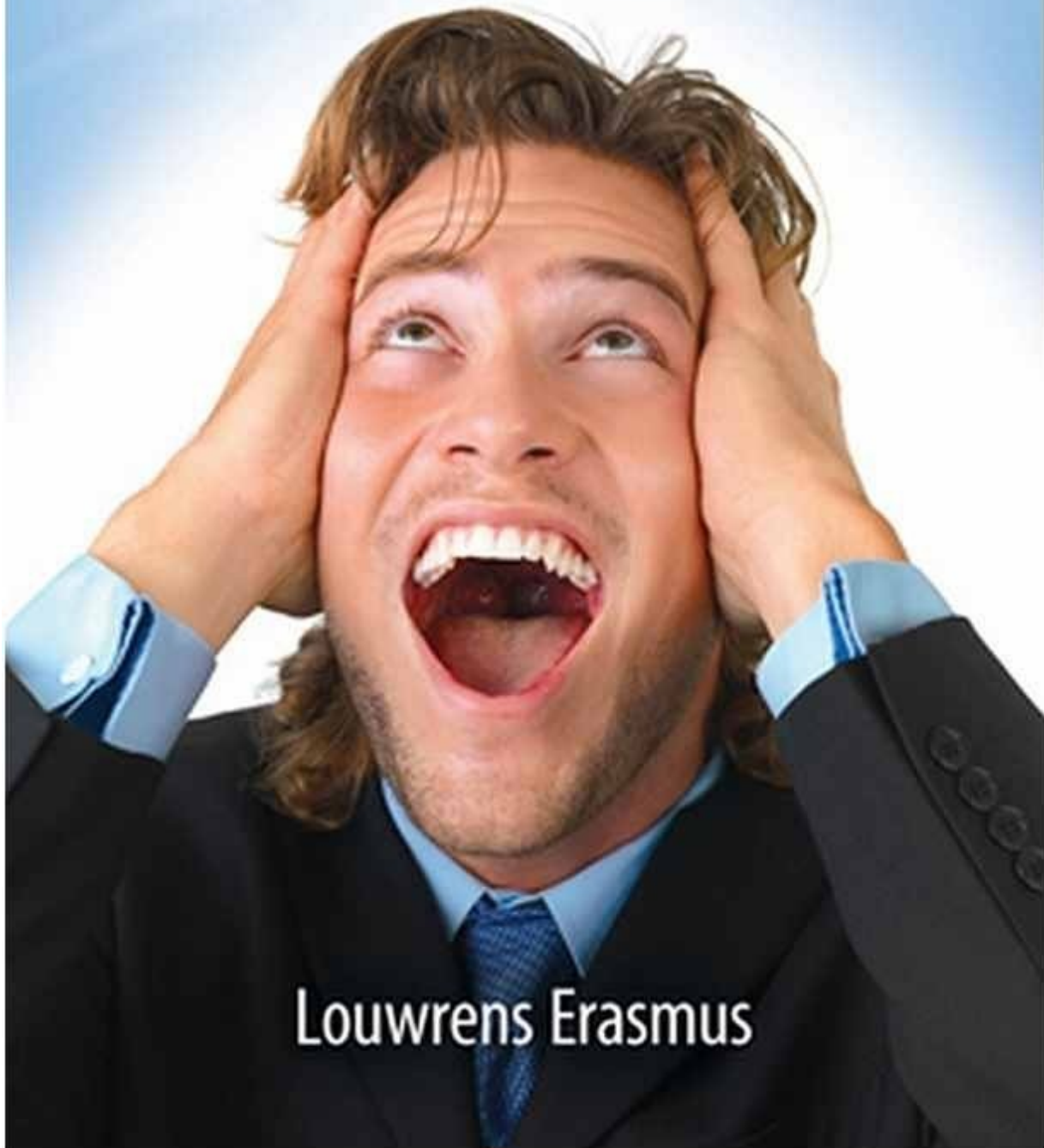


A WAKE UP CALL



Louwrens Erasmus

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INTRODUCTION

"Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all. Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? Why are we also in danger every hour? I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE. Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame." (1Cor 15:12-34)

Is there a heaven? And if so, do we know all the entry requirements to be completely sure of the fact that we will enter into heaven? Why and where will Christ have to reign? The short answer to this is *"For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death."*

Did you know that the prophets of the Old Testament saw this future? That they mentioned the millennium reign of Jesus Christ? What will this Kingdom look like? Did they see the so-called rapture of the saints, or is it a fairy tale? This is what I would like to look at in this book. You might ask why the Old Testament and the prophets, but are you aware of the fact that many of these prophecies have yet to be fulfilled? One such an example comes from Jeremiah 30 verse 3. *"For behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.' The LORD says, 'I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers and they shall possess it.'" The majority of biblical commentators agree that Israel never possessed Canaan in the true sense of the word ever, as when they returned from captivity they were ruled over by other nations, as well as the fact that only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were taken captive. So what did Jeremiah mean with this passage?*

Other prophecies that still need to be fulfilled are from Zechariah, who sees a new world being born, Ezekiel and his temple, and then Isaiah that says that Egypt and Assyria will both serve the LORD, along with many other prophecies. One of the other prophecies I will look at is the seventy weeks of Daniel. Some scholars declare that it has been fulfilled, while others disagree.

In this series I want to investigate why these prophets saw certain things, what it means to us as Christians, and to whom it applies.

This is not your average interpretation of these and other prophecies, but a radical new look at everything we as Christians have taken for granted over the years. We are so often taught not to question our basic Christian beliefs or our Church fathers, but after surviving cancer twice in my life, I had to find answers for myself. During the next fifteen years I studied the Bible and searched for answers, only to end up with more questions.

CHAPTER 1 – IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH?

I want to advise you right here in the beginning of the book that should you be a well read theologian with very strict rules on how to interpret scripture, that you might not agree with my way of interpreting scripture, as we will differ on how Israel and the Church fits into history. I still want to ask you to read this book, and at the completion of the book you might find that I do not have such a weird outlook after all.

The Bible teaches us that we will not end up in an English speaking heaven, or perhaps an Afrikaans speaking one, or maybe even a Greek speaking heaven. It is however very clear that there is a heaven and that all Christians will be there. We are also not told that there will be an Anglican heaven, or different heavens for the different Churches groups. So what will heaven actually look like, and who will be there? These are some of the questions I will try to answer.

Let us start at the first question. Who will end up in heaven? I believe those that are there already are people like Moses, David, Samuel and many more of the people of the Old Testament. If we look at the New Testament it would be people like Peter, Paul and John. You might wonder why I only mention the names of people that descended from Jacob. The reason being is that they will definitely be there, as they belonged to the nation of the LORD, Israel. We learn from the Old Testament that only those people that were chosen by the LORD ended up in heaven, in other words only people from Israel. The LORD says the following through Moses to Israel: *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"* (Deu 7:6-9)

Now what about people from other nations? Are they also part of God's plan, His elected, and if they are elected, how does it work today?

This question is a fairly difficult question to answer, as so many people have tried to answer it and then their interpretations ended up tearing families apart, and I know of instances where people lost their inheritance because of this subject. However, I believe that God's Word is there to build up and not to tear down relationships. So what does the Bible actually teach on this subject, and will it still be in effect today?

I know that if you have a very strict interpretation based on the theologian Calvin that you might not agree with me. All I ask of you is to open your mind in order for the Bible, the Word of God, to speak to you.

I want to start at the beginning. Now when I quote from the book of Revelation you might think that I am starting at the end, but fortunately Jesus is speaking. He was there right at the beginning of time, even when Adam and Eve were formed. Revelation 3:9: *"Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan,*

who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie--I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you."

Jesus is telling us here that even though people are from the synagogue of Satan; they are still saying that they are Jews. These people are from Philadelphia, and definitely not Jews from Israel. This confirms the scripture from Revelation 2:9: *"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."* This piece of information is extremely important, in that Jesus is saying that all believers are Jews, and that only Jews will be saved. This confirms the scripture that Moses gave to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6-7: *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples."*

Once we realise that God does not and will not change His word, we will realise that there seems to be a problem with interpreting this verse in the light of the verses from Revelation. How is it possible then that God declares in one place that He has chosen only Israel, and then later on declares that all true believers are Jews? The answer comes partly from the book of Acts chapter 10:34-35: *"Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."*

So all people who fear God and accept His righteousness, is accepted. This however still does not satisfy the requirement of Revelation, as we are still not Jews. The answer is given to us as part of the exodus from Egypt. Here the LORD gave them a commandment that they had to keep forever. The scripture comes from Numbers 15 verse 15 and 16: *"As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. "There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you."* One point I would like to make here, is that Israel is referred to as a congregation, and not as a nation. In fact, it Israel is referred to more than 350 times in the Old Testament as a congregation, an assembly and not as a nation. See Addendum 1 for a full description of this subject.

Exodus 12 verse 48 gives us the final answer: *"But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."*

In the history of Israel we find that whenever someone from another nation wanted to join them to Israel, they had to do whatever was required to become part of the covenant and then they were treated as people from Israel. A very good example is Ruth. Although she had the right to return to her people after her husband's death, she chose to go with Naomi. Her words were as follows: Ruth 1 verses 15 to 17: *"Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."*

Ruth answers that she chooses to go with Naomi, and that only death will part them, but that she, Ruth will die where Naomi dies. She will worship Naomi's God, and never return to her original nation. Who was Ruth? David's great grandma. Where did Jesus come from: David's tribe.

How do all these various pieces fit together? The LORD chose Israel as His nation. We as gentiles must chose to become Jews by joining Israel and its tribes. How is this done? The same way it was done in Israel's time, by becoming part of the covenant with the LORD. In the time of Israel it was by circumcision, and after Christ it is by being born again. John 3:5-6 gives us the answer: "*Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*"

In other words, I have to decide, my parents cannot decide on my behalf, to become part of the LORD's people, to be born again and to become part of Israel. The next step after this for me is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul gives us the following summary in Ephesians 2: "*Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, **excluded from the commonwealth of Israel**, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, **who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.***" (Eph 2:11-16) Paul confirms that there is no difference between the Gentiles and the Jews any longer, as Christ made both one on the cross, and that all born again Christians are Jews, and is now called the Church.

To the Romans Paul writes the following: "*What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."*" (Rom 9:22-26)

Peter again declares the following in 1 Peter 2:9-10: "*But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."*

I trust that this short explanation will allow us all to accept that there is no difference any longer between believing Jew and gentile. We are all His people. It does not help to complicate things so nobody understands it. Jesus himself said that we must become like a child again to follow Him. I trust that a child will even understand my explanation.

Coming back to my question on who we will find in heaven, both the short and the long answer is everyone that became part of the New Covenant with the LORD, in other words, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, and became Jews.

Another question that is answered by the above is that we as true Church, all became Jews and can therefore lay claim to all the promises that were made to Israel.

Paul now declares the following in 1 Corinthians 10: *“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. **Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, **“THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.”** Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. **Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.** Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”* (1Co 10:1-12)

I am not preaching replacement theology as that says the Church replaced Israel. I am saying that we as Christians become part of Gods nation, Israel, the moment we enter into the covenant with Him. The book of Romans declares that God is the roots and the stump of the tree, and we are grafted into that tree, so we are His people. The moment we allow some of the original branches to grow again it will ultimately mean the end of those grafted in, as the original branch will take over with their rituals, which is not meant to be any longer. So do not get involved in Messianic practises, as it will kill your relationship with the LORD.

In conclusion, we must look at how the LORD dealt with Israel, and from this we would be able to find out how He would deal with us. We can now also look at all the promises made to Israel, and claim them for ourselves. There are still many promises to be fulfilled in the Bible, as well as descriptions of what will happen at the end of our age. Let us understand what these are, and how it will impact our lives as His children.

CHAPTER 2 – WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR US AS THE NEW ISRAEL?

To me, the most significant impact was in the way I read the Bible. I was so intrigued by what was in store for Israel after Jesus, that I could not stop reading, as I was scared that I would miss something. The other side of the coin however, was that I had to revisit some of my own doctrines to see if it actually matches what we read in the Bible.

The first doctrine was the popular doctrine about the rapture. This doctrine is based on the fact that we are living in a dispensation of grace, that Jesus would come to rapture the Church before, during or after the tribulation, that the Jews would be restored to their former state, and that they will be given a second chance to come to Jesus, and that Jesus would then come again to judge the people of the earth. The advocates of this doctrine maintain that there is a difference between Israel and the Church, and then refer to a mystery that Paul says was revealed to him. These advocates then claim that only certain people have the ability to interpret certain sections of scriptures, and that Paul's mystery is one of these scriptures as it refers to the difference between the Church and Israel and the way the LORD will deal with them. They use the prophecy of Daniel regarding the seventy weeks as their main argument that the last week of this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and that this is part of the mystery of what Paul refers to.

