

BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY



WHY PROPHECY?

**HERE'S HOW YOU CAN -
CONQUER EVERY OBSTACLE!**

October-December 2017

Bible News Prophecy

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FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF: BOB THIEL

Why Prophecy?

Should you pay attention to prophecy? Some wonder about that. Some, called preterists, consider that most prophecy is already fulfilled, which is a wrong and dangerous position.

Most world leaders look upon preaching the prophecies of WHAT GOD SAYS IS GOING TO HAPPEN as mere fanaticism or religious extremism.

They tend to spurn, scorn, ridicule, and scoff at the applicability of Bible prophecy (cf. 2 Peter 3:1-12).

To many people, PROPHECY seems to be a weird, fanatical sort of religious extremism having no bearing on actual fact or present-day world conditions. But biblical prophecies have come to pass and will come to pass.

The Bible shows that YOU CAN understand Biblical prophecy. Here's how: God told Daniel the words which he had received were CLOSED and SEALED – but only UNTIL a certain time:

9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. (Daniel 12:9-10)

Notice another prophecy about the wise:

Those who are wise shall shine

Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to
righteousness like the stars forever
and ever. (Daniel 12:3)

In the end-times, the wise would be the Philadelphian Christians that are holding fast and doing the work that God wants done (Revelation 3:7-13). Various of them will "instruct many" (Daniel 11:33) just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation.

Interestingly, of the end-time Christians, only the Philadelphians are promised protection "from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10).

God is clear that He makes prophetic statements and causes them to be fulfilled:

9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. (Isaiah 46:9-11)

Fulfilled prophecy is part of the proof that God exists and should be real to your life EVERYDAY!

Between 1/4 and 1/3rd of the Bible is prophetic. Since, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

of God" (Luke 4:4), knowing the prophetic word is important. All scripture, including prophecy, is important:

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

If you do not understand relevant prophecy, you cannot "be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Yet, most discount or misunderstand prophecy.

Many Misconceptions

Many people falsely ASSUME all prophecies are merely horrific foretellings of catastrophic events, of the wrathful vengeance of a harsh God who is about to descend with terrible fury upon His hapless subjects here below.

This is FAR from the truth!

Biblical teachings about salvation are prophetic.

Furthermore, MANY of the 'Kingdom of God' prophecies foretell a time of peace, of happiness, of restoration, of joy, of great prosperity and physical wealth for those who are serving God.

MANY prophecies merely foretell, in advance, certain events which are to happen, the rise and fall of nations, the COURSE of world affairs! Thus, they help us understand where various events and trends in the world are leading.

Prophecy IS a chronicle of the great PLAN God is working out here below! It describes this plan in DETAIL, showing how God KNEW it would work out, according to human nature, together with other SPECIAL INTERVENTIONS of God.

As has been stated by various Church of God (COG) leaders, "Prophecy is HISTORY WRITTEN IN ADVANCE!" (e.g. Why Prophecy! Plain Truth, June 1960).

Yet, it should be sadly noted that, nearly all the COG groups have significant prophetic misunderstandings.

The Sardis group CG7-Denver, for example, is now preterist and thus believes many events that are prophesied for the future are already past, hence Jesus warned them "you will not know what hour I will come upon you" (Revelation 3:3). This group has demonstrated with its loss of prophetic perspective that it has fulfilled prophecies related to Sardis.

Nearly all the rest of the COG groups are Laodicean and hold to prophetic misunderstandings, that unless they repent as Jesus tells them to (Revelation 3:14-22), they will not possibly know when the Great Tribulation will be. And then there are a variety of wrong prophetic position of Protestants and Catholics.

Since many are wrong, is paying attention to prophecy and current events important?

Certainly.

God Reveals His Secrets to His servants

Notice what God had Amos record:

7 Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:7-8)

3 Woe to you who put far off the day of doom ...

6 Who drink wine from bowls, and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, But are not grieved for the

affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives, And those who recline at banquets shall be removed. (Amos 6:3, 6-7)

Notice that those who DO NOT seem the care about what is going on in the lands of Joseph's descendants Manasseh and Ephraim (the USA and its British-descended allies) will be taken into captivity.

Many in various COGs do not take prophecy seriously enough. And nearly all groups have major prophetic errors.

Some, who discount prophecy, fail to realize that in the first recorded sermon, the Apostle Peter tied current events in with biblical prophecy (Acts 2:14-40). Partially because people were aware of the events that Peter discussed, many paid attention and thousands were converted (Acts 2:41).

Throughout the New Testament, Christian leaders did try to tie events to prophecy and other parts of the Bible to known events to better reach their audiences (e.g. Acts 17:22-31).

The first message that it is recorded that Jesus preached (the gospel of the kingdom in Mark 1:14) and the last message Jesus gave (the Book of Revelation) were prophetic. Various messages that He gave (e.g. Matthew 24, Luke 21) were tied to upcoming world events.

Does this mean that prophecy is the most important characteristic of the true Church?

No, love is (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1,8). Yet, the pursuit of love is also tied in with prophecy in the Bible (1 Corinthians 14:1). Those who truly have the love of the truth will be spared from some prophesied events according to 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

Today, massive societal changes are taking place. Many of them are prophesied in the Bible. Even though between perhaps one-

quarter to one-third of the entire Bible is prophetic, most simply do not understand that truth about various key prophecies in the Bible that Jesus urged His followers in the end to understand (e.g. Matthew 24:15).

Jesus Christ commissioned His Church to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all the world as a WITNESS (Matthew 24:14). The gospel is prophetic! It has to do with present-day world news, and the FUTURE of this whole earth! The MEANING of the gospel is PROPHETIC. But before that Kingdom is established, the Bible is clear that signs and lying wonders will deceive the masses of humanity:

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

Those who are not real Christians will be deceived. Yet the more faithful will be spiritually strong around this time and give a witness:

32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.

33 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by

sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. (Daniel 11:32-33)

Those who are Philadelphian Christians are subject to protection during the time of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:7-10) which begins a few verses later. But not all Christians (like the Laodiceans and those who remain of Sardis) will be protected:

25 ... Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. (Daniel 7:25)

14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:14-17)

These Christian saints have the testimony of Jesus and keep God's commandments. Yet, we see two groups of Christians: Those protected for 3 ½ years and those who will be persecuted for 3 ½ years (time, times, and half a time). As mentioned before, Jesus only promised to protect the Philadelphians from that "hour of trial" (Revelation 3:10).

The "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of PROPHECY" and true Christians have that:

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly

take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. (Revelation 1:1-3)

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:9-10)

People who discount prophecy are not understanding the Bible. Jesus wanted His followers to pay attention to when He would return. Notice also the following:

54 Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is.

55 And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is.

56 Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time? (Luke 12:54-56)

Various Jews knew that the Messiah was expected about the time that Jesus was on earth. Yet, the vast majority failed to properly recognize Him.

Well, we are in the time that Jesus called the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:4-8). More sorrows and troubles are ahead, many world events are aligning with properly understood biblical prophecy, and true believers should be willing to watch and discern the signs of this time.

Some, despite claiming to believe the Bible, either discount or overlook prophecy. But that is not supposed to be the case for true Christians:

29 “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)

Notice that Jesus taught that His followers will always have to pay attention to events and prophecies related to His return. Jesus repeatedly told His followers to watch for world events that would fulfil prophecy in other scriptures such as Matthew 24:42, 25:13; Mark 13:9,33,34,35,37, and

Revelation 3:3. Jesus did expect His followers to watch. This ‘watching’ is to help encourage Christians to truly change enough to be counted worthy to escape certain calamities that are prophesied to happen.

Scripture is clear that not all real Christians will be protected (Revelation 12:17), thus those who will not pay proper attention to prophecy will not realize what is happening until it is too late. Jesus used prophecy to keep His followers vigilant-He wanted them to be ‘hot’ and not lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-22). Prophetic understanding can help keep Christians spiritually hot (cf. Luke 21:36).

Jesus also taught that the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of truth,” would assist the faithful understanding all truth, including prophetic ones:

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 However, when ...the Spirit of truth, has come, {it} will guide you into all truth; ...will tell you things to come. (John 16:12-13)

Having the Holy Spirit and properly being led by the Holy Spirit helps us understand prophecy.

The Bible also teaches:

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-20)

Yet many do not seem to believe that God’s Spirit is currently working prophetically now. Many also tend to despise biblical prophecies as well as, often, their proper explanation(s).

While some discount the importance of prophecy, notice what the Apostle Paul taught:

11 And do this, knowing the time,

that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:11-14)

Are we not a lot closer to the end now than when Paul wrote that? Paul also taught that true Christians were not to be like others who would not know near when Jesus would return (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

The Apostle Peter wrote:

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:11-13)

Properly paying attention to prophetic events helps one to be ready for Jesus (Luke 21:36; Matthew 24). Additionally, the reality of prophecy and world events is also intended to be a reflective exercise to get Christians to examine their lives enough to change as they should (cf. Romans 13:11-14; 2 Peter 3:10-13).

Another reason to pay attention to prophecy and events is so that you will not be carried

away with false prophetic and other teachings. That is also part of the reason that there is a ministry, including prophets:

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ –

16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Throughout the years, various ones have claimed that the end was sooner than it was. One of most famous in the 21st century were the pronouncements of the now deceased Harold Camping. But those who properly understood current events in the light of biblical prophecy could easily prove he was in error (for details, see article *Harold Camping's Teachings About the End of the World Do Not Agree with the Bible* at www.cogwriter.com).

There are others as well.

But no matter what anyone says, the world will not end this year, or next year, or even the year after.

How can I be sure?

Well, for one reason, the Apostle Peter wrote:

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed (2 Peter 1:19, KJV).

This is the case with the *Continuing Church* of God. We understand certain prophesied world events and realize that until certain ones take place (e.g. Daniel 9:27), the end will not be here yet.

Part of the reason to watch events and understand Bible prophecy is so that we will not be affected by those who promote false doctrines or claim that the end can come before the Bible allows it (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:2; Ephesians 4:14).

Prophecy also assures us that God is in charge and that His will will be done. The faithful do not have to fear what humans can say or do. Notice what Jesus said in one of the most reassuring of the prophecies:

32 Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32, NKJV).

