

A worldly Church, A Churchly World

THE CHURCH — THEN AND TODAY

2,000 Years of Church History — What Has Happened?

During the early years of the Church, attention was focused on *an inheritance in a heavenly land* to which Christians had been called. This was *the central message* proclaimed throughout Christendom during that time.

But today, attention in Christendom — *all Christendom, so-called fundamental and liberal circles alike* — is centered elsewhere; and the true message concerning a heavenly inheritance awaiting Christians is seldom, if ever, heard.

So what brought about the change from the way things were to the way things presently exist? Scripture reveals exactly what happened.

The Way Things Were

The Bible is a book dealing with *redemption*. But the Biblical scope of redemption doesn't stop with man passing "from death unto life" (John 5:24). Rather, it goes on to also include "that which is really life [literal translation]" (I Tim. 6:19). The former has to do with *the gospel of the grace of God*, and the latter has to do with *the gospel of the glory of Christ*. And Scripture, as a whole, concerns itself *far more with the latter than with the former*, for Scripture has been written to the saved, not to the unsaved (I Cor. 2:9-14).

Scripture *begins this way* (the framework set forth in the six and seven days in Genesis chapters one and two [*ref.* the author's book, THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE, Chs. II-IV]), necessitating that Scripture *remain this way* (which it does). It is man who has turned

the matter around and has not only placed the emphasis at a point where Scripture does not place it but has also either minimized or completely done away with teachings surrounding the point where Scripture does place the emphasis.

Note, for example, Paul's dealings with the Church in Ephesus. He spent three years teaching them. But what did he teach them? That's revealed in Acts 20:17-38 when Paul called the elders of this Church together for the last time that he would be with them.

Paul, referring to that which he had previously taught them, began with "the gospel of the grace of God" (v. 24). But he didn't remain there. He then referred to his prior proclamation of "the kingdom of God" (v. 25). And both of these together constituted "all the counsel of God" (v. 27).

God purchased the Church (with the use of "Church" viewed in a complete sense, as in Matt. 16:18) "with his own blood," and the elders in Ephesus were exhorted by Paul to "feed" those in the Church over which they had been placed (v. 28).

(There are manuscript variances in Acts 20:28 relative to whether *Theos* [God], *Kurios* [Lord], or both words together [both *Theos* and *Kurios*] should appear in the text — *i.e.*, God's blood, the Lord's blood [referring to Christ], or the blood of both the Father and His Son.

There is manuscript evidence for each of the three renderings, though most grammarians and translators, who study these things, usually see more evidence for the use of *Theos* [God] alone, with the translation as it appears in the KJV [also in the NASB and NIV]. In the final analysis though it would really be immaterial which of the three manuscript variances was followed, for the Son is God manifested in the flesh.

The time that the paschal lambs were being slain throughout the camp of Israel on the 14th day of the first month of the year in 33 A.D., "in the evening [*lit.*, 'between the evenings,' understood to be between 3 and 6 P.M. (Ex. 12:6)] was the time when the Paschal Lamb was slain. This was the time *when God died*. This was the time *when God purchased the Church with His Own blood*.)

And the elders, called to feed Christians in the Church, which had been purchased by the very blood of God would, of necessity, have to move beyond teachings surrounding the simple gospel of the grace of God. Contextually, in this passage, it would have to

involve things surrounding “the kingdom of God.”

And, in conjunction with that, contextually, it would involve commending them to God and to His Word — that which could *build them up* in “the faith” so they might one day realize the inheritance to which they had been called (v. 32).

