

Research paper

EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE

Parts two and three

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Version 2.0

Just what is the commission of the Watchman? Should we warn the modern descendants of Israel of future captivity and slavery? Or does the New Testament do away with parts of the Old Testament? Why do some protestants admit that almost 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy?

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**Excerpts from a letter by Mr. Les McCullough
to UCG ministry....**

September 4, 1998

Dear Fellow Elders and Wives,

Hola!, as they say in Mexico. As you can see, I am practicing my Spanish for the last half of the Feast ...

I have had some absolutely delightful letters this past week from people who see positive steps being taken and are thrilled with them. Of course, there are also some which are not so positive, which shouldn't be ignored. **One of the less positive ones was taking us to task for not declaring more strongly a warning witness of what lies ahead. There is some merit to the comment. As ministers, we do need to cry aloud and spare not. We do need to warn, at least at times, of things which will occur before the return of Jesus Christ.**

The news today certainly lends itself to sermons along this line. Financial debacle is only a slight misstep away. Terrorist activity is an assured thing, and could lead to great disruption of society. More nations joining the nuclear club is fraught with potential worldwide trouble. Biochemical weapons or plague-producing diseases are easily transported and introduced into the social system. We are living in vastly troubled times. There is no need to set dates or go out on a limb. **The prophesied troubles are going to happen. Don't neglect preaching about them, along with sermons about the love of God, faith, salvation and the kingdom of God. As ministers of God, we must give the bad along with the good, and there is an abundance of bad out there.**

PART TWO:

EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE AND THE WORK (AN ISSUE THAT JUST WILL NOT GO AWAY)

Should we proclaim the Ezekiel Message? Because of a few mistakes in prophetic understanding thirty-five years ago, should we therefore never again proclaim a strong prophetic warning message? Is the duty of the Church to be, amongst other things, a Watchman to the House of Israel, or should it preach only the centrality of Christ? What does the entire Bible say?

We now need to press ahead and ensure that the various Churches of God incorporate this important teaching into their Mission Statements, Constitutions, Fundamentals of Belief, policies, literature and overall culture. If it is not raised to its proper prominence, it will not be proclaimed.

We have a duty of care to proclaim this Watchman witness to our peoples and to trumpet it to its fullest extent. By way of reiteration, the Ezekiel Message is not merely publishing articles on prophecy. It is a particular type of prophecy: a distinct warning to the 'lost' tribes of Israel that they will be invaded, conquered and taken into captivity in foreign lands where they will be massacred to the extent that only one tenth of the one third which go into captivity, will return in the second Exodus.

We need to warn them that they will go into the most horrible forms of slavery in strange lands!

Will the Churches of God get on with the 'Work'?

Well, will they, or have they absorbed so much protestantism from their former association that all they want to do is preach the centrality of Christ, without really knowing what that means?

To these men, the centrality of Christ is preaching about His birth, life, death, resurrection and what He is doing now. While all that is obviously an essential part of our theology and is something our former association taught for many decades, that is not all there is to the story. Here are some often neglected points to consider:

- preaching about Christ alone is not what the Bible tells us to do;
- the Bible no where teaches the centrality of Christ – it teaches us the centrality of God the Father;

- Christ is not central, except that He is the door to communion with the Father Who is central (the WCG always taught the subordination of Christ to the Father. It believed He was co-eternal with the Father, but not equal in power, glory or authority);
- if we were to teach the REAL centrality of Christ, we must realise that Christ is not limited to the four Gospels and Pauline epistles. Christ is the entire Word of God and the whole Bible exemplifies His character. We can see in both Old and New Testaments how He works with individuals or nations and under what conditions. For example, He has inspired the prophet Ezekiel to provide a message which is relevant for us today and which we must take up the gauntlet and to powerfully pronounce.

It is sad to realise that newer people do not know much about these truths – we have neglected to educate them in these truths. Over the years our literature has gradually watered-down the truth. Our magazines lack the zeal and power our original material once possessed. Our sermons lack detail and indepth strong meat; and our entire church programs have taken on characteristics which are somewhat lukewarm.

There will be no growth while we fail to acknowledge these realities. No growth even from our former association. And who is to blame for that? Ourselves! Not other people - so let's quit blaming others for our problems.

So let us get on with the 'Work', but with the following realisations:

- there can be no real Work in a watered-down capacity;
- it must be understood that the Work is not to GET members, but to GIVE hope to a dying world. If no new members begin to attend our churches, that could be that all God wants is a witness. But it could also mean that we are not providing warm, loving environments for new people. However, evangelism is not about getting new members – it is about giving information – to evangelise means to pronounce, not to convert people;
- it must involve the entire Church, and not just head office folk and elders. As such, a Work should include four levels: **1)**. Those functions best undertaken at head office; **2)**. Those at the regional level; **3)**. others at local church level; **4)** and of course personal initiative. They all complement each other and all levels should be utilised.
- any such Work must include, beside the true Gospel, the Ezekiel Message. This Message is not mere prophecy – rather it contains a stern rebuke about Israel's performance and a strong warning of future invasion and captivity. Our peoples will be taken as slaves into foreign lands under awful conditions, and few seem interested in trumpeting this warning.

