

## Restored Truth Bible Study #12 - The Millennium July 20, 2013

When all of God's restored truths are put together, what do they mean? They simply explain who God is, what His purpose is, and how He is working out that purpose. With this Restored Truth Bible Study #12, two thirds of the restored truths God used Herbert W Armstrong to put back into His Church will have been covered. Hopefully, these studies have provided a deeper understanding and appreciation for the knowledge God restored back into His Church before Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. Also, it is hoped Satan attacks on these wonderful truths has been exposed, along with how easily they can be corrupted, if not maintained and protected.

This world is in a mess. And it's not going to get any better. Why has the world gotten this way? What are the reasons behind the way things are?

There are two reasons why this world is so messed up.

Ezek. 28:11 provides the first reason. *Moreover, the word of the Eternal came to me saying (vs 12) Son of man take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him...[A lamentation is a slow mournful piece of music or a dirge, an unhappy piece of music] thus says the Lord God; you were the seal of perfection...[Speaking of the King of Tyre] full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. (vs 13) You were in Eden in the garden of God, and every precious stone was your covering...[all listed] the workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created...[In verse 14 the king of Tyre's identity is revealed] (vs 14) You were the anointed cherub. I established you. You were on the holy mountain of God. You walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones. (vs 15) You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created... [This is speaking of Satan the devil before he became Satan] till iniquity was found in you...[This shows angels can sin] (vs 16) By the abundance of your training you became filled with violence within and you sinned...[God's law was in effect long before human beings were created] Therefore I cast you out as a profane thing, out of the mountain of God and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. (vs 17) Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.* Satan's rebellion is the first reason why this world is in the condition it is in.

Why did Satan rebel against God? He was, one of the top angelic beings in God's government. He was at the very throne of God. He covered God's throne. This is why he is described as a covering cherub. God's throne is covered by the wings of the cherubim. Satan at one time was in that position. It can be said Satan had it all; but it wasn't enough. Why did he rebel against his Creator? Isaiah provides the answer.

Isa. 14:12 *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How you are cut down to the ground, you who weaken the nations. (vs 13) For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...[Satan was responsible for the first coup of power] I will also sit in the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the North (vs 14) I will sit above the height of the clouds. I will be like the most High.*

Satan's reason for rebelling against God is because he wanted to be the supreme authority. He wanted to be worshipped.

Matt. 4:8 This deals with Christ's temptation. This is the very last temptation Christ had to go through with Satan at the end of the 40 days and 40 nights of fasting. *Again the devil took him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory and said to him (vs 9) all these things I will give you...[A conditional offer] if you [Christ] will fall down and worship me.* Satan wanted Christ worship to him. He wants people to react to him the way people should react to God. He wants to be the one in supreme authority. He wants to be worshipped. Christ gives the correct response for dealing with this demonic force. (vs 10) *Then Jesus said to him, away with you, Satan, for it is written, you shall worship the Eternal your God, and him only shall you serve. (vs 11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and administered to him.* As previously covered in this Restored Truth Bible Study series, the demonic world has no power over human beings. Demons have to follow commands, if those commands are in accordance with God's authority. Christ's example is a clear demonstration of this fact. One doesn't have to be Jesus Christ to resist the demons and their demonic forces. James says submit to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you. That's how to handle demonic problems.

The second reason for why this world is in the shape it's in can be found in the opening chapters of Genesis.

Gen. 2:15 *Then the Eternal God took the man, and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. (vs 16) And the Eternal God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat (vs 17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.* Here is God's instruction to man at the very beginning of human creation. In with talking with Adam, God provide very clear and explicit instructions that had life and death consequences.

Gen. 3:1 *The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Eternal God had made. He said to the woman, has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?...[This is a statement designed to cast doubt in the mind of Eve] (vs 2) And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden (vs 3) but of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it lest*

*you die. (vs 4) Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die...*[This clearly shows Satan to be a bald-faced liar. This shows what dealing with Satan the devil is about. He lies with impunity] *(vs 5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, then you will be like God, knowing good and evil...*[Eve is being told she can be like God, able to determine what's right and wrong] *(vs 6) When the woman saw the tree was good for food...*[It had an appeal to her mental faculties] *that it was pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate...*[Eve disregarded God's instructions because what she wanted was more important than what God said] *She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.* So Adam and Eve rejected God's instruction and the world has been in a mess ever since.