Paul, in Acts 20:17ff, exhibited exactly the same qualities which Peter exhibited in his second epistle. Paul had previously spent three years teaching the Christians at Ephesus, and that which he taught them centered around *the Word of the Kingdom*. Then, when he called the elders of this Church together for his last time with them, he still called their attention to teachings surrounding *the Word of the Kingdom*, though these were things that he had spent three previous years teaching them. *This is how important he considered this overall teaching to be.*

And Peter, writing his second epistle and calling attention to this same message, stated that *he was going to always keep these things before the Christians to whom he wrote*, though they had previously been taught these things and were established in these truths. As long as he remained alive *he was going to stir them up by calling these things to their attention* (1:12-18; 3:1, 2; cf. 1:1-11).

Many Christians in the Church today would look upon anyone proclaiming the message surrounding Christ’s return after this fashion as “fanatical,” or as someone who has “gone to seed on Christ’s return.” But that’s not the way Scripture presents the matter at all.

This was *the central message* Paul (*et al.*) proclaimed, and this was the way that the Holy Spirit moved him to structure his epistles (*et al.* also; e.g., Hebrews-Jude have been structured this same way). Accordingly, this was *a message not only constantly proclaimed but well known and understood throughout Christendom during Paul’s day* (Col. 1:5, 6, 23-28).

Note, for example, the Book of Ephesians: As elsewhere throughout the Word of God, there are references in the epistle to the gospel of the grace of God (e.g., 2:8, 9), but almost the entire epistle concerns itself with things surrounding the gospel of the glory of Christ. The epistle concerns itself, in the main, with that which is stated in Eph. 2:10, giving *the purpose* for man’s salvation (vv. 8, 9).

This is what *the inheritance* in chapter one has to do with; this is what *the mystery* revealed to Paul in chapter three has to do with; and the epistle ends with details concerning *the present warfare* against those in the land of our inheritance and how we are to array ourselves for the battle at hand. And between these points, in other parts of the epistle, one will find the same central teaching.

And, in this respect, it's interesting that the Church in Ephesus appears first among the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three. The Church in Ephesus sets forth an example of the way that the Church existed at the beginning of the dispensation (knowledgeable about the present spiritual warfare, the Christians' future inheritance, etc.).

But then things began to happen, as seen even in the Church in Ephesus, which left its "first love" (Rev. 2:4).

Then, the Church appears at the end of the dispensation in a completely different setting, a condition resulting from the Church initially leaving its "first love," seen in the seventh and last of the Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, the Church in Laodicea — described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:14-21).

That Which Happened

So, What happened? *A woman placed leaven in the three measures of meal.* That's what happened. And Christ stated that the leaven would do its damaging work, "till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33).

This depicts a work by Satan very early in the dispensation. The approximate time when this was done can be known through observing that even during the first few decades of the existence of the Church things were beginning to go awry. The Church in Ephesus had left its "first love" (Rev. 2:4), and false prophets (Christian teachers, elders, proclaiming a message contrary to the Word of the Kingdom — apostates) were beginning to appear in the Churches (II Peter, Jude).

This all occurred within the first forty years of the Church's

existence, and the leaven took the Church down over the next several centuries until the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom had all but disappeared. By the fourth century A.D., during the days of the Roman Emperors Constantine the Great and Theodosius I, the Church had *so completely lost its true focus that the unthinkable eventually happened. The Church merged with the State.*

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion*; and by the year 395 A.D., Christianity had become recognized as *the official and only religion of the Roman Empire* — something which could not have occurred apart from almost three centuries of the working of the leaven from within.

The Church, called to inherit *in another land (a heavenly)*, had settled down in the land (an earthly) from which it had been called; the Church, called to rule and reign in *a future kingdom (under Christ)*, had merged with the powers in the present kingdom (under Satan).

A 1,000-year period of darkness then engulfed the Church, awaiting the Reformation under Martin Luther, along with succeeding events.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM, Chapters V, VI, "Parable of the Mustard Seed" and "Parable of the Leaven.")

The Reformation itself though had nothing to do with a restoration of truths surrounding the gospel of the glory of Christ. The reformers were concerned centrally with the simple gospel of the grace of God. It was only in later years that men began to look beyond the simple message of salvation by grace through faith — beyond that set forth in Gen. 1:2-5 to that set forth in Gen. 1:6-2:3.

