

APOSTATE!

What Is the *Real* Synagogue of Satan?

Reader beware! This article faces head-on the spiritual forces that leveled a full-out attack on the Christian faith in the Western world. On the one hand, it is a story of demonic possession, insanity, suicide, mass murder, adultery, homosexuality, cultural and social revolutions and unbridled, maniacal apostasy. It is the story of apostasy on a massive scale.

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Whatever happened to the teachings of the first century Church of God – the Church Jesus built?

Jesus said, “I will build My church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt.16:18).

Whatever happened to that pure, pristine, spiritual church?

Somehow, Christian influence has lost ground in every cultural area of leadership and influence in Europe and America since 1700. This is an undeniable fact. The modern “remnant”, remaining Christians are divided, split up into countless sects, cults, and divisions – each claiming to represent Christ – yet each denying everyone else! America, originally settled by pilgrims seeking freedom to live by God’s Word and their Christian conscience, has been transmogrified into an apostate, secular, worldly kingdom of political cronyism, chicanery, avarice and religious despotism.

Many, seeing the sad state of affairs, search for an explanation. They seek answers. They want to know how it happened. The Church somehow was blindsided – hijacked – by the forces of evil. Our forefathers believed in a Creator God, and that He rules in the affairs of men. But modern leaders believe in Darwinian evolutionary theory, secular education, progressivism, and God’s Word has been jettisoned from the public square, courtrooms, and abortion has replaced the right to life!

What happened? How did it happen? Where did we go wrong?

The Great Falling Away

Jeremiah prophesied of the flagrant End-Time rebellion that would occur within the very Church of God at the close of the age, before the coming of the Messiah. He was inspired to write: “A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority [pretending it is ‘God’s Authority’!], and my people LOVE IT THIS WAY. But what will you do in the end?” (Jer.5:30-31).

Thousands today put their trust in "Church authority." They believe smugly that their church is “the ONLY Church of God.” They confidently trust their ministry never to mislead them. They think to themselves, “If there is wrong in the Church, God will correct it in due time. I don't have to worry about it God would never let the ministry go astray, or lead us astray. Why, after all, this is God’s own Church!”

Jeremiah prophesied that people would make that very boast, during the End Time! He wrote: “This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!’ If you REALLY change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods, to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever. But look, you are TRUSTING IN DECEPTIVE WORDS that are worthless” (Jer.7:3-8).

Modern Church Idolatry

People who have the attitude, “This is the Church of God, the Church of God, the Church of God!” and who put their trust in the “Church of God” are foolish and, as God Himself says, are “trusting in deceptive words.” God thunders, “Behold, ye trust in LYING WORDS, that cannot profit” (Jer.7:8, King James Version).

The apostle Paul gave us a similar warning. He declared, “Now the Spirit clearly says that in later times some will ABANDON the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through HYPOCRITICAL LIARS, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (I Tim. 4:1-2). The Greek word for liars or lies, as used in this verse, is *pseudologos* – and this is the only place it is used in the New Testament. The usual word for “lies” is *pseudos*. But this is talking about “lying words” or speech in the context of hypocrisy – something which conveys the subtlety of very cunning lies and deceptions, something beyond just normal run-of-the-mill “lies.”

These "lies" are carefully thought out and arranged and orchestrated clever DECEPTIONS, which seem close to the truth, and may even appear true, at first glance, or to the superficial observer. But these "lies" are Satan's subtle misinformation, his clever alterations, and cunning hiding of the truth under a covering that SEEMS right on the surface. It may even SOUND like the truth – but is not! Something is not quite correct – something is very cleverly altered, to deceive and delude people! To trust in such lies leads to DEATH!

In other words, Satan gives the truth a little "spin." He "shades" the truth ever so slightly, to alter the meaning and emphasis. The lies that are hardest to detect are those that are slight twists or variations on the truth. So slight that they may still sound like the truth, and may seem virtually indistinguishable from it! But they are COUNTERFEITS of the real truth, and lead people into apostasy and spiritual error! Satan knows that by injecting little "shadings" of the truth, he can eventually change entire doctrines and major beliefs, in time – he can inject sufficient error to cause God to frown upon His erring people, and have to punish them. Satan knows that blatant lies would be rejected by most people, so he is very assiduous and subtle in his approach!

