

Christian Prosperity & the Covenants of Promise

1.

Under the Moab covenant, Moses commanded Israel to choose life and blessing (Deut 30:15) ... does one come without the other? Can an Israelite choose life and not be blessed? What about the *prosperity gospel*? Can it be believed? What about seed, time and harvest? Or receiving more than you have left to be a Christian? What about tithing? Is it commanded in the new covenant? Must Christians tithe? Or was tithing nailed to the Cross? Will God open the windows of heaven to tithe-payers? What about 2nd-tithes, or 3rd-tithes? Are they required? Is there a connection between spirituality and material prosperity? Does the possession of "things" reflect a drawn disciple's state of righteousness? How do Christians go about storing up treasure in heaven? What type of a savings account can they open? And is there any connection between material wealth and treasure in heaven?

The answers to these questions will strain every bit of faith the Christian has, for the easy answers aren't answers at all.

Paul wrote of saints at Ephesus, "Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called 'the uncircumcision' by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (2:11–12) ... these Gentiles cannot be brought near to what has been abolished (vv. 13–15). They cannot be brought near God if there were no more God; they cannot be brought near covenants of promise if there were no more covenants of promise; they cannot be brought near the commonwealth of Israel if there were no more commonwealth or no more Israel. So the covenants of promise found in the Law of Moses remain binding on Israel, now a nation circumcised of heart (Rom 2:28–29). And if Gentiles have been brought near covenants of promise through being included in the commonwealth circumcised of heart, they need to know what these covenants are.

When I was baptized into the Body of Christ three-plus decades ago, I became part of what was then regarded as a fringe cult. Indeed, the former Worldwide Church of God had many cult-like characteristics that have since manifested themselves into the deification of a man in the same manner as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, George Fox and other men have had their biblical teachings deified. Each of the men was a reformer whose reforms fell short of purifying the Bride of Christ. Additional purification was required as spiritual Israel escaped from spiritual Babylon, the single kingdom of this world.

When Israel was a nation circumcised in the flesh, God delivered first the house of Israel [the northern kingdom of Samaria] into the hand of Assyria (ca 721 BCE), then the house of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (ca 606 BCE). The king of Babylon set up a puppet government in

Jerusalem, but Jerusalem soon sent emissaries to Egypt to make an alliance with Babylon's enemy. Nebuchadnezzar sent his army back to Judea, sacked Jerusalem, and took all but the very poorest of Israel captive, taking the residents of the polis of Jerusalem to Babylon as the prophet Jeremiah had prophesied.

Israel would not again be a free people until the Maccabean rebellion against the Seleucid Empire and Antiochus Epiphanes IV—and this history of the physically circumcised nation is the shadow and copy of the history of the spiritually circumcised nation of Israel that God delivered into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon (Isa 14:4), the prince of this world, at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE). Conciliar Christendom is the spiritual reality of natural Israel in Babylon. And as most of Israel, when seventy years passed, chose to remain in Babylon where business could be easily conducted and houses had been built and the customs of the people are familiar, Christendom, with the exception of the Anabaptists, has chosen to remain in this world as a functioning and governing part of this world and as such as servants to the prince of this world.

Reform is about walking away from Babylon, with each step taking the circumcised Israelite, physical or spiritual, a little closer to heavenly Jerusalem, the city that is the Bride of Christ. Reform was not completed in the 16th-Century under the Radicals [Anabaptists] who would have had Christians separate from this world. It has not yet been completed although a remnant of the remnant that left Babylon between 1525 and 1528 CE has finally reached the foundation of the house of God that the Apostle Paul laid so very long ago.

The distance between Babylon and Jerusalem was far greater than the remnant that left in the 16th-Century anticipated; for to reach Jerusalem drawn disciples must actually believe Moses who wrote about Jesus (John 5:47–48). The remnant must live as Judeans, how both Paul and Peter taught Gentile converts to live (Gal 2:2, 14). The doubly accursed gospel that Paul mentions wasn't teaching Gentiles to live like Judeans, but the mixing of physical covenants with spiritual covenants of promise. In other words, Paul's doubly accursed gospel was not about keeping the *Decalogue*, but about converted Jews requiring that Gentile converts become physical Israelites before they can become spiritual Israelites. That, however, was the model seen in Scripture prior to Peter's vision and the filling or empowering of Cornelius and his household by the Holy Spirit; therefore those converted Pharisees who taught converts that they must become physically circumcised actually had Scripture on their side, for most of the "New Testament" hadn't yet been written. The first of Paul's epistles wouldn't be written for another decade-plus.

Christianity was not a static philosophical construct received from Jesus on or about 31 CE; nor was the Torah a static text made on the day when God led the fathers of Israel out from Egypt. The Torah grew for 40 years. Likewise, Christendom grew until John wrote Revelation. And as Moses had much opposition, genuine disciples had much opposition throughout the 1st-Century CE, the reason why Jesus warned His disciples against deceiving anyone (Matt 24:4 — read the verse in its original Greek), for many would come and would lead many astray (v. 5). There was never an idyllic era of unity within the history of the Jesus Movement. Even though Paul wrote that the Body of Christ was one, Christianity was never one.

Today, Paul's doubly accursed gospel manifests itself in the mixing of the physical covenant given at Sinai with the eternal covenants made at both Sinai and Moab. Those who do this mixing understand nothing about "covenants."

A covenant [in Hebrew, *beriyth*, Strong's #H1285; in Greek, *diatheke*, Strong's #G1242] is a solemn contract that is, literally, the distance between cuttings, or from one shedding of blood to another, and a covenant ratified or purified with the shedding of blood is a copy or shadow of a heavenly covenant (Heb 9:23). Thus, the Sinai covenant ratified by the blood of oxen thrown on the altar and on the people (Ex 24:5–8) was, therefore, a temporary covenant conditioned on Israel obeying God's voice and keeping the terms of the covenant. But the covenant mediated by Moses and made with the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised children of Israel on the plains of Moab was ratified by a song, a better sacrifice than blood. As the covenant God made with Noah about never again baptizing the world into death was ratified with a bow (rainbow) set in the sky (Gen 9:11–17), the covenant made on the plains of Moab promised life through circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6) to Israel on the condition of obedience by faith (vv. 1-2). So the Moab covenant was not an earthly copy of a heavenly thing, but a heavenly covenant, the covenant to which better promises were added when its mediator became Christ Jesus ... better promises are not added to an abolished covenant, nor does an abolished covenant get a new mediator.

A physical or earthly covenant pertains to the flesh, and "those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh" and to "set the mind on the flesh is death ... [f]or the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom 8:5–8). Simply put, Israel under the Sinai covenant could not please God. The prophet Jeremiah recorded, "Behold the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh—Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart" (9:15–26). So only when circumcised of heart can an Israelite please God; only when circumcised of heart will a person not have his or her mind set on the things of the flesh.

Rabbinical Judaism takes great exception to what the Apostle Paul taught about physically circumcised Israel not being able to please God; about all of humankind being consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32). Rabbis contend that God would not have given the nation a law that it could not keep; yet Jesus said that none of the pious Jews seeking to kill Him kept the law (John 7:19). So the schism between Christendom and Judaism that began in the 1st-Century will continue until the Messiah, the anointed one, comes to fulfill everything written in the Law and the Prophets. Only then will Judaism except Jesus as the glorified Christ, but by then it will be too late for Judaism to enter into the covenants of promise from which their disbelief presently excludes them. Thus, Judaism and Christendom represent, respectively, physical and spiritual circumcision, with that which is physical being spiritually lifeless. They will not, and cannot "mix" even though Christianity began as a sect of Judaism. Attempts to merge the two as in the *Messianic Israel Alliance*, which is by its self declared definition "a place

where both Jew and non-Jew could worship the God of Israel as equal brothers in Messiah” will inevitably result in Christians being concerned with things that pertain to the flesh—will result in producing Christians who are hostile to God, denying specifically that *the Creator of all that is* entered His creation as His only Son.

The mixing of physical and spiritual also occurs when prophecy experts mix physical applications of prophecies with spiritual applications ... Scripture is about two creations, one physical, one spiritual, with the physical creation forming the type and revealing shadow of the invisible spiritual creation; thus, there are two Adams, one formed from red mud to become a physically breathing creature, a *nephesh*; the other a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:14). The physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46), but the spiritual creation that began when the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended as a dove to light and remain on the man Jesus of Nazareth will actually catch up to the physical creation that began with the first Adam. Both creations will track together when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28), thereby baptizing the world into life as it had been baptized into death in the days of Noah. Then every living person will be born of spirit as every living person today has been born of physical breath.

Life received from the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] is life in the heavenly realm; whereas life received when *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into the nostrils of the man of mud (Gen 2:7) is life in this physical realm only, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven” (1 Cor 15:50). And Paul’s doubly accursed gospel is about mingling the physical with the spiritual in a manner that cannot succeed. It is about dragging Christendom back into abolished covenants made with the flesh without recognizing that a spiritual covenant has existed between God and Israel since Sinai and since Moses addressed the assembled children of Israel on the plains of Moab ... the shadow of a person is not the person. Again, the spiritually lifeless nation of physically circumcised Israel is the shadow and type of the Church; what happened to Israel serves as an example of what happened to the Church (1 Cor 10:6, 11).

With few exceptions, Christendom spurns Moses; yet it is from Moses that Christ intends to make a nation greater and mightier than physically circumcised Israel (Num 14:12 *et al*). Hence, the “Christian” who will not believe Moses’ writings will not believe Jesus’ words (John 5:46–47), and the many teachers of lawlessness would have Christians ignore Moses, misread Paul, and commit blasphemy against the Father and the Son. It is no wonder that these teachers of lawlessness who do and have done mighty works in the name of Jesus will be denied when their judgments are revealed (Matt 7:21–23).

The marriage covenant made at Sinai (Ex chaps 19–24) between *Yah* and Israel—the covenant by which Israel became the holy nation of God—was a temporary covenant in that it was made with the flesh and ratified by blood. All marriage covenants ratified by the blood of a broken hymen are made with the flesh and last until blood is shed at death; they are not heavenly covenants. Thus, the blood Moses cast on Israel and on the altar represented the blood of a broken hymen: the Sinai covenant could only be broken by death, either that of Israel as if the nation were a man or by the death of *Yah* as if he were a man, and it is this latter that occurred. *Yah* entered His creation as His only Son, the man Jesus of

Nazareth; so He “died” in the heavenly realm when He entered His creation as a man, fully flesh and blood. He then died in this physical realm when He was crucified at Calvary. The first covenant made at Sinai is now abolished: Israel will never again be under this first Sinai covenant. It is truly a thing of the past. In fact all covenants made with the flesh were abolished, including the covenant made with the sons of Levi (Ex 32:25–29).

After Israel rebelled against God and before Israel left Sinai, a covenant was made with Moses and ratified by a better promise, entering into God’s presence, the glory that shown from Moses’ face:

And he [*YHWH*] said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord [*YHWH*], for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

“Observe what I command you this day ... (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous [*quanâ*], is a jealous God) ...

“You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.

“You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread All that open the womb are mine, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep ...

“Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end. Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in a year.

“You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifices with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover remain until morning. The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

And the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

... And he wrote on the [stone] tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments [words]. (Ex 34:10–28)

This covenant, made after the Sinai covenant was broken, was ratified by the shining of Moses’ face from having entered into God’s rest (Ex 33:14; 34:29). And about this covenant, which is the basis for Israel’s relationship with God today, Paul wrote,

Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has

come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it.
(2 Cor 3:7–10)

The Ten Commandments or ten living words represent the covenant made with Israel after Israel rebelled against the terms of the Sinai covenant: this covenant is not ratified by blood; it is a heavenly covenant; yet the ministry that comes from this covenant is “the ministry of death.” Israel has become a doubly accursed nation, condemned under the Sinai covenant when the Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God, and condemned under this second covenant made at Sinai when the commandments are inscribed on stone tablets shaped by Moses. The “flesh” is condemned in both heaven and on earth.

Death comes in heaven and on earth to Israel for transgressions of the Commandments [or living words] of God.

Calvary ends the marriage covenant made at Sinai, but not the heavenly covenant made after Israel had transgressed the marriage covenant while having no means to “cover” this transgression. Thus, the ministry of death (given because Israel was condemned to death) was replaced by a ministry of “life,” which is by the mercy of God through Christ Jesus and Israel being born of spirit and circumcised of heart after hearts have been cleansed by a journey of faith.

About this ministry of life, Paul wrote, “[W]e do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word” (2 Cor 4:1–2). Israel that was a physically circumcised nation is not now a nation of the flesh, but a nation consisting of those who have been born of spirit and circumcised of heart [physical circumcision will return in the Millennium]. Promises made to the flesh by abolished covenants made with the flesh either no longer pertain or have been moved upward to a spiritual level, where the blessing for keeping the covenants will come as treasure stored in heaven. It is Paul’s doubly accursed teachers of Israel who would have promises made to the flesh apply to spiritually circumcised Israel. These doubly accursed teachers tamper with God’s word, inevitably using cunning and disgraceful, underhanded means to extort moneys from sincere but easily duped infant sons of God.

What does Paul's accursed gospel have to do with Christian prosperity? When I began attending the services of the Church of God, the prevailing teaching concerning wealth was then very Calvinistic: the amount of physical prosperity a person possessed was a measure of the individual's spirituality. Tithing was putting God to the test to demonstrate how He would prosper the individual (Mal 3:10). If prosperity didn't follow tithing, then the person either wasn't properly paying his or her tithe, or the person had a secret sin which wasn't allowing God to prosper the person.

