The background of the cover features an open Bible with light rays emanating from its center, set against a parchment-like texture. A dark blue vertical bar is on the left side.

# Speaking the Truth in Love and Concern

Exposing the False Teachings  
of the Churches of God

Michael H. Exton

[TheBibleComesAlive.org](http://TheBibleComesAlive.org)

# **Speaking the Truth in Love & Concern:**

## **Exposing the False Teachings of the Churches of God**

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**TheBibleComesAlive.org**

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# INTRODUCTION

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This book is written in the spirit of Ephesians 4:15 — speaking the truth in love and concern for those who have been misled. The teachings addressed here are not minor differences of opinion. They are foundational errors that have damaged the lives, finances, and spiritual understanding of hundreds of thousands of people across the Armstrong-tradition Churches of God for nearly a century.

The author has 47 years of independent biblical research and was the first person disfellowshipped from the Worldwide Church of God in Northern California for exposing Joseph Tkach's doctrinal changes. He witnessed the apostasy from the inside. He writes not as an outsider, but as someone who has lived this history firsthand.

For each teaching addressed in this book, the author has written far more extensively elsewhere. References to those fuller studies are provided so the reader may pursue the complete biblical case. The goal here is to present the clearest and most devastating proofs in a form accessible to any reader — and to name the errors without apology.

The Apostle Paul did not mince words when he confronted false doctrine. He named names. He called the Galatians foolish. He said those who pervert the gospel should be accursed — and he said it twice. This book follows that same apostolic standard.

## DISCERNING TRUTH FROM ERROR

Several years ago, many of us in the Sabbath-keeping churches of God went through one of the most difficult times of our lives. The

Word of God was twisted, maligned, and perverted in about every conceivable way. Yet how many of us went through this period unscathed? How many of us never accepted a single false doctrine that was being propagated at the time?

As far as I know every single one of us accepted at least one false doctrine. And of course, most of us accepted far more than just one false teaching before we finally repented.

Someone wrote a book during this period, showing that there were over 235 false doctrines being taught by misguided individuals. Yet how many of these false teachings did you initially accept before you finally repented? Five? Ten? Fifty?

Like just about everyone else, I also was deceived. But I was only duped into accepting one false doctrine (or at least partially) before I came to my senses. That's right. Out of the 235 or so false teachings that were being taught at the time I only accepted one (or partly one). And of course, I later repented of that false doctrine. But, how about you? Can you honestly and sincerely say that you were only misguided on one of the changes that took place just a few short years ago?

Well, if you are like most people in the Sabbath-keeping churches of God today, and if you are brutally honest with yourself, you will have to admit that you were deceived on far more than just one doctrine.

So, what's my secret? Why was it that I was deceived far less than most people? Is it because of my brilliance? Because of my superior intellect? If you know me well you would have to answer that question with a resounding "NO WAY!"

So then, what's my secret? Why was I deceived far less than most people, and how can you and I be protected from false doctrines in the future? Here are the seven keys that helped me — and hopefully will help you — avoid being deceived.

### **Key #1**

Pray very fervently and sincerely for God to lead you into the truth. Claim the promise that Jesus gives us in John 16:13 (NKJ): *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth [God’s Holy Spirit] has come, He will guide you into all truth.”*

### **Key #2**

Prove all things! In 1 Thessalonians 5:21 we are commanded to prove all things. Unless we are doing our part God will not do His part. Therefore, make sure you are proving all things. We must be like the Bereans who tested everything that the apostle Paul taught them (Acts 17:10-11). They did not blindly accept anything — even what Paul taught them! If they didn't even accept what Paul taught them without first going to the Scriptures — how much more should we prove everything that we are taught today! Remember also that the Laodiceans are spiritually blind (Rev. 3:17-18) and as a result they will have to go through the great tribulation. Don't blindly accept anything. For when we blindly accept things — we become spiritually blind. Instead — prove all things!

### **Key #3**

Hold fast to the truth! Once you have asked God to lead you into all truth and then you have proved all things, you must never give it up — but instead hold fast to what you have proven to be good. If you would rather be a Philadelphian instead of a Laodicean (see Revelation 3) then you must do what we are commanded to do in Rev. 3:11 — and that is to hold fast to the truth so that no one will take your crown!

#### **Key #4**

Don't trust anyone except God! In Jeremiah 9:4 and Micah 7:5 we are warned not to trust in anyone — be it a neighbor, friend, or brother. As a matter of fact, God proclaims a curse on anyone who would trust in another human being. As Jeremiah 17:5 proclaims, *“Cursed is the man who trusts in man.”* And this most certainly includes ministers! Do you realize how many times the Bible says to “beware”? And do you realize that in just about every case we are told to beware of *ministers in the Church*? Time after time the Bible warns us to beware of their false doctrines. We are promised in 2 Peter 2:1-3 that there would be false teachers among us who would bring in destructive heresies and blaspheme the truth. So, beware and trust only in God!

#### **Key #5**

Obeys God! In order to be wise and able to discern truth from error we must be practicing God's way of life. As Psalms 111:10 tells us: *“A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.”*

#### **Key #6**

Don't be overconfident! We are admonished in 1 Corinthians 10:12 — *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”* Being overconfident is a trait of a typical Laodicean (see Rev. 3:17). So, make sure that you don't become overconfident. Look up every Scripture that is quoted in every sermon, book, article, etc. And make sure that every Scripture is properly quoted and in its proper context. Don't take anything for granted. Instead let's be zealous and search the Scriptures daily (like the Bereans did in Acts 17:10-11) so that we may be true Philadelphians — and be accounted worthy to escape the great tribulation (Revelation 3:10).

## **Key #7**

When proving all things — always get both sides of the story! Remember there are usually two sides to every story. Anytime someone teaches you something new or different from what you were previously taught make sure that you carefully examine both sides of the issue. Go back and find out exactly what the previous teaching was before ever accepting any new teaching or idea. Remember to get all the facts. Do not deceive yourself in thinking that you only need to hear one side of the story in order to make a proper evaluation. In most cases that is plain foolishness! What kind of judge would ever make a judgment without first hearing both sides of an argument? If the unrighteous judges of this world are wise enough to hear both sides of an issue, how much more should we be concerning the Word of God — especially when our eternal life is at stake!

## **Summary**

So, if you never want to be deceived again, please make sure you implement these seven keys into your life starting today!

**#1 — Fervently cry out to God to lead you into all truth. Claim God's promise of John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.**

**#2 — Prove all things!**

**#3 — Hold fast to the truth!**

**#4 — Don't trust anyone except God!**

**#5 — Obey God!**

**#6 — Don't be overconfident!**

**#7 — In proving all things get both sides of the story!**

## SHOULD CHRISTIANS SPEAK OUT?

Jesus Christ told His disciples that if the world hated and persecuted Him — they did! — then it would hate and persecute His true followers (John 15:18, 15:20). But why would the world hate genuine Christians? For the same reason the world hated Jesus, since true Christians are to emulate their Savior. But why did the world hate Jesus? Let's let Jesus answer that: "*The world... hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil*" (John 7:7). So, if we are following in Christ's footsteps, we would be hated and persecuted for telling the world that its ways are evil.

Isaiah reminds us of our responsibility to speak out: "*Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins*" (Isaiah 58:1). When we speak out against the wicked ways of this world, the world does not take kindly to it. But take heart — the world hated Christ first: "*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you*" (John 15:18).

Jesus also told His followers: "*WOE TO YOU when all men speak WELL of you, for so did their fathers to the FALSE prophets*" (Luke 6:26). The false prophets told the people what they wanted to hear — comforting words, telling them their deeds were good and pleasing to God. God's true prophets, by contrast, continually pleaded with the people to REPENT of their evil ways. People don't like being told their deeds are wicked — and as a result they hate and persecute those who say so. This is why the true prophets were hated and persecuted, why the apostles were hated and persecuted, why Jesus Christ Himself was hated and persecuted, and why faithful followers of Jesus today would also be hated and persecuted.

