

# Is the End-Time Church of God DIVIDED?

Jesus Christ said, "I will build my Church" (Matt.16:18). Was that Church foretold to always be UNITED, and of "one accord"? Is it impossible for separate groups, each with differing beliefs to one degree or another, to ALL comprise the end-time "church of GOD"? Or did Jesus promise to keep all His saints unified, together, in ONE group or church? What is the truth?

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Jesus Christ told Peter and the apostles, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt.16:18). That church was to never die, or disappear, or peter out and vanish from sight. It would always exist, and continue to be, in one form or another, till the end of the age, when Christ would return!

But would the Church always be united -- singular -- in perfect oneness? Jesus, in His final prayer for the church before His death, prayed that the Father would "keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are" (John 17:11). He added, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they ALL MAY BE ONE . . . that they may be one, even as we are one" (verses 20-22).

Does this mean that the church would never be "divided"? That it would never be "split" into various branches, or divisions, or various groups independent of each other, each answering solely to Christ?

Some have thought so -- and have therefore made the boastful claim that they are the ONE AND ONLY "TRUE CHURCH OF GOD"! Herbert Armstrong used to make this seemingly proud boast continually -- and as "proof," he would point out that nobody taught the same thing as he did, and that all one had to do to prove that he was God's true messenger was just to compare the messages of everyone else, including himself, with the Scriptures. If he was right, then all the rest had to be wrong!

But is it really as simple as that?

What if he himself was wrong on certain points?

Would that "prove" that his church wasn't the true church, either?

## **What Do You Mean, "One TRUE Church"?**

In the last few years, I have seen and experienced "wolves in sheep's clothing," trying to "join" with me in this Work of God, who since proved to be virulent predators who led a few people off into the netherworld of religious apostasy. Unfortunately, those few who followed such were ripe for the picking or plucking -- their own attitudes were wrong, in some crucial way, and so God allowed them to be led off into the religious "boondocks" and "wilderness."

God allows such things to happen. We know that these things must happen -- why? "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor.11:19). These "tests" which come upon God's people separate the "sheep from the goats," as it were. They prove to be a sort of "litmus test" of the reality of the faith and obedience of those who profess to follow Christ!

When we look at church history, it becomes very apparent that fractures, divisions, and schisms, often occurred to the Church of God. Most of the resultant groups went into varying forms of religious apostasy, and departed from the truth, and could no longer be called correctly, "the church of God." They had been infiltrated, conned, and taken over by Satan the seductive devil and his devious minions.

However, history and Biblical prophecy also prove that there have been and can be "divisions" of various degrees WITHIN the spiritual "body of Christ," as well! As I see it, there is no doubt that "divisions" and "differences" have occurred in the true church of God, throughout its history, due to human nature, human imperfection, and weakness -- as well as human sins, and "goats" among the sheep! Jesus Himself said that the "wheat and tares" would dwell IN the church, side by side, TILL THE HARVEST (second coming), which itself leads to a certain amount of division and contention within the visible "church" (see Matt.13:36-43). Jesus warned FIRST for us to beware of false prophets and teachers because they would be the church's MAJOR DANGER -- further evidence of strife, division, and "splits" occurring within the true church (Matt.24:11).

### **"Divisions" in Paul's Day**

Paul warned expressly of this danger, saying to the Ephesus church leaders, "TAKE HEED therefore unto YOURSELVES, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God . . . For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ALSO, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30).

Paul beseeched the Corinthians not to allow "divisions" to crop up among them (I Cor.1:10). It was reported to Paul that there were "contentions among you," as he wrote to them, admonishing them to watch out for such things (v.11). These were serious contentions, so Paul asked them, "Is Christ divided?" (v.13). No -- of course not! Christ is ONE. But apostasy set in within the first century church, and communication was not

easy from church to church, so local congregations began to become more and more independent. DIVISION set in! Those with the Spirit of God guiding them, remained loyal to the truth, but more and more "differences of opinion" crept in, after the departure of the original apostles. Paul called the Corinthians "CARNAL" (I Cor.3:1-3). He warned them, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and STRIFE, and DIVISIONS, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (v.3).

Some of these churches were still God's Church, even though various "differences" had crept in. They had not yet made a major change in doctrine which militated against their being considered "Christian" in God's sight! They had various "problems" -- but they were not yet sick "unto death" -- spiritual death!