The job of ministry becomes easy when the spirituality of a person can be determined by the extent to which the person has physically prospered. The rich young ruler who came to Jesus and asked, “‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’” (Luke 18:18) would have been a very “spiritual” individual, based upon his wealth which apparently was to him evidence of his righteousness. And certainly the leadership of many Christian sects has used physical prosperity as the gage to determine who will or will not be advanced or ordained within the sect.

Within the Church of God, the fact that most disciples were not significantly increased with goods suggested that most disciples had secret sins. Corrective sermons were given, but the correction that needed to occur was of additional spiritual understanding being given to the ministry. The Church of God billed itself as having restored all spiritual truths whereas it was only newly arrived in heavenly Jerusalem where it wandered unfamiliar streets as a beggar. Ahead of this remnant of a remnant was the task of rebuilding the temple on the foundation Paul had laid (1 Cor 3:10–11). The walls of the city would have to await another generation.

The Church of God in the 20th-Century never understood the spiritually weightier matters of the covenant: it never could intellectually separate the physical from the spiritual. It never understood the new covenant was not yet implemented. And its work was tested by God, and was found to be of straw. Its work has been burned, with a few burning straws escaping the inferno and setting ablaze small grass tussocks that are consuming themselves. Each calendar year, the average age of the members and ministry of the remnant that still wanders the streets of heavenly Jerusalem as blind beggars is about twelve months older, meaning that within a few years, these fellowships will rest in their graves, where they will await the revealing of their judgments. These fellowships long ago ceased being viable servants of Christ.

Regardless of the actual state of members' finances, the ministry of this remnant of spiritual Israel self-identified as the Church of God needed to show that tithing worked as its endtime apostle flew the Church's plane between Jerusalem and Cairo in what he believed was fulfilling his great commission of warning the world that Christ's return was eminent. Jet fuel costs money. Airports have landing fees. And the bills were being paid by a hundred thousand plus tithe-payers, so tithing needed to work as advertised.

Tithing needed to produce physical prosperity to keep tithe moneys pouring into headquarters—

Yes, there were nicer cars in church parking lots, and nicer homes were purchased, but disciples acquired more consumer debt and seemed to reflect America's rising debt-based affluence. Overall, disciples were neither ahead, nor behind the nation's economic health. Yet new vehicles and nicer homes became evidence that tithing worked, and that God was pouring out His blessings on a people and on a nation so that His work of taking the true gospel to the world could be accomplished.

The true gospel?—this administration's hubris knew no limits, and the little spiritual knowledge that this administration of the Church of God had caused it to be puffed up beyond measure. That little bit of spiritual knowledge became leavening in a work of the flesh, a work based upon a hard correspondence between righteousness and materialism. So ministers within this administration were continually surprised by who stayed and who fell away. And I suspect I was one of the ones who surprised them during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Following baptism, my income went from \$13,000 in 1971, the last full year before I began tithing, to \$3,500 in 1973, the first full year I was tithing, a drop of approximately \$10,000 that meant the difference between being middle class and being numbered among the poor of the nation. I failed to see how I was physically

prospering by tithing. Yes, I learned a lot of Scripture, and I was continuing to learn. Yes, I had supernatural events happen to me that actually saved the life of my youngest daughter on two, and possibly three occasions. In 1975, I would experience a supernatural event that saved my life. But I wasn't prospering by any measure of how that word is normally used. I was strapped for money. My business was barely afloat, and I had become virtually unemployable, judging by the number of jobs for which I wasn't hired.

Yet—and here is the kicker—despite being genuinely destitute, I was able to relocate to Alaska, where I had wanted to move since my early teens. I was able to purchase an acre of raw land in what would become a prime retail area: I bought the acre for \$200 down and \$45/month. And while Outside (out of the state of Alaska) in the fall of 1975, my neighbor put in a power pole on my lot. His mistake: he directed the power company to put the pole on the wrong lot, thereby getting me power a year earlier than otherwise ... in the 1970s on the Kenai Peninsula obtaining electrical service required waiting one's turn on a long list onto which I had not then added my name.

I would trade seven chainsaws, for which I was a dealer, and a twenty-five horse outboard, for which I was also a dealer, for the Cat work and building materials to construct a 26x36 foot shop. Altogether, I built my shop for \$2,600, those seven chainsaws and that outboard, and I built without borrowing.

I was faithfully tithing, and I was getting by financially, but no one would have said that I was prospering in the usual sense of the word. In the many sermons I heard about money management, the idea of tithing to gain material wealth was implied if not directly taught. It was *giving to get*, and I felt a certain degree of low level guilt because I wasn't prospering more than I was. But my lack of monetary wealth wasn't for lack of effort: from Breakup to Freezeup, I was in the shop at six every morning, six days a week, and I didn't leave until ten or eleven at night. Even though I was living a quarter mile from the famed Kenai River, I didn't have time to go fishing. My presence was required in the shop so that others could fish. Likewise, when moose season came, I had no time to go hunting. Moose hunters cut firewood when they weren't successful, and I was inundated with chainsaw repair for all of moose season. Then came the dead season: November through March. For those years I was at Kenai, I busheled (fell timber for a contracted amount per boardfoot) during these months, falling for whichever gyppo had money to pay wages, and occasionally not receiving those wages because the export log market had collapsed. And the sermons kept coming: *test God and see if He won't open the windows of heaven, pouring down an overflowing blessing. Prove God. Send tithes and offerings to headquarters. If I am faithful, then God is faithful to open the windows of heaven.* And in December 1978, I didn't have the money to take a chainsaw sales rep job in Boise, Idaho. I was hired for the job, but when it came time to leave the Kenai, I didn't have the money necessary to get down the Highway.

Everyone I knew (many also faithfully tithing) was a broke as I was, so there wasn't anyone to whom I could turn for help taking the job in Boise. I was without choice: I stayed in Kenai, but I put my shop on the market March 1st, 1979. It sold nine days later; it sold before I could change my mind. And I took the proceeds, bought a boat and went commercial fishing.

By spring 1979, I had been faithfully tithing for six and a half years, and I had less material wealth, success, and prosperity than I had before I started. I had begun to understand that those sermons I heard about testing God were somehow off target. I didn't know then what was wrong with what was said. I only knew that I had been faithful, and I had been blessed in many ways, the foremost being physical protection through supernatural intervention, but I hadn't prospered materially.

Coming forward two decades, I began hearing televangelists preaching a "prosperity gospel" based upon Jesus' teachings. The idea of sowing money into a ministry and reaping material gain is an unassailable tenet of this gospel. If a person puts in enough money, even if the person has to borrow the money or pay only a tithe of the pledged amount, the person is assured of financial success. The anecdotal evidence is overwhelming: people are getting out of debt by giving to a certain ministry. They are receiving new houses, new cars, new clothes, renewed relationships. Whatever their hearts desire, they are receiving by sowing a large enough seed. And if the seed money doesn't produce gain, then that ground is no good, and the person needs to sow seed into a different ministry.

The sad part about the *prosperity gospel* is that it's a resurrected version of Herbert Armstrong's scare gospel of the 1940s and 1950s. The following passage, though long, is only excerpts from Armstrong's co-worker letter dated [December 8, 1947](#):

The WORLD TOMORROW will soon dawn, bringing peace, prosperity, happiness and joy at last;---and in the short time that remains our calling and sole important mission in life is to SHOUT THIS GOOD NEWS (the true Gospel of Jesus Christ) TO THE WORLD! It must go, not only to America and Canada, as it is now going, it must go to ALL NATIONS, in ALL LANGUAGES! To this end, AMBASSADOR COLLEGE is now operating in sober earnest---instructing consecrated, eager young men and women in the true Message, training them in speaking foreign languages.

THE OUTLOOK, at the moment, is for six or seven more years of PROSPERITY here in America---(even tho it is an artificial, unsound and inflated "prosperity")---while meantime the world moves relentlessly toward WORLD WAR III and final DESTRUCTION!

YOU, dear Co-Worker, are not going to be permitted to enjoy your home, your freedom, your present privileges and pursuits, many more years. Just a few more years---perhaps six or seven---perhaps twelve or fifteen---and a re-united Fascist-Nazi Europe will STRIKE---America's great cities will be blown out of existence in one night without warning---we shall see such tremendous atomic destruction as the world has never even dreamed ---more than 40 MILLION Americans will perish in the horrifying blasts! At the same time drought and famine will strike dead another THIRD of our entire population---men, women, and children --- thru starvation and disease! And our second great commission ---our divine calling from Almighty God---is to WARN our beloved nation, and other Israelitish nations, before it is too late! Every individual who HEEDS this warning, turns to God, is WATCHING and PRAYING ALWAYS, being filled with God's Spirit, living by every Word of God, with a life consecrated to Him, will be given special divine protection---taken beforehand to a place of SAFETY---preserved thru the final horrifying tribulation, time of plagues and human anguish soon to visit this earth!

But if we to whom God has revealed this terrible future thru His divine prophecies fail to heed it---if we fail to each play his or her full part in WARNING

this nation and the world, now, while we may---then God says we shall not escape, but He will require the blood of this entire people at our hands!

God Almighty is causing a "prosperity"---if only a temporary, stimulated, prosperity---to shine brightly upon our LAND. Listen! Do you know WHY? TO ENABLE US WHO UNDERSTAND TO HAVE ENOUGH FINANCIAL MEANS TO CARRY OUT GOD'S PURPOSE---to WARN our nations of the soon-coming prophesied destruction---to WARN the entire world of the fast-approaching "TRIBULATION" and true Gospel of Jesus Christ---the Gospel Christ brought and preached, and commissioned every true minister of His to proclaim to the world throughout this age---THE GOOD NEWS OF THE COMING WORLD-RULING KINGDOM OF GOD! The denominations, preachers, and evangelists are not proclaiming THIS true Gospel!

Listen, dear Co-Worker! To set your heart, your mind and interest now in the pursuits of THIS WORLD, or THIS LIFE,---to ignore this appeal, and this PRIVILEGE, to HELP TO YOUR VERY UTMOST in the closing work of God---to figure that you can't afford to spare anything now for God's cause because of OTHER worldly interests---is to enjoy a fool's paradise, and find yourself suddenly, when least expected, in just a few years, caught in the snare of this on-coming DESTRUCTION!

I tell you, ON THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST, IT IS COMING! Many of you NOW, are in financial condition to DO A LOT MORE than you are doing for GOD'S CAUSE---to help me get out this Message over the air, and in print---to help me train and prepare talented, able, consecrated young men and women for THEIR part in soon carrying this vital message to THE ENTIRE WORLD---into EVERY NATION!

One consecrated co-worker and his wife are mortgaging their home in order to place a few more thousand dollars in this mighty work that more millions may be warned! At first I shrank from accepting money under such conditions---but when we remember that in a few years NONE OF US will be living in our present homes---EVERYTHING material we possess now will be swept away from us, and we shall then be either in that haven of safety under God's divine protection, or else dead or in slavery worse than death--- and when we consider further that this brother and his wife are not deprived of their home, but merely PUTTING IT TO WORK FOR GOD'S GREAT CAUSE, while they enjoy it and live in it, too---then it appeared in a different light, and we could do nothing but accept it, to use it for God's honor and glory. WHO KNOWS? perhaps this one sacrifice on the part of this one man and wife may be the means to bringing MANY precious souls not only under God's divine protection in the TIME OF TROUBLE TO COME, but also into ETERNAL LIFE in God's Kingdom FOREVER!

TIME IS SHORT! It is fast running out! Soon we shall come to the time of the prophesied FAMINE OF HEARING THE WORD OF THE ETERNAL---the time when world forces will no longer PERMIT the preaching of God's Truth!

No man can know exactly how long. This much we DO KNOW ---it is now NEAR, even at the very doors, according to prophecy ---it will strike DURING THIS PRESENT GENERATION---it cannot now be more than A FEW YEARS;---yet, on the other hand, we may KNOW that God will not permit this time of national disaster and world destruction to fall UNTIL our nations HAVE BEEN WARNED (and no other voice is warning them), and UNTIL "this Gospel of the KINGDOM shall be preached in ALL THE WORLD for a witness UNTO ALL NATIONS, and then shall the END COME!" BE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH TIME, if we set ourselves full pressure to the task, and do our very utmost, at any sacrifice. But there is no more than enough---not one single day to waste.

I know that TIME IS SO SHORT, there was not enough time to delay the opening of AMBASSADOR COLLEGE even one more year. That is why God moved with MIRACLES to make the IMPOSSIBLE happen for us, so we could start, as we did, this fall!

I want to tell you of its progress---of the state of this work. BUT DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT WE HAVE BEEN PLUNGED INTO A GREAT CRISIS IN THIS WORK, WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET PASSED, ALTHOUGH GOD HAS MERCIFULLY KEPT THE WORK ALIVE AND PROGRESSING WITH INCREASING MOMENTUM AND POWER. This work needs your greatest sacrifice---it needs all you and every other co-worker can give. It need MORE than you can give---it still needs the LOANS from many who are in position to put money they may need later INTO GOD'S WORK where it can be WORKING FOR GOD until needed, when we can pay it back. Especially do we need more LONG-TERM, and LARGE loans--- that is, of from one to ten thousand dollars--- even more, over a long period, not to be paid back for two, three, five years or more. A few loans for a period of only a few months have helped greatly. More of these will help---but the greater need is for larger, and longer-term loans from those who are able.