Gen. 3:22 Because of their sin - *Then the Eternal God said, behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil...*[This doesn't mean Adam became like God, but that Adam and Eve took to themselves the prerogative of God to determine right and wrong for themselves. It wasn't their position or place to take, and decide, what was good and evil, what was right and wrong. Nevertheless, they thought it was and chose to be like God, so 'they became like one of us, to know good and evil'. Adam and Eve chose to determine good and evil instead of listening to God] *and now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever (vs 23) Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. (vs 24) So he drove out the man; and he placed Cherubim at the east of the garden, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way of the tree of life.* With this action God cut mankind off from having a relationship with Him.

A real problem in this world is that men don't lead. Adam didn't lead in this instance. He chose to listen to his wife. A man can't be an effective leader, if there is a fear of making somebody mad. Good leaders aren't worried about public opinion. Good leaders are first and foremost concerned about doing what is right. All of the world's problems come from the human creation rejecting its Creator and the happy way of life He intended His human beings to live. Satan rebelled. Adam and Eve rebelled. Each rejected God. Each rejected what God was about and what He wanted. In place of God, each embraced what they wanted to do in contradiction to God's Way. The world has no reason to complain about the problems it experiences, but it does. People don't realize they are the source of this world's problems. The problems in the world today are the result of people rejecting God and His Way of life.

In Rom. 1:20 Paul writes about the reason for this world's problems going all the way back to creation. *For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes...[God's] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...*

Really human beings are without excuse. Yes, there's a lot of deception in the world, and it has been going on since the Garden of Eden; but God made Himself known to mankind. There are a lot of people who understand certain things about God's Truth but choose not to follow it.

(vs 21) *Because although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, nor were thankful; but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened...*[This is what happens when God is rejected. People become darkened in their understanding about the world they live in] (vs 22) *Professing to be wise they became fools...*[This describes the world of academia, business, entertainment, government and religion. An honest look at the top echelons of society reveals very smart and intelligent people who don't have a problem telling others how smart and intelligent they are. These people who claim to be wise, are actually fools because the knowledge they've built their lives on is in rejection of God. Because of their rejection-] (vs 23) *And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible...[Or perishable] man, and birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things.* This refers to all the ancient idols people have worshipped down through the ages. Today, many of these idols are no longer seen, but manifested in other forms throughout the world of traditional Christianity, which have origins going back to ancient times and practices.

Rom. 1:24 *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts to dishonor their bodies among themselves.* (vs 25) *Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie...*[What did Eve do? She didn't look at the tree of knowledge of good and evil and say I'm not going to die. No, she looked at the tree has something to make her wise. She exchanged the truth of God for a lie] *and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen...* [So be it. When one chooses to follow Satan's way of life, it is a choice of worshiping the creature over the Creator. Why? Because God created Satan. All these idols mentioned in (vs 23) are part of God's creation. There is a spiritual component in man. Man has to have allegiance to something] (vs 28) *Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.* Not in accordance with His law. God lets people have their own way. Most people God has worked with in the past, to accomplish his purpose on the earth, have rejected Him in some way. The Bible is a record and a history of peoples' rejection of God.

Most people don't think they reject God; but this Bible Study will demonstrate the rejection of God in clear detail.

Examine first, the example of the children of Israel wanting to have a human king rule over them.

1 Sam. 8:4 *Then all the elders of Israel gathered together, and came to Samuel at Ramah.* (vs 5) *And said to him, look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways...*[Obviously, the people recognized the difference between

Samuel's righteous leadership and his sons' unrighteous leadership] *Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations...*[The Israelites wanted to be like the nations around them, which is exactly what God said he didn't want them to become] (vs 6) *But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, give us a king to judge us. So, Samuel prayed to the Eternal. (vs 7) And the Eternal said to Samuel, heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you: for they have not rejected you, Samuel, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*

The word 'rejected' in Hebrew means to spurn, to disappear, to abhor, cast off, contemn, despise, disdain, or to become loathsome. This how Israel viewed God's leadership. Here the very descendants of those God brought out of the land of Egypt, after 400 years of slavery, were rejecting God.

Israel's rejection of God did not stop when they got a king, it actually increased. Here is a summary of why the ancient Israelites went into Assyrian captivity. 2 Kings 17:9 *Also the children of Israel secretly did against the Eternal their God things that were not right...*[It's interesting to note how wicked people don't operate out in public. There's a reason for this and it's because they don't want to be found out. It goes beyond the act of wickedness, but the intent of the act also] (vs 15) *And they rejected his statutes...[Spurned God's statutes] and his covenant that he had made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations...[Notice, they went after the nations they wanted to live like other peoples around them] who were all around them, concerning whom the Eternal had charged them, that they should not do like them.*

God did not intend the Israelites to be like the nations around them. There is plenty of instruction in the book of Deuteronomy that make this point very clear. The Israelites were carried into Assyrian captivity and about 130 years later, their brothers, the Jews were carried into Babylonian captivity.

