

God's Church
is
SPIRITUAL

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

What is God's Church in New Testament times? Does it continue to exist as an Old Testament type physical organization with repetitive symbolic ceremonies and rituals? Is a ministry of men the means used by God to communicate with and teach the faithful His spiritual truth? Is God's Church merely the continuation of the practices established by God for ancient Israel which was never a converted nation? It is critically important for you to know because your eternal salvation depends on you knowing the truth and then acting on it.

Preamble

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Phi 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 [Christ] Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [the glorified Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliffs Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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Truly converted Christians today are faced with a rather huge problem. They have to determine which one of the many new “churches of God” that have arisen since the end of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) organization is the one and only true Church founded by God on the Day of Pentecost.

Or, is it any of them?

And, if its none of them, then where is God’s one, true church that was never to die out? Is it an organization of men with the words “church of God” somewhere in the title of their organization? There continues to be much confusion with one church claiming to be the true one and saying that all the others are not. And, what adds to the problem is that those attending the different “churches of God” don’t seem to be able to sort out which one, if any of them, is indeed God’s one true Church. It would seem that the measure being used is to what extent a given church is similar or not to the WCG in terms of its mission and doctrines and in the manner in which it conducts its worship services.

All say they are remaining faithful to the truth given to God’s church by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, (HWA) but upon closer examination, it would seem none of them are fully doing so. Some say they are now more advanced in knowledge than HWA; others say, they have to continue HWA’s work of preaching the gospel to the nations as the end has not yet come.

However, HWA whom they say they follow, clearly said that the Gospel had been preached to the world and that no one was to continue doing so as no one has been prepared as he was.

*He used me in building the Philadelphia era of HIS CHURCH-
-and in proclaiming His Gospel IN ALL THE WORLD!*

*Now He has brought this Great Commission near its FINISH.
Neither I nor you know how much longer will be required
completely to finish it!*

*But as I said at the beginning, some, even in the public
press, are beginning to ask, WHO is the "heir apparent," as
the newspapers put it? WHO will rule the Church after Mr.
Armstrong?*

The answer is, NOBODY!

*I have gone to considerable length in this letter to show you
how God does His Work among humans through one man
at a time. He specially prepared me for the Work He has
called me to do. I know of NO ONE ELSE who has been so
prepared.*

Excerpt from Letter to co-workers from HWA dated March 19, 1981.

And, HWA on page 158 of *Mystery of the Ages* made the following statement:

This gospel now has been preached into every nation.

Some churches of God have abandoned some of the doctrines taught in the WCG and have basically become churches of God in name only. Were HWA to come back and see what they are doing, he would be appalled to see how much they have departed from the truth. Yet, former members of the WCG, continue to attend their services being sure they are in the right place and that when the time comes to go to the place of safety, it is to their church that God will reveal its location. So, all is well, and all can breathe a sigh of relief.

Or, is it?

There is no lack of Mr. Armstrong imitators who are hoping to succeed in growing their church to a size comparable to that of HWA and to enjoy the large amounts of tithes and offerings that will result. They hope to be able to go on television, be on social media, have 1-800 numbers for people to call in to their phone banks, to have a college, nice hous-

es, late model cars, and travel the world in private jets doing the work.

But, is that what God's Church is? Is it a large, visible-to-the-world organization engaged in preaching the Gospel to the world and giving out a warning message. Many by their actions seem to think that it is as they continue sitting in the congregations of so-called "churches of God" who say that is their mission.

Knowing what is God's Church in New Testament times is of vital importance for all those who would want to ensure they are not wasting their precious limited time and energy listening to people who are preaching as a way to make a living or for filthy lucre sake as the Bible states it.

Tit 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.[\[those preaching as a means of making money\]](#)

Tit 1:10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: [\[the Jews in their days but there have also always been many unruly and vain talkers of all nations throughout the centuries including today.\]](#)

Tit 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, [for filthy lucre's sake.](#)[\[Trying to make followers out of them so they can exploit them financially.\]](#)

In order to cut through all the different arguments being put forward to justify that one "church of God" is the true one and all the others aren't, we have to go to the one and only sure source of truth that we have and that is God's holy Bible. Either the Bible gives us the answer or we must remain in the dark as to what and where is God's true Church. Of course, it may be that God's church is not really in any given physical location nor is it a given physical organization of men.

Let's see what the Bible has to say about it.

False Prophets

The Bible tells us that there will be many false prophets or teachers that will arise and that rose up right after Christianity began.

Mat 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

And, Christ tells us all they would succeed in deceiving not the few but the many. Those being deceived are individuals who are in the world and have never been called. They are not members of God's Church of which Christ says, they cannot be deceived.

Mat 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

If God's elect could be deceived then God could not hold them responsible because a deceived person doesn't know he is deceived as if he did, he wouldn't be deceived. Judgment is upon the house of God because its members cannot be deceived.

1Pe 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

The world is not now under judgment because it is deceived.

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Christ tells us clearly that the elect, that's you, cannot be deceived. If you ever fall away from the truth, it will be by a consciously and knowingly made decision. Falling away is not something that happens to someone without that person being aware of it. They know what they are doing.

What is God's command to all His elect, in the past, today and in the future?

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

God's people are told to try the spirits, to examine with their Bible whether what they are being taught is the truth or not. They are not to accept any teaching without first verifying its truthfulness with their Bible and if it turns out to be in error, they are not to follow it nor are they to associate with or remain with any man or organization of men whose teachings are false.

Why would false prophets be able to gain the trust of initially truly con-

verted Christians? What would cause them to want to follow them?

2Ti 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they [originally truly converted Christians] will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

Truly converted Christians who at first were full of zeal and enthusiasm to obey God, lose their great motivation to obey Him and start longing to go back to their previous unconverted life. But, they don't want to lose their salvation, they need to find someone that will reassure them that they can go back to some of the sinful ways of their previous life and still not lose their salvation. They'll downplay the importance of the truth they have received and give priority to the teachings of false prophets who tell them they can go on sinning and not lose their salvation.

2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Where would these false prophets come from?

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

And what would they do?

Jud 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Jud 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are men who would come among the truly converted pretending to believe the truth that they have only as a means of getting access to them so they can start placing doubt in their minds regarding their beliefs and seek to have them follow them instead of the truth.

Some would even come from truly converted individuals among the congregations of God's Church including **even the ministry**.

In Act 20:28-30, Paul was telling those who had been appointed to watch over the congregations of God's Church, that some of them would become false prophets to get a group for themselves.

Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Act 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing [**Paul was going to Rome and there, would be put to death**] shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Act 20:30 Also **of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.**

Not only would there be false prophets from the world making their way among the truly converted, the very men entrusted with helping to protect the members from false prophets would themselves become false prophets. Do we know of any such men who pretended to believe the truth and are now heading up "new" "better" and "improved" churches of God twisting and distorting Scriptures in an effort to make men believe they have been given new revelation from God?

Would it only be a few of the truly converted that would follow the false prophets that would come among the congregations of God's Church?

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, [**truly converted Christians**] who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2Pe 2:2 And **many** shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Now, this is quite the Scripture if you will take a moment to really understand what it is saying. It is saying that it is the **many** of the truly converted who will become followers of these false prophets. This Scripture should be a strong warning to all true Christians to be very careful about following men who say they have new truth being revealed to them by God without fully verifying what they say with your Bible.

What is the purpose of these false prophets? Why do they do what they do?

2Pe 2:3 And through covetousness shall they **with feigned words make merchandise of you**: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Their goal is to use preaching as a means of making a living for themselves; to amass large amounts of wealth and to live a life of ease and luxury from the tithes and offerings of those who follow them. And as we have previously seen, some of these false prophets would arise right from among the ministry in God's Church.