However, in the previous chapter we have concluded that there is no difference between Israel and the Church. How do we then interpret Daniels prophecy, and has the seventieth week been fulfilled? I know that people have written many books about the rapture and its effect, and that many people have used it as scripts for their doctorate degrees, but is this doctrine correct?

The rapture is one of those doctrines that have a very calming effect on Christians, as it gives us a sense of relief that we do not have to worry about all these nasty things that will happen during the tribulation. The tribulation is only for Israel and the unbelievers, or that is what we are taught. If we however see ourselves as the new Israel, we end up with a problem in that we have to face the tribulation, and then things get slightly out of hand.

Many people have written books concerning Daniel's seventy weeks, and how it must be interpreted. The first 69 weeks we find that most people agree with in that it gives us the time from the return of Israel from exile, up to the coming of Jesus. The last week is the week that all the fuss is about. This fuss only started about 160 years ago when a certain John Nelson Darby gave a different meaning to this, and now we find that most people who are not strong in their faith, are running after him. Before Darby there was no doctrine about the rapture or someone claiming that there is a difference between the Church and the latter day Jews. This doctrine has the effect that people are spending lots of money to go to Israel and to celebrate Shabbat, to fight for Israel's right to the temple mount, and to try and establish new sacrifices to the LORD.

But what does the seventieth week of Daniel actually proclaim? I am quoting this passage from the Amplified Bible: *"And he shall enter into a strong and firm covenant with the many for one week [seven years]. And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease [for the remaining three and one-half years]; and upon the wing or pinnacle of abominations [shall come] one who makes desolate, until the full determined end is poured out on the desolator."* (Dan 9:27) Daniel prophecies that in the last week, which is actually years, a new covenant will come in effect. When we examine our Lord Jesus

Christ's ministry on earth, we find that He spent three and a half years trying to convince the Jews that He was the Christ, and that they had to change their ways and accept Him as the Christ. After this period, and as Daniel puts it, in the middle of the week, Jesus was crucified. We know that Jesus was the complete and perfect sacrifice and accepted by the Father, which is why the daily sacrifice ceased in the middle of the week, as it was no longer required. We also find that people are looking for the Ark of the Covenant, or as others call it the Holy Grail, as they need that for their third temple so that the LORD can be put back in a box. But that is the only reason as they did not recognise Jesus as the Lamb in the covenant, and therefore need to act like the Israel of the years before Christ was crucified.

Let us examine this scripture chronologically as Daniel wrote it. The covenant that Jesus entered into with God the Father is the strong covenant that Daniel prophesied about, as it is the covenant between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This covenant was established on our behalf. We also know that Jesus Himself said that He came to fulfil and not to establish something new. That is why He was sacrificed, and that is the reason why this is the strongest covenant that can be entered into. *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."* (Mat 5:17) This confirms then that the covenant Abraham entered into was fulfilled, which required all male persons to be circumcised, and that only those that were circumcised were treated as children of Abraham. When the LORD asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac his son, the LORD declared that He would sacrifice His Son, as one rule applied to both parties of the covenant. By asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the LORD declared that He would do the same. This first covenant had to be confirmed by continually bringing sacrifices, and by circumcising all males. In addition to this the Israelites had to bring their tithes to the Levites for their service at the temple, and all first born had to be sacrificed to the LORD. The circumcision and sacrifice of the first-born was required as the LORD cursed the entire first born in Egypt as part of the plagues in Egypt. That is another reason Jesus had to die, as he had to nullify that curse, as He was the Son of God.

So, to summarise: The covenant that Jesus entered into, was the strong covenant that Daniel prophesied about, as it removed the curse of the first born, as well as all the sacrifices the priests had to do. By doing this He paid for all our transgressions once, as he entered into the heavenly tabernacle, in order for us to be set free. This now allows us to appear in righteousness before the Father, without blemish or sin.

Many of the advocates of the rapture says that the daily sacrifice only ended when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., and that we cannot use this as an indicator. What they forget however, is that if we believe that Jesus was the Christ, no sacrifices were required after His death. He was the perfect sacrifice required by the Law of Moses. We find another reason why Jesus could be sacrificed and why He was acceptable to the LORD, and why the Father did not look favourably on the offer of the High Priest. The following events took place the day Jesus was brought before the High Priest: *"And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy."* (Mat 26:61-65) The clothing of the High priest had to be made of a single cloth, without any seams.

"These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as

*priests. They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together. And the skillfully woven band on it shall be made like it **and be of one piece with it**, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.” Ex 28:4-8.*

By tearing his clothing, the high priest could not enter into the temple the next day for the sacrifice. The only way he could do it, was by sewing it together, but then it would have a seam, and would thus be rejected by the Father, as it did not comply with the Law of Moses. That is why the sacrifice Jesus brought was accepted, and the reason why His clothes were not torn, but the lot cast over it. *“And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.”* (Mar 15:24) Here we see that His clothes were not torn but given as complete clothing which complied with the Law of Moses.

We have to remember that Jesus was crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice, and that He died at the time of the afternoon sacrifice. He was crucified outside the town, as He also had to complete that sacrifice that had to be slain outside the town. *“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”* (Heb 13:10-13) As mentioned earlier He also did not bring His sacrifice in the earthly tabernacle, but in the heavenly one: *“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”* (Heb 9:23-28)

When the veil was rent in the temple, Jesus was accepted in the Heavenly tabernacle. That was also the end of the first half of the last week of Daniels’ prophecy.

The second half of the week was the time the apostles spent in Jerusalem to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, and ended with the vision of Peter: *“On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”* (Act 10:9-15) This was also about the same time that Stephen was killed by the Jews. This was the end of the last half of the week as seen by Daniel, and at this time we as Church replaced the Jews as Israel. The one thing we have to remember is that the Jews expected a physical king to rule over them again like in the days of Saul and David, but failed to realise that these kings only ruled over them because they rejected the LORD. *“And the LORD said to Samuel, Obey*

the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.” (1Sa 8:7)

Daniel also declares that at the end of the week abominations will start and it will continue until the end of time. What is Satan trying to accomplish? When he was cast out of heaven, he lost all his power as an angel of the LORD. When he deceived Adam and Eve, he claimed the power Adam had as he was stronger and took the power rightfully from Adam. Since then he has been trying everyday to increase his power in order for him to have the same power as God the Father. That is why he tried to get the power of Jesus by getting Jesus to worship him. When Jesus died, Satan rejoiced as he thought he was now next in line for the power of God the Father. But that was when the Father played his final trump card. He unveiled His love as a power, by resurrecting Jesus, and by Jesus defeating Satan. As a consequence of this, Satan is now trying to destroy all flesh, and as Daniel says, it will last till the end of the earth.

I mentioned earlier that the advocates of the rapture also refer to the mystery of Paul. These words are normally used completely out of context in order for them to deceive the people and to convince people of their doctrine.

However Paul himself declares what this mystery is: *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; **Having made known unto us the mystery of his will**, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: **That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Eph 1:7-14)* So the mystery that Paul alludes to is that the gospel of peace will be preached to us as gentiles and that we will inherit everything proclaimed in the Bible, once we are united in one, the Church, with Jesus Christ as head. We have already proven that the Church is the new Israel, and thus the mystery of the LORD is revealed to the Church, through Paul. It is not something that will happen in the future, it happens the day you become a child of God.

To conclude the seventy weeks then; it started with the ministry of Jesus to the Jews, and ended when the message of the gospel came to us as gentiles. From this we can also conclude that there will not be a separate rapture of the Church, but that we as gentiles are one with all believers. Jesus himself said that we must hold on to our faith till the end, and not to think that we will not go through the tribulation. Even in Paul’s time we had people that did not understand the message of the gospel: *“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” (1Ti 1:3-7)*

But if this is the case that we as Church have become the new Israel, what then about the current Jewish nation? They were the firstborn of the flesh, but just like Esau, they sold their first-born right when they

rejected Jesus as the Christ and now us as gentiles became the new Israel. Their end will be according to the judgements we find to Edom. Israel as state has nothing to do with Israel of the prophets. We as born again Christians, as Church, became Israel, and will inherit a never-ending life with Jesus and the Father.

So is there a rapture? Nope. I cannot find any scripture supporting the rapture. Only a few years ago, on 21 May 2011, a large number of people prepared for the rapture. Did it happen? Nope. Why not? Some people were saying that these people's calculations were wrong, or that we do not know when it will happen, but a lot of people still said that it will happen. However the Bible teaches that if someone utters prophecy and it does not happen that this person is a false prophet. That is what I believe the rapture theory is. A false prophecy, as it is not supported in the Bible.

The Bible only teaches that Jesus will come on the clouds and we as His people will join him and be taken to where He is.

CHAPTER 3—WHAT NATION DO YOU BELONG TO?

If we remember correctly from chapter one, we all became Jews, as we all followed the rules of the covenant and hence became part of Israel. Or did we? We find that even though all the tribes of Israel inherited Israel, only the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi were in Jerusalem during the time that Jesus wandered on the earth. Most of the other tribes did not function as Jews any longer. We know that even in the time of Jeremiah people returned to Egypt, and during this time and other times of war, Israel got scattered all over the middle east and later all over the then known parts of the earth. Another point that further adds confusion is that Isaiah declares that we will find a main road between Egypt, Assyria and Jerusalem. This tells me that not everyone will be in Jerusalem after the second coming of Christ. People will find themselves in different areas, but the one thing I find is that these people will be known by the area they occupy. This then tells us that there will be people from Egypt, Zidon, and many more countries.

We find many passages in the Old Testament that are difficult to interpret. If I think of Isaiah and what he prophesies about Israel, Egypt and Assyria, it is extremely difficult to interpret: *“In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”* (Isa 19:18-25)

The Bible commentator, Matthew Henry had the following to say about this; *“The words, “In that day,” do not always refer to the passage just before. At a time which was to come, the Egyptians shall speak the holy language, the Scripture language; not only understand it, but use it. Converting grace, by changing the heart, changes the language; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. So many Jews shall come to Egypt, that they shall soon fill five cities. Where the sun was worshipped, a place infamous for idolatry, even there shall be a wonderful reformation. Christ, the great Altar, who sanctifies every gift, shall be owned, and the gospel sacrifices of prayer and praise shall be offered up. Let the broken-hearted and afflicted, whom the Lord has wounded, and thus taught to return to, and call upon him, take courage; for He will heal their souls, and turn their sorrowing supplications into joyful praises. The Gentile nations shall not only unite with each other in the gospel fold under Christ, the great Shepherd, but they shall all be united with the Jews. They shall be owned together by him; they shall all share in one and the same blessing. Meeting at the same throne of grace, and serving with each other in the same business of religion, should end all disputes, and unite the hearts of believers to each other in holy love.”* He confirms that the various nations will serve the LORD. We find many more areas discussed in the Bible, but this will be discussed later on in this book.

We also find many different prophesies in the Bible that we are not sure of if it has happened or not. One such a prophesy which I believe gives us the key to unlocking these scriptures are found in Zechariah: *“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not,*

that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.” (Zec 14:17-21) We find this scripture after Zechariah has seen the final judgment of the end times and before the new day has started. One can then safely assume that what is meant here will happen at the end of the current dispensation. Here we find people in Egypt, and if they do not go to Jerusalem for the annual feast of the tabernacles, no rain will fall on them.

But why is the feast of tabernacles so important? It is the feast that Israel had to obey annually to remember the day the LORD took them out of Egypt, and placed them in Canaan. This scripture tells me that there will be different places where we as Christians will find ourselves in, in the time to come. The moment we read the Old Testament with this in mind, we will find that many other scriptures will all of a sudden make sense to us. Then we will find that the part where Isaiah said that the lamb and the lion will both eat grass and be together, refers to the next dispensation that awaits us. As you can see I believe in the physical explanation of these prophesies, and expect what was said to happen.

But what does the New Testament have to say about this subject? I have found two references to this in the book of Revelation. The first part is the letters to the various churches, while the second part is where John tells us of the beast with seven heads that will rise from the sea. In the Old Testament we find that the prophets always addressed their utterings to seven different nations, but in the New Testament we find it is addressed to the seven churches, and then explained further by the discussion on the beast that rose from the sea. This is the only place where we find that the seven different nations and churches are all joined to the beast that controls all seven heads. The horns of the beast are the proclamations or messages that the beast brings. The beast is Satan with his false message that he proclaims to the Church as the truth.

What can we learn from these passages in Revelation?

We daily meet people that believe differently to what we believe. But who is correct? Is there a part in Scripture that I can use that would tell me difference between what is the right way and what is the wrong way? And when I find that I am wrong, is there also a part that would tell me what to do to correct my ways?

The Bible is certainly the book that will have an answer to all these questions, but that means we have to understand what each prophet declared and how to interpret it. I will use the letters to the different churches as a basis to show the difference between the different Christians. This will also allow us to examine the different doctrines people believe in, and what is acceptable to the LORD and what not. We will then also be able to see what we believe in. We will also find that the way we believe may be the same as one or multiples of these churches.