Examine some of the similarities between what is said about Israel anciently and modern Israel today.

Jeremiah 8:5 The question is asked: *Why has this people slidden back? Why is Jerusalem in a perpetual backsliding?...*[This should not be for a nation that has been given God's law. They had been given God's word and instructed by God's servants. Why are they in a perpetual backsliding? Here is the answer:] *They hold fast to deceit. They refuse to return. (vs 6) I listened and heard but they do not speak aright: no man repented of his wickedness, saying, what have I done?...*[What have I done? Me? I'm wrong? I've done something wrong?] *Everyone turned to his own course...[Another way of saying - everyone does what is right in his own eyes] Everyone has turned to his own course, as the horse rushes into the battle...[Charging headlong into what will be certain death] (vs 8) How can you say, we are wise...[This is the attitude of leaders who extol the supposed strengths and virtues of the country*

under their leadership] *How can you say, we are wise, and the law of the Eternal is with us? Look, the false pen of the scribes certainly works falsehood. (vs 9) The wise men are ashamed. They are dismayed. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Eternal. What wisdom do they have?* When trouble came upon these leaders and their nation anciently, everything that had been taught and built in their intellectual world came crashing down.

Mark 7:9 When the Jews were released from Babylonian captivity they were allowed to go back and rebuild Jerusalem; but they didn't change. Here Christ addresses the descendants of those captive Jews. He is speaking to the religious leadership of the Jews in His time. Notice what Christ says to them: *All too well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition.* The word 'reject' simply means to set aside. "We'll just set God's law aside so we can do what we want to do." Not only did they reject God's law, but they also rejected God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Luke 20:17 is a direct quote from Psalm 118:22. *He looked at them...*[Again, speaking to the religious leadership of the Jews in His time] *and said, what then is this that is written, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone...*[The word rejected here has a little different meaning from the word used in Mark, it means to disapprove, or to repudiate, or refuse to test] (vs 18) *Whoever falls on that stone will be broken, but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder...*[If one falls on the truth, it's going to break the person. In other words, it's going to have a positive spiritual impact because that person will come to see the realities of one's life as God sees it. But if one refuses to pay attention to God's Truth, then that person will be destroyed by Christ in their rebellion] (vs 19) *Then the chief priests and scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on him; but they feared...*[were afraid] *of the people; for they knew he had spoken this parable against them.* Instead of changing their ways, these Jewish leaders forgot their history and doubled down on their rebellion. Their desire was to kill Christ and get rid of Him. But what does this change? It changes nothing. These leaders were still the same corrupt individuals they always had been.

This same rejection of God is in the modern descendants of Israel & Judah today. It is also God's Church as well. Notice what Paul tells the Galatians 20 years after God's Church had been established.

Gal. 1:6 *I marvel that you...*[The brethren in Galatia] *are turning away so soon, from him who called you to the grace of Christ, to a different gospel...*[Who is the one that called them? God the Father. The phrase 'turning away' means to transfer, transport, by implication to exchange or to change sides. It can also mean to pervert. These brethren were exchanging Christ's gospel for a different gospel, a gospel about Christ] *which is not another...*[There is not another true gospel message] *but there are some who trouble you, and want to pervert...*[Or distort] *the gospel of Christ.* Just a mere 20 years after the Church of God is established, people are turning away to another message.

This rejection of God applies to God's Church in the current times we are living in now. Rev. 3:14 *And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: (vs 15) I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I could wish you were cold or hot. (vs 16) So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth...*[Christ is being made sick by the conduct of Laodicean Christians. They have made Him sick, so sick that He is just ready to puke them out of His mouth] (vs 17) *So then because you say...*[How many ministers in God's Church are delivering this message to their congregations today] *because you say I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing; and do not know...*[Why don't they know? Because their ministers aren't telling them] *you do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* God's Church today is full of sin. This has resulted because of a rejection of God's way of life. So, whether you're in God's Church or you're not, the problems human beings experience result from a rejection of God.

