

# **THE BEAST STRUCTURE THE MAN OF SIN OF 2 THESSALONIANS PART 1**

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## **REVIEW OF THE BEAST STRUCTURE**

We have learned from the Beast Structure Series that Nebuchadnezzar of the Kingdom of Babylon was the First Beast. He was conquered by Cyrus of the Kingdom of Medes and Persians who was the Second Beast. He was conquered by Alexander the Great and the four heads of his kingdom of the Third Beast. Most people just assume that the Roman Empire which followed Alexander's kingdom, was the Fourth Beast. But notice that Daniel 11 continues on to follow the histories of two of the four heads of the Third Beast, the Kings of the North (Syria) and South (Egypt). One King of the North described in Daniel 11:20-32 (still part of the Third Beast and ruling from Damascus, Syria) was Antiochus Epiphanes who placed the Abomination of Desolation in the Temple in 168 BC. Daniel 11:36-45 then describes the last King of the North (still the Third Beast) who arose after a long period of time (verse 33) and planted the tabernacle of his palace in the Holy Mountain (verse 45) This was Abd al-Malik who ruled from Damascus, Syria, and built the Dome of the Rock in the Holy Mountain in 689 AD.

Most people assume that the Roman Empire that arose about 30 BC was the Fourth Beast. But the Fourth Beast could not have arisen until Abd al Malik's Umayyad dynasty that ruled from Damascus, Syria and still part of the Third Beast ended. It did end when the new Abbasid dynasty took over and moved the capital city from Damascus, Syria to the newly built city of Baghdad, Iraq in 764 AD.

Evidence that this was the true beginning of the Fourth Beast is Revelation 13:5 which tells us that the Fourth Beast lasts forty two months. We could interpret this forty two months as being the final resurrection of the Fourth Beast that lasts for three and a half years in the end time (which equals a literal forty two months) or we could interpret it as being forty two months times thirty days in a month equals 1260 prophetic years from the end of the Third Beast. If you add 1260 years to 764 AD, the year Baghdad was being built, you come to the year 2024 AD, the end of the Fourth Beast and the First Resurrection. Evidence that this interpretation is correct is that the Days of Daniel 12 also end in 2024 AD.

Most people also do not notice that the Third Beast has a 'Little Horn' as well as the four heads. He is described in Daniel 8 as the King who after 2300 days takes away the Daily Sacrifice. If you add 2300 years to the beginning of the Four Heads of the Third Beast, 321 BC, you come to 1979 AD. This was the year Herbert Armstrong took away the Daily Sacrifice. How did he do this? There is only one 'daily' or 'yearly' sacrifice that is taken away rather than killed and that is the scapegoat of the Day of Atonement described in Leviticus 16. This goat (representing a

person) was taken away from the congregation and let go free into the wilderness with the sins of Israel put on his head.

This verse proves that the Daily Sacrifice was a PERSON because the place of HIS (The Daily Sacrifice's sanctuary, was cast down.

*Dan 8:11 Yea, he (the Little Horn of the Third Beast) magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the Daily Sacrifice was taken away, and the place of HIS sanctuary was cast down.*

The Daily Sacrifice was a PERSON whom Herbert Armstrong unjustly disfellowshipped on the Day of Atonement, October 1, 1979.

This following chart shows how these days all fit together perfectly to arrive at the year 2024 as the year of the first resurrection. That the Days of Daniel 12 end at the first resurrection is shown in Daniel 12:13 that tells us how Daniel shall rest (in death) and then stand up in his lot (in the first resurrection) at the end of the days.

Theory of the 2300 Days of Daniel 8				
321 BC Beginning of the 4 Divisions Dan 8:9	+ 2300 Days (Years) Dan 8:14	= 1979 AD Daily Sacrifice taken away		
Theory of the Days of Daniel 12				
689 AD Dome of Rock Abomination being built Dan 11:45	+ 1290 Days (Years) Dan 12:11	= 1979 AD Daily Sacrifice taken away	+ 45 more Days (Years) = 1335 Waiting Period	= 2024 AD First Resurrection
Theory of the length of time the Fourth Beast is allowed to continue				
764 AD Baghdad - 4th Beast begins	+ 42 Months or 1260 Years Rev 13:5		3.5 years before 2024, Great Trib. begins	= 2024 AD First Resurrection

## THE MAN OF SIN OF 2 THESSALONIANS

### WHERE DOES THE MAN OF SIN OF 2THESSALONIANS FIT IN?

We know that the Fourth Beast and his Little Horn are coming together in the end time to usher in the Great Tribulation. But where does the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians fit into the Beast structure? The Little Horn of the Third Beast is gone and the Fourth Beast has not arisen yet. Many believe that the Man of Sin will be the same as the Little Horn of the Fourth Beast described in Dan 7:7-8 and Rev 13:11-18. This reference is a paper giving this teaching by a

Church of God. [1] I believe that the Man of Sin is the same as the Little Horn of the Third Beast, Herbert Armstrong. (See Ref 36) The following are the scriptures about the Man of Sin with commentary to show how Herbert Armstrong fulfilled these scriptures.

**1.**

**2Th 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,**

**2Th 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.**

**2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,**

Here we see that the Lord warned us not to be shaken in mind as that the day of Christ is at hand, but know that a falling away must come first. A good example of this principle is when the Worldwide Church of God published the booklet in 1956 called 1975 In Prophecy that taught Christ would return to set up his Kingdom in 1975. [2] No mention was made in that booklet about what the falling away was that should come first. Many believed in this false prophecy and as 1975 drew closer they drastically adjusted their lives even to the point of selling homes and possessions in preparation for fleeing to the place of safety in 1972. And when the prophecy failed to come to pass, some were so discouraged and demoralized that they left the church.

They assumed the coming of Christ in 1972 without heeding the warning written here, that a falling away must come first.