▪ **EPHESUS**

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 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: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev 2:1-7)

Who was this church? We find that these people actually knew the LORD as they are told that the LORD knows their works and their labour. They can further distinguish between the false prophets and the true prophets. They also hate the works of the Nicolaitans, in other words they teach that it is wrong to live in sin and to sleep around. To me it sounds as though these people really knew what is right and what is wrong, but the LORD still finds something wrong. They are asked to repent and do the first works again as they left their first love.

What are the first works? The writer of Hebrews tells us as follows: *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”* (Heb 6:1-2). These people are told to repent and to do the first works again. These works are faith in God, baptism, laying on of hands, and the doctrines about the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. So these people do not believe in the baptism of the believer, but hold on to baptism of infants. To me they are still in Egypt.

These people are also described in Ezekiel 31: *“And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness? Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the*

deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen. To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.” (Ezek 31:1-18)

We read in this part of scripture about a tree that grew very tall, although it was planted in Egypt. It became even bigger than the trees that were planted in paradise. So this group of believers became a great many people, although they were in Egypt. The reason the Bible declares that they were in Egypt, was because they did not leave Egypt to start the long walk to Canaan. They decided it was better to stay with the devil they knew, than to face an unknown future. This meant that they did not follow the LORD’s instructions to leave Egypt behind and go through the Red Sea, or baptism. The prophet uses the example of what happened to Israel because of their unwillingness to follow the LORD. The LORD rejected them. So if you are part of this tree in Egypt, look at the example of Israel. If He rejected them, will He act any different with you? This also confirms the words of Jesus earlier: *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen”*.

One lesson we have to learn right at the outset is that even if you do almost everything right, but only have this one small problem, you are still unacceptable to the LORD. We read in Exodus that the Israelites had to remove all yeast from their homes prior to Passover, and eat unleavened bread. The same way a small part of yeast can cause a bread to raise, sin will cause us to be puffed up and make us unacceptable to the LORD.

So the first group of Christians are those that do not believe that baptism has any influence on your life. They are told to repent and do the first works. Once this is done, they will eat from the tree in paradise and receive everlasting life.

■ SMYRNA

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” (Rev 2:8-11)

These people only receive encouragement. The LORD knows that they always receive criticism from those who say they are Christians, but are not. *(and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not,)* These people always receive words like “This doesn’t happen to Christians” from others. This criticism will normally come from people of the church in Laodicea, as Jesus tells them that *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” (Rev 3:19)* So, if you know that you belong to the LORD, but you always have to face criticism from so-called Christians, know that you are part of the

Church of Smyrna. This portion of scripture also tells us that we will face hard times, but it also states that we will receive a crown. This crown confirms the scripture in Revelation 20 that says that these people will rule with Jesus for a thousand years, as only rulers wear crowns. The future of these people is described later in this book.

■ PERGAMOS

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” (Rev 2:12-17)

Here we find people who do not interpret the Word correctly, as He says He is the one with the two edged sword. The sword being the Word of God and as such these people will be judged by what the Bible teaches. A further complication is that they are told that they live where the headquarters of Satan is. That means that they are still in Egypt and have never moved, as they do not believe in the true meaning of baptism. To them baptism is only an emblem, and not an action of leaving my old life behind me. I can personally think of a number of charismatic congregations that fit this description.

A further negative point is that they hold on to the teachings of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitans, who teaches free sexual relationships. I am personally aware of a number of congregations where leaders inform their congregation that it is okay to live together as you first have to see if you are sexually compatible, and that this is no sin. These churches normally advertise that people who have been through a divorce is welcome to join them as the LORD will never reject anyone, even if you were the cause of the divorce. I am sorry, but this passage teaches the opposite. The LORD will never condone free sexual relationships. He will only accept people who have repented, have been born again, and have put their total trust in Him.

The LORD declares that He will come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth, and the Word will prove them wrong. But, like in most of the churches, the people are asked to repent. He will then give them the hidden manna, which means that He will make them part of the covenant again.

■ THYATIRA

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with

death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". (Rev 2:18-29)

How many people do you know that will tell you that if you do not attend a service at a church, or you do not act this way, that you will not inherit eternal life? These people will attend all services every Sunday, but of faith and other gifts of the Holy Spirit, nothing is to be seen. We are okay as long as we attend the services every week. This is the group that is mentioned here. They have fallen into a form of godliness, and will be part of the whore of Revelation 17, 18 and 19.

In today's world with the so-called "new reformation", we find people that want to research the customs of the Old and New Testament and in the light of that, interpret the Bible, as they will now find the right ways to do it. Paul had the following to say to them: *"But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ."* (2Co 3:14) He tells us that we do not have to research the customs, but that we need to go to the Giver of all good gifts to receive Christ. Christendom is not like all other religions, as we serve a living God.

Ezekiel wrote the following about these people: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, **the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen**; Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim, Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD."* (Eze 25:8-11)

Jeremiah gives us a complete description of these people in chapter 48: *"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence. How say ye, We are mighty and strong men for the war? Moab is spoiled, and gone up out of her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod! Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, and he shall destroy thy strong holds. O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done? Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled, And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim, And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon, And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near. The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD. Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision. For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he*

found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy. O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth. We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it. Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting. From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods. Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished. For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth. There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD. They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismay to all them about him. For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD. He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones. Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives. Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab." (Jer 48:10-47)

We are taught here that the people of Moab are judged here as they do not use the Bible as the basis to distinguish between right and wrong. No, they like us used their own norms to decide what was acceptable. Moab is also told that they did not go into captivity, and as such has not been separated from his lees: *"Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed."* This portion of scripture had me baffled for quite a long time. For months I just could not make sense of this scripture. What the LORD is trying to tell me is that I cannot continue saying that I am clean, but as soon as someone disturbs me, all the murkiness in my life shows. I have to allow the LORD to empty me from vessel to vessel, meaning that He will change my life by getting rid of the lees in my life. This can only be done after giving my life over to the LORD. If I do not allow Him to empty me from vessel to vessel, then I will take on the taste of the lees. I must therefore allow Him to separate me from my lees, which is contaminating my life. This is what the prophet describes here. We do not like to look at our own lives, but like telling others what is wrong in theirs. That is the people of Thyatira.

Jesus had the following to say to some of them: *"as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have*

already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” We see from this that everyone will be judged on his own, and not because they belong to a certain group of people.

▪ SARDIS

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev 3:1-6)

These people have as Jeremiah and Ezekiel puts it, the pestilence. They have the looks of being perfect, but are actually dead. They remind us of the people of Zidon in the Old Testament. “Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD.” (Eze 28:21-23)

The LORD declares that he will be glorified in their midst, in order for them to understand that He is not a God of afar, but one that lives amongst His people. He will send the pestilence in amongst them. But what is the pestilence? It is when I believe that I am right and everybody else is wrong. That is why they have the name that they live but are actually dead.

But like in most of these churches, we find also people who still believe in the original gospel and have not defiled their clothes. For these Jesus declares that He will clothe them in white garments. For those that have gone astray, there is no call to repentance, as Jesus knows that these people will never change their minds. How tragic.

▪ PHILADELPHIA

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of

my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev 3:7-13)

This is only the second group of people that receive no reprimand. They hold on to what is right. Like the word to Smyrna, all they have to do is to hold fast onto that which they received. They should also not fear when they are taken on by those who profess to be Christians, but are not. They are told that people with very sincere feelings will tell them that is wrong to suffer. These people are from the synagogue of Satan, we are told. These people normally tell you that you have such a large harvest in heaven and all you have to do is believe your suffering is from the devil. People that declare that you only have to give to their ministry and the LORD will give to you, as you have now bribed Him with your offering.

The Bible only declares that you have to give to the poor, and not to those who want to tell you what a large harvest the LORD has already given to them. Micah puts it as follows: *“Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic 6:6-8)*

The people of Philadelphia are told that Jesus will protect them in the time of trying that will come upon all the earth. We are told by so many people that we only have to wait for the rapture as we will not be tempted or tried. However, the people of Philadelphia are told that Jesus will protect them during these trying times.

We see that these people will receive crowns, which will allow them to rule in the new millennium.

▪ LAODICEANS

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev 3:14-22)

This group have received quite a lot of attention from almost everybody. We all think that they will be extremely wicked, but we live with so many of these people without being able to identify them. How many people do you know of will tell you that the LORD wants to give you all the cattle on a thousand hills, and everything else you covet. They ask you if you didn't know that your forefathers gave so much money into the Kingdom of God and that all you have to do to get your share is to rebuke Satan and claim your inheritance. This will ensure that you can live in comfort. What did Jesus tell these people: *“Because*

thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." These people will normally have photographs of houses and cars and everything else they covet on their fridges and rebuke Satan everyday for not allowing them to get what they want. But Jesus tells them that they are naked and poor as they do not have Him. He is not their God. Paul tells us in Philippians who their god is: *"Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."* (Phi 3:19) These people will also declare that they will lead you in a prayer and after that you will be a child of God. You see they believe they have the power for you to be born again. Ezekiel wrote the following about these people: *"Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:"* (Eze 26:2) Even in Ezekiel's' time did the LORD know that people will declare that their churches will be filled with people as they are "Jerusalem". All you have to do is join them and you are as good as in heaven. They will save everyone and lead them to Jesus, but all they accomplish is to make disciples of them as they have broken to gates of Jerusalem and turned it to them. We also find that in Revelation 19 that our righteous deeds will be our clothes that we wear to the wedding feast with Christ, but these people are found to be naked. So they will not attend the wedding feast. ***Rev 19:8*** *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."*

Another point Jesus makes is that He is standing at the gate knocking. He is not part of this church. When they decide to open the door He will enter and make them part of the covenant and, *"I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"*. Until this happens, these people are on their own mission, and will they continue filling their churches to the brim, build bigger and better buildings, and serve their own god.

Ezekiel wrote the following about these people. I have included quite a lengthy quotation but it actually tells us everything about them : *"Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I am the LORD. For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the*

wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD. The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus; And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim. Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots. The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise. They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness. The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect. Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market. They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules. The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony. Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate. Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm. Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool. Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market. Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots. Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they thy merchants. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold. Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants. These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise. The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas. Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas. Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day

of thy ruin. The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes: And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing. And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise. In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall. All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance. The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more. The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD. And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have

gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God.” (Eze 26:2-28:26)

What alarming words to hear, that your god is Satan himself, and that you will die the death of an uncircumcised person.

▪ WHAT WILL THE ELECT RECEIVE?

I mentioned earlier that I will look into what the elect will receive from the LORD. The first Christians were known as “The Way”. I want to explain their way quickly, as we will go into it points wise later on in this chapter. We are all born in Egypt, a life separated from God and His promises. By age twenty I have to decide if I want to wander in the ways of the LORD forever, or not. If I decide not to accept the ways of the LORD, I will die the death of the uncircumcised, and spend eternity with Satan.

However, if I decide to accept the ways of the LORD, then like in Israel’s time I have to join myself to His nation by becoming part of the covenant. I then have to leave Egypt by being baptised, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and receive the LORD’S commandments in my heart. I will then have to decide to enter into the promised land or like Israel reject His promises.

Should I decide to enter into Canaan, then I will trust in the LORD alone for a while, and then decide that I have to become a member of a church where I can serve the LORD. This is the time of the kings in your life where you will have to abide with what they want you to do, or move on to another church to see if you can fit into this kingdom. Like in Israel’s time we find both good and bad kings, so you have to be watchful where you decide to fit in.

Eventually you will decide that you are not being taught anything new at your church any more. Should you decide to leave your church and to be separate from church; the LORD will take you into captivity, or exile. But what does it mean to go into exile, or captivity? Let us examine a number of scriptures on this subject. The first scripture is about the physical captivity. During the Biblical times it was custom for the loser of a war to be taken captive as slaves and to be taken to the winning nations land. The loser lost all his physical assets and became a slave to his captor. This meant that when someone went into captivity, he had to bring out all of his moveable assets, his furniture, his shoes, his rod, etc., outside of his home and then went into captivity. The only thing he left behind was his house. But what does this mean to us today? We have to lose the war against God in order to become his slave and to be taken away to His Land, His Canaan. I have to place my full trust in Him in order to become completely dependent on Him for all my needs. Just like in the Biblical times He will have to provide for shelter and food, but it means that I have to do His work. He already won the war and paid the price for me. He purchased us with His blood, as He overcame death and can now free us from all our sins. I cannot go into exile by myself; I have to surrender to the LORD.

