

NEWS WATCH FOR *the* CHURCH OF GOD

News in the world and church — to give warning and help for God's people — by Ron Weinland

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ANOTHER PUBLICATION???

Who wants another publication? We already have to wade through too much information to find material of real value. And that is the very reason this publication is being added to the barrage that is already out there. There is a need for single source materials that are concise, reliable, and doctrinally sound. Those are becoming fewer and harder to find.

With any publication, including this one, we must always remember that we each have a responsibility to prove everything to ourselves. Having single source materials that we have regularly proven to be true helps save us much precious time.

News Watch will be geared to providing you with the kind of material that will aid you in being spiritually sobered and alert to the dangerous times in which we live. There is a greater need than ever to be physically and spiritually watchful.

HWA's Sense of Urgency

Herbert W. Armstrong had a gift of being able to stir a sense of urgency in God's people. Such a sense of urgency is spiritually healthy. We can not afford to become complacent! Yet today, the fastest growing attitude and spirit within the church and in our society is COMPLACENCY! And now, of all times, we have nothing to be complacent about!

Far too many people in God's Church are asleep to the events in this world and the events in the church that are increasingly crying out, "**the bridegroom is coming**".

Are you ready? Are you preparing yourself by getting ready? Getting ready means you are willing to look honestly at the conditions you see in God's scattered Church and in your own life. Then you can be making the tough decisions that will produce changes in your life that lead to "being ready". Too many today take the path of least resistance by burying their head in the sand. Such people are

making a choice to paint a world around them that gives a false sense of peace. But we are at war and must choose to fight the battle that is before us! Crying "peace, peace" will not bring peace nor take away the reality of the sick condition of God's scattered people.

This publication is written for people who want help. It is for those who are willing to look at their own condition and repent. There is much for which God's people must repent. Our woes and troubles are not the result of having done well and having lived righteously before our God.

God's Warning!

We have become a spoiled people. We are filled with pride and, far too often, filled with complacency. God's warning to us is clear and succinct. "*Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house*" (NKJ--Ezekiel 12:2). This is in contrast to the scriptures from the O.T. quoted in the N.T. that speak of people who *don't have the spiritual ability* to see or hear, for they have eyes but do not see and ears but do not hear. This quote in Ezekiel is unique to the church, which has the spiritual ability to see and hear, but will not do so. That is very much the condition of the larger portion of God's Church today. Far too often, people don't want to know what is truly wrong in God's scattered churches, let alone in their own individual lives.

This is a prophesied warning, along with many other scriptures, that show the condition of God's own people at the end of this age, just prior to the establishing of His Kingdom on this earth. We are now in greater need than ever of God's help. We need spiritual sound mindedness and sober realism. God tells us that if we are willing to look at our lives and truly repent, He

will be there for us. He has been correcting us over and over for the past 25 years plus. But as God says in Amos, "*Yet you have not returned to me*". As we repent and turn more to God, He will lead us through the troubling times that are directly ahead of us. He tells us that He will deliver us, He will save us.

Now Is the Time

This publication is geared toward providing you with the straight forward, hard hitting reality of conditions each of us must face and answer.

This is not a time to let down. This is not a time to straddle the fence. This is not a time for God's ministers to tip toe around peoples sensitivities. Time is too short! Now is the time for strong meat. Now is the time for genuine openness and a realistic examining of lessons we should be learning from our past.

Our past is the cause of our present condition. But too many people are focusing on the wrong things from our past, much like spoiled children that grow up only to blame their parents for all their current problems. Our suffering is the result of our own sins!

Accepting personal responsibility for our own spiritual life means making difficult choices. Some follow the path of least resistance and try to avoid addressing, let alone confronting, the difficult problems that face the church and each of us individually. Doing so requires we make the hard decisions and choices in life.

Don't make the mistake that so many are making by painting a false picture that the church (or at least their organization) is fine and getting better. The church isn't fine and it isn't getting better. Instead, the plain truth is, things are bad and are prophesied to get much worse and we are to BE READY! NW

NEWS WATCH of the Church

We are often more alert to events in this world than we are to events in the church. However, we need to be as watchful, if not more so, of events within the church. These events have a great impact upon us spiritually. We can't afford not to be spiritually watchful!