To assume that you are protected from Satan's deceptions just because you are a physical PART of the Church, is a dangerous assumption! Adam and Eve may have assumed that they were in no danger, because they were right in Paradise – the Garden of Eden! But the serpent's cunning still caught Eve off her guard, and she was deceived rather easily and quickly! God warns us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor.10:12).

God says of His End Time Church, "The shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the LORD; so they do not prosper *and all their flock is SCATTERED*" (Jer.10:21). Yes, scattered through hundreds or even thousands of denominations, sects, cults, and victimized and ravaged by spiritual WOLVES in sheep's clothing!

What Really Happened?

The Roman Catholic Church keeps Sunday, the first day of the week as a day of rest and calls it the Lord's Day, as do most Protestant churches around the world and they are not keeping the faith once delivered to the early church and are misdirected away from the truth of God into error.

"To turn aside the justice due a man before the face of the Most High, or subvert a man in his cause—the Lord does not approve" (Lamentations 3:35-36). The greatest subverter (deceiver) in all history is Satan the devil, and he does this in many different ways. "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan, who *deceives the whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev.12:9).

Satan the devil exists, and he is the prince and god of this world. He has deceived all the nations, one way or another. This why God tells us “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (I John 4:1-6).

The apostle Paul foretold, “And you (Christians) He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

The Beginning of Apostasy

Millions put their trust in the various Christian churches of God which claim to teach the Word of God. It is like a “mother” to them. Yet they will be punished and destroyed, God says, for the large professing churches are no longer truly His Church because of sins and compromises with the truth and perversions of true doctrine.

The prophet Hosea writes, “YOU stumble day and night and the prophets STUMBLE with you. So I will DESTROY YOUR MOTHER [the Church, which is the “mother of us all” – Gal.4:26]; my people are DESTROYED from lack of knowledge. Because you have REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I also reject you as my priests [“ministers”]; because you have ignored the LAW of your God, I also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased [the more the End Time Churches of God grew and increased in numbers and size], the MORE THEY SINNED AGAINST ME.”

God warns; “they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness. And it will be: Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds. They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in PROSTITUTION [whoring with the civil governments of the world, the world's educational accreditation committees, and committing spiritual “incest” with the world's churches!] but not increase [their growth and income will suffer], because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to PROSTITUTION, to old wine [old pagan erroneous doctrines] and new [bizarre new interpretations], which take away the UNDERSTANDING of my people . . . *A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God*” (Hos.4:5-12).

We have been called out of the world and our former lives where we were wrapped up in sinful attitudes and evil practices and walking according to the course of this world—according to the prince of the power of the air—Satan the devil who now works actively in the sons of disobedience. Now God has made us alive in Christ, even though we were dead in spirit. All of those who serve God are called to be in his church.

But our Adversary, the Devil, stands in our way. As Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8).

The Lions of Tsavo

The mention of a roaring lion brings back to my memory a book I read entitled *Man-eaters of Tsavo* written by John Henry Patterson in 1907 that recounts his experiences while overseeing the construction of a railroad bridge in what would become Kenya. The Tsavo man-eater attacks occurred while working on the Uganda Railway. The nearest large city to the man-eater attacks was Mombasa, the largest city then and second largest city now in Kenya. The railway reached Lake Victoria at Port Florence, now Kisumu, which at that time was in Uganda territory. Patterson, a Lieutenant Colonel in the British army and trained as an engineer was hired. He was also an experienced big-game hunter.

While he is working on this, two man-eating lions known as the [Tsavo man-eaters](#) showed up. They would stop at nothing for a bite of human flesh and the first attempts to stalk, capture or keep them out of the camp fail. They attack the camp hospital and kill a patient. Even after the hospital is moved, one lion penetrates the thick, thorn fence called a *boma* built to protect it and drags the water carrier away to his death. Eventually, the first lion is defeated by baiting it with a tethered goat while Patterson keeps watch from an elevated stand – though for a few tense moments Patterson himself becomes the hunted. The lions are not the only challenge to completing the bridge project. Tensions between native workers and Sikhs brought in from British East India to work on the project (coolies) threaten to stop the project. The railway project was controversial and the British Press referred to it as “The Lunatic Express”, as critics considered it a waste of funds, while supporters argued it was necessary for transportation of goods.