But I remain hopeful: recently, some leaders of some Churches of God have made statements about the Ezekiel Message:

- Dr Roderick C Meredith is quoted in *The Journal* (27 June 1997, page 12) as stating that:

“We have a responsibility to preach the Ezekiel warning to Israel, [which is] the people of the United States and British-descended peoples”.

Certain Churches of God are indeed attempting to proclaim the message. But it has virtually nothing to say about the real Ezekiel Message as defined above in its literature although it does have some general prophecy articles;

- Vance Stinson in "The Message of the Watchman", *Twenty-First Century WATCH* newsletter (July 1997) wrote an excellent article on the subject. Mr Stinson states:

"The watchman's responsibility is to sound the alarm the moment he sees the enemy approaching. If he fails to warn the people and someone is killed in the invasion, the watchman is held responsible

- David Hulme, President, United Church of God recently is quoted as stressing the

"concept of an expanded warning" based on understanding Ezekiel's prophecies, which Mr Armstrong began to preach from the early days of World War II. (*Council of Elders Meeting Report, 27 August 1997*)

- Whilst President of the UCG's COE, Leslie McCullough urged the Church to proclaim a message of urgency as did Don Ward.

One can only ask "When will the Churches of God acknowledge and proclaim that the House of Israel now dwells within NW Europe, North America and the white former British colonies?" This is essential prior to being able to pronounce the Ezekiel Message. Certainly hints are found within the Sept/Oct 1997 *Good News*, pages 12 and E9; but when will it fulfill Christ's command (remember He is the Word of God which includes YHWH of the Older Testament) and warn Israel as a Watchman (Ezekiel chapters 3 and 33)? Let's quit talking about it and let's just do it! Come on Churches of God – DO THE WORK!

Amongst the excuses given for not proclaiming the Ezekiel message are as follows:

- we don't have the money or resources to proclaim this message. Response: "If not, why not?" Is God trying to show us something? Should the Churches of God co-operate on this vital issue? Why are the leaders of the various groups so possessive about God's flock? Why do they behave in such a way which infers that they own us instead of God Himself? There are so many ways they could co-operate (more on this later in this article);
- All we have to do is a "Work" – But my response to this is "What kind of Work?" A so-called 'Work' which preaches about the centrality of Christ/the person Christ but not the entire Bible has some basic and fundamental problems which require urgent fixing. We need a Work which preaches the full counsel of God's Word, not just about the second coming alone. It MUST include educating people about all aspects of God's Word, the Law and contain a warning message.
- We do not have the time, so let's just get ourselves in order first and have a nice little social club with lots of music, singing and little teaching or doctrine. - This is a prime protestant-evangelical attitude and is not based on Biblical principles;

- The two witnesses will do the job, so we don't have to – Who says? Christ tells us in no uncertain terms to continue to do the Work, no matter how large or small, until His return (Matt 28:18-20).

In reality, there are no excuses to God. So what should we do about it?

Let's get 'Back on the Track' on this subject

Now for the ultimate question: "Who is responsible for preaching this desperately urgent witness and warning message to our peoples and indeed the birthright Anglo-Saxon-Keltic-Nordic nations and their scattered descendants around the globe?" Unmistakably it is the scattered Churches of God – representing the Watchman to the modern-day nations who have descended from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel!

The Churches of God now should proclaim the Ezekiel Warning Message as a Watchman! But what is preventing them from doing so? Here are a list of possibilities, beside the above excuses:

1. Loss of knowledge of the identity of the House of Israel. It never ceases to amaze me the number of persons who have virtually abandoned these truths; others who have totally abandoned it but who out of fear for the membership, will not publicly admit it; others who feel that it is not that important. Hence they cannot see nor understand the critical importance of this issue. They know not what it means to be a WATCHMAN or to TRUMPET a warning to our peoples. And there are some ministers who, in self-will, refuse to preach about it as they have moved decisively to the left of many issues.
2. They know not the seriousness of their calling, wishing to live in accordance with sections of the New Testament alone, rather than the entire Word of God. To them, Ezekiel is not important and not to be emphasised. These people have absorbed too much protestantism and cannot see it.
3. Lack of finances. Why is this so? One reason is that God is perhaps trying to teach us something: instead of Church leaders fighting over who is boss and very minor differences, we should be seeking co-operation. The way that the various churches attack each other is exceedingly carnal and is a severe test upon our character. God is indeed watching us, don't our church leaders know that? Or do they justify their constant attacks (either subtly or openly)?
4. Lack of emphasis on prophecy, the identity of Israel and the coming conquest of Israel. It is claimed by some that there has been too much emphasis on these issues in the past. However, I have almost every *Plain Truth* since 1934 and we probably only had about 10-20% of articles on prophecy. The *Good News* only had about three articles on the 'lost' tribes of Israel and we only ever had 1 book and 1 reprint article on Israel – so how on earth could they claim we over-emphasised it? In all my years in the WCG I heard only 2 sermons on the topic of Israel and very few on prophecy. We in the Churches of God must not place less emphasis on the subject of Israel and prophecy than which the old WCG did.