The Bible is clear that certain events need to occur before the end comes. And that includes us all growing in "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18, NKJV).

Part of that knowledge is prophetic. And part of that biblical knowledge tells us that the world will not end before the events that the Bible shows must first come to pass.

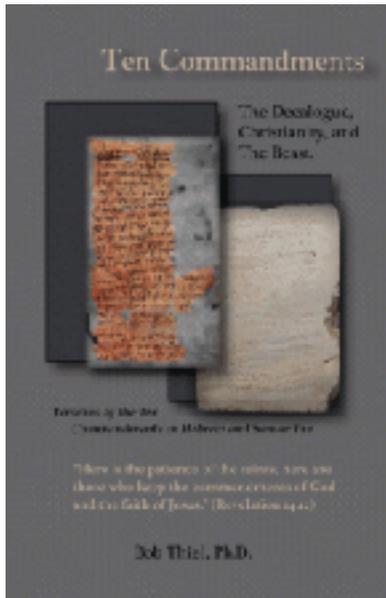
Pray to God to give you an obedient, humble, submissive mind – giving you a more and more deep, respectful, AWE of the

word of God! As an end-time Christian – your very LIFE – your FUTURE is at stake!

Why prophecy?

To strengthen our faith and keep us vigilant physically and spiritually. Also, so we will not be swayed by others who do not have sufficient love of the truth. Philadelphian Christians (Revelation 3:7-13) truly realize, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

Introduction to the Ten Commandments



By Bob Thiel

Our latest book is titled *The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast*. This article contains the introduction to it.

Introduction

Billions of people have heard of the Ten Commandments. There have been court battles related to them and even the display of them.

Even movies have been made related to them. Part of Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 silent film *The Ten Commandments* was filmed in the sand dunes very close to where I am writing this. Yet, that does not make this a highly religious area.

Many claim to try to keep the Ten Commandments, but few really do. Many religion leaders have either claimed that they are 'done away,' changed, or do not really need to be kept as they were intended.

Are the Ten Commandments relevant in the 21st century?

Growing up in a Roman Catholic household, I was aware of the Ten Commandments. In catechism classes, I recall needing to memorize the version that the Church of Rome claimed it believed.

But I really did not know what the Ten Commandments meant until after I studied the Bible more, plus read Church of God literature related to them.

While people realize that the Ten Commandments were written on stone at Mount Sinai and given to Moses, few seem to realize the Bible shows they were established in the beginning. Some believe that Christians have no need to keep the Ten Commandments and claim they were "nailed to the cross."

Are the Ten Commandments a bunch of harsh rules or do they show love and teach God's people how to live?

This is something you need to know.

In the Beginning

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). These functioned according to laws of physics that God created. God also made various life forms that functioned according various laws of biology that He made to work with His creation.

God made humans and breathed life into Adam (Genesis 2:7). One way humans differ from animals is because of the "spirit in man" and "the breath of the Almighty" that gives humans understanding (Job 32:8).

There are laws for humans that God decreed so that humans could live better (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). The Bible teaches that "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16) and Jesus said that God's laws were based on love (Matthew 22:37-40).

The Ten Commandments were first made known to Adam in the Garden of Eden.

How do we know that?

Because the Bible teaches: “through one man sin entered the world” (Romans 5:12)—and that man was Adam (Romans 5:14).

So, what is sin according to Protestant and Catholic translations of the Bible?

⁴ Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (1 John 3:4, KJV)

⁴ Whosoever committeth sin committeth also iniquity; and sin is iniquity. (1 John 3:4, DRB)

Consider that Romans 5:14 teaches, “death reigned from Adam to Moses.”

In Romans 5:13 we read that, “Sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Yet sin was imputed, because death did reign from Adam to Moses. There must then have been some law from Adam’s time for Adam to have sinned.

The reality is that God’s commandments were in effect from the beginning.

It was sin to transgress God’s commandments between the time of Adam and Moses. Therefore, the Ten Commandments did not originate at Mount Sinai with Moses.

Consider also the following:

¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. (Ezekiel 28:13, NKJV)

¹⁴ Thou a cherub stretched out, and protecting, and I set thee in the holy mountain of God, thou hast walked

in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵ Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation, until iniquity was found in thee. (Ezekiel 28:14-15, DRB)

That “cherub” with iniquity was the one who is known as Satan the devil (Revelation 12:9; 20:2). Satan sinned BEFORE Adam and Eve were created. ‘Iniquity’ existed before Mt. Sinai. God destroyed people in the Great Flood of Noah’s time for their wickedness (Genesis 6:6). Since the “wicked man ... is caught in the cords of his sin” (Proverbs 5:22), sin (and hence the Ten Commandments) existed prior to Mt. Sinai.

How do We Know there are Ten Commandments?

How do we know that there are TEN Commandments?

The commandments are literally called the “ten words” in Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13, and Deuteronomy 10:4—and that is how we know there are ten.

The Hebrew terms for the Ten Commandments are literally translated as the “ten words,” which is where the term “Decalogue” in English come from (via Greek).

They are called “commandments” in other parts of the Old Testament (e.g. Exodus 20:6) as well as in the New Testament, from Hebrew and Greek words more literally meaning “commandments,” but without the numeric designation of ten.

Kept by Gentile Christians

Early church history clearly shows that all real as well as many professing Christians believed that they needed to keep the Ten Commandments.

While some point to the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 as ‘proof’ that Gentile Christians did not need to keep the Ten Commandments, Christians afterwards did teach that they still needed to be kept.

This is confirmed by writings of early Gentile church leaders such as Polycarp of Smyrna (ordained by the original Apostles), Melito of Sardis, and Theophilus of Antioch who all taught that Christians were to keep the Ten Commandments.

It was only apostates who had some connection to Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24), like Marcion of Pontus, who taught they were done away. This Marcion was denounced by Polycarp, who “turned away” some of those Marcion deceived “to the Church of God” (Irenaeus. Against Heresies. Book III, Chapter 3, Verse 4).

While some in modern times believe that they know better, those who actually used *koine* Greek (the language of the New Testament) and lived in the first and second centuries obviously better understood the Greek as well as what the Apostles meant.

Early Christians, Jew and Gentile, believed that they were to keep the Ten Commandments. Do not be deceived by clever, false, arguments of men (cf. 2 Peter 2:3, NLT).

The Ten Commandments Show Love

God’s commandments show love:

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:2-3)

⁶ This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. (2 John 6)

The commandments show love and are not a burden for real Christians. Loving your neighbor is part of the royal law, which is a law of liberty:

⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well ...

¹² So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. (James 2:8, 12)

Christians are to keep the commandments as they will be judged by them.

New Book

Our newest book is titled *The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast*. It has a chapter on each of the Ten Commandments, numerous scriptures, and gives practical tips on how to observe and not violate the Ten Commandments. It also addresses common arguments falsely raised against the Ten Commandments, defines how most who profess Christianity do NOT properly observe the Ten Commandments, and explains some of the prophetic ramifications of the Ten Commandments during the time of the final Beast of Daniel 7:24-25 and Revelation 13:1-10.

This book is free and is available online at www.ccog.org.

Repackaged Demonic Holidays?



By Bob Thiel

In the Fall and Winter we see the world observe many days.

Many would be surprised to learn that Greco-Roman theologians have sometimes condemned these holidays as pagan and inappropriate for Christians—despite the fact that various Greco-Roman churches promote them in the 21st century.

Halloween/All Saints' Day

While the idea of honoring the memory of the life and death of a person like a saint is not opposed to scripture (cf. Judges 11:38-40), veneration of saints and sacrificing to them is opposed to apostolic teachings.

Satan wanted Christ to bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:9), but Jesus refused (Matthew 4:10). Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-23) reportedly encouraged his followers to venerate/worship him (Irenaeus. *Adversus*

haereses, Book 1, Chapter 23, Verses 1-5).

The Apostle Peter not only denounced Simon Magus, he forbade a Gentile from bowing down or paying homage to him (Acts 10:25-26). The Apostle Paul forbade Gentiles from sacrificing to him and Barnabas (Acts 14:11-18). The Apostles basically both argued that they were men and this should not be done. Early Christians understood this and did not do such. Over time, however, some heretics began to venerate relics in the late second century.

The veneration of claimed saints began to be a significant problem with the Greco-Roman churches in the fourth and later centuries, despite the fact it was not an apostolic practice.

Notice the following:

By incorporating familiar Pagan images, such as Celtic gods, the Green Man, and bicephalic heads within churches and cathedrals, church officials encouraged the populace to intermingle the two spiritual traditions in their mind supposedly easing their acceptance of the new religion and smoothing the transition from the old ways to the new. (Pesznecker S. *Gargoyles: From the Archives of the Grey School of Wizardry*. Career Press, 2006, p. 85)

In a book, the above statement preceded a truncated version of the following that Pope "Gregory "the Great" wrote around 600 A.D.:

Tell Augustine that he should be no means destroy the temples of the gods but rather the idols within those temples. Let him, after he has purified them with holy water, place altars and relics of the saints in them. For, if those temples are well built, they should be converted **from the worship of demons** to the service of the true God. ... Let them therefore, on the day of the

dedication of their churches, or on the feast of the martyrs whose relics are preserved in them, build themselves huts around their one-time temples and celebrate the occasion with religious feasting. **They will sacrifice and eat the animals not any more as an offering to the devil, but for the glory of God** to whom, as the giver of all things, they will give thanks for having been satiated. (Gregory I: Letter to Abbot Mellitus. Epsitola 76, PL 77: 1215-1216)

Pope Gregory advocated the incorporation on pagan practices. Yet, the Bible opposes this and these type of sacrifices as demonic (1 Corinthians 10:20-21). Furthermore, the Bible teaches that after the sacrifice of Jesus that there is no need for animal sacrifices (Hebrews 10:1-10). Allowing the above for 'saints days' shows that this is also relic of paganism and that they are truly demonic holidays.

Many dress biblically inappropriately (cf. 1 Timothy 2:9) and sometimes also as witches (which the Bible condemns— Exodus 22:18) on Halloween. This is not a biblically-appropriate celebration and certainly was not an early Christian one.

All Saints' Day was declared in the seventh century, and later moved to November 1st and the evening before became known as Halloween (Mershman F. All Saints' Day. The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 1. Nihil Obstat. March 1, 1907).