After Patterson completes the bridge, he learns that a lion has been trying to destroy the train station. When he goes to see, he finds big bloodstains where the lion was trying to slash the roof. There were three men in one compartment and an uncertain number of coolies in another. Two of the men had been sleeping on the floor when the lion gained entrance. The lion was on one of the men while trying to attack another. The third man, in an effort to get to the other section, which the coolies had been holding shut with their turbans, leapt on to the lion’s back, and tried desperately to get through. The coolies opened the door just wide enough for him to get through, and then tied it shut again. As for the other men, one got carried off and eaten by the lion, while the other man lay very still, probably saving his own life. Hearing this, Patterson decides to go after this lion and eventually kills it.

Satan is likened to one of those man-eating lions, seeking whom he may devour. The apostle Peter says we must “*resist* Satan, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be glory and the dominion forever and ever.” (I Peter 5:9-11).

How does Satan deceive the world? He is the master of deception. He sends false ministers, disguised as ministers of righteousness, and creates false churches with false, pagan doctrines, to mislead the multitudes!

Prophesied Long Ago

Peter warned the church, even in his day, “There were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you (brethren), who will secretly bring in destructive heresies (doctrines), even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber” (II Peter 2:1-3).

Even in the days of Moses there was Korah’s rebellion against the Lord and he gathered the entire congregation against Moses and Aaron at the door of the tabernacle of meeting as recounted in Numbers 16. In the time of Abraham there was Ishmael who scorned Isaac so he and his mother Hagar were sent away. In Jacob’s day Esau went astray and hated his brother seeking to kill him. In our day, Peter says many will follow their destructive and deceitful ways. Because of them the truth of God will be blasphemed and people will not accept God’s truth or correction.

The apostle Paul warns us about people in the last days who “do not like to retain God in their knowledge. God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also *approve of those who practice them.*” (Romans 1:28-32).

These people will try to deceive you with their deceptive words and ways. Declares Peter, “By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber” (II Peter 2:3). Their destruction is coming. We need to beware, so we are not led astray from the way of the truth of God.

This falling away is also described in the second letter to the Thessalonians. Who is Paul talking about here? He is including all these churches today and the splits away from the Churches from A to Z where the ministers go on radio and television preaching their gospel (money-making, feel-good, gospel of success, purpose-filled—(whatever they choose), but do not preach the full salvation and gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. They say they do, but they subvert the truth.

Paul says in I Thessalonians 5:21, “PROVE, [TEST, EXAMINE] ALL THINGS; hold fast that which is good [true].” Paul praised the church in Berea, saying, “The Bereans were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica in that *they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.* Therefore many of them believed and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men” (Acts 17:11-12).

The Course of Apostasy

Paul had great concern for the faithfulness of the Corinthians, during the first century. He saw them making mistakes, going off into splits and divisions. So he wrote to them, saying: “ Oh that you would bear with me in a little folly; and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it!” (II Cor.11:1-4).

The gospel of the kingdom in one sense is simple. It is not complicated and hard for anyone to understand. It is written so that anyone who comes in a prayerful attitude of mind will understand.

Paul continues: “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!” (II Corinthians 11:4). Then he adds: “But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. For such are **false apostles**, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works*” (verses 12-15).

Paul was amazed at how gullible the Corinthians were. He said in palpable unbelief, “For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise! For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame I say that we were too

weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold – I speak foolishly – I am bold also.” (verses 19-21).

End-Time Deception

“But know this, that in the last days *perilous times* will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, Always learning but *never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (II Timothy 3:1-7).

“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was” (v.8-9).

Paul continues his warning: “But you have *carefully followed* my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured. And out of them all, the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:10-15).

How can we steer clear of the massive great deception all around us, today? The great swindle – the gigantic hoax? Paul pinpoints the truth, saying: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (v.16-17).

Turned to Fables

Paul continues in the next chapter, describing conditions in the church in the end time. He relates, “For the time is coming when people will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, and will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions” (II Tim.4:3-4, Amplified Bible).