To enable the Churches of God to do a big Work again, they need to co-operate. It would seem that God is testing our character to see if we are haughty or humble enough. Here are a few simple examples of possible areas the churches may co-operate: sometimes publish articles in each others magazines; ministers and members could visit each others church; hold Feast of Tabernacles in close proximity permitting members and ministers to visit each other and have joint advertising; link to each others web pages. Now those suggestions cannot be that difficult to fulfill, surely? It can only come down to a matter of pride and self-will that prevents us from co-operating. Given that we are so small, the Churches of God need to co-operate to not only survive, but to do a Work to warn our peoples.

It is up to us to put Ezekiel's Message in proper context. In the first instance the Churches of God must take up the cause before the coming punishments and disasters occur. Right here in the land "down under" – Australia – the populace generally continues on its current path, blissfully ignorant of the terrible dangers awaiting it. All the world knows that Australia will host the Year 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney; but only a handful know that the "lucky country" is under a Biblical curse for national disobedience extending back to over 2,500 years ago! Unless the nation repents and turns to God, it is under a curse of impending captivity and punishment. Ezekiel's Message is not merely plain prophecy of future events. It is specifically a message of national captivity, slavery, torture and the scattering of the nation to the four winds in the most disgusting and shocking conditions imaginable.

Yet it dovetails beautifully into the Gospel message of the future Messiah Who shall save the enslaved and usher in a golden age of peace and plenty. Ezekiel therefore also contains a message of hope, protection, love and blessings for those who repent.

Ezekiel 33 makes it clear that if Israel's Watchman does not blow a trumpet blast warning about impending captivity the bloodshed of many will be on his head! The truth about Israel, detailed prophecy and the Warning Watchman are amongst the most critical issues facing the Churches of God today! It is saddening to so many Church of God members that in the almost 12 years since the passing of Herbert W Armstrong, very little has been trumpeted on this message whether in published or electronic media form. **Yet we are the ones entrusted by God to carry out this responsibility – one of the most important given to any group of people in history!**

Clearly, the only conclusion one can draw from Ezekiel 33:6 is that if we do not carry out this vital mission, the blood of many will be upon our heads. Let us now see if various Church of God leaders will be self-willed and come up with excuses, refusing to listen to the general membership, to co-operate and more importantly, to bow to God's Word (note: we ask them to co-operate, not to amalgamate).

The obvious consensus of the membership is for our leaders to co-operate. We do not ask them to step down from their positions. Their self-will has caused many to lose faith and to leave the Churches. God holds the shepherds responsible for the hardening of their hearts and requiring the members of the other churches to join their church. This absolute childishness is laughable, were it not so serious.

It would also seem that enough doctrinal error and watering-down has found its way into our midst from our former association which requires us to radically rethink our position and approach.

PART THREE:

PROCLAIMING THE EZEKIEL MESSAGE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Should church elders ever present sermons on the 'lost' tribes of Israel and the United States and Britain in prophecy?

Is the doctrine of the 'lost tribes of Israel' a minor truth? Should we never have sermons or sermonettes on the subject? Does it add any value to our understanding of the Gospel? Do we recall the excuses that the leaders of our former association gave for not teaching or proclaiming it and that some closet Tkachians have been insidiously lying low, waiting to rise at the right time and are now raising the same excuses for not proclaiming it. Is it because they do not believe in this vital truth or because they have been so infected by the Tkachian disease?

And should the elders be involved in the Ezekiel Message, or should it be proclaimed to the world alone? Finally, does it apply in any way to the church, or to the world only?

In the first section the concept of the Ezekiel Message was outlined and explained: it is not merely the publication of articles and broadcasts about general prophecy. Rather, it is a severe warning to the House of Israel that it is going into captivity for national sins and hence it could be titled the "Captivity Doctrine". In the second section it was argued that unless certain Churches of God cooperate, this message would not reach the House of Israel and God would deal with us accordingly (Ezek 33:6).

To trumpet a warning, our peoples must first know their identities (awaking our peoples to their identity is sometimes known as the *Israel Message*). Indeed, after almost 12 years of lack of preaching and teaching on this subject in a major branch of the Church of God, it is high time that we got "back on the track" in regard to this important truth and to quit making excuses for not preaching and teaching it.

In other words, should local church elders occasionally raise the subject? Or should it be ignored in sermons, sermonettes and Bible studies?