The words 'falling away' are the Greek 'apostasia' (G646) which means a defection or apostasy. This great falling away is from the true God and the true faith. Therefore, the true faith must exist in the end time in order to have a falling away from it.

**2.**

**2Thes 2:3... and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**

This is the second part of verse 3 telling us that a man associated with the apostasy, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition must be REVEALED before the Day of Christ comes. Also this tells us that we will not be able to recognize or identify him on our own, but God must intervene and REVEAL him.

Another point here is that the Man of Sin is also called the Son of Perdition. Because another man in the Bible, Judas Iscariot, was called the Son of Perdition (Jhn 17:12), we have here a clue that this Son of Perdition might also be one of Jesus' own disciples. Also the word 'Son' here is yet another clue that this person must have had God's holy spirit because having the holy spirit is what makes a person God's SON, (Rom 8:14, Gal 4:6-7). So this is a man who was a disciple of Jesus and God's son with his holy spirit. But then he went astray into perdition.

These are the events in the Worldwide Church of God leading up to the REVEALING of the Man of Sin.

In January 1979 the State of California launched an investigation on the Worldwide Church of God and specifically Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader for alleged fraudulent misuse of tithe money. Charges were that there was failure to provide an accounting of finances as required by state laws governing charitable organizations. The leaders also were charged with siphoning off property and assets of the church for their own use and benefit on a massive scale amounting to millions of dollars a year. The state imposed a receiver to take charge of the church's finances and conduct the investigation. [3]

At first Mr. Armstrong appointed Mr. C. Wayne Cole to mediate between the Church and the receiver. Mr. Cole addressed the leaders and members of the Church advising them to cooperate with the state and to 'obey the magistrates' as this is what the scriptures tell us to do.

*Rom 13:1 et every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

*Rom 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

*Tit 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,*

But Stanley Rader, Mr. Armstrong's legal counsel and personal advisor, persuaded Mr. Armstrong, many ministers and members to rebel against the state. [4]

I did not know at that time whether the charges that the state brought against the church leaders were true or not. In fact I still do not know for sure, because later the State dropped the case and the investigation was discontinued. But I recently found this website showing numerous items belonging to and revealing the lifestyle of Herbert Armstrong that were sold at auction after his death. [5] And I think that a man who used God's tithes righteously would not have this much wealth in his house, for we cannot serve God and mammon. (Mat 6:24) So although I did not know whether the charges were true at that time, I did know the scriptures in Romans 13:1-2 and Titus 3:1 about obeying the magistrates and I agreed with the word of God. I felt as others did that the church should be honest and have nothing to hide. So to cooperate and give an honest accounting as required by the state would do the church no harm and only good as long as there was no evildoing going on.

But soon Mr. Cole was disfellowshipped. Sit-ins and locking out of officials were conducted at the Pasadena Headquarters. Mr. Armstrong wrote to the membership that the state investigation was a Satanic plot to take over the church. [6] This was a lie as they had no such intention. [7] Every legal means was taken to fight against the investigation. Records were removed and destroyed. Mr. Armstrong had tithe money rerouted to his home in Tucson, Arizona. As time went on ministers who disagreed with this rebellion were disfellowshipped.

As it happened, I was in a California congregation on the Day of Atonement, October 1, 1979 and it was on that day, the most solemn Holy Day of the year, that Mr. Fred Coulter who also

preached that 'we ought to obey the magistrates, was disfellowshipped. Here is a link to his final sermon on that day. [8]

I had been attending Mr. Coulter's congregation for about a year and never heard him preach any heretical thing. So after having listened to his farewell sermon on the Day of Atonement, I was very grieved and upset about a minister of God being unjustly disfellowshipped and about the events that were happening in the church. I went to the Feast of Tabernacles five days later determined to spend the entire eight days of the feast praying and asking God to tell me what was going on in the church. This was the answer I received to my prayer as a flash into my mind - in these exact words:

**"THERE IS A MAN OF SIN SITTING IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND, WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD!"**

The first part of this answer is quoted from 2Thessalonians 2:4 and the last part is quoted from 1Corinthians 3:16. I was shocked at this answer because I had always thought according to the church's teachings, that a Man of Sin would arise to sit in a physical temple to be built in physical Jerusalem. According to this answer the fulfillment was carried out in the Worldwide Church of God, the spiritual temple of God in spiritual Jerusalem.

This is how the Man of Sin was REVEALED to me as God said he would be revealed in 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 3.

Because of this answer to prayer, I had to ask myself some questions about the Man of Sin:

**3.**

**2Th 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 2Th 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**

**3A.**

**HOW DID HERBERT ARMSTRONG OPPOSE AND EXALT HIMSELF ABOVE ALL THAT IS CALLED GOD?**

On page 272 of his book, *Mystery of the Ages*, published in 1985, [9] Herbert Armstrong wrote that all other churches are part of the great whore of Revelation and her harlot daughters. They are Satan's churches and are deceived by him. This link gives other examples of his statements about other churches. [10] Such statements as this could qualify as opposing all other religions and their gods.

On the other hand, Mr. Armstrong exalted himself above all that is called God by claiming that the Worldwide Church of God was the one and only true church on earth. And God appointed him to be the Apostle and sole ruler of that one and only true Church supposedly directly under Christ. [11] The 'eth' ending on the words, 'opposeth, exalteth and sitteth means that these are

spoken in present tense as 'is opposing', 'is exalting' and 'is sitting'. He was doing these things at the very time he was revealed.

### **3B.**

#### **HOW DID HERBERT ARMSTRONG SIT IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD SHOWING HIMSELF THAT HE IS GOD?**

As we already know, the Bible teaches that our bodies are the temple of God because God's holy spirit dwells within us as individuals. The church as a whole is also called the temple of God.