And the watchman's warning of Ezekiel 33:1-6 makes our responsibility unmistakably clear:

“Son of man, speak to the children of your people... when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people... he who takes warning will save his life. BUT IF THE WATCHMAN SEES THE SWORD COMING AND DOES NOT BLOW THE TRUMPET, AND THE PEOPLE ARE NOT WARNED, AND THE SWORD COMES AND TAKES ANY PERSON FROM AMONG THEM, HE IS TAKEN AWAY IN HIS INIQUITY; BUT HIS BLOOD I WILL REQUIRE AT THE WATCHMAN’S HAND.”

This book is written in that spirit. The following scriptures further confirm our responsibility to speak out:

**Matthew 5:11-12** “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

**Luke 21:17** “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.”

**Hebrews 1:9** “[Jesus Christ] ...loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.”

**Revelation 2:6** “But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

**Proverbs 8:13** “The fear of the Lord is to HATE EVIL...”

**Psalms 97:10** “You who love the Lord, HATE EVIL...!”

**Hosea 4:6** “...Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you...”

# THE SEVEN CHURCH ERAS

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## Philadelphia and Laodicea — Two End-Time Church Eras

**The COG Teaching:** The seven church eras are primarily historical, with the Philadelphian era representing the WCG under HWA.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Bible describes two distinct end-time church eras existing simultaneously — Philadelphia and Laodicea. Philadelphians escape to a place of safety. Laodiceans must suffer through the Great Tribulation.

In chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, Jesus Christ writes seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. But these letters were not written primarily for those first-century congregations — they were written as a prophecy of what would befall God’s true Church throughout history, from the first century until the return of Christ. Each of the seven churches represents a successive era of God’s Church through time.

Today we are in the last and final era — the Laodicean Era — though there is an overlap with the preceding Philadelphian Era. The Bible speaks very highly of the Philadelphian Era, commanding it to “hold fast to the truth” (Revelation 3:11). But the Laodicean Era is rebuked in the sharpest possible terms:

**Revelation 3:17-19:** *“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — I counsel you to buy*

*from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich... be zealous and repent!”*

## **THE STARK CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO ERAS**

While the Philadelphian members will be protected from the coming Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:10), the Laodicean members will have to suffer through it (Revelation 3:19). At that time Satan is at war with the Laodicean members (Revelation 12:17), but the Philadelphian members are taken to a place of safety — protected from Satan’s wrath (Revelation 3:10, 12:13-17, Luke 21:36).

**Revelation 3:10:** *“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.”*

**Luke 21:36:** *“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

In order to wake up the lukewarm Laodicean from his spiritual lethargy, God will allow him to be severely disciplined in the Great Tribulation. Yet even the Laodiceans who suffer and prove their repentance through martyrdom will ultimately be granted eternal life in God’s Kingdom (Revelation 3:20-21).

So which type of person will YOU be — a Philadelphian who holds fast to the truth today, or a Laodicean who waits until the tribulation to repent? Based on which COG teachings you have blindly accepted versus which ones you have carefully proved from your Bible — you already know the answer.

*For the complete study on this topic as well as the rest of the subjects presented in this book, please go to: [TheBibleComesAlive.org](http://TheBibleComesAlive.org)*

# CHAPTER 1

## WHEN WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED AND RESURRECTED?

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**The COG Teaching:** Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday and resurrected late Saturday afternoon.

**The Biblical Truth:** Jesus was crucified on a Thursday and resurrected on a Sunday.

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## WHEN WAS CHRIST RESURRECTED? SUNDAY!

### PROOF — Mark 16:9

1. **ESV** — *“Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...”*
2. **NKJV** — *“Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene...”*
3. **NIV** — *“When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...”*

4. CSB — “After he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...”

5. NLT — “After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene...”

## FIVE TRANSLATIONS AT A GLANCE

#	Translation	Scripture
1	ESV	"when he rose early on the first day"
2	NKJV	"when He rose early on the first day"
3	NIV	"when Jesus rose early on the first day"
4	CSB	"After he rose early on the first day"
5	NLT	"rose from the dead early on Sunday morning"

**THEREFORE, CHRIST WAS RESURRECTED ON  
A SUNDAY!**

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## WHEN WAS CHRIST CRUCIFIED? THURSDAY!

**PROOF — Luke 24:1, 13, 20-21**

**Luke 24:1** — “Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb...” **Therefore, it is Sunday.**

**Luke 24:13** — *"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus..."* **Therefore, it is still Sunday.**

**Luke 24:20-21** — *"But our leading priests and other religious leaders arrested Him and handed Him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified Him. We had thought he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. That all happened three days ago."* (NLT) **Therefore, Christ was crucified on Thursday!**

## **LUKE 24 — FOUR-STEP BUILDUP**

- Luke 24:1 — establishes it is Sunday.
- Luke 24:13 — confirms they are still on that same Sunday.
- Luke 24:20 — *"condemned to death, and they crucified Him"* — establishes that they are discussing the crucifixion.
- Luke 24:21 — delivers the knockout: *"That all happened three days ago"* — therefore the crucifixion occurred on **Thursday!**

**Since today is Sunday, and the crucifixion occurred 3 days ago:**

- One day ago = Saturday
- Two days ago = Friday
- Three days ago = **Thursday**

Every major translation of Luke 24:20-21 gives the same meaning, proving that Christ was crucified on a Thursday. Here is the confirmation:

**NKJ** — *"...condemned to death, and crucified Him... today is the third day since these things happened."*

**NLT** — “condemned to death, and they crucified Him... THAT ALL HAPPENED THREE DAYS AGO.”

**LB** — “...condemned to death, and they crucified him... And now, besides, all *THIS* — which happened three days ago...”

**NIV** — “...handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him... it is the third day since all *THIS* took place.”

**RSV** — “...condemned to death, and crucified him... it is now the third day since *THIS* happened.”

**TEV** — “...handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was nailed to the cross... this is now the third day since *IT* happened.”

**NEB** — “...handed him over to be sentenced to death, and crucified him... this is the third day since *IT* happened...”

Every translation gives the same answer. Jesus was crucified three days prior to Sunday — **THURSDAY**. Instead of holding on to preconceived ideas, let’s obey Jesus Christ and live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). As Hosea 4:6 warns: “...*Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you...*”

## **THEREFORE, CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED ON A THURSDAY!**

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That is a clean, tight, short chapter. Simple. Clear. Plain. And for anyone who wants the full 67-page deep dive (for the complete biblical case), the link to *When Was Jesus Crucified?* is right there on [TheBibleComesAlive.org](http://TheBibleComesAlive.org).

# ORDER OF EVENTS — CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION (32 A.D., Month of Nisan)

**Sunday, 10th** — Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey. Lamb chosen for Passover sacrifice.

**Thursday, 14th** — Passover kept by Jesus and the Apostles at the beginning of Thursday (after sunset Wednesday evening).

3:00 pm on Thursday: Jesus dies.

~4:45 pm on Thursday: Jesus placed in the tomb.

~5:00-6:30 pm on Thursday: Women prepare spices.

~6:30 pm on Thursday: Sunset — *annual* Sabbath begins.

**Friday, 15th** — 1st Day of Feast of Unleavened Bread. Annual Sabbath — rest.

**Saturday, 16th** — Weekly Sabbath — rest. After sunset: Women buy more spices.

**Sunday, 17th** — Just before sunrise: Women *go* to the tomb.

~Sunrise: Jesus resurrected.

~Just after sunrise: Women *arrive* at the tomb.

~3:00 pm in the afternoon: Two disciples encounter Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and they state that the crucifixion occurred 3 days before that Sunday (proving that the crucifixion occurred on Thursday!)

# **RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST — ORDER OF EVENTS**

**(Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20)**

**#1** — Mary and other women go to the tomb Sunday morning near sunrise (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1, 22; John 20:1).

**#2** — The women say among themselves, “Who will remove the stone?” (Mark 16:3).

**#3** — After an angel removes the stone, the women see two angels, and one tells them Christ has risen and they should tell His disciples He is going before them into Galilee (Matthew 28:2-8; Mark 16:4-8; Luke 24:2-8, 23).

**#4** — The women tell the disciples (Luke 24:9-11, 23; John 20:2).

**#5** — Peter and John run to the tomb and, seeing Jesus is gone, return to their homes (Luke 24:12, 24; John 20:3-10).

**#6** — Mary returns to the tomb and again sees the two angels — apparently still not believing Christ had risen (John 20:2, 11-13).