The second scripture which describes our spiritual captivity comes from Jeremiah 48 verse 11: *“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.”* For months I just could not make sense of this scripture. What the LORD is trying to tell me is that we cannot continue saying that I am clean, but as soon as someone disturbs me, all the murkiness in my life

shows. I have to allow the LORD to empty me from vessel to vessel, meaning that He will change my life by getting rid of the lees in my life. This can only be done after giving my life over to the LORD. If I do not allow Him to empty me from vessel to vessel, then I will take on the taste of the lees. I must therefore allow Him to separate me from my lees, which is contaminating my life.

This cleansing process is also something that does not happen overnight. I have to allow time in between sessions for the lees to settle at the bottom again before being emptied from vessel to vessel. During this time He will provide for you super naturally, and will He separate you from your lees. During this time He will take you away from everything people wrote that you think is worthwhile in order for Him to implant His message in your life.

The apostle John has the following to say to people that decide not to be separated from their lees: *“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”* (Rev 14:9-11)

Once He has separated you from your lees, only then will He send you back to His people, His Jerusalem, to teach His Word to the saints. Only once we reach this stage of our life will we be in a position to rule with Him in the time to come. Only then have we reached the stage as mentioned in Revelation 20: *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”*(Rev 20:4-6)

This is the prize that is waiting for those who have endured till the end. Death will have no hold on them, and as John says they will be known as priests of God and of Christ. This is the prize waiting for those that followed The Way till death. If I do not endure to the end, in other words I did not complete the full journey, I will be subjected to the final white throne judgement as explained in Revelation 20, and will I not be part of the first resurrection.

I actually want to give you a number of scriptures to read. I trust that these scriptures will comfort you, and that they will make you long for the day that Jesus will come on the clouds to judge the living as well as the dead. Here then the scriptures: Isaiah 32: 1-9, 35, Ezekiel 37, Daniel 12 Zephaniah 3: 8-20 Zechariah 8, 9:9-17, 12, 13, 14

DOES THE BIBLE TELL US WHO WILL FIND THEMSELVES IN EGYPT?

We will find people in different areas in heaven, depending on the way they believe. The first people I want to discuss are the Egyptians. Who are they, and how do they believe? I believe the LORD gave us a model of how we must live, and this includes how to reach His fullness.

This model is as follows:

1. We are all born in Egypt, a life without the LORD in sin.
2. Like Israel, we have to call out to the LORD for help, in order for us to be saved from the life under the Pharaoh, the devil. We all have to understand that we cannot get out of Egypt without first realizing that we are there, and then understanding that only the LORD can take us out of Egypt, and that the Pharaoh represents the Satan.
3. We have to become part of Israel, His nation, by becoming part of the covenant, so we have to eat His flesh and drink His blood, we must share communion with Him. He will send you a Moses to take you out of Egypt and to teach you His commandments.
4. We have to come under the blood of the Lamb, in order not to die the life of a sinner.
5. We then have to leave Egypt, by being baptised like Israel in the sea.
6. The next step is to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, like Israel received at Mara.
7. We then have to spend time receiving training. This requires us to receive the LORD's commandments in our hearts. We have to receive the Tabernacle in our hearts. This is the training part of our lives where we find out what is right and what is wrong. This is what happened to Israel while encamped at Sinai and this is what your local congregation should do. During this time you might even be chosen as an elder or deacon in your local congregation while receiving instruction from your pastor, your Moses.
8. Once our training is complete, we are supposed to be confronted by our pastor to enter into our own ministry, that calling we have all received from the LORD. This happens when the LORD with His promise of Canaan for us confronts us. Some will accept his promise and enter into Canaan, while others will die in the dessert.
9. Those that enter into Canaan will serve either under their pastor or eventually decide to become part of a ministry and get "under the covering" of a king. (A king is someone who rules over you and could be a ministry, a church grouping, or a spiritual father).
10. Most of the people that enter into Canaan will die while serving this king, while a remnant will be called to go into exile.
11. Once we have served our term in exile, this remnant will be returned to Israel and work amongst the people in Jerusalem, the real church, to rebuild the temple of the LORD.
12. The next thing that will happen to all of us, is death. Those of us who are still alive when Jesus returns on the clouds, will be taken away with those that died in Jesus. (1 Tess 4:17) These people will then form part of the thousand year reign of Jesus, where we will live in the country according to the way we believed.
13. Those that believed in the sprinkling of babies and never left Egypt will find themselves back in Egypt as told by Zechariah, and there they will receive the judgements as declared by the various prophets for Egypt. All people will find themselves somewhere between Egypt and Jerusalem, according to how they believed in this life. We will find people in Egypt, Mara and all over the dessert, with some ending up in Jerusalem. We will also find the highway that Isaiah mentioned that connects Assyria and Egypt, while everyone will speak the heavenly language.
14. During this time the people will learn who the LORD is, and will He reveal Himself to us for who He is, and we will get the opportunity to get to know Him completely.
15. At the end of this period the Satan will be loosed again, and will he again cause people to leave the LORD, but then the LORD will utterly destroy him and his followers, Gog and Magog.
16. The last thing we learn in the Bible is the white throne judgement, and then we will have time to live and spend eternity in the New Jerusalem.

17. This then tells us that those who did not leave Egypt, in other words those who became part of the covenant with the LORD but did not go through the sea, or baptism, will be found in Egypt. The same applies to other people. We will find people all over the dessert even to those residing on the banks of the river Jordan, depending on how far they went. This also confirms a scripture in Mark for us, that people will not be judged because they did not get baptised, but because they did not believe. *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mar 16:16)
18. We also have to remember that some of the judgements the prophets of old prophesied are actually happening today. They are perpetual prophecies and every person will have to pass through these prophecies. I will take a look at these prophecies on a book-by-book basis in order for us to get to a full picture.

ISAIAH:

“So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother and each against his neighbor, City against city and kingdom against kingdom. Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and ghosts of the dead And to mediums and spiritists. (Isa 19:2-3)”. Isaiah declares that the LORD will set the one group against the other. How many different interpretations of scripture do we find just in this grouping? In my own country, South Africa we find that people in the one denomination will fight with people in another denomination on major issues. Most of these issues can only be resolved once you have reached Canaan in your walk with the LORD, but they are fighting over doctrines that they do not understand. One of these issues today is sexuality. Is the minister allowed to marry people from the same sex as it is allowed under our constitution? Can ministers practise homosexuality? These are some of the issues Isaiah is talking about.

Isaiah continues in this chapter as follows: *“Well then, where are your wise men? Please let them tell you, And let them understand what the LORD of hosts Has purposed against Egypt. The princes of Zoan have acted foolishly, The princes of Memphis are deluded; Those who are the cornerstone of her tribes Have led Egypt astray. The LORD has mixed within her a spirit of distortion; They have led Egypt astray in all that it does, As a drunken man staggers in his vomit. There will be no work for Egypt Which its head or tail, its palm branch or bulrush, may do. In that day the Egyptians will become like women, and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He is going to wave over them. The land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the LORD of hosts which He is purposing against them.”* (Isa 19:12-17)

Despite this, Isaiah still prophesies healing to Egypt: *“In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing allegiance to the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD near its border. It will become a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them. Thus the LORD will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.”* (Isa 19:18-23)

JEREMIAH:

“Line up the shield and buckler, And draw near for the battle! Harness the horses, And mount the steeds, And take your stand with helmets on! Polish the spears, Put on the scale-armor! Why have I seen it? They are terrified, They are drawing back, And their mighty men are defeated And have taken refuge in flight, Without facing back; Terror is on every side!” Declares the LORD. Let not the swift man flee, Nor the mighty man escape; In the north beside the river Euphrates They have stumbled and fallen. Who is this that rises like the Nile, Like the rivers whose waters surge about? Egypt rises like the Nile, Even like the rivers whose waters surge about; And He has said, “I will rise and cover that land; I will surely destroy the city and its inhabitants.” Go up, you horses, and drive madly, you chariots, That the mighty men may march forward: Ethiopia and Put, that handle the shield, And the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow. For that day belongs to the Lord GOD of hosts, A day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself on His foes; And the sword will devour and be satiated And drink its fill of their blood; For there will be a slaughter for the Lord GOD of hosts, In the land of the north by the river Euphrates. Go up to Gilead and obtain balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt! In vain have you multiplied remedies; There is no healing for you. The nations have heard of your shame, And the earth is full of your cry of distress; For one warrior has stumbled over another, And both of them have fallen down together.” (Jer 46:3-12) In this passage Egypt is told that the LORD will come against them with the sword, His Word. When we do not pay attention to what the Bible declares, He will judge us according to His Word. As Amos declares we must ready ourselves to meet our God. If you do not want to be judged by the Word, then you have to ensure that what you believe in is what the Bible declares, and not what your specific brand of Christianity declares, or what your king, your pastor or minister teaches.

EZEKIEL:

“Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven. And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee. And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it. Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.” (Eze 29:3-12) It seems that this ruling will have an effect at the end of the millennium rule and is applicable to those Christians who would then still not believe that they have to follow Israel to Canaan.

Fortunately the prophet does not end there. It continues with the following words: *“And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.”* (Eze 29:14-16) The prophet informs us that even though many churches of today look up to the Church in Egypt because of the vast numbers of people, a time will come when this will change. Take your Bible and read through chapters 30 and 31 of Ezekiel and see what the LORD will do with them. It is absolutely frightening. One verse that I would like to quote from this section comes from verse 18 in chapter 31. I will quote from the Amplified: *“To whom [O Egypt] among the trees of Eden are you thus like in glory and in greatness? Yet you [also] shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the netherworld. You shall lie among the uncircumcised heathen with those who are slain by the sword. This is how it shall be with Pharaoh and all the multitude of his strength, his tumult, and his store [of wealth and glory], says the Lord God.”* We read in this section of scripture that even the trees in Eden, so the churches that were very close to the LORD, actually looked up to the Church of Egypt because of its size. Despite their size, the LORD will utterly destroy them for holding on to the belief that they are correct. Their end will be with the heathen, as the sword, the Word of God, will judge them.

OTHER PROPHETS

- **Joel:** *“Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. (Joel 3:19)”* Joel confirms the words of the other prophets that the Church in Egypt will use force to get their way against the people of Israel. This is a daily occurrence where people that do not belong to the Egyptian Church are made to look like fools when they question or reprimand people from the Egyptian Church. They are always branded as those weird people, and told that you cannot interpret the Bible that way as they have studied for seven or more years and know how to interpret the Bible.
- **Zechariah:** *“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. Zec 14:17-19).”* The LORD shows the prophet that in the last days everyone including the Church in Egypt will have to partake in the feast of tabernacles, as if they do not do it, the LORD will withhold His blessings from them.

This is then a short summary of what will happen to the Egyptian Church.

PHILISTINE CHURCH.

Just as there are certain judgments against the Egyptian Church, other nations receive the same treatment from the prophets. One of these nations is the Philistines. Who are they, and what judgments do they receive? We saw in the previous chapter that Zebulon received his inheritance against the sea, an area that later became known as Tyre, and Asher received a portion that later became known as Zidon. Who do these nations then represent in a Church, and what judgments do they receive?

The same way that we find an Egyptian Church, we also find a Church of the Philistines. The amazing thing is that these people actually followed the roadmap of the Bible to get to Canaan, but they neglected to kill all the Philistines. By doing that, the Philistines eventually overcame them. There are two sections in this Church, those in Zidon, and the others in Tyre. These areas were allocated to Zebulon and Asher. But who are these people today?

For this we have to look at the judgments they receive in order to establish their identity. This will then give us an indication of who belongs to this Church. Let us look at what the prophets declare.

ISAIAH.

“The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them. Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished. And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins. As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof. And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest. Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing. (Isa 23:1-18)”

From these passages we find that no difference is made between Zidon and Tyre, but they are both given the same judgments. The first point that we find is that they enjoy business. They enjoy making money and doing business with anyone who is willing and able, as long as they can profit from the deal. The LORD actually informs them that they will receive utter destruction, but also promises that their profit will be used in His kingdom for beautiful clothes and for support for those that dwell before Him. Ezekiel tells us later on who this Church is, but it is already clear that they belong to the whore of Revelations, as they were intimate with every other religion.

From these scripture we also know that this Church is driven by money, and that they don't care with whom they do business. It doesn't matter if the people that they do business with know the LORD, as long as they pay their tithes, all is forgiven. I remember once earlier in my life when a pastor from one of these

churches asked me if I would mind if he sends some Muslims and Hindus to my Bible School, as they pay their tithes and he therefore cannot stop them from attending any function of their church. This group I believe are part of the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement, who believes that the LORD will bless them financially for their belief. How many people do you find with photographs of cars and houses and all sorts of material things glued to their fridges that believe that they will receive it, as their belief is not always a belief in Jesus as the Christ, but a belief in their belief. You are always told by them that you must expect that the LORD will give it to you, and He will. They belong to the famous name it and claim it theology. People like Kenneth Copeland and other specialize in it. All you have to do is pay you tithe, and the LORD will have to bless you. The fact that Jesus was the complete sacrifice and that all sacrifices, including tithing was paid for by Jesus, is never taught by them. We also find that pastors from the Pentecostal Churches will join the Charismatic movement as they then do not have to pay over some of their income to the central board, but they can now keep everything for themselves. The one good point about these people are that they actually lead a lot of people to the LORD, and that they actually succeed in getting big numbers of people to stand before the LORD in white clothes. This is what is meant by the last verse of the quote from Isaiah.