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

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

*\*Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

*Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

*Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

*Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Mr. Armstrong sat in his own body (the temple of God) and in the Church (the temple of God) as if he were God. How did he do this?

Notice that in 2 Thessalonians verse 4 he does not exactly SAY that he is God. He SHOWS HIMSELF that he is God. The way he does this, the verse says, is by OPPOSING GOD and EXALTING HIMSELF ABOVE GOD.

### **3C.**

#### **HOW DID HERBERT ARMSTRONG OPPOSE GOD?**

The word 'oppose' is the Greek 'antikeimai' (G480) and means to be over against, opposite to, to withstand, to be an adversary.

The best example of how he opposed God is shown in these scriptures:

*Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

*Rom 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

By leading the church to rebel against the state's lawful investigation, which these scriptures say are ordained of God, he set himself in direct opposition to the ordinance of God. This truth that

we ought to obey the magistrates unless they command us to disobey a law of God (as we read in the examples of Daniel 3:8-20 and 6:6-16) had been taught in the church for many years. The Plain Truth Magazine of January 1964 contains an article by Herman Hoeh on how the scriptures teach Christians to obey and respect civil government laws and leaders. [12] Also the Herbert Armstrong Library under the heading, Magazine Article Index, gives titles of articles under 'Government' appearing in various publications over the years that are consistent in teaching that we ought to obey the magistrates. [13]

### **3D.**

#### **HOW DID HERBERT ARMSTRONG EXALT HIMSELF ABOVE GOD?**

The way he did this was not by exactly stating that he was God or above God. But he claimed that God would back up his authority as Apostle whether a doctrine he taught was right or wrong. Therefore he set his authority above God's authority. God's function was not to decide doctrine, but only to back up whatever Mr. Armstrong taught whether right or wrong, as he said in this reference, "Christ ... has BOUND in heaven what His Church, even in unrealized error, has bound in earth." [14]

Another example of exalting himself above God was by claiming that God has and always will see to it that Herbert Armstrong would teach truth and purge out error. So if we don't believe that God's power guides his mind, we question Christ himself. Statements like this work a subtle transfer of our faith in God to faith in himself that God is guiding him. [15]

### **3E**

#### **WAS MR. ARMSTRONG AN APOSTLE?**

In Acts 1, after the Lord had ascended to Heaven, Peter brought up the fact that Judas Iscariot had been numbered with the 12 apostles and now another apostle must be selected to take his place from among those who had been with the Lord. Also 1 Corinthians 9:1 tells us that the apostles had personally seen Jesus Christ. Does this mean that only 12 apostles have ever existed and that a qualification for being one is that he must have been with the Lord personally? These scriptures do not say specifically, but some claim this is so and therefore Mr. Armstrong could not be an apostle. Herbert Armstrong was not taught by Christ in person as the original apostles were.

Romans 1:1 tells us that an apostle's job was to preach the gospel to people. And Mr. Armstrong did preach the gospel to his own generation. 2Corinthians 12:12 talks about the signs of an apostle in patience, in wonders and mighty deeds. I do not recall mighty deeds being done by Herbert Armstrong, but there were certainly many answers to prayer and healings done in the church. 1Corinthians 9:1-2 tell us that the seal of Paul's apostleship were those who were converted to God and Christ through his preaching efforts. So we could say that the seal of Mr. Armstrong's apostleship are all those who were converted to God the Father and Jesus Christ through his preaching efforts.

My own personal conversion was through Garner Ted Armstrong while I listened to him on the

radio when I was working in the kitchen. At the time I was only listening to make fun of him. He began talking about the commandments of God and how they have a natural and automatic penalty. Something struck my mind and I turned around in my tracks, stared at the radio and said, "That makes sense!" From there I went to church and got baptized. So I believe that Herbert Armstrong and his son Garner Ted were apostles. But when they sinned, they turned to become false apostles.

### **3F.**

#### **WAS MR. ARMSTRONG A MAN OF SIN?**

One only has to read Mr. Armstrong's library of booklets and writings [16] to see that God did originally call him and use him to teach truth and raise up the church. Many of his teachings were correct. The problem is that in addition to also teaching false doctrines, he gradually turned from his righteousness, leading many away from God and into the great apostasy that these scriptures said would occur before the Day of the Lord.

There are listed here seven areas of sin.

#### **3F-1.**

##### **LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD**

Since God revealed the Man of Sin immediately after Mr. Armstrong unjustly disfellowshipped Mr. Coulter, the sin of mistreating instead of loving the brotherhood should be listed first.

I listened to a Worldwide Church of God sermon by Dean Blackwell where he went through scriptures such as 1Corinthians 5:1-5 to show that disfellowshipping is a true Biblical God-approved practice. What he failed to mention in the sermon were scriptures such as 3John 1:9-11 to show examples of unjust disfellowshipping.

When you read 1Corinthians 5:1-5, you notice that everyone knew about what sin the man was committing that he should be put out of the church for. But in the second example of 3John 1:9-11, the sin was not known. Members were being disfellowshipped just on the say-so of the leader who loved to have the preeminence.

Here is a Worldwide News article in which Mr. Armstrong demonized ministers whom he disfellowshipped. There is a list of the ministers' names at the end of the article. [17] After reading the article, which type of disfellowshipping do you think it portrays – the just example of 1 Corinthians 5 or the unjust example of 3 John 9? Do we know the sins that these ministers were put out for or not?

Matthew 24:34-45 is a good example of how important it is that we treat one another with brotherly love. Jesus says here that whatsoever evil we do or good that we fail to do to the least of his brethren, we have done it to the Lord himself. Does Mr. Armstrong's article portray the way the Lord wants us to treat our brethren?