**#7** — Mary sees and speaks with Jesus. He tells her not to cling to Him, that He has not yet ascended to His Father, and to tell His brethren He is ascending (John 20:14-17; Mark 16:9).

**#8** — Mary tells the disciples that she has seen Christ and He had spoken to her (John 20:18; Mark 16:10-11).

**#9** — The women meet Jesus again. He tells them to tell His brethren to go to Galilee to meet Him. They worship Christ and hold Him by His feet (Matthew 28:9-10).

# CHAPTER 2

## THE MARK OF THE BEAST

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**The COG Teaching:** The Mark of the Beast is Sunday worship. Those who worship on Sunday will receive the mark.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Mark of the Beast is a literal physical mark — a tattoo, brand, or stamp — placed on the right hand or forehead, bearing the name or number (666) of the Antichrist.

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In the end-time no one will be able to buy or sell unless they have the MARK OF THE BEAST on either their right hand or forehead (Revelation 13:17). This mark will be a LITERAL PHYSICAL MARK that will be placed (tattooed, branded, stamped, etc.) on one's body (Revelation 13:16). This mark will be the name of the beast (such as 'Roman') and the number that represents his name — the number '666' (Revelation 13:17-18).

### THE MARK IS: A LITERAL PHYSICAL MARK

**Revelation 13:16** — LB — He required everyone — great and small, rich and poor, slave and free — to be **tattooed** with a certain mark on the right hand or on the forehead.

**Revelation 13:16 — RSV & NRS & ESV — ...to be **marked** on the right hand or the forehead.**

**Revelation 13:16 — GW — ...to be **branded** on their right hands or on their foreheads.**

**Revelation 13:16 — WNT — ...to have **stamped** upon them a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads.**

## **THE MARK IS: THE NAME OF THE BEAST OR THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST**

**Revelation 13:17 — NLT — And no one could buy or sell anything without that **MARK**, which was either the **NAME** of the beast or the **NUMBER** representing his name.**

**Revelation 13:17 — NIV — ...the **MARK**, which is the **NAME** of the beast or the **NUMBER** of his name.**

**Revelation 13:17 — CJB & ESV & NRSVA — ...the **MARK**, that is, the **NAME** of the beast or the **NUMBER** of its name.**

**Revelation 13:17 — ERV & ICB & NIRV — ...This **MARK** is the **NAME** of the beast or the **NUMBER** of its name.**

## **THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST IS: 666**

**Revelation 13:18 — LB — Here is a puzzle that calls for careful thought to solve it. Let those who are able, interpret this code: the numerical values of the letters in his name **ADD** to **666**!**

**Revelation 13:18 — GNT —** ...the number stands for the name of someone. Its number is **666**.

**Revelation 13:18 — NEB —** ...The number represents a man's name [such as "Roman"], and the numerical value of its letters is **666**.

**Revelation 13:18 (NKJV):** "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is **666**."

## **THE NAME OF THE BEAST IS: POSSIBLY LATEINOS OR ROMAN**

"Lateinos." Lateinos is a Greek word, and most of the New Testament was originally written in Greek, including the book of Revelation. In Greek: L=30, A=1, T=300, E=5, I=10, N=50, O=70, S=200. Added together = 666!

"Lateinos" signifies "a Latin" or "Latin-man," but it can also be translated as "Roman." Why? Because "lat" and "rom" are synonymous with one another. Any good dictionary confirms this. The American Heritage Dictionary defines "Latin" as: "Of or relating to ancient Rome, its people, or its culture." And "Roman alphabet" is defined simply as "Latin alphabet." "Latin Church" means "Roman Catholic Church." "Latinize" means "Romanize." The two Greek words Rhomaios (Roman) and Lateinos (Latin) mean, for all intents and purposes, the exact same thing. This is because when Rome was founded, it was located within the small country of Latium, and the two peoples intermarried and became one — until the names became essentially synonymous.

Therefore, the English word ROMAN can be translated into Greek as either Rhomaios or Lateinos — and Lateinos adds up to 666. Can anyone think of a better name for the coming Antichrist than ROMAN? Not only can it be translated as Lateinos (= 666), but it is also the name of the empire he will lead (a revitalized Holy ROMAN Empire) and the name of the great false church that will back him up (the ROMAN Catholic Church).

*For the complete study on this topic, go to:  
[www.TheBibleComesAlive.org](http://www.TheBibleComesAlive.org)*

# CHAPTER 3

## THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST

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**The COG Teaching:** The Image of the Beast represents a false governmental system.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Image of the Beast is a **literal statue** of the Antichrist, which the False Prophet will cause to be built and which will be placed in the temple in Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, many translations actually use the word “statue” or “idol” instead of “image.” STATUE: NLT, GW, NIRV, PHIL, NOG, AMPC, TLB. IDOL: CEV, EXB, ICB, WE, NCV, ERV.

In the book of Revelation, we are told that 'the false prophet' will order the inhabitants of the earth to make an image (a statue) of the BEAST (the Antichrist). Amazingly this statue will be able to speak (as Satan will empower it). And the BEAST will put anyone who refuses to worship it to death. (Revelation 13:4, 13:15)

**Revelation 13:14-15 (NLT):** "He ordered the people of the world to make a **GREAT STATUE** of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. He was permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die."

**THEREFORE, THE “IMAGE” OF THE BEAST (ANTICHRIST) IS A STATUE!**

# CHAPTER 4

## The Abomination of Desolation

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**The COG Teaching:** The Abomination of Desolation is the army of the Beast.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Abomination of Desolation is the statue (“image”) of the Beast that is set up in the Temple at Jerusalem

The statue of the Beast will be **placed** in the temple (at Jerusalem) exactly 1290 days before the return of Christ (Daniel 12:11, Matthew 24:15).

**Daniel 12:11:** “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is **set up**, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days [until the return of Jesus Christ].” NKJV

**Matthew 24:15:** “Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, **standing** in the holy place...”

**THEREFORE, THE “ABOMINATION OF  
DESOLATION” IS THE STATUE  
 (“IMAGE”) OF THE BEAST!**

# CHAPTER 5

## THE BEAST WILL BE KILLED BUT HE WILL COME BACK TO LIFE

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**The COG Teaching:** The “deadly wound” was historically healed when the Roman Empire was restored.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Antichrist himself will be killed, and will miraculously come back to life approximately 3½ years before Christ's return.

The BEAST (the Antichrist) will be fatally wounded about 3½ years before the return of Jesus (Revelation 13:3, 13:5). But the BEAST will come back to life! And the world will be absolutely astonished when he does! (Revelation 13:3-4; 17:8, 11, 13:3, 14)

And don't be surprised if the BEAST is killed on a Friday (perhaps even Good Friday!) and brought back to life on a Sunday (perhaps even Easter Sunday!). Where does his power come from? From Satan the Devil! (Revelation 13:4)

**Revelation 13:3-4:** “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his **deadly wound was healed**. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’” NKJV

The whole world will not only worship the Antichrist — but will worship the DEVIL as well. For it is Satan who is behind this evil political leader and his corrupt government, just as it is Satan who is behind the end-time false prophet and his false religious system.

**Revelation 13:14** – “And he ordered the people of the world to make a great statue of the first Beast, who was **fatally wounded and then came back to life.**” TLB

**Revelation 17:8** – “The beast you saw was alive but isn't now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit and go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world, whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made, will be amazed at the **reappearance of this beast who had died.** NLT

**THEREFORE, THE BEAST (ANTICHRIST)  
WILL BE KILLED AND YET HE WILL  
COME BACK TO LIFE!**

# CHAPTER 6

## THE FALSE PROPHET

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**The COG Teaching:** The False Prophet is the Man of Sin and the Antichrist.

**The Biblical Truth:** The False Prophet (the secondary Beast of Revelation) is NOT the Antichrist and he is NOT the Man of Sin.