Church elders: should they water-down the truth?

In his powerful article, "Now God Speaks to You Ministers" (the *Good News*, Oct-Nov 1979), HWA wrote:

"... Ezekiel's message is for us today! That is, for God's Church to proclaim to the English-speaking nations ... now I do feel we must seriously consider God's warning message to our nations and to the ministry of His Church through Ezekiel. This is of crisis importance right now ... [the lost tribes of Israel] has always been a primary doctrine of this Church. Yet some few of our ministers have rejected this truth, and even tried to destroy it from the Church ... [the *US & Britain in Prophecy*] was one of the two or three [booklets] that did more to build this Church than any others".

Notice several important matters arising from this article:

- in 1979 the Ezekiel message was for then. How much more so today!
- this message is of "crisis importance" - it is not some little thing
- this has always been a primary doctrine of the Church and not a minor matter. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Mr Armstrong equated watering-down this truth along with others as Laodiceanism. What is Laodiceanism but a slide toward apostasy and protestantism? It is a mere step away from utter apostasy from God's Truth. Therefore Ezekiel's message (the captivity doctrine) applies to this church era too - it is destined to suffer the captivity and punishment along with the House of Israel. Instead of warning and witnessing, it was too busy politicking, absorbing the world's liberal philosophies and watering-down the truth than being filled with zeal for the truth or to do the Work.

In Jeremiah 23:1-2 let us note what God has to say:

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

"Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD."

What causes scattering of God's flock anyway? This is what the membership have noticed over the years:

- abusiveness and ungodly conduct due to, amongst other things, lack of safety guards such as accountabilities, codes of conduct, appeal systems. Lack of accountability makes it easier for wolves and serpents to devour or poison the flock
- spreading false rumours about members leading to discouragement and being demoralised
- neglecting to care for the local church whilst one spends an inordinate amount of time politicking or 'gassing'. This hireling-like behaviour is seen for what it is by the membership. Being neglected, they drift away, disappointed and starving.
- watering-down the Truth and half-baked, ill-prepared sermons which one could quite easily find in a Sunday church
- cronyism - unwilling to set up a system to involve or train the membership. Instead relatives and close friends (even if they are not doctrinally 'kosher') are used above the rest of the membership.

- Failure to undertake a Work in any meaningful manner (monies needed for the Work is wasted on trying to find work for buddies - overstaffing is the result). Thus no direction or forward thinking is obvious to the membership.
- Doctrinal watering-down. What is happening to the Churches of God today is exactly what HWA termed "Laodiceanism" 20 years ago!

Compare the above with Ezekiel 34:1-16. This, like so many prophecies, has dual or even several meanings. It refers, to the ancient political and religious leaders of Israel. It can and does refer to the Church elders of any era or generation. From verses 17-22 refer to 'goats' pushing the membership of local churches around and hurting them. Those that fall into this category are close ministerial buddies who act as de facto advisors (so much for accountability, justice and due practice) and who are always listened to and whose viewpoints are pushed and pushed; those that are pushy and cocky throwing their weight around undoing the good work of others; jealous and competitive individuals; persons who are mere visitors to the Churches of God but wish to promote protestant and evangelical ideas; persons wishing to hold permanent positions; "Johnny's-come-lately" being slotted into positions and becoming arrogant toward long-term and faithful members of God's Church. Often these are 'bully sheep' because of their closeness to the shepherd - those not close to the shepherd are not in a position to bully. We members call them the 'New Tkachians' - their doctrinal viewpoints are not that different from them.

Bullinger in his *Companion Bible* makes the following interesting statement in verse 18: "you: i.e. ye goats. The verse goes on to describe the evil work of the goats in fouling the pastures of the sheep. There is a solemn application of this to the churches and congregations in the present day" (page 1155). How insightful Bullinger was.

What then is needed to overcome this scattering of the sheep by these shepherds and their goats? Direction and focus!

Direction and focus comes not from stricter and sterner, angrier government. It comes from excellent articles in the magazines, indepth doctrinal and spiritual articles in the Church members' periodicals, well researched sermons (this means that some time is needed to be spent on them instead of politicking), undertaking a Work, training the members, articles and booklets on a range of issues and teachings. The Bible has scores of teachings - not 7 or 8 which is the impression one gets when reading some literature - resulting in boring and uninspiring materials.

Look at Christ's example. He proclaimed a powerful warning message in Matt 24; Luke 23:27-31 for instance. So, for those that wish to preach the supposed centrality of Christ, why don't you look at what He preached?

Thus it is proclaiming our teachings - God's Truth, gives direction - not stricter government. Let us have better articles, booklets and sermons. Yet those who deny we have been watering-down the truth fail to compare the literature and sermons with those under HWA. They are therefore not in a good position to discern

As HWA himself wrote, the Church was in danger of "Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference" (*Good News*, April 1979, page 28) even back then. The two attitudes of

Philadelphia and Laodicea (with a sprinkling of the other five) were therefore perceived by HWA as dwelling alongside each other during that period. But with the rise of the apostasy, the Laodicean element continued alive and well elsewhere - it did not die out - but grew to the point where most groups may now be Laodicean in some way.