The truth about disfellowshipping is that we must not practice the one extreme of allowing sin in the church and doing nothing about it for a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. Neither should we practice the other extreme of casting brothers out unjustly, for then we are following the way of Cain who killed his brother because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. We must remember what Jesus said in the sermon on the mount that if we are even angry with our brother without a cause, we are in danger of hell fire.

This is the example of Jesus in John 9 when he knew that a man had been cast out of the synagogue without knowing the circumstances. He personally went to visit the man and asked him if he believed. How many of us do this for our brethren who have been cast out?

### **3F-2.**

#### **OBEY THE MAGISTRATES**

Since Mr. Coulter and other ministers were disfellowshipped because they disagreed with the church's rebellion against the state's lawful investigation, 'failing to obey the magistrates' is listed as the second sin. This has been discussed already on page 6 under the heading, 3C. 'How Did Herbert Armstrong Oppose God?'

### **3F-3.**

#### **FALSE DOCTRINE**

Just like everyone who came into Worldwide, I was converted and baptized because God opened my mind to the truths that were taught in that church. But being a baby Christian and not yet able to discern good and evil when first baptized, I (like all the other members) believed that all the doctrines Mr. Armstrong taught must be true. It is as we grow in grace and knowledge with the help of the Holy Spirit in us, that we become more and more able to discern true versus false doctrines.

*Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

*Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

One major false doctrine Mr. Armstrong taught was the Peter Primacy Heresy used by the Roman Catholic Church to justify papal authority. Mr. Armstrong used this doctrine to promote his authority as Chief Apostle. [18] See a refutation of this doctrine. [19]

Another major false doctrine was taught by Herbert Armstrong in his booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. [20] This doctrine took scriptures promising punishments to Israel (Deut 28, Lev 25:1-2 and Lev 26) and Jerusalem (Ezek 5) out of context and applied them to America and Britain in the end time whom he identified as Ephraim and Manasseh. This doctrine proclaims a warning message of destruction and captivity for America and Britain which is not true. A lengthy refutation of this doctrine containing ten articles is here: [21] but it can basically be disproved by verses like these saying that when Israel would go into captivity, from there they would be scattered over the whole earth.

*\*Deut 28:64 And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.*

*\*Jer 50:17 Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.*

*Jer 50:18 Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.*

*Jer 50:19 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.*

*Jer 50:20 In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.*

*\*Eze 11:16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.*

*Eze 11:17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.*

*Eze 11:18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.*

*Eze 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*

*Eze 11:20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

*\*Jas 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

There is no promise that they would be gathered together again to become the end-time great nations of America and Britain and suffer another captivity. But this condition of scattering would only end when the Lord shall bring them again to the land of Israel, cause them to repent and forgive their sins.

A whole class of false doctrines taught in Worldwide are exposed in the scriptures as commandments of men.

*Mat 15:9 In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*

*Tit 1:14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*

Here are examples:

Thou shalt not vote

Thou shalt not enter into the military

Thou shalt not wear makeup

Thou shalt not go to doctors for medical treatment but only have faith in God to heal

We must know and understand the difference between commandments of God and those of men. Jesus and his disciples gave us their example of not obeying commandments of men that the Pharisees, the religious leaders imposed on people. Jesus exposed commandments of men that conveyed wrong principles such as their teaching of washing up to the elbows before eating that they thought purified you, as well as commandments of men that broke commandments of God such as their teaching of Corban (Mat 15:1-20, 23:2-4) that broke God's commandment, honor thy father and mother.

Mr. Armstrong might have taught some of his doctrines of men with God's approval by putting them in the proper category of being his own opinions such as the Apostle Paul did in 1Corinthians 7:25. But he taught them as if they were the commandments of God and even disfellowshipped people for not keeping them. (For example, he disfellowshipped his daughters for not keeping his commandment to not wear makeup.)

*2Jo 1:9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

*2Jo 1:10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:*

The Lord has allowed false doctrine in the church because we are all responsible to study our church's literature and the scriptures like the Bereans did in Acts 17:11 to see whether those things we are being taught are so.

We should keep and appreciate the true commandments of God that Mr. Armstrong taught us such as the truth about the Kingdom of God, the truth about the resurrections, the truth about heaven and hell, baptism, clean and unclean meats, the Sabbath and Holy Days etc. As the scriptures say, we ought to prove all things and then hold fast to that which is good. (1Thes 5:21)

#### **3F-4. FALSE PROPHECY**

Many people seek to understand and explain prophecy. That their ideas may be wrong is not necessarily a sin. But if a person says that he is speaking in the name of the Lord and the Lord never commanded him to say what he is saying, then God says that prophet shall die.

*Deu 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

I knew a minister who said that the coming Y2K computer meltdown of the year 2000 was a device of the New World Order and GOD TOLD HIM this would bring in the great tribulation. The Y2K prophecy failed and this minister is dead today.

These are two examples of Mr. Armstrong using God's and Jesus' authority to say that something is coming to pass which did not come to pass.

From a Coworker Letter December 8 1947 Mr. Armstrong wrote:

"YOU, dear Co-Worker, are not going to be permitted to enjoy your home, your freedom, your present privileges and pursuits, many more years. Just a few more years—perhaps six or seven—perhaps twelve or fifteen—and a re-united Fascist-Nazi Europe will STRIKE—America's great cities will be blown out of existence in one night without warning... I tell you, ON THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST, IT IS COMING!" [22]

And again in his booklet, 1975 in Prophecy, Mr. Armstrong predicted a German-led European combine that would usher in the Great Tribulation and the coming of Christ in 1975, saying on Page 31, "I SAY TO YOU ON AUTHORITY OF GOD ALMIGHTY THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY SURE!" [1,23]

It is a SIN to prophesy in the authority of the Lord when the Lord never commanded him to say that within a few years from 1947 the United States and Britain would go into captivity with their cities blown to bits. The Lord never commanded him to say that Jesus Christ would return in 1975. Mr. Armstrong should have said that these ideas were theories, but he was famous for dogmatically using God's name in this way.