In the book of Revelation a FALSE PROPHET is described who in the end-time will work hand-in-hand with the Antichrist. This FALSE PROPHET will look like a lamb but speak like a dragon (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10, 13:11-18). In other words, he will look like a true representative of Jesus Christ — but he will teach doctrines of Satan! But he will NOT be worshipped. On the contrary, the Bible says that the primary beast mentioned in the book of Revelation will be worshipped by the whole world, so he is the Antichrist, NOT the false prophet, the secondary beast, who is not worshipped.

### **Revelation 13:11-12:**

*"Then I saw **another beast [the false prophet]** coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to **worship the first beast**, whose deadly wound was healed."*

### **Revelation 19:20:**

*"Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone."*

### **THE FIRST BEAST = ANTICHRIST = MAN OF SIN:**

The first and primary beast of Revelation 13 IS the Antichrist AND the Man of Sin. They are one and the same person. Many in the COGs have wrongly split these into separate individuals. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 describes this same individual who "sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" — this is the Antichrist, the Beast, and the Man of Sin, all one person.

### **THE BEAST FROM THE SEA — SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS — THE ANTICHRIST — THE MAN OF SIN**

**Revelation 13:1-5:** *"And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having SEVEN HEADS and TEN HORNS, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name... And the dragon [Satan the devil] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded,*

*and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and **they worshiped the beast**, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies...”*

## **THE BEAST FROM THE LAND — THE FALSE PROPHET**

**Revelation 13:11-15:** *“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a LAMB and spoke like a DRAGON. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to **worship the first beast**, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he **DECEIVES** those who dwell on the earth by those signs... telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image [statue] to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not **worship the image of the beast** to be killed.”*

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-12:** *“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and **THE MAN OF SIN** is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God... And then **THE LAWLESS ONE** will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception*

*among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*

This is the same individual described as the first and primary Beast in Revelation 13, and the Antichrist in 1 John 2:18, as it is the “Man of Sin” and the 1<sup>st</sup> and primary Beast of Revelation 13 that the world worships. The false prophet is NOT worshiped, therefore he is NOT the Antichrist nor the man of sin.

# CHAPTER 7

## THE 144,000

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**The COG Teaching:** The 144,000 will be protected during the Great Tribulation in the Place of Safety.

**The Biblical Truth:** The 144,000 are Christians who are NOT protected during the Great Tribulation, but somehow survive the Great Tribulation and are then protected from the Day of the Lord only.

In the end-time 144,000 people will be protected from the “Day of the Lord” — the punishment of Jesus upon an unrepentant and defiant mankind. This will occur during the final year preceding Christ’s return. These 144,000 are “servants of God” — converted, faithful Christians who have not worshiped the BEAST, his statue, or received his mark (Revelation 7:1-4, 9:3-4, 14:1-5; Ezekiel 9:4-6). The Bible makes clear that the 144,000 will be protected from the “Day of the Lord.” But it says nothing about them going to the Place of Safety. There seems to be two different groups of people spoken of as being protected in the book of Revelation: Those who go to the Place of Safety right before the Great Tribulation begins (perhaps 12,000 faithful obedient Christians), who are protected from Satan’s wrath, the Great Tribulation (and obviously God’s wrath, the Day of the Lord); and then another group that does NOT

go to the Place of Safety and are NOT protected from the Great Tribulation, but who are protected (while living among everyone else in the world) from the punishment of God during the Day of the Lord. These Scriptures in Psalm probably applies to this particular group:

**PSALM 91:7-10 (NKJV)**

A thousand may fall at your side,  
And ten thousand at your right hand;  
*But* it shall not come near you.

<sup>8</sup> Only with your eyes shall you look,  
And see the reward of the wicked.

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the Lord, *who is* my refuge,  
*Even* the Most High, your dwelling place,

<sup>10</sup> No evil shall befall you,  
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

**Revelation 7:1-4:**

*"Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed [marked] the servants of our God on their foreheads. AND I HEARD THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO WERE SEALED [MARKED]. ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed [marked]."*

**Revelation 9:3-4:**

*"Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth... They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal [mark] of God on their foreheads."*

## **Revelation 14:1-5:**

*"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000, having His Father's Name written on their foreheads... THESE WERE REDEEMED FROM AMONG MEN, BEING FIRSTFRUITS TO GOD AND TO THE LAMB."*

## **THE DAY OF TRUMPETS = THE DAY OF THE LORD**

The Day of Trumpets — the fourth of God’s annual holy days — pictures the Day of the Lord. This “Day” of the Lord actually lasts one full year: “For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance; the year of recompense for the cause of Zion” (Isaiah 34:8). It is portrayed by seven trumpets, which is why the holy day is called the Day of Trumpets. Zephaniah 1:14-17 describes it: “The great day of the Lord is near... That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation... a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities.”

Immediately before God begins this punishment, He seals the 144,000 — marking them for protection from what is about to come. Then the seven trumpets begin to sound.

## **THE SEVEN TRUMPETS**

**Revelation 8:1-2, 6 (NLT):** *“When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets... Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their mighty blasts.”*

**5th Trumpet:** Locusts with scorpion-like power torment all who do NOT have the seal of God on their foreheads for five months. The agony will be so severe that people will long to die (Revelation 9:1-10). The 144,000 are supernaturally protected and not harmed.

## **THE PLACE OF SAFETY**

Though much of the world is duped by the Antichrist, those wholeheartedly obeying the real God will not be deceived. These true Christians — those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12) — will be allowed to escape to a place of safety, protected from the Devil and his agents. As they flee, Satan sends an army after them — but to no avail, for the earth opens up and swallows the pursuing force (Revelation 12:14-16). How many? The Bible does NOT say. My guess is that it will be about 12,000 truly converted Christians who are “ready” when the call comes and who are “counted worthy to escape” (Luke 21:36; Revelation 7:3-8).

# CHAPTER 8

## THE GREAT MULTITUDE

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**The COG Teaching:** The Great Multitude will be protected during the Great Tribulation.

**The Biblical Truth:** In the end-time a “great multitude” of people will be martyred during the Great Tribulation.

These loyal, obedient servants of God will be slain for remaining faithful to the Word of God. This martyrdom of true Christians will occur during the last 3½ years preceding Christ's return (during the Great Tribulation). But in the end they will rejoice — for they will be resurrected back to life in the 1st resurrection as immortal spirit beings in God’s very Family! (Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17)

### THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

In Revelation 6, four horsemen are described whose ride sets the stage for the Great Tribulation. These four horses and their riders are often called “the four horsemen of the apocalypse.” One horse is white — representing religious deception. The second is red — portraying war. The third is black — depicting famine. The last is pale green — symbolizing disease and death. Once these four riders have finished their ride, one fourth of humanity lies dead — roughly two billion lives snuffed out (Revelation 6:8).

It is during this same period that the Great Multitude — those who repent and turn to God during the Great Tribulation — will be martyred for the Word of God. But God promises them that in the end they will be rewarded with eternal life. At that time “the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:16-17).

## **THE FIFTH SEAL — THE CRY OF THE MARTYRS**

The connection between the Great Multitude and the Fifth Seal of Revelation 6 is unmistakable. When Jesus opened the Fifth Seal, John saw under the altar those who had already been slain for the Word of God throughout the ages. They cried out to God to avenge their blood:

**Revelation 6:9-11:** “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.”

Those “fellow servants and brethren, who would be killed” — that IS the Great Multitude. The martyrs of the ages are waiting for one final end-time martyrdom to be completed before their blood is avenged. The Great Multitude described in Revelation 7 is that final group. They are the ones who “come out of the Great Tribulation” by being killed in it (Revelation 7:14). Their deaths complete what the Fifth Seal declared must happen before Christ’s return.

This is why the Great Multitude is pictured clothed in white robes — exactly like the Fifth Seal martyrs. They are the same category of people: those slain for the Word of God and the testimony they held. And like the martyrs before them, they will be raised in the first resurrection to eternal life in God's very Family.

**Revelation 7:13-14 (NLT):**

"Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, 'Who are these clothed in white? Where did they come from?' And I said, 'Sir, you are the one who knows.' Then he said to me, '**These are the ones who DIED IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION.** They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white.'"