What are true Christians to do to protect themselves from the "many" false prophets in the world that come into God's Church pretending to believe its teachings and from those arising out of God's own church?

Before continuing, I would like to bring your attention to the following Scripture:

1Th 5:20 Despise not **prophesying**.

Now, this is an interesting Scripture which was never really explained in the days of the WCG under the leadership of HWA. What is it talking about? Can lowly, non-ordained, regular members of God's Church be involved in prophesying? Wasn't it only men specially chosen by God the ones who could prophesy?

What about Paul telling the members of the Corinthian congregations that they should have a strong desire to prophesy?

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, **covet to prophesy**, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

And, what about the following Scriptures.

Act 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and **your sons and your daughters shall prophesy**, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

Act 2:18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; **and they shall prophesy**:

A full explanation is given of how it is Christians prophesy in the following study: [Unity in God's Church](#)

And what is a prophet is explained in the following study: [Why Does God Have a Church?](#)

In these 2 studies you will find all the information you need to understand what it is the Bible means by Christians prophesying. Basically, it has to do with spiritual fellowshipping between truly converted Christians and God.

1Jn 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and **truly** our **[truly converted Christians]** fellowship is with **the Father**, and with **his Son Jesus Christ**.

John taught the early church the truth He had received from Christ so they could have spiritual fellowship with him but John adds, that a Christian's true fellowship is with God the Father and God the Word. Be sure to read the studies mentioned, you'll be glad you did.

Now, pursuing with our examination of how Christians are to protect themselves from false prophets, let's go to 1Th 5:21:

1Th 5:21 **Prove all things;** hold fast that which is good.

Christians are to prove all things using their Bible as their one and only criterion of truth. They are not to place their trust in any man no matter how much they might be impressed by him because he holds a high office in God's Church, is a great and inspiring speaker and we agree with everything he says; he's an honored and highly respected long time member of God's church, etc. etc.

In proving all things, Christians will find that some of the things taught them are true and that some are not true. They are to keep what is true and reject what is false. And, if a certain teacher is often found to be teaching things that are not true, they should cease associating with him.

Christians are not to let themselves be intimidated from checking out their teachers no matter what or who they claim to be.

Rev 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

There were some who came along and claimed to be apostles. What

happened? Were the brethren so impressed with the fact these men were saying they were apostles that they dared not check them out to see if they were telling the truth?

No, they tested them and found them to be liars and God praised them for having done so. Christ says the following to the members of the Church at Ephesus:

Rev 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Christians can and must test their teachers no matter who they say they are as no man should be considered to be exempt from being evaluated against the truth of the Bible. This is how Christians protect themselves from men who may not have started off as false prophets but who became corrupted by a desire for fame, power and money.

The Little People of God's Church

We have to be careful about letting ourselves be impressed by men we consider to be highly intelligent, very knowledgeable of the Bible and who are great public speakers.

Why?

The Bible tells us that God mostly calls what today we would refer to as being the “little people” of this world to confound (to confuse and surprise) the mighty, the noble and the wise of this world.

1Co 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

As a Christian are you thinking that God's truth will be mostly found in

the mouth or the writings of men with impressive credentials and reputations whom you personally judge to be worthy of your admiration and trust? Those whom God calls and uses as prophets and members of His Church are the little people of this world. These are those that are looked down upon as inferior and ignorant by the intellectually, financially and politically powerful people of this world.

And, the tendency to look to men who are famous or known as men who can be trusted to be telling us the truth is also found in God's Church where people want to follow certain speakers they consider better than others. .

1Co 3:3 For **ye are yet carnal**: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

What was the problem Paul was addressing among the members of the Corinthian congregations?

1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

1Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but **God gave the increase**.

The increase in understanding of God's truth is God's doing; it is not by the clear writings and great sermons of men. Did any of us come to understand God's truth as a result of the preaching of a specific individuals who, for one reason or another, we greatly esteemed or because of their ability to deliver interesting and stirring sermons? If we will believe our Bible, the answer is that it is God who gives Christians increased understanding; not any man.

Are you following some man who impresses you because you agree with what he preaches, he's a long time minister, he's a pastor general, he was a long time member of the WCG, you consider him superior to you in intelligence, etc.

But what does God say you must do rather than putting your trust in men, even truly converted ones whose continuing conversion is not a sure thing.

2Ti 2:15 **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

Christians are to study? What are they to study? Their work is to study their Bible to grow their ability to read it with understanding and not to have to rely on men to tell them what it means. God's warning to Christians is to not rely on men.

Psa 118:8 **It is better to trust in the LORD** than to put confidence in man.

By the way, this is the middle verse in all of the Bible.

Isa 2:22 **Cease ye from man**, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

God clearly tells Christians not to blindly trust any man because no matter how faithful they may have been in the past, there is no guaranty that they will not in the future become corrupted by fame, money and power. Holding a ministerial office has turned many into dictators and fierce defenders of the organization and men who appointed them. Their mission once appointed became to maintain their new-found status as minister and to try to get promoted even higher in the organization by being highly supportive of the men who appointed them and preaching whatever they are told to preach.

Why are Christians to study their Bible?

Pro 4:5 **Get wisdom, get understanding:** forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Pro 4:7 **Wisdom is the principal thing;** therefore **get wisdom:** and with all thy getting **get understanding.**

Pro 9:10 **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:** and the **knowledge of the holy is understanding.**

Knowledge and understanding are not the same thing. The unconverted world can have a great deal of Bible knowledge. They can memorize and quote Scriptures but they don't correctly understand what they mean. Just try giving the correct explanation of the Scriptures to the unconverted and you will immediately hit a wall of insurmountable opposition to your explanations.

Pro 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

The knowledge of the holy or God comes from having a correct understanding of the Scriptures and understanding of the Scriptures comes from God; not any particular man who claims to have been given special and privileged understanding of God's spiritual truth.

What are Christians to do when they find they are being taught by a false prophet?

3Jn 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

3Jn 1:10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

The Bible record is that Christians who find themselves in a group that has been taken over by someone who is no longer holding on to the truth were either cast out or left on their own. They did not stay with a group after they discovered they were being taught errors because they didn't want to lose their friends, were anxious about finding another group, and especially, didn't want to be on their own if that what was needed for them to maintain the truth they had.

Can Christians continue to remain with and listen to speakers they have discovered to be false prophets/teachers?

Amo 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

If as a Christian you are remaining with a group whose teachings you know to be untrue, then it means that you agree with them or at least, are pretending to agree with them so as to not get expelled. However, God tells us that truth is light and falsities are darkness.

Light and darkness cannot co-exist.

1Jn 1:5 This then is the message which we [apostles] have heard of him, [Christ] and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

1Th 5:5 Ye [truly converted Christians who are remaining faithful to the truth] are all the children of light, and the children of

the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

1Th 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others [truly converted Christians who have lost the truth they had]; but let us watch and be sober. [so a not to lose the truth given us.]

1Th 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. [They are in the darkness; from lack of vigilance and study, they have come to believe lies and have lost the truth they once had.]

And, in Ephesians 5:6-8 God tells us:

Eph 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

This is talking about Christians who have left themselves be deceived by the many false prophets/teachers the Bible tells us would come among the truly converted or who would arise right from among them. They did not remain alert or sober. Their drunkenness was to place their trust in men whom they considered to be true servants of God who would never knowingly misinterpret the Bible to develop and maintain a group of followers from which they could earn a living.

God's command to true Christians faced with having to decide whether to remain or not with men who they know are not being truthful is easy to understand.

Eph 5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Don't remain among them. You were in darkness before your conversion but now you know the truth. God's command is that you walk as children of light, that is, you are not to associate with or remain with those whose teachings you know to be lies solely because it would be inconvenient for you to leave.

Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

A very similar message is given to true Christians by God through Paul in the following verses of 2nd Corinthians.

2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness [light] with unright-

teousness? [darkness] and what communion hath light with darkness? [And, what does righteousness have in common with unrighteousness? The obvious answer is, nothing.]

2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Paul here is not saying that Christians should live in isolation from the unbelievers in the world but rather not to associate or remain with those who once knew the truth and have left it, including any members of the ministry who have started preachings falsities.

1Co 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

1Co 5:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

Christians are not to go out of the world where they will be among fornicators, idolaters, etc. rather, they are not to associate with any man who is a Christian who is shown to be a fornicator, drunkard, idolater, etc.

1Co 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

God's message is clear. Truly converted Christians who are remaining faithful to the truth (light) cannot continue associating with infidels (converted individuals no longer following the truth) or stay within groups where error (darkness) is being taught.

Who is Building God's Church?

There are many Christians who believe that in order to be a Christian, it is

necessary to belong to an organization of men with leaders to whom, they believe, God reveals truth for them to teach to their congregations. Such visible organizations of men, to them, is the means used by God to build and maintain His Church in existence.

But, what does the Bible say?

The Jews who came back to Jerusalem from their captivity among the Persians rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and built a second temple to replace the first one that had been destroyed. Some of them had seen the previous temple before its destruction and God asked them what they thought of the new temple they had just built as compared to the first one [Solomon's]. This new temple despite their best efforts didn't come close to being as beautiful as the first temple.

Hag 2:3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? **is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?**

But God tells them about a latter house or temple that is to be built which will be much greater in beauty (in glory) than the first temple.

Hag 2:9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

What house was God referring to when He spoke these words through Hagai? It would be a house or temple not built by the hands of men.

Zec 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, **but by my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts.

God would build it by His spirit; it would not be done by men. The new house or temple would be a non-physical, spiritual one which only God can build. And, who does God say is His glorious holy temple which He is building by His spirit as He is the only one who can open men's minds to understand correctly His spiritual truth?

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that **ye are the temple of God**, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1Co 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are.**

The individual truly converted Christian wherever he might be in the world, by himself or in small groups, organized or not organized, collectively, are the temple of God or God's Church. God's truth is being **revealed** to them by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman, not men, as they study the sure word of God, the holy Bible.

The Worship of God in NT Times

On the Day of Pentecost, God founded His New Testament spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church. Previously, God had a physical nation of men, the descendants of Jacob whose name God changed to Israel. The descendants of his 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel who constituted the nation or house of Israel.

Old Testament Israel was never converted because the holy spirit God the Word had not then yet been made flesh and become the perfect sacrifice for sin accepted by God the Father making it possible for sin to be forgiven.

Joh 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

Joh 7:39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

After, Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin, for the first time since the creation of mankind, the holy spirit God the Father could start calling and choosing men and revealing God-level spiritual truth to them which is otherwise impossible for men to accept and understand.

OT Israel was given physical and laborious symbolic and ritualistic ceremonies as a means of demonstrating their obedience to God. Not having the ability to understand spiritual truth, they could only worship God through the repetitive, symbolic, physical rituals God had commanded them to perform.

But, after Pentecost, came a great change in the manner in which God was to be worshiped. It would not longer be by conducting physical and symbolic ceremonies.

Joh 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

Joh 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

That hour came with the beginning of God's spiritual nation of Israel on the Day of Pentecost and will continue until the end of the Last Great Day. God's spiritual nation of Israel would no longer be a physical nation of men visible to the world. It would be made up of individuals from the nations of the world whom God has called, who have followed their calling and who are remaining faithful. Conversion is not something outwardly visible to the world as it is a change in attitude of mind from one of being in opposition to God to wanting to obey Him to the best of one's abilities. Truly converted Christians walk unseen among the uncovered masses of the world.

Can you identify in a crowd who are the true Christians among them? If you are honest, you know that you can't.

The True Teachers of God's Church

In OT times, God had a physical nation and a physical priesthood responsible for teaching the law and judges who administered it over the people. They were the shepherds of Israel and God says He wasn't happy with how they acted.

Eze 34:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Eze 34:2 Son of man, prophesy **against** the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

Eze 34:9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

Eze 34:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I am against the shepherds;** and I will require my flock at their hand, and **cause them to cease from feeding the flock;** neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

The shepherds or teachers of God's NT spiritual nation of Israel would not be men.

God says He would give it pastors according to his heart.

Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Jer 3:15 And I will give you **pastors according to mine heart**, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

However, God gave man the absolute freedom to choose which means there is no power on earth or in the spirit world that can force men to believe something against their will, that is, that they have not chosen to believe.

Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

When we are called, God sets life and death before us and we are left completely free to choose one or the other. God will not intervene to change our decision even if we should choose death.

When God says He will give His spiritual nation of Israel **pastors according to His own heart**, these true **pastors** cannot be men for whom there is no certainty that they would remain true to their calling. Only God could force them to do so and He has chosen not to do so.

So, who are the true **pastors** who are to watch over God's New Testament flock or spiritual nation of Israel?

In the book of John, chapter 14, starting with verse 25, we read the following:

Joh 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

This Comforter would teach NT Christians who are members of God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church, all things.

But, who is this Comforter?

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye [disciples] know him [the Comforter]; for he [I, Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I [Christ, the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman made flesh will comfort them] will come to you. [the disciples, after my resurrection, glorification and ascension back to the glory that I had before with the holy spirit God the Father.]

Of course, the Comforter would not only come to the disciples but to all those who would be called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father and this, until the end of the ages.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, [Christ who is the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman] except the Father [the holy spirit God who became a father with the birth of His Son] which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up [by a resurrection from the dead to glorified, immortal holy spirit life] at the last day. [at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Last Great Day]

No man can come to the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman unless the holy spirit God the Father calls him. God and the Word are the ones doing the calling and the teaching in God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church who are all those called, chosen and faithful wherever they may be in the world.

When Christ spoke these words, He knew it would sound incredible to the Jews who followed Him and so he tells them that according to the Scriptures that they said they understood so well that they would be all taught of God.

What!!! They would not be taught of men?

Joh 6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

The holy spirit God the Father calls men by opening their minds to understand spiritual truth. He gives them enough truth for them to be brought to the point where they have to choose between continuing to learn God's spiritual truth or to return into the world. Those who follow their calling then come to Christ because He is the one responsible for teaching all things to God the Father's called and chosen ones (John 14:26).

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

The conclusion of the matter is that no man can be revealed God's spiritual truth by coming to Christ, the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman, who teaches them all thing except that they have been called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father.

God the Father is the only one who can call and choose men and Christ, His Son, is the only one who can teach them God's spiritual truth. God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church is begotten and taught by God.

Spiritual Truth Knowable ONLY by Revelation

Spiritual truth is something that God and the Word have and which men cannot come to know on their own or as a result of being taught by other men. One day Jesus asked the disciples if they knew who He was. Men were saying that he was John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

Mat 16:15 He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?**

Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**

Peter correctly answered Christ's question because God the Father had revealed to him who was Christ. It was not something that men could have come to know on their own and this is borne out by what men were then saying about who they thought Christ was; they didn't know nor could know who he really was unless it was revealed to them.

Then Paul in writing to the Corinthians gives us more information which confirms that men cannot know God-level spiritual truth but by revelation from God.

1Co 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1Co 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1Co 2:9 But as it is written, **Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**

God's spiritual truth cannot be known by men as spirit cannot be seen, touched, felt, tasted, etc. or otherwise perceived by men's physical senses. This is why men who have not been called deny the existence of God as for them for something to exist they must be able to verify its existence using one or more of their 5 physical senses.

It is impossible for men without God revealing it to them for them to know that He exists and to come to know and understand His spiritual truth.