The ways of this world, and its rejection of God, will soon come to a big climax. Take a look at how the Bible describes this climax of big trouble. Matt. 24:21 *For then there will be great tribulation...*[Christ's statement is not optional. There will be great tribulation] *such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be...*[Clearly, this is an event unlike anything written in the annals of history. Nothing like it will occur after it has happened. It is a once-in-the-course-of-history event. Nothing before has ever occurred like it, and nothing after will ever occur like it. (vs 22) *Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved...*[The Moffatt translation adds the word 'alive'] *but for the elect's sake...*[The elect are the physical, faithful remnant of Philadelphia Christians alive, and protected during this earth-shaking event] *for their sake those days will be shortened.*

Jer. 30:4 Jeremiah uses different terminology to describe the same event. Notice, *These are the words the Eternal spoke concerning Israel and Judah...*

The use of the word 'Israel' refers to the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, which Jacob adopted as his own sons. He then passed along the birthright blessing to them. They were leading nations of the northern kingdom of Israel. Judah was the leading nation of the southern kingdom of Judah, which included the tribes of Levi and Benjamin. This prophecy in Jeremiah is for the whole nation of Israel, all 12 tribes.

(vs 5) *For thus says the Eternal, we have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace. (vs 6) Ask now, and see whether man is ever in labor with child? Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale?...*[These questions provide indication of the mental and emotional reaction of the modern descendants of Israel to what is about to take place] (vs 7) *Alas! For the day is great, so that none is like it. It is the time of Jacob's trouble...*[This description matches with what Christ said about the great tribulation. Notice]

*so that none is like it.* This is a tremendous, history making world event that is about to befall the modern descendants of Israel.

This is the ultimate cost for rejecting God. People didn't pay attention when the gospel message went to the world through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (Matt. 24:14). Because of their rejection, these descendants are going to have to pay the price. A price that is going to be very, very high and extremely tumultuous.

John writes about this time in the context of 4 horsemen of Revelation 6.

Many in the Church of God think the riding of these 4 horsemen apply to events of the past 2000 years since Christ established God's Church. This is a misapplication in the timing of prophecy.

*Rev. 6:2 I looked and, behold, a white horse: and he who sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given to him: and he went out conquering, and to conquer...*

The time of great tribulation is going to be filled with lots of false religion (white horse). This will produce a lot of conflict, represented by the bow, a weapon of war. The crown on this rider is symbolic of rulership. There's going to be a heavy push to promote a dominant false religion.

*(vs 4) Another horse, fiery red, went out, and it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another: and there was given to him a great sword...*

This red horse pictures global war.

*(vs 5) Come and see. So I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand*  
*(vs 6) I heard a voice in the midst of four living creatures saying, a quart of wheat for a denarius, three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.*

War has devastating effects on the food supply. The scourge of war will produce famine, disease and death. Which the black and pale horses represent. Food will be in short and limited supply. This why John writes, "*don't harm the oil and the wine.*"

*Rev. 6:8 I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and the name of him who sat on it was death, and Hades followed him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth...*

The activities of the white, red and black horses culminate in death. One fourth of the earth's population is going to be destroyed by the events these 4 horsemen represent. Currently, the earth has an estimated population of approximately 8 billion people. One fourth of this population or 2 billion people will be destroyed by the rides of the 4 horsemen. On top of this another third will be destroyed through the events of the sixth trumpet. The magnitude of human destruction and death being discussed is unfathomable to imagine. And caught in the midst of tribulation is God's Church for its failure to listen and obey God.

*(vs 9) When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God...[John figuratively portrays these dead people as alive. It's important to understand this context] When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held (vs 10) And they cried out with a loud voice saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?...[The implication is 'how much longer are we going to have to stay in the grave?'] (vs 11) Then a white robe was given to each of them; it was said to them, that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

'Fellow servants' is a reference to Laodicean Christians who are killed in the great tribulation for God's truth. This is a future martyrdom of true Christians. This high price must be paid because these true Christians rejected God and allowed their spiritual condition to become 'lukewarm.'

Now, look at the solution to this world's problems. The implementation of this solution begins at the seventh trumpet. *Rev. 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded and there were loud voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this earth have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and they shall reign forever and ever. (vs 16) The twenty four elders who sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God. (vs 17) Saying, we give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is, and who was, and who is to come; because you have taken your great power and reigned. (vs 18) The nations were angry...[People aren't going to be very happy when Jesus Christ returns] and your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged; and that you should reward your servants the prophets, and the saints, and those who fear your name, small and great; and should destroy those who destroy the earth.* This is when the true Christians in Revelation 6 will be brought up out of their graves. This is the first resurrection.