But even then there was no restoration of these truths. There was only a bringing of them to light again, with one Christian here and one Christian there understanding and receiving the truth of the matter.

The leaven had centered its attack at this point, it had done its damaging work, and the only thing which remained was for the leaven to complete its work.

And this is why, when the Son of Man returns for His Church, He will not find “the faith” being proclaimed by elders in the Churches of the land. *The whole will have been leavened.* Those in the Churches will be talking about *everything but the central message of Scripture.* And the dispensation will end with *the Church — the complete Church — in the condition depicted by the Church in Laodicea.*

The Way Things Are

We’re in *the final days* of a dispensation in which the leaven has been working for almost two millenniums. The Church at the end of the dispensation is to be *completely permeated by the leaven, and this has particular reference to the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.* This is the message Christ will not find being proclaimed in the Churches at the time of His return.

And, if a person wants to see exactly where we are in relation to that day through *the working of the leaven alone*, all he has to do is go into practically any Church of the land and listen to the message being proclaimed from the pulpit. *He will listen in vain* for any mention of that which is not only the central message which Scripture directs to the saved but also the central message which was proclaimed and understood throughout Christendom during the early years of the Church — *namely that Christians have been purchased by the blood of God for a purpose, to be realized during the Messianic Era, then during the ages beyond.*

Will conditions in Christendom improve? Can matters be turned around?

What does Scripture say? *Scripture is not only the sole Word on the subject but the final Word as well.*

Scripture states that “the whole” *will be leavened;* and Scripture further states that, as a result, the Son of Man is not going to find “the faith” on the earth at the time of His return (Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8).

So don’t look for an end-time revival. It’s not coming! Scripture foretells *total apostasy* within the Church instead (*the complete Church standing completely away from “the faith”*).

Thus, *matters can only get worse.*

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

The Condition of the Church in the World Today
(Seen from Several Perspectives, O.T. & N.T.)

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me...

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

...and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” (Ex. 32:1,2, 4, 6b).

The type in Exodus deals primarily with Israel at the end of the Jewish dispensation and immediately beyond (at the end of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy [fulfilling the last seven years of the previous dispensation, the Jewish dispensation] and immediately beyond), and a secondary application would be seen in the type dealing with the Church at the end of the present dispensation and immediately beyond.

Scripture presents the same bleak picture pertaining to both *Israel* and *the Church* at the end of their respective dispensations — a condition in which *Israel presently finds itself, which will continue on into and through the Tribulation* (Daniel’s Seventieth Week, ending the Jewish dispensation); and a condition in which *the Church as well presently finds itself, which will also continue to the end of the dispensation*.

Two Places in the New Testament

To depict the picture pertaining to the Church as it currently exists, since Exodus chapter thirty-two is being dealt with, we'll begin doing it from that chapter first. Then we'll go to Matthew chapter thirteen and Revelation chapters two and three to provide some complementary, additional information to help complete the picture.

Christ, following events seen at His first coming, resulting in the necessity of the Church being brought into existence (a new entity called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected, which had been taken from Israel — the proffered kingdom of the heavens), has gone back into the Mount, back to heaven (*cf.* Matt. 21:33-45; 25:14ff; Luke 19:12ff).

And He is going to remain in the Mount, for a complete period of time, exactly as Moses remained in the Mount for a complete period of time in the type (Ex. 24:18; Deut. 9:9).

Prior to the end of that complete period of time (forty days in the type, 2,000 years in the antitype), when Christ returns for the Church, exactly as in the type, the Church will be seen in the same state as Israel before Moses came down from the Mount.

And though this would not normally be seen and recognized in today's Christendom, the Church presently existing as Israel existed at the foot of the Mount during Moses' day can be easily and clearly shown.