This was the CHURCH OF GOD, with all of its "spots and wrinkles." Clearly, it had carnal-minded ministers and leaders, in some cases, and there were arguments, debates, and strife. One of the major issues of that day was whether a Gentile needed to be "circumcised" and become a Jew in order to be saved. This controversy led to a major doctrinal meeting in Jerusalem over the issue (Acts 15).

So even the New Testament Church, as we see, was NOT "united." There were "DIVISIONS" in the church. Yet Christ is NOT divided. But experience proves that human beings, even those who STRIVE to follow Him, can be divided, and have differences of opinions about many things -- policies, judgments, prophecies, even some doctrines. Of course, the BASIC truths they should all adhere to. Paul and Barnabas had a major disagreement at one point, which caused them to go their separate ways, and to conduct separate ministries, in effect -- although they still regarded each other as "brothers" (Acts 15:36-39).

Paul wrote to the Ephesians (4:11-14), "And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers [WHY?]: For the perfecting of the saints [i.e., they are not yet perfect!], for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [BUILDING, strengthening] of the body of Christ [the church]: TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH" -- ah hah! Did you catch that? "TILL we all come in [or, INTO] the UNITY of the faith." In other words, WE DO NOT YET HAVE TRUE OR PERFECT UNITY in faith, beliefs, doctrines, etc.!

### **The Book of Revelation**

In describing the Church of God during the last days, the time of the end, in the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ describes it in letters to SEVEN churches -- not just ONE. Each church is independent, locally governed, with its own administration, having originally been planted by true servants of God. But each one has DIFFERENT PROBLEMS, differences in many ways, and each is given particularly pointed correction (Rev.2-3).

Notice that to the first church, Ephesus, Christ says, "Remember therefore from whence thou art FALLEN, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly,

and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou REPENT" (Rev.2:5). Here is a church, in the end time, just before the "Day of the Lord" (Rev.1:10), which needs to REPENT!

The third church, in Pergamos, also is told, "REPENT; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev.2:16). This also seems to be a clear indication of the existence of this church just before the second coming of Christ -- it will be in existence "when he comes" and He will fight against it, when He returns, if it doesn't REPENT of its sins! Yet it also has faithful saints, typified by the martyr Antipas, whom Christ refers to as "my faithful martyr" (v.13).

The fourth church, Thyatira, is told, "But that which ye have already hold fast TILL I COME" (Rev.2:25). It also is obviously in existence when Christ returns, as it is commanded to "hold fast" TILL He returns!

The fifth church, Sardis, is also warned: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev.3:3).

Similarly, the sixth church, Philadelphia is told: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev.3:11).

Finally, the seventh church, the church of Laodicea, is told: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev.3:18). Here is reference to the end-time Great Tribulation just ahead of us, which this "division" or "segment" or "remnant" of the Church of God must go through, in order to be made white and worthy!

These seven "churches" of Revelation stand for and represent SEVEN MAJOR DIVISIONS OR INDEPENDENT GROUPS which worship God and "keep His commandments," and believe in Christ as the Messiah, to the extent that God still considers them HIS Church! But they obviously have many, many major problems, which earn most of them the wrath and anger of God, if they don't "repent"!

This indicates that during these last days, the "true church of God" has over the centuries divided up into SEVEN major or minor "branches" -- each different, yet each enough alike to be part of the SAME TREE. Each has the SAME Spirit, but each has unique differences. Pergamos has a problem with paganism creeping in (Rev.2:14). Smyrna doesn't have much knowledge, apparently, but is rich in love -- and gives its life in persecution and martyrdom (Rev.2:9-10). Thyatira has a problem with the teachings of "Jezebel" -- a type of the great false church (Rev.2:18-21).

The most degenerate of all the churches, of course, is the LAODICEAN church (Rev.3:13-22). Its seems to describe not only the Worldwide Church of God, which is

very rapidly becoming "Protestant," but also its major offshoots -- including CGI, Global, Flurry's group, etc.

Meanwhile, over the past 10-20 years, very small, individual, single churches have also split off -- because of problems they saw with the organizations they once were part of -- and became independent. I believe many of these are still remnants of the body of Christ -- small "members" of the body, as it were. By their fruits, they have remained faithful to what they have proved. Some of them have even discovered the truth about Passover on Nisan 15, and Pentecost on Sivan 6.

At the same time, however, many vicious prowling wolves have also created "branches," and splits, and have led away members after themselves, just as Paul warned. One such is Fred Coulter. Eventually, these false leaders will all be exposed and brought to light. Many of these end time people of God may have to go through great tribulation in order to be purged and purified and made "white."