October 31 was a date the ancient Druids observed:

The Druids, and order of priests in ancient Gaul and Britain, believed that on Halloween, ghosts, spirits, fairies, witches, and elves came out to harm people. ... From these Druid beliefs come the present-day use of witches, ghosts, and cats in Halloween festivities...The custom of using leaves, pumpkins, and

corn stalks as Halloween decorations comes from the Druids. The early peoples of Europe also had a festival similar to the Druid holiday...In the 700s, the Roman Catholic Church named November 1 as *All Saints' Day*. **The old pagan customs and the Christian feast day were combined into the Halloween festival.** (Halloween. World Book Encyclopedia, vol 9. Chicago, 1966: 25-26)

It may be of interest to consider what a Catholic writer wrote:

Why would a pope put the Catholic celebration of the dead on top of the pagans' celebrations of the dead? Because the Catholic feasts are in continuity and fulfill the meaning of the pagan ones. (Killian Brian. Halloween, as autumn celebration, reminder God's name is hallowed. Catholic Online International News. 10/31/06)

It is a fact that many associated with the Church of Rome relish and boast about pagan connections for their faith. It is the Bible that they, and all, should look to as the source of doctrine (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16) and it condemns using pagan forms of worship (Deuteronomy 12:29-32; Jeremiah 10:2-6; 1 Corinthians 10:21; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

Christmas

The Bible never endorses the celebration of birthdays, including that of Jesus. The early Church of Rome did not celebrate Christmas nor any other birthday. Furthermore, Tertullian warned that to participate in the winter celebrations with wreaths and gift-giving made one beholden to pagan gods. There was one such celebration known as the Saturnalia that was celebrated by the heathen in late December.

The claimed “father of Latin theology,” Tertullian denounced winter celebrations, such as Saturnalia (from a pagan deity whose name meant plentiful) which morphed into Christmas as he wrote:

The Minervalia are as much Minerva's, as the Saturnalia Saturn's; Saturn's, which must necessarily be celebrated even by little slaves at the time of the Saturnalia. New-year's gifts likewise must be caught at, and the Septimontium kept; and all the presents of Midwinter and the feast of Dear Kinsmanship must be exacted; the schools must be wreathed with flowers; the flamens' wives and the aediles sacrifice; the school is honoured on the appointed holy-days. The same thing takes place on an idol's birthday; every pomp of the devil is frequented. Who will think that these things are befitting to a Christian master, unless it be he who shall think them suitable likewise to one who is not a master? (Tertullian. On Idolatry, Chapter X)

Around the time of Tertullian, the Roman Bishops Zephyrinus (199-217) and Callistus (217-222) had a reputation of compromise and corruption (and this is confirmed by such Roman Catholic saints such as Hippolytus (Hippolytus. Refutation of All Heresies, Book IX, Chapter VI) and allowed people in their church that compromised with paganism, etc.

The Roman Saturnalia and the Persian Mithraism themselves were adaptations of an even earlier pagan religion - that of the ancient Babylonian mystery cult. The ancient Babylonians celebrated the reborn Nimrod as the newborn Tammuz by worshipping an evergreen tree. The Bible condemns worship involving evergreen trees (Deuteronomy 12:2-3; Jeremiah 3:13; 10:2-6).

The Babylonians also celebrated a rebirth of the sun during the season of the winter solstice. December 25th was eventually

chosen as the date of Jesus' birthday, because the Saturnalia and other sun god worship happened at that time of the year:

In 354 A.D., Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun. (Sechrist EH. Christmas. World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 3. Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, 1966, pp. 408-417)

Helios Mithras is one god...Sunday was kept holy in honour of Mithra, and the sixteenth of each month was sacred to him as mediator. **The 25 December was observed as his birthday, the natalis invicti, the rebirth of the winter-sun, unconquered by the rigours of the season.** (Arendzen J. Mithraism. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume X. Nihil Obstat, October 1, 1911)

Emperor Constantine had been the follower of the sun-god Mithras, who was considered to be the unconquered sun and was one born from a rock in a below ground cave. Perhaps because of this, Constantine's mother Helena decide to believe the myth that Jesus was born in a below ground rocky cave. Rome now teaches this (and this author has seen that 'nativity' displayed multiple times in Vatican City), but in the third century one of its supporters, Commodianus, condemned the rock deity:

The unconquered one was born from a rock, if he is regarded as a god. Now tell us, then, on the other hand, which is the first of these two. The rock has overcome the god: then the creator of the rock has to be sought after. Moreover, you still depict him also as a thief; although, if he were a god, he certainly did not live by theft. Assuredly he was of earth, and of a monstrous nature. And he turned other people's oxen into his caves;

just as did Cacus, that son of Vulcan.
(Commodianus. On Christian
Discipline)

Jesus was not born from a rock, yet that is partially how His birth is now portrayed. It is also not true to teach that He was born on December 25th. Scholars recognize that shepherds would not have been out with their flocks in the field (like the Bible shows in Luke 2:8) as late as December 25th and that the biblically-mentioned (Luke 2:1-5) “census would have been impossible in winter” (Christmas. The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1908).

Many of the practices and customs associated with Christmas come from paganism as real scholars will admit. Neither Jesus’ apostles nor their early followers observed Christmas.

New Year’s Day Honored Janus (god of time) and Strenua (goddess of purification and well being)

The Bible begins the year in the Spring (Exodus 12:2), but what is commonly called New Year’s Day is observed on January 1st on modern calendars. In the late 2nd century A.D., Greco-Roman theologian Tertullian condemned those who professed Christ who were celebrating a version of it. But, that did not stop many who wanted to celebrate.

The Catholic Encyclopedia reports:

Christian writers and councils condemned the heathen orgies and excesses connected with the festival ... celebrated at the beginning of the year: Tertullian blames Christians who regarded the customary presents – called *strenae* (Fr. *étrennes*) from the goddess *Strenia*, who presided over New Year’s Day (cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 185-90) – as mere tokens of friendly intercourse (*De Idol.* xiv). (Tierney J. New Year’s Day. The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 11, 1911)

Around 487 A.D., the Greco-Romans seemed to adopt the “Feast of the Circumcision” on

January 1st. This, however, did not stop all heathen activity.

The Catholic Encyclopedia notes:

Even in our own day the secular features of the opening of the New Year interfere with the religious observance of the Circumcision, and tend to make a mere holiday of that which should have the sacred character of a Holy Day. St. Augustine points out the difference between the pagan and the Christian manner of celebrating the day: pagan feasting and excesses were to be expiated by Christian fasting and prayer (P. L., XXXVIII, 1024 sqq.; Serm. cxcvii, cxcviii). (Ibid)

So it also states:

...towards the end of the sixth century the Council of Auxerre (can. I) forbade Christians *strenas diabolicas observare*.

The expression *strenas diabolicas observare* roughly translates from Latin to English as “observing the new time of the Devil.” It is likely that New Year’s resolutions are related to prayers and practices once given for the pagan goddess.

January 1st is not a biblical holiday, and even the Church of Rome has forbidden some of its attributes as demonic.

Valentine’s Day Honored Faunus/Pan (god of herds and fertility)

The Bible does not have a holiday like Valentine’s Day, but many people observe it.

Here is what a Catholic source has written about it:

The roots of St. Valentine’s Day lie in the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was celebrated on Feb. 15. For 800 years the Romans had dedicated this day to the god Lupercus. On Lupercalia, a young man would draw the name of a young

woman in a lottery and would then keep the woman as a sexual companion for the year...

The Catholic Church no longer officially honors St. Valentine, but the holiday has both Roman and Catholic roots. (The Origins of St. Valentine's Day. <http://www.americancatholic.org>)

A day of pagan roots and sexual license is certainly not a day for Christians to observe. This type of behavior was warned against in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:18; Jude 4). Notice some Islamic comments about Valentine's Day:

Celebrating the Valentine Day is not permissible because: Firstly, it is an innovated holiday ...Christians were aware of the Pagan roots of Valentine's Day. **The way the Christians adopted St. Valentine's Day should be a lesson for Muslims ...We should avoid anything associated with pagan immoral practices ..** Love between families, friends and married people does not need to be celebrated on a day with such origins. (Ruling on Celebrating Valentine's Day. <http://www.contactpakistan.com>)

Notice that Muslims associate Valentine's Day with Christianity (obviously the false compromising kind) and sin.

In other words, Valentine's Day causes the name of Christ (through the term 'Christianity') to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Romans 2:24;

Isaiah 52:5). Do not have "the name of God blasphemed because of you" (Romans 2:24) keeping pagan holidays.

Repackaged Pagan Holidays

While the Bible does not prohibit secular holidays (like sober independence day observances), early Christians did NOT pray to dead saints nor observe anything like All Saint's Day nor Christmas. Many pagan

deities were essentially changed from being the 'god of something' to being called the 'saint of something.'

Some of the pagan practices may have changed, but the repackaged demonic holidays are still not Christian, nor are they those that Jesus and His early followers kept. Many holidays that people keep came from paganism, and even have ties to the ancient Babylonian mystery religion. When God sent Nehemiah to help the children of Israel who had been influenced by Babylon, notice what Nehemiah said he did:

³⁰ I cleansed them of everything pagan. (Nehemiah 13:30)

The New Testament warns of a compromised faith and "Mystery Babylon the Great" (Revelation 17:5).

Notice what the Bible teaches that God's people should do in regards to "Babylon the Great":

⁴ Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (Revelation 18:4)

Christians should flee temptation and sin (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22), not embrace it nor promote it. They should not combine pagan practices in with the worship of the true God (1 Corinthians 10:19-21; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18), even it is a tradition (Matthew 15:3-9).

Real Christians do not keep repackaged demonic holidays (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:21). More on this can be found in our free online booklet: *Should you observe God's Holy Days or demonic holidays?*

A Little Child Shall Lead Them



By Robert Smith

This was originally published in the Good News magazine, March 1976, by the old Worldwide Church of God, which is not believed to have renewed the copyright. While it is somewhat dated, youth face similar challenges today and the Kingdom of God remains the solution.

Instantaneous, Nightmarish Destruction?