JEREMIAH:

“The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza. Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl. At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands; Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor. Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself? O thou sword of the LORD, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it. (Jer 47:1-7)”

This scripture tells us where I got the name of this church. Zidon and Tyre belonged to the Philistines initially, and because the people that inherited this portion in Canaan did not kill everyone as the LORD commanded but made them to work for them, they intermingled with the people from Israel and eventually very few Israelites were left. Most of these people accepted the religion and ways of the Philistines. I must say here that not all the people that belong to this church are bad people. We find some really good people here. One of the people that had a huge impact on Christianity came from a town in this region. His name was Saul, who later became Paul.

EZEKIEL:

He is the prophet that had the most to say about the Church in Philistia. He starts in Chapter 25 telling them how they acted against the people from Jacob, and ends in Chapter 28 where he ends with a prophesy against Zidon. I am not going to quote all these chapters, but will only concentrate on some of these prophesy. I suggest that you take time out now to read these chapters to get a complete overview of what will happen to them. I have quoted this part earlier in the book completely.

At the start of Chapter 26 we find the reason for the prophesy against them. *“Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:”* (Eze 26:2) This verse tells us that they have turned the gates of Jerusalem to them. What does it actually mean? That they are making members of their church, rather than members of the real Church, the Church in Jerusalem. They are filling their own churches to the brim. Just look around you and see how many of these mega churches are around you, as all you have to do is repeat this small prayer that the pastor is praying, or just listen to this prayer, and bingo, you are now a child of God. To follow the biblical way of making disciples is never even mentioned during this time. Only if and when this person decides to attend a cell meeting will they find out that there are certain doctrines that apply to a Christian. So, as the people entering the gates are now entering into the Philistine Church, there is no reason for these people to even think that they must join the spiritual Israel to be part of the real Church.

In verse 13 we also find a very clear sign of who this church is. *“And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.”* (Eze 26:13) This church is identified by their music that covers every aspect of their “worship service”. For some of the older congregations it is alright to sing three or four fast paced songs followed by three slower songs, but in the newer congregations we find sometimes 10 to 20 musicians in a worship team, with most of these congregations having two or three teams. I have witnessed where some of these so-called worship leaders have fallen in to sin with gay relationships abound, and even saying that it is all right, and then leading the congregation in worship on a Sunday. And then they put up a performance that few if any nightclub or pop star is capable of and that is how they attract people into “their” church.

A further characteristic of this Church is that they are extremely good at doing business. We see everyday how that which is sacred, are being used to do business with. A verse is printed on a T-shirt or armband and sold for far more than what it is worth. Some of these congregations have huge bookstores where you have to fight through the masses on a Sunday before or after the service. Some of these congregations operate shops in the bigger malls around town, as they want their share of what people spend every day. Everything gets done in the name of Jesus, as they have to spread the gospel to the world. This is the business that Ezekiel is talking about.

Chapter 28 is certainly the most damning chapter against this Church. That is where their master is identified. *“Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among*

the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” (Eze 28: 12-19)

What horrific words to hear, that you king that actually rules over you is Satan, and he is the one behind all your plans. Remember that Jesus said that the problem is not money, but the love of money.

We must also remember that not all Charismatic/Pentecostal Churches are part of this Church. No person will be judged for the way their Church believes, no everyone will be judged for what they believe in. *“For every man shall bear his own burden.” (Gal 6:5)*

Ezekiel continues with a prophesy against Zidon. *“Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD. And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.” (Eze 28:21-25)*

The prophet says here that the LORD will judge the people of this Church, as it seems that they are all right, but they are in fact dead. That is why they will die of the pestilence, as people think that they are acceptable to the LORD, when in fact they are not. He will also use the sword against them in the fight, in other words He will use the Word of God against them, as their interpretation is incorrect. Despite these judgements, He still declares that He will gather the people of Israel that served Him only, when He comes on the clouds to gather us.

AMOS.

I want to add just one further prophesy against the Church of Philistia. This is from chapter one verse nine: *“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:” (Amo 1:9).* The last part of this verse says that the people of Philistia did not think of the brotherly covenant with the Jews. How many times have I seen and heard people say that we must do all that the Jews do, that we must assist them in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem and many more things of the Jews, but we forget that they rejected Jesus, and thus became Edom.

- **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT ISRAEL OF TODAY?**

The next group I want to look at are the Jews, or the people from Israel as we know it today. Remember that they were the original nation chosen by the LORD as His people, but that they rejected Jesus when He came to earth. Like Esau gave away his right of the first born, Israel did the same and handed the right of the first born to the Church. We therefore have to look at the prophesies against Edom, to see what will happen to the Jews when Jesus comes on the clouds. Again I will do it prophet by prophet.

ISAIAH:

“Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.” (Isa 34:1-6)

From this scripture we see that the LORD wants to use them to set an example to everyone. The sword that drips with blood confirms the scripture in Isaiah 63: *“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.” (Isa 63:1-6)* The prophet paints us a picture of Jesus returning from Bozrah after judging them, with His clothes dripping with blood, like someone who has trodden grapes in the wine press. He is telling us that Jesus Himself will judge the Jews, for rejecting Him. This is confirmed in Revelation: *“His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.” (Rev 19:12-13)*

JEREMIAH:

*“Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him. If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough. But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not. Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me. **For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it.** For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle. For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD. Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of*

Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me? Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them. The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea. Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.” (Jer 49:7-22)

- The LORD confirms that they, who were originally not supposed to drink of the cup of His justice, will surely drink of it. They will be an example and the Church will be astonished by the fact that they are judged. So for those who look at Israel and the Jews for telling the times in the calendar of the LORD, know that they will be judged for rejecting Jesus, and that we as Church and have called on the name of Jesus for repentance, are the new Israel. And this new Israel is composed of all nations including the Jews who have realised that Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life.

EZEKIEL

25:12-14: “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.” (Eze 25:12-14) The prophet Ezekiel has two prophecies against Edom. This, the first prophecy tells them that they are judged because they acted wrongfully against the Church, and are they told that their country will become desolate. The second prophecy in chapter 35 verses one to fifteen, which confirms this scripture as well as telling them that they are full of themselves.

DANIEL

11:39-41: “Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.”

We find here how the people of the north, or the people who cling to the prosperity teaching, in other words the Church of Philistia, will come and take over in Edom. This Church will take the riches of the nations for themselves, but it will have no effect on the people Edom. If we look at the Jews today, we find that the prosperity teaching has not affected them at all, as they know that each one has to help those in need, as long as the needy are Jews.

JOEL

3:19: "Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land." This prophet confirms that Edom will be desolate as they have spoken against the Church.

OBADDIAH

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD. If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes? How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up! All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him. Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it. And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S." (Oba 1:1-21)

I have included the complete book of Obadiah, as I would like you to read it to see for yourself that there would never be a strictly Israelite nation on earth ever again. Even though most of our political and spiritual leaders are working so hard to re-establish Israel as a nation, the LORD Himself declares that

they would never be established again. Why not? Because they rejected Jesus even though they saw Him, heard Him and knew Him. They received the first right to remain the chosen nation of the LORD, but they sold that right to us, the Church.

These then are the judgements against Israel the nation of today.

The last Church I want to look at is the Church in Jerusalem, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ.

• THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

Who belongs to this Church? Everyone who in Spirit participated in the exodus from Egypt, accepted that which the LORD had in mind for them, and thus entered Canaan.

Would they also receive judgements? For sure. We have to remember that the judgements will start at the house of the LORD, or as we are known today, the Church. You may even ask me that if you did everything required of the Bible to enter into Canaan, why then still judgements? Hebrews 12 gives us the answer. *“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, **My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.**”* (Heb 12:3-8). Extremely interesting words. Many times others confront us as Christians because we suffer, as we are told that the LORD will not allow His children to suffer. This scripture confirms the opposite.

As there are so many judgements against the Church in Jerusalem, I will only quote a small number of them. I suggest that you study the Bible to see what the prophets had to say against Jerusalem.

Here then some of these prophecies.

ISAIAH:

I will only quote the scriptures in most cases without commentary, as I believe that we will understand what the prophets said without major commentary. *“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: **but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.** Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; **give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the***

blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers". (Isa 1:3-21)

- Read the verses in bold again to allow the words to sink into your memory. Several points are made in this portion of scripture. In the first part of the quotation Isaiah tells them what is wrong with them. They have no knowledge of the LORD, they do not understand Him. We are not talking about worldly knowledge but knowledge of Him. We go to university and study for years and think that we now know the Bible and understand His message, but all we have accomplished is to further cement our own dogma into our brains. We must understand what Jesus said to the apostles in John 14: *"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 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."* (John 14:25-26). Here Jesus declares that we only need the Holy Spirit to teach us. Paul declares the following to the people of Ephesus: *"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; **That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:"** Eph 1:15-21)*

- As we can see from the two scripture quotes above, we need that our eyes of understanding be enlightened. No earthly knowledge will do it for us. Why do we need His Spirit of knowledge? Isaiah declares as follows: *"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."* (Isa 6:9-10). This is the reason we do not understand His Word without His Spirit.

What do we learn from Isaiah chapter 1? The prophet tells them what is wrong with them, gives them the results of their current wrong doing, tells them what must change, and what the result is when they change their ways, and what the end would be if they don't. This also highlights the sequence we find in all the prophecies. So next time you read a prophesy in the Bible, use this as a guideline to evaluate what is being said by the LORD.

Let us now look and see what the prophet is saying is wrong with Israel, and what are the results. *“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib (verse 3), Ah sinful nation (verse 4), From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; (verse 5), but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up (verse 6), Your country is desolate (verse 7)”*.

What has to change? Verse 11-15: *“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”* We are taught a very important lesson here right at the start of this book, and that is that the LORD has no interest in that which we call religion. It does not matter if we call out special days for prayer, or that we do everything according to our views, or even to hold special sacrifices. No, the LORD has no interest in it as our hands are covered with blood.

In verses 16 and 17 we are told what to do. *“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”* (Isa 1:16-17). Change your ways, do what is right to all people, and then you will find favour in His eyes.

The following two verses tell us what the result will be if we do that. *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:”* (Isa 1:18-19). What a feast to look forward to. That we can know that we can appear before the LORD without any blemish, and that we will receive that which is good from His hand.

What will the result be if we do not heed to His call? *“But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.”* (Isa 1:20-21). This is what will happen, the sword, the Word of God will judge us, and we will become part of the harlot we read about in the Revelation of John. Read through those sections and see what will happen to the harlot.

With this chapter as background, I would like to suggest that you read through all the prophets and what they had to say against Jerusalem, to see what lies ahead for the Church. You might even find that not all is rosy as everyone tries to tell you. I will anyway continue with the other prophets to see what they had to say.

JEREMIAH:

“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then

will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit." (Jer 7:1-8). "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth." (Jer 7:21-28). Jeremiah calls Jerusalem, the Church, to make right their ways, and not to trust in their temple or church, also not on their sacrifices, but that they must listen to the prophets. This is the same message Isaiah had for Israel, that they, and therefore us, must change our ways to that what the LORD expects.

1. Jeremiah has a further prophecy for the Church in Jerusalem. This prophecy calls on them to leave Jerusalem and to go over to the Chaldeans: "And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey." (Jer 21:8-9) This is a very unusual word, in that the LORD tells them to leave Jerusalem. One would think that if you are in Jerusalem everything is all right, and everything we do should please the LORD. The difference is that when in Jerusalem, we still look up to our church or our pastor before we do anything. When the enemy attacks us we ask our leader to free us from the hold of the enemy, but the LORD wants to change this. We cannot trust in earthly leaders or membership of a denomination to save us or to give us eternal life. No, only the LORD can do it. We must free ourselves from the thought that we learn at our local church, and that it is all we need. No, we have to trust completely in the LORD only, and ask the Holy Spirit to teach us. If we do not do this, then we will die by the sword as the Word of God will judge us, or by the pestilence, as we will not receive eternal life while thinking that we do not need to change, or by the famine, as we will not get to know everything that we need to know. Not the best of words to hear, but it confirms the words from John in Revelation: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev 18:4)

2. Jeremiah also makes another point. He tells Israel not to return to Egypt. Why not? Once you have gone through the exodus of Egypt in your life, have tasted the life in Canaan, and you then return to the teachings of Egypt, it is impossible to receive eternal life. This is the way Jeremiah declared it: "And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; **they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.** For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an

*execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more. The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.” (Jer 42:15-19) Why will they die by the sword, the famine and the pestilence? Firstly the sword, the word of God will judge them, because they did not heed to His call. Then the famine will hit them, as they will receive no spiritual food, except that which their leaders dish up for them, which is normally just moral boosting stories, as we do not want to upset our congregation. And then the pestilence will hit as we still think that we are always right, and no other Christian will convince them otherwise. This also confirms the scripture from Hebrews: “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, **to renew them again unto repentance**; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (Heb 6:4-6)*

Jeremiah however also gives us one of the best judgements we will ever hear: *“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.” (Jer 30:1-3) This word declares that we will return to Jerusalem the way the LORD originally planned it to be like, and that we will possess it.*

EZEKIEL:

This prophet describes in great detail what he saw. We will look at this book in the next chapter, when we will do a parallel with the Book of Revelation.