In future *News Watch* publications, we will address many of the following kinds of items more fully. But today, we will mention just a few, for which we should be more alert.

Prophetic events, concerning the church at the end of this age have been coming alive these past few years. The *Bible* is loaded with prophecies that carry strong warnings for God's people in these times. They should be most sobering to us and stir us to deeper self-examination.

Numerous events in both the church and world have all the markings for fulfilled prophecy. Activities are rapidly increasing and moving forward with the potential of a massive crescendo. Yet, we seem to be afraid of facing that reality, let alone the need to sound a warning.

If the return of Jesus Christ is approaching in the near future, shouldn't we become more concerned with warnings of what may be just around the corner? Even if events don't happen quickly, if we are making ourselves ready now, we will be ready later as well. Isn't that the condition that Jesus said we should be in anyway?

If we are getting close, do you think we should become more concerned with warning others? Don't you want your loved ones to better understand what they are going to be living through? Won't it be much better if people understand WHY such horrible events are taking place and WHAT lies just ahead? Will such understanding give them courage to repent more fully and seek God more zealously? Will understanding of such events give increased hope to hold on for a better world that is coming? Hope for God's Kingdom will be a powerful asset and blessing to help

carry people through the worst period of earth's history.

One Third Left

Is the fulfillment of Ezekiel 5 both physical and spiritual? In the future, at the very beginning of Israel's tribulation, two thirds will be quickly cut off. The last third, that is scattered, will have a sword taken out after them. Only a remnant will survive.

Is it simply coincidence that two thirds of the church, as we have known it, has gone by the wayside? Only a third remains that still observes the Sabbath and Holy Days. That includes Worldwide Church of God, Global, United Church of God, Church of God International, Philadelphia Church of God, and all the other scattered groups combined.

Is the last third about to have a sword taken out after it, with only a remnant being saved? Can you afford to ignore the possibilities? Can you afford to slough off such an idea?

An Apostasy?

Does two thirds of the church, having already gone by the wayside, suffice to be counted for the apostasy or falling away mentioned in II Thessalonians 2? One need only look at the condition of the church and realize that the apostasy isn't over yet.

How does God look upon what caused such a falling away? And what about those responsible? And does one person hold a greater accountability than others? Has the man of sin already been revealed? The fulfillment of these two events, the apostasy and the revealing of the man of sin, is what Paul stated as having to be accomplished, *within the church*, before the day of Christ could come.

1260 Days At Pentecost

Is it another coincidence, that on the Sabbath before Pentecost this year, a prophetic 1260 day period will have been completed? This 1260 days is counted from the single most significant event that caused the greatest portion of this current day apostasy to begin.

That date may prove to be even more significant with a further

fulfilling of prophetic events. If so, we will begin seeing even far greater events begin to unfold speedily before our eyes. These are sobering times. We can't afford to ignore them.

Perhaps we have much time left, but can we afford being at ease now? Whether these events are specific to our time now, it is yet too early to know. But it would be spiritually wise to make ourselves far more ready than ever before. After all, that is the condition in which Christ said we should always be.

A Scattered Church?

God's Church is being scattered like a broken vase. Some still seem to think it can be prevented. Others deny it has even happened. Two thirds is already gone! And what is left is certainly scattered.

Still, others believe we can put it back together. Not only can we not prevent it, but we can not reverse its course if we are indeed living at the end of this age, because this is prophecy being fulfilled!

If we are living in the prophesied time of a scattering of God's people at the end of the age, then these events have great purpose, both positive and negative for God's people.

The negative part is that the scattering is the result of our sins, especially the sins of the ministry. God holds the ministry more accountable. This is a time for God's ministry to seek deeper self-examination and repent of the causes for scattering. We ministers have sought to our own interest, rather than the interests of God --- His flock.

Scattering should produce humility and remove the pride. Scattering should produce a greater reliance and stirring up of zeal for God. Yet overall, the ministry and church is rapidly going the other way, becoming sluggish and sleepy once again.

The positive part of being scattered is that as God's people repent, the scattering will have worked to save us, to turn us from our wrong ways. Being scattered may also prove to be a blessing in our future as this world progressively becomes more difficult to live in.