1Co 2:10 But God hath **revealed** them unto us by his Spirit [**the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who teaches them all things**]: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

And, in the following verses we are given more information as to why it is that men cannot, on their own, come to know spiritual truth.

1Co 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so **the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**

Men cannot come to know by using the mind with which all are born, the things or spiritual truth of God. The spirit in man gives man's animal brain mind power which is limited to knowing and understanding the physical and material world. Another spirit has to be added to men's mind to make it possible for them to know and understand God level spiritual truth, the spirit of God (the holy spirit God the Father while being called and the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman once chosen).

1Co 2:12 Now we [**truly converted Christians**] have received, not the spirit of the world, [**the spirit in man with which all men are born**] but the spirit which is of God; that we might **know** the things that are freely given to us of God.

2Co 1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, **is God;**

God the Father is the one who has called and chosen true Christians and has made Paul and the other disciples, apostles (the anointing from God mentioned in 2Co 1:21 we just read).

2Co 1:22 Who [**God**] hath also sealed us, [**apostles and Christians**] and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. [**minds**]

In the following verses of 2Co 1, God through Paul also tells us something

of great importance which when correctly understood, allows us to know just how limited is the ability of men to have other men accept what they teach.

2Co 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

Paul intended to go to Corinth to discipline the Corinthians in person because of some of the wrongful things they were doing but as he says in the following verse, coming in person to correct them would really not be any more effective than simply doing it in writing because he knows he has no power to force them to believe what he would tell them.

2Co 1:24 Not for **that we have dominion over your faith**, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

This last verse contains very significant information that bears directly on the role of ministers when congregations become large enough to have some which is not very frequent.

They cannot impose on the brethren what it is they have to believe.

Why?

Men have absolute free moral agency which means that no one can force them to believe something they have not personally chosen to believe. God's plan of salvation requires that man must have complete freedom to choose so as to be a being of character. Man must be wholly free to obey God when God calls him when nothing and no one is forcing him to do so in order for God to be able to hold man responsible for his decisions. If men were controlled by a higher power then they would have no freedom to choose and God could not judge them. Character can be defined as being the unforced commitment to obey God.

This means that the ministry cannot force anyone to believe anything he has not chosen to believe nor can it force anyone to return to the truth once he has decided to abandon it.

This is why that Paul in the book of Ephesians tells us the following:

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; **[faith is the truth of God that you have chosen to believe]** and that not of yourselves: it **[grace; the unmerited, unearnable forgiveness of your sins]** is the gift of God:

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest **any man** should boast.

Salvation is not due to anything a man can do for himself or that others can do for him. Salvation is wholly made possible by God only; not men.

Eph 2:10 For we [**truly converted Christians**] are his [**God's**] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God is the one working in those called and chosen to give them more knowledge and understanding as they study their Bible and make an effort to change their lives to bring them more into compliance with the truth that God is revealing to them.

God's Spiritual Nation

As previously mentioned in this study, God's OT nation of Israel was physical. It had a priesthood of men, a ritualistic and symbolic physical worship of God, and was never converted. God could not teach them spiritual truth which can only be known by revelation.

God's NT spiritual nation are all those from the nations of the world who have been called and chosen, who followed their calling and who are remaining faithful. This spiritual nation is different in many significant ways from the physical nation of OT Israel.

Let's examine what are those differences.

Christ High Priest, Mediator and Apostle

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God, and **one mediator** between God and men, the **man Christ Jesus**;

There can be no human intermediary between God's called and chosen ones and God. Their one and only mediator is the resurrected and glorified Christ who now sits at the right-hand of the holy spirit God the Father as the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman.

Heb 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the **Apostle** and **High Priest of our profession**, **Christ Jesus**;

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we [**truly converted Christians**] have a **great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our profession.

Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be

touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Kings and Priests

Another relevant difference between OT and NT Israel has to do with who are its priests or ministers.

Rev 1:6 And hath made us [truly converted Christians] kings and priests [in embryo, to be born as glorified spirit beings in God's Kingdom by a resurrection from the dead] unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1Pe 2:9 But ye [truly converted Christians] are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, [God's holy nation of spiritual Israel or God's Church] a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1Pe 2:5 Ye [truly converted Christians] also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1Pe 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

The people from the many nations of the world whom God is calling do not constitute a physical nation; they are from many different nations. But once called and chosen, though coming from the many different nations of the world, they become a nation, a spiritual one, God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church.

Living Sacrifices

In OT Israel, the sacrifices offered were physical but in God's NT spiritual nation of Israel, the individual members are the living sacrifices being offered to God. There is no priesthood required to offer them. Their sacrifice on a daily basis is to put to death their old man, their previous life of sin and to strive to live in newness of life with a mind regenerated by the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Father and of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of

God, that ye present your **bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Col 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye **have put off the old man with his deeds**;

Col 3:10 And **have put on the new man**, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him [**the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman**] that created him:

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our **old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

God's Temple

OT Israel had a physical temple which was God's house but in NT times God's temple are God's called, chosen and faithful.

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye [**truly converted Christians**] are **the temple of God**, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1Co 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are**.

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, **I will dwell in them**, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ministry of Men

In OT Israel God had instituted the priesthood of the order of Aaron to offer sacrifices for the people and conduct various symbolic ceremonies. In NT times, God says that there are some men who are given certain responsibilities which are as follows:

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

The first thing to notice is that some of these offices of responsibilities do not continue in New Testament times.

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

In OT times, God communicated with His physical nation using prophets.

Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days [started with Christ's First Coming and the foundation of God's Church on the day of Pentecost] spoken unto us [truly converted Christians who collectively are God's spiritual nation and temple] by his Son, [the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman responsible for teaching all things to God the Father's called and chosen ones] whom he [God the Father] hath appointed heir of all things, by whom [God the Word] also he [God the Father] made the worlds;

In NT times, there are no more apostles, evangelists and prophets as God's spiritual nation or God's Church is being taught by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman. Preaching the Gospel to the world was something done in type by the apostles and the evangelist they appointed to assist them following their empowerment by the holy spirits of the Godhead on the day of Pentecost.

Peter's inspired sermon was to Jews of all nations who were in Jerusalem on the Day of the first NT Pentecost.

Act 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

This is the only way the apostles' mission could be accomplished as it was impossible for them to go to the all the nations of the world in their lifetime given the rudimentary modes of travel then available to them such as horses, donkeys, sailboats, etc.

Let's continue reading Ephesians 4.

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

The reason God's First Century church had ministers was to provide assistance to God's called and chosen ones in becoming better Christians.

The ultimate objective of God's First Century church ministry was to assist babes-in-Christ to become spiritually mature adults who can no longer be made to doubt their beliefs by the many deceivers in the world and those that will arise right from within God's Church. The goal was to make God's elect independent of them (the ministers) and render them able to read their Bible on their own and get the correct meaning out of it. God's elects' salvation cannot depend on men; it is the holy spirits of the God-head who are doing the work.

The success or failure of God's plan of salvation for mankind cannot depend on men who cannot be trusted to remain true and faithful to their calling.

God's First Century Church Scattered

God's First Century Church would be scattered because of the persecutions that would come upon it. They became so intense that it had to flee into the wilderness i.e., far away from the great cities to escape the wrath of a new, great false church which persecuted all those who didn't share its religious beliefs.

After Pentecost, the apostles trained men to be evangelist, pastors, ministers and teachers as mentioned in the following verses:

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

These ministers were trained by the apostles who were trained by Christ. They were given the same knowledge that Christ had given the apostles. They were then able to feed their flocks with the truth of Christ they had. However, after the scattering of the Church in the wilderness, the ministry and regular members of God's Church lost contact with each other. And, after the death of the apostles and the ministers taught by them, much of the truth that they had began to be lost.