Watering-down the US & Britain in Prophecy

HWA labels this type of behaviour as "Trojan-horse invasions" (*Good News*, April 1979, page 24).

Those who are not favourable toward this truth destroy the truth subtly, slowly, insidiously: the Japanese call it "nashikuzushi" death by a thousand cuts. It means that you do not formally announce any change. It means that you are not open and honest. It means that you are dishonest and underhanded. You spread untruths of those fired up for the truth.

It means that you subject the main doctrine to so many smaller alterations, amendments and minor changes, that gradually the doctrine or policy is replaced by the doctrine or policy you wanted all along. This is what is happening to several truths, including the 'lost' tribes of Israel. By making excuses not to preach on it and not to publish a booklet on it, one is doing exactly what happened in our former association. And it is being done in the same unchristian and insidious way.

It is this self-will which is also known as "never so blind as those that WILL not see", as the saying goes.

Or as HWA wrote in the *Worldwide News* (11 June 1979, page 16):

"Now I am not, of course, going to order any firing squads. But the least you can do, if you cannot wholeheartedly accept and **loyally teach the truths** Jesus Christ put into His Church ... is to resign".

How many ministers are man enough to do what HWA said they should do, if they were honest. Or will dishonesty and self-will prevail. Whilst the Code of Conduct states that the ministry must "uphold" the doctrines, this is not being done. The opposite is being done if they are not being taught in any meaningful and sincere way.

The flock - God's flock - requires feeding in the Truth - otherwise we are just a local protestant church which meets on Saturday.

Basic Principles in Understanding the Ezekiel Message/Captivity Doctrine

1. We should understand the Ezekiel Message essentially the same as HWA understood this doctrine.
2. It was originally to the immediate audience of the day (some Jews and a few others from Israel already in captivity in Babylonia) but as with all prophecies, the typological

prophecies have a later fulfillment, particularly for the last days. In other words much of prophecy is dual - especially Ezekiel.

3. Even if one does not believe in the Ezekiel Message as we have always understood it, nevertheless a warning is embedded throughout the Bible and the Gospel.
4. As with many or most prophecies, they have end-time reference. House of Israel may refer directly to the northern tribes; or typologically of the northern tribes when addressing the immediate audience of Judah. Similarly, prophecies concerning Jerusalem were specific for that city, but referred also to Judah and in cases to all of Israel. Again, similarly the Babylonians are no longer residing in the Middle East, nor are the Assyrians and a myriad of other nations. Thus prophecies referring to them can only be fully understood if we know where these nations are today. Babylon had a larger reference to Babylonia; Nineveh to Assyria; Ephraim sometimes to all of Israel; House of Israel to either the northern tribes or, as in many places in Ezekiel, to both northern and southern tribes.

For instance, the Assyrians reside in southern Germany, parts of NE France, most of Switzerland and most of Austria. But in prophecy Assyria incorporates all of Germany, including the northern Germans descended from Assur, descendant of Abraham.

5. In Ezek 2:3 God sends Ezekiel to the "nations" of Israel (original Heb.) which some commentators interpret as both the northern tribes and Judah. In 9:9 we have a prophecy of "Israel and Judah" - not just Judah. In 16:53 God speaks of bringing the captivity of the Samaria again. The whole House of Israel (not just Judah) is referred to in Ezek 20. Judah and Israel are referred to in chapter 37 as coming together again in unison (Is 11:12) which we have seen temporarily as a type with the union of Scotland and England (now beginning to come apart - see Is 11:13). Thus Ezekiel is a book for the entirety of Israel, and not Judah alone as some suspect.

The Assyrians who come against Israel are mentioned in 23:1-9,23; 31:3; 32:22; 27:23. More proof it has reference to Israel and not Judah alone.

In my article in *The Journal* on national origins ("Member wants to rekindle interest in table of nations"), I tried to re-introduce a much forgotten subject - that is to understand these prophecies, we must know generally where the nations are TODAY which those prophecies refer. Sure, many of those prophecies were fulfilled typologically in their ancient geographical locations, but not completely. A future and final completion is yet ahead. For instance, what was prophesied for Babylonia (Is 47 & 48; Jer 50 & 51), will be again. Similarly for Israel in Ezekiel. Today the Jews are a very small mixed remnant of Judah. Most of Judah never returned to the Holy Land but ended up amongst the Celts, specifically the Scots (Armstrongs are Lowlanders). Out of all proportion to their nos, the Scots and Ulster Scots have had many leadership positions and the major pioneering spirit in the USA, South Africa and Australia, demonstrating their Judaic mentality and drive.