There are two places in the New Testament where a succinct, overall history of the Church throughout the dispensation is seen. And this history is seen *from God's perspective, not from man's*.

One account was given during Christ's earthly ministry in Matthew chapter thirteen, and the other account was given by John, in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation following Christ's ascension.

And the two accounts present matters from the same perspective, centering on that which would occur in Christendom throughout the 2,000-year dispensation relative to *the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom, along with why this would occur*.

The Matthew Thirteen Parables

The first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, recording the first of the two accounts of the history of the Church in the New Testament, have their setting in the previous chapter. In chapter twelve, Christ had performed a number of supernatural signs, which had been rejected by the religious leaders and consequently the people at large. And this rejection had gone to the point of ascribing the supernatural power through which these signs had been performed to Satan (vv. 9-30).

Then after Christ stated a number of things pertaining to the consequences of this rejection and blasphemy (vv. 31-45), a rejection which had reached an apex in Christ's ministry, matters move into that seen in chapter thirteen, which begins:

"The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the seaside.
And great multitudes were gathered together unto him..." (vv. 1,2a).

The picture is that of Jesus, because of the type rejection which He had previously experienced, leaving the house (the house of Israel) and going down by the seaside (going to the Gentiles). This not only sets the stage for the parables about to follow but anticipates the mention of the Church in chapter sixteen and the announcement concerning the kingdom (the proffered kingdom, the kingdom of the heavens, the heavenly sphere of the kingdom) being taken from Israel and being offered to an entirely new entity in chapter twenty-one (previously introduced in chapter thirteen and then identified in chapter sixteen).

Then in chapter thirteen, the first four parables present the complete history of this new entity throughout the dispensation relative to the proclamation of that which had been rejected by Israel, taken from Israel, and offered to this new entity.

And the parables carry the reader *from the point of fruit-bearing at the beginning of the dispensation to a completely leavened Church at the end of the dispensation.*

Both the fruit-bearing and the leavening process have to be understood in relation to the subject matter at hand, *the Word of the Kingdom* — which is not only the announced subject matter in the chapter but the subject matter seen contextually as well. The

work of Satan and his angels, by sowing tares among the wheat (second parable) and eventually taking Christendom into the very realm which Satan and his angels occupied (world government among the nations [third parable]), not only stopped fruit-bearing but ultimately brought matters into the state seen in the fourth parable — *a completely leavened Church*.

And note once again the subject matter in these first four parables, along with who is being dealt with (*the subject matter and identity* of the one being dealt with are seen both textually and contextually). *The subject matter has to do with the work of Satan and his angels in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, and this work is seen being done among Christians throughout the dispensation.*

Thus, these four parables present a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation, *from God's perspective, not man's*. And this history has to do with that which Satan and his angels would be allowed to accomplish throughout 2,000 years of Church history in relation to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom among Christians — *complete, total corruption*.

(For additional information, refer to the author's book, MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.)

Revelation Chapters Two and Three

These two chapters in the Book of Revelation present a dual word picture.

The central word picture presented is that of the removal of the Church and the appearance of Christians before Christ's judgment seat at the end of the dispensation, seen in chapter one (vv. 10-18). Then the subsequent two chapters (two and three) simply continue with the same subject matter from chapter one and present different facets of this judgment, both negative and positive.

But, continuing on into chapter four, beginning at the same place seen in chapter one (the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation, the rapture), it appears evident that there is a secondary word picture seen in chapters two and three as well.

These two chapters not only present *the Church before Christ's judgment seat* but present *a history of the Church throughout the dis-*

*pen*sation, beginning with the Church in Ephesus, which left its “first love” (2:4), and ending with the Church in Laodicea, which is seen as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (3:17).

And all of this is relative to the same thing previously seen in the Matthew thirteen parables — relative to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom among Christians throughout the dispensation. It can be no other way, for the latter account of Church history throughout the dispensation must be in complete agreement with the former account.