Our world has changed! Prior to 1945, its citizens were not subjected to the awesome specter of total nuclear annihilation. Prior to just a short century ago, the world continued on basically the same course originally charted at man's beginning on this earth. The world was basically agrarian in nature and the problems of respective countries were generally of little interest to the world per se.

Sophisticated technology became a reality just twenty short years following the Armistice of 1918 which concluded the "war to end all wars." Radar, sonar, jet aircraft and other modern innovations" replaced the long-established methods of conventional warfare, and that "progress" continued right up to that infamous day when people all over the world puzzled at their newspaper headlines: "Atom Bomb Destroys Hiroshima."

Since then, the entire society of man has

lived under the threat of instantaneous, nightmarish destruction – at the whim of any number of frail despots who sit at the controls of the world.

Is it any wonder our youth are uncertain and resentful?

They live in the first society in which mankind has produced the capability to absolutely obliterate himself from existence, worldwide!

The Cry of Youth.

In our introverted society, we cling desperately to "today," because we cannot be certain there will be any tomorrows. The global community is engaged in a furtive battle for survival – and it has produced youth who ache for changes, security, peace and happiness, but do not know the way to achieve it.

That frustration is vented in myriad ways. The heartache of watching our youth run frantically in search of answers became obvious with the introduction of the "Hippie movement" several years ago – and which spread like wildfire among the youth of nations all over the world. A withdrawal from the existing society seemed to be the motivating factor, but without valid alternatives a sort of "subculture" resulted.

Protests were voiced from college campuses around the world, and united effort by force soon began to unseat long-established governments throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Our youth also wrought havoc in colleges and universities in England and America.

A frustrated adult world, suffering from acute pangs of guilt at the unsettling recognition they had failed their heritage, began to apologize weakly by accepting the symbols of that rebellion and tacitly getting "in step" with it – as followers, and no longer leaders!

The societies of the world belong to the youth, and they will contemptuously legislate their "no-answer" culture to an adult world they cannot accept. Today's music belongs to the youth. Advertising is geared toward our teenagers and young adults – for they are responsible for the success or failure of products, personalities and businesses.

Violence is as much a part of our young people's way of life as apple pie and Mom used to be in the older generation. Blatant and homogenous pre- and post- marital sex activity is accepted as natural, and the older folks might have a difficult time explaining it any other way to them. After all, haven't the adults set the example?

When an "individual" does stand up, he immediately has a hungry, adoring following. Our youth aches for leadership!

A Panorama of Our Day.

In the book of Isaiah, in the Old Testament of the Bible, God inspired the prophet to record events in advance of our day – a time when the leaders have lost knowledge of the way which would guarantee peace, happiness and abundant, rich, productive living. A time when the leaders have failed to establish governmental systems structured upon equity. A time when confusion and near chaos reign world wide, and when there are seemingly no answers.

Isaiah wrote: "For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away... the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them" (Isa. 3:1-4).

Here is portrayed a panorama of life, from the ability to properly provide foodstuffs and nourishment for millions, to the

ultimate inability of our great military men, our lawmen, the average men on the street, the businessmen and the great, eloquent speakers to administer proper judgment. It talks about a time of global confusion!

Is it any wonder our youth attempt to establish their own laws?

Continuing in verse 12: "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." What a stern indictment against our world leaders – in government, religion and education.

Our world is in chaos!

Our youth are smart enough to recognize that fact, and they desire to do something to dramatically change it. But they do not yet have the answers or the wherewithal to achieve that goal. That frustration has led to the oppression which Isaiah wrote about.

We Shall Yet Be Saved.

What the world does not yet understand is that the Almighty God who created this planet is not going to allow man to destroy himself. When Jesus Christ inspired Matthew to write about the "time of the end" – a time when "iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12) – He guaranteed His intervention in an awesome manner.

"For, then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive]: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (verses 21-22).

That promise is the only hope for this world in which you and I live! That promise is one which will open opportunities unimagined to the youth hungrily seeking strong leadership. That leadership will come through the government of Almighty God!

Christ said the world would enter into a time of tribulation and trial such as has never been experienced before. That means it must necessarily be the most perilous time in man's history; a time when, barring divine intervention, man would literally commit universal cosmoicide. We are living in those general times today!

Time of the End.

For centuries men have been proclaiming the impending doom of the world, but only since the advent of nuclear weapons in 1945 has that doom become an absolutely immediate reality.

The Bible talks about shocking events prophesied to happen in the "time of the end." The good news is that only the governments of man will end. Only the way of life which has led us inexorably to the brink of destruction will be destroyed.

Isaiah 24:21-22 warns: "In that day... the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth," Punishment is coming upon world rulers.

Notice also Isaiah 13:9: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."

The "day of the Lord" is also the "day" or time of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to this earth to set up His world government (see Zechariah 14:1-9).

When Jesus Christ sets His feet on the Mount of Olives and begins to restore His government on this earth, there will be millions of people alive who have survived the prophesied nuclear holocaust – who will eagerly reach out, with tear-stained eyes and hearts filled with gratitude, for instruction in the way of life which will completely turn them around. They will want to be shown how to live, why they were born, and what is their ultimate

destiny.

In the United States alone, more than one half of the population is under 27 years of age, In the rest of the world, the average age is even younger.

The populations of the world are prophesied to be reduced dramatically through war, famine, pestilence and natural disasters just prior to the intervention of God, but there will still be multiple millions of human beings left alive – and most of them will be under twenty-four years old.

Opportunity for Leadership.

Who would be the most logical ones to teach them in the new way of life? Who would be better able to equate with, empathize with, have rapport with than those of their own peer group? Would not peers who understand the same philosophies be better qualified to assist in reeducating the masses?

God offers a fantastic challenge to the youth of today, who recognize the world has gone insane but are unable to change it – now! Rather than vicariously live "leadership" in the heroes of yesterday, or in the limited scope of television productions, God is offering our youth the opportunity to train to become leaders over millions in just a few short years.

Rather than agonize at the "no-answer" society of today – the result of blatantly and flagrantly ignoring living laws designed to insure healthy, happy lives – be one who gives the answers to the eager society in the World Tomorrow!

Are you a teenager or young adult who aches for the opportunity to make right the myriad wrongs you are able to recognize? Do you, if you live in England, anguish at the disintegration of the once awesome British Empire – on which the sun never set? Do you – the youth of France, Australia, Europe, Israel – not fervently desire to discover the answers which will enable all

peoples of the community of earth to be filled and satisfied?

Can you – the youth of productive America, who have shown by your frustrated fruits your total unacceptance of the heritage bequeathed you – continue to lash out in rebellion without accomplishment?

Or does something tell you there is a better way – and that way is available to you right this instant?

God desires that His creation have the good life (III John 2). He has created us for such an ultimate destiny as to literally boggle the mind.

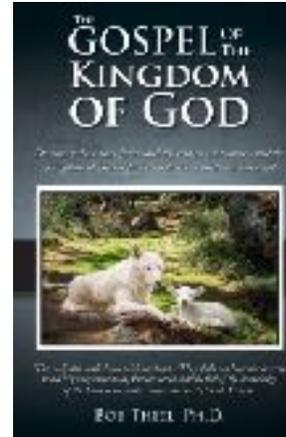
Utopia.

After the coming oppression and holocaust will come a time of total peace and harmony such as the world has never known. A loving God – with the assistance of physical human beings – will reestablish a utopian society on this earth. As the prophet Ezekiel wrote: "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 36:8-11).

And Isaiah 11:9: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Can you imagine a society where there is no hurt, and no one is trying to destroy? Can you visualize – and desire – a society where right government leads nations into the fulfillment of everything God wishes for us?

Verse 6: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."



You – as a little child in this new society – can also be a leader. You can begin today to relieve yourself of all the frustrations and anxieties which surround you in your daily struggle, and begin to prepare to be a strong leader in the government of the World Tomorrow.

God wants you to help humanity!

The 'utopian' society that is coming is the millennial portion of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is needed even more now than when this article was originally written.

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

Lesson 12c: Is God Able to Preserve His Book?



Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief
Published 2017 by the *Continuing*
Church of God

This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Although much of the original writing has been retained, it has been updated for the 21st century and contains 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 King James Version (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.

Note: This particular lesson was so long in the original, it was needful to break it into four pieces as it was longer than two regular-sized editions of this magazine. The next part, 12d, is planned for the next edition of this magazine.

Is God Able to Preserve His Book?

Critics today challenge the accuracy of copies of the Bible in their original Hebrew and Greek languages. Can we be sure that the Bible has not been corrupted? How can we know that it still is the REVELATION of God to man? Has it been so changed and corrupted by myth since the original writing as to be highly doubtful, if not altogether altered?

We must understand the answers to these questions before we can really acknowledge the Bible as the foundation of truth.

Here are the facts:

For years the critics claimed the Hebrew Bible was of no authority. "A late and altered form of earlier Hebrew writings," they claimed!

Then came the year 1947.

In the summer of '47 a sheer coincidence led to the discovery of the oldest manuscripts of the Bible so far known. Among a collection of literary works found in a cave in Wadi Qumran on the north side of the Dead Sea, a 23-foot leather scroll was found to contain the complete text of the book of Isaiah in Hebrew! Expert examination of the document revealed beyond doubt that this Isaiah text dated from about 100 B.C.

This COPY of Isaiah, now about 2000 years old, called the Great Isaiah scroll,

is unique proof of the reliability of the Holy Scriptures that have been handed down to us. The text in all fundamentals AGREES with what we have in our PRESENT-DAY BIBLES! The only differences are minor spelling changes and misplaced words, changes that represent the carelessness of unofficial scribes who copied that text of the book of Isaiah.

In other words, the present Masoretic Hebrew text, which is a continuation of the official Old Testament Hebrew, is far superior in preservation to the unofficial copy of Isaiah made 2000 years ago. Furthermore, we have the wonderful knowledge that the ancient scroll of Isaiah, just like the printed copies of Isaiah in any modern-day Bible, whether Hebrew, Greek, English or German, has the SAME 66 CHAPTERS of our present-day text.

Until this find, the oldest and fullest Manuscript in Hebrew was the Codex Petropolitanus, dating from about 916 A.D. This proves how accurate the Jews have been in copying, generation after generation, the books of the Old Testament. HOW CAN ANYONE DENY THAT GOD IS GIVING DIVINE PROTECTION TO THE BOOK WHICH CONTAINS HIS COMMANDS AND REVELATIONS TO MAN!