This article was followed by two others on the need for an Ezekiel Message to Israel - that we must know who Israel is (both northern and southern tribes) before we can warn them.

6. As God is the creator of all mankind, all nations must be warned. However, the Ezekiel Message is a very specific aspect of prophecy - any article claiming to be in that mould cannot be a mere general prophecy article. Nor is the Ezekiel Message the whole book of

Ezekiel and all of its contents. As I tried to explain in the articles, the specific Ezekiel Message is for the end-time Israel, bristling with self-confidence, wealth and yet lewd and sunken to liberal-left non-values. Quickly she falls to the sword probably close to a time at the height of her power.

So the Ezekiel Message that Mr Armstrong spoke of was about the fall, conquest, captivity and slavery of all of Israel (northern tribes and Judah), followed by deliverance by the Messiah in the 2nd Exodus. That is what he meant and said. It was not completely fulfilled to small part of Judah in Ezekiel's day.

7. Finally, why should a warning of captivity go to a people already in captivity? Or as the *New Bible Dictionary* puts it: "he is the prophet of inexorable doom, interpreting coming events to the remnant in exile (not to Jerusalem) to prepare them for their future role". This is typological what was to occur to the whole nation in the last days. Ezekiel is a message for our day!

The extensive knowledge this truth brings to us

1. those who have been in the church a long time (especially during the Armstrong years) recall well that prophecy and especially the non-racist US & Britain book was used by God to build the church.

Or as Mr Armstrong wrote in the Oct/Nov 1979 *Good News* (page 6): "This book was one of the two or three that did more to build this church than any others".

2. Given that the world is turning more and more to prognostications than ever, now is the time to spread the true prophetic message. Or as HWA also used to say "the Gospel is prophetic". That is why the more one thinks about it, one can see that when as the Churches of God have articles and booklets on this subject, then it will see people taking an interest in our church. There will be no new growth unless we use God's formula for spreading the Gospel.
3. one of the reasons for avoiding the topic of the US & Britain is that it is racist. The roots of nations is not racist and I have never heard a gentile who has really read the book say that it is. I would like to challenge anyone to show me one racist comment in the entire book. This and other arguments were used for years in our previous association to attack and tear down these truths. However, there is also anti-Caucasian racism everywhere, including in the church. Why don't they mention that?
4. In HWA's book he has a lot to say about race and GRACE; about Jesus Christ; about salvation and so on. May I suggest that we all have another read of this work before charging that expounding the Israel Message is not part of the Gospel? The Israel Message awakening our peoples to their origins and destiny is an important part of the Gospel and doctrine for the following reasons:
 - Israel is mentioned hundreds of times in the scripture and thus is an important doctrine to God

- the message is prophetic and is one of the greatest proofs of God and that He keeps His promises
 - it includes the knowledge of the 2nd Exodus and how God is going to use Israel to lead the nations in the World Tomorrow (it is such a pity that some are now going around calling the Church of God the "true Israel" and that scriptures such as Is 49:22-23 are merely spiritual etc - shades of our former association)
 - it typifies the Church (the spiritual Israel) and as such it assists us in understanding it
 - we must know who Israel is to be able to proclaim the Ezekiel Message and Warning
 - a taped sermon by one of the members of the UCG's COE which was played in the congregations in 1997 showed that the Gospel by its very meaning, has embedded within it a warning, reference to law and prophecy. It is NOT about a 'Jesus' as the evangelical infiltrators are saying. Eg "do you have a relationship with Jesus" they say to me without the foggiest notion of Him and His plan
 - we must be constantly reminded of our links to them. - why should Israel not be mentioned as part of the Gospel? Everywhere in scripture God talks about His coming to Israel and working with Israel in the tribulation and millenium etc
5. If the Israel Message leads people toward the truth of God, it must be part of preaching the Gospel. If it were not so, then one might as well say that we should not proclaim any other doctrine either. Yet all that type of material dovetails into the Gospel. All Biblical truths can be used in proclaiming the Gospel. Why single this doctrine out for exclusion for spreading the Gospel? As an Israelite I feel offended and wonder how deep the worldly anti-Caucasian racism has taken root. How much did the leaders of our former association affect us that we still hold on to some of their evangelical-protestant ideas?

As HWA used to say, evangelising is an educational message - it is not there to "get" members in. It is there to educate, warn and witness. Just as Christ did and HWA did. The Gospel has not changed from being prophetic pointing people to the events leading up to the Messiah's return, about His 2nd coming, the Millenium and of course eternal life in His divine Kingdom to one about a 'Jesus'.