And this can easily be seen throughout the account. There is an overcomer’s promise to each of the seven Churches in the seven short epistles making up these two chapters, and it is evident that these overcomer’s promises are *millennial in their scope of fulfillment*.

That is to say, though presented from a different perspective, *everything is exactly the same as previously seen in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen, which move toward the same goal*.

The work of Satan and his angels attacking *the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom* is the subject matter throughout, whether in Matthew chapter thirteen or in Revelation chapters two and three. And that which Satan and his angels are allowed to accomplish is the same in both — *taking matters in Christendom from fruit-bearing, to leaving one’s first love, to seeing total and complete corruption existing in the Churches of the land*.

(For additional information, refer to the author’s books, JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, and THE TIME OF THE END [Ch. VII].)

Satan and His Angels

The introduction of Satan in Scripture, in Gen. 3:1ff, in association with the first man, the first Adam, presents an individual *well-versed in the ways of God and that which God had said*. And exactly the same thing is seen in his interaction with the second Man, the last Adam in Matt. 4:1ff, or anyplace else in Scripture where Satan’s activities are seen.

Satan uses the Word; and he knows full-well how to use the Word in a deceptive manner, evident at the beginning in Gen. 3:1ff, establishing a first-mention principle at this early point in

Scripture on how Satan will *always* appear. *He will always appear in a deceptive manner, and he will always, after some fashion, use the Word of God in his deception.*

In this respect, *God has His deep things, and Satan has his deep things* (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24). Satan uses the Word in this manner to counter that which the Word actually has to say, centering his attack upon *the Word of the Kingdom* (cf. II Cor. 4:3-6). And, to accomplish his purpose through the preceding means, Satan appears, as “an angel of light,” and his ministers “as the ministers of righteousness” (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Thus, if you want to find Satan and his ministers, don’t go to the entertainment centers of the world. Go where the Word is being proclaimed. And don’t look for Satan and his ministers the way that they are often depicted. Rather, look for those advocating what may appear to be *messages associated with light and righteousness*, not with messages associated with darkness and unrighteousness.

Look for Satan and his ministers occupying *the chair of Bible* in colleges and seminaries; look for them occupying *the pulpits* of the Churches of the land on Sunday morning, Sunday night.

They occupy these places to make certain that *the one message Satan doesn’t want proclaimed is not proclaimed*. And how well Satan and his ministers have succeeded over time can easily be seen from *the almost universal absence of this message from the Bible colleges, the seminaries, and the pulpits of the Churches of the land today*.

And because, over time, the deep things of God have become so watered down with the deep things of Satan, the Churches have been left so emasculated that they have had to invite the world into the Church to maintain some semblance of attendance — their music, their message, their inclusion of entertainment, etc. Conditions have become so bad that one often doesn’t know what is Christian and what is the world.

Thus, if an individual wants to see “the world” in which Satan and his angels dwell, *the best place to look today would not be in the world’s entertainment centers but in the Churches*. That seen out in the world in which we live is not really the world in its true form, *i.e.*, a form with respect to that associated with the central work of Satan and his angels. For this, today, *look in the Churches instead*.

CHRISTIANS AND THE WORLD

The Biblical Relationship of Christians to the World

“I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [‘the evil one’].

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth” (John 17:14-17).

Christians live in a world governed and controlled by Satan and his angels. It is a world in which Satan and his angels continue a rule which they have held since time immemorial, since a time preceding Satan’s fall, along with one-third of his original contingent of angels ruling in lesser positions of power under him. And this, in turn, would date back to the time following the creation of the heavens and the earth when God appointed and placed Satan and his angels in the positions of power which they, since that time, have occupied (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14ff; Dan. 4:17ff; Rom. 13:1).