The apostle John also wrote on the problem facing the church in these times. He declared, “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. [These antichrists are teaching replacement theology, their own interpretation of Scripture coupled with their own ideas, instead of preaching the gospel of Christ that He brought from God the Father]. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they

had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out *that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us*" (I John 2:18-19).

The Words of Ezekiel

Ezekiel the prophet was inspired also to warn us in advance of latter-day ministers, churches, and preachers, who claim to represent Christ and serve God: "And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to *those who prophesy out of their own heart*, "Hear the word of the LORD." Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you,' says the Lord GOD. My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of my people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 13:1-2, 8-9).

All these ministers out there today who rise up and claim, "I am a servant of God, an apostle, a prophet" and so forth and so on – need to heed what God says. Notice! Isaiah says where they should look, for doctrine and teaching – "*To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isaiah 8:20). **THE WORD OF GOD, HIS LAW AND TEACHING – TESTIMONY – IS OUR TRUE STANDARD TO EVALUATE EVERYTHING!**

Ezekiel goes on: "And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, prophesy against the *prophets of Israel* who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, "Hear the word of the Lord.'" Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the LORD. They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, "Thus says the LORD!" But the *LORD has not sent them*; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, "The Lord says," *but I have not spoken.*"' (Ezekiel 13:1-7).

"Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered *mortar*—say to those who plaster it with untempered *mortar* that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear it down. Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where is the mortar with which you plastered it?'"

"Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in my fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in my anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume it. So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.' Thus will I accomplish my wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered mortar; and I will say to you, 'The wall is no more, nor those who plastered it, that is, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem,

and who see visions of peace for her *when there is no peace,*’ says the Lord GOD. Likewise, son of man, set your face *against the daughters* of your people, *who prophesy out of their own heart;* prophesy against them, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Woe to the women who sew magic charms on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of my people, and keep yourselves alive? And will you profane me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, *by your lying* to my people who listen to lies?”’” (Ezek.13:8-19).

Who is God against? All these prophets, prognosticators, soothsayers, and ministerial liars who dominate the earth and fill its churches today are primarily churches of the devil, not the church of God which is widely scattered. We need to wake up to the danger that is around us in this world.

A Final Warning Against the Churches

“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: *Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves!* Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but *you do not feed the flock.* The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, my flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them”’”(Ezekiel 34:1-6).

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘surely because My flock became a prey, and my flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed my flock,’ therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them’ ” (verses 7-10).

God declares, “Therefore I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them. I will make a covenant of peace with them. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid. Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord GOD.” (verses 22-30).

The Synagogue or Church of Satan

The great false church is all around us, today. The whole world has been led astray from the truth.

Jesus Christ warned, “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: ‘I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have *kept my word*, and have *not denied my name*. Indeed I will make *those of the synagogue of Satan*, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie; indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God. And I will write on him my new name.’ He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 3:7-13).

Satan’s great false “church” masquerading as “Christian” is called the synagogue of Satan. Notice again! “To the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: ‘I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are *a synagogue of Satan*. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” (Revelation 2:8-11).

The warning is clear. The Greek word for “synagogue” in these verses is *sunagoge*, meaning *sun*, “together,” and *ago*, “to bring” – which denotes “a gathering of things, a collection,” then, “of persons, an assembling, of Jewish religious gatherings” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words). It literally means “an assembly,” for religious purposes, as in a church service, Bible Study group, or such. A “synagogue of Satan” would be one “dominated by the power and activity of Satan” (Vine’s). Says *Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon*, “a bringing together, gathering,” “an assembling together of men where Satan governs.” The term was first applied to Sabbath meetings and festival conclaves of the Jews, but then was also applied to the “assembly of Christians formally gathered for religious purposes”, says Thayer.

Today, let’s face it: The great majority of churches have become literal “synagogues of Satan”! We live in an APOSTATE WORLD. Let’s walk carefully. Be VERY sure of your faith. Do not be DECEIVED! Do not be a member of the “synagogue of Satan” or a part of his great religious deception which is all around us.