### **How Final UNITY Will Be Achieved**

How is true "unity" really created? With human nature being what it is, and human beings being prone to independence, and a universal dislike of "human authority," how can the various "churches of God" ever become truly "ONE"? How can they be truly "UNITED"?

Is it not through the fires of trials and tests and tribulation? Some are more hard-headed than others, and need stronger testing and trials in order to mature spiritually.

Notice! Many, in this final age, will have to go through, and then come out of, "great tribulation," in which they "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (Rev.7:14). Their robes are obviously dirty -- but the waters and bloodshed of Great Tribulation will give them the means to "wash" their robes, that they may become white -- righteous, in God's sight.

Daniel speaks of this same purification process, which will BRING US TOGETHER, and get rid of the dross, flimflam, dishonesty, and foolishness, which we see in the church and many members, today. Daniel was told, "And some of them of understanding shall FALL, to TRY them, and to PURGE, and to MAKE THEM WHITE, even to the time of the end" (Dan.11:35).

Although the church is "divided" into segments, and has many problems, today, these problems will in most cases be eliminated by the FIRES OF TRIBULATION and final testing. Christ is going to present the church to himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph.5:27). In the coming months and years, Christ is going to CLEAN THE CHURCH UP! He is going to purge and purify every "element," every group, every true segment, rub-a-dub dub, and get rid of all the dirt, grime, grease and filth -- scrub, scrub, scrub -- until it is squeaky clean and spotless and shining!

Therefore, WHEN Christ returns, we read, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his WIFE hath made herself ready" (Rev.19:7). She is not ready, today. She is not yet purified, purged, and made white. But she will be in time for the wedding! "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev.19:8).

### **WHY the Church Is DIVIDED, Today!**

Thus, the Church of God, today, is "divided" -- as a result of Satan's wiles, human nature, human greed and slackness and lethargy, and human error. The fault is not Christ's or God's. The blame rests with erring and sinning human leaders, who in far too many cases are simply not close enough to God and His Word, and don't tremble before His Word (Isaiah 66:2).

The Church today is divided -- SIN has wormed its way in. Much purging and purifying must be done. ERROR has contaminated the Church, and even grown and spread. That is why certain ones MUST go into the Great Tribulation to be purged and cleansed, as their final "testing." They will pay the ultimate price -- their lives. They will suffer martyrdom, imprisonment, even torture in some cases, and death. It will not be pretty. But thank God He gives us a chance to repent now, and to respond to His Truth, and to come out of sin and error. The hard-headed ones and "blinded" ones who refuse to admit the truth now will simply have to suffer the consequences, but they are not "lost." They can still redeem their lives by repenting and turning to God, in heart and spirit, during the time of great tribulation.

When we look at the "Christian" world today, we see many false, counterfeit churches which masquerade as churches of God (II Cor.11:13-15). But we also see some few very sincere evangelical churches (at least some of the ministers, and members are sincere and devout), Messianic Jewish churches, Seventh Day Churches of God, Seventh Day Baptists, and similar groups which seem to have enough understanding to be considered "God's church," even though they are weak and ignorant in many respects. Many of them have evidence of true love and devotion in their lives, which in God's sight is far more important than much "head knowledge" and factual understanding.

As Paul said, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing" (I Cor.13:2).

Today, the professing "Christian world" is a shambles of confusion and chaos. Most of the sects, cults, denominations are now merely "store-front religion" -- empty spiritual facades created and controlled by Satan the devil. But there are a few -- perhaps literally "seven" main divisions -- who do represent the true Church of God, in all its faults, foibles, and blemishes, as they exist, today! Some of these remnant groups of the true Church of God could include segments of the Seventh Day Adventist Church; others could include various evangelical groups. Others would be churches that came out of Worldwide, each with much truth, but each with serious error.

Many of these people are SINCERE. I would not hesitate to call them "Christian." But they are in serious jeopardy -- error -- and some will pay a very high price for their mistakes (such as endorsing or following Gerald Flurry, or even Rod Meredith). Some of the shepherds may be "wolves" -- but the flock is still the flock! Some we can with God's help reach out to and save NOW, but others will not respond until God deals directly with them in great tribulation. Ultimately, however, all those who become part of the BRIDE of Christ will have to "pass the test" -- God's test. Or they simply won't be there.

Of course, God knows and sees all, and He knows the hearts and minds of men, and He is testing each one of us. He knows those who are His. As Paul wrote, ""Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore PURGE HIMSELF from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:19-21).