# CHAPTER 9

## THE ELIJAH TO COME

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**The COG Teaching:** Herbert W. Armstrong was the end-time Elijah, or alternately, the Church of God itself fulfills this role.

**The Biblical Truth:** The end-time Elijah is a specific individual who will appear just before Christ's second coming and "restore all things."

Apparently there would be TWO men who would come in the spirit and power of the original Elijah. One would appear just before Christ's first coming (John the Baptist), and the other will appear just before Christ's second coming.

### **Matthew 17:10-13:**

"[The end-time] Elijah truly is coming first and *will* RESTORE ALL THINGS. But I say to you that Elijah [the one who would appear just before Christ's 1st coming] has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

## **Malachi 4:5-6:**

“Behold, I will send you ELIJAH THE PROPHET before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord [this occurs just before Christ’s 2nd coming]. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

## **THE TWO END-TIME WITNESSES**

The end-time Elijah may be one of the Two Witnesses described in Revelation 11. But he may not be. He may be a completely different person from the two witnesses. Therefore, in the very end-time there just may be three servants of God who have a special role determined by God: The Elijah to come and the two witnesses.

During the final three and a half years of this age — spanning the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord — two men will proclaim the truth of God throughout the world.

The end-time Elijah will NOT come not come in the person of Herbert W. Armstrong (who died over 40 years ago) or any Church organization, but as a specific individual inspired by God in the very end time to restore all things to those with ears to hear.

Furthermore, HWA did NOT restore all things. He got many things wrong, as this very book plainly demonstrates. The claim that he was the end-time Elijah was a misguided assertion with no biblical support whatsoever. Plus, many of the things attributed to him as teachings that hadn’t been taught in centuries is simply not true. Almost all of these supposed “restored truths” weren’t restored at all, as they were being taught by several others in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, including the very church that HWA was a member of for many years before he eventually left in the 1930’s to start his own independent work.

# CHAPTER 10

## BAPTISM IN WHOSE NAME?

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**The COG Teaching:** Repentant adults are to be baptized IN THE NAME OF THE “FATHER, SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

**The Biblical Truth:** The Bible commands baptism for repentant adults IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.

Acts 2:38 and MANY other Scriptures declare that we must be “**baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.**”

Now, there is one Scripture (Matthew 28:19) that tells us to be baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Yet ALL other Scriptures only tell us to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Not only that, but in EVERY SINGLE EXAMPLE given in the Bible, everyone who is baptized is baptized in the name of Jesus only — and NEVER in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit — such as Acts 2:38-41, 10:48, 19:5, 8:16-17, 22:16; 1 Corinthians 1:12-13). More than likely Matthew 28:19 was NOT in the original Greek of the first century — but was fallaciously added many years later by someone who wrongly believed in the trinity and therefore was trying to put their false pagan teaching of the trinity in the Bible itself by inserting this particular verse in the Bible.

## **Acts 2:38**

“Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be **baptized in the name of JESUS CHRIST** for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

# CHAPTER 11

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT

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**The COG Teaching:** HWA taught that the church is governed by a single leader or “apostle” at the top, with authority flowing downward in a strict hierarchy — the “government of God” as he coined it. The WCG even went so far as to say that if anyone ever left the WCG they would lose out on eternal life and never enter the Kingdom of God! But not all of the churches of God that came out of the WCG follow that teaching today, but some still adhere to it.

**The Biblical Truth:** Church government in the New Testament is primarily local, with elders/bishops serving specific congregations.

The New Testament clearly shows a decentralized church structure. Elders and bishops were appointed in “every city” (Titus 1:5) — they served local congregations, not a global empire. No single human being in the New Testament held the kind of centralized autocratic authority that HWA claimed for himself and that some of his successor organizations have continued to exercise.

**Titus 1:5-7** (NKJV)

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders IN EVERY CITY..."

## 2 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV)

“For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and OURSELVES AS YOUR SERVANTS for Jesus' sake.”

## Matthew 23:11-12 (NKJV)

“But he who is greatest among you shall be your SERVANT. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

## MATTHEW 23 (All verses NLT except when noted otherwise)

<sup>6</sup> And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. <sup>7</sup> **They love to receive respectful greetings [Mr.?] as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi.’**<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>8</sup> “Don’t let anyone call you ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one teacher, and **all of you are EQUAL as brothers and sisters.**<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>9</sup> And don’t address anyone here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your Father. <sup>10</sup> And don’t let anyone call you ‘Teacher,’ for you have only one teacher, the Messiah. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you must be a **servant**. <sup>11</sup> If you are recognized at all, let it be for your service. **Delight in the one who calls you servant.** (VOICE) <sup>12</sup> But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matthew 23:6-12 is clear: ministers are NOT to be elevated above the rest of the congregation. That principle applies even to something as seemingly small as how we address them. If the members of a congregation are called by their first names, then the ministers should be called by their first names as well. To single out ministers alone with the title “Mr.” — while everyone else goes by “John” or “Mary” — is to place them on a pedestal. And placing ministers on a pedestal is precisely what God, through these verses, forbids. The rule is simple: whatever standard of address applies to

the congregation applies to the ministry. No exceptions, no elevated titles, no special treatment.

Therefore, ministers in the church should NOT be called MASTER, HIS HOLINESS, RABBI, LEADER, DOCTOR, FATHER, REVEREND, etc. — or even MISTER — by doing so you are putting them on a pedestal; you are elevating them to a superior position; you are exalting them above others (which we should NOT do).

The autocratic “government of God” model used by HWA and many of his successor organizations is not found in the New Testament. It is a model borrowed from corporate structure and used to control members and **suppress independent biblical thinking**. And it is completely contrary to the Word of God.

# CHAPTER 12

## THE CALENDAR

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**The COG Teaching:** The Hebrew Calculated Calendar (Jewish calendar) is “God’s Sacred Calendar” and must be used for determining holy days.

**The Biblical Truth:** God’s calendar is based on actual observation of the new moon and the sun — not complicated and confusing mathematical calculations created by later rabbis centuries after Christ walked the earth.

God’s calendar is much different than the calendar that most people use today. It incorporates both the sun AND the moon in its calculations (Genesis 1:14). The start of a new year is determined each year by the appearance of the first new moon in the sky after the spring equinox. This first new moon of the spring appears in the western sky as a very thin visible crescent shortly after sunset.

The Jewish calculated calendar used today was a misguided later rabbinic construction, not the biblical calendar. And it was only created for CONVENIENCE!

### **Genesis 1:14**

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.**’”

# CHAPTER 13

## FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

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**The COG Teaching:** Teach that you can eat food sacrificed to idols.

**The Biblical Truth:** Christians are NOT to eat food sacrificed to idols. Those who do are fellowshiping with demons!

The Bible emphatically states that Christians are NOT to eat things sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:20, 15:29, 21:25; Revelation 2:14, 2:20). It also states that those who eat foods sacrificed to idols are fellowshiping with DEMONS! (1 Corinthians 10:20-21)

### **Acts 15:28-29**

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you ABSTAIN from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

### **1 Corinthians 10:20-21**

“...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice [to idols] they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do NOT want you to have fellowship with DEMONS. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.”

**Revelation 2:14**

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”

# CHAPTER 14

## DID THE PHARISEES KEEP THE LAW?

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**The COG Teaching:** The Pharisees kept the law but lacked love.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Pharisees did NOT keep the law of God. They kept their own traditions and in doing so broke God's law.

### **John 7:19**

“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet NONE OF YOU KEEPS THE LAW? Why do you seek to kill Me?”

### **Mark 7:5-13**

“Well did Isaiah prophesy of you HYPOCRITES... ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men... ALL TOO WELL YOU REJECT (SET ASIDE) THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION.”

### **Matthew 23:23-28**

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES!... you have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all

uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and LAWLESSNESS.”

**Acts 7:52-53**

“...who have received the law by the direction of angels and have NOT kept it.”

**Galatians 6:13**

“For NOT even those who are circumcised keep the law...”

The common COG teaching that the Pharisees “kept the law but lacked love” contradicts the direct words of Jesus Christ Himself, who said plainly that none of them kept the law.

# CHAPTER 15

## THE TEMPLE IN THE END-TIME

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**The COG Teaching:** A temple in Jerusalem is NOT necessary or required for end-time prophecies to be fulfilled.