The Laodicean Generation

Jesus Himself rebukes this End Time Church of God, calling it the “Laodicean Church” generation and age – the FINAL prophesied Church era to appear in the world, shortly before His second coming! He declared: "To the angel of the Church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness [because

they are not faithful and true], the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are LUKEWARM – neither hot nor cold – I am about to SPIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH.

“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are WRETCHED, PITIFUL, POOR, BLIND AND NAKED. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So BE IN EARNEST AND REPENT. Here I stand at the door and knock. If ANYONE [He is appealing to individuals, not entire church groups, but one by one to individual persons, one by one] hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev.3:14-22).

Notice! This account describes the vast, whole, ENTIRE REMNANT CHURCH OF GOD! It is the LAST GENERATION! It is spiritually blind and naked, but thinks it is rich and very spiritual, proud of its supposed “knowledge,” but really pitiful in God's sight. It is so far removed from the ways and true paths of God, that Christ is not even INSIDE this “Church” – He is pictured as standing OUTSIDE “looking in” – KNOCKING ON THE DOOR, hoping that someone, at least a few, may open the door and let him into their own individual homes!

The Laodicean Church is proud of its apparent wealth. It also is a Church which highly values its own human or church traditions. Interestingly, there are only two Greek words in the New Testament, which, when their letters are added up, they each add up to the number 666 – the number of the Beast (Rev.13:18). Those two words are – tradition, and wealth. The Laodicean Church, therefore, has characteristics which are very similar and close to the very MARK OF THE BEAST of Revelation! It has allowed its wealth and tradition to get in the way of God's Laws, and serving God out of a pure and undefiled heart and mind! The love of money leads to all kinds of perversions, and putting tradition ahead of and above the very LAWS of God leads to sin, and wickedness.

Thus the Laodicean End-Time Church of God is in VERY BAD SPIRITUAL SHAPE! Jeremiah describes this Church generation, saying, “Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me; all my bones tremble. I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and his holy words. The land is full of adulterers. The prophets follow an EVIL COURSE and *use their power unjustly*. Both prophet and priest are godless; EVEN IN MY TEMPLE [even in God's CHURCH, the “Temple of God” – Eph.2:21] I find their wickedness,” declares the Lord. “Therefore their path will become slippery; they will be banished to darkness and there they will fall. I

will bring disaster on them in the year they are punished,” declares the Lord. ‘Among the prophets of Samaria [the United States, where most of the End Time Churches of God are head-quartered!] I saw this repulsive thing: They prophesied by BAAL and led my people Israel astray”’ (Jer.23:9-13).

The Oppression and Slavery of Gods People

Isaiah the prophet thunders, “AWAKE, awake; put on thy strength [the whole armor of God – Ephesians 6:10-11], O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments” – the robes of righteousness (Isaiah 52:1, Rev.19:10-14). “Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? *they that rule over them* [their shepherds or ministers] **MAKE THEM TO HOWL . . .** saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is *blasphemed*” (Isa.52:1,5).

They blaspheme God's name by their practices, their filthy deeds, their disfellowshippment procedures, their false doctrines, their calling God's TRUE servants and prophets “false prophets,” “Satan-inspired,” and other epithets, while they themselves claim to be “apostles,” or “prophets,” or “inspired men of God.” But Jesus Christ said, in no uncertain words, “You will know them *by their FRUITS*” (Matt.7:20).. Such evil men blaspheme God by their every action and word, every day, as they abuse, beat, and browbeat the sheep under their control.

The prophet Ezekiel wrote, “The word of the LORD came to me: Son of man, prophesy against the SHEPHERDS of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: WOE to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have RULED THEM HARSHLY AND BRUTALLY. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them’” (Ezek.34:1-6).

God thunders, “I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will REMOVE them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves; I will RESCUE my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them” (verse 10).

God Himself will also judge between the sheep, individual Church members who have conflicts and who mistreat each other. He says, “As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. . . See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns

until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be PLUNDERED” (Ezek.34:17-22).

Almighty God, and Jesus Christ, both have a severe criticism and correction for the End Time Church of God generation – the people of God today. God says to His flock, His people, who have strayed into the paths of sin and Laodicean compromise and error: “Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your INIQUITIES have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken LIES, and your tongue uttered wicked things. No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched.