### **3F-5.**

#### **THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**

In 1953 Mr. Armstrong wrote an article that did not allow divorce and remarriage in the church. He said then that the word fornication 'pornea', the only thing that allows divorce in Matthew 19:9, means only sex before marriage and therefore divorce is a type of annulment. Although this was wrong as 'pornea' means much more than sex before marriage. (It includes all kinds of unlawful sexual behavior.) his doctrine served the will of God in that it kept divorce and remarriage out of the church. [24]

In 1974 Mr. Armstrong changed the doctrine [25] saying that unconverted marriages are not bound by God and he allowed divorce and remarriage in the church for a number of causes. Promoted as 'new truth', this was actually Protestant teaching that began during the Protestant reformation under Erasmus in the 1500's [26]. Mr. Armstrong's 1974 doctrine continued under Joseph Tkach when he became Pastor General and finished the work of leading the church into an apostasy of Protestant Evangelical doctrine. Most of the split-off Churches of God have also continued to teach the Protestant divorce and remarriage permission doctrine.

There is no scripture that says clearly that remarriage is allowed, only some scriptures that people ASSUME give them permission for certain causes. When these scriptures are closely studied though, we find many evidences showing that they do not give the presumed permission. But the scriptures do say clearly that marriage is bound until death. They also say clearly that remarriage is adultery. [27]

As the door opened wider for divorce and remarriage in the church, Mr. Armstrong himself married a divorced woman in 1977 whose husband was still living. Jesus said that this is adultery. Mr. Armstrong divorced the same woman in 1984 for reasons other than fornication which Jesus also said causes the divorced spouse to commit adultery.

*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

*Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

The result of allowing fornication 'pornea' (which includes adultery) in the church is that the temple of the Lord has been defiled and the Churches of God who allow it must REPENT.

*\*1Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

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

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

### **3F-6.**

#### **THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS**

The booklet, *Just What Do You Mean - Kingdom of God* [28] published in 1962 and 1972 by Herbert Armstrong, shows the doctrine of the Kingdom of God which is the gospel or 'good news' Jesus preached and sent forth his disciples to preach. The true gospel is about the worldwide kingdom that shall soon be set up with Jesus Christ as king. It is also about how people can repent of their sins, be baptized, receive the spirit of God now and eternal life at the return of Jesus to enter into his kingdom as everlasting spirit beings.

Mr. Armstrong regularly sent out letters to the members and co-workers requesting that they support him with their prayers, tithes and offerings so that he could do 'GOD'S WORK' of preaching the gospel to heads of state around the world. Millions of dollars poured in sent by faithful members who struggled, sacrificed and believed that this was what he was doing with the money.

But I have not yet found any record or picture showing Mr. Armstrong giving the Kingdom of God booklet into the hand of any head of state. I did find these sites showing quotes from Mr. Armstrong's own writings declaring how he would and did preach to world leaders. [29] [30]

Mr. Armstrong traveled extensively during the late 1960's, the 1970's and the early part of the 1980's. This Wikipedia article shows how Stanley Rader set up the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation in 1975 to change the image of Herbert Armstrong so that he would appear to world leaders, not as an Apostle with God's message of the Kingdom of God or as representing a church at all, but as a secular Ambassador for World Peace. [31]

Thus the gospel that he went on his world tours with was changed from the true gospel in the booklet above to a general gospel of 'give versus get' and 'a strong hand from someplace' coming to save humanity. He did not mention the name of Jesus Christ at all. What does Jesus say about

doing this? In these scriptures he sent his disciples to preach his gospel and warned them not to be afraid of even being killed for doing so, for if they deny him before men, he will also deny them before God.

*Mat 10:27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.*

*Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

*Mat 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

*Mat 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

*Mat 10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

*Mat 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

*Mat 10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

This should tell faithful members that they need to be watchful and responsible to require accounting of church leaders and see to it that God's holy tithes they send in are used for the purpose God intends.

### **3F-7.**

#### **THOU SHALT NOT EXERCISE AUTHORITY AS THE GENTILES DO**

This is one of the best examples of how Mr. Armstrong changed from his original righteous doctrine. In 1939 he wrote an article called, "Did Christ Reorganize the Church". [32] In it he condemned centralized hierarchical church government and supported the autonomy of congregations. This article [33] gives the history of his gradual change from his original righteous government doctrine to the centralized dictatorial church government that he became famous for.

In this article [34] Mr. Armstrong published an organizational chart with himself in charge over all the church under Christ. The truth is that the government of God is indeed from the top down as Mr. Armstrong said, but his organizational chart differs from the Lord's chart that reads this way:

*1Cor 11:3 ...the HEAD of every man is Christ; and the HEAD of the woman is the man; and the HEAD of Christ is God.*

Therefore in his organizational chart, Mr. Armstrong superimposed his authority in between Jesus Christ and every man.

The Beast structure was a series of Gentile rulers over God's people beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Kingdom. This rule was to continue until the Lord sets up his kingdom when he returns. Here the Lord gives a description of Gentile rulers as opposed to the government he wants his church to have:

*\*Mat 20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the*

*Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*

*Mat 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*

*Mat 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*

*Mat 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

*\*Luk 22:24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.*

*Luk 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.*

*Luk 22:26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.*

*Luk 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

Mr. Armstrong gradually brought the church's government in line with the authoritarian Gentile rulers of the Beast system. This is how he became the Little Horn of the Third Beast of Daniel 8 as well as the Man of Sin here.