Between 1947 and 1955 additional manuscripts were located in other caves near the Dead Sea. In these scrolls were 19 books of the Old Testament - all telling the same story as the Isaiah Manuscript! At least 10 caves with materials were located.

Notice the following that were found in Cave 1 and Cave 2 according to BiblicalArchaeology.org:

Contents found in Cave 1

1Q1: Genesis

1Q2: Exodus

1Q3: Paleo-Leviticus

1Q4: Deuteronomy

1Q5: Deuteronomy

1Q6: Judges

1Q7: Samuel



Great Isaiah Scroll

1QIsa: Isaiah Scroll

1Q8: Isaiah

1Q9: Ezekial

1Q10: Psalms

1Q11: Psalms

1Q12: Psalms

1Q13: Phylactery

1Q14: Peshier Micah



Habakkuk Scroll

1QpHab: Peshet

Habakkuk

1Q15: Peshet Zephaniah

1Q16: Peshet Psalms

Contents found in Cave 2:

2Q1: Genesis

2Q2: Exodus

2Q3: Exodus

2Q4: Exodus

2Q5: Paleo-Leviticus

2Q6: Numbers

2Q7: Numbers

2Q8: Numbers

2Q9: Numbers

2Q10: Deuteronomy

2Q11: Deuteronomy

2Q12: Deuteronomy

2Q13: Jeremiah

2Q14: Psalms

2Q15: Job

2Q16: Ruth

2Q17: Ruth

Who Has Preserved the Bible?

Through whom has God preserved His authoritative written Word accurately?

Jesus said: “till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass

from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). Has this happened? Was Jesus right? Or has the Law - the Old Testament - been hopelessly lost and corrupted?

Luke quotes Jesus as saying: “And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:17). Modern critics assume Jesus was wrong. They think the Old Testament has not been accurately preserved. But they are wrong!

1. Has the Bible been hopelessly corrupted? Can we ever be sure what the words of Jesus really were?
Matthew 24:35, KJV; Mark 13:31, KJV and Luke 21:33, KJV.

COMMENT: What words those! - “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY”!

Jesus' words - the very words recorded by the apostles in the New Testament - shall NOT pass away!

Of course, the MODERN CRITICS prefer to think of Jesus as saying: "Heaven and earth CANNOT pass away, but my words SHALL PASS AWAY!" But these critics are wrong! Jesus is right. His words have not passed away. The critics have merely been unwilling to look for His words where He said they could be found! They have, instead, looked elsewhere so that they WOULD not find Jesus' words.

Notice where we ought to look for the authoritative text of the Old Testament. Read it from the Revised Standard Version which the modern critics have themselves translated: "Then what advantage has the Jew?"

Yes, what special duty did God give to the Jew? Notice:

"Much in every way. To begin with, THE JEWS ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE ORACLES OF GOD. What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every man be false, as it is written, 'That Thou mayest be justified in Thy WORDS ...'" (Romans 3:1-4, RSV).

2. To whom were the ORACLES of God, the written record of God's revelation delivered through Moses and the prophets - the Old Testament - committed? Romans 3:1-2, RSV.

COMMENT: The JEWS have preserved the Old Testament. But what if the Jews did not believe and did not practice the things written in the law, the prophets and the psalms? What if the Jews became divided into Orthodox and other sects? Does their rejection of the truth nullify the faithfulness of the written Word of God which they are required to preserve from generation to generation?

"God forbid," declared the King James Version. "By no means," reiterates the Revised Standard Version.

So the Jews - by the very admission of these critics - HAVE preserved the Old Testament faithfully!

What about the so-called "Deuterocanonical Books"?

While the Bible clearly teaches, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17), apparently the Orthodox (and Roman Catholic) Church apparently believes that the Hebrew Old Testament needed to be corrected and expanded.

As their own literature admits, the Romans finally listed the ones they accepted in one place in 1546 and the Orthodox apparently did not officially finalize their list until about 100 years later!

And they took what Greek-speaking Jews, called Hellenists (as opposed to the Hebrews of Palestine), preferred.

But other writings of these groups admit that it was the Palestinian Christians (those initially based from Jerusalem, and those that would have relied on the canon of the Palestinian Jews)

that kept the faith “in purity” (Eusebius, Church History, Book IV, Chapter 5). Even their saint and doctor Jerome was opposed to putting the deuterocanonical books in the Latin Vulgate Bible, but was pressured to (e.g. Jerome, The Preface on the Book of Judith).

It should be noted that the New Testament makes it clear that the original disciples were Palestinian Hebrews and not from the Hellenists (e.g. Acts 6:1-2). Paul was not a Hellenist either (Acts 9:26-29).

Church of God Bishop/Pastor Melito of Sardis listed the books of the Old Testament (and he seems to be the first one to call it the Old Testament) in the second century and he included the books that we in the Continuing Church of God consider to be part of the Old Testament and he did not include any of the so-called “deuterocanonical books”—and this is admitted by *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

The following is from the *Statement of Beliefs of the Continuing Church of God*:

THE HOLY BIBLE

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God. As commonly divided, it is a collection of 66 books, with 39 from the Hebrew scriptures (The Old Testament Canon) and 27 from the Greek Scriptures (The

New Testament Canon). Scripture is inspired in thought and word and contains knowledge of what is needed for salvation (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Matthew 4:4; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Scripture is truth (John 17:17) and is infallible and inerrant in its original manuscripts (John 10:35).

We in the *Continuing Church of God* are following the Apostle Jude’s admonition “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The Roman and Eastern Orthodox churches clearly are NOT doing this as they adopted books that their early leaders knew were not part of the true canon.

The 39 books that are in the Old Testaments that those in the COGs and Protestant Churches use are the correct books of the Old Testament. Only the antinomian Justin Martyr, and those that supported some of his heresies or the heresies of others, claimed that the Christian Church would use different books than the Palestinian Jews. And, of course, those in the true Church of God (as well as most Protestants), never accepted this.

Now consider the New Testament. It was offered first to the Jews. But the Jews rejected the New Testament - refused even to accept its Author. What did God, in His wise foreknowledge, do? He revealed His New Testament message to the Gentiles and especially the Greeks for a very great purpose.

Perhaps it should be added that there is a passage in the Old Testament that predicts a New Testament as it shows that the disciples would essentially finalize the Bible. Notice:

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

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

Their successors like Polycarp of Smyrna, later quoted or referred to books of the New Testament that we in the *Continuing Church of God* use (as do the Greco-Roman-Protestants).

Some Critics Reject Some or Many of the Greek Texts

Now let us see what has happened. We find that some modern critics refuse to accept the valid manuscripts which the Greeks have preserved! They have done the same with the true text of the Old Testament! **OVER 95% OF ALL NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS HAVE BEEN PRESERVED IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE.**

These were the manuscripts basically

used in the King James Version and the New King James Version, and certain other translators.

Some critics in their OWN wisdom, turn away from these in their Revised Standard Version to the corrupted 5% of Greek copies found in Egypt and the Latin world. These spurious manuscripts originated under Samaritan, Egyptian and Roman influence at the hands of the conspirators who secretly followed Simon Magus (see Acts 8). They wanted to decide for themselves how the Bible should read.

Some critics claim, in their pompous wisdom, that out of these contradictory and corrupted manuscripts - no two of which agree closely on many important verses - they can derive a New Testament text! All they have done is discover how the Greek New Testament had been corrupted in Egypt and Rome by the conspirators out of Samaria who followed Simon Magus. It is time we "come out of Egypt!" How many times God has had to call His people out of Egypt! And still, like the children of Israel, people want to "turn back again into Egypt" (Acts 7:39, KJV).

SOME CRITICS ARE MERELY FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE EARLY CONSPIRATORS, like the "Church Father" Origen, who tried to "correct" the New Testament in their OWN "wisdom."

Other critics claim that the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Usually, those who insist on this do so because they believe that 'sacred names' are important as

pretty much all of the 'sacred name' arguments are nullified if the New Testament was written in Greek. Linguistic scholars who have studied the Greek writings of the New Testament have basically concluded that they do NOT show the type of signs that a translation would have, thus the New Testament was originally written in Greek (though some notes probably came from Hebrew and/or Aramaic.

Translation Issues

For centuries, during the Middle Ages, the only Bible mainly accessible to Western Europe was the Latin Vulgate Bible. It was originally the work of the scholar Jerome, who prepared it for the Church of Rome.

1. What is modern Babylon - Rome called? Revelation 17:5.

COMMENT: Rome has preserved the Latin translation of the Bible. Italy is not the homeland of the inspired Greek New Testament.

Jerome attested to the corruption of the Latin translations of his day. Notice what Jerome reveals:

"If we are to glean the truth," Jerome said, "from a comparison of many, why not go back to the original Greek and CORRECT THE MISTAKES introduced by INACCURATE TRANSLATORS, and the BLUNDERING ALTERATIONS of confident but ignorant critics, ... all that has BEEN INSERTED OR CHANGED by copyists" in the Latin

(Jerome, "Vulgate Preface", Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6).

For nearly 14 centuries the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible dominated the Western World. IN A FEW INSTANCES SOME GREEK NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS CONTAINED ADDITIONS FROM THE LATIN VULGATE WHICH THESE SCHOLARS TRANSLATED INTO GREEK. A striking example is 1 John 5:7 which occurs in no early Greek manuscript. Nor was it in the original Latin Vulgate.

Now lest any Catholics have a different view, although the CHANGED version of the *Latin Vulgate* contains a version of this, the *Codex*

Amiatinus (Codex Amiatinus. Novum Testamentum Latine interpreter Hieronymo. Epistula Iohannis I V:6-8. Constantinus Tischendorf, Lipsiae. 1854), which is believed to be the closest to the original document that Jerome originally translated, also does not have this as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states

Codex Amiatinus The most celebrated manuscript of the Latin Vulgate Bible, remarkable as the best witness to the true text of St.

Jerome... (Fenlon, John Francis. "Codex Amiatinus." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 4. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. 21 Apr. 2012 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04081a.htm>>)

Note: Yes, I personally read the Latin in

the *Codex Amiatinus* and compared it to the changed version and more modern version of the Latin Vulgate which differs from the early version in that the modern version adds "*in caelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus. Et hi tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra:*" (Latin Vulgate.com).