The members of God's Church were often not able to read and write; they were and are the little people of the world.

1Co 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

The truth they had could only be transmitted by word-of-mouth which is an imprecise process. In the retelling from person to person, some information is omitted while other parts of the message are exaggerated. Over time, there remains but a few common bits of outstanding knowledge that stay unchanged like the necessity to keep the Sabbath and the 10 commandments.

Those who would be called and chosen would then only have a few truths that they could follow. After their scattering, they were on their own and much of the time didn't know any other truly converted Christians. They had to hold on by themselves to the truth they had.

Another major difficulty to maintaining the truth given the apostles was that books were not commonly available as any book that existed had to be copied by hand (manuscript) which was an expensive process available only to rich people. And, the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and in Greek which are languages that were not commonly spoken.

It is only in the 14th century that there first was a complete English translation of the Bible but of course, there are many other languages and having an English Bible did not reach any of them. Printing would only be invented in the 15th century and until then there was no easy way of duplicating documents and making them cheaply accessible to a great number of people.

From the time of the scattering of God's Church after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD until our time, there have been only isolated instances where organized congregations of God's Church arose. They were persecuted and faded from view. When HWA came in among those he believed to be a Sardis Era congregation he found they were uneducated and had but a small amount of truth. If the truth given the apostolic church had

been faithfully transmitted throughout the ages from one generation of believers to another, wouldn't this congregation of God's Church have had abundant truth?

Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall **wear out the saints of the most High**, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time (1260 years).

The "he" mentioned in Dan 7:25 is the little horn that came up among the 10 horns on the beast seen by David in a vision. It represents a great, false Christian Church that would persecute all other religions and which succeeded in wearing out the saints of the most high, God's Church. It wore them out by killing and imprisoning them and causing them to lose most of the truths given the Church by Christ to the apostles.

Manner of Existence of God's Church

Nowadays, there are laws that protect religious groups from being persecuted by the civil authorities. These laws are mostly to be found in north American countries and in Europe but Christianity still continues to be under attack in other areas of the world. The freedom of religion laws that we have today is the reason why we can have so many different churches, Christians and non-Christians, including several highly-visible "Churches of God."

It is acknowledged that not having men as teachers of God's truth goes counter to our understanding of how people are taught knowledge. But here the situation is one where knowledge is to be transmitted from spirit beings who cannot be perceived by our physical senses but who yet, just the same, are quite capable of giving us not only knowledge but understanding of the Scriptures which is something no man can do.

The example of how God's Church was organized and functioned when it first came into being is not something that can be replicated today. For a brief amount of time, men had been trained by God-in-the-flesh, Jesus Christ. Their knowledge was sure and unquestionable. They could as authorities teach it to those called and chosen by God the Father. But since the death of the apostles and those they trained, and since the scattering of God's First Century Church because of persecutions, there are no men today of whom we can be sure they were called and chosen by God to teach God's Church.

One thing is certain, they don't have the truth given the apostles nor can they ever have it. And, having appointed oneself as a pastor or being ap-

pointed by an organization of men who gave itself the authority to appoint pastors does not by any means make them a true pastor in whom we can have confidence they are preaching the truth.

Christ said we would know the false prophets by their fruits.

Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Mat 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

The several “churches of God” today are divided because they don’t preach nor believe the same things. Many of them are teaching “new truths” which cannot be proven with the Bible. Some believe “speaking in tongues” as being an outburst of incomprehensible gibberish from someone who is supposedly truly converted and that, that gibberish is a God level language unknown to men.

Some are having women covering their heads with a hat or scarf during services as they believe that when Paul says a woman is not to pray with her head unconverted it means she has to cover it with something.

1Co 11:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

1Co 11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

But, Paul is speaking about the hair on the head of woman and that it should not be overly short and if it is, she might as well have her head shaven. In the following verse, it is made clear that Paul was talking about hair; not the requirement for women to cover their heads with a hat or a scarf.

1Co 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

Many “churches of God” believe the Gospel is a message about Christ taking over the governments of this world at His Second Coming and that this will result in a world of peace, security, safety, abundance and joy the likes of which the world has never known. According to them, it will be the establishment of heaven on earth over flesh-and-blood human beings which is an impossibility.

Men cannot enter or become part of God's Kingdom unless they are born again by a resurrection from the dead to glorified spirit life. God's Kingdom is wholly composed of glorified spirit beings.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And, what does it mean to be born again? Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead.

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

One of the leaders of one of these several "churches of God" thinks he is Elijah and that he will never die; another one, says he is "that prophet" mentioned in Act 3:23.

Act 3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

But this prophet is clearly Jesus Christ according to Act 3:20.

Act 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

He is to come to the physical nation of Israel, not to an organization of men calling itself God's Church. Peter was talking to physical Israelites in the 3rd chapter of the book of Acts.

Another of the many "churches of God" has adopted the Systematic Theology Project (STP) as the basis for what they preach to their members. That particular document was rejected by HWA because it was liberalizing the Church's teachings.

Other churches of God are asking those who attend their services to invite their friends and neighbors to their meetings thinking this may motivate some of them to join their group. It used to be that not just anyone could attend church worship services. The ministry had to have been working with them to make sure they knew, understood and accepted the basic

teachings of the church. Other “true” churches of God are stealing the inheritance of their members’ children by having their elderly members sign legal papers in secret from their families where when they die, their estate will be donated to the church and there will be nothing their families will be able to do to prevent it.

Such practices and these glaring misunderstandings of the Bible, and they are not the only ones, prove that these organizations of men are not God’s Church. They are unable to read God’s Bible with understanding and are spreading error among those who follow them.

These erroneous comprehension of the Bible should be ringing alarm bells in those who are attending their services but this is not what is happening. They continue to financially support them while they wait for Christ’s 2nd Coming to occur. They seem to be incapable of proving what is taught them with their Bible or are simply uninterested in doing so having put their full faith in the men who are teaching them.

Christians are rewarded according to their works, not that of others. They are to be students of their Bible.

2Ti 2:15 **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Idly sitting in a hall listening uncritically to men who claim to be true ministers of God and accepting everything they say will not ensure their salvation.

God’s Church exists in all those called and chosen by God the Father and who are being taught by God the Word wherever they may be in the world, by themselves or in little groups of faithful, organized or not. They are invisible to the world and to each other as conversion is not something outwardly visible which is why they are not usually found in large groups.

Whether by themselves or in small groups, wherever they may be in the world, and whatever language they may speak they are the living stones of God’s temple in which God the Father and God the Word dwell.

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as **lively stones**, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

They are God’s holy priesthood of God’s Church offering themselves daily as living sacrifices putting their old man of sin to death and striving to live in newness of life.

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as **lively stones**, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

They are the living stones of God's spiritual house or temple, God's holy priesthood and the spiritual sacrifices of God's spiritual church dying every day to their old life of sin and living in newness of life.

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk **in newness of life**.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

They are the royal priesthood of God's Church and God's holy nation and kingdom of priests. They are royal and priests.

God's Church in NT times is a spiritual which means it is not physical. It is something a lot of people readily agree with but don't really know what it means. For them, organizations of men calling themselves churches of God are spiritual organizations. But, actually, they are not.

In NT times, there are no human mediator or organizations of men between God and His called and chosen ones.

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God, and **one mediator** between God and men, the man **Christ Jesus**;

Christians' great high priest is not any men or organization of men.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a **great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our profession.

The holy spirit God calls men, and upon accepting their calling, it is the holy spirit God the Word who teaches them all things. And, belonging to God's Church is based on continuing to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, having growth in the character of Christ, and remaining faithful.