Then, since man’s creation and fall 6,000 years ago — an individual created in God’s image, after His likeness, created to take the sceptre in the stead of Satan and his angels (Gen. 1:26-28 [though the fall, requiring redemption, has delayed man from occupying this position]) — Satan and his angels, continuing to rule, have carried out this rule *through fallen man, through rulers among the nations* (Dan. 10:12-20).

And since the bringing into existence of the nation of Israel over two millenniums following man’s creation (descendants of Jacob, a special creation, separate from the nations), the rule of Satan and his angels through fallen man has been restricted to the Gentile nations. Israel’s ruling angel is Michael, with undoubtedly

a large contingent of angels ruling under him. And Michael, with his angels, is not part of Satan's kingdom (Dan. 10:21).

(*Ref.* the author's book, "The Most High Ruleth," for a more complete, overall picture of the preceding.)

A World Which Hates Christians

The preceding, according to John 17:14, describes *a world which hates Christians, for a revealed reason — a world presently governed and controlled by Satan and his angels.*

Something though is evidently wrong in today's world, for there is no presently existing hatred between the world and Christians. The world and Christians appear to get along with one another just fine. The conflict described in Scripture, for all practical purposes, simply doesn't exist in today's world.

So, what is this all about?

The answer is simple. All a person has to do is read the first part of John 17:14, then take a look at Christendom in the world today. And doing so, that person can know, solely from a Scriptural standpoint, what is wrong. He can know, solely from a Scriptural standpoint, why Christians are not hated by the world today.

Note the verse again:

"I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them..."

The world either hates or does not hate Christians, the world either gets along with or does not get along with Christians, *on one basis alone — the Word.* Christians holding to the Word, proclaiming the Word, will not find the world to be their friend. On the other hand, Christians not holding to the Word, not proclaiming the Word, will have no problem with the world. The two can walk hand-in-hand.

Stated another way, there can be no such thing as Christians holding to, proclaiming the Word, and, at the same time, being loved by the world. And the inverse of that would have to be equally true. The world would have no basis for hating Christians not holding to the Word, not proclaiming the Word.

The base for the whole of the matter is *singular*. It's *the Word, the Word, the Word*, nothing else. It's not aids to devotions, it's not so-called Christian music, it's not anything connected with any type so-called Christian activity. Rather, it's *the WORD*, with that being the end of the matter.

Why?

The “why” of *the world's hatred for Christians holding to and proclaiming the Word* is very simple. Satan could only have an extreme hatred for what the Word reveals about where matters are headed. Satan is *the god of this age* (II Cor. 4:4), he and his angels rule through and control the nations, and the nations could only follow suit concerning what the Word has to say about that which the future holds for Satan, his angels, and unsaved man under his control and sway.

But, if *the Word is removed, then nothing is left*. Apart from the Word, there would be no basis for an existing enmity between the world and Christians.

Again, it's *the Word, the Word, the Word*, nothing else.

So, What Has Happened?

The Church and the world find themselves today at the very end of a 2,000-year dispensation in which God has been dealing with *the new creation* “in Christ.” *Israel* was set aside for a dispensation, *a new creation* was called into existence, and the Spirit of God has been performing a special and particular work throughout the dispensation. He has been calling out a bride for God's Son, who will reign as consort queen with Him — co-heir over all things — following Satan and his angels being put down.

Satan and his angels know these things, which form the heart of the message to be proclaimed by and heard in the Churches of the land today. But how many Christians know anything about or have ever even heard these things proclaimed?

The answer to that question will explain the “why” of the problem presently existing throughout Christendom.

1) *In Christendom*

In the chronology of Church history, as depicted in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen, or in the letters to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three (the only two places in the N.T. where this complete history is revealed), *the Church at the end of the dispensation is seen in two descriptive ways:*

- 1) *As completely leavened* (Matt. 13:33).
- 2) *As wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* (Rev. 3:17b).

In the latter, the Church has been deceived into believing that it is “rich, and increased with goods, and have [has] need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17a). Yet, the state of the completely leavened Church at the end of the dispensation is seen by God in a completely opposite respect.