In this article [35] Mr. Armstrong also defended the Peter primacy doctrine by which the Catholic Church justifies its belief in Papal authority. The doctrine states that Peter had the authority among the disciples of Christ. A major scripture used to prove this idea was that he made the decision in the matter of whether or not to compel the Gentiles to be circumcised. But when you read closely, Acts 15:7-9 and especially verse 8 shows that Peter did not make this decision, but God had already made the decision by giving the holy spirit to the Gentiles who were not circumcised. Peter spoke up, not because he was in charge, but because it was he who was first sent to the house of Cornelius the Gentile to convert him. Then when the Jerusalem council subsequently sent the letter to the Gentiles telling them the results of this meeting, (Acts 15:23-29) it was sent in the name of all the apostles, elders and brethren, not in the name and authority of Peter.

Also, the decision of the Jerusalem council had nothing to do with naming who was in charge. It had to do with understanding the letter versus the spirit of the law as Paul explained in his letter to the Romans. (Rom 2:25-29) and to the Corinthians (1Cor 7:17-19) The letter of the law is physical circumcision in the flesh which means nothing. The spirit of the law is circumcision of the heart in being converted to obey the commandments of God.

Although it is true that the scriptures give Peter some authority by saying that he was the Apostle of the circumcision, Galatians 2:7 says it this way - that "the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul and the gospel of the circumcision committed to Peter." Peter's apostleship was therefore a commission from God to preach the gospel to Israel, not a position of authority over them, whereas the Pope and Mr. Armstrong use the Peter Primacy doctrine to justify their authority over the present-day church. It sounds good as the Catholics say because when you have hundreds of denominations, someone has to have the authority to decide what the church is

going to believe. But this misapplication that replaces God's stated authority and will with a man's authority is what makes the Peter Primacy doctrine a heresy.

In taking such authority, Mr. Armstrong appointed hierarchical ministerial ranks. The scriptures show that ranks of ministers are not appointed by a man, but are gifts of the holy spirit.

*\*1Cor 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

*1Cor 12:5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.*

*1Cor 12:6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*

*1Cor 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

*1Cor 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

*1Cor 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*

*1Cor 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

*1Cor 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

*\*1Cor 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

*1Cor 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

*1Cor 12:29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*

*1Cor 12:30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*

## CONCLUSION:

Yes we should obey the leaders of the church...

*Heb 13:17 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.*

But we follow them AS they follow Christ and as they are faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

*1Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

*1Cor 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

*1Cor 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

If a leader is not teaching the same as our Lord Jesus Christ, then he is a false apostle and we are not to follow him.

*Jhn 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*



*Jhn 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*

*Jhn 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

*Jhn 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

*Jhn 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*

THESE SEVEN SINS QUALIFY MR. ARMSTRONG AS A MAN OF SIN.

4.

**2Th 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.**

**2Th 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.**

VERSE 6 tells us that the Man of Sin shall be revealed in his time, but there is something holding back his revealing.

VERSE 7 tells us that there was a mystery of iniquity already at work in the church when 2 Thessalonians was being written and shall again be at work when the Man of Sin is revealed. The word iniquity is the Greek anomia (G458) which means without law either by being ignorant of it or by deliberately violating it and also by having contempt for it. The mystery is that this condition of iniquity was entering into the church from the beginning. False Christians who entered the church kept the name of Christ, but gradually changed the true doctrines, laws and commandments of God little by little so that today what is called Christianity bears little resemblance to that which the original apostles preached and practiced. This condition of lawlessness would also be in the church when the Man of Sin is revealed.

The word 'withholdeth' in verse 6 and 'letteth' in verse 7 are both the Greek word 'katechō' (G2722) which means to hold back, detain, retain or restrain. These verses are telling us that the Lord was holding back the revealing of the Man of Sin until 'HE' is taken out of the way. Who is this 'HE?' and how was 'he' 'taken out of the way?'

The answer to this question is that the Man of Sin is the same person as the Little Horn of the Third Beast in Daniel 8 who TAKES AWAY the DAILY SACRIFICE. The Little Horn of the Third Beast article [36] explains how the Daily Sacrifice was taken away after 2300 days or years. These years began when the four divisions of Alexander's empire began in 321 BC and ended in 1979 AD. What does 1979 have to do with taking away the Daily Sacrifice? There is only one daily or yearly (day = year) sacrifice that is taken away rather than killed and that is the scapegoat of the Day of Atonement. And on the Day of Atonement in 1979, the Daily Sacrifice was 'taken away'. How was this done? At this time the Daily Sacrifice is not the system of sacrifices performed daily at the physical temple, but Daniel 8:11 shows he is a PERSON who is taken away because the place of HIS (the Daily Sacrifice's) sanctuary is cast down.

*Dan 8:11 Yea, he (The Little Horn of the Third Beast) magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his*

*sanctuary was cast down.*

'HE' was Mr. Fred Coulter who was 'taken away' or unjustly disfellowshipped and cast out of the church by Herbert Armstrong on the Day of Atonement 1979.

## 5.

**2Th 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (G2015) of his coming (G3952) :**

Soon after 'HE' (Mr. Fred Coulter) was taken away on the Day of Atonement, October 1, 1979, the Lord's restraint spoken of in verse 7 was removed and the Man of Sin was REVEALED during the Feast of Tabernacles a few days later just as 2Thessalonians 2 verse 3 said he would be.

VERSE 8 then says that the Man of Sin will be consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth and destroyed with the brightness of his coming. The phrase, 'consumed by the spirit of his mouth' does not mean that the Lord literally breathes on sinners to destroy them, but the pronouncement of death from the mouth of the Lord is all that is needed.

The phrase, 'destroy with the brightness of his coming' does not mean that he will be destroyed immediately when the Lord first appears in the heavens at his coming. The word 'coming' is the Greek word *parousia* (G3952) which is also translated 'presence' as well as 'coming' as it is in Philippians 2:12. So the phrase could actually read, 'destroy with the brightness of his presence'. The word presence would fit better here since the brightness of the Lord is not confined to the time of his initial coming in the heavens, but describes his entire presence from the beginning of the millennium to the end.