Being part of a physical organization of men having the words "Church of God" somewhere in the title of their organization and which is preaching falsities does not make anyone part of God's Church which is spiritual not a physical organization. God's spiritual church is God's one and only true Church. Those who are part of it have been called and chosen by God the Father and are being taught all things by God the Word their high priest and only mediator.

Summary

If we put together all the information contained so far in this study, we can see the major differences between God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church and God's physical unconverted nation of Israel.

In God's New Testament, God's Church is spiritual not physical:

The **living head** of the body or God's Church is the resurrected Christ not any man.

Its **great high priest** is the resurrected Christ not any man.

The one and only **mediator** between God and the members of God's Church is Christ. There are no man standing between God's faithful and God

The members of God's Church are **the living stones of God's spiritual temple**.

The **members' bodies are the temple of God**; there is no physical building in NT times that can be called God's house.

The **sacrifice offered to God** are the elect daily **putting to death their old man of sin** and living in newness of life. There is no more requirement for the performance of ritualistic, repetitive, physical, laborious, ceremonial and symbolic offerings and animal sacrifices.

The church's **worship of God is in spirit and in truth**; not through repetitive symbolic ceremonies. God is worshiped through Church members submitting to **the government of God's law which is written in their minds** and which they try to follow to the best of their abilities as they go about their lives in the world.

The **pastors, prophets and teachers** of God's spiritual nation is the holy spirit God the Father while being called and the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman once chosen.

The **members of God's Church are a royal priesthood** in embryo (spiritually speaking) of God's spiritual nation.

The job of the ministry in God's First Century Church, was simply to be the helpers of the joy of the brethren. Their role in the salvation process was minimal.

2Co 1:24 Not for that we have **dominion** over your faith, but are **helpers of your joy**: for by faith ye stand.

The disciples who became apostles and taught those called and chosen by God the Father could not impose or force those they taught to believe their teachings. God created man with the absolute power to choose. (Deu 30:19). No man can force another man to believe something against his will, not even the apostles. Christians stand (remain part of God's Church) only as long as they continue to choose to believe the truth. No man can force them to do so and if they choose to no longer believe the truth, no man can force them to believe it again.

Christ is the author and the finisher of the faith of the brethren; not any man.

Heb 12:2 Looking unto **Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

This is why ministers' can only be helpers of the joy that God's truly converted and faithful Christians have of knowing God's spiritual truth. Their conversion and the truth they have and understand are from God and not men.

Ministers in the days of God's First Century Church also had to be study-

ing their Bible to grow their knowledge and understanding of the truth and in this way participate in the joy of God's spiritual truth given to God's spiritual nation by God.

Salvation requires that all truly converted Christians have growth in knowledge and understanding of God's truth through their own, personal study of the Bible and by assembling with other truly converted Christians in spiritual fellowship when some are known. (See the parable of the talents in your Bible; especially Mat 25:30.)

Why the Current Several True Churches of God

If we look back at the recent history of organizations of men calling themselves churches of God and of what happened during the days of the WCG organization under the administration of HWA, we can see that things did not run smoothly. We should also be able to see how what then happened is a precursor to the present doctrinal confusion that lead to the creation of the numerous "true" churches of God that we have today.

Even during HWA's tenure, there were WCG ministers who started their own version of God's Church drawing members away from the WCG. There was the Systematic Theology Project (STP) that was run by WCG ministers who unknown to HWA were working at liberalizing the church's doctrines. HWA only found out about it after having been informed by a church member. Then there was Garner Ted Armstrong, (GTA) HWA's son, whom HWA thought would take over the administration of the WCG after his death. But, GTA rebelled and founded his own version of God's true Church calling it Church of God International. Its members were from the congregations of the WCG who abandoned HWA to follow GTA.

The many, current so-called churches of God are headed up by former ministers of the WCG. None of them have held on faithfully to the doctrines taught by HWA while claiming either that they are doing so or that they have progressed on to new truths never known by HWA. The members of these new, improved and more advanced churches of God, are filled with joy for being the recipients of all these new truths HWA never had. They're so happy to be in the leading new true church of God, so they think, while hoping that one day the other true churches of God will catch up to them once their members start waking up.

They are all supposedly true churches of God but they all have doctrinal differences which are so significant, that they cannot hold services together. They call each other Laodicean with some of them calling themselves, the one true Church founded by God that all true Christians should belong

to. Some members object to their ministry referring to their church as being the one true church as this makes all the other ones false, "true" churches of God and there are surely a lot of good people in them.

Basically, they're not sure who and what is the one true church founded by Christ and just want all churches of God to be considered true and none of them false. They don't want to offend anyone by saying the "true" churches others have chosen to attend, with whose teachings they disagree enough not to be part of them, are not also true churches.

If this sounds confusing, it's because it is. Christ said He would build His Church not churches and that it would always exist.

All should realize that the former ministers of the WCG who today are heading up the many so-called churches of God are some of the same people who disagreed with HWA, sought to overthrow him and take over the WCG, agreed with the goals of the STP project and who lusted for the power, fame and money that comes from being a great and highly respected religious leader heading up a large and growing religious organization.

It is also those same ministers who accepted the doctrinal changes made by the administration that followed the death of HWA. They simply started teaching them and they became the new, absolute truth that every one had to follow. But, weren't the doctrines changed by the new church administration supposedly fully proven Biblical truth? And, if they were, how could they have been so easily changed without seemingly any objections having been raised by the ministry who supposedly are better able to understand the Bible than those they teach. Everybody fell in line and started preaching the changes with the same unshakable conviction as the previous ones that were changed.

Did they really believe that what they used to preach was the truth or were they simply pretending?

Wasn't the ministry able to check out for themselves whether these doctrinal changes were in accordance with the Bible?

If not, why not?

Few if any of the ministers were disfellowshipped or cast out for not wanting to go along with the changes including elders and deacons. Just about everybody went along with the changes including about all the brethren. Weren't any of them capable of proving these doctrinal changes out with their Bible?

If not, why not?

Were the ministers and the brethren all blindly accepting everything taught them without proving them with their Bible because they believed in the organization, its Headquarters ministers and in its leader, the Pastor General. But, doesn't God warn us all that we are to prove all things before accepting them and not to ever place our trust in men?

Doesn't the Bible show us that when false teachers show up replacing biblical truth with "new" truth from their imagination that God's faithful are not to follow after them nor stay among them?

Being part of God's Church is not a matter of belonging to the right group, following the right man or believing what everybody else around you believes. Conversion and salvation are not a spectator sport; you must be continuously proving all things with your Bible and have the strength of character to separate yourself from organizations and men if they start teaching error.

It is an easily demonstrated biblical truth that there are not several, one and only true churches of God. It is the responsibility of the brethren to prove all things with their Bible and make sure they are not unknowingly following false prophets who are teaching for filthy lucre sake.

This is one of the major responsibility God places squarely on your shoulders and on which your salvation depends. Will you sit comfortably in the assemblies of those teaching falsities not being willing to be by yourself with the truth, your Bible and God if that's what it takes to hold on to the truth?

As always, your salvation wholly depends on what you do; not on any man.

God's Government and Men's Government

The churches of this world's organization is patterned on the Roman form of government. The papacy liked it so much that it adopted it for its own organization. HWA in his booklet *Who or What is the Prophetic Beast?* gives us the following information on page 26, 2nd to 4th paragraphs: (Highlighting in text is by the author of this study)

Where, then, did human church government derive its present form? "The first pope, in the real sense of the word, was Leo I (440-461 A.D.)," says the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, volume 7, page 629.

To him the form of government of the Roman Empire was the most marvelous thing on earth. He applied its principles to the church, organized the church into a government, forming the papacy.

This church government or organization is the image of the beast.