“Their COBWEBS are useless for clothing [rendering people “naked” spiritually!]; they cannot cover themselves with what they make. Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood [to disfellowship so-called “dissidents”!]. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths [they “cover up” the sins of the ministry , and refuse to judge individual cases with righteousness, but always support the “minister,” right or wrong!]. They have turned them into CROOKED ROADS; no one who walks in them will know peace” (Isa.59 1-8).

God's Rebuke and Warning

This is a very serious rebuke and stern correction. This is a description of the End Time Laodicean Church, with all its glory and wickedness! The oppressed sheep of this Church cry out, “So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. LIKE THE BLIND” – Laodiceans are “BLIND,” remember – “we grope along the wall, feeling our way like MEN WITHOUT EYES. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the DEAD. We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away” (Isa.59:9-11).

In the middle of Great Tribulation, many of the people of this remnant Church will finally cry out to God, confessing their sins and wickedness. They will pray, and say, “For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities, rebellion and treachery against the Lord, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance;

TRUTH has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. TRUTH is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey” (Isa.59:12-15).

In their distress they will finally call on God, in deep remorse and repentance for their sins, and God will forgive them, and wipe away their iniquities. He will deliver them from the Great Tribulation, those who remain alive, and Christ Himself will rescue them (verses 16-18). “From the west, men will fear the name of the *LORD*, and from the rising of the sun, they will REVERE his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the *LORD* drives along. The Redeemer will come to Zion [the remnant Church in captivity], to those in Jacob who REPENT of their sins” (Isa.59:19-20).

What about you? Will you repent now? Or will you have to experience the pangs of bitter travail and Great Tribulation to bring you to your senses?

God tells His people, “I have posted WATCHMEN on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night You who call on the *LORD*, give yourselves NO REST, and give Him no rest, till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth” (Isa.62:6-7).

God's WATCHMEN

What about you? Will you repent now? Or will you have to experience the pangs of bitter travail and Great Tribulation to bring you to your senses?

God has called prophets and watchmen to WARN His erring, sinning, straying people to RETURN to HIM, before it is too late! That cry and warning is going out!

God thunders to us, “Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice LIKE A TRUMPET. Declare to my people their REBELLION and to the house of Jacob their SINS” (Isa.58:1).

God tells His people, “I have posted WATCHMEN on your walls, O Jerusalem [the Church]; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the *LORD*, *give yourselves NO REST, and give Him no rest*, till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth” (Isa.62:6-7).

God says to His modern day watchmen,

“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word that I speak and GIVE THEM WARNING FROM ME. When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or SPEAK OUT TO DISSUADE HIM from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you

will have saved yourself” (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

God also warns us of the alternative:

“Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But IF YOU DO WARN the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he TOOK WARNING, and you will have saved yourself” (Ezek.3:20-21).

If the wicked repent, and turn from their sins, God will forgive them. But if they are warned, and refuse to repent, their blood is upon their own head -- they are responsible (Ezek.18:14-23). On the other hand, if the righteous man "turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? NONE of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is GUILTY of and the SINS he has committed, he will DIE" (Ezek.18:24).

End-Time Apostasy and You

The apostle Paul warns us that many will be deceived and carried away by this terrible, end-time apostasy. Speaking of the second coming of Christ, Paul declares, “Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except THE APOSTASY COMES FIRST [unless the predicted great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come], and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition)” (II Thess.2:3).

The world will embrace this “lawless one,” Paul says. “The coming [of the lawless one, the antichrist] is through the activity and working of Satan and will be attended by great power and with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels— [all of them] lying wonders—and by unlimited seduction to evil and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing (going to perdition) because they did not welcome the Truth but refused to love it that they might be saved” (II Thess.2:9-10, Amplified Bible).

The world is set for massive deception – the greatest apostasy in all history! Why? “because they refused to *love the truth* and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe THE LIE and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (verses 10-12).