False Teachers

Jesus warned of false teachers. But this has often been applied only to ministers outside the church. But these warnings were about ministers within the church too. God's ministry still has much for which to repent. We have become filled with pride.

There has been a greater concern for security than for God's people. Ezekiel 34 is for today. And the cause of the church being scattered is because of the shepherds. Security, power, politics, pride, control, and many more sinful attitudes have made the ministry weak. Leadership is faint hearted. Decisiveness and sound judgment is slow in coming or even non-existent. Excitement, inspiration, and zeal toward God's Word and the times in which we live is lacking. The cause is sin.

And now more than ever, because of a continuation of such sins and weaknesses, more in the ministry are turning farther from sound doctrine. And each of you has the responsibility to prove the ministers with whom you come in contact.

This involves ministers in the larger organizations as well as the smaller ones. Some are turning away from the 14th Passover. Often it begins with only a little movement toward the 15th. Others are beginning to introduce their people to Protestant notions.

One area that is again being heavily attacked is the concept that the beginning of our calling is not directly from God the Father. Instead, people are being told that they need a certain amount of human faith to bring us to believe in Christ. Some teach that when anyone hears the gospel, they have a choice to respond to "a calling" at that moment. Such teachings are subtle and pull at the heart strings, but they will take you away from the confidence and inspiration that comes from knowing and experiencing a *very special calling* and involvement of God in your life. The power of our calling begins at the earliest stages when true revelations begin to be given from God through His Spirit. And from that first moment,

continuing throughout our lives within the church, we are to respond and make our calling and election sure. Satan wants to defile and weaken the beauty of God's Work in our lives.

Be careful of what you digest. Only you can WATCH what you put in your mind. Be alert to a growing trend that is polluting God's precious truths. These things are coming from sources that should shock and sober you.

When you find ministers that are holding firm and faithful to God's Word, who have a shepherding spirit (not sheriffing and controlling), whose messages are moving and inspiring, hold on to them! But continue to prove them. Such ministers are becoming fewer and harder to find.

This is not a time to rest and feel secure. You may believe you have seen the worst from false teachers and complacent ministers, but prophecy shows it is far from over. That is why you must stay alert and be on the watch for such things.

Subtle Trends

News Watch is established to sift through the onslaught of false and subtle trends that are working to weaken the people of God. Some things may seem to be harmless, but can work to weaken us mightily. Just as there has been a recent trend of some to flirt with Messianic Jews or some friends of the Sabbath. At first glance such things can seem very innocent and harmless --- perhaps even helpful. Do you know what to be on guard against? Are you alert to the subtleties and do you readily recognize the dangers? They are there.

Are you cautious and do you readily recognize those who have Protestant leanings in their services and in their teaching? Things as simple as music can be a warning. Also the watering down of PLAIN biblical language to the use of more acceptable mainstream jargon should be a caution for deeper scrutiny. It only takes a little spiritual leaven to begin dulling an otherwise alert mind.

News Watch of the Church will work to help you become more alert to subtle trends. You have already experienced such trends once. But

even now, far too many of God's scattered people are experiencing them again. Don't let that happen to you the second time. And don't let it "*just happen*" to ones you love. Love them, help them, warn them! NW

NEWS WATCH of the WORLD

This second feature of *News Watch* is to help us keep abreast of events in this world that are significant for potential prophetic fulfillment. We are to be spiritually watchful, but we must also stay physically watchful of such events in this world. Doing so helps to stir us with an additional sense of urgency and soberness.

If, indeed, we are witnessing those events that will lead up to the most traumatic times in earth's history, then we need to understand that these events are also going to have a tremendous impact on God's people. We need to be ready for what is coming so we can give greater comfort, hope, aid, and encouragement to others. We have now, and will increasingly have great opportunities to be more directly involved in serving God in the great work He is doing.

Financial Crises

One of the first things that will most certainly affect God's people is the financial crises that is looming on the horizon. This will deliver one of the most crushing blows through events that are going to begin unfolding in the near future.

An economic collapse is imminent. It is not a question of whether it will happen, but when. A world economy will no longer make it possible for any nation to escape the emerging tidal wave of disaster. Its effect on the church? What happens when money begins to dry up and cease to flow as it does today? Will people argue about what T.V. stations we should be on? Will ministers stay with the churches they serve when salaries can no longer be paid? As you can see, the effect will not be a small one. God's people

are going to come to see a much greater need for relying on God. We are going to experience things we haven't yet experienced. Ignoring the possibilities or refusing to face the possibilities, doesn't mean it won't happen. It will happen! How prepared are you? That is not a financial consideration, but a spiritual one. No amount of financial preparation will deliver anyone.