Says Myers' *Ancient History*: "During the reign of Leo I, the Church set up, within the Roman Empire, an ecclesiastical state [government] which, in its constitution and its administrative system, was shaping itself upon the imperial model." **This church government**, then, according to this historical authority, **is in fact a model, a counterpart, an image of the beast which is the Roman Empire government.**

The Roman Empire had a centralized form of government where the head of the government holds all powers which he then sub-delegates to subordinates who are responsible for carrying out tasks related to the financial, legal and personnel administration requirements of the Empire.

In an ecclesiastical organization (churches), where this form of government is adopted, the head of the organization (the Pastor General) establishes what doctrines are to be taught to church members in addition to holding all administrative powers over the organization. This is exactly how it is with the papacy. The Pope is considered to be infallible when setting the doctrines of the Catholic church.

The very same type of government was found in the WCG under the leadership of HWA. You will recall that HWA always said that he was the only one who could establish Church doctrine. God's truth entered the Church through him and it was taught to the ministry who taught it to the Church. It is also the very same type of government that we find in the several churches of God that arose after his death.

As stated by HWA himself in his brochure titled *Who or What is the Prophetic Beast?* This form of government is the image of the beast.

Would this be or could this be the kind of government God would use in His spiritual nation?

If we take into consideration that:

- God's spiritual truth is knowable only by revelation from God,

- that the holy spirits of the Godhead are responsible for calling and teaching the members of God's Church,
- that Christ is the only mediator between the elect and God,
- that the members of God's Church are its royal priesthood and living sacrifice, and
- and that God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth in NT times,

then, it follows that God's government in God's Church cannot be a centralized and hierarchical government such as the one found in the Roman Catholic Church.

There are not several human intermediaries (elders, preachers, pastors and a pastor general) between God and truly converted Christians. God is not working only through one man to whom He reveals truth which he teaches to subordinate ministers who teaches it to the brethren. All truly converted Christians are being taught by the holy spirits of the Godhead.

God's government in God's Church is by God's law which is written in the hearts (minds) of all truly converted Christians who try to the best of their abilities to conduct their lives accordingly. It is not a centralized, hierarchical government of men patterned on the Roman style of government which is the image of the Beast.

Furthermore, no man can claim to be a true representative of God's government and that failure to obey him is to go against God's government. This is a bizarre distortion of the Scriptures.

True Christians are not under the government of any man nor are they part of a hierarchical, centralized organization of men with at its head, a supreme leader (Pastor General) who sets doctrine for the church and who holds all administrative powers.

God's truth does not come to one man who then teaches it to subordinate ministers who then teaches it to church members.

God in NT times is working directly with every member of God's Church; they are all being taught by the holy spirits of the Godhead as they study the word of God, God's holy Bible.

God's Church in NT times is first and foremost and primarily spiritual and as such is largely invisible to the world though living among it.

Holy Convocations

The annual holy days and the weekly Sabbath are holy convocations except for the Passover according to Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 and 29. A holy convocation is a commanded assembly that all who are capable of doing so are to attend. Ancient Israel was a physical nation occupying a specific territory which made it easy for them to assemble as commanded on holy days.

Spiritual Israel however, is not an outwardly visible physical nation located in a specific geographical area. Its members are found in all the nations of the world and their status as truly converted Christians is not something that is visible to the world nor to other truly converted Christians.

What is significantly different about them is the change that has occurred in their attitude toward God. Prior to their conversion they were hostile to God but since their conversion, their attitude is to try to obey God to the best of their abilities in all things. This change in attitude is not something others can see.

So, it is usually not possible for them to obey God's command to assemble on the holy days because they are invisible to each other and because of their great geographical dispersion across the world.

It is a sure thing that truly converted Christians should assemble with other truly converted Christians on the holy days when some are known but there is no obligation for them to assemble with any group they know to be preaching falsities even if they have the words "church of God" somewhere in the name of their organization.

It has occurred in the past and it is happening now that true Christians have had to celebrate the holy days on their own not knowing any other true Christians with whom they could assemble.

In the first century church, Christians met in each other's houses and the apostles taught them there.

Act 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they [the apostles] ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Rom 16:5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

1Co 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla

salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Col 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

They were not meeting in the temple where the Jews met on the holy days as the Jews rejected Christ as a false prophet and had the Roman authorities put Him to death. They were hostile to Christians and sought to have them put to death whenever they found some.

They met in their homes to avoid being persecuted by the Jews and this was quite acceptable to God as made evident by the fact the apostles taught them there. Had it not been acceptable to God they would not have done so.

It is therefore acceptable when it is not possible for Christians to assemble with other Christians to celebrate the holy days in their homes even though they are commanded assemblies or to do so with other truly converted Christians they may know.

There is absolutely no obligation to assemble with any group whatever it may call itself that is known not to be holding on to the truth.

Apostles vs NT Preachers

The biggest problem with the churches of God that have arisen after the death of HWA is that the preachers in them all think that they have the knowledge and authority of the apostles who were directly taught by Christ.

When the apostles spoke, they did so having fresh in their minds the truth Christ had just taught them while he was with them for 3 1/2 years. They could speak with authority and rightly so; they had been personally taught by Christ. But all the others who came after them, could not in all truthfulness claim that they could teach others with authority, the very same spiritual truth given the apostles.

As time and generations went by it became impossible for someone to come along as a preacher proclaiming he had an error free knowledge and understanding of the truth taught personally by Christ to the apostles.

The people who heard Christ speaking were astonished as to how He spoke with authority, meaning, he really sounded like he knew what he was talking about while the Scribes and the Pharisees did not.

Mar 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

This is why Paul who was taught directly by Christ could say that the brethren in the congregations of God's Church could discuss among themselves the truth they had found as a result of their Bible studies but that what he taught was not debatable as he had learned it directly from Christ.

1Co 14:36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

1Co 14:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

Modern-day preachers cannot claim to have the same complete truth that Paul and the apostles had nor can they say that what they teach cannot be questioned or be the subject of debate or discussion among the brethren.

Much of the original truth Christ taught the apostles was lost because of persecutions which started up almost immediately upon the newly-founded Christianity by the established religion of the day which was Judaism.

And, in that same time period, a new false Christianity arose claiming that it was the Christianity founded by Christ and that all other "Christian" groups not part of their organization and submitting to its doctrines were heretics that were to be hunted down and put to death to prevent them from contaminating the faith of true Christians with their false Christian beliefs.

True Christians fled and scattered into the wilderness away from the cities to avoid being put to death.

More than 1,900 years later, men claiming they have the truth of God to preach to others have never had direct and personal contact with Christ nor will they ever have such contact.

Ministers like other truly converted Christians have spiritual truth revealed to them by the holy spirits of the Godhead but they are not being given knowledge and understanding of every truth in the Bible so that they become the source of truth for Church members. It is not possible for them to insist that everything they say is the absolute truth of God which no one can question.

Their teachings cannot help but be a mixture of truth and error as they don't and can't know it all. Errors may not be intentional but they are errors just the same and this is why ministers have to be humble enough to be corrected by the Bible even when that correction comes from the mouth of one of the non-ordained members of the Church. A fully Bible proven truth remains the truth no matter to whom it has been given to know it, even a lowly, non-ordained member of God's Church.

It is a sure thing that much of the original truth given the apostles became lost over the centuries because of persecution, false prophets seeking to make a living out of preaching and teaching falsities, and the Bible having been inaccessible to people who in the past were, for the greatest part, not educated and could not read.

Other factors which made it difficult to maintain the truth taught by the apostles were that the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek and had to be translated into English so more people could read it; and information could not be easily recorded and distributed until the invention of the printing press. As a result, true Christianity for a very long time, only had a very basic knowledge of God's truth such as the requirement to keep the Sabbath and the 10 commandments.