This AGE is closing FAST! We must WARN the nations, before it is too late! NO ONE ELSE IS SOUNDING THIS WARNING! Can you realize that? A NEW AGE will soon dawn, with the COMING OF CHRIST! The GOOD NEWS of that must be proclaimed in great power to the WHOLE WORLD! I am fighting with every ounce of strength in me to build and prepare this work for that great COMMISSION---the commission to which we have been called BY JESUS CHRIST!

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS today! Our nation is in an artificial, stimulated, inflated "prosperity". Our people are living in a fool's paradise! YOU WON'T BE LIVING IN YOUR HOME MUCH LONGER---you won't be doing what you are now doing much LONGER! NOTHING ELSE MATTERS TODAY! We must WARN the people, NOW. We must preach and publish the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom while there is time. The night is coming swiftly when no man can work, for God.

I am still fighting---doing my very utmost. I NEED YOUR HELP---to your very utmost. Nothing else MATTERS, today!

GOD BLESS those of you who have helped so nobly, and at such sacrifice---some of you with just the widow's mites, who have nevertheless given as MUCH, in proportion to what you have---and some of you with one, two, or three thousand dollars! God has USED YOU TO preserve this, HIS WORK! He will reward you, and GREAT shall be your reward in the Kingdom. Nothing MATTERS any more, in this world!

By immediate return mail if possible---otherwise, at the very earliest possible moment, please send the largest offering you can, in addition to God's tithe. And, if you cannot give a large amount, but can LOAN it for the use of God's work, SEND THE MONEY by return mail or as soon as you can get it, and a letter stating when, and in what amounts, you may need to have it returned, and I will send you our NOTE for it. And remember, we are maintaining a cash reserve fund to guarantee repayment of all such loans.

Once again, I leave the issue in your hands. I know you won't fail me, or our God. THANK YOU, and GOD BLESS YOU! And PLEASE remember above all, KEEP PRAYING EARNESTLY, and IN FAITH for God to deliver us, and keep this great work going.

With love to all, in Jesus' name,
Herbert W. Armstrong

I dare say that none of today's televangelists appealing for money to further their vaunted ministries can better Herbert Armstrong for either originality or sensationalism. At best, there are beggarly imitators who have picked up the baton of sensationalism dropped when Armstrong passed away more than two decades ago without any of his prophetic understandings coming to pass.

It is no wonder that Christendom has become a hissing and a stench in the nostrils of the world. Asking disciples to mortgage homes is unacceptable! Even asking to receive tithes and offerings places the ministry outside of Paul's instructions:

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. ... And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. (2 Cor 11:7–15)

The test of every minister and of every ministry that would build on the foundation Paul laid is whether, even when in need, this minister or ministry asks for money or support in any other way ... those who ask are false!

The reality that no "Christian" ministry wants to admit is that all requests for money prove that the ministry is false. While some televangelists have improved their appeals for money—*won't yuh please help us build a hospital in India, or drill water wells in Africa*—their appeals are nevertheless physically based, with nothing said about them taking out their salaries and paying their expenses before any well is drilled and any patient is treated. They are false ministers, deceitful workmen, spiritual bastards, their father being Satan the devil. They pose as spirit-filled teachers of Israel, but they have less *truth* than Herbert Armstrong had and less charisma, less creativity, and less chance of entering the kingdom of heaven. They are truly in trouble, and not astute enough to realize how badly deceived they are. And they are today the foremost purveyors of Paul's doubly accursed gospel, for they mingle the spiritual with the physical and come up with a witches' brew of doctrines and promises.

But! And here is the catch: the basis for the prosperity gospel exists in Scripture.

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus, after being assured by the young ruler that he had kept the commandments since his youth (Luke 18:21), told the young ruler to sell all he had and give his wealth to the poor, the same advice Jesus had previously given His first disciples (Luke 12:33). The young ruler couldn't do this, for his wealth was proof of his spirituality. His wealth was proof that God had opened the windows of heaven to him. He couldn't see his wealth as standing between him and God, so when Jesus offered him a place in the resurrection of firstfruits, he couldn't claim the position, because he had to divest himself of the proof of his righteousness. He couldn't see that spiritual wealth differed from material wealth, and neither could Jesus' disciples. For the 1st-Century world of Judea and

Hellenistic Asia Minor, wealth involved tangible goods; it consisted of things. And the wealth of this world separated the young ruler from God, just as it does with most everyone (1 John 2:15-17). Jesus then made His famous comment about it being easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God.

Peter, not understanding Jesus' comment, said, "Look, we have left our homes and followed you" (Luke 18:28). Jesus answered Peter with a statement that validates the prosperity gospel if the evidence of how Christians have lived for the past two millennia is ignored. He said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life" (vv. 29-30). So the unambiguous teaching of Jesus is that between now and a disciple's glorification, the disciple will receive much more than the person has left. A wife, brothers, parents, children, however, aren't things; they are relationships. But a house is a thing. So Jesus told Peter and the others listening that a person would receive much more than a house left behind; plus, the person would receive eternal life in the age to come.

In Scripture, a "house" is a family, and a "city" is a house grown large. Example:

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God [θεός].) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. (Heb 3:3–7)

The "house" that each disciple left was his ancestry, and the house that disciples will receive is the ancestry of God: disciples are sons of God who will dwell in the Father's house (John 14:2–3) ... as the born of spirit son of God presently dwells in a tent of flesh, the tent of the old creature, both Christ and the Father presently dwell in the Father's house. Paul wrote, "For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5:1). This house is the Father's house, in which Jesus has gone ahead to prepare legal stays so that disciples will be with Him when He comes again. And if our heavenly house is the house of the Father—this is Jesus' testimony—and since both Jesus and the Father dwell in the house called "God," the house disciples will receive is far better than the house which disciples left behind when they sold everything and followed Jesus. But the house disciples will receive isn't any structure built with stone and timber, or any structure of this world. The house is God, and disciples are younger sons in this house (Rom 8:29).

All of those years before I sold the shop in 1979, all of those years when I had nothing that appeared as material prosperity, and all of the years since when I've had even less seem to argue against Jesus' unambiguous statement of receiving more back than I left, if the *more* were material possessions. Of course I spent several years living on Kodiak Island, enjoying its hunting and fishing, and I

twice sailed a small boat down the Alaska Peninsula and out to the Aleutians, experiencing some of the most impressive scenery in the world close up. I made a poor living selling hunting and fishing articles for a few years, and I entered graduate school without an undergraduate degree and without any course work in the field. My first degree is my M.F.A. in Creative Writing from University of Alaska Fairbanks. So I have no complaints. Rather, I came to take for granted locations and a way of life for which others spend large sums of money to enjoy as I live on the edge of the world, taking a living from its margins. I have looked into tomorrow in a literal and in a figurative sense; I have also been uncertain about how Jesus' statement about receiving *more* applied to the real-world lives of Christians although I'm not now. I didn't before and don't today know many disciples—ones who have brought forth fruit worthy of repentance—that have substantial material prosperity. Those individuals with even limited prosperity are the exception, rather than the norm.

In the early 1990s, with Armstrong dead, the most visible administration of the Church of God realized that as an institution, it hadn't well understood the not-yet-implemented new covenant. The institution initiated a series of doctrinal changes that placed it left of center within Evangelical Christianity. The resulting theological fallout caused spinoff organizations to idolize the teachings of the previous Pastor General of the institution. But neither the move left, nor the subsequent spinning magically produced understanding of any spiritual covenant.

Doctrinally, nothing good came from the destruction of this most visible administration's work. Spiritual understanding didn't suddenly materialize. The Church of God's accursed gospel joined the even more accursed gospels of Evangelical Christianity. In every case, the centrally controlled organization mixed the physical covenants with the spiritual. These organizations cannot maintain their centralized authority without such blending of the physical with the spiritual, and I just telegraphed where I am going theologically; so if you are more interested in exercising governance over Christ's disciples than you are in obeying Christ, you should probably stop reading and get your sermon ready about the windows of heaven being opened for the tithe-payer according to the promises made at Horeb (Mal 4:4); that is, according to the promises made in the Sinai covenants.

2.

Within the Churches of God, autocratic government became one of the restored truths. But this "truth" of top-down governance allowed Satan to kill the organization, plus a hundred thousand saints (my own daughters included) with two shots. Of course, God the Father and His Christ had to allow Satan to fire his two shots. But permission was granted because the organization had, in 1962, made the conscious decision not to grow spiritually. They even rejected a third of God's Sabbaths, the observance of which they should have restored. The observance of these Sabbaths argued against this revealed "truth" of top-down governance. But for the sake of the perceived great endtime work then being done by the organization, it was more important to maintain control of tithe moneys than it was to obey God, a harsh statement, the truth of which I'm willing to

debate with anyone. Again, when change came following Armstrong's death, the work that had been constructed on the centralized collection of tithes was destroyed. Although I feel no love toward the men who engineered its destruction and the slaughter of so many saints, I am humbled by their spiritual ignorance, which is beyond appalling, and in any other field would be criminal malpractice.

In *A Philadelphia Apologetic* I tell the story of being drafted into the Body of Christ three decades ago. I also write about being drafted to reread prophecy: in January of 2002, I received a call to begin what I am now doing. I wasn't given anything more than a command to reread prophecy; I wasn't told how to reread Scripture, wasn't told what should be found in Scripture that wasn't already known, wasn't even told that known readings were incomplete or inaccurate. What I was commanded to do was simply to reread prophetic Scripture—and with this call to a work came spiritual understanding that was not gleaned through much study. What I received when I wasn't looking (in a figurative sense) was the training necessary to actually read Scripture. I found that the decades of math, playing chess, building guns, falling timber, repairing small engines, fishing commercially, writing about hunting and fishing, writing about literature, writing poetry, formline carving in the Northwest Coast tradition—all had converted the innate ability to recognize faces into a pattern-processor that transformed segments of narrative into comparable verbal imagery. The audio dysfunction I had inherited from my father transformed the world into stories that were now comparable so that one could rather easily be recognized as the shadow or type of another.

My qualifications for what I do now come from being a novelist and literary critic who has been born of spirit for more than thirty years. They do not come from a seminary where I would have been taught to read texts in this particular way, or in that particular way. I was drafted to reread Scripture, not to reinforce the readings of historical exegesis. And if in rereading biblical passages, I overturn concepts formalized by the Council of Nicea 325 A.D., or taught by the college that educated many of the Church of God ministers who are still unsure about what is or isn't a part of the Law of Moses, then overturn those concepts I must.

So before someone says that he or she understands the new covenant, the person needs to look into the mirror of the perfect law and see who is looking back. If Christ isn't, then have the laws of God really been written on the person's heart and mind?

Under the new covenant, three linguistic absolutes occur simultaneously: (1) the laws of God are written on the person's heart and mind; (2) the person now knows God because the person has internalized God's laws; (3) and the person's sins have been forgiven because the person chooses not to sin, which is the transgression of the internalized laws of God (Jer 31:31–34; Heb 8:10–12). Under the new covenant, no one will teach either neighbor or brother to, "Know the Lord," for all with *Know the Lord*. There will be no need or justification for Christian ministry, and if all do not presently *Know the Lord* then disciples are assured that the new covenant is not yet in effect.

What covenant are disciples under if they are not under the new covenant? The Passover covenant, made with Israel the day when God took the fathers of

Israel by the hand to lead this nation out of Egypt, is still in effect for blood has not yet been shed to end this covenant. Plus, disciples are under the eternal covenant ratified by entering into God's presence, this being the second covenant made at Sinai (Ex chap 34), with the covenant not being abolished by the ministry of death yielding to the ministry of spirit (2 Cor chap 3). In addition, disciples are under the eternal Moab covenant, by which circumcision of the heart is promised upon demonstrated faith. Thus, it is by the Passover covenant that sins are today covered by the shed blood of Jesus; it is by the second covenant made at Sinai that disciples enter into the presence of God; and it is by the Moab covenant that disciples receive circumcised hearts. Three covenants, one physical and the shadow of the new covenant, two heavenly that are in addition to the new covenant—all three covenants were initially mediated by Moses as a faithful servant in God's house.

The ten living words (the *Decalogue*) that Moses brought down from atop Sinai the second time disappeared when Israel was delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. These words represent the second covenant made at Sinai, and these words were absent from the second temple: they will not again be seen until they are inscribed on the hearts and placed in the minds of spiritually circumcised Israelites. Hence spiritual circumcision precedes Israel entering into the new covenant, and spiritual circumcision comes only after hearts have been cleansed by faith.

Under the new covenant, the laws of God aren't almost written on the heart and mind of a disciple. Nor are they partly there. They are either on a disciple's heart and mind, or the person is not under the new covenant, regardless of what the person believes about Christ Jesus.

If the disciple is not yet under the new covenant, then the disciple's sins are not forgiven as a condition of the new covenant. Rather, the person's sins are only forgiven by the annual taking of the Passover sacrament of the blood of Jesus, "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28) ...

I suspect that a pause is appropriate so that objections can be mentally formulated to the above. Yes, I know that you want to argue. But save your arguments: you will lose. If brother and neighbor do not *Know the Lord*, and you know that they don't, then Israel (Judaism and Christendom) is not yet under the new covenant—and your sins are not forgiven if you have neglect so great a privilege as taking the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed.

The person who does not keep the commandments doesn't know God, regardless of what the person thinks (1 John 2:3–6). This person can either have or not have the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]: spiritual birth is only the precursor to spiritual circumcision as physical birth is the necessary condition that must precede physical circumcision. And as physical circumcision occurs on the eighth day, not when a person is born, spiritual circumcision occurs following a journey of faith that cleanses the heart and makes the disciple spiritually correspond in age to a human infant of eight days.