The Lord has determined that all the wicked shall die the second death in the lake of fire. The first mention of the lake of fire is when the Beast and the False Prophet shall be cast into it at the beginning of the thousand years. It is mentioned again at the end of the thousand years when all sinners shall be raised up to face the second death in the lake of fire. Both these occasions occur in the 'presence' of the Lord.

*\*Rev 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

*\*Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.  
Rev 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Other evidence showing that the Man of Sin is not destroyed immediately when the Lord appears in the heavens is that the Fourth Beast and his Little Horn or False Prophet are said to be thrown in when the Lord returns, but the actual truth is that there are 15 things that happen between when the Lord first returns and when the Fourth Beast and Little Horn are thrown in.

Mat 24:29-30 Immediately after the tribulation, the Lord is seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory

1. Mat 24:31 He shall gather together his elect from the four corners of the world.
  2. 1Thes 4:16 The dead elect shall rise up first and ascend to meet the Lord in the clouds.
  3. 1Thes 4:17 Then the living elect shall rise up and shall be caught up together with the first group to meet the Lord in the clouds.
  4. Rev 14:1 The Lord then comes down to Mt. Sion with the 144,000 who have his father's name in their foreheads.
  5. Rev 14:6 The everlasting gospel is preached to the world by an angel
  6. Rev 14:8 A second angel announces the fall of Babylon
  7. Rev 14:9-10 A third angel announces the wrath of God poured out on those who worship the Beast and receive his mark
  8. Rev 14:14-20 The earth is reaped with a sharp sickle
  9. Rev 15:1 The vision of the seven angels having the seven last plagues.
  10. Rev 15:2-4 The vision of those having gotten the victory over the Beast standing on the sea of glass
  11. Rev 15:5-8 The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is opened and seven angels come out having the seven vials full of the wrath of God
  12. Rev 16 The seven last plagues are poured out one at a time. The Beast and false prophet are still alive as of verse 13.
  13. Rev 17 and 18 The end of Babylon the Great Whore who sits upon many waters
  14. Rev 19:7-9 The marriage of the Lamb takes place
  15. Rev 19:11-19 The armies of the world gather together to make war against the Lord and his armies
- Rev 19:20 The Beast and the False Prophet (Little Horn of the Fourth Beast) are taken and cast into the lake of fire.

So the conclusion is that the Man of Sin will be destroyed in the brightness of the Lord's 'presence' to face the second death at the end of the millennium with the rest of all unrepentant sinners.

## 6.

**2Th 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,**

Some might say, "Mr. Armstrong did not perform great miracles as this verse says the Man of Sin will do. Therefore he cannot be the Man of Sin." However, look at the context in which these other scriptures use the term 'signs and wonders'...

*2Cor 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*

*Heb 2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Here we see that these signs and wonders are used by God such as healings, gifts of the holy spirit etc., to prove that his apostles are bearing the true message of God. In this context we know that Mr. Armstrong was bearing such fruit. God called people by him and his son Garner Ted. God gave his holy spirit to those who repented and were baptized. But these turned out to be lying wonders, not because God was lying, but Mr. Armstrong and his son turned from the way of truth to sin. Therefore the good signs of the holy spirit that had been wrought by him as proof that he was an apostle of God could be called 'lying wonders'.

We find an example of this in the Old Testament with Solomon to whom the Lord had appeared twice (1Ki 11:9-12), but then he turned away from the true God to follow other gods because of his many wives. The Lord's appearing to him twice could be called a 'lying wonder', not because God had not appeared to him, but because Solomon abused the true wonders that God had performed for him and turned himself to accepting the false gods of his wives - the lies.

7.

**2Th 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

Verses 9 and 10 go together in telling us how the Man of Sin comes after the working of Satan. First he will show signs and wonders such as God gives to his apostles. Second, he will show deceivableness of unrighteousness. What does deceivableness of unrighteousness mean?

Herbert Armstrong gave us a great deal of the truth and for this he was so honored that blatant sins he committed were overlooked and not dealt with the way they should have been. Just for one example, he ruled to allow divorce and remarriage in 1974 and married a divorced woman in 1977 which Jesus plainly said is adultery. His son Garner Ted also committed adultery for many years in the church without any consequence. These events contributed to opening the door wide for adultery to enter and become common in the church. This is an example of the phrase, 'deceivableness of unrighteousness' in verse 10. Any continuing practice of unrighteousness that is unrecognized or ignored or not properly dealt with has great power to deceive. People just get used to having the sin around and don't see it as anything out of the ordinary.

It is thought that the False Prophet of Revelation 13 is the Man of Sin because he will be able to make fire come down from heaven (Rev 13:13). To respond to this, here are the differences between the miracles of the False Prophet and the Man of Sin.

The miracles of the Man of Sin are caused by God who gives his truth, his holy spirit and gifts thereof, healings, answered prayers, etc. These miracles are directed to the church and the ones deceived are named in verse 10 as those who do not receive the love of the truth. This tells us that they did receive the truth - just not the LOVE of the truth. Those who are not deceived are those who have received the love of the truth.

The miracles of the False Prophet are making fire come down out of heaven and giving life to the image of the beast. These are caused by Satan the Devil according to Revelation 13 verse 2.

They are directed to the whole world since the False Prophet and the Beast have power over the whole world according to verses 7 and 12. They are meant to cause all who will not worship the Beast to be put to death. And here the ones deceived by these miracles and agree to worship the Beast are the whole world except for those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Those written in Heaven are called the Church of the Firstborn in Hebrews 12:23

**8.**

**2Thes 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:**

**2Th 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

Those who really love the truth cannot condone, ignore or participate in practicing unrighteousness. In addition to being deceived by the continuing practice of unrighteousness that is never addressed because they did not receive the love of the truth, God shall send them additional strong delusion to believe a lie.