OTHER PROPHETS.

Hosea. This entire book depicts the relationship of the LORD with His nation Israel, and thus with us, the Church. Read through it and see the role Hosea had as God, with his wife as the Church.

Other prophets. Read through all these books and examine specifically those chapters where Israel or Jerusalem is mentioned, to see what will happen when we do not heed the LORD.

Fortunately for us it is not all doom and gloom. We also find wonderful prophecies of what will happen when the LORD returns on the clouds. Some of these prophecies are as follows:

Isaiah. *“O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we*

have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.” (Isa 25:1-12)

Other wonderful sections can be found in chapters 29, 51, 54, 56, 60, and 62.

Ezekiel: “Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession: Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD. Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among

the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.” (Eze 36:1-38)

*Zechariah: “Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. **These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath:** for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD. And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast*

of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zec 8:1-23)

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD?

I have to ensure that I build my faith on the Word of God, and not on the tradition of men. This might sound ridiculous to you, but you have to evaluate every message you get from people about the Bible, you have to check that it does fit in with the true message of the Bible, before acting upon it. I am aware of the fact that most assemblies or congregations will not even allow you to question the message brought by the pastor during a service, as the preacher apparently had to study for so many years in order bring the message. As I quoted earlier, we do not need years of study, but as Ephesians chapter 1 says: *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”* (Eph 1:18). We do not need a doctorate in hermeneutics, but an understanding of the Word of God. If we do not do it, we will be like the people Jesus mentioned in to the disciples in Matthew: *“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”* (Mat 15:14). So return to the Bible, and let the Holy Spirit teach you. He is waiting for this opportunity.

WHAT SHOULD THE MESSAGE I MUST RECEIVE THEN COMPRISE OF?

Isaiah gave us such a wonderful message in Chapter 58. I would like to quote it from the Message: *“Shout! A full-throated shout! Hold nothing back--a trumpet-blast shout! Tell my people what's wrong with their lives, face my family Jacob with their sins! **They're busy, busy, busy at worship**, and love studying all about me. To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people-- law-abiding, God-honoring. They ask me, 'What's the right thing to do?' and love having me on their side. But they also complain, 'Why do we fast and you don't look our way? Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?' "Well, here's why: "The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit. You drive your employees much too hard. You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist. The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground. Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after: a day to show off humility? To put on a pious long face and parade around solemnly in black? Do you call that fasting, a fast day that I, GOD, would like? **"This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts.** What I'm interested in seeing you do is: **sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families.** Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once. Your righteousness will pave your way. The GOD of glory will secure your passage. Then when you pray, GOD will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.' " **If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins, If you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out,** Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I'll*

give you a full life in the emptiest of places-- firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again. "If you watch your step on the Sabbath and don't use my holy day for personal advantage, If you treat the Sabbath as a day of joy, GOD's holy day as a celebration, If you honor it by refusing 'business as usual,' making money, running here and there-- Then you'll be free to enjoy GOD! Oh, I'll make you ride high and soar above it all. I'll make you feast on the inheritance of your ancestor Jacob." Yes! GOD says so!" (Isa 58:1-14).

If the message you receive from the pulpit does not contain these requirements, you must see if the message actually is from the LORD. This is what Jesus came to teach His disciples, and we as His disciples, have to teach the same message. This message is not a message about what I should do to feel better; to be acceptable to myself, but it is a message of Jesus and what he came to do.

WHAT THEN IF I RECEIVE THE WRONG MESSAGE?

You will have to decide if you want to continue in the congregation where the message being taught is incorrect. You can go to a place where the message is taught correctly or maybe even to allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. The choice is yours.

Remember that the person teaching you will be judged according to Ezekiel chapter 34. This chapter can basically be divided in three sections. The first section addresses the shepherds and their wrong doings: *"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 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? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."* (Eze 34:1-6)

The second section addresses the punishment of the shepherds and the return to favour of the flock: *"Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; 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. For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I*

will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.” (Eze 34:7-16)

The third section tells us who will be appointed as Shepherd over us: *“And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.” (Eze 34:17-31)*

To summarize this section: A number of different Churches are unveiled to us in the Old Testament, and through this we can learn where we will function by examining the way we believe. These Churches will cover the area from Egypt to Jerusalem. To find out where you will fit in, you have to examine the doctrines of the Church you belong to. The Egyptian Church will not believe in the baptism of the believer, the Church by the sea will be the Baptist Church who believe in the baptism of the believer but do not believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Then we will also find the Church in Philistia, and eventually, the Church in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 4—THE END TIMES AND EZEKIEL

The one aspect I have learned over the years is that everything that is described in the New Testament of the Bible has already been described in the Old Testament. That is the reason when someone tries to convince me of a doctrine based on only the New Testament, I normally ignore it as it will turn out to be a doctrine based on wrongful interpretation of the scripture. Remember that Jesus declared Himself that He came to fulfil, and not to establish new doctrines.

Many people struggle to understand the Book of Revelation, and especially the millennium kingdom, where it fits, and how and what the New Jerusalem will be.

I would like to use the book of Ezekiel to give us an understanding of the sequence of events, and that will then give us a better understanding of Revelation. The book of Ezekiel starts with a vision of the LORD. For many years people could only read this after turning thirty, as the priests were not allowed to read it in the temple. Fortunately for us Jesus came and many people saw Him, and Jesus himself declared that those who saw Him also saw the Father. So today we can read and interpret that vision.

The next chapters then give us the background on his calling, as well as the purpose of his calling, namely to be a watchmen for Israel. The next couple of chapters we find what are wrong with the people of Israel, just as Revelation discusses what is wrong with the various Churches. This also includes various judgements.

The one judgement I would really like to emphasize is that of chapter 16, concerning Jerusalem. We are told that the LORD will take her, the Church under His wings and cover her with fine linen and silk. But she turned away from Him and became a harlot as the Church went after other gods. This portion confirms the scripture in Revelations 17, 18 and 19, where John discusses the whore, harlot, and the fall of Babylon. Fortunately Ezekiel ends this chapter with a wonderful word as the Church will be restored. *“Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.”* (Eze 16:60-63). The next chapter is a continuation of the judgement against the Church as they did not return to the LORD in times of oppression.

In chapter 18 Ezekiel confirms that we each have a personal choice and responsibility, and that we cannot hide behind the works of our fathers, and similarly, we won't be judged because of their sins. In the next chapter we are again reminded of how the LORD treated Israel during the exodus of Egypt, and how this should be an example to us. He then continues with judgements against the Church, and what we can expect to receive.

Chapter 23 is a very interesting chapter as it concerns two sisters Aholah, and the younger one, Aholibah. Strongs dictionary declares that the meaning of these two names are, my tent, and the second name, my tent in her. The way I see it is that the first sister represents Israel of old, where the Tabernacle of the LORD was with them, whereas the second sister represents us as the Church, because the Tabernacle is inside of us. The storyline tells us that the first sister turned her back on the LORD, and the second sister, despite seeing what the result of the first sisters' action was, does exactly the same. Thus I can assume

from this then that the Church followed the same road as Israel, even though we know what happened to Israel. Reading through the newspapers and magazines we can see how the theologians and members of the church end up in a religion without any substance, without any Power. The teachings declare that the LORD will not punish people as He is a God of grace, but it is never mentioned that you have to forsake the old road, and start a new life for Him in order to receive His grace. We are told, in South Africa, that the synod must investigate the claim that the Satan does exist, and if he is at all necessary in our religion. The next chapter continues again with judgements over the Church as they left Him and followed after other gods.

We then find the judgements over the seven nations or as John define them, the seven Churches. Chapter 33 is a repeat of chapter three in so far that Ezekiel is appointed as a watchman by the LORD. Chapter 34 was discussed in the previous chapter as it pertains to the shepherds and the coming judgements against them. There is no repeat of Chapter 35 in Revelation, as it concerns Israel as a nation today.

The next chapter discusses the restoration of the Church and the area where it will operate, and that we will find favour by the LORD again. In chapter 37 we find that Ezekiel has to prophecy over the dead bones to resurrect them, which confirms the opening of the graves in Revelation. This is the start of the thousand year reign of Christ to restore those Christians who were misled by their pastors.

The next two chapters have most people baffled, as it concerns Gog and Magog, and their eventual demise. These two chapters describe to us the millennium reign, as well as the eventual utter destroying of Satan and his army. Satan is told the following: *“After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,”* (Eze 38:8-11) We are told here that the people will live safely in unwalled cities, but after many days Satan will rise and take on the people of the LORD again, exactly as we are told in Revelation chapter 20.

Of the ensuing battle we read that after the battle that there would be enough wood to last for fires for seven years, and that the number of people that will die in Satan’s’ army will take seven months to bury.

In the next nine chapters Ezekiel describes the New Temple and how everything will function, whereas John sees a New Jerusalem appear from the sky. The LORD showed each one of them the same picture, but at the level that they expected, to the one a temple, and to the other a city.

As we can see from this comparison John established no new doctrines and no new things were added to the covenant of old, but it was only coloured in for the time that each lived. This I trust is then a summary of the prophets and their message for today. I trust that you will now look with new expectations to the Old Testament, and learn from what these prophets had to say.

Similarly I expect to continue for the next months and years, on this road the LORD of discovery that the LORD has started, in order for everyone to learn what to expect today, as well as in the future.

I can add this to the book that I ended up writing a complete commentary on Revelation and the first 35 chapters of Isaiah in the time between this book and as of now, September 2017.

They can be downloaded for free from my website at <http://www.shama.org.za> and select what you want to read. The book of revelation is at <http://www.shama.org.za/boeke/TheRevelationofJohnRevealed.pdf> and follow the link to the free books or just look at the other articles on my website. All of these take as a basis 1 Corinthians 10 where Paul states that we can use Israel as an example to see how the LORD will act against us.

The next section was my outline for the commentary on Isaiah, but barely touches the real issues.

CHAPTER 5 - ISAIAH AND THE END TIMES

We all know sections of this book in the Bible very well. There are parts that we always read during the Christmas season, when we celebrate communion, and when we welcome a new Pastor to a congregation. But what about the rest of the book?

Let us start with chapter 1. This chapter starts with judgments over Israel, or as we know it, the Church in general today, those people that became part of the covenant, irrespective of which grouping you belong to.

"Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. "An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand." Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him. Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick And the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts and raw wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil. Your land is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire, Your fields--strangers are devouring them in your presence; It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers. The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. Unless the LORD of hosts Had left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood."(Isa 1:2-15)

Fairly strong words these. We always try to be so politically correct, form prayer chains and pray for ourselves, offer up our lives to the LORD, to do only that which we believe is His will for us, go to the services at our local congregation at every possible occasion, call out days to humble ourselves before the LORD, but He says he cannot bear it, we are a burden to Him. Our hands are covered in blood as we are not doing that which He expects from us. He says that He has actually caused so much to go wrong that nothing is sound in our whole body. We were chastised by Him, but we do not listen to Him. Isaiah then follows this with what we should be doing. Verses 16 and 17 *"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow."* So we all have to change our lives and start **doing** that which He requires. This is a life where I have to show my love to my neighbour. The apostle John states it as follows: *"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."* (1Jn 4:20-21) We have to understand that the LORD gave His best, His only without us asking for it, or deserving it. That is His love, and that is what He expects from us. We have to show this love to everyone of our neighbours, without them asking for it or deserving it. So we cannot wait till we are asked to do something, no, we have to find those in the church

that requires our love. That is the key to being a Christian. So I should not go around bragging how the LORD is spoiling me, no, I have to use that which I get from Him, for helping those in need.

Isaiah continues: *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. "If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; "But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword." Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken."* (Isa 1:18-20) This is the section we all know. We have to ask for forgiveness, and He will forgive us, but if we don't, then we will be judged by the Bible, the Word of God.

The next verse is a verse that most people do not want to believe today. *"How the faithful city has become a harlot, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers."* And we still wonder who the harlot is that we find in Revelation. Here we see that it is the Church. If I do not willingly put myself under the jurisdiction of the LORD and do what He requires of me to do, then I am part of the harlot. So if I continue with my ways of going to church, putting on a Sunday face, and saying all is well, I am part of the harlot. I would suggest you read through the book of Amos to see what the LORD has to say about those that believe in their "religion" and that their religion would save them.