Matt. 24:29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken...*[These heavenly signs will occur just prior to sound of the seventh trumpet] (vs 30) *Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (vs 31) And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet...*[The same trumpet of Revelation 11:15] *and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

God's faithful servants are scattered in graves all around this earth. When they are resurrected, God's angels will go out to meet these resurrected true Christians. These angels will escort those of the first resurrection through the skies to Jerusalem to meet up with Jesus Christ in the air. This will be the first group of people to be born again into God's family.

John talks about these same heavenly signs in Revelation 6.

Rev. 6:12 *I looked when he opened the sixth seal, and behold, a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. (vs 13) And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs, when it is shaken by a mighty wind. (vs 17) For the great day of his wrath has come; and who is able to stand?*

These heavenly signs are the prelude to the Day of the Lord. Notice these signs occur immediately following the conclusion of the great tribulation. Matt. 24:29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken* This a very important piece of end-time chronology that only a few in God's Church understand.

Rev. 15:1 tells what will take place following the heavenly signs and the first resurrection. *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them the wrath of God is complete (vs 2) I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire; and those who have victory over the beast, over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass having harps of God.* [These are those of the first resurrection. After their resurrection, these resurrected/changed members of God's family return back to heaven with Christ. This is not speaking of false Christianity's concept of life after death. This is about life after resurrection from the grave. Life after resurrection, as a spirit being with eternal life, and the perfect righteous character of God] *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,*

*great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are your ways, King of all the saints. (vs 4) Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy: for all nations shall come and worship before you...*[This is speaking of a future time when all physical nations of the earth are going to come before God and worship, but notice-] *they shall come and worship before God. (vs 8) The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no one was able to enter the temple, until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed...* [These resurrected saints, the 144,000 firstfruits of Revelation 14, are going to stand on the sea of glass, outside the temple of God, in the third heaven, where they will wait until the seven last plagues are poured out.

Rev. 16:1 *Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.* Here is the start of the seven last plagues being poured out. Once these plagues are completed, then will follow the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Rev. 19:6 *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thundering saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns...*[At this point the 7 last plagues have been poured out] (vs 7) *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give him glory: for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready...*[Notice the emphasis, the wife has made herself ready. God's people are responsible for their own spiritual salvation. Paul says work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. These people have made themselves ready to rule with Christ. The bride of Christ has made herself ready] (vs 8) *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen...*[righteousness] *clean and bright: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (vs 9) He said to me, write, blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me these are true sayings of God.* The marriage supper of the Lamb will occur after the seven last plagues are poured out during the Day of the Lord.

Rev. 19:11 *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (vs 14) And the armies of heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed him on white horses...*[These armies are those of the first resurrection. They are coming back to the earth with Jesus Christ. They're coming to fight against the nations of the earth] (vs 15) *Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations: and he himself will rule them with a rod of iron: he himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (vs 16) And he has on his robe and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords...*[Notice that Christ and these resurrected saints destroy the armies of the earth] (vs 17) *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather together for the supper of the great God. (vs 18) That you may eat the flesh of kings, of captains and mighty men, of horses and of those who sat on them, and the flesh of all people, free*

*and slave, both small and great...*[All segments of society are going to be affected by Christ's return and the war He is going to wage on them] (vs 19) *And I saw the beast; and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse, against his army.* (vs 20) *Then the beast was captured...*[Or arrested] *and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast, and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.* (vs 21) *And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.* Once these human armies are destroyed, then the final event of the Day of the Lord occurs.

The final event is to deal with Satan the devil. Rev. 20:1 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.* (vs 2) *And he laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a 1000 years.* (vs 3) *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were finished: but after these things he must be released for a little while...*[Satan is put away for 1000 years] (vs 4) *I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them: then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus, and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast, or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads, or on their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ for 1000 years.*

In the past, God's Church has applied this verse to the whole of those in the first resurrection. But actually, this applies to those who were martyred in the great tribulation. However, the positions of teaching and rulership will be given to all who are part of the 144,000 firstfruits.

(vs 5) *The rest of the dead didn't live again until the thousand years were finished...*[This applies to all human beings who lived and died on the earth prior to Jesus Christ's return] [The second half of verse five says:] *This is the first resurrection...*[Which applies to everyone resurrected at the seventh trumpet] (vs 6) *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: over such the second death has no power...*[No longer will these individuals be subject to death] *But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him 1000 years.*

Verse 4 goes from Laodicean Christians who must stand up against the beast to verse 6 and everyone who is part of the first resurrection. This is the fulfillment of Christ's words in Revelation 3:21.