What is the lie? It depends on what the sin is. For example, if they believe what Mr. Armstrong wrote about having permission for divorce and remarriage, they are believing in a lie. If they believe in false doctrines Mr. Armstrong taught, they are believing in a lie.

The word 'damned' is the Greek word 'kno' (#G2919) and is translated 'judged' and 'condemned' in this verse:

*Luk 6:37 Judge (G2919) not, and ye shall not be judged: (G2919) condemn (G2919) not, and ye shall not be condemned: (G2919) forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:*

**9.**

**2Th 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:**

**2Th 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

In contrast to those in the church who will believe lies, God is here addressing those brethren who remain faithful to their baptism. Just as Jesus knew from the beginning which disciple would betray him, he knows also which brethren will fall away into the apostasy and which will not. Therefore he calls them 'chosen'.

*Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

The words 'called, chosen and faithful' describe the process by which God chooses people to give salvation to. He reaches down from Heaven and works with the mind of an individual,

converting the mind to have a relationship with God. God calls his chosen ones by their hearing the preaching of the true gospel of the Kingdom of God and moves them to respond to it. Then he grants them repentance of their sins. This involves a recognition of what sin is as defined by the scriptures. For example, 1Jhn 3:4 tells us that sin is the transgression of God's laws and commandments. Repentance means not just an emotional experience, but a determination to turn away from sin, forsake it and live in obedience to God's commandments. Then the individual is baptized by total immersion in water symbolizing the death of Christ and rising out of the water symbolizing the resurrection of Christ. With the laying on of hands, God then gives that person his holy spirit as the earnest or a down payment of becoming a spirit being like God himself when the first resurrection shall occur. (Eph 3:13-14) This is what sanctification of the spirit means. The individual is sanctified or set apart as belonging to God by having God's own holy spirit in his mind. Belief of the truth means that the individual now has a new set of beliefs in his mind that make him likeminded with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

## 10.

**2Th 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.**

This verse gives us the critical instruction on how to escape from the Man of Sin. The word brethren is significant here because Jesus said that those who are doing the will of God are his (spiritual) mother, sisters and brethren or brothers (Mat 12:47-50, Luk 8:20-21) We must know the difference between TRUTH and ERROR by prayer, striving to apply the teachings, attitudes and examples of our Lord Jesus into our lives, studying what we are being taught and then stand fast in the traditions of truth taught by Jesus Christ and his original apostles regardless of teachings, examples and oppressions to the contrary.

## CONCLUSION

In the light of these things, what was the apostasy?

These verses give the best definition of the great apostasy:

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

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

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

The great apostasy is that many shall follow the pernicious (destructive) ways of false teachers in the Church, and by reason of their false teachings and sinful deeds, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. In fulfillment of this I have found web sites condemning the true doctrines of the church and calling the church a cult because of the sinful actions of Mr. Armstrong and

adulteries of Garner Ted Armstrong. [37]

So on the one hand the apostasy was a falling away into the error of idolizing Mr. Armstrong because of the truths he taught. In this mindset there is no acknowledging that he taught any errors or committed any sins. To them he is God's chosen Apostle and anything he did or taught is not to be questioned, but is direct revelation from God.

On the other hand the apostasy was a falling away into the error of seeing the sins and errors committed by Mr. Armstrong and then throwing the baby out with the bathwater so to speak. In this mindset they totally reject the church and all its teachings, call it a cult and rejoin the world. Since HWA was a sinner, the Sabbath, Holy Days etc. that he taught cannot be true either.

Like the frog coming to a slow boil in the water, the apostasy developed over a long period of years. Members became adjusted to unscriptural oppressive manmade rules as if they were commandments of God. Unlike the Bereans in Acts 17:11, we did not study to prove everything that was being taught to us so we are not prepared to discern the difference between the true doctrines that Mr. Armstrong taught us and the false doctrines. We did not question what was being done with our tithes - whether they were really being used to preach the true gospel or not. We did not raise voices when brothers in Christ were unjustly disfellowshipped or when Mr. Armstrong disobeyed the words of Jesus openly by marrying a divorced woman.

Verse 10 describes the apostasy: that since they received not the love of the truth God would send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. The apostasy began with a lack of love for THE TRUTH. This lack of love then manifested in different ways. Some just swallowed things that they were taught without being diligent to check the truth of God's word. Some who knew various truths were willing to compromise them in order to be loyal to a man or an organization or to save their paycheck or job. Some who knew the truth, failed to discipline themselves to live in accordance with the truth. Then there were those who fell away believing in various false doctrines such as Sacred Names and different calendars.

Jesus Christ said, "I am the way and THE TRUTH". So the apostasy is a departure from Jesus Christ, his teachings and his standard of living. THE TRUTH as a system of beliefs must have existed first in order to have an end time falling away from it. The great apostasy, therefore, is something that takes place within the Church.

The phrase in 2Peter 2:1, 'even denying the Lord that bought them' tells us two things. First the word 'denying' is the same word that describes the antichrist.

*1Jo 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

*Tit 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

Second, the words 'bought them' tell us that the apostasy was being developed among those whom the Lord bought, that is, among those who are baptized members of the church.

*Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the*

*Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased (bought) with his own blood.*

The purpose of this article is not to badmouth Mr. Armstrong, but to remind the brethren of our responsibility to understand truth versus error, to study, prove all things that he taught us, to discard the false doctrines/deeds and to hold fast to the truths he taught us. We must not hold Mr. Armstrong up as an idol who can do no wrong, neither should we discard the truths he taught us because of his wrongdoing. The way to escape from the great apostasy always was and still is to know, to love and to hold fast to the TRUTHS of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

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