Men cannot be trusted. Even in the days of the first century church of God, some of the men who had been taught the truth by the apostles, became false prophets in order to get a group for themselves from which they could earn a living.

Others, simply took over congregations like Diotrephes did (3Joh 1:9), to satisfy their lust for power. Having been taught the same truth Christ taught the apostles wasn't enough to stop them from doing so.

Men, truly converted or not, remain full of lusts that they need to keep under control. Fame, money and power are very strong corrupting influences which few seem able to resist for any length of time.

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

1Ti 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

1Ti 6:9 But they that will be rich [who want to become rich] fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they **have erred from the faith**, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

This was Paul speaking to Timothy and warning him of the perils of succumbing to the temptation of seeking after riches as it had led some astray from the faith and caused them many problems.

The Bible record is clear that men cannot be trusted to remain faithful teachers of the truth and that those they teach have to remain vigilant not to let themselves be led into error by them.

When it comes to HWA, he did indeed restore to God's Church many of the original truths that had become lost and these constitute a foundation from which those called out by God the Father can use to study their Bible to gain more spiritual truth as the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman opens their minds to understand it.

But, HWA also made errors in what he taught and he always warned us to verify his teachings with our Bible to make sure he was not unknowingly, sometimes, teaching falsities despite his best intentions to never do so. HWA was just a man with all the weaknesses of the flesh common to mankind and subject to making mistakes as we all are. Having unintentionally at times made mistakes in what he taught does not invalidate in any way the many, wonderful, fully Bible-provable truths he gave us.

HWA's organization did not represent the habitual way God's Church exists. HWA said more than once that the WCG was an exception and that God's Church for most of its existence had usually been small and invisible to the world as prophesied by Christ.

Luk 12:32 Fear not, **little flock**; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

As well, HWA stated there were other truly converted Christians in the world who had never heard of the WCG but who nevertheless were truly members of God's Church having been called and chosen by God.

Finally, before I close off this study, I think it would be appropriate, based on the information provided so far, to describe what are the kinds of qualities, true Christians should expect to find in men who say they are true ministers of God.

Character Traits of a True Minister

- A first thing that someone who calls himself a minister of God has to acknowledge is that he is just a man like any other man subject to all the frailties that come with being human. He must realize that though he may for a time be quite sincere, dedicated to the truth and determined to teach only the truth, time and circumstances can intervene to change his mind. What happened with the ministry in the days of HWA and the WCG should make this evident to everyone.
- A true minister of God freely and openly admits that he does not know everything and that he is not the primary source of information for the brethren, the Bible is that source.
- A true minister of God does not resent being politely challenged on his teachings. He recognizes that individual members all have the holy spirits of the God family dwelling in them who are revealing spiritual truth to them and that some of the truths they are given may invalidate some of the things he teaches.
- A true minister does not set himself up as the criterion or standard of truth for Christians. He knows only the Bible is that criterion.
- A true minister understands that Christians are not to depend on any man for their salvation including ministers.
- A true minister knows full well that God's truth does not enter the church through a specific man who then teaches it to others. In NT times, God is not working through a single man. All called and chosen ones have the holy spirits of the Godhead dwelling in them and are being taught by them.
- Men presenting themselves as ministers today and since the death of the original apostles, have not been nor will they ever be trained personally by Christ. An organization of men has appointed them and that organization of men has appointed itself as the authority to appoint other men as ministers.
- There are no true ministers of God today but those who are sincerely seeking to know and understand the truth of the Bible through their own personal study of the Bible, who freely admit they don't know everything, who are willing to change what they teach when proven wrong with the Bible and especially, who are not being ministers as a means of making a living; they like the apostle Paul, earn their living by having a job.

- God's church is not to be found in any group of men organized according to the corporative models of this world engaged in building large organizations and owning large, immaculately maintained properties on which sit luxurious buildings for their administrative staff, who drive luxury cars, travel in private jets either rented or owned by the organization with all of it paid by the tithes and offerings of those who follow them.
- The church is a spiritual organism NOT an organization of men. There is no human intermediary between God's elect and God. Christ is their great high priest not some man who appointed himself or who was appointed by an organization of men as chief high priest or Pastor General.

One True Church

Christ said He would build His Church not churches and that it would never die out.

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [death] shall not prevail against it.

How can there be just one true church of God?

Well, the word “church” is simply a different way of saying “group” but only in a specialized way which is that the word “church” refers to a group of people who have in common religious beliefs revealed to them by God. So, God's Church, is that group of people from all over the nations of the world who have been called and chosen by God the Father and who have chosen to believe the truth of God revealed to them. Every day of their lives they keep on choosing to believe the truth they received while being called and the truth given them by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman as they study God's holy Bible.

More often than not, they do not know each other as conversion is a process that goes on in the mind. A changed attitude from being hostile to God to wanting to obey Him. It is not something that is outwardly visible to others. They are a group or church not because they are physically located together; the relationship between them is spiritual, not physical. What binds them together as a group or church is their conversion which again is something spiritual not physical.

Their one and only source of truth which is sure is God's holy Bible and their understanding of the truth it contains is by the holy spirits of the

Godhead. They don't have many teachers. Their only teachers are God the Father and God the Word. They are not all given to know the same truths at the same time as Christians learn the truth at different rates and in different ways as they study the Scriptures. Having the same teachers, they are one in what they believe. Though they do not all know the same truths at the same time, the truths that they have in common they all understand in the same way. God the Father will not teach something different than God the Word and the Word's teachings will not be different from those of the Father.

This is why that no matter where Christians are located in the world, they all basically believe the same truths as they are being taught by the same teachers.

God's Church is spiritual as its teachers are 2 spirit beings, the one and only mediator between true Christians and God is Christ, the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman, and understanding of God's spiritual truth is only possible by these 2 spirit beings sharing thoughts from their minds to the minds of those they are teaching. Spiritual understanding of God's truth is not something that can be provided by any man nor was it ever intended by God that men would be able to do so.

This is how there is and there can only be "one" true spiritual Church of God which is not an organization of men.

Final Words

As strange as it may seem to most people, God relates to men by sharing thoughts from His mind to the minds of those He has called and chosen; this is what makes it possible for them to understand the spiritual truth of the Bible. Since Pentecost men from all over the world are called and upon accepting their calling, become members of a spiritual nation, God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church.

They don't know one another, speak different languages, and live far apart yet they are part of and constitute God's spiritual nation. They have a direct relationship with God; not through men or an organization of men but by the holy spirits of the Godhead dwelling in them.

Their teacher is a holy spirit being, God the Word and Spokesman and He is the author and finisher of their faith.

The understanding of God's spiritual truth is only possible by revelation from God no matter how much men would like to be the means used by God to do so. Men can plant and water but there is no growth in understanding but by God.

There are some that may worry that when there are no human teachers such as an organized ministry, God's called and chosen ones may not get enough information to be saved. But, salvation is not based on how much knowledge and understanding one may acquire but on the extent to which an effort is made to apply in their lives the knowledge they are given to know and their obedience to God's command to grow in knowledge through continuing study of His holy Bible.

Pro 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Pro 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

The servant in the parable of the talents with 1 talent lost his salvation because he did not grow his talent not because he only had 1 talent.

There have been many times in the history of God's Church (the 1,260 years of persecution among other times) when there were no true ministers and no organized church group and yet men continued to be called and saved as they are now and will be during the Millennium and the Last Great Day.

God's church as a spiritual organism is like a virtual organization where many individuals are working for a boss but without being together in the same physical location. They get the work to be performed directly from their boss by electronic means and they send their finished work directly to him by electronic means such as e-mail.

God is our boss, we are scattered all over this world and the electronic means used by God is Him communicating through the spirit in man with His called and chosen ones revealing spiritual truth to them as they study His holy Bible their only sure standard of truth.