If a person has life received from receipt of the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], the person is born of spirit [πνεῦμα] and is a son of God. The person has been spiritually modified in that a second life now dwells in the same tent of flesh that remains male or female even though this second self or second nature is

neither male nor female (Gal 3:28). But this person is not under the new covenant: the laws of God are not automatically written on the person's heart and mind ... righteousness comes from faith. It is one thing to profess belief and faith, but quite another to actually apply that belief. Even the demons believe in God (Jas 2:19) and shudder, but they are also in rebellion against Him. Unfortunately, so are most Christians. But once born of spirit, once enlightened, disciples will go into the lake of fire if they rebel against God. So to teach infant sons of God to ignore the commandments through clever arguments makes the teacher a murderer, the servant of a murderer, Satan the devil.

Distinguishing covenants made with the flesh from spiritual covenants, Paul said that the righteousness that comes from faith says, and he goes on to quote the Moab covenant mediated by Moses (*cf.* Rom 10:6–8; Deut 30:11–14). This is Paul's law of faith (Rom 3:27). And this law of faith, which includes everything written in Deuteronomy (30:10) can be summarized by two principles: love God with all one's heart and mind (Deut 30:1–2; 6:5), and love one's neighbor as oneself (Deut 10:19; Lev 19:18). And about this single law of righteousness Moses said, "Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away ... it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe" (Deut 30:11, 14).

The Apostle Paul's law of faith—his righteousness that comes from faith—will have disciples observing all of the laws, commandments and decrees written in Deuteronomy. Faith is emphasized, and salvation becomes possible because the Holy Spirit was offered to those Israelites who believed the Lord, and obeyed by faith when in a far land. Malachi writes,

Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the Lord and thought on his name. They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as parents spare their children who serve them. Then once more you shall see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him. (3:16-18).

An Israelite is reconciled to the Father by having the person's past sins covered by the shed blood of Christ. The person is now justified by having his or her post-baptism sins borne by the resurrected Christ. Both goats on Yom Kipporim are the sin offering for Israel, now the nation circumcised of heart. As a shadow of what would happen, one goat was sacrificed on the altar as the lively representation of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary; the *Azazel* goat is lead away into a far country as the lively representation of the glorified Christ returning to heaven as the high priest of saints where He bears but does not pay the death penalty for sins committed in that realm. Yes, in that portion of the heavenly realm within the bottomless pit, Christ "covers" or bears the sins of saints, but He will not be crucified a second time.

Time can be written as a mathematical function of gravity; time is a function of mass, with the passage of time being a function of the decay of, particularly, dark matter. Time has been created. Thus, outside the creation, time doesn't exist. One moment does not change into the next moment. There is no decay. The

moment remains. Therefore, all that has life must coexist as one entity. Change must coexist with what-is, and the absence of life and the presence of life cannot coexist in the same moment. So whatever has life has “eternal” or everlasting life for the moment is everlasting. Neither Satan or any angel or the Son of Man can die *unless cast out of heaven and into the creation where one moment must necessarily become the next moment*. Hence, the glorified Jesus cannot die for the sins of sons of God in the heavenly realm (nor would He want to). He can only bear or cover these sins which are akin to the sins of rebelling angels.

Rebelling angels were cast into outer darkness [*tartaroo*—ταρταρώσας] (2 Pet 2:4), which was in Greek mythology the outer confines of the underworld. Peter had no better word for the creation within the bottomless pit [the *Tzimtzum*] that we identify as the cosmos. Rebelling angels were cast into time, or better space-time, where death is assured. As the fissure in the earth’s crust opened to swallow Korah and his rebellious friends, all Levites who argued for democracy—

“For all of the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you [Moses and Aaron] exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?” (Num 16:3) —

A tear in the fabric of heaven opened to create a bottomless pit into which rebelling angels were cast. This rent permitted separation from God and created somewhere rebelling angels could be cast so that the problems of a paradox would not bring everything to a gridlock halt in the heavenly realm. And in this rent, the “creation” was formed. Four dimensions were unfurled. And all that human beings can see and measure came into existence. Radical change can now occur: the living can die, including angelic beings. So the sons of God who remain confined within the creation [within the bottomless pit] are subject to the certainty of death, for this bottomless pit will “close” as the fissure that swallowed Korah and his friends closed. This applies equally to fallen angels as it does to born-again disciples. When the rent closes, all that is in it will be no more forever.

Because the glorified Jesus now bears the sins of the saints in the heavenly realm, and because the wages for sins is death, spiritual lives within the creation will be given for these transgressions of the law. It is not true that angels cannot die—they cannot die in the heavenly realm, but they can certainly die when they have been cast to the earth or cast into the creation. Likewise, born of spirit sons of God will die the second death [being cast into the lake of fire] if another life is not given to satisfy the righteous demands of the law. And this “other life” will not be that of the glorified Christ.

Satan is ultimately responsible for all transgressions of the law in heaven and on earth. Just as *Yah* consigned humankind to disobedience because of the transgression of the first Adam, thereby taking upon Himself the ultimate responsibility for the lawless of human beings; and just as *Yah* as *Theos*, the *Logos*, entered His creation as the man Jesus of Nazareth to take upon Himself the prescribed death sentence demanded by the law, thereby becoming sin and dying on the cross at Calvary to satisfy these righteous demands; and just as goats and bullocks, lambs and turtledoves were sacrificed by Israel to temporarily cover the righteous demands of the law until Jesus satisfied these demands, spiritual livestock [i.e., vessels of wrath endured for a season] will give their lives in the heavenly realm to temporarily cover the demands of the law until Satan, after the

1000 years, ultimately satisfies these righteous demands in the heavenly realm in a manner analogous to Christ Jesus satisfying these demands in this physical world.

So there is no mistake: the *Azazel* goat does not represent Satan as half of Israel's sin offering on *Yom Kipporim*. The glorified Jesus bearing sins committed by saints in the heavenly realm is the reality of the *Azazel* goat. But Jesus does not die for these sins; Satan will. Plus, Jesus will not bear these sins as the Messiah. He will give them to Satan, but Satan will not die for them when the judgments of firstfruits are revealed. Satan will not die for a thousand years. And the record of debt with its legal demands is not like an IOU that can hang in limbo for a millennium: the debt must be "covered," and if it is no longer covered by Christ Jesus, and if it is not paid by Satan, then another entity must cover this debt in a manner analogous to how the livestock sacrificed by ancient Israel covered but did not satisfy the record of debt earned by these ancient transgressors. This "other entity" is lawless disciples who have been made into vessels for dishonorable usage, endured with much patience, prepared for wrath and destruction (Rom 9:22–23).

Jesus said that many have been called, but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14). Many have been born of spirit; many teach as having been sent by God; many proclaim Jesus as their Lord; many sing praises to Jesus; but of these many, only a few will be chosen to enter the kingdom of heaven. Only a few will live as spiritual Judeans. Only a few will walk as Jesus, an Observant Jew, walked. The anti-Semitism of this world—a world consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32)—inevitably causes most infant sons of God to commit spiritual suicide. And it is "the many" that the world recognizes as Christians, not the few who keep the precepts of the law thereby causing their uncircumcision to be counted as circumcision (Rom 2:26).

It is "the many" that look for physical prosperity to come to them as disciples of Christ Jesus. It is livestock that look to be feed before they are slaughtered.

Animal sacrifices return in the Millennium because Jesus will not bear the sins of Israel, nor will Satan immediately pay for these transgressions of the law, nor will "the many" be left to temporarily cover these sins. Therefore, the lives of sheep and goats will again be given to temporarily cover the righteous demands of the law.

3.

The fault God found with the first covenant lay within Israel (Heb 8:8), a nation uncircumcised of heart. Although circumcision of the heart was offered to Israel—the nation was given a law that would have led to righteousness if pursued by faith rather than by the works of their hands (Rom 9:31–32)—the nation refused to believe that God would give a law that couldn't be kept if minutely examined and followed explicitly. The nation never entertained the concept that it was the spiritually lifeless shadow of a later Israel, a nation born of spirit. It could not (and even now cannot) entertain the possibility that it wasn't in control of its destiny. But how could or can it explain the decades and centuries of idolatry, of burning its firstborns to Molech, of profaning the Sabbaths of God, of slaying the prophets God sent, of rebellion against God? It could not then, and it cannot

today. And when it realizes that it was the lively representation of the Christian Church, it should absolutely hate everything the cross represents; for the cross is the mark of death and the tattoo of Christ's cross [χξς'] is the mark of the beast.

The fault found in Israel was corrected when the nation was born of spirit and circumcised of heart, but this "fix" did not last long ... in the 1st-Century disciples following Jesus figuratively walked on water as Jesus walked on water: as long as they kept their eyes on Jesus, they need have no concern about Moses, who wrote of Jesus. As these first disciples walked as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6) and imitated Paul (Phil 3:17) as Paul imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1), they received spiritual circumcision prior to demonstrated obedience. But second generation Achaean converts did not attempt to walk as Jesus walked. Figuratively, they did not and could not walk on water, nor did they walk on dry land by following Moses. They never left disobedience even though they appropriated the name of Christ. And about them there was nothing "good."

A concept that hasn't been well understood is that Jesus was the "light" of day one of the Genesis chapter one creation account [the so-called "P" account]. What portion of the creation is not complete in, "In the beginning, God created [filled] the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1)? All is, even the sun and the stars, what have traditionally been ascribed to the fourth day. So either the creation accounts (there are definitely two) contradict one another—Adam cannot be created on the day when "the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen 2:4–8) and on the sixth day—or the creation accounts are not about an *ex nihilo* creation.

Traditionally, Judaism has not focused on the Genesis accounts being about the formation of the universe from nothing, but being about the struggle between an inclination to do good and an inclination to do wrong. It is lawless Christendom exercising the authority of the State that insisted the universe was created in six literal days, and that the earth was the center of the universe. Thus, Christendom set itself up to be at odds with scientific observation about the age of the universe as dated by the decay of light mass particles—as well as being at odds with Scripture. Once the divine breath of God is "seen" in Genesis 1:2, this creation account (the so-called "P" account) ceases to be about the physical creation and becomes a metaphorical account of the spiritual creation that will have the harvest of firstfruits glorified on the fourth day and the remainder of humankind divided, as the two lawbreakers crucified with Jesus were divided, into spiritual livestock and sons of God on the sixth day, with these sons of God further divided as gender presently divides human beings.

The taxonomically complex creation account in Genesis chapter one is not about the creation of fruit-bearing trees before the creation of the sun as would seem to be the case if the account is read literally, but about the creation of the sons of God, beginning with *the Creator of all that has been made* [θεὸς] entering His creation as His only Son, the light of day one (2 Cor 4:6; John 1:4, 14; 3:16). The *Logos* [λόγος] was *Theos* [θεός] and was with *Theon* [θεόν] in the beginning (John 1:1). This *Logos* was the *Theos* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 22:32), and this *Logos* made all things. Nothing came into being without Him (John 1:3). And this *Logos* entered His creation as His only Son (He could do this only once) to be born of Mary as the infant Jesus of Nazareth. The only difference between Jesus and any other Hebrew child is that His father was not

the first Adam, but the *Logos*, so He was not born consigned to disobedience (i.e., with original sin). He was free to keep the Law from birth, but he was not fully God. He was fully flesh and blood—and to claim otherwise is to make oneself into an antichrist (1 John 4:2–3).

The man Jesus become the firstborn Son of the Father [θεόν] when the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him as a dove (Matt 3:16). Following baptism, Jesus became the beloved Son of *Theon*; He was not born as the Son of *Theon*, but as the only Son of *Theos*. And it is the presence of two entities, both God, both forming one God, that Judaism rejects and Christendom has struggled poorly to explain. Yet in the creation account of the first Adam is the knowledge needed: “And the rib that the Lord God [YHWH *Elohim*] had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh; / she shall be called Woman, / because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:22–24).

Two are one, not mathematically possible but the underlying construct of human existence. Two sexes are necessary for biological reproduction. Two eyes of a human being produce one image, with both eyes necessary for the hand to be able to reach out and grasp an object (if one eye is missing and the head is held still so that it cannot use motion-produced parallax, the hand will undershoot its mark every time). And the principle of dualism producing singularity extends to the spiritual creation: Scripture begins with the marriage of θεός and θεόν in the Tetragrammaton YHWH [יהוה] ... because of ancient Israelites’ lawlessness Judaism lost its ability to read the icon phrase, YHWH *Elohim*.

Using Latin characters, the Hebrew name of God is *El*, as in *El Shaddai* or God Almighty (Gen 17:1). Thus, when life inherent [received from the breath of God, “breath” used in its metaphorical sense] is added to the Hebrew name for God, *El*, the linguistic icon /*Eloah*/ is formed, with the /*ah*/ radical representing the breath of God as in “life inherent.” The icon /*Elohim*/, now, is the regular plural of /*Eloah*/; so *Elohim* deconstructs to (*El* + *ah*) + (*El* + *ah*) an undetermined number of times. The multiple is, though, determined by the Tetragrammaton YHWH, which deconstructs to YH + WH, with /YH/ being written as *Yah*, the name David used to show that he knew that spokesman, the *Logos*, was the God known to ancient Israel. Through the structure of Hebraic poetry, David disclosed the *Yah* was God of the natural world whereas YHWH was God of the heavens and earth (see Ps 146:1; 148:1; 149:1). David knew that *Yah* was part of YHWH, but not all of YHWH, that another entity existed as an undisclosed part of the deity. David knew at least late in his life that Israel’s one God consisted of two entities, which is much more than Judaism today knows. For rabbinical Judaism contends that the plural *Elohim* is inscribed as “plural” through *pluralis intensivus*, the practice of transforming singular words into plurals to enhance their apparent majesty, when in reality rabbinical Judaism knows less about God than did King David, a man after God’s own heart.