What is “the lie” which these people will swallow, hook, line and sinker? It is not just any old lie – it is THE lie – the very lie that Satan deceived Adam and Eve with in the Garden of Eden! It is the lie that God lied when He told Adam the day he sinned he

would die. It is the lie that if we follow Satan's ways we will become as “gods” to know good and evil (Genesis 3:4-5). It is the lie that Satan brings truth and God is a liar, the Word of God cannot be trusted, that the doctrines of the Bible are false, that we can change them and still be saved! It is the lie that we should believe a NEW gospel – the gospel of “human salvation” instead of the “kingdom of God,” which Jesus and the apostles all preached! It is the LIE that we are “born again” at conversion, when we “accept Christ,” rather than at the resurrection, when our bodies are changed to SPIRIT!

The Phillips Translation has this passage, “The lawless man is produced by the spirit of evil and armed with all the force, wonders and signs that falsehood can devise. To those involved in this dying world he will come with *evil's undiluted power to deceive*, for they have *refused to love the truth* which could have saved them. God sends upon them, therefore, the full force of evil's delusion, so that *they put their faith in an UTTER FRAUD* and meet the inevitable judgment of all who have refused to believe the truth and who have made evil their playfellow” (II Thess.2:9-12).

What about you? Do you still have the “love of the truth”? Or have you “lost your first love,” like the Church of Ephesus? (Rev.2:4).

How important is TRUTH and doctrinal purity to you? Does it make any difference? Are you willing to compromise “a little bit,” with error and falsehood? Are you willing to stand by and accept doctrinal “changes” which you have not “tested,” or “proven”?

The apostle Paul exhorts each one of us, “Continue to WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION with fear and trembling” (Phil.2:12). Peter exhorts, “Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE. For *if you do these things*, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Pet.1:10-11).

“COME OUT from among Them!”

In the midst of all the apostasy occurring all around us, where do you stand? What are YOU going to do about it? Your own eternal salvation – and that of your family and children – is at stake!

God gives us perfectly clear instructions on handling such matters in His Word. Some try to tell us, today, that the appropriate action is to *do nothing – stay right where you are – and WAIT for God to CHANGE the “church of God” and bring it back to the Truth!*

Is that what *God* says?

God commands us to have *nothing whatever to do with apostates!* Solomon wrote, “CEASE, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to ERR from the words of knowledge” (Prov.19:27). How can you *cease* to hear such instruction *if you continue*

to listen to it every week?

God commands us further: “My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and *MEDDLE NOT with them that are given to CHANGE*: For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?” (Prov.24:21-22).

The Curse of Totalitarianism

On September 23, 1800, Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the youthful United States, wrote a letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush in which he declared the immortal words:

“I have sworn upon the altar of God hostility toward every form of tyranny over the mind of man.”

There is a mental and religious, or spiritual, tyranny, as well as physical or political tyranny. The word “tyranny” is defined as “cruel and unjust use of power”; “oppression, harshness, despotism.” A “tyrant” is “a person who uses his power cruelly or unjustly,” a “cruel master.” In ancient Egypt the Egyptians tyrannized over the Israelite slaves, forcing them to work inhuman hours slaving over manufacturing bricks. This cruel bondage and wicked use of power occurs in political societies, such as Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, and often occurs in religious institutions or organizations. In the last days, just before the return of Christ, it was prophesied to occur within the very Church of God, and to be characteristic of the “Laodicean” phase of God's Church!

The word “totalitarian” is closely related to “tyranny.” It means “a government which suppresses all opposition, often with force, and which controls many aspects of people’s lives” including “what books the people may read, and other severe controls on private life.” A totalitarian government in Church or politics, seeks absolute control over individuals in the church or state.

God is not a totalitarian. His law is a law of “liberty” (James 2:12). As Christians, under God's government, we are “as FREE,” but “not using your *LIBERTY* for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (I Pet.2:16).

Obeying the word or law of God is the true way to personal freedom for everybody - the way of love, mercy, kindness, gentleness, meekness, and goodness. But totalitarian government denies personal freedom; it seeks to enslave people. A religious hierarchy which seeks to perpetuate itself and to dominate over people is a tyrannical form of totalitarian government diametrically opposed to the way of God!