Why is this the case? The answer, part and parcel with the working of the leaven, is very simple. *The Church has progressively strayed from the pure, unadulterated proclamation of the Word (John 16:9-11), the Church has progressively gone the way of the world, and the world has won the Church over.*

Accordingly, the world has disarmed the Church, stripping the Church naked of the armor which God has provided (Eph. 6:11-17 [again, note the end result of this “naked” condition in Rev. 3:17b]).

If a person doesn’t believe that this is the case, all he has to do is open his eyes and look around. There is no hatred between the world and the Church; and it is difficult to know whether we have a worldly Church or a Churchly world — probably both. Equally difficult is to know where one begins and the other ends in the world today.

2) *In the World*

The world though, by disarming the Church, has sealed its own fate. In a respect, the nations comprising the world, through disarming the Church, have committed genocide.

The Church, possessing the Word, believing and proclaiming this Word, is in possession of a restraining power for all which

exists among the nations. But a disarmed Church, having ignored the Word, is another matter entirely.

Note how such a Church is aptly described in Matt. 5:13-16.

The Church, in this passage, can be seen as the “salt of the earth” which has “lost his savour” and is now “good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” The Church can be seen as the “light of the world,” though now “put under a bushel.” And, occupying this position, there is no longer a shining light which can glorify the “Father which is in heaven.”

The restraining power of such a Church is gone. And apart from this restraining power, there is nothing withholding *the god of this age* from taking the nations under his control and sway to heretofore unseen depths of degradation — *e.g.*, homosexuality and same-sex marriage running rampant, uprisings in nations worldwide, etc.

The Church has allowed this to occur on the one hand; and the world, under Satan, has brought it to pass on the other. And the end result will be far from anything that anyone might desire.

3) *The End of the Matter*

The principle pertaining to the whole of that which exists is seen in II Thess. 2:3-12. This passage, dealing with an already working “mystery of iniquity,” has to do with things which will occur, yet future, after an existing restraining power has been removed.

(For information on the presently existing restraining power referenced in II Thessalonians chapter two [vv. 6, 7], refer to the author’s two pamphlets, “Antichrist Cannot Appear Until...”)

Once this restraining power has been removed, the man of sin (the Antichrist) is going to be revealed, one “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” This man, seated on Satan’s throne, will take the nations of the earth, including Israel, to the very brink of complete destruction (Matt. 24:22; Rev. 13:2).

And, leading into this man’s rise, paving the way for him to put the finishing touches on all seen happening in the world

today, is the worldly Church no longer holding to or proclaiming the Word, *opening the door for the world under Satan and his angels to become fully engaged in the madness seen all around us.*

The world, spiritually speaking, is *dead*; and the Church, the only means through which the world could possibly find life during the present time, for all practical purposes, has become like the world. And the same fate awaits both (I Cor. 11:31, 32).

Note from the preceding two verses that it is possible for Christians who do not judge themselves during the present time to one day be judged by the Lord after a fashion that they will be “condemned with the world.” For *the Christian*, this would have to do with his calling, with millennial verities in view; but for *the world*, without life or a calling, this could only have to do with eternal verities.

And that brings matters back to the existing problem. *The Church*, by forsaking the Word (progressively brought about by the working of the leaven), *has allowed a friendship with the world to ensue* (cf. James 4:4; I John 2:15-17), *sealing its own fate in one respect*; and *the world, having disarmed the Church, has sealed its own fate in another respect.*

How much worse will it become on both fronts before the Lord steps in and removes the Church? Only time will tell. But when the Church is removed, and the existing flicker of light, though under a bushel, is gone — with nothing but *darkness and death* remaining — *things will begin tumbling completely out of control.*

And you don't want to be here.

But you will be if unsaved.

And you don't want to be among Christians at Christ's judgment seat, “condemned with the world.”

But you will be if...