**The Biblical Truth:** In the end-time a temple WILL be built in Jerusalem. The Antichrist will sit in it, and the Abomination of Desolation (his statue) will be placed in it. There has been no temple since 70 AD — expect one to be built soon.

In the end-time the Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be GOD (2 Thessalonians 2:4). And the “abomination of desolation” (a statue of the Antichrist) will also be set up in the temple (which will be located in Jerusalem) 1290 days before Christ’s return (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Daniel 12:11; Revelation 13:14-15). But there has not been a temple in Jerusalem since 70 AD — so expect one to be built in the very near future!

### **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**

“..the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he SITS AS GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, showing himself that he is God.”

**Matthew 24:15**

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the HOLY PLACE [the temple] (whoever reads, let him understand)...”

**Daniel 12:11**

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up [in the temple], there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

The Churches of God attempt to sidestep the issue by pointing out that animal sacrifices can be performed without a temple — and they cite Ezra as their proof. That may be historically accurate. But it completely misses the point. The question is not whether sacrifices can occur without a temple. The question is what God Himself says about the end-time temple — the one the man of sin will enter, and the one in which the abomination of desolation will be set up. Ezra has nothing to say about that. The prophecy does.

# CHAPTER 16

## THE LOCATION OF THE WEDDING OF CHRIST

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**The COG Teaching:** The marriage of Christ takes place on earth at His return.

**The Biblical Truth:** The marriage of Jesus with His bride — the true saints of God — will take place in HEAVEN, and almost surely between the Day of Atonement and the Festival of Tabernacles, before Christ and the saints return to earth.

Revelation 19 clearly implies that the marriage of Christ with His bride occurs at His return.

**The Timeline:** Jesus will return on the Day of Trumpets. The last 7 plagues will be completed by the 10th day of the 7th month. On the Day of Atonement (10th day, 7th month) Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit. Then from the 11th through 15th day of the 7th month the MARRIAGE OF JESUS WITH HIS BRIDE WILL TAKE PLACE IN HEAVEN. Then Christ and the saints will return to earth on the 15th day (Festival of Tabernacles).

### **Revelation 19:6-9:**

“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

HAS COME, and His wife has made herself ready... ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’”

## **WILL THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OCCUR BETWEEN TRUMPETS AND ATONEMENT — OR BETWEEN ATONEMENT AND TABERNACLES?**

Some have proposed that the marriage supper takes place between the Day of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. But there are six powerful reasons why this cannot be correct:

(1) Revelation 15:8 states that no one is allowed to enter the heavenly temple during the last 7 plagues — and these 7 last plagues begin on the Day of Trumpets and continue until the Day of Atonement.

(2) If the marriage supper took place between the Day of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, we would be rejoicing and celebrating in heaven while millions of people — perhaps even some of our own friends and relatives — are suffering greatly under those plagues.

(3) If the millennium began before the 15th, then God would have established the Feast of Tabernacles on that earlier date — but He did not. The Feast of Tabernacles begins on the 15th because the millennium begins on the 15th.

(4) If Jesus did not truly return to earth until the Day of Atonement, then the Atonement — and not the Day of Trumpets — would picture the return of Christ. But Scripture is clear that it is the Day of Trumpets that pictures His return.

(5) We would be celebrating and rejoicing before Satan is put away, rather than after — since Satan will not be bound until the Day of Atonement.

(6) Revelation 17:14 and 19:19-21 show that Jesus and the saints will defeat the Beast power at the 7th and final plague. That 7th plague occurs between Trumpets and Atonement — almost certainly immediately before the Day of Atonement begins, as Revelation 19:17-21 and 20:1 show that Satan is bound on the 10th day right after the Beast is defeated. And Revelation 19:1-9 (especially verse 1) shows that the marriage occurs after the defeat of the Beast.

Therefore, this is the correct sequence of events for the 7th month of the Biblical calendar:

1st Day = Day of Trumpets = Jesus Returns & Saints Resurrected

1st Day to 10th Day = Last 7 Plagues

10th Day = Day of Atonement = Satan Bound

10th Day to 15th Day = Marriage Banquet in Heaven

15th Day = Start of Feast of Tabernacles = Start of Millennium

# CHAPTER 17

## DOOR-TO-DOOR EVANGELISM

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**The COG Teaching:** Door-to-door evangelism is prohibited by the Bible.

**The Biblical Truth:** Going house to house to share the gospel is not only acceptable — it is exactly what the early church and the apostles did.

### **Acts 5:40-42**

“And daily in the temple, and IN EVERY HOUSE, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

### **Acts 20:18-20**

“...how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.”

### **Luke 10:1-12**

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.... ‘But whatever house you enter, first say, Peace to this house.’”

The early church went door to door daily. Paul went house to house.  
The seventy disciples went into homes two by two.

# CHAPTER 18

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

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**The COG Teaching:** Church members may not divorce and remarry for adultery.

**The Biblical Truth:** Jesus Christ plainly stated that no one may divorce and remarry — **except for adultery**.

Jesus Christ plainly stated that no one could divorce and remarry — except for one reason — adultery (Matthew 5:32, 19:9). Jesus also said that anyone who divorces his or her mate for any other reason and remarries commits adultery. And unless repented of, no adulterers will enter the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8).

### **Matthew 19:3-9**

“..whoever divorces his wife, EXCEPT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

### **Matthew 5:31-32**

“...whoever divorces his wife for any reason EXCEPT SEXUAL IMMORALITY causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”

## **SEPARATION WITHOUT REMARRIAGE:**

There are certain circumstances in which someone may separate from their mate (but NOT divorce their mate). Such a person may NOT remarry — they must either stay separated or be reconciled to their mate (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (WEB)**

“Or don't you know that the unrighteous will NOT inherit the kingdom of God?... Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers... will inherit the kingdom of God.”

# CHAPTER 19

## TITHING — FACT OR FICTION?

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**The COG Teaching:** Christians are commanded to give 10% of their income (“tithe”) to the church. Most COG congregations even teach two or three tithes.

**The Biblical Truth:** Christians are NEVER commanded to tithe. They are called to support God’s servants through freewill offerings.

Contrary to what many churches teach today, Christians are NOT commanded by God to give 10% of their income to the church. Though Christians are to help support true servants of God, they are NEVER commanded to accomplish this through tithing. On the contrary, Christians are told to help support faithful servants of God through FREEWILL OFFERINGS. (Philippians 4:10-18; 1 Corinthians 9:1-18; Luke 10:1-8; 2 Corinthians 11:7-9)

### **1 Corinthians 9:14-18 (NLT)**

"In the same way, the Lord gave orders that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it. Yet I have never used any of these rights... I would rather die than lose my distinction of preaching without charge. For preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it... I have no choice. What then is my pay? It is the satisfaction

I get from preaching the Good News without expense to anyone, never demanding my rights as a preacher."

## **2 Corinthians 11:7-9 (NLT)**

"Did I do wrong when I humbled myself and honored you by preaching God's Good News to you without expecting anything in return?... when I was with you and didn't have enough to live on, I did not ask you to help me... I have never yet asked you for any support, and I never will."

The COG tithing system has extracted enormous sums of money from trusting members — often three tithes totaling 20-30% of income — based on a teaching that does not apply to Christians under the New Covenant. This financial burden has caused genuine hardship to thousands of families.

## **MY OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH TITHING**

I came into a church in my 20's that taught three tithes. The first tithe (10% of one's income) was paid each year to the church. The second tithe (an additional 10%) was used each year for holy day expenses. And a third tithe (an additional 10%) was paid to the church every third year for the "needy" in the church.

Each year members were expected to set aside 20% of their income for the church and church-related activities, and then 30% every third year — all from *gross* income. For example, if a member earned \$3,000 per month gross but took home \$2,000 net, he was expected to set aside \$300 for first tithe and another \$300 for second tithe — amounting to 30% of net income — leaving \$1,400 per month to live on, before holy day offerings and other freewill offerings. In a third-tithe year that dropped to \$1,100, meaning a staggering 45% or more of net income went to the church. Once you included all offerings, you were looking at roughly 50% of net income — or more.