Furthermore, "*Verse 7 is nonexistent in the Eastern Peschitta*" (Roth AG, Daniel BB. Aramaic English New Testament, 5th edition. Netazari Press, 2012, p. 658)--in other words, it is also not in the primary Aramaic version of the New Testament.

So when did the extra statement get put in? Notice what seems probably to be the most accepted view:

the earliest manuscript, codex 221

(10th century), includes the reading in a marginal note which was added

sometime after the original composition. Thus, there is no sure evidence of this reading in any Greek manuscript until the 1500s; each such

reading was apparently composed after Erasmus' Greek NT was published in 1516. Indeed, the reading appears in no Greek witness of any kind (either manuscript, patristic, or Greek translation of some other version) until AD 1215 (in a

Greek translation of the Acts of the Lateran Council, a work originally written in Latin)...

The Trinitarian formula (known as the *Comma Johanneum*) made its way into the third edition of Erasmus' Greek NT (1522) because of pressure from the Catholic Church. After his first edition appeared (1516), there arose such a furor over the absence of the *Comma* that Erasmus needed to defend himself. He argued that he did not put in the *Comma* because he found no Greek manuscripts that included it...

In reality, the issue is history, not heresy: How can one argue that the *Comma Johanneum* must go back to the original text when it did not appear until the 16th century in any Greek manuscripts? (Wallace DB, professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. The Textual Problem in 1 John 5:7-8. <http://bible.org/article/textual-problem-1-john-57-8> viewed 04/21/12)

Basically, what seems to have happened is that a monk put a personal note related to his interpretation of the 'three' mentioned in the first part of 1 John 5:7. One or more scribal monks after him, inserted his note actually in the text. It was NOT inspired by God.

The Protestant and Catholic Bibles that have the added words are relying on very late documents that were not considered to be original. Some, of course, have ignored the truth about the

origin of 1 John 5:7-8 and wish to believe that because early heretics seem to have possibly referred to it (one popular online source falsely claims that Tertullian, who followed the heretic Montanus, quoted the omitted words in *Against Praxeas*--this is not true as I have read that writing).

The Greek texts of the early Reformation printers were vastly superior to the Latin versions previously circulated. From these Greek texts the early English translations came including the renowned King James Version of 1611 VERY FEW BASIC ERRORS APPEAR IN THE KING JAMES VERSION - though it is by no means a perfect or clear translation.

But the work of the early printers was not continued. Critics - English and German - gradually ceased to search out the official Greek text preserved in various parts of Greece, PARTICULARLY IN MOUNT ATHOS where the bulk of New Testament manuscripts are still located. Instead, they have turned away from the bulk of these accurate New Testament manuscripts of Greece to the corrupted texts of Rome and especially Egypt! These faulty texts have been used for many translations of the Bible over the decades-- and especially in the Revised Standard Version and the New English Translation. There are also more recent 'translations' which do not attempt to literally translate the biblical texts into English, but instead provide a 'paraphrased' translation. While paraphrases can sometimes help with conceptual understanding, they are generally not reliable enough when it comes to certain points of doctrine.

It should also be noted that the current Latin Vulgate that many use is the Challoner version--and that is NOT the same as the version that Jerome wrote. Jerome's account makes it clear that Hebrews 4:9, for example, is referring to the need for Christians to keep the seventh-day, whereas the changed Challoner version does not.

An Often-overlooked Principle

Do you realize that God sets the pattern for translations in His own Word?

Few have recognized it, but the Bible gives us the principles of translation in the New Testament especially. Let us see how:

1. First, turn to the Ten Commandments which God Himself uttered and wrote. They are recorded in Exodus 20. Notice the command against adultery in Exodus 20:14, KJV: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Now turn to Deuteronomy, the fifth chapter. Forty years had elapsed since God uttered the Ten Commandments. Moses is now repeating the Law of God, under inspiration, to the people. How is Moses inspired to WORD this command? Verse 18, KJV. Write both scriptures down for comparison.

COMMENT: DO YOU notice it? THE WORDING IS DIFFERENT, BUT THE MEANING IS THE SAME! The meaning would not have been the same, however, if Moses had said:

"Thou shalt not commit adultery unless your mate is unfaithful"!

Here we have proof in scripture itself that it is not wrong to use different words, provided the MEANING IS not corrupted. That is one reason for slight changes in both Hebrew and Greek originals - changes which make the meaning equally CLEAR!

2. Now let us turn quickly to the NEW TESTAMENT for an example. How DID JESUS HIMSELF REWORD THE ORIGINAL INSPIRED HEBREW TEXT, BUT RETAIN THE SAME MEANING? Write in full the contrasting verses of Mark 7:6-7 and Isaiah 29:13.

COMMENT: Once again the inspired wording is different, but the MEANING remains identical. Jesus did not translate the Hebrew word for word, yet His meaning is the same. That is why you find the various writers of the Bible - particularly the gospel writers - expressing the same thoughts in different words.

The Bible is God's Revelation for man, delivered through inspired men for mankind to preserve INTELLIGIBLY!

Yet another example is worth our consideration. Open your Bibles to Romans 3:10-12 and compare these verses with Psalm 14:1-3. Write them down. Here again the meaning is not lost although different words are freely used.

No Translation Inspired

Apart from Hebrew translations into the Greek in the New Testament, there are no perfect translations. Many people, it seems, come to cherish one particular translation so much that they assume it must be inspired and without error. Every translation has its FLAWS, its provable mistranslations, and its misinterpretations. These faults are due to the fact that God has never used scholarly translators as inspired translators since the days of the apostles.

Here are two fundamental reasons for flaws which you need to remember about translations into any language from the original:

(1) SCHOLARS ARE NOT ALWAYS PERFECT IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORIGINAL TONGUES and (2) most scholars and ministers on translation committees DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF GOD. They have been taught that Scripture does not mean QUITE what it says. Hence they interpret and translate the Bible according to their OWN VIEWPOINT. INCORRECT MEANINGS ARE READ INTO the inspired original.

Nevertheless, EVERY VERSION IS ACCURATE ENOUGH to be a reasonably faithful rendering of the Word of God.

The skeptic will ask, of course, about the many doubtful readings especially those which have been put into the FOOTNOTES of the Revised Standard

Version. The facts are that many INSPIRED verses have been put incorrectly into the footnotes of this version because the scholars who worked on this version followed the ancient Egyptian scribes and copyists who overlooked or carelessly left out these phrases and even whole sentences in the copies they were reproducing. This is the one great weakness of this version. But it remains a fact that 95% of the manuscripts are preserved by the Greeks and retain every one of the deleted sections! The deletions are preserved in the King James Version and often in the American and English Revised Versions.

Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53 through 8:11, which are put in the footnotes in the Revised Standard Version, ought to be in the text. Read these verses carefully. Also Matthew 27:49 ought to have added to it: "And another took a spear and pierced His side, and out came water and blood." This is left out of both the King James and the Revised Standard Versions. It is in the Moffatt Translation and in the original inspired Greek.

There is insufficient space in this lesson to proceed further, but these illustrations give us some indication of the OVERWHELMING ACCURACY of both Old and New Testaments. No other written work has ever been preserved as accurately as the Bible - and the marvel is that it has been preserved primarily by its enemies, those who do not really believe what the Bible says! The enemies of Christ have been made responsible for preserving the Book that is a witness against them!

Do We Have ALL the Bible?

One final question should be answered with regard to the preservation of Scripture. Do we have ALL the Bible?

The testimony of history itself is that NONE of the Old Testament has been lost since the days of Christ. For nearly two thousand years, through persecution and war, the Jews have PRESERVED THE OLD TESTAMENT EXACTLY as God intended! The same books composing the Bible in Jesus' day are used today in the synagogues and in the churches.

But what about the Catholics having seven more books (the Apocrypha) added to the Old Testament than do the Jews and Protestants? Are these added books part of the Bible - or are they spurious?

The official authority of God for the Old Testament was vested in the Priesthood and the officially appointed Scribes in Palestine (Matthew 23:2). This Priesthood never accepted the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha are uninspired books written by unconverted men. These books contain definite errors, plus a measure of truth - just as all HUMAN books do. The apostles never quoted from the Apocrypha. They never referred to these seven added books as inspired. Even the Catholic Church did not accept them until about 398 A.D., at the Council of Carthage 300 years after the Bible was completed in the days of the apostle John!

The Greek Bibles used by the inspired New Testament Church under the

guidance of the apostles did not contain the Apocrypha. These uninspired books apparently were not added until after 315 A.D. according to the admission of the Catholic bishop Cyril of Jerusalem. Here is proof that THE APOCRYPHA WAS NEVER APPROVED BY CHRIST OR THE APOSTLES. The Bible WAS COMPLETED in the days of the apostles!

Now, while many believe that because of the *Latin Vulgate Bible* by Jerome, that the Catholic Church gave the world the Bible, those who espouse that view overlook the question of where Jerome got parts of his information.

Based on records in Latin and other languages, Scholars Ray Pritz and the Catholic Priest Bagatti both concluded that Jerome got some of his information on the Bible from the Nazarene Christians and from various synagogues (Pritz, pp. 49-53; Bagatti, Bellarmino. *The Church from the Circumcision*. Nihil obstat: Marcus Adinolfi, 13 Maii 1970. Imprimi potest: Herminius Roncari, 14 Junii 1970. Imprimatur: +Albertus Gori, die 26 Junii 1970. Franciscan Printing Press, Jerusalem, 1971, pp. 84-85).

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

Ad quam edomandam, cuidam frati, que ex Hebræis crediderat,

me in disciplin dei, ut post Quintiliani acumina, ciceronis fluvios... (Jerome, *Epistula CXXV*, Chapter 12. *Patrologia Latina* (22, 1079; alternatively, 22, 941; J. P. Migne, c. 1886, p. 1079)

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

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

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

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

Taking this a step further, even those who later compromised in Asia Minor apparently recognized that they knew of the complete canon and thus they (and

probably others) influenced the Church of Rome.