Rev. 3:21 *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father on his throne.* Christ promised rulership and in Revelation 20 resurrected Christians are in rulership positions, sitting on their thrones as kings and priests.

The 1,000 years represents a period of time known as the Millennium. This is 1,000 years of peace, happiness, and prosperity on the earth, under the establishment of God's kingdom, with Jesus Christ as king and 144,000 firstfruits as kings and priests. In Revelation 20, the goal of being in God's Church has been achieved. The 144,000 firstfruits were called; they were chosen; and they were faithful to the end of their lives.

This group, under Christ's leadership, will govern the earth as God intended it to be governed from the beginning. God's purpose never changes. God has a way of doing things and if it takes a little while for things to come around to the way God wants it, then that's the way it is. God doesn't change. He never has and He never will. His purpose is fixed.

When will this 1,000 years of peace, happiness, and prosperity begin? The following paragraphs will lay out the timeline for how and when the Millennium will be established.

Daniel 12 lists three time periods critical for understanding when Christ's 1,000 year reign will begin. These time periods are described in chronological order as time, times and half a time, 1,290 days and 1,335 days.

First, Daniel is told the length of time for the Days of Vengeance/great tribulation will be for time, times and half a time. Time, times, and half a time equals three and a half years and is calculated using the Hebrew calendar. While three and half years is a fixed time, the number of days in this time period can vary. It cannot be known specifically until the great tribulation begins. Suffice it to say, it is not 1,260 days as many in God's Church currently believe. In using the Hebrew calendar, time, times and half a time can range from 1,269 days to 1,271 days depending on when great tribulation begins.

The second time period represents the length of the Day of the Lord. It is not a year as many in the Church of God have been taught. This devastating period of God's wrath on mankind will only last approximately three weeks. This period of time is an addition of days to time, times and half a time that reaches 1,290 days. The Day of the Lord last for approximately three weeks following the end of great tribulation.

The third period of time is an additional forty-five days which follows the Day of the Lord. Christ will use these forty-five days to clean up the destruction of the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord. This will also include taking care of the human beings who have survived this most historic time in human history. Once the 1,335 days are complete the millennial rule of Jesus Christ will begin in earnest.

Peter talks about what the world will be like once the 1,335 days are complete in Acts 2. This is Peter's first sermon, delivered on the Feast of Pentecost when God's Church was established. But what Peter is talking about did not occur on this historic Pentecost. It was something yet to happen at a later time. What Peter did was use Joel 2 to make the connection to God giving His Spirit to God's Church.

Acts 2:16 Notice; *This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel (vs 17) and it shall come to pass in the last days...*[The timing is the last days. The last days were not in the first century. Peter, John and Paul all thought events of the last days would occur in their time. This was not the case] *God says, I will pour out my spirit...[Notice] on all flesh...*[All flesh did not have access to the Spirit in the first century] *your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. (vs 18) and on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.*

Joel is speaking about the start of the millennium, the 1,000 period spoken of in Revelation 20. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong taught the 1,000 years of Revelation 20:4, 6 pictured the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. To illustrate this point, notice what Mr. Armstrong taught in his sermon *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era* on December 17, 1983, in regard to the millennium:

The knowledge of the millennium and what it is... (that's one of the truths that has been restored)... Now the Sardis people knew that Christ would rule 1,000 years. They knew it would be a millennium. They had no idea in the world about what would happen in the millennium. They had no idea what is the purpose of the millennium. We know and we assemble for the Feast of Tabernacles. That's what we are celebrating. We know what's going to happen in the millennium, that salvation will be opened then to all that are still alive; but it is not open to all now. No other church knows that. These are things that you, brethren, are privileged to know. You, God has blessed you, with this knowledge, has restored this knowledge to you.

Mr. Armstrong thought the millennium pictured the Feast of Tabernacles: *"and we assemble for the Feast of Tabernacles. That's what we're celebrating."* Mr. Armstrong knew that salvation in the millennium would only come to those who survived the great tribulation and Day of the Lord.

Since Mr. Armstrong's death, understanding about the start of the millennium has increased. This increased understanding makes it necessary re-examine when the Millennium will begin.

The millennial rule of Jesus Christ actually begins in the spring of the year after Satan the Devil is put away for a 1,000 years. After the 45 days to follow the Day of the Lord, the Tree of Life will be re-opened and the Holy Spirit will be made available to all people. It is the time, as Mr. Armstrong said, when salvation will be open to all that are still alive. This will occur on the Feast of Pentecost not the Feast of Tabernacles.