Therefore, *Theos* plus inherent life [θεός + πνεῦμα ἅγιον] is or equals *Yah*, the front half of the Tetragrammaton; whereas *Theon* plus inherent life [θεόν + πνεῦμα ἅγιον] equates to WH, the half of the four letters too sacred to pronounce

that was hidden from natural Israel because of the inherited consignment to disobedience. As much as Judaism is reluctance to acknowledge “original sin,” it was the transgression of Adam and the arrogance of Babel that caused the Father to hide His face from humankind until *Yah* entered His creation as His only Son, the man Jesus of Nazareth.

The above has been a long way of getting to the reality that the division of the waters of the second day of the “P” account metaphorically describes the first disciples being born of spirit and receiving life in the heavenly realm. These first disciples are the waters above the firmament called heaven, and when these first disciples died physically [i.e., the tents of flesh in which they dwell died], Christendom also died spiritually through its separation from God—its lawlessness separates it from the Father in a manner foreshadowed by natural Israel’s lawlessness separating this firstborn son (Ex 4:22) of *Yah* from *Yah* (Deut 32:20). Thus, there is nothing that God calls “good” on the second day of the “P” creation account.

But the remaining waters are separated and dry land formed on the dark portion of the third day and God calls this separation “good” (Gen 1:9–10) ... again, Jesus walked on water, but Moses walked on dry land: the waters parted for Moses. *Yah* told Moses that He intended to make from Moses a nation greater and mightier than natural Israel. Moses did not understand what it was that *Yah* intended. Moses was certain that natural Israel’s very existence was at risk, and he had to repeatedly appeal for mercy being again extended to Israel. Mercy was extended, but Israel did not use this mercy to keep the precepts of the law by faith. Israel did not use this mercy to practice love toward God and neighbor. No, Israel used this mercy to make a pact with death, a covenant that would not stand (Isa 28:15). As a result a tested stone would be laid in Jerusalem as the cornerstone for the second temple (v. 16), not the structure built by the human hands of Zerubbabel but the rebuilt second temple constructed of living stones, with Christ Jesus being both cornerstone and builder.

Jesus told Jews seeking His life, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (John 5:47–48).

Achaean Christians have not, since mid 1st-Century, believed Moses or even wanted anything to do with Moses. Christendom has fled Moses as if he alone, as their accuser, could condemn the Church to death. But Moses’ writings reflect the words of Jesus. To say otherwise is to deny Jesus. So it is through the writings of Moses that dry land is formed upon which disciples are able to grow and produce fruit.

The Christian who seeks material prosperity seeks what Moses promised Israel upon obedience to the law. The problem central to this is Moses wrote of Christ, who said not to think that He came to abolish the Law [the Torah] and the Prophets (Matt 5:17), that the person who relaxed the least of the commandments would be called least in the kingdom of heaven while the person who kept the commandments and taught others to do likewise would be called great (v. 19). So the person who does not keep the law cannot expect anything but cursing from Christ. It will be Satan that gives this person material prosperity if this person receives any prosperity ... King David saw his enemies and the lawless regularly

prospering before and during his reign as king of Israel. Today, genuine disciples see their enemies and the lawless regularly prospering. Not much has changed in three millennia. And not much will change between now and the coming of Christ.

After the flood of Noah's day, life started over with eight human beings, seven pairs of clean animals and a single pair of every other air-breathing creature. When the Millennium begins, life (this time spiritual) will again start over with Christ Jesus and the seven angels to the seven churches. What's apparent is that as the first Adam became a breathing creature before there were other breathing creatures, the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:14) became a spiritually breathing creature before there were other spiritually breathing creatures. The Church was formed from His spirit as the first Eve was formed of the bone and flesh of the first Adam. The Church is the last Eve. And as spiritual Zion, this last Eve will bring forth children in a day (Isa 66:7–8). Two spiritual sons at the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation, then a third son, a spiritual Seth, halfway through the Tribulation—the seven endtime years are Zion's hard labor pains that follow, not precede, the liberation or empowerment by the Holy Spirit of first Israel, then the third part of humankind not previously born of spirit (Zech 13:7–9). This third part (v. 9) will be analogous to Seth, and will be accepted by God through enduring in faith unto the end (Matt 24:13).

The person who seeks material prosperity seeks the things of this world, the trinkets by which Satan deceives and keeps the person deceived. Real wealth is imbedded in the things of heaven, including possessing the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10), which is the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17).

When moving from physical to spiritual—from the visible things of this world to the invisible attributes of God—the spirit of prophecy becomes an attribute of God analogous to a “thing” in this world. The spirit of prophecy becomes wealth stored in heaven where it cannot be stolen. It is knowledge that cannot be taken from the person. It has the same degree of “thinginess” as the words of the *Logos* had when speaking all that is into existence. In other words, possessing the spirit of prophecy as a spiritual thing is analogous to disciples being epistles in the Book of Life (2 Cor 3:3). The intangible becomes the tangible.

The Christian who seeks the trinkets bartered by the Adversary seeks to be duped by both Satan's servants in this world and by the prince of this world. What worldly trinket is worth an invisible attribute of God? Wealth? A yacht in the Mediterranean; a ski chalet in the Alps or in Jackson, Wyoming; a townhouse in New York; a flat in Paris; a sexual partner young enough to be a son or daughter—what trinket, as a feather flasher on a lynx set, can Satan use to trap you into seeking first the things of this world?

The fault of the first covenant lay with Israel; the fault lay with uncircumcision of the heart; and the fault continues to lay with uncircumcision of the heart. Israel, now born of spirit, is to the Father [θεόν] as natural Israel was to *Yah* [θεός]. Again, the first disciples received circumcised hearts prior to demonstrated obedience; for they saw Jesus and knew to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6). But these first disciples did not continue to walk as Jesus walked. Some demanded that Gentile converts walk as Pharisees walked, while others demanded that Gentiles converts needed to hang onto the customs of Greek

paganism. These later converts interpreted Paul through the lens of Plato. And all in Asia left Paul while he still lived (2 Tim 1:15). In Judea, converts sought Paul's life, and in Achaia, converts questioned whether Paul was even of God. So it was no wonder that when God, millennia earlier, looked at what would happen on the second day of the spiritual creation found nothing He could call "good."

The philosophical construct of theistic determinism and predestination continues to hang around, as a child molester near a school playground, both Judaism and Christendom: the community at Qumran, like Augustine of Hippo and John Calvin centuries later, believed in predestination, with the predestined elect being determined by whether the person was a member of communities of the elect. But predestination negates freewill. Plus, predestination excuses bad behavior. The *elect* will be saved regardless of what the elect does whereas the condemned will perish regardless of what the condemned does: if a person is predestined to be saved, the person will be saved. Or if a person is predestined for damnation, the person will be condemned. The person cannot alter his or her fate, but must live the life God has ordained for the person.

Predestination as a construct is of no particular use to the prince of this world; for if the Adversary is to convince angels who did not rebel that his way works, then he needs as many human beings as possible to exercise good behavior ... the reality imbedded within humankind being consigned to disobedience is that human beings operate within a demonstration project that discloses to both participants and observers that Satan's perception of good and evil will not work. Evil is, theologically, self-determination of what is good and what is evil. A person is to obey God as a child obeys a parent because the parent says to do this or to do that. And evidence that humankind has been consigned to disobedience will now be immediately apparent in the innate hostility felt within the person [you] to blind obedience to God.

Why have you been given a good mind if God doesn't want you to determine for yourself what is good and what is evil? Why do you have free will—if you have freewill—if not to choose to do what is right and good? Why do you have within you an inclination to harm your neighbor as well as an inclination to love your neighbor if God did not want you to choose to love? What fault was to be found with Korah telling Moses, "You have gone too far! For all of the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them" (Num 16:3)? What did Korah say that was wrong? Was not all of Israel holy (Ex 19:5–6)? Was not the Lord among the congregation? What right did Moses have to command that the Sabbath-breaker [the man found gathering sticks] be stoned to death? What right did Moses have to demand that tassels be put on the corners of garments? Certainly it seemed that Moses had gone too far. Human reasoning said, *Enough is enough!* This Moses has to be reined-in for every Israelite has freewill and the right to determine for him or herself what is good and what is evil and whether a Sabbath-breaker should be stoned to death, slain with the broken tablets of the law.

A person can know with certainty that he or she has been consigned to disobedience by what the person "feels" within the person when told that he or she must obey because God said to do this or that. The person will inevitably say, *My God wouldn't demand blind obedience!* And the person will be absolutely

correct. Nothing the person could say would be more correct; for the person does not worship the Most High regardless of what the person has told him or herself. The person worships the Adversary, the god of this world, the prince of the demons that humankind will not cease worshipping even after the sixth Trumpet Plague (Rev 9:20).

What can be said? The evidence that humankind has been consigned to disobedience and has minds set on the things of the flesh is found within the person when told that he or she must obey without questioning, without exercising freewill, without challenging what has been said to the person ... *can't you hear the objections now? Can't you hear your mother saying, If someone told you to jump off the Empire State Building, would you jump? You can, can't you, hear that inner voice challenging obedience for the sake of obedience. And by damn, you're not going to blindly obey anyone!!*

From where did that rejection of blind obedience come? Do you know? ... It comes from the prince of this world—the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2)—reigning over the mental topography of your mind. This is how Satan has deceived everyone (Rev 12:9). This is how the spiritual king of Babylon (Isa 14:4) reigns over the single kingdom of this world that will become that of the Father and His Christ (Rev 11:15) when Satan and his angels are defeated by Michael and cast from heaven and into time (Rev 12:7–12). This is the kingdom that will be taken from the four kings of Daniel chapter seven and given to the Son of Man (vv. 9–14). This kingdom, as Jesus told Pilate, is not of this world or from this world (John 18:36). And every biblical scholar, teacher, and pundit who fails to understand that the kingdom to which the Messiah comes reigns over the mental landscape of human beings has not been sent by God but comes by his or her own authority.

Do disciples have free will? Yes, but not for many days or in any way taught within Judaism or Christendom: when the Father draws a person from the kingdom of this world (John 6:44, 65), the person receives the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] and life in the heavenly realm. This new life is the new creature or new nature that Paul calls the “new man” and this *new man* is born free from bondage to sin (Rom 8:1–2). Sin no longer has dominion over the person (Rom 6:14) even though sin and death continue to dwell in the fleshly members of the person (Rom 7:21–25). Thus, God initiates a war between the mind and the flesh when He draws a person from the world; He creates within Satan’s kingdom a rebellion in a manner foreshadowed by how Satan created within the kingdom of heaven a rebellion that caused a third of the angels to disbelieve God.

Unquestioned belief is the antithesis of being consigned to disobedience. But both the flesh and Satan will fight against the infant son of God, born of spirit. Both will strive to get the mind to compromise with unquestioning obedience. Both will tell the person that he or she has freewill and the mental capacity to determine for oneself right and wrong. And for a short period of time after the person has been born of spirit, this is true: the person is clay in the hands of the master potter, who will make from the same lump vessels for honored usage and vessels for dishonorable use, and the person through his or her freewill tells God how “workable” the person is. The person chooses whether he or she will obey God or whether the person will question obedience. And based upon how

“workable” the person is, Christ Jesus will form the person into one kind of a vessel or the other.

Once a person is formed into a vessel for honorable usage, the person no longer has freewill—this is correct! Once a person is made into a vessel for honorable usage, the person will keep the commandments because the person has the mind of Christ. The person will figuratively choose to obey God when in reality the person no longer has a choice about obeying because of the indwelling of Christ, who kept the law and committed no transgressions. At times the flesh will win a skirmish against the mind, but grace or the mantle of Christ’s righteousness covers these stumbles as the person walks uprightly before man and God. And what is seen though rarely today [because the Body of Christ is dead] is a person who obeys what God says because God said such and such.

Freewill occurs when a disciple as a lump of clay is first centered on the potter’s wheel. The disciple’s inclination towards obedience or disobedience makes the disciple workable or not workable. The disciple’s determination to make a spiritual journey of faith analogous to Abraham’s physical journey of faith causes the heart to be cleansed so that it can be circumcised, and tells the mater potter that this person can be sculpted into or made into a vessel for honorable usage. And conversely, a disciple’s unwillingness to surrender sovereignty over the inner self to God will cause Christ to sculpt this person into a vessel of wrath, reserved for destruction, the most dishonorable of all usages.

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy that if someone “cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy” (2 Tim 2:21); so a person sculpted to be a vessel of wrath can repent and put away lawlessness and unrighteousness. But this will not happen often, unfortunately.

Therefore, determinism occurs not at physical birth nor even at spiritual birth, but after the born of spirit son of God chooses either life or death (Deut 30:15–20). It is the person who has been made into a vessel intended for honorable use who is predestined, called, justified, and glorified (Rom 8:29–30); for this person, even before being drawn from the world, was willing to obey God, not presumptuously, not as a sycophant, not as a doubter, but as a son who loves the Father and his elder Brother enough to do as he is told.

For those first disciples of the second day, spiritual circumcision preceded obedience and actually allowed for obedience to occur. Obedience very seldom occurred prior to receipt of the spirit of God, even in a nation that had the laws of God and had knowledge that its citizens were a holy people. But after God delivered the Church into the hands of the spiritual king of Babylon, Israel was again under the eternal Moab covenant, which has obedience by faith (Deut 30:1–2) preceding receipt of a circumcised heart and mind.