What about the leaders of these religious societies? *"Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, Nor does the widow's plea come before them."* (Isa 1:23) How many times have I not seen this in various groupings. The moment you enter into a position of leadership you are well looked after, but you also have to realize that the rich also pays your salary at the end of the month. So you better perform according to their objectives, not those of the Bible. So the leaders are the first to be looked at in church, and only a small amount is set aside to look after the widows and the orphans, even though the Bible says they should be the first in the queue.

Fortunately for us, Isaiah ends this chapter with some encouraging words. *"Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counsellors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city."* (Isa 1:26) This is what is planned for the millennial reign of Christ.

And to think this was only the first chapter.

Chapter 2 starts with a very interesting portion. It declares that at the end of days (the millennial reign of Christ) the house of the LORD will be on mount Zion and the people will go there to receive instruction on how to live as part of His nation. *"Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."* (Isa 2:2-3) This is extremely interesting as we all think that we will learn on earth how to serve the LORD. But with so many factions it makes it near impossible for us to even live together today. So we have to learn somewhere else what everything is all about, and that will happen during the millennial reign. We all have to unite before we can live together in the New Jerusalem.

We then find a part that kept me busy for many years. *"And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into*

pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.”(Isa 2:4) When we look at the model I used earlier in the book, we find that we will live in various parts during the millennial reign according to how we believe. Then, after we have all gone up to receive instruction the time will come that we can lay down our weapons as we will be able to live together in unity.

But why will this happen? What is wrong with us as Christians? I believe the next couple of verses will give us the answers. Remember, the judgement has to start at the Church.

“Because they are filled with influences from the east” How many customs do we find in the Church today that have their roots in eastern mystical rituals. Things like Yoga, New Age, meditation, to only mention a few. All these Hindu and Buddhist rituals have found their way into Church and are accepted by Christians.

Isaiah says they are soothsayers like the Philistines. How many “prophets” do we find today that prophecy but none of their prophesies ever come true. And they are invariably from the Philistine Church, the name it and claim it Christians.

The next phrase says that the Church does business with foreigners, people who do not believe in the LORD. How many people are allowed to attend our services only because they contribute money to the local congregation?

- *“Their land has also been filled with silver and gold And there is no end to their treasures; Their land has also been filled with horses And there is no end to their chariots.”*(Isa 2:7) What is the bank balance of your church? And the value of their property? What if someone has a shortage and cannot provide for themselves? Then it is because they did not bring their tithe to the church, and it is not something that the leadership will spend any resources on.
- This is followed by a string of other actions that are wrong, like profiting from the Word of the LORD as well as a host of other actions.

From verse nine onwards, Isaiah handles the issue of pride, which we all suffer from. He says we should go and hide in the rocks in order for the LORD not to judge them. The same words are found in Revelation: *“Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they *said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”* (Rev 6:15-17) Pride is certainly one of the biggest problems facing us today. How does Isaiah put it: *“The proud look of man will be abased And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased. And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up, Against all the oaks of Bashan, Against all the lofty mountains, Against all the hills that are lifted up, Against every high tower, Against every fortified wall, Against all the ships of Tarshish And against all the beautiful craft. The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased; And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, But the idols will completely vanish.”* (Isa 2:11-18)

Isaiah continues with all the things, up to the end of chapter five, that are wrong with the Church. All these judgements will come on us in order to bring us to a point where we will accept His rule over us.

Remember, the Bible is written for us as Christians, not for those who do not believe in the LORD. We have to remember that Israel and Judah were His people, and we as New Testament children are also His people and that is why it will happen to us also.

A short synopsis is as follows:

Chapter 3. The LORD will take everything that we trust in away from us. He will make that children rule over us. I think that this is so true even today. You only have to go to the shops over a weekend to find out who is in control. The children will almost every time get what they want. In verse 12 he continues saying that women will be the rulers. If you don't think woman lib is in control, think again. Our church leaders have become deceivers. We are bombarded with messages from the podium that says you're okay, don't change, you are acceptable as is. A message that does not exhibit any love as no obedience is required.

- Chapter 4. This does not require any summary: *"For seven women will take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach!" In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel. It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy--everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem. When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain". (Isa 4:1-6)*

- Chapter 5. Here the prophet Isaiah uses a parable. *"Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones. "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. "I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress. Woe to those who add house to house and join field to field, Until there is no more room, So that you have to live alone in the midst of the land! In my ears the LORD of hosts has sworn, "Surely, many houses shall become desolate, Even great and fine ones, without occupants. "For ten acres of vineyard will yield only one bath of wine, And a homer of seed will yield but an ephah of grain." Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink, Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them! Their banquets are accompanied by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute, and by wine; But they do not pay attention to the deeds of the LORD, Nor do they consider the work of His hands. Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; And their honorable men are famished, And their multitude is parched with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure; And Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din of revelry and the jubilant within her, descend into it". (Isa 5:1-14). Isaiah tells us what the LORD thinks of us. We take everything that He gives to us for ourselves, without sharing it with our neighbour. We indulge in our riches, but they pay no attention to Him. Isaiah continues: *"Woe to those**

who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, And sin as if with cart ropes; Who say, "Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it; And let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near And come to pass, that we may know it!" Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink, Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!" (Isa 5:18-23) How many people cannot wait for the end of time, but they do not have a clue what to expect. This is also repeated by Jesus in Matthew 21, where He says that the Kingdom of God will be taken from Israel and given to the Church.

- Chapter 6. Only now do we find that Isaiah describes his calling as prophet. It is as if he had such an urgent message, that a description of his calling had to wait until he had delivered his first messages. In these verses we find a description that reminds us of the vision Ezekiel saw. The apostle John also referred to this vision in John 12: *"But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM." These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him."* (Joh 12:37-41) How long is this going to happen? Till the end. How many people do not want to hear the Word of the LORD. We consistently hear of people that question everything in the Bible. People that cannot identify themselves with the LORD. No, they have made a choice not to hear His Word. Some of these people worked themselves to a standstill in their local congregation, but decided to walk away as they believe the LORD did not see their works. It might even be true, but maybe they expected Him to answer them in the way they believe is correct, and did not find out that He is with those that are meek. "The LORD is near to the broken-hearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18.

Chapter 7. In this chapter Isaiah describes how he has to take his baby boy to the king. This is one of the few examples where the king did not go to the prophet. But we also know that he did not go because he did not have any faith in the LORD. He did not go to the temple but was at the water canals trying to work out a way to get water into Jerusalem when Israel is attacked by the enemy. The LORD tells the king that that which he is worried about will not happen, and tells him to ask for a sign from the LORD as confirmation. He does not want a sign from the LORD as he then has to put his faith in the LORD. So it is actually a slap in the face of the LORD. But the LORD says that He will provide a sign: *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."* What does the name Immanuel mean? God with us. He is there when we need Him, but He is also there when we do not want Him to be with us. This is something the king did not want to hear. But despite this, the LORD will still bless Israel.

Chapter 8. This chapter contains further judgements against Jerusalem. All these judgements will come suddenly without anyone expecting it. It happened as prophesied that before Isaiah's son could say mother or father, the enemy attacked Jerusalem. It then continues about the waters of Shiloah that the people disregard. This points to the fact that they do not like the small, restful kingdom they have, but would rather have a big kingdom like the waters of the Euphrates. Because of this, the LORD will pass judgement against them. Then follows a portion of scripture that has always been close to my heart. *"You are not to say, 'It is a conspiracy!' In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be*

your fear, And He shall be your dread. "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught." Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" (Isa 8:12-20) Here we find that if people do not teach you that which the Bible teaches, then they are in darkness.

Chapter 9. Now we can understand the light that Isaiah is talking about. Because they were in darkness, a light will rise over them. *"The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them."* Isaiah 9:2. This is the start of a portion of scripture we all know as it points to the reason why Jesus has to come to start the millennial reign and that His reign will be forever and ever. *"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."* (Isa 9:6-7) But before this can happen, certain judgements have to take place. *"Yet the people do not turn back to Him who struck them, Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts. So the LORD cuts off head and tail from Israel, Both palm branch and bulrush in a single day. The head is the elder and honorable man, And the prophet who teaches falsehood is the tail. For those who guide this people are leading them astray; And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion."* (Isa 9:13-16) I must admit that I see this nearly every day in the people I talk to.

Chapter 10. It starts off with some interesting words. *"Woe to those who enact evil statutes And to those who constantly record unjust decisions, So as to deprive the needy of justice And rob the poor of My people of their rights, So that widows may be their spoil And that they may plunder the orphans. Now what will you do in the day of punishment, And in the devastation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your wealth? Nothing remains but to crouch among the captives Or fall among the slain. In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away And His hand is still stretched out."* (Isa 10:1-4) This spells out how we as Christians act today. We bring in so many rules and regulations that Christians should follow and abide with. We are told not to do this, and say that, but those things that really matter, is not taught. This is also the end of the judgements prophesied against Jerusalem in this section of Isaiah. He then changes his attention to Assyria.

This is where I will end this section. I have now completed a full commentary of the first 35 chapters of Isaiah which can be downloaded from my website. The book can be downloaded [here](#).

ADDENDUM 1

JEW – NATION OR CHURCH GROUPING?

I want to look at our belief system of today and will try and prove to you the reader that Israel was never a nation as portrayed today, but should in reality be seen as the first Church.

Why am I saying this? Even from the days of Moses up and to the times that Jesus came they operated as a Church under the Old Covenant. It will then also clear up so many misconceptions about the difference between Church and Israel or Jews. These are the people that label you as someone preaching replacement theology the moment that you mention that the Church is also Israel or Jews. This article will try and prove that the Church has been there from the early days, and I believe that is also the way the people of the Old Covenant saw it.

Where did the CHURCH start? To me it started with Abraham. The LORD started talking to Abraham long before He entered into a covenant with him. Abraham had to listen and do everything the LORD told him to do. So what does this teach us? There are two actions that speak volumes about this relationship. The first principle is that Abraham had to believe the LORD and then he had to obey the LORD. This to me speaks of how a church should respond. We have to believe what He tells us to do, and then have to obey Him in everything we do. This is also what we read of in Hebrews 6 verse 1: *"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,"* (Heb 6:1) So we see that Abraham had to lay down his life, repentance, and do what the LORD commanded him to do, so believe Him, which is faith..

After this we find that the covenant is started with communion, where Melchizedek brought the wine and break. *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything."* (Gen 14:18-20)

What we learn from this is that even before the LORD made the covenant with Abraham, that peoples from other nations were also serving the LORD, even to the point where they had their own priests.

Only now do we find that the LORD enters into a covenant relationship with Abraham: *"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."* (Gen 15:1-7)

What does this mean? That he believed and it counted him as righteousness. Without righteousness it is impossible to be part of the CHURCH of the LORD. We now find that Abraham only had to supply the livestock needed for the covenant. He had to cut the heifer in two and lay the sides next to each other. The meaning being that if either one of the partners of the covenant could do this to the other partner should they break the covenant. This also features when the LORD told Abraham to go and sacrifice Isaac. So for Abraham it was not difficult to follow the instructions of the LORD, as the LORD told Abraham that his descendants will come from Isaac. The LORD had to stay true to His word, and had two choices. He either had to provide a substitute for Isaac, or He had to bring Isaac back from the dead if Abraham sacrificed Isaac, as the LORD promised that Abraham's family would come from Isaac. So Abraham knew that the

LORD cannot lie, so he knew that if the LORD expected him to sacrifice his son, then the LORD had to be willing to do the same. He also knew it was impossible to kill the LORD, so he obeyed Him. This also points to us the first time that Jesus would become God's sacrificial Lamb for our sins. That is also why Jesus can only come once to fulfil the covenant and pay for all sins, and not have a shuttle service during the end times.

For those who want to know more about what the Covenant of Righteousness means, you can read it [here](#). I do suggest that you read this or if you have the time, look at the YouTube version which will run as a [playlist](#) for about 4 hours.

The next step only followed 25 years later when the LORD instituted circumcision as a sign of the covenant. A very interesting part we find here is that we find a sequence of events from this piece of history. It started with Abraham deciding to change his life and to follow the LORD, he then had to believe the LORD (faith), and then he had to have communion. Then only do we find circumcision. We find the same sequence after Jesus came to be the complete sacrifice, in that we have to repent from our sinful life, put out faith in Him alone, and then share communion. That is one reason we find so many arguments in Church today, as we find that leaders of churches have done these steps, but their hearts have not been circumcised. This is why we find so many leaders trying to justify the sins of people being enforced onto the church.

So we find that the church started with Abraham, and that every person who puts their faith in the completed works of Jesus, is part of CHURCH. Only now can we start with Israel.