Therefore, since the true Church of God in Asia Minor originally had the New Testament canon (as the last books of the New Testament were written in Asia Minor and not Rome), it should be realized that the New Testament canon was originally finalized in Asia Minor and then basically later accepted by Rome. And, the Roman Catholic Church knows its leaders had concerns about these books for centuries:

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT DURING THE FOURTH, AND FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH, CENTURY

In this period the position of the deuterocanonical literature is no longer as secure...Alexandria, with its elastic Scriptures, had from the beginning been a congenial field for apocryphal literature, and St. Athanasius, the vigilant pastor of that flock, to protect it against the pernicious influence, drew up a catalogue of books with the values to be attached to each. First, the strict canon and authoritative source of truth is the Jewish Old Testament, Esther excepted...Following the precedent of Origen and the Alexandrian tradition, the saintly doctor recognized no other formal canon of the Old Testament than the Hebrew one; but also, faithful to the same tradition, he practically admitted the deuterocanonical books to a Scriptural dignity, as is evident from his general usage...

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTH TO THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

This period exhibits a curious exchange of opinions between the West and the East, while ecclesiastical usage remained unchanged, at least in the Latin Church. During this intermediate age the use of St. Jerome's new version of the Old Testament (the Vulgate) became widespread in the Occident. With its text went Jerome's prefaces disparaging the deuterocanonicals, and under the influence of his authority the West began to distrust these and to show the first symptoms of a current hostile to their canonicity...

The Latin Church

In the Latin Church, all through the Middle Ages we find evidence of hesitation about the character of the deuterocanonicals. (Reid, Canon of the Old Testament. The Catholic Encyclopedia).

Also notice that even Athanasius in the fourth century really did not consider that the deuterocanonical books were actually scripture, and that Jerome in the fifth century made disparaging comments about them. And even into the Middle Ages, the RCC was not sure if the deuterocanonical books were on a par with scripture!

Thus, while the many of the Greco-Roman churches knew which were and were not the true books at least as late as the fourth and fifth centuries.

Additional books somehow came to be accepted by them, there were NOT part of the original faith, which true Christians are to earnestly contend for (Jude 3).

So when were these books actually adopted?

The Catholic Encyclopedia also states:

The protocanonical books of the Old Testament correspond with those of the Bible of the Hebrews, and the Old Testament as received by Protestants. The deutero-canonical (*deuteros*, "second") are those whose Scriptural character was contested in some quarters, but which long ago gained a secure footing in the Bible of the Catholic Church, though those of the Old Testament are classed by Protestants as the "Apocrypha". These consist of seven books: Tobias (Tobit), Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, I and II Machabees, and three documents added to protocanonical books, viz., the supplement to Esther, from x, 4, to the end, the Canticle of the Three Youths (Song of the Three Children) in Daniel, iii, and the stories of Susanna and the Elders and Bel and the Dragon, forming the closing chapters of the Catholic version of that book...The ancient Greek Old Testament known as the Septuagint was the vehicle which conveyed these additional Scriptures into the Catholic Church. The Septuagint version

was the Bible of the Greek-speaking, or Hellenist, Jews, whose intellectual and literary centre was Alexandria (see SEPTUAGINT). The oldest extant copies date from the fourth and fifth centuries of our era...The most explicit definition of the Catholic Canon is that given by the Council of Trent, Session IV, 1546...The order of books copies that of the Council of Florence, 1442, and in its general plan is that of the Septuagint (Reid, Old Testament Canon).

Thus, it took until 1546 for these books to be completely adopted by the Roman Catholic Church.

But why then?

Here is the view of one writer:

There is a mistaken belief among some that the Apocrypha books were part of the Bible, and that these were rejected by the Protestant Reformers. On the contrary, the Apocrypha books were never a part of the Old Testament Canon. Thus there is no question of the Reformers dropping out some books from the Canon. Rather, it is the Roman Catholic Church which ADDED these books to the Canon by a proclamation made at the Council of Trent...

With the Protestant Reformation, many of the Reformers challenged the Catholic church to prove their doctrine by supporting these from

the Canon. To their dismay the Roman Catholics discovered that many of their doctrines are not derived from the Canon. At the same time they realized that at least some of these erroneous doctrines are supported by the Apocrypha. Thus for their survival it became necessary to add the Apocrypha to the Canon.

In 1545 the Roman Catholic Church convened what is called the Council Of Trent. Here they passed numerous resolutions, including many curses against the Protestant Believers. In April 1545 the Council declared that the Apocrypha are also part of the Bible. Thus for the first time in history the Apocrypha books were ADDED by the Roman Catholic church to the Bible. This was done in order to justify their doctrinal errors (for which support was available only in the Apocrypha), and also to oppose the Protestant believers. The first Vatican Council held 1869-70 reaffirmed the decision of the Roman Catholic Church to add the Apocrypha to the Canon. Historically and theologically the Apocrypha was never part of the Canon (Philip Johnson C. Reliability Of The Canon. Indus School of Apologetics and Theology Textbook No -004A1, version used in 2006).

The Roman Catholics were not the only ones to adopt those so-called deuterocanonical books. The Orthodox Church did as well. However, their

scholars admit that they are not on the same level as the other books they consider to be scripture:

The Orthodox Church...as...its authoritative text for the Old Testament, it uses the ancient Greek Septuagint. When this differs from the original Hebrew (which happens quite often), Orthodox believe that the changes in the Septuagint were made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are to be accepted as part of God's continuing revelation...The Hebrew version of the Old Testament contains thirty-nine books. The Septuagint contains in addition ten further books not present in the Hebrew, which are known in the Orthodox Church as the 'Deutero-Canonical Books'. These were declared by the Councils of Jassy (1641) and Jerusalem (1672) to be 'genuine parts of Scripture'; most Orthodox scholars...consider that the Deutero-Canonical Books, although part of the Bible, stand at a lower footing than the rest of scripture (Ware T. The Orthodox Church, p.200).

<http://www.cogwriter.com/otcanon.htm>)

The same may be said of the so-called "Lost Books of the Bible." These books were never lost because they were NEVER A PART OF THE BIBLE. They are outright FRAUDS! They are spurious - un-inspired - and full of errors!

Some, will point to the so-called Book of Enoch. They will point out a reference

to something Enoch said that is in Jude 14 which is also in the Book of Enoch. Well, Enoch could not have written more than perhaps part of the first chapter of that book (if he wrote anything at all). The Book of Enoch contains absurd claims such as, “these giants were about 11,000 feet tall or a little over 3 kilometers high!” It was never part of the Bible. There are also absurd statements in many other ‘lost books.’ Also, the book called 2 Enoch is believed to not have been written until after Jesus was born.

But what about the New Testament? Is it complete? Here again the testimony is the same - **THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS BEEN PRESERVED EXACTLY!** The early Greeks recognized no other New Testament books than we have today. No New Testament book has been lost.

Some erroneously believe that it was the Church of Rome that prevented the ‘Gnostic gospels’ and other non-canonical books to be part of the New Testament for reasons of power and control. Well, nearly all of the Gnostic accounts were not written until the second century, and normally with names of apostles falsely claimed to be their writers. While we have evidence that the false Gospel of Peter was accepted as legitimate by the churches of Rome and Alexander, we see that it was a Church of God leader, named Serapion of Antioch, that denounced that book in the early 3rd century. Hence, there was definitely Church of God influence for the Greco-Romans to not accept other books that should not have been part of the New Testament.

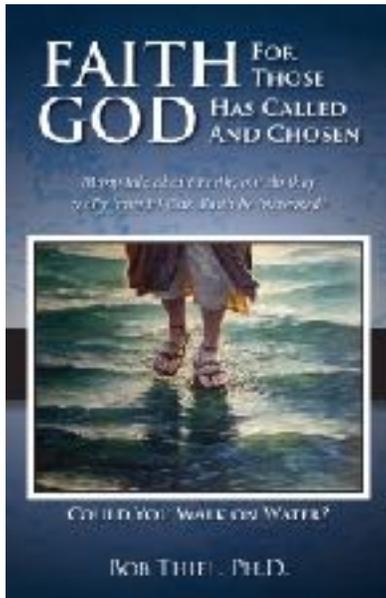
The word of God was not destroyed and the Bible we accept in the *Continuing* Church of God with its 66 books, is correct and proper.

If you want an illustration of God's intervention to preserve His Word, turn to Jeremiah 36, beginning with verse 23. King Jehoiakim had an entire scroll of the Word of God cut with a penknife and consumed by a fire. Certainly burning the only copy of the Word of God would destroy it if anything would! - he thought. (Write down these verses.)

But what happened? Did it perish forever? No! Read the account in Jeremiah 36:32.

You can depend on the Bible. **IT IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD IN PRINT!** It carries absolute authority.

Here's How You Can - Conquer Every Obstacle!



By Clint Zimmerman

This article was originally published in the Tomorrow's World magazine in November 1969 by the old Worldwide Church of God and is believed to be in the public domain.

JOSHUA and Caleb were willing to take to the field and battle it out with the fierce, giant inhabitants of the promised land. Even though towering giants stood between them and possession of the land, they did not cower in fear.

Where did they get such courage?

Years later that same land was invaded and threatened by a huge host of Philistines. But the stripling youth, David, challenged, fought and killed the most fearsome warrior of the day. And the Philistine armies fled back across the border.

Why? Where did David get such all-conquering power?

Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Samuel and the other prophets, were able to repel invading armies, close the very mouths of

lions, put out furious fires that threatened to burn them alive, and escape what seemed to be imminent death time after time. They found the strength to overcome their every weakness. Some of them nearly single-handedly put huge foreign armies to flight.

How did they do it?

The BIG Picture

The basic reason they succeeded, and you have often failed, may be quite simple – once you see it clearly. All these men had the BIG PICTURE, and BELIEVED in it! They saw the KINGDOM OF GOD. They had vision and proper perspective. They responded valiantly and moved forward to secure the Kingdom.

All these men had deep and abiding BELIEF, and through it dutifully served their God and nation. They knew the Kingdom God had promised Israel was REAL and worth any effort or price. They had the BIG PICTURE and so they did everything possible to establish the KINGDOM.

However – if you have not seen the big picture and the REALITY of the Kingdom of God, that may explain why you have not overcome problems and have found yourself coming up short.