And consider the very wealthy member in a country where income tax rates reached 70% or higher. Imagine grossing one million dollars a year. After taxes you take home \$300,000. Pay 10% of gross in first tithe (\$100,000), set aside another 10% for festivals, and pay \$100,000 in third tithe — and you break even. You would not make a single penny, even though you grossed a million dollars. Did God really require this? Was this teaching truly biblical? Or was it extra-biblical — and therefore wrong?

### **THIRD TITHE**

In the New Testament there are many Scriptures that discuss the poor in the church. And yet in every single one of them, not once is it ever stated that members were expected to give 10% of their wages every three years to help support the needy. NEVER ONCE in the entire New Testament is it stated that Christians are to give 10% of their income every three years to help the less fortunate in the church. Not one single Scripture.

Christians in the New Testament helped support their fellow Christians by giving freely from their heart — whatever they wanted and whatever they could afford. In every single instance they were told to support the poor by giving what they were able — what they had determined in their own heart. Here is the proof:

**Acts 11:27-30** “Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.”

**2 Corinthians 9:7 (NLT)** “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”

**2 Corinthians 9:9 (NLT)** “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.”

In the Bible, Christians help the poor through freewill contributions 100% of the time, and 0% of the time through a third tithe fund. This

false teaching stems from Deuteronomy 14:28-29, where the Israelites were instructed to contribute 10% of their *produce* every third year to assist the needy. But just because the Israelites were instructed to help their fellow Israelites through a tithe of their produce does NOT mean that Christians are required to do the same. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that Christians are to support the poor through freewill offerings — NOT through third-year tithing.

## FIRST TITHE

So what does the New Testament say about first tithe — the tithe used to support the ministry? Are Christians really instructed to give 10% of their salary to their church? Let's see what the Bible actually says.

After carefully examining every New Testament Scripture that addresses how the ministry is to be supported — including 1 Corinthians 9:1-18, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Luke 10:1-8, Galatians 6:6, Philippians 4:10-18, and 2 Corinthians 11:7-9 — one thing is unmistakably clear: NOT ONE SINGLE TIME is tithing ever mentioned as the means used to support the ministry. Not once. Instead, what is shown time and again is that ministers are to be supported by freewill offerings from the believers.

Now, some ask: “But aren't there Scriptures in the New Testament that mention tithing?” Yes, there are two — and both are completely misused by those who teach tithing today.

First, **Matthew 23:23**: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.” Jesus was not yet crucified when He said this — so of course the Jews of His day should have been tithing, just as they should

have been circumcising and performing animal sacrifices. None of that makes tithing obligatory on Christians today. Not in the least.

Second, **Hebrews 7:12** is used by some to argue that the tithe has been transferred from the Levitical priesthood to Christian ministers. But the law that was changed in Hebrews 7:12 had NOTHING to do with tithing — it had to do with the requirement that only descendants of Levi could serve as priests. If anything, a change in the tithing law would mean tithing was ABOLISHED — not that the recipient was changed. And even if it did mean a change in recipient, it would completely contradict everything Paul wrote about the ministry being supported through freewill offerings.

## **SECOND TITHE**

Are Christians required to spend a tenth of their income on church festivals each year? The New Testament is completely silent on this particular tithe. But even if second tithe were applicable today, Deuteronomy 14:22-26 makes clear that it consisted only of a tithe of “grain, new wine, and oil” — NOT a tithe of income, money, gold, silver, or any other produce. If second tithe applied to Christians today it would ONLY apply to those who produce grain, wine, or oil. That’s it — at least that’s what your Bible says.

## **THE CONCLUSION**

In ancient Israel there was probably just one tithe separated into three parts: (1) a tithe of the animals that went to the Levites each year; (2) a tithe of the grain, new wine, and oil that were consumed at the festivals each year; and (3) a tithe of the produce that went to the needy every three years. The teaching of two full tithes each year with a third full tithe every three years — each consisting of all crops and all animals — is DEFINITELY NOT CORRECT.

Even if tithing were applicable to Christians today, it would ONLY apply to food substances — farm animals and produce. It would

definitely NOT apply to one's income. Why? Because that's what the Bible says. Never once in the entire Bible does it ever mention that the Israelites were to tithe of their money, gold, or silver. The Bible is full of references to builders, carpenters, masons, craftsmen, goldsmiths, silversmiths — and yet not once is it ever mentioned that these workers were to tithe of the money they received for their labor. Because tithing was never meant to apply to one's wages.

In the Old Testament tithing was a land tax. You only paid it if the land was productive and produced food. It had absolutely nothing to do with one's income or wages. Ministers who use Malachi 3:8-11 as a scare tactic to extract tithes of income from Christians are twisting Scripture. Not a single word in that passage mentions income — it speaks only of crops and farm animals. The only ones stealing today are the ministers who deceive people into tithing to them.

The New Testament is crystal-clear: tithing does NOT apply to Christians. The ministers and the poor in the church are to be supported through freewill offerings — and NOT through tithes. Don't believe a word any man says on this subject — but instead believe only what is written in the pages of your Bible.

# CHAPTER 20

## LAODICEAN OR PHILADELPHIAN?

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**The COG Teaching:** The seven church eras are primarily historical, with the Philadelphian era representing the WCG under HWA.

**The Biblical Truth:** The Bible describes two distinct end-time church eras existing simultaneously — Philadelphia and Laodicea. Philadelphians escape to a place of safety. Laodiceans must suffer through the Great Tribulation.

In chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, Jesus Christ writes seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. But these letters were not written primarily for those first-century congregations — they were written as a prophecy of what would befall God’s true Church throughout history, from the first century until the return of Christ. Each of the seven churches represents a successive era of God’s Church through time.

Today we are in the last and final era — the Laodicean Era — though there is an overlap with the preceding Philadelphian Era. The Bible speaks very highly of the Philadelphian Era, commanding it to “hold fast to the truth” (Revelation 3:11). But the Laodicean Era is rebuked in the sharpest possible terms:

**Revelation 3:17-19:** *“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — I counsel you to buy*

*from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich... be zealous and repent!”*

## **THE STARK CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO ERAS**

While the Philadelphian members will be protected from the coming Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:10), the Laodicean members will have to suffer through it (Revelation 3:19). At that time Satan is at war with the Laodicean members (Revelation 12:17), but the Philadelphian members are taken to a place of safety — protected from Satan’s wrath (Revelation 3:10, 12:13-17, Luke 21:36).

**Revelation 3:10:** *“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.”*

**Luke 21:36:** *“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

In order to wake up the lukewarm Laodicean from his spiritual lethargy, God will allow him to be severely disciplined in the Great Tribulation. Yet even the Laodiceans who suffer and prove their repentance through martyrdom will ultimately be granted eternal life in God’s Kingdom (Revelation 3:20-21).

So which type of person will YOU be — a Philadelphian who holds fast to the truth today, or a Laodicean who waits until the tribulation to repent? Based on which COG teachings you have blindly accepted versus which ones you have carefully proved from your Bible — you already know the answer.

*For the complete study on this topic as well as the rest of the subjects presented in this book, please go to: [TheBibleComesAlive.org](http://TheBibleComesAlive.org)*

# CONCLUSION

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This book has addressed 20 specific areas where the Armstrong-tradition Churches of God have taught error — some of them foundational errors that have shaped the lives, finances, and spiritual understanding of their members for decades. These are not minor quibbles. They are matters of doctrine, practice, and ultimately of eternal consequence.

To the members of these churches: The apostle Paul told the Galatians the truth plainly because he cared about them — not despite that care, but because of it. He did not water it down. He did not make excuses for error. He named the problem and called for repentance. This book follows that same apostolic standard.

You have spent years — perhaps decades — in an organization that took your tithes, your time, your trust, and in many cases your family relationships. Some of what you were taught was right. But some of it was wrong — provably, biblically wrong. The question now is what you will do with that knowledge. Will you suppress it to avoid conflict? Or will you be like the Bereans — those whom God praised for checking everything against the Scriptures, every single day?