The Wave Is Building

Have we forgotten our history? Do we know what effect world economies had on the events that led up to WW II?

The Asian contagion can not be healed. Although many economists try to play down the devastating potential of what looms on the horizon, reports continue to make national economies uneasy. Even in this world, most people choose to bury their heads in the sand and try to convince others that everything is alright.

Indonesia, the fourth most populous nation on earth has seen the value of its currency drop by 85% in just the last seven months. The rippling effect has been strong.

South Korea is negotiating the largest IMF bailout to date, amounting to nearly \$60 billion. The AP reports today that, *"Both the Clinton administration and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan warned Congress today that the U.S. economy could suffer if an international rescue effort fails to stabilize the Asian currency crisis."* The article went on to report that both Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and Greenspan were the leadoff witnesses as Congress began examining the \$100 billion in bailout packages that have been assembled to help South Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand stabilize their economies. Greenspan said, *"the largest bailout in IMF history had not produced stability yet."*

Further, Greenspan said, *"I should like to stress that the significant degree of volatility that continues to exist in Asian markets indicates exceptionally high levels of uncertainty, bordering on panic."*

Japan's Strain

Stress is mounting in Japan. In the late 80's and early 90's, Japan had to deal with their economic bubble's first burst. That carried a price tag of nearly \$250 billion. Their latest round of problems is setting them back another \$250 billion.

Japan has heavily invested throughout Asia. Their own house is in a financial struggle, even without pressure to pump more support into the other failing economies of Asia.

Yet, Reuters reports today that, *"U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky described Japanese efforts to help end the economic crisis in Asia as 'absolutely inadequate' on Thursday, escalating a war of words between Washington and Tokyo. Japan, as the world's second-largest economy, must play a more active and meaningful role in helping to bring Asia out of its current economic crisis. Its efforts to date have been absolutely inadequate,"* she said. *"The fear among some economists in the U.S. is that Asian nations will export their way out of trouble by flooding the huge U.S. market with cheap goods, undercutting domestic manufacturers and threatening U.S. jobs."*

These are reasons that some people are beginning to realize that our threat is no longer inflation, but deflation.

As several economists have pointed out, much of the problem experienced in this latest uneasiness in the global economy is due to greed. The markets hit lows and greed brings in buyers who see a bargain. Greed is one factor that helps build up a wall of inflated markets.

Another factor is the "peace, peace" mentality. For peace and good times to prevail in the markets, white wash brushes must be applied liberally. Even after Alan Greenspan gave his statement before Congress of the *volatility that continues in Asia and the high level of uncertainty that borders on panic*, reports started coming out about how good everything looks for a strong economy.

Supporting the flimsy walls of our sick economy with greed and falsely

created trust are formulas for a great crash.

God's Warning

Deceitfulness used in the creating of false trust by spoon feeding people with a continual barrage of how good things are and covering up what is true, is commonplace. It is true not only for matters like our economy, but it is true within the realm of God's Church. There is a duality of prophecy recorded throughout the prophets that is for the physical nation of Israel, as well as the spiritual nation, the church.

Notice God's warning. *"...Because of your false words and lying visions, I am against you, declares the Sovereign Lord. My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. ...Because they lead my people astray, saying 'Peace,' when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash, therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. ...Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ...I will tear down the wall you have covered with whitewash and will level it to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you will be destroyed in it; and you will know that I am the Lord"* (NIV, Ezekiel 13:8-14).

God warns that the end of such practices will be by His bringing down the false walls and revealing what is truly there.

Other Dark Clouds

Economic woes are just the beginning of concerns that are gaining momentum all around this world. There are numerous dark clouds on the horizon that we cannot afford to ignore.

Tensions continue to build in places like Iraq, Israel, Turkey, and other of the Mideast nations. Will the weather and other conditions in nature, like earthquakes, be picking up their fury?

News Watch of the World is published to help you focus more wisely on the times in which we are living. NW