Disobedience and Disaster

Now let's look at the other side of the picture.

Wherever Israelites failed to believe God, lost sight of the goal and disobeyed, they began to die like so many bugs. They died because they rebelliously stiffened their necks. They set their wills to a wrong end. They lost sight of the big picture. They started in pursuit of their own goals. The Kingdom was forgotten.

Some of them died naturally. But usually their deaths were gruesome and frightful. They died swollen, suffering, screaming because of venomous snake bites. They died

in battle gasping out their last breath through bubbles of their own blood. They suffocated under the crushing, juice-sputtering weight of the earth as it swallowed them in earthquakes.

God provided a physical kingdom for Israel so they could have the happiness, safety, satisfaction, and success for which they had so feverishly longed during their slavery in Egypt. God promised them every physical blessing if only they would move to the land He had chosen and accept His government. All they needed to do was believe God and see the reality of the plan He was working out in their behalf. Joshua and Caleb saw the plan in reality. They comprehended it. They really BELIEVED it!

Those Israelites who BELIEVED GOD were able to overcome all of the obstacles and trials which beset them during that 40 years of miserable wandering on the Sinai Peninsula. They moved steadily toward the goal. Nothing stopped them! Continuously they looked toward the promises which had been given them. Nothing took their eyes from the Kingdom. And so they won! They were rewarded!

They received and had the power to make the trip and obtain their inheritance simply because they believed in the Kingdom God had promised.

Promise of Power

When you and I come to realize the plan of God – when we SEE the Kingdom, then we, too, can make it! Look at what Paul says in Romans 1:16, "... THE GOSPEL... IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH."

Christ's entire ministry was centered around and concerned with preaching the GOSPEL. He said we must BELIEVE this good news (Mark 1:15). Let's comprehend how awesomely powerful is BELIEF in this Gospel.

The Gospel, as you know, is Good News of the Kingdom which God soon is going to set

up. Those who BELIEVE in this Kingdom are going to be saved! But we must give due CREDIT to the promise. We must have an utmost mental PERSUASION that the goal is there and can be reached. The plan of God must become real REALITY to us! We must view the Kingdom as if it already were! We must KNOW that we know about the Kingdom of God. We must be caught up in the pursuit of the Kingdom.

You and I must come to yearn, crave, long for, yes, burn and ache for the Kingdom!

The goal – the Kingdom – must become the very reason for our existence!

As we see the grand magnificence of it, our very being will be changed. We will become motivated with the accomplishment of God's plan. We will be entirely enthusiastic about doing the Work of God.

We can't do this without believing it.

Bigness of Belief

The word "believe" is a BIG, STRONG word. It means to have FAITH, conviction, confidence, TRUST, to be persuaded, to be CERTAIN!

In defining the Greek word which is translated "belief," the staid Thayer's Lexicon uses such pithy and impressive phrases as this:

"Holy FERVOR born of FAITH and conjoined with it.

"CONVICTION that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things, the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ.

"Strong and WELCOME conviction.

"Conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and higher prerogative."

Maybe you haven't yet seen and comprehended and realized the depths to which the faith of God plumbs!

Faith and belief are not little words that nibble weakly on the edge of hazy notion or fantasy. They are not concerned with superficial opinion. They are not acquainted with dainty sentiment. They have no double meaning or supposition. They leave no room for theory or mere impression.

Faith and belief in the Kingdom encompass all that mind, intelligence, thought can muster and contain or explain about this most important concept.

These words crash thunderously, unstoppably to the very root-tips of all thought concerning the promises of God.

They unabashedly, unequivocally gather all reason and purpose concerning certainty, reliability and positive persuasion and they simply must result in action!

When you say, "I believe the Gospel of the Kingdom" you go to the very heart and core, the very bottom of the reason for being. Belief is of God and has the very certainty of "I AM THAT I AM!"

Faith leaves no room for equivocation, vacillation, variance or doubt.

Faith is the substance of things not yet seen.

Faith already sees God as He is. Faith will force us to respond as Christ did! — as God does!

Be Like Christ!

In the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul perfectly describes the attitude which we must have:

"So by whatever appeal there is in our relation to Christ, by whatever

incentive there is in love, by whatever participation there is in the Spirit, whatever affection and sympathy, make me perfectly happy by living in harmony, with the same attitude of love, with the same feeling and purpose. Do not act for selfish ends or from vanity, but modestly treat one another as your superiors. Do not take account of your own interests, BUT OF THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS as well. Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he possessed the nature of God, he did not grasp at equality with God, but laid it aside to take on the nature of a slave and become like other men. When he had assumed human form, he still further humbled himself and carried his obedience so far as to die, and to die upon the cross. That is WHY God has so greatly exalted him and given him the name above all others, so that in the name of Jesus everyone should kneel; in heaven and on earth and in the underworld, and everyone should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, and thus glorify God the Father... For it is God who in his good will is at work in your hearts, INSPIRING YOUR WILL AND YOUR ACTION....

"Brothers, I do not consider that I have captured it yet, only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal, for the prize to which God through Christ Jesus calls us upward. Let as many of us therefore as are mature have this

attitude. If you have any different attitude, God will make this clear to you. Only we must live up to what we have already attained.

"Follow my example, brothers, all of you, and notice those who follow the pattern we have set you. For there are many who live, as I have often

told you, and tell you now with tears, like enemies of the cross of Christ. They are doomed to destruction: Their appetites are their god; they glory in their shame; they are absorbed in earthly matters. But the commonwealth to which we belong is in heaven, and from it we are eagerly awaiting the coming of a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will make our poor bodies over to resemble his glorious body, by exerting the power he has to subject everything to himself" (Philip. 2:1-11, 13; 3:13-21 – Goodspeed translation).

Christ demonstrated and proved His great love for humanity when He willingly left the very throne of God and His high position in order to become a mere man. He was willing to die – and because He was willing to die – He was again made very God. He returned to the Kingdom, which He so easily left because mankind needed help. He saw the big picture. He saw that in the end all mankind could be in the Kingdom. All of us who repent and believe in the Gospel can be kings and priests with Him as very God.

He took the opportunity to preach the Gospel to the world in order that all of suffering humanity could have the peace and security which Godship provides.

Help Others

You and I can have the sound mind of God and can view the whole panorama of human history and the world today just like Jesus Christ. We can see the importance of saving humanity. We can see the good that will come out of the salvation which God extends. We can see the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control from which men can benefit if they will only follow Jesus.

If we have the big picture we will want all men to participate in this indescribably magnificent wonderfulness. But we must see the end of the matter. We must know that it

really can happen. We must realize that it WILL happen.

Understand that we are not just to obtain something for ourselves. We have been drafted to help and teach others. We are engaged in the working out of God's plan. We have the same goal as Christ. We think like Christ. We want to give all goodness to all mankind.

Read John 14:12-28; 16:7-11 to see what Christ had to say about this. FORGET YOURSELF! The point is, we must become thoroughly involved in the Work that Christ has started! We have been given an understanding of what the truth is. We know what the end of the matter is. We know that the Kingdom is the really important thing. Like Caleb, Joshua, Gideon, David, and all the prophets, we must do all possible to finish the Work of Christ and assist in setting up His Kingdom.

In the letter to the Colossians Paul says, "If, then, you have been raised to life with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are where Christ is, above, seated at God's right hand. For you have died, and your life now lies hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our true life, shall make his appearance, then you also will appear glorified with him.

"So treat as dead your physical nature, as far as immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed are concerned; for it is really idolatry. It is on account of these things that God's anger is coming. And you once practiced them as others do, when you lived that old earthly life. But NOW YOU TOO MUST PUT THEM ALL ASIDE" (Col. 3:1-8 – Goodspeed translation).

Christ's Power

Christ had the power to subdue His human nature and do the will of God because He saw the big picture. It was real to Him and He died in order that it could be real for us. When we comprehend the reality, then we

will be motivated, just as Christ was, to do all that needs doing. We will be able to subdue our nature. We will be able to overcome the lusts of our flesh. We will be able to give our bodies and our lives that the rest of humanity may have the benefit of God's Kingdom.

Out of necessity we will be willing to suffer, to resist the sin in our natural inclinations. Yes, our senses will become wearied; we'll crave things which we ought not. We will be pained, even outraged, in one way or another. But we can ride over the natural inclinations to give up, to quit, to forsake the job which we have been given to do.

Do you see the vision? Do you grasp the Big Picture? This is how you can have the power to conquer every obstacle in the Christian path. This is the way you can really BELIEVE, and see the REALITY of the coming Kingdom of God.

Just like dauntless Joshua and Caleb who did not fear the hulking giants in the promised land. Just like David and the other mighty and valiant men of old who faced grave and deadly dangers without flinching, despairing or losing hope and courage. Just like Jesus Christ who gave His all, in the face of the most paralyzing dangers and persecution, to bring this Big Picture – the goal of the Kingdom of God – to each one of us.

You too can OVERCOME every tendency to slide into sin and cave in to your weaknesses. This is the way you can receive real spiritual POWER through the Holy Spirit of God to resist the flesh and bring it into subjection. Trials and problems, difficulties which used to overpower you and lead you as a cringing slave into sin, will no longer hold you fast in darkest captivity to the flesh.

Remember this lesson of the Bible and the wonderful examples recorded there for you. Keep these examples uppermost in your mind. Like these men of old – dedicate your being to doing all you personally can to bring SOON the Kingdom of God to the earth! Let Jesus Christ live His life fully, wonderfully, in you. Get the BIG PICTURE!

If we have the Spirit of God to empower us, we can have the big picture. We will bring our bodies and minds into captivity and make them do what needs doing. If the Kingdom is actually real to us, if God is true and the reward as great as we say we believe, we will be motivated as Christ was and then we CANNOT FAIL – WE WILL WIN!

Editor-in-Chief: I heard Clint Zimmerman speak many times in the old Worldwide Church of God. More on faith can be found in our free booklet, Faith for Those God has Called and Chosen, available at www.ccog.org.

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



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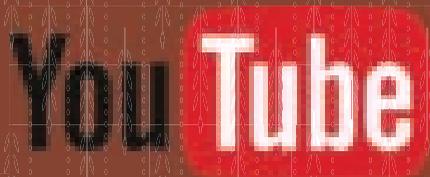
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