How can this understanding be proven? Does the Bible show when God's Spirit will be made available to people? Yes, it does!!!

Understanding when end-time events will occur requires a correct understanding of the 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel 9.

The 70 weeks prophecy begins when Ezra the scribe left Babylon for Jerusalem in the year 457 BC (Ezra 7:9). 69 weeks of this prophecy ran consecutively from 457 BC to 27 AD. Since Ezra left Babylon on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month, the starting point for this prophecy is in the spring of the year. This means each week of the 70 weeks prophecy begins and ends in the spring of the year. The end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week occurs right before the death of Jesus Christ (Dan. 9:26).

This leaves the 70<sup>th</sup> and final week of this prophecy to be fulfilled and represents the last 7 years of Satan's rule on this earth. It begins with the implementation of a 7-year peace treaty in the spring of the year. This treaty will be broken 3 ½ years later in the fall of the year, coinciding with the Feast of Trumpets. This will mark the start of great tribulation.

This understanding puts the Millennium beginning in the spring of the year, not the fall of the year as previously understood by Mr. Armstrong. Notice the timeline of events.

The 70<sup>th</sup> week will begin in the spring of the year, just like every other week in the 70 week prophecy did. The great tribulation will begin in the fall of the year. 3 ½ years after a 7 year treaty is implemented. Following tribulation in order will be the heavenly signs, the seven last plagues, Marriage Supper of the Lamb, presentation of the wave sheaf (the very firstfruits of the spring harvest) to God the Father.

Once these events are complete Jesus Christ will return back to the earth with His Bride to defeat the nations at Jerusalem and put Satan the Devil away for a 1,000 years on day 1,290. This is when Christ takes over rulership of the earth and the Millennium begins.

45 days later, on the Feast of Pentecost, the Tree of Life will be re-opened and God's Spirit will be available to all people.

It is important to realize that the starting point for time, times, and half a time, 1,290 and 1,335 days is in the fall of the year, with different ending points in the spring of the year.

God's plan is truly marvelous. Isaiah provides a glimpse of what the Millennium will be like once Satan is put away and Christ is king over the earth.

Isa. 11:1 *There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse; and a branch shall grow out of his roots...*[Jesus Christ] (vs 2) *The Spirit of the Eternal shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear...*[Or respect] *of the Eternal.* (vs 3) *His delight is in the fear of the Eternal, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, nor decide by the hearing of his ears...*[Description of how Christ will rule in God's kingdom] (vs 4) *But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth: he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.* (vs 5) *Righteousness shall be the belt of his loins, and faithfulness the belt of his waist.*

Isa. 11:6 *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion and fatling together; a little child shall lead them.* (vs 7) *The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw with the ox...*

This does not describe the nature of the animal world today. Try putting any of these domesticated and wild animals together with a little child and it won't be a pretty sight. The child would be the first to go, but not in the Millennium.

(vs 8) *The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.* (vs 9) *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Eternal, as the waters cover the sea.*

Isaiah is comparing the totality of the waters of the seas to the amount of God's knowledge available during the Millennium. This is a remarkable prophecy.

Isa. 11:10 *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek him: and his resting place shall be glorious.* (vs 11) *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Eternal shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, who are left.*

Isaiah is speaking of a second exodus which mirrors the first Exodus, but in a much broader context. Who is the remnant God will recover a second time?

*Eze. 36:17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds: to me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. (vs 18) Therefore I poured out my fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it.*

The remnant to be recover is the modern descendants of Israel. John numbers a portion of this remnant in Rev. 7:4 *And I heard the number of those who were sealed, One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.* 12,000 from each tribe to be protected from the impact of the 7 seven trumpet plagues. This verse proves the children of Israel are very much in existence today. They are not lost, nor have they blended in with society at large. God knows who they are and where they are. And soon they will know who they are.

*Eze. 36:19 So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries: I judged them according to their ways and their deeds...[A prophecy for today] (vs 22) Therefore, say to the house of Israel, thus says the Lord God, I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. (vs 23) And I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Eternal, says the Lord God, when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. (vs 24) For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all the countries, and bring you into your own land. (vs 25) And I will sprinkle clean water on you...[A reference to baptism] You shall be clean: I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. (vs 26) I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. (vs 27) I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments, and do them. (vs 28) Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

These events will occur following the 1,335 days. This is an exciting increase of biblical understanding which God has provided at this time before these events occur. This information clarifies the sequence of events in the first half of Revelation 20 and how the Millennium begins. This will be a joyous time of peace, happiness and prosperity. Never before have people experienced such a time throughout man's existence. This is something to really look forward to!