Unfortunately, within the Church of God during the past 50+ years there has been a serious problem with misuse and abuse of government – a Pharisaical form of totalitarianism. Ministers would delve into the personal, private lives of members and would-be members with a fine tooth comb. They used to scrutinize carefully their marital history and sex lives. They would spy on the “tithing records” of people, by using computer lists to determine who was and wasn't "tithing" in the way they sought. Many people were disfellowshipped for nothing more than what some minister interpreted as a "bad attitude" – i.e., any attitude which stood up to the minister, or questioned a decision he made, or which disagreed with him on some point or issue, or refused to “bow and scrape”!

Sadly, many ministers seem to have the attitude of Haman in the book of Esther. He was very upset when Mordecai, a Jew, would not bow and do him obeisance when he passed by. This infuriated him, so he hatched a plot to eradicate himself of this “pest,” and all his Jewish countrymen and women as well!

God Almighty condemns this kind of government. He hates and abhors and detests it with all His supreme being! It is an abomination to Him, even as the slavery of ancient Egypt was. It is a form of slavery, something God never sanctioned or intended. It is the way of Satan the devil, his system, his methodology, his government!

God is the author of perfect Freedom within His law of love. He is the author of eternal Liberty, justice, and goodness for all. With Him there is and never has been any "respect of persons" (Rom.2:11). He is completely and totally "fair."

Why is it, then, that even true Christians sometimes become mesmerized by a totalitarian system of Church government which they *assume* comes from God?

Why do even true Christians allow various men and ministers to rule over them with tyranny, absolute control, and “fear” the ministry?

The apostle Paul wrote of this very problem in the Church of God during his day, in Corinth. He wrote to the brethren at Corinth, “For ye suffer *FOOLS* gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. For ye suffer, if a man bring you into *BONDAGE*, if a man *DEVOUR* you, if a man *TAKE OF YOU*, if a man *EXALT HIMSELF*, if a man *SMITE YOU* on the face” (II Cor.11:19-20).

The *LIVING BIBLE* makes this even plainer: “You think you are so wise – yet you listen gladly to those fools; you don't mind at all when they make you their slaves and take everything you have, and take advantage of you, and put on airs, and slap you in the face.”

Is that the way Church government is supposed to be? Assuredly not! Paul went on, in gentle sarcasm, “I'm ashamed to say that I'm not strong and daring like that!” (verse 21, TLB)” God condemns tyranny. God never intended the ministry to “lord it over” the flock (I Pet.5:1-3). “Don't be tyrants,” he said to the elders (same verse, TLB).

Why, then, do people allow it? Many fear that if they voiced their opinions, they would be disfellowshipped, or put out of the Church. So they keep silent even when they see wrong being committed. For shame!

God Almighty, in His Law, commands each one of us, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude (even a whole Church!) to do evil” (Exodus 23:2). He thunders, “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty (or wealthy): but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor . . . Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise *REBUKE*, and not suffer *SIN* upon him” (Leviticus 19:15,17).

God does not want us to simply “follow along,” like blind, dumb sheep, when we see error and evil being committed, or wrong decisions or judgments being made. He commands us to **STAND UP FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**, to **REBUKE** the error or sin, even if it is committed by a minister in a high office! We ought to be fearless, and to be willing to suffer the consequences – whatever they may be. God says of the righteous: “The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous is as **BOLD AS A LION**” (Prov.28:1).

Do you understand that principle? Many people today fear mere **MEN** – when they ought to fear **GOD**!

The apostle Jude warned, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **EARNESTLY CONTEND**” – that is, fight, struggle, wrestle, with fury and vigor – “**FOR THE FAITH** which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are *certain men* **CREPT IN UNAWARES**, who were before of old ordained to this **CONDEMNATION**, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and **DENYING** the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4).

It may seem strange to many, but just such an end-time Apostasy from the truth of God, by the visible, extant Church of God, was **PREDICTED** in the Bible! Jesus Christ warned, “**WATCH OUT** that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name [acting like His ministers], claiming, 'I am the Christ' [admitting Jesus is the Messiah, but changing His message!], and will **DECEIVE MANY**” (Matt.24:4-5).

In fact, Jesus went so far as to warn, “All this I have told you so that you will **NOT** go astray. They will **PUT YOU OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUES** [**CHURCHES!!!**], in fact, a time is coming when anyone who **KILLS** you will think he is offering service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you” (John 16:1-4).