbols (1 Corinthians 11:27-29), some in the second century apparently on their own decided that a type of fast may be appropriate.

While sometimes people would fast for a day, others chose differing amounts of time, but generally they were stricter

than Lenten fasts and lasted less than a week:

For the controversy is not only concerning the day, but also concerning the very manner of the fast. For some think that they should fast one day, others two, yet others more; some, moreover, count their day as consisting of forty hours day and night. And this variety in its observance has not originated in our time; but long before in that of our ancestors. It is likely that they did not hold to strict accuracy, and thus formed a custom for their posterity according to their own simplicity and peculiar mode (Irenaeus as cited by Eusebius. Church History, V, Verses 12-13).

Moreover, with the Easter festival there seems also to have established itself a preliminary fast, not as yet anywhere exceeding a week in duration, but very severe in character, which commemorated the Passion, or more generally, "the days on which the bridegroom was taken away". (Lent. The Catholic Encyclopedia).

The Days of Unleavened Bread were kept for a week in the Bible (and 8 days if you count that some was eaten on Passover). In time, another change was to go to a 40 day Lent:

The Beginning of Lent...

Until the 600s, Lent began on Quadragesima (Fortieth) Sunday, but Gregory the Great (c.540-604) moved it to a Wednesday, now called Ash Wednesday, to secure the exact number of 40 days in Lent—not counting Sundays, which were feast days. Gregory, who is regarded as the father of the medieval papacy, is also credited with the ceremony that gives the day its name. (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/news/2004/lent.html>)

Those who keep it are obeying traditions of men, not God:

6 Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:
8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.
9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" (Matthew 15:6-9)

Also notice:

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure

rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3:1-7)

Lent is a focus on self. People do not really examine themselves and repent during Lent—essentially they decide what they will temporarily abstain from for 40 days, then they go back to it. It is not a time of real change, but seems to be a time when people have a ‘form of godliness’ based upon what they choose to do. Instead people who claim Christianity should keep the Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, and other biblically-appointed times.

As far as some type of ‘Passover plot’ goes, I would suggest that switching to Easter Sunday and not observing it as Jesus told His followers to do so is the REAL Passover plot that has affected perhaps billions over the centuries. Lent is more of a vanity thing, a surface thing. It promotes only a temporal worldly repentance.

Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are enjoined in the Bible.

The Apostle Paul realized that that Jesus was a substitute for the Passover lamb that the Jewish people used. He also taught that Christians should still continue to observe Passover:

Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

But how were Christians to do this?

The Apostle Paul explains:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and

blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body (1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

So Christians were to keep the Passover in the manner that Jesus observed His final Passover. And that was at night as memorial—a memorial is an annual, not a weekly event. Notice that Jesus stated, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” It is Jesus’ death that this commemorates, and the Christian Passover is the annual commemoration of it. Also notice that Jesus DID NOT say to do this AS OFTEN AS YOU DESIRE, only that when you do it, you are proclaiming His death.

The Greek term for often, *hosakis*, is used one other time in the New Testament. It does not mean as often as you desire UNLESS the Greek term for “you desire”, *thelo* or *ethelo*, is also present, which it is in Revelation 11:6 (the only other place in the Bible this particular term is used). However, since it is NOT present in 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul is NOT telling us to observe the Lord’s Passover as often as we desire, but that when we are observing it on Passover, it is not just a ceremony, it is showing Christ’s death.

In 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, Paul is clearly teaching that to take this bread and wine, one must examine oneself. This also supports the concept of an annual examination. The delecting that is supposed to accompany Passover helps us focus on our faults and sins, and thus helps fulfill this command from Paul to examine ourselves.

Passover Plots

There have been many Passover plots. Most who profess Christianity properly discount the book with that title. Yet, most have accepted many of the other Passover plots that have come beginning with the change of Passover to Sunday. They have also accepted Easter as the holiday, and not Passover. And while not all Greco-Romans keep Lent, they also basically do not keep the Days of Unleavened Bread.

But the real Passover plot now is for you to not consider Passover important enough to examine yourself and change to be more like Jesus Christ. Christians, as the Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:18, are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is a big part of what the real Passover is all about.

During the time near Passover, please examine yourself. Be willing to change your life. Obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

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



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