6. Another excuse is that we do not need to have any messages on this topic is that we all know it and believe it. Belief is not just knowing about something. It is not an idea or awareness in our heads. Belief in a truth of God (doctrine) is like faith (in fact, a set of doctrines is sometimes called a "Faith".) Note that our constitution has "Fundamentals of BELIEF" (which ministers are required to "uphold" under their code of conduct. See also 1Tim 4:6,13,16; Titus 2:7). They are set there and protected there. One of them is the doctrine of the identity of Israel which has been under immense attack by Satan for 12 years. He may operate overtly or covertly to undermine the truth. **Indeed, what is the point of codifying and protecting this doctrine unless we are to teach it, publish a booklet and articles in our magazines and use it as an evangelistic tool?** We may as well not have it and other doctrines included there.

Just as faith without works is dead, so is belief/doctrine. Just knowing about something is not a belief/doctrine. We have to work at the truth/belief/doctrine (2Tim 3:15; Acts 17:11). One way of gaining faith is 'hearing the Word' - all the Word and its truths ('Faith comes from hearing the Word of God' - Rom 10:17).

Therefore a belief to be a belief must be studied, heard (the occasional reminder of these truths does wonders in strengthening them) and be part of our overall theology (and will come out in our conversation, understanding world events etc). Thereby rooted in, it becomes a belief. Otherwise it is a mere thought or an awareness. Not reinforced it becomes watered-down and useless. Easily forgotten. Was not that the technique used in our former association - removing material on key subjects, not preaching on them etc so that people soon forgot these precious truths and quickly gave them up? **WHY IS THAT HAPPENING AMONGST MANY OF THE BRETHERN AND MINISTRY?**

Further, if this doctrine should not be in messages or at least referred to as some say, then what subject should be? Given that we all basically believe all Biblical topics, does that mean that we should never hear about them because we "believe" them? It follows that we would have to cancel all church services as nothing could then be preached about as we all know them and believe them. On the contrary, church services are there to strengthen our beliefs so that we will not be blown about by every wind of doctrine. **And the winds are blowing lightly, subtly and softly now.** They may blow with gale force again. When they do, will our beliefs be rooted in?

Advantages of knowing who Israel is today

The doctrine of Israel is so important, that without it, we lose our understanding of many other truths.

It leads to a much greater understanding of other doctrines such as:

- The New Covenant;
- spiritual typology of the Church;
- seven eras;
- race relations;
- national origins (as a type of the spiritual);
- prophecy;
- the real meaning of history;
- second Exodus,
- aspects of the millenium and so on.
- is fully a part of the Gospel and mentioned throughout the new books of the Bible (New Testament) and of course the previous books (Old Testament)

There are those that claim that this doctrine is not Christian living and therefore should not be preached much, if at all. If that were the case, we may as well cease proclaiming the nature of God, born again, Wednesday crucifixion and so on. However, ALL of God's Word leads us toward His Kingdom and is therefore Christian living. Prophecy shows us how great our God is Who can make these things come to pass; the prophets call us to repentance and to keep His Law; they have many spiritual lessons within them. How on earth did this Tkachian/protestant idea creep into the Churches of God that prophecy is not important to salvation? Where does the Bible say that? Why should 1/3 of the Bible not be important? Why did God bother

inspiring prophecy? Who are we to be selective about scripture? Is it because prophecy is a little more difficult to understand and thus a little more time, effort and discipline is required to study it? Or are we showing both God and man that we are plain lazy that we do not wish to study or proclaim vast portions of His Word. **IT IS HIS WORD AND NO HUMAN, MINISTER OR NOT, HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL PEOPLE TO WATER IT DOWN!!!**

Some ministers are now going around portraying faithful members as 'extremists', racists, fanatics for their belief in this Truth. Well, after not preaching it for 12 years, they are not in a position to make such statements. Rather, it is up to each of us to look and ascertain whether we are what HWA described as 'Laodiceanic'.

" ... we ... are in serious danger of becoming also the Laodicean era. I am personally much concerned about that. If you are not concerned, then indeed we are in mortal *DANGER!*" (HWA, *Worldwide News*, 25-6-79, page 1)

Are we concerned by the wish-washy state of our churches and the lack of a true Work or so focused on stricter government that we have watered-down the Truth? The choice is ours.

Let us be mindful of Dr Hoeh's charge in his booklet on *A True History of the True Church* (page 31):

"This frightful condition lies just ahead of us. Just as the Sardis era of the Church existed side by side with the Philadelphia era, **SO WE WILL CONTINUE OUR WORK** at the very same time that another work will develop. Another separate work is yet to arise-made up of begotten individuals who are spiritually lukewarm! **WOE BE TO ANY OF US IF WE TAKE PART IN SUCH A WORK!** Here is a work, yet to arise because of our preaching, which will say: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." And Jesus will reply: "As many as I **LOVE**, I rebuke and chasten: be **ZEALOUS** therefore, and **REPENT**."