So the first question is why do I say that the Old Testament Israel is the Church? Before Israel left Egypt we find the first clue. People from all nations could join Israel before the Exodus. ***"All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."*** (Exo 12:47-49) ***"You shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God."*** (Lev 24:22)

This already intimates that the people that left Egypt with Moses did not only belong to the Jewish tribe, but also included foreigners. So they all shared the same theology and believed in the one LORD. So this already shows us that they operate as a Church, and not as a nation. This confirms the promise made to Abraham: ***"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be you perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made you. And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you. And I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said to Abraham, You shall keep my covenant therefore, you, and your seed after you in their generations."*** (Gen 17:1-9)

So here we find that even before the exodus and the long trek to Canaan that Israel operated as a Church and not as a nation. That is what they are referred to, as a congregation in Exodus 12 verse 47 above, and not as a nation. One further point to make here is that when we look at the first five books of the Bible, and especially those written by Moses, we find that the word congregation, referring to those people who left Egypt, is used 250 times in these books. This I believe is enough proof that even Moses and the LORD saw them as a Church, a congregation, and not as a nation.

225 verses found, 250 matches

Exodus	48 verses found	49 matches
Leviticus	50 verses found	57 matches
Numbers	120 verses found	134 matches
Deuteronomy	7 verses found	10 matches

If we include the rest of the Old Testament we find that they are referred to as a congregation 363 times in 330 verses.

This is also what the whole book to the Hebrews in the New Testament is all about.

Quite a number of very influential people including Martin Luther wanted to keep this book from the Bible as they believed it had no relevance to us as Christians. But they are the people who believe that the book was only applicable to Israel or Jews as a nation, and not to all believers. Those that are part of the LORD's congregation.

But this is exactly where I start differing from them. But why? Because even today we find that most Christians see Israel as nation and not as the first Church. That is one of the most prominent teachings of today across all types of Christians. But they fail to see that the book of Hebrews actually has the covenant as a central theme and not Israel as a central theme.

So it was not written for Israel as nation, but to Israel or the Jews as Church. But what is the difference? I want to use certain texts from Paul to Corinth and John in Revelation to explain my viewpoint. Paul says the following: *"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened to them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.**"* (1Co 10:6-11)

We find the words of Jesus as recorded by John: *"I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."* (Rev 2:9) *"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."* (Rev 3:9)

So I will use this as a basis to show that Israel functioned as a Church and not as a nation. But let us start at the beginning. Who will end up in heaven? I believe those that are there already are people like Moses, David, Samuel and many more of the people of the Old Testament. If we look at the New Testament it would be people like Peter, Paul and John. You might wonder why I only mention the names of people that descended from Jacob. The reason being is that they will definitely be there, as they belonged to the nation of the LORD, Israel. We learn from the Old Testament that only those people that were chosen by the LORD ended up in heaven, in other words only people from Israel. *"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."* (1Co 10:5)

The LORD says the following through Moses to Israel: *"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand*

and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, ” (Deu 7:6-9) This sounds more like a promise to a Church than a promise to a specific nation.

I want to start at the beginning. Now when I quote from the book of Revelation you might think that I am starting at the end, but fortunately Jesus is speaking. He was there right at the beginning of time, even when Adam and Eve were formed. Revelation 3:9: *“Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie--I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. ”* Jesus is telling us here that even though people are from the synagogue of Satan; they are still saying that they are Jews. These people are from Philadelphia, and definitely not Jews from Israel. This confirms the scripture from Revelation 2:9: *“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”* This piece of information is extremely important, in that Jesus is saying that all believers are Jews, and that only Jews will be saved. This confirms the scripture that Moses gave to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6-7: *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ”The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.”*

Once we realise that God does not and will not change His word, we will realise that there seems to be a problem with interpreting this verse in the light of the verses from Revelation. How is it possible then that God declares in one place that He has chosen only Israel, and then later on declares that all true believers are Jews? The answer comes partly from the book of Acts chapter 10:34-35: *“Opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. ”* So all people who fear God and accept His righteousness, is accepted. This however still does not satisfy the requirement of Revelation, as we are still not Jews. The answer is given to us as part of the exodus from Egypt. Here the LORD gave them a commandment that they had to keep forever. The scripture comes from Numbers 15 verse 15 and 16: *“As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. ”There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.”* Exodus 12 verse 48 gives us the final answer: ***“But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.”***

In the history of Israel we find that whenever someone from another nation wanted to join them to Israel, they had to do whatever was required to become part of the covenant and then they were treated as people from Israel. A very good example is Ruth. Although she had the right to return to her people after her husband's death, she chose to go with Naomi. Her words were as follows: Ruth 1 verses 15 to 17: *“Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ”Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.”* Ruth answers that she chooses to go with Naomi, and that only death will part them, but that she, Ruth will die where Naomi dies. She will worship Naomi's God, and never return to her original nation. Who was Ruth? David's great grandma. Where did Jesus come from? From David's tribe.

How do all these various pieces fit together? The LORD chose Israel as His nation. We as gentiles must chose to become Jews by joining Israel and its tribes. How is this done? The same way it was done in Israel's time, by becoming part of the covenant with the LORD. In the time of Israel it was by circumcision, and after Christ it is by being born again. That means we have to receive the righteousness of Jesus. As we

know that Jesus came to fulfil the Old Covenant by fulfilling all its requirements, it now gives us the opportunity to become part of the Israel of God. *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God.”* (Gal 6:14-16) This sounds again more like a promise to the Church than a promise to a nation. So Israel did not receive a blanket redemption from the LORD, but only those that became part of the covenant and kept His commandments, were His children.

Where do we find the first apostasy from the Church? It happened when each tribe received their inheritance in Canaan. The Rubenites, the descendants from Gad, and the descendants from Manasseh all decided that they wanted to stay outside of Canaan, the Promised Land, and not receive that which the LORD had in store for them. So they chose not to get what they were promised. If we look at the descendants of these tribes we find that they did not feature in the history of Israel after deciding to follow their own plans. That is exactly what is happening today. People are leaving the Church and cannot be counted as Christians any longer as only people who confess Jesus as the Christ, and live a life worthy of Him forms part of the real Church. This is how Hebrews 6 puts it: *“And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* (Heb 6:3-6) That is also what happened to Saul after he visited the medium at Endor. *“Then said Saul to his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor.”* (1Sa 28:7) This also meant that he died as a sinner, and did not receive everlasting life, but everlasting death. When Israel sinned, and was chastised by the LORD to bring them back to Him, they were safe. If they continued in their wickedness they died as sinners. Even after David the Church, or Israel, divided into two camps. We find very little of the grouping that moved away from David in the Bible. So they started their own ‘church’ and was rejected by the LORD. We also see in the New Testament that Jesus did not speak to the two factions of the ‘church’, the Pharisees and Sadducees, but He went and spoke to the people. In fact He always pitted the two groups against each other. And they were the ‘church’.

So in the history of Israel we find that the tribes started serving other gods and religions, the same people they were supposed to exterminate when they went into Canaan. Now we find people today saying that Jesus first have to return to the physical earth to save the Jewish faith people or the lost tribes although they already made their choices years ago. The LORD did not choose a specific nation, but only those people who believe that Jesus is the Christ. That is what all the prophets tried to say. They were preaching revival messages to the Jews to get them to return to the God of their fathers. There were some specific messages that pointed to the coming Saviour, but it always asked them to return to the LORD. So all these messages we expect to find in the Church of today, and not messages to a specific nation.

We also found then and today that membership of a church grouping or nation can never mean that you receive everlasting life, but only belief in Jesus can make that possible.

So Israel was the Church under the Old Covenant, and we are Church under the New Covenant. So there is no replacement theology as people would like you to believe, but only messages to the Church of the LORD. And this all started with Moses who gave them the following choice they had to make: *“For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes*

and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce to you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days on the land, where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. 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 you and your seed may live: That you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may hold to him: for he is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” (Deu 30:11-20)

So just like Israel had to choose to follow the LORD, we have to make the same choice today. I do not find a blanket statement in the Old Covenant that every person will receive everlasting life. No, I only find that people, who chose to follow and obey Him, were His children and His nation.

So when we return to the book of Hebrews, we see that it describes the different viewpoints of the Churches. There are those that understand the New Covenant and believe that Jesus did everything to fulfil the Old Covenant. Then we find those that believe that Jesus is the Christ, but they also believe that you have to do certain things to get saved. So they still believe you have to comply with certain rules, rules like the Sabbath etc. And then there are those of the Jewish faith today, those that reject Jesus as the Christ. And that is what the writer of Hebrews is trying to show people, that Jesus did everything that was necessary according to the law, and that He went through the Heavenly Tabernacle for us in order for us to receive everlasting life. No works will make that we are part of the real Church.

So the writer shows us that we do not have to work to get our way into heaven, as Jesus did away with all the works and that only faith in His completed work will bring everlasting life. That is what Hebrews 3 and 4 are about. You must have faith, because without it you are condemned, and stuck in the sixth day and do not enter into the rest promised by the LORD.

That is why we find new prescriptions of how we should live our lives under the New Covenant in Hebrews chapter 13.

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Why Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Heb 13:1-21)

So these are commandments to the Church. This now enables you as an ordinary member to see if you are taught the correct message of the Bible or not. I do not find any scripture or clause in the New Covenant anywhere in the Bible that teaches that you can turn your back on the LORD, and then get a second chance. So this also indicates that He chose Israel as a Church, and not as a nation or piece of real estate. And that Church includes me in you that have decided to become part of His covenant.

So there is now replacement theology. You either believe this as the Truth and receive everlasting life, or you do not believe this Truth and die the second death. Those people who serve the LORD are part of His Israel, the Church. *“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God.”* (Gal 6:16) So the Bible only teaches the Church, and cannot be used to judge the unbelievers.

We also have to remember that the first people who became Christians were Jews, and they were also the first people to be called Christians. *“When they heard these things, they held their peace, **and glorified God, saying, Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance to life.** Now they which were scattered abroad on the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to none but to the Jews only.** And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, **spoke to the Grecians, preaching the LORD Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.** Then tidings of these things came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would hold to the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added to the Lord. **Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**”* (Act 11:18-26)

So these people were Jews, but were called Christians. So those that speaks about replacement theology only shows their lack of knowledge of the Bible.

So there won't be a rapture to allow the Jews to come to Christ and all the other people to get a second chance. If we believe that then Jesus and the Bible does not mean anything at all. So run from these people before they take you down the canyon of death with them. I know that you might feel that I am taking on people that have such a passion for Christ, **but unfortunately only those that believe the full message of the Bible will be saved.** I only confirm that which Jesus spoke about when He told them that they were rejected. *“Jesus said to them, Did you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I to you, **The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.”* (Mat 21:42-46) The original was already mentioned in Isaiah 5 verses 1 to 7. *“Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the middle of it, and also made a wine press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? why, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor dig; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”* (Isa 5:1-7)

“Jesus also speaks about a nation as the true Church, the Bride, did not yet exist, as He was still alive.

That is why the book of Revelation says that two thirds of the people that call themselves Christians will die the second death, as they believe the Bible, but only through their interpretation of the Bible. They will fight with you to prove you wrong and quote large parts of the Bible to convince you, but did you know that the Satan also quoted the Bible to convince Jesus, but Jesus showed him all the flaws in his quotes of scripture. My only purpose is to show you that there are incorrect interpretations of scripture, that we must take personal responsibility for our own lives, and not depend on the teachings of others to receive everlasting life. The same story is used in the Bible, there were ten women who waited for the Bridegroom, but only five expected Him and were prepared for His coming, while the others waited for the rapture and all its stories, but they missed the wedding feast.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw yourself. But godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1Ti 6:3-6)

Paul declares the following: *“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside to vain jangling; **Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for murderers, For fornicators, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for enslavers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” (1Ti 1:5-11)***

So if someone wants to place you back under the law, know that according to Paul that he is not righteous. So he will try to convince you that you have to believe his interpretation. They will tell you to ignore days like Christmas, Easter and numerous other days, but all that they are trying is to place you under the law again. *“Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a female slave, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the female slave was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engenders to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.** For it is written, Rejoice, you barren that bore not; break forth and cry, you that travail not: for the desolate has many more children than she which has an husband. Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. **But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what said the scripture? Cast out the female slave and her son: for the son of the female slave shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brothers, we are not children of the female slave, but of the free.” (Gal 4:21-31)***

So those that believe that Jesus is the Christ and that He came to take us from the bondage of the law are the true Church of the LORD, and not those that keep the law and boast in their heritage. *“However, then, when you knew not God, you did service to them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labor in vain. Brothers, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as you are: you have not injured me at all. You know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” (Gal 4:8-14)*

So who is the real Israel? Those people that do what the LORD commands to become part of His Covenant, and that started with Moses. So only those that choose Him are His Church.