Paul declared that the Moab covenant mediated by Moses was the righteousness that came from faith, and in this law or commandment, Moses wrote, "For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob], when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your [mind—*nephesh*]" (vv. 9–10).

Moses then added, "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess" (vv. 15–16).

4.

Christendom is awash in babble, most trivial, most coming from being physically minded, most no more than white noise that is filtered out by belief. But this background babble hinders infant sons of God from hearing the voice of Jesus (John 10:3), a voice that seems alien to those long accustomed to hearing the noise emanating from the Christianity of the cross. Therefore, certain tenets of the faith must be restated:

1. Jesus gave only one sign to Israel that He was from heaven: this sign is the story of Jonah, who was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish; who entered Sheol and who was resurrected to life as the spokesman sent by God to the people of Nineveh who worshipped Dagon, the fish god.
2. This sign of Jonah is like the sign of a red sky in that it has context-specific significance, meaning that it reflects tranquility going into darkness and reflects turmoil going into daybreak, opposing meanings coming from "night" and "day."
3. The Church is the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27).
4. The Body of Christ is crucified with Christ and buried with Christ in baptism (Rom 6:3-11).
5. So when the Body of Christ returned to sin [lawlessness], the Body of Christ "died" from taking on sin in a manner analogous to Jesus on the cross dying from taking on sin.
6. Therefore, as the physical body of Christ was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, the spiritual Body of Christ was, through separation from God, dead and buried in spiritual Babylon for three days and three nights.
7. But the gates of Hades would not prevail over Jesus' physical body: Jesus saw no corruption and was resurrected from the dead after three days.
8. Likewise, the gates of Hades will not prevail over the spiritual Body of Christ which will be resurrected from death at a second Passover liberation of Israel.
9. The dark portion of the first day of the week, now [when Jesus was resurrected but before Mary Magdalene came to the tomb in the dark to find the stone rolled away] becomes analogous to the darkness of the Tribulation.
10. Thus, it is the resurrection of Jesus' physical body that corresponds to the red sky at evening; whereas it is the resurrection of His spiritual Body that corresponds to the red sky in the morning.

The Body of Christ returned to sin after old selves were buried and new creatures, born of spirit, were made alive in the tents of flesh of former sons of disobedience. No further sacrifice remained for these new creatures or new selves or new natures when they presented themselves as willing bondservants to sin (Rom 6:16). Thus, their lawlessness caused the Father to deliver them back into the hand of the prince of this world. It was Satan not Christ that they wanted to serve anyway; for when sin had no dominion over them (v. 14) and they were free to keep the commandments of God, they spurned God, mocked Christ, and returned to disobedience, contending that since Jesus kept the law they didn't have to. They did not even attempt to walk uprightly before God. They argued that faith in Christ alone was sufficient for salvation, but their faith was a dead faith, a lifeless shadow of living faith that would cause the uncircumcised person to keep the precepts of the law and have his or her uncircumcision counted as circumcision (Rom 2:26).

Faith is dynamic. It is not a fungus that can be bottle and examined as a museum specimen. Faith is believing Jesus and attempting to walk as He walked (1 John 2:3-6). Faith is imitating Paul as he imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17). Faith is a disciple living as a Judean in a world consigned to disobedience. Faith is keeping the commandments to the best of a person's ability, then believing that Jesus' righteousness covers those times when the disciple stumbles. Faith is walking uprightly as a biped before God, not shambling along as a beast, knowing neither good nor evil.

And all of the above relates to spiritual prosperity through understanding the terms of the eternal Moab covenant, to which *YHWH* attached a series of carrots to get physical Israel to turn to God when in a far land. It is always wrong to say that salvation wasn't offered to physical Israel—but the carrots *YHWH* attached to the law didn't produce much righteousness. All those carrots produced was an appetite for carrots. Therefore, a new covenant was promised, one that would replace the Passover covenant made on the day when God took the fathers of Israel by the hand to lead this nation out of Egypt.

I have, in three books published in 2002 and two in 2008, built upon what I was taught during thirty years of listening to weekly sermons, but my teachers knew less than I did when I wrote those first three books and a lot less than I know now. When I wrote those books, I didn't fully understand the key of David. Actually, I wasn't familiar with the term typological exegesis. I did not understand that the repetitive structure of Hebrew poetry had the first presentation of an idea pertaining to the visible natural world, and the second presentation of the same idea pertaining to the invisible spiritual world. The movement of the poetic conceit was from hand to heart, from darkness to light—and this is the true key of David.

Possessing the *Key of David* will cause a person to understand that this visible world reveals the invisible spiritual world.

Lawless disciples will mouth words about God not being a respecter of persons, but they will also expect Christ to change the terms of eternal covenants of promise so that they can practice sin with impunity.

Too many disciples do not realize the seriousness of their callings, or that judgment is presently upon them. So they tell the one who didn't spare but eight

that they do not have to abide by His rules ... how smart is that? They profess that Christ is love. And yes, He is. And He loves them enough to command angels to cast them into the lake of fire for their lawlessness.

Satan rebelled against the laws of God. He decided for himself what constituted good and evil, and many "Christian" ministers teach disciples that Christians don't have to keep the laws of God because Jesus did. Is this not teaching disciples to be lawless? What did Jesus say about those who teach disciples to be lawless? You need to reread Matthew 7:21–23.

Do you really expect to be glorified when teaching a doctrine of lawlessness? If you do, you belong in the lake of fire. Nothing I write can help you.

Again, the promises made to natural Israel, a nation with no spiritual life, were physical promises, or carrots, attached to obedience. These promises of prosperity pertained to the accumulation of "things" and children—money, property, houses, livestock, vineyards, servants—which are the things that televangelists promise today if a person will sow seed (money) in good ground, that good ground always being the televangelist's ministry. As such, these televangelists are keeping alive the promises made with the flesh either when the law was given or when prophets, speaking for God, tried to coax Israel into returning to covenant relationships.

These televangelists are such poor readers that they do not realize they have blended promises made to the flesh with sin to produce a honey and gall concoction sure to sicken the strongest disciple. They promise Christians the blessings of the flesh without accepting any of the contractual terms for achieving these blessings. These televangelists are, frankly, intellectually dishonest with the Word of God, either through their own ignorance, or through spiritual malice by being Satan's ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:14–15).

When the rich young ruler asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18), Christ didn't tell the ruler that he already had eternal life. He didn't tell the young ruler that achieving eternal life wasn't possible if the ruler were a legalist. Rather, Jesus said, "You know the commandments" (v. 20) and listed enough of the single royal law (i.e., the Ten Commandments) so the young ruler would know the law to which Christ was referring.

Keeping the Ten Commandments as part of the law of God was the reasonable expectation of a person who desired eternal life. It was commanded under the eternal second Sinai covenant, and under the eternal Moab covenant.

Giving the rich young ruler the benefit of doubt, let us assume that he was keeping the commandments: Jesus said there was still something this young ruler lacked. "Sell all you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me" (Luke 18:22). Jesus told the young ruler to make a journey of faith, a journey of sufficient length to cleanse his heart so that it could be spiritually circumcised; for on what would this rich young ruler live if he sold all he had and gave it to the poor? How would he live? By faith? Yes, by faith. He would by faith follow Jesus at the cost of getting rid of the things of this world. He would, in a figurative sense, pull up the stake that tethered him to this world and he would then have to trust God to provide for his needs.

Earlier in Luke's gospel, a lawyer stood up to test Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life (10:25), the same question the rich young ruler asked. Jesus' answer was almost the same as in the later incident: "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" (v. 26). The lawyer recited the two summary commandments that incorporate all of the Ten Commandments, with the necessary requisite of love both toward God and toward neighbor—these two commandments sum up not merely the Ten Commandments, but all of the Book of Deuteronomy. It is a mistake to state that these commandments summarize only the *Decalogue*, when, in actuality, the Ten Commandments are the codification of the larger second covenant made on Sinai and ratified by entering into the presence of God.

Jesus tells the lawyer, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live" (Luke 10:28). Again, what the lawyer asked about was eternal life. Jesus didn't tell the lawyer that achieving eternal life wasn't possible unless the lawyer invited Jesus into the lawyer's heart. Rather, Jesus said to do the summary commandments, which encapsulate love that only comes from faith. Eternal life is a gift from God (Rom 6:23), and it is only given to those who follow Jesus.

Jesus told the lawyer that if he were to do what he knows the law says the lawyer would live. The lawyer would receive the gift of eternal life, which negates the value of however many houses the lawyer might possess, or of however many sons and daughters he might father, or of how far his land stretched. But because most of spiritual Israel believes the lie Eve swallowed, the gift of eternal life doesn't mean much: these spiritual Israelites already believe they have eternal life, that they received it at birth in the form of an immortal soul, or in the form of a little angel that no longer remembers coming down from heaven, or in some other form of theological silliness. The lawyer who sought to test Jesus (as well as the rich young ruler) had far more spiritual understanding than do the televangelists who promise old covenant blessings for just believing that the person has been born again.

God is not a respecter of persons. This is universally accepted. So why are the airways filled by televangelists teaching that He is? If Jesus said to keep and to teach others to keep the least of the commandments, why do so many teach a different gospel, one based upon historical exegesis, one based upon doctrines received after spiritual Israel was taken captive by the spiritual king of Babylon? Why do so many teach an accursed gospel in which they mix the physical and the spiritual covenants and promises? Don't they believe that they can sin against the Holy Spirit? Or are they so intellectually dead that they will embrace Satan himself as their messiah? That is what they have set themselves up to do.

Just so everyone understands, conversion occurs when God the Father decides He wants an out-of-season relationship with a person; when the Father decides He wants to hire a person for a certain job. He modifies the person spiritually by giving the person life in the heavenly realm through receipt of His divine breath—and until such modification is made, a person is part of this world. The person's mind is hostile to God. The person cannot understand the things of God, nor even understand that the person needs salvation.

The Father is a legalist. Sin—any sin, even the smallest sin—separates angel or human from Him. Therefore, to have a relationship with the Father, the disciple

must be sin free, which no human has been except for Christ Jesus. But as the *Logos* prior to His human birth, Jesus' physical life was worth more than all of the Creation. His shed blood is of sufficient worth to cover all sins, thereby reconciling disciples to the Father.

Jesus told two parables that relate to spiritual prosperity—the parable of the pounds [*minas*], and the parable of the talents—with both parables told within ten days or so of His death; so the subject was on His mind at the end of His ministry here on earth. The subject should be on our minds, for the juxtaposition in Deuteronomy is with life comes prosperity, and with death comes adversity. Jesus' parables show this relationship between life and death at work.

In the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11–27), a certain nobleman who can be read as Christ—Jesus told the parable because His disciples "supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately" (v. 11)—goes to a far country to get royal power for himself. He would return sometime in the future. But before he leaves, he gives a pound each to ten of his slaves, or servants, and he tells his slaves to do business with them until he returns. And here the parable addresses all of those Christians who teach a dispensation of grace, and who teach that legalism is the great apostasy: doing business is a doctrine of works.

The citizens of the nobleman's country send a delegation after the nobleman. Along with, apparently, seven of the ten slaves who received a pound each, the citizens say that they will not have the nobleman rule over them. They will not have Christ rule over them ... how will Christ rule over them? Again, His kingdom is not of this world or from this world. His kingdom will reign over the mental landscape of all living entities, for even the natures of the great predators will be changed (Isa 11:6–9).

What does the unit of money represent since we put money with moneylenders in order to gain interest? When Jesus was asked by His disciples why He spoke in parables, "He answered, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the crowds] it has not been given. For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away'" (Matt 13:11-12). This language is virtually identical to what is said to the slave who buries his pound and to the slave who buries his talent.

What can be taken from the one who has nothing? The person has no material possessions. The person has only his or her life—and that is what can be taken.

Money, now, isn't what Jesus left with His disciples. What He left was knowledge of the Father, for Moses had left with Israel knowledge of the law and the promise of everlasting life. What Jesus revealed was knowledge of the mysteries of God. So in some way, both the pound and the talent represent knowledge. More knowledge is given to some disciples than to other disciples, depending upon the job for which the disciple has been called. And having less than nothing is losing what the disciple had received by promise— and what has been received by promise is eternal life.

The nobleman returns. The first slave comes forward and says, "'Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds'" (Luke 19:16). And it needs to be here noted that this slave is offering to the nobleman all eleven pounds, the original one pound and then the ten additional pounds that have been earned in this present

age. Those ten additional pounds were always the nobleman's, and were not the slave's to spend however the slave wished even though the slave had earned them through his efforts. And when substituting knowledge of the mysteries of God for the pounds earned, what we encounter is what the Apostle Peter wrote about being made a holy people to proclaim the mighty acts of Christ (1 Peter 2:9–10).

Multiplying the pound or knowledge left with a person is making disciples for Christ Jesus; doing business with knowledge of the mysteries of God is evangelizing the world, beginning at home (Luke 24:46–47). The additional disciples always belong to Christ and the Father, and never to us. But in a way, we will always have a relationship with those whom we have brought into fellowship with Christ. And now we can peek back at what Jesus told Peter after the rich young ruler left: we will get more relationships back in this age than we will leave because of Christ. Each of these relationships will have an aura of permanency, since both student and teacher should receive eternal life in the age to come; both will then be of the house of God.