It is time to **WAKE UP!** If **YOU** become complacent, lacking in zeal, looking upon a local church as a social club, instead of having your heart in the gospel, you, too, may end up in the "Church at Laodicea." Jesus, then, will **NOT** deliver you from the impending, horrifying tribulation. Notice Jesus' admonition in Luke 21:36. "**WATCH** ye therefore and **PRAY ALWAYS**, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape **ALL** these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Let's **PRAY** and **WORK**, **TOGETHER** to carry this gospel to all nations so Jesus will say to each of us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

TYPICAL "EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE" ARTICLES

(Please note that I do not necessarily agree with every detail in these articles. Sometimes a writer may be a little too enthusiastic for the return of Christ. But I think it is necessary to gain insight into the general thrust and purpose of these articles).

- Armstrong, GT** *"And they Worshipped the Beast"*, 1991.
- Armstrong, GT** "And when you see the ABOMINATION ...", *Plain Truth*, July 1963.
- Armstrong, GT** "Australia's Deadly Peril", *Plain Truth*, February 1963.
- Armstrong, GT** "Great National Tribulation Coming on America and Britain – But Why?", *The International News*, January 1991
- Armstrong, GT** "How Dictators will Seize Power in Europe", *Twentieth Century Watch*, Dec 1992
- Armstrong, GT** "Is America In Decline?", *Twentieth Century Watch*, August 1992.
- Armstrong, GT** "Is Naziism Dead?", *Plain Truth*, April 1960.
- Armstrong, GT** "Japan. Supergiant of the Orient", *Twentieth Century Watch*, March 1995.
- Armstrong, GT** "Just Where are we Now in Prophecy?", *Twentieth Century Watch*, Sept 1994.
- Armstrong, GT** "New Order Coming in GERMANY", *Twentieth Century Watch*, Dec/Jan 1990.
- Armstrong, GT** "The Birth of the Beast", *Plain Truth*, August 1959.
- Armstrong, GT** "The New Germany – Friend ... or Frankenstein Monster?", *Plain Truth*, December 1963.
- Armstrong, GT** "The New Germany – is it Dangerous?", *Plain Truth*, April 1963.
- Armstrong, GT** "Where are we, Now, in Prophecy?", *Twentieth Century Watch*, Sept 1994.
- Armstrong, GT** "Work of the Watchman", *Twentieth Century Watch*, Sept/Oct 1995.
- Armstrong, GT** *Who, What is the "Beast" of Revelation?*, 1985.
- Armstrong, HW** "America the Beautiful. America the Condemned", *Plain Truth*, August 1980.
- Armstrong, HW** "Biggest World News Happening in Germany", *Plain Truth*, August 1959
- Armstrong, HW** "Hitler's Thousand-Year Plan versus God's", *Plain Truth*, May-June 1941.
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- Armstrong, HW** "USA Riding to Total Collapse", *Plain Truth*, February 1956.
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- Armstrong, HW** *Co-Worker Letter*, 29 January 1970.
- Armstrong, HW** *What Lies Ahead NOW in Prophecy?* (article reprint).
- Boraker, RC** "Nazis Plotting World War III", *Plain Truth*, November 1962.
- Boraker, RC** "Papacy Answers Red Threat", *Plain Truth*, October 1960.
- Hill, DJ** "Christ or Antichrist", *Plain Truth*, April 1961.
- Hill, DJ** "What is Germany's Destiny?", *Plain Truth*, March 1962.

Hoeh, HL	"Are Christians again to be Martyred?", <i>Plain Truth</i> , November 1956.
Hoeh, HL	"Germany in Prophecy", <i>Plain Truth</i> , December 1962.
Hoeh, HL	"If World War III Comes – There is a Way of Escape", <i>Plain Truth</i> , June 1963.
Hogberg, GH	"Coming: Greatest Economic Crash Ever!", <i>Plain Truth</i> , September 1963.
McNair, RF	"The Decline and Fall of the British Commonwealth!", <i>Plain Truth</i> , April 1963.
Meredith, RC	"I Remember", <i>Plain Truth</i> , January 1961.
Meredith, RC	"Now Revealed – The False Prophet of Revelation", <i>Plain Truth</i> , July 1963.
Meredith, RC	"Ten Reasons Why Christ MUST Return!", <i>Plain Truth</i> , December 1963.
Meredith, RC	"The Beast of Revelation Rears its Head!", <i>Plain Truth</i> , June 1963.
Neff, LL	"Sins of "Modern" Babylon Exposed", <i>The Good News</i> , January 1964.
Neff, LL	"You May NOT Escape the Tribulation!", <i>The Good News</i> , January 1962.
Stump, KW	"Ahead! Japanese Rearmament", <i>Plain Truth</i> , March 1981.
Stump, KW	"Uncovering a 2500 year old Time Capsule", <i>Plain Truth</i> , March 1981.
Torrance, LE	"Slave Labor Camps are Coming Back!", <i>Plain Truth</i> , June 1958.
Torrance, LE	"What will the "Tribulation" Really be Like?", <i>Plain Truth</i> , August 1961.

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