Now, understand what the Millennium is not.

The catechism of the Catholic Church has a different explanation of the Millennium than the Bible. Notice, carefully,

Section 676:

The Antichrist Deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize, within history, that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history, through the eschatological judgment. (*Understand 'within history' and 'beyond history', is speaking of the history of mankind.*) The church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millennialism, especially the intrinsically perverse political form of a secular Messianism and his church.

The Catholic Church does not believe in the Millennium. It rejects this clear biblical teaching outright. To illustrate their rejection, notice three short sections from the catechism:

Section 680:

Christ the Lord already reigns through the church; but all the things of this world are not yet subjected to him. The triumph of Christ's kingdom will not come about without one last assault by the powers of evil.

Section 681:

On judgment day, at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to achieve the definitive triumph of good over evil which, like the wheat and the tares, have grown up together in the course of history.

Section 682:

When he comes, at the end of time, to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts; and will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace.

The Catholic teaching states that when Christ returns, this will be the end of time. It is when judgment will take place for all, and nothing will follow it. In its own words, the Catholic Church rejects the 1000-year millennial reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. This teaching is not based on God's Word, the Holy Bible.

Now, take a look at how Satan distorted the restored truth about the Millennium in God's Church.

From an article from the September 1993 Plain Truth Magazine, entitled *Jesus Is Coming* by Norman Shoaf. This article provides three varying views on the millennium.

A-millennialism: the belief that Christ will not rule on the earth either before or after his second coming

Pre-millennialism: the belief that Christ will return before his earthly reign

Post-millennialism: the belief that Christ will return after an earthly reign that does not require His presence

Understand that Satan is good at confusing a topic by using a multiple-choice approach in discussing it. So, when a-millennial, pre-millennial, or post-millennial is discussed it disguises and confuses what God's truth is really all about.

Mr. Shoaf states in his article on millennialism, that:

Millennialism is the belief in a period of the rule of Christ on earth. The most literal view understands this time as being 1000 years. Early Christians were pre-millennialists; but by the time of Augustine, 354 to 430 A.D., the Church concluded that the millennium, which may or may not equal exactly 1000 years, was not totally in the future. Augustine wrote *The City of God* calling Revelation a spiritual allegory, and saying the millennium was realized in the Church.

This is why the Catholic Church holds the position it does on the Millennium. Many in the world of traditional Christianity do not believe in an actual millennial period, with Jesus Christ ruling on this earth. In other words, a 1,000 years doesn't literally mean a 1,000 years.

From the personal answer section of the Plain Truth, July 1992, the following is said on the 1,000 years.

We will undoubtedly hear prophetic speculations about the end of the world as the year 2000 approaches. According to this concept, the seven days of the week, or the seven days of creation, are considered types of this 7000-year plan, interpreted by the one-day-as-a-1000-years statement in 2 Peter 3:18. Peter used the thousand year-statement as a metaphor of God's eternity, that human measurements of time mean nothing to God.

If time doesn't mean anything to God, why are there so many references to it in the Bible?

Why does God require the keeping of His holy Sabbath day on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week?

Why is God so specific about when His holy days are to be kept?

Why does God refer to time, times and half a time, 1,290 days and 1,335 days when laying out the timing of end-time events?

Finally, from a Worldwide Church of God Personal Correspondence letter numbered L057, it says:

Based on the seven-day week, and on the seven days of creation, some have reasoned that God has also set aside some 7000 years to work with man. Verse 8 in 2 Peter 3, which includes the words "one day is as a thousand years" is used to support this view. It is not wise to use this reference to establish a set method for calculating biblical chronology that God has not clearly revealed. God's plan centers around his power, love, and saving grace, not chronologies and endless genealogies, which cause disputes.

This letter, written after Mr. Armstrong's death, minimizes God's plan, which centers around the building of His family through a chronological order. Timing is very important to God.

God continues His work by providing a deeper understanding of His Word. This would not be happening if God were not pleased with the efforts of those in His Church who have chosen to obey and hold fast to His Truth.

Remember, these restored truths have not changed because many have fallen away, or the final era of God's Church has become 'lukewarm'.

In his December 1983 sermon, *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*, Mr. Armstrong said the following about the meaning and purpose of the Millennium:

"We know what's going to happen in the millennium, and that salvation will be open then to all that are still alive; but it is not open to all now. No other church knows that. These are things that you, brethren, are privileged to know. You, God has blessed you, with this knowledge, has restored and revealed this knowledge to you."