The truth is worth the discomfort. It always has been. Every prophet who ever spoke for God paid a price for it. Every apostle paid a price. Jesus Christ Himself paid the ultimate price. And He warned His followers they would face the same rejection. That warning was not meant to discourage them — it was meant to confirm to them that they were on the right path.

The seven church eras tell us exactly where we are. The Laodicean era — the final era — is characterized by those who are comfortable, who feel they lack nothing, who assume their church has all the answers. Christ’s words to them are severe: “You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” That is NOT a description of pagans. That IS a description of people inside God’s own Church. His prescription is equally direct: **“Be zealous and repent.”**

We are living in the last days before the return of Jesus Christ. The events described in this book — the Antichrist, the False Prophet, the Mark of the Beast, the Great Tribulation, the Two Witnesses, the Day of the Lord — are not distant mythology. They are the near future. How you understand them, and what you do about them right now, may literally determine whether you escape to a place of safety or suffer through the worst time of trouble this world has ever seen.

The truth is not comfortable. But it is liberating. As Jesus Christ said in John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Ephesians 4:15: “...speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ.”

The topics addressed in this booklet barely scratch the surface of the biblical case for each truth presented. For a complete and comprehensive biblical study of any topic covered here, please visit [TheBibleComesAlive.org](http://TheBibleComesAlive.org), where the author’s 25 books across 47 years of independent biblical research are available.

— *Michael H. Exton*

**TheBibleComesAlive.org**

# APPENDIX A

## **Books by Michael H. Exton** **25 Books • 47 Years • 1979–2026**

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1. Do Christians Really Follow the Bible? (1979)
2. The Startling Prophecy of God's True Church (1992)
3. Revelation Comes Alive! (1994)
4. The Astonishing History of God's True Church! (1994)
5. When Was Jesus Crucified? (2008)
6. Tithing: Fact or Fiction? (2009)
7. The Shocking History of the Great False Church & Her Whoredom with the Kings of the Earth (2011)
8. The Middle East in Prophecy (2011)
9. USA & Britain & Israel In Prophecy (2011)
10. The Antichrist (2011)
11. Teachings of the Bible Part 1 & 2 (2012)

- 12. History of the World & Beyond (2012)**
- 13. The Final Seven Years (2013)**
- 14. Bigotry (2016)**
- 15. The 4 Beasts & 10 Horns of Daniel (2017)**
- 16. Exton Study Bible: The First 5 Books — Genesis–Deuteronomy (2017)**
- 17. Prophecy Comes ALIVE! (2018)**
- 18. Exton Study Bible: New Testament (2019)**
- 19. The Secret to Vibrant, Radiant Health! (2026)**
- 20. Antichrist & Man’s Final 7 Years: When Prophecy Comes Alive! (2026)**
- 21. The Sickness Industry: How They Profit from Your Pain – And How to Break Free (2026)**
- 22. ROMAN: The Counterfeit Messiah (2026)**
- 23. From the Projects to the Podium (2026)**
- 24. The Depths of Satan (2026)**
- 25. From God’s Church to Satan’s Church: The Greatest Apostasy in History (2026)**

*Plus, scores of articles on biblical prophecy, church history, natural health, and more.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

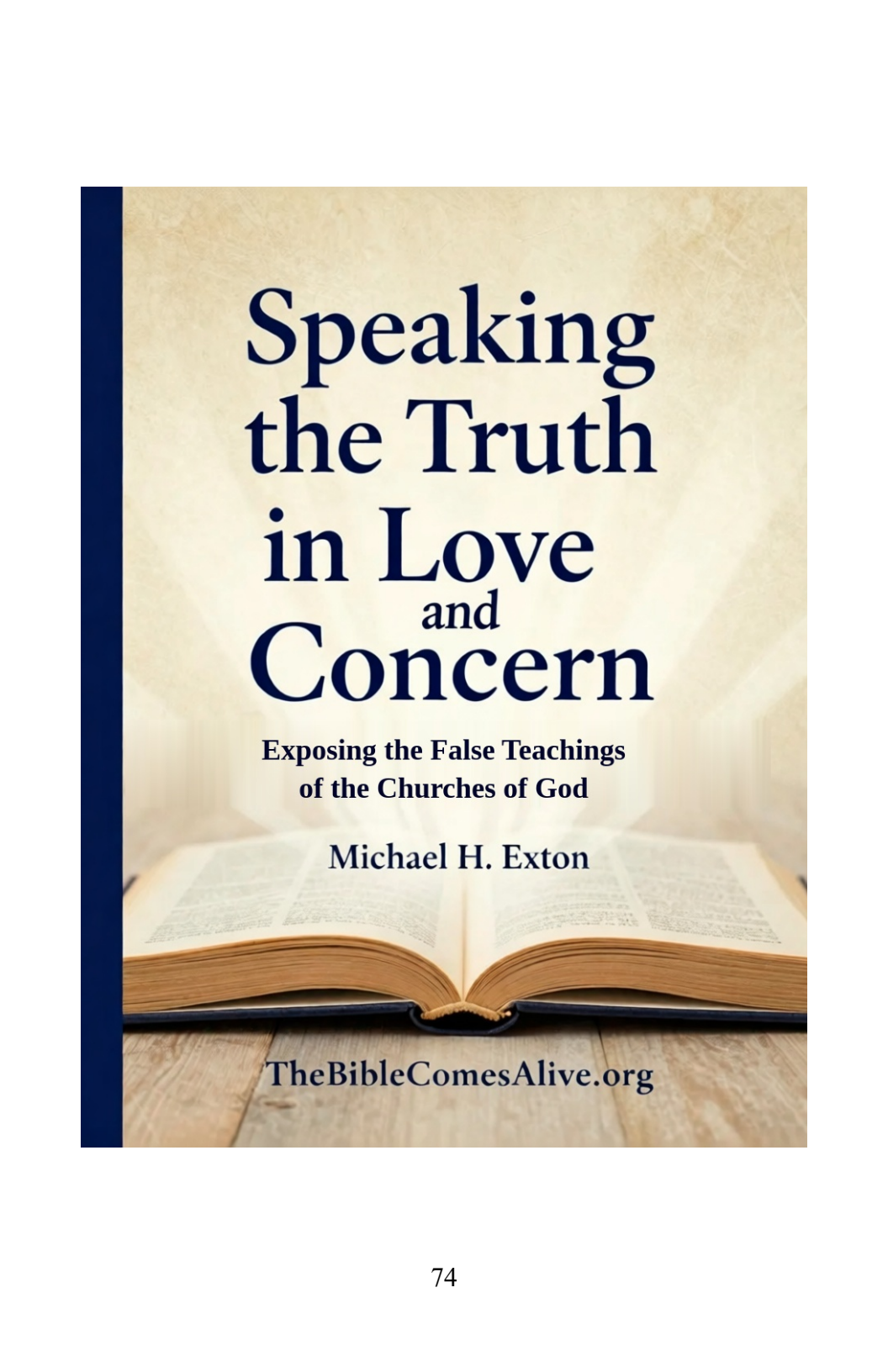
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Michael H. Exton is an independent biblical researcher, author, and retired coach and teacher based in Northern California. Over 47 years of independent study — from 1979 to 2026 — he has published 25 books spanning biblical prophecy, church history, natural health, and fiction.

He was the first person disfellowshipped from the Worldwide Church of God in Northern California for exposing Joseph Tkach's doctrinal changes — a distinction he carries not with bitterness, but as a testament to his refusal to remain silent in the face of apostasy. He witnessed the collapse of the WCG from the inside and has spent the decades since documenting the biblical truth that was abandoned.

His prophetic fiction novel, *ROMAN: The Counterfeit Messiah*, twenty-five years in the making, brings these end-time prophecies to life in a gripping narrative set from 2030 to 2037. His autobiography, *From the Projects to the Podium*, traces his remarkable journey from the housing projects of Philadelphia to a lifetime of biblical scholarship and coaching excellence.

Michael H. Exton is also the founder of the California Grizzlies Running Club (CalGrizzlies.com), where he coached elite youth distance runners for 37 years. He operates TheBibleComesAlive.org, where all of his books and biblical research articles are available free of charge.



# Speaking the Truth in Love and Concern

Exposing the False Teachings  
of the Churches of God

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