### **"Underground Christians"**

There are "underground" Christians today, suffering persecution in North Korea, Vietnam, China -- many have been imprisoned, others have been tortured, and some have been martyred. They are our brethren, even if they don't see all the truth we have been privileged to know and understand! Jesus will judge them on a different standard, as we read so plainly in the Scriptures: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of them they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47-48). Each will be judged fairly, according to what they have done with what God gave to them, including the amount of knowledge and understanding they received (see Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27).

Jesus plainly told His disciples, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there SHALL [ultimately] be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

Therefore, it really is not our need or concern to try to sort out who belongs to Christ, and who doesn't. Many will be there, and you might be surprised to see them. On the other hand, some of the self-righteous, who think they will be there, may well not make it at all. Jesus said the poor publican, who would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13) will be justified -- that is, be in God's kingdom -- rather than the smug, self-righteous Pharisee who had confidence in his own righteousness (Luke 18:11-14).

Jesus put it plainly on another occasion. He declared: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint, and anise and cumin, and have omitted the

weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt.23:23).

The "bottom line" is that God knows who belongs to Him. He will judge each individual. That includes those men of old who died in flames for having translated the Bible into the common tongue, such as Wycliff, and Tyndale. That includes such men of faith and humility as George Mueller, of the Plymouth Brethren, of the nineteenth century, who served God in an amazing way, building up many orphanages merely by faith and trust in God, through fervent, intercessory prayer. It was his great work of faith that Herbert W. Armstrong originally patterned the Worldwide Church of God after, when it was known as the "Radio Church of God."

Personally, I believe no one can read George Mueller's Autobiography, or biographical accounts about this man's dealings with the Lord, and his life of faith and obedience, and come away without being mightily impressed with the depth of his conversion, love of God, and faithfulness under extreme trial and duress! He was, in my opinion, a very faithful and humble man of God of his century -- a man who looked upon himself as a "poor, unworthy servant of the Lord."

### **Persecution Growing Around World**

In our day, in Bulgaria a fear campaign has been launched against all "new and unconventional religious movements," including evangelical Christians, some with a history longer than 100 years. The Bulgarian press accuses evangelicals of giving drugs to teenagers, bribing people to attend church and encouraging young people to commit suicide. The media promotes hatred of Christians, and publishes inflammatory accusations, such as one woman's fear that evangelicals will kill her, and who accuses pastors of practicing cannibalism.

In February 1994, the Bulgarian state announced that religious organizations must "re-register" within three months or the government would seize all their assets and possessions. May 10, 1994, a new law was passed in Bulgaria's second largest city forbidding religious organizations from inviting people under 18 years of age to religious activities. June, 1994, it was announced that 24 groups had been denied permission to seek government registration, including Gideons International, well known distributor of free Bibles. In August, opposition from the Orthodox Church and Communist Party forced the cancellation of an evangelistic mission to the port city of Varna, accusing the mission of disseminating religious propaganda.

In Cuba, a Christian from the Dominican Republic was caught by police, who burned his legs with cigarettes and put electrical shocks to his teeth. A group of forty Christians who brought Bibles to Cuba from Jamaica were all arrested at their hotel, many were robbed by the police, and escorted back to the plane. A Vietnamese pastor, previously imprisoned for ten years in North Vietnam, is now in prison in South Vietnam for evangelizing the Stieng tribe. In the Philippines, a man who gave up a good job to preach the gospel of Christ, was warned three times by the New People's Army, a militant

wing of the Communists, to desist. Two men who belonged to his church were killed by the Communists only two weeks after becoming Christians.

A Pakistani believer in Christ was shot and killed by his Muslim accusers, after having been released from prison in Lahore, Pakistan. This man read his Bible every day.

In China a Christian was sentenced to five years for preaching the gospel, when he would not abandon his faith, which authorities called "the poison of imperialism." He was beaten, but while they beat him a supernatural joy filled him. He felt the Holy Spirit surround him, and the Reds could obtain no retraction. While in prison, he was given another ten years for preaching in the slave labor camp! One winter a severe disease epidemic broke out, and of 1300 prisoners, 1035 died. He himself was considered dead, and taken to the morgue. When he prayed, he saw an angel dressed in white whose face shone with God's glory and who blew upon him. Immediately he felt better and the sickness left him, he knelt, gave thanks to God, and left the morgue! The prison doctor, seeing him, thought he was a ghost! He told the physician, "Don't be afraid. . . God restored me to health. He sent me to show you the way of God." The doctor knelt, and said, "Your God is a reality."