Even though the first slave offers the nobleman all eleven pounds, the nobleman apparently takes only the one which had been initially given since when the one pound of the third slave is later given to this first slave, those witnessing this accounting protest, saying "Lord, he has ten pounds!" (Luke 19:25). He would have had eleven pounds if he kept them all, and he would have no pounds if he had returned them all to the nobleman. So this first slave was allowed to keep his increase or the gain he had made trading. He could keep the relationships he had made while teaching converts the mysteries of God. Plus, in addition to this gain of relationships, he will be rewarded by being given authority over ten cities, thereby establishing a one-to-one correspondence between his earnings and his reward. And cities are much more than houses: they are houses that have grown large, with New Jerusalem being the Bride of Christ. So instead of getting a couple of houses back for the one the disciple left, he will receive authority over entire cities while being part of the house of the Father.

Again, cities are houses that have grown large. The *many rooms in my [Jesus'] Father's house* become New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ.

So what Jesus told Peter about receiving, in this age, more relationships and houses than left behind seems to be that our future spiritual prosperity—the treasure that we store up in heaven—is directly related to the work that we do in this age in spreading the gospel, taking it from here (wherever "here" is) to the farthest corners of the world.

But not much treasure is acquired taking the false gospel of lawlessness to the world. A person teaching lawlessness makes him or herself an enemy of Christ.

The second slave has made five pounds with the one pound that had been left with him. Continuing the one-to-one correspondence between gain and reward, this slave is given rule over five cities (Luke 19:19). And the third slave came forward, returning the pound he had been given to the nobleman. He had not done what he had been commanded: "Do business with these until I come back" (Luke 19:13). Rather, he had buried the knowledge of God with which he was to have done business, and the nobleman isn't pleased. He says that the slave should have at least put the pound with the money lenders so that it would have accrued interest: if this slave didn't want to manipulate his capital, thereby making a

greater return in his investment, then the least the slave should have done is put the pound with someone who would work with it.

How is a person who has received knowledge to put this knowledge to work for another? The question answers itself: the person works for another, or at an even more primordial level invests his or her money into another's ministry ... within the Church of God, I was taught that the pound represented the Holy Spirit. But would a person put his or her portion of the Holy Spirit out to money lenders? A person wouldn't. The Holy Spirit isn't a tangible thing on which interest can be accrued. So what about a person's knowledge of the mysteries of God, since knowledge also isn't tangible? And a little linguistic leap is necessary, but a leap that can be well supported from Scripture.

Tithing is commanded by the Moab covenant (Deut 14:22 as part of Paul's law of faith); it isn't a voluntary option that a person can do if the person wants covenant blessings. It isn't limited to the Sinai covenant, or the Law of Moses. It will be, rather, part of what has been written on the hearts and minds of spiritually circumcised disciples. To not tithe is to grieve the Holy Spirit.

If you have been drawn from this world, you know you should tithe. Excuses are merely reasons why you will not have Christ rule over you, thereby making you one of the seven slaves or servants who will be slaughtered by Christ when He returns, this slaughtering being the resurrection to condemnation (John 5:29). But no ministry should ever ask for your tithe. The ministry that asks is false to its core.

Because of a disciple's knowledge of the mysteries of God, the disciple knows to tithe, returning to God the portion of this disciple's increase that doesn't belong to the disciple. Now, the tithe has acquired the characteristics of the received pound. So, since this drawn disciple will tithe willingly, what this disciple is really doing is investing in a work or ministry that proclaims the mighty deeds of Christ to the world, while beginning locally. This disciple can proclaim the mighty deeds of Christ through public evangelism, and/or this disciple will proclaim Christ through paying his or her tithe to a ministry that takes Christ to the world. Therefore, tithing becomes a salvational issue as we will see when we look at the parable of the talents in which the slave who buries his talent is bound and cast into darkness. Make no mistake: tithing is a salvational issue, but it is an issue between the disciple and God, not between the disciple and any ministry.

Again, any ministry that asks for money does not work on the same terms as Paul worked, who even when in need did not burden the saints at Corinth where he was then teaching. Any ministry that sends out an appeal-for-funds letter like the letter of Herbert Armstrong from December 1947 is false regardless of the good work that the ministry thinks it is doing or the "truth" the ministry possesses ... Armstrong wore out a generation of saints with his constant appeals for money, and turned off a second and a third generation. He built an army of cynical detractors who were once supporters but now mock all discussions of the Second Advent. He truly harmed more than he helped.

Nevertheless, if your treasure is here on earth, if your focus is on acquiring the tender things of this earth, if your prosperity consists only of "things"—then why should Christ bother glorifying you? You won't appreciate receiving eternal life?

You want the things of this earth, part of a creation that is passing away. You're not really interested in the things of God.

If eternal life doesn't mean enough to you in this age that you will not strive for it, you won't miss not having it in the age to come.

What you do with your money reflects where your heart is. What you do with God's money (i.e., your tithe, to which you have no claim) reveals whether you are a thief. And how many unrepentant thieves are there going to be in the kingdom of heaven? You have one guess, if you don't know the answer.

In the parables, a pound or talents is/are received in this present age. The work done is performed in this present age. The increase is made in this present age, but isn't spent or consumed in this age. Rather the earnings don't belong to the slaves until the nobleman returns. And the reward isn't received until the age to come arrives—that reward is spiritual authority over cities.

Under the eternal covenants, prosperity is spiritual, which apparently has some physical-like qualities, in that we make relationships now with those individuals we disciple. We multiply our voices through acquiring broadcast or printing facilities, but it is through personal evangelism and spiritual fellowship that relationships are made. The work of ministry, however large or small, produces spiritual gain for both Christ and for the disciple doing the work.

Parables are analogies, and as such, they don't work exactly like allegories, but they are close enough that what can be said about allegories can be said about parables. What the nobleman left with each of the ten slaves was identical. All ten slaves had knowledge of the mysteries of God, but what Paul writes about spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4–11) suggests that what is allotted to each individual by the Holy Spirit differs (v. 11). Thus, what is allotted equally might be better read as the opportunity to work at proclaiming the mighty deeds of Christ. The widow putting in her two mites gave more than the many coins of a rich man. Both had the equal opportunity to give. The gifts differed, with the gift of the widow being of greater worth spiritually even though it was worth less physically. Paul's discussion of sowing sparingly and sowing bountifully (2 Cor 9:6–15) works with the idea of receiving interest on what Christ has left with each person. The spiritual interest received is somewhat dependent upon what has been sown, with the minimum sowing being the tithe that actually belongs to God. The more that is sown, the more interest a person receives. Making now another linguistic leap, the pound in the parable has become a person's wealth, with everyone's wealth being perceived as a single unit of one pound. The widow's wealth is her one pound, and she gives it all to the temple. Likewise, the rich man's wealth is also his one pound, of which he only gives, maybe, a thousandth of it to the temple. Therefore, the rich man has sown much more sparingly than has the widow even though he has given more coins of greater worth. And here, we can again link this parable to what Jesus told Peter about receiving more in this age than what the disciples left (Luke 18:29–30).

Unfortunately, the evidence of two millennia of Christianity isn't that drawn disciples receive many more houses in this life than they left. Rather, the evidence is that most disciples struggle financially as they reflect the overall prosperity of the social area in which they live. Their sowing of seed hasn't statistically improved their material prosperity beyond what their prosperity

would have increased or decreased within the rise or decline of the social-economic strata in which the disciples reside. Certainly benefits come. For disciples, things have a way of just working out when there doesn't seem to be any way possible for that to happen. But getting back physically much more than what was sown hasn't been the case in the Church of God.

King David was appalled that the wicked seemed to prosper more than the godly, and not much has changed since his reign when it comes to the righteous and material prosperity.

Under the prosperity gospel, disciples sow seed in this ministry or in that ministry, hoping that their seed sown in the particular ministry will return blessings to them in this age. They have sown physically, and they will reap physically if they have sown into good ground. But if they reap physically, they have no crop stored in heavenly warehouses. They remain spiritually bankrupt. They are spiritual paupers since they have received their reward for their giving.

Was that blunt enough? If you sow physically to receive physically, you have no treasure in heaven. Your sowing has become like the Pharisees' giving. Instead of a trumpet blast causing all to look to see you give, your name becomes part of a telethon's pledge roll. You have occupied a phone line, while helping to take an accursed gospel to the world. You might as well smile: you have been conned by the greatest con man of all time, Satan himself, the spiritual king of Babylon.

The spiritual interest on the seed sown in a ministry doesn't become the disciple's prior to judgment. Until then that interest might well be accruing, but it doesn't necessarily translate into things. Rather, Jesus commanded disciples to, "Sell your possession, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:33–34). And this is what He told the rich young ruler, and this is what He would tell those televangelists who preach the prosperity gospel. God the Father knows that as humans, disciples have need for things, for income, for food. About these things, disciples should not worry. Instead, they should strive for the kingdom of God, and the physical things that are needed will be given (vv. 29–31).

The slave who has his one pound taken from him did nothing with it. The nobleman says that the least that the slave should have done would have been to put it with the moneylenders so that it might earn interest. The least a disciple is to do with his or her knowledge of the mysteries of God is to tithe, which is merely returning to God what is already His. While it has been argued by some scholars that tithing ended with the abolishment of the old covenant, Israel did not cease to exist when it is no longer a physically circumcised nation. Likewise, tithing does not cease to exist when the temple is constructed of living stones.

Israel is now a nation circumcised of heart (Rom 2:28–29). Likewise the eternal covenants that were made with the fleshly nation now pertain to the spiritual nation of Israel. And this is seen in the Moab covenant addressing three tithes, or rather, one tithe divvied into three funds: one fund for the operation of the temple, or now, the work of evangelism; a fund for feast expenses; and a fund for supporting all who have no inheritance in Israel (Deut 14:22–29).

The greed of Herbert Armstrong was most visible in what he taught about tithing: the Church of God labeled the three applications of the tithe as the 1st, 2nd

and 3rd tithes, each a full 10% of a member's income. Under the formerly most visible administration of the Church of God, considerable faith was necessary to trust God to supply needs when a disciple's outgo versus income didn't balance after the 1st tithe was paid. Add now a 2nd ten percent every year, and a 3rd ten percent every third year—more faith was needed than many disciples had. Nevertheless, most members of this administration faithfully paid what was asked of them. A lot of seed was sown, and the ground went to weeds.

Before going farther, it should here be stated: God never asked for 30% of Israel's income. The tithe is 10%, and there is only one tithe. The second tithe was 10% of the tithe. Levites returned to the Israelite a tithe of the tithe so that the Israelite could eat while appearing three times a year before the Lord—the Levites returned to Israel (or paid a tithe themselves) the second tithe. And the third tithe was the single tithe not going to the temple on years three and six of the seven year land Sabbath cycle, but to the local Levite and to the widows and the fatherless (those who had no inheritance in Israel).

Tithing was never intended to become the burden that it became under Armstrong when a person gave thirty percent of his or her income to the Church, plus additional offerings. Tithing is returning a tenth of a disciple's increase back to God, who retains His claim on this first tenth. Under the old covenant, tithing was a national responsibility that preceded receiving the promises of physical prosperity (Mal 3:8–12). The entire nation of Israel was to be a holy people (Ex 19:5–8). The Sinai covenants weren't made with individuals, but with Moses and with a nation. Therefore, both the responsibilities and the promises of the Sinai covenant were national, with national punishment (enslavement or captivity) coming to the nation for disobedience. And the *watchmen* today who prophesy national captivity for the modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel fail to understand that Israel is no ethnic peoples, but individuals who have been born of spirit and circumcised of heart. They, like the televangelists preaching the prosperity gospel, are exceedingly poor readers of Scripture.

The disciple who fails to tithe has been tested, and has been found wanting. That disciple can be assured more testing will come, so God the Father can be absolutely certain about where the disciple's treasure is stored.

When Israel became a spiritual nation, all promises within the covenants of promise have also become spiritual. God knows what the needs are of disciples He has drawn from the world. He would fail in His responsibility to those whom He has drawn if He didn't provide their needs now that they are no longer of the world. Of course, if they return to the world; if they leave the covenant relationship into which they have been drawn, they can expect to have to provide for themselves. And God's promise to provide doesn't relieve the disciple of his or her responsibility to work. Rather, the promise is that regardless of what work is diligently done, enough material prosperity will come the disciple's way that his or her needs are met—and not only needs, but *wants* that don't harm the disciple's spiritual development. Therefore, tithing is directly addressed by Jesus (Matt 23:23), commanded by the Moab covenant (*cf.* Deut 30:10; Deut 14:22), and indirectly commanded in both the parable of the pounds and in the parable of the talents. Where it is indirectly commanded, it can only pertain to spiritually circumcised Israel.

Under no covenant should a spiritually circumcised Israelite expect to receive material prosperity because of the person's faithfulness in tithing. That prosperity might occur, but the promise is that the person is storing up treasure in heaven, even if that treasure is merely the interest gained on the person's pound through tithing.

The other parable Jesus gave concerning spiritual prosperity is of talents (Matt 25:14-30): a man going on a journey summoned his slaves, and gave to one five talents, to another two talents, and to the third one talent. After a long time, the master returns and demands an accounting from each slave. The one who received five talents had made five more, and his master said, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master" (v. 21). That last phrase now makes spiritual prosperity a salvational issue, thereby linking life to prosperity in the same way they are linked in the Moab covenant (Deut 30:15).

The exact nature of what the *many things* are over which the slave will be put isn't mentioned, nor needs be. The purpose of this parable, which is given less than a week after the parable of the pounds, appears to be for the purpose of adding flesh to the first parable; for the same thing is said to the second slave who returns two additional talents made from the two talents he received as was said to the first slave. To whom more is given, more will be expected to receive the same reward. Thus, the disciple who has been given five talents and has a fivefold increase will return to Christ thirty talents, of which he can keep twenty-five when the two parables are put together. This servant, who will become a son when glorified, now receives both the treasure or prosperity he or she has accrued in heaven, as well as the reward of being put over five cities. But the disciple who received two talents and who has a tenfold increase will return twenty-two talents to Christ at judgment. This glorified saint will keep twenty talents and will actually have less treasure than the servant to whom more was given, but this saint will be rewarded by being put in charge of ten cities. So this saint's reward will be greater than the first's.