After he left the prison, after serving 15 years, he told the authorities, "Suffering did not diminish my faith but only intensified my relationship with Jesus." This man, Mizhong Miao, worked another 18 years in the underground church, secretly, until he finished his course.

Are such men truly men of God? I shout from the top of my lungs, YES! YES, INDEED! They are my brothers in Christ! GOD BLESS THEM, and their Witness for the Truth they have been given to understand!

### **"Judge Not, That You Be Not Judged"**

Too many of God's people tend to be judgmental, and look down their noses at others who do not belong to the same "group" as they do. Too many are proud, lifted up, and act like the Pharisee who thanked God that he was "not like other men." Too many are prone to "judge their brother" because of doctrinal errors on minor points (or what might be considered "major points"), when they themselves have major problems with attitude, hidden sins, and a wrong spirit.

Jesus Christ said, in this regard, to those who are prone to sit in judgment of others: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the BEAM that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite! First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt.7:1-5).

Paul also warned us about the SIN of judging one another, over issues that shouldn't really matter. He wrote: Him that is weak [i.e., such as weak in knowledge, lacking in understanding] in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things [i.e., animal flesh of "clean" animals]: another, who is weak, eateth herbs [is a "vegetarian" and won't eat meat -- he believes it is wrong]. . . . Let not him that eateth despise him that eatest not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holpen up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom.14:1-4).

Does this mean that I would knowingly endorse, or accept error? Of course not! But I will accept as a "brother" in Christ one who does not have the same understanding as I do, even on points of God's Law, or understanding the nature of the "Godhead," although I will not compromise with him in either obedience to God, myself, or in understanding! I will simply accept such as they are -- weaker brothers in Christ who have not been gifted with the knowledge and understanding God has given us. Of course, any "brother" who is dishonest, immoral, breaks the commandments, steals sheep, lies and bears false witness, and falsely accuses others, I would not consider a true "brother" at all, but an imposter -- a Satan implant, a "tare" amongst the wheat! Jesus said of such, plainly, "You shall know them by their fruits" (Matt.7:16, 20).

I will, however, continue to preach and publish the TRUTH of God without compromise -- I will not "accept" error, or false doctrine, knowingly, or quietly allow it to exist without attempting to expose it and eradicate it, wherever found.

Paul summarized this principle, saying, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. . . . But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall ALL stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom.14:7-13).

### **The Real "Bottom Line"**

In the months and years ahead, severe persecution such as we have never seen, is going to break out against all minority groups and tiny religious churches, which will be termed "cults" and "bizarre sects" by the mass media, under the control of government propagandists. True Christians will be persecuted with a vengeance -- before the "Great Tribulation" even arrives!

Notice! In Matthew 24, Jesus gave a sequence of prophetic events which must occur before He returns. In verse 21, He mentions the coming of Great Tribulation. However, long before this event occurs, Jesus mentioned in the same chapter, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (vs.7-8).

Here He is talking about the BEGINNING of the End Time -- years before the final "Great Tribulation"! And notice! Right after this "beginning," He declares: "THEN shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall KILL you; and ye shall be hated of ALL NATIONS for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall HATE one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall DECEIVE MANY [those who are sleeping through the Apocalyptic Times, not close to God, not busily overcoming, praying, and "watching"]. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt.24:9-13).

This persecution occurs BEFORE the Great Tribulation. It is the very NEXT thing prophesied -- on the prophetic calendar!

Knowing this, isn't it high time we draw close to one another, begin to LOVE one another, and show by our attitudes and actions that we really are the children of God and servants of Christ?

Isn't it high time we quit "judging" one another, or others who are proving their loyalty and devotion to Christ by their intense suffering, by accusing them of being "blinded," or not really "Christian" because they don't understand certain things we do?

For shame!

Jesus plainly said to His disciples -- and I hope that includes you: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

In the coming years, those who truly belong to Jesus Christ/Yeshuah the Messiah, are going to be "tried" and "tested" to prepare them for entrance into God's Kingdom (Matt.5:48). Those who are wicked, who are tares, and goats, and who do not really belong to Him, will be discovered and found out -- their works, words and "fruits" will eventually, when the "heat" comes, betray them.

David wrote in the Psalms: "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord TRIETH the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold [with favor] the upright" (Psalm 11:4-7).