Parables or allegories—both special forms of metaphors—establish one-to-one correspondences that are literary, not literal.

The reward of a glorified saint might be to rule over cities, if the saint doesn't become a pillar in the temple of God (Rev 3:12). What the parables actually establish is that a relationship exists between doing work here on earth for God the Father and His Son, and the saint's prosperity in the world to come. The minimum that a saint is to do is pray and pay (i.e., pay tithes and give offerings). If a saint buries what the saint has received, the saint is worthless and will be cast into the lake of fire. Thus, what a saint does with his or her wealth, opportunities, and abilities becomes a salvational issue, which wasn't the case under the old covenant. But under the old covenant, national captivity was the club God used to chastise an adulterous nation.

Malachi concludes his instructions to bring the tithes of the nation into the storehouse with, "Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I [God] commanded him at Horeb for all Israel" (4:4). The first covenant made at Horeb has been abolished (Eph 2:15). Therefore, the promises to open the windows of heaven for a tithing nation have also been abolished. But

the principle of tithing hasn't been. Rather, the windows of heaven have become purses that are holding the prosperity of saints in heaven until their judgment is revealed.

The work of saints is to proclaim the mighty deeds of Christ to the world (1 Peter 2:9). Through trading upon a saint's natural gifts and received spiritual knowledge, the saint accumulates spiritual prosperity, to which will be added rewards when glorified. There is no possible way for one person to determine another person's level of spirituality from the second person's material wealth. No correspondence is promised to spiritually circumcised Israel. Thus, the prosperity gospel of televangelists that sounds too good to be true is. However, Satan as the king of Babylon can make the physical promises of seed, time, and harvest come true. He can honor what his ministers and servants have promised to financial contributors in the name of Jesus. But no spiritual prosperity accrues when a person sows into the soils of this world.

Now, returning to the second tithe: a tithe of the firstfruits is commanded to be kept for attending the feasts of the Lord (Deut 14:23–26). The language is somewhat ambiguous. The Church of God, based upon Herbert Armstrong's understanding of this passage, taught that a full tithe was to be kept for attending religious services on the annual holy days. That teaching has allowed many people to attend services in exotic locations, and to generally treat attendance at the holy day services as expensive vacations. The fruit of spending 10% of one's increase in a week or so hasn't been spiritual enrichment as much as it has been physical enjoyment according to the physical blessings promised under the first Sinai covenant.

A little logic needs applied to this 2nd tithe command: firstfruits are the tithe, are they not? A person doesn't give to God second-fruits or third-fruits? And an ancient Israelite would have taken his or her tithe to the temple on years 1, 2, 4, and 5 of the seven year cycle. The person would not have lugged his or her entire crop up to the temple only to take 70% or 80% of it home a week later. Rather, the person would have only taken the tithe to the temple—and of this tithe, a tithe (10%) is returned to the person by the priests so the person can eat while attending High Day services.

When the command to spend a festival tithe is closely examined, the traditional practice of setting aside ten percent of one's yearly increase cannot be well supported. Rather, the command appears to be that a tithe of a tithe is to be retained to cover festival expenses. This would be one percent of a person's yearly increase, and would certainly be enough to address the expense of a housetop booth constructed of boughs and food for an eight day festival. The practice of traveling to exotic locations for services, staying in the best hotels, and feasting lavishly seems to be contrary to the spirit of High Sabbath observance—and seems to be a spirit coming from the prince of this world. Yes, the passage commanding retention of a festival tithe says that the money can be spent for whatever the person desires (Deut 14:26), but the purpose of observing the High Days is "to learn to fear the Lord your God always" (v. 23). The purpose isn't to vacation far from home, which is what has happened with the location of feast sites near Disney World, or in the South of France. The spiritual intent seems to be that services should be held locally, not just at Jerusalem, or at Orlando,

Florida. Under the new covenant, with its spiritual promises and obligations, learning to fear the Lord isn't dining in the restaurants of five star hotels, but listening to the Word of the Lord expounded wherever the person is.

Now, spiritually adding to the festival tithe being one percent of one's annual increase is the observance of new moons, the Sabbaths which the Church of God studied and started to keep in the late 1920s, but abandoned a decade later. When new moons are observed, every spiritual Israelite ends up taking charge of his or her own salvation though setting holy day calendars locally. Paul's accursed gospel had converted Pharisees mingling the physical and spiritual covenants. The Church of God has likewise mingled the physical with the spiritual by using physical Jerusalem to set the sacred calendar for spiritual Israelites returning to spiritual Jerusalem. Observance of new moons shows that centralized governance of the Body of Christ is contrary to Scripture. In addition, since the setting of the seasonal calendar requires that harvest feasts are kept at harvest time, with the Feast of Ingathering to occur when the harvest moon does, feasts starting dates will vary. Therefore, the Feast of Ingathering will occur in Perth approximately six months before or after it does in North America. It will be kept locally there by spiritual Israelites, using one percent of their annual increase to cover their expenses for attending services. This is not to say that additional moneys cannot be spent to observe the feast. It is to say that those additional moneys are not a person's tithe.

Has, then, the teaching about saving a 2nd tithe been changed from what Armstrong taught? Yes, it has. The fruit that has matured over the past forty years of spending ten percent of a person's income on the person in a week has caused the passage commanding the saving of a 2nd tithe to be reexamined. When reread critically, only a portion of a person's tithe is to be spent as a form of worshipping God for bringing Israel into the promised land (Deut 26:1–11). Debate will occur over how much of the tithe can be eaten by the person and over how much is given to the Levite. This debate will give rise to counting a person's mint leaves, a figurative expression addressing the retained carnality of a person which, if not checked, will cause the person to sow as little seed as possible with God, thereby garnering little interest on the person's spiritual investment. Thus, within the ambiguity that exists in the passages commanding disciples to save a festival tithe, the determination that a tithe of a tithe should be retained for the exclusive purpose of learning to fear God on His high Sabbaths seems reasonable, and not overly burdensome.

If a person wishes to go on a vacation to learn to fear God, then that person needs to set non-tithe moneys aside for that purpose; these moneys would be in addition to the commanded festival tithe (1% of a person's increase, not income).

There isn't enough ambiguity in the text to support an argument for a full tithe to be retained as a festival tithe, not when the evidence of that practice is an absence of spiritual fruit. Rather, the practice has promoted a Christmas-type holiday atmosphere, in which actual competition has existed in how to spend moneys. That ought not to have happened. When Sukkot or Feast of Tabernacles observance was commanded, there were no five star hotels, nor jet travel to distant lands. Vacation as a concept was underdeveloped: a pilgrimage to the Promised Land might be as close to our concept of a vacation as the ancient world

could experience. The principle, though, of learning to fear the Lord remains unchanged. The annual Sabbaths are shadows of the significant events in the plan God has for humanity, so an ancient Israelite journeying to Jerusalem to observe the Passover was certainly escaping his or her day to day routine, but the person wasn't on holiday, using the British expression. The person was worshiping God in the most sacred setting then extant. And the same thing cannot be said of the person making a pilgrimage to Orlando, Florida, to attend Feast of Tabernacles services. That geographical location is no more sacred to God than is Barrow, Alaska.

The question must be asked, does a person need to travel away from his or her home church to learn to fear the Lord? The answer is, No! And it is NO every time the question is asked. Spiritual Jerusalem has no geographical location. Rather, its walls are of living stones in whom are the doctrines of Christ. God sets His name wherever two or more are gathered. It is a mistake to use physical Jerusalem as the lens through which spiritual Israelites worship God. Likewise, it is a mistake to create multinational, autocratic, top-down governing institutions within the Body of Christ. Associations of fellowships are commendable. But the Bride of Christ needs to keep Her eyes on Christ, not on other men. She needs to keep a spiritual focus, what the 2nd tithe actually shows.

While Paul certainly traveled at feast time, and tried to return to Jerusalem, we don't find Paul commanding entire congregations to travel to Jerusalem. But in the Millennium, the families of the earth shall up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Booths (Zech 14:16–19). When this passage is coupled to, "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose" (Deut 16:16), what becomes evident is that representatives of all of the families of the earth shall appear before God three times a year, with Jerusalem being the only named place at this time where God has chosen for Millennium observance. So making a pilgrimage to a location where God has placed His name fits Scripture. However, under the spiritual application of passages that are undeniably physical, God the Father has placed His name wherever two or more disciples are gathered in His name. Therefore, in this era wherever local congregations assemble on the weekly Sabbath is also where God has placed His name for annual Sabbath observance. No one has to travel halfway around the world to arrive at an exotic feast site to learn to fear the Lord.

The Church of God's traditional teaching that saints should save a full ten percent of the saints' yearly income for the purpose of attending the holy days cannot be well supported from Scripture although retention of a festival tithe is commanded. The context indicates that this festival tithe is a tithe of a tithe, or "some of the first of all the fruit of the ground" (Deut 26:2). Therefore, as an administrative decision, disciples should save a tithe of the tithe (1%) of the disciple's increase for the purpose of learning to fear the Lord where He places His name. This tithe of the tithe was returned to the tithe payer by the Levitical priesthood after the full tithe was paid. It is, therefore, unacceptable for the individual tithe payer to determine what percentage of the tithe will be 2nd tithe. The tithe payer is to bring the full tithe to the ministry, who then becomes responsible for returning the 2nd tithe to the tithe payer. But within the

prerogative of individual fellowships are the administrative decisions of how best to handle this festival tithing in this era.

The 3rd tithe is the tithe paid on the third and sixth years of a seven year cycle. It is not an additional tithe, but a different destination for the single tithe. While nine tenths of the tithe for years one, two, four, and five were to go to the temple, the tithe of years three and six supported the Levite, and all who resided in Israel without an inheritance. While an argument can be sustained that in this era support of the ministry and the work of evangelism are the same, under the new covenant all will know the Lord. Ministry will not consist of evangelism.

The linguistic icon "tithe" is used in context with firstfruits, first born, and other offerings. In its old covenant usage, the person producing the tithe also partakes in consuming the tithe, while remembering the resident Levite. Thus, the icon acquires sufficient vagueness that administrative decisions regarding tithing are necessary; yet, all of the tithe is holy to God (Lev 27:30). Therefore, the tithe remains holy. But only one tithe is paid, not two or three. A feast tithe can be consumed by saints where God places His name, and this isn't on every hill and in every grove, nor is it at every national vacation destination. It is, rather, where genuine saints assemble together for Sabbath services. And it is there where the ministry should return to the tithe payer his or her feast tithe, or 2nd tithe. This would have been in the form of feeding tithe payers during High Day observances. This would still be an appropriate means of returning the feast tithe. To use the feast tithe for any other purpose is problematic, regardless of what the past practices have been of the formerly most visible administration of the Church of God.

Not understanding the spiritual nature of the new covenant, the former Worldwide Church of God (WCG) taught that the feast tithe should be used by disciples to live as that administration imagined saints would live in the Millennium. The emphasis was on physical prosperity. And any protests to the contrary the former WCG are refuted by the locations chosen for feast sites, which with very few exceptions argue against disciples primarily coming to the Feast of Tabernacles to learn to fear the Lord. Festival brochures were published that emphasized the vacation potential of each location. And the practices of the splinter organizations that have derived from this formerly most visible administration of the Church of God have these organizations choosing the most exotic vacation spots possible for their Feast of Tabernacles sites. It is hardly a coincidence that most of them choose at least one location near Disney World.

Question: if God places His name at Disney World as He had at Jerusalem for the purpose of disciples learning to fear Him, why does He need so many competing sites within a few miles of each other? Wouldn't one site be enough? And if it were enough, which site, or whose site would it be? Or is it possible that God hasn't placed His name at any of the temporary sites?

Concerning the poverty tithe which has been called the 3rd tithe (Deut 14:28–29), paying this tithe is a form of worshipping God that expresses love to those individuals who are without resources. It is used to support the dependent, regardless of the reason for their dependency. It is the full tithe, suggesting that on the third and sixth years, the feast is handled differently. When it has been fully paid, the tithe payer can ask God for a special blessing, a spiritual blessing.

My observation is that a terrific number of couples have a child after their third tithe year.

It is easy to spiritualize away the promises of God that have material benefits coming from paying tithes and giving offerings into a ministry. None of us can see what treasure we have stored in heaven; so a charlatan can beg offerings while assuring a disciple that he or she is storing up treasure in heaven. A televangelist will promise a material blessing for the sowing of a large enough seed, knowing that the law of coincidence will cause some of his or her audience to continue sending in donations. Thus, the audiences that these televangelists continue to milk don't seem to be expanding. Rather, moneys that once would have gone to a local church now are being sown in "better ground," as if giving offerings to God equates to buying lottery tickets.

The parables of the pounds and of the talents suggest that as long as the person has put his or her pound or talent out to the bankers, the person has resolved the salvational issue, but if the person has sown into the soil of this world, the person won't receive much interest. The person faces spiritual poverty when judged. So it behooves a person to determine as best as the person can where God works—and it becomes self-serving to say more about who is doing the work of God at this time.

* * *

Because this article was first written in 2003 then revised in 2008, Scripture citations are from both the New Revised Standard Version and from the English Standard Version; thus, the following permission statements are cited:

"The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright, 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

<http://homerkizer.org>