

**The Gates of
Hell
Will Not
Prevail
Against Her**

By Don Esposito

The most amazing story of faith and courage that a true believer can only hope to find!

Read about the true Congregation of Yahshua and how it survived through antiquity under such duress persecution against it by its enemies. The truth is stranger than fiction. It's shocking and eye opening. If you are a believer, you will be cheerfully enlightened to find out that the original Congregation that Yahshua started in 30 A.D. has survived into this present time and that ***"the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against it."*** The Truth shall make you free. (Jn 8:32)

THIS BOOK IS NOT TO BE SOLD!

It is written and produced in the public interest to awaken and make Christianity aware of the lies and the distortion of facts in history and doctrine of the body of believers of Yahshua the Messiah. If you would like to help produce more books for distribution, send your contribution to:

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Author's Note:

Scriptures quoted in this book are from the Hebraic Roots Bible- A Literal Translation. It is composed of the original Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts with a literal word- for- word translation. It is essential for getting to the truth.

The original names of our Creator, Yahweh, and His Son, our Savior Yahshua, are also used throughout. The name Yahweh or YHWH is in the original Hebrew manuscripts 6,823 times. Almost every translation on earth, including the King James, takes out the Creator's personal name and replaces it with the name Lord, a generic title that means Baal or Master. Also, our Savior's true given Hebrew name, Yahshua, which means "Yah is salvation" is changed to a Greek hybrid of Jesus, which is a poor transliteration from the Greek IE-Zeus. The English transliteration of Yahshua would be the equivalent to Joshua. There was no letter J in any language until the 16th century. So the Greek name "Jesus" would not be the name of our Savior. The third commandment strictly forbids taking Yahweh's name in vain. In vain literally means to change, falsify, or make common. Taking the name Yahweh or Yahshua and changing it to Lord or Jesus is definitely going against the clear instruction of the third commandment. So we will use the original, true Hebrew names of the Father Yahweh and the Son Yahshua in this book. Since many quotes were translated from documents from ancient languages we also took the liberty to transliterate The Hebrew name for our Savior Yahshua and the Hebrew generic word for deity Elohim, instead of the corrupted fashion of God.

Chapter Titles:

Introduction

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- 2) Gentiles Being Grafted In
- 3) Disappointment That Yahshua Doesn't Return
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Introduction:

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. We are living in a world where things are changing so quickly it is hard to keep up with all the technological advancements that are coming out on a yearly basis.

However, the more frightening scenario in the world today is how mass media and the Internet are trying to change the moral perception of what the Bible tells us is Yahweh's (the Creator) eternal code of conduct. It is also equally frightening how in the days we are living in that the media is no longer objective, non-biased journalists, but mostly are a conglomerate for their progressive, liberal New World Order backers.

History is being rewritten as it was with the early Congregation, and evil murderers, such as Yasser Arafat, suddenly earn the Nobel Peace Prize. It is the same with the Roman Catholic Church. Most of our history comes from their historians, as the conquerors, however the truth is that through antiquity the Roman Catholic Church has persecuted and murdered many of the true remnant flock of Yahshua; yet today the Pope is looked at by many as the holiest man on earth. I will clearly expose the true history of this in this book.

Revelation 12:9 states that '*Satan has deceived the whole world.*' It is hard to believe that at first until you start to actually study the Bible and see that the laws and moral absolutes that Father Yahweh set down at Creation and reaffirmed to the nation of Israel, and then, confirmed again by our Savior Yahshua H'Mashiach have been altered, manipulated and even outright abrogated in some cases and

a new religion has surfaced that is hard to even find a comparison with the early Congregation that Yahshua started at Shavuot in 30 A.D.

The reason for that is because the church that is masquerading today as Christianity in its many forms is not the true Congregation that our Savior Yahshua started in 30 A.D., but is a forgery that was actually started with Simon Magus and then, codified with the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great in 313 A.D. I clearly outline how this great falling away has taken place in my book entitled “**The Great Falling Away**”, and it can be acquired by writing to the address in the back of this book and requesting a copy.

If someone truly wants to come into covenant relationship with Yahweh our Heavenly Father and Yahshua His begotten Son, then, he must ask himself whether he wants to join the Congregation that Yahshua started almost 2,000 years ago, or does he want to join the counterfeit Christianity started by Constantine, which is the Christianity mostly around today.

What I plan on doing in this book is giving a comprehensive outline and history of the early true Congregation of Yahweh that Yahshua started in 30 A.D. Actually, I even want to begin about 200 years before the Common Era and examine the circumstances that were created for the need of a Messiah to appear and also the circumstances surrounding the start of that first, early Congregation in Jerusalem in 30 A.D. I also, then, want to show the cultural and historical progression through history of this true body of believers and give clear, concise evidence as to their belief system, faith, and location throughout antiquity. I will also show and

parallel the Universal Roman Church that Constantine started so that the true, truth seeker out there today can separate the true Congregation started by Yahshua which still exists today, compared to the false, corporate, controlling church of Constantine and also her Protestant sisters.

If you are someone who loves the truth you will be absolutely, joyfully amazed to see that the true Congregation that our Savior Yahshua started in 30 A.D. did indeed keep the 7th day Sabbath, as well as the other commandments, and statutes of the Torah, as well as the Holy Days of Leviticus 23 along with the biblical Passover on the 14th day of the first biblical month of Aviv. You will also be happily amazed to see that this tiny congregation that was so persecuted for so many years never gave up, never quit nor acquiesced with the Universal (Catholic) Church, but fought tooth and nail to stay separate from the world and to keep themselves holy and sanctified.

The true history of Yahshua's true Congregation is an amazing journey throughout the last 2,000 years and an amazing story of faith and courage that continues into our time today. They were never the gigantic, corporate entity that the Universal Church was, but their faith and courage helped them survive and there are still thousands of their remnant congregations around until this present day.

So let us start in the beginning of their journey and go step by step in history and follow the most amazing, courageous group of individuals of the true Congregation that Yahshua our Savior started, and also prophesied that "*the gates of hell would not prevail against her*" (Math 16:18).

Chapter 1 – The Beginning of the Early Congregation

When we are looking at the history of the early, true set of believers of the early Congregation established by Yahshua Messiah our Savior Himself, our greatest source of reference and research is none other than the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) itself.

As we will see in later chapters, following the true Congregation of Yahweh through the ages will take a journey through time searching through the archives of history to follow the Congregation established and sanctioned by Yahshua through antiquity.

By first establishing the proper parameters and markers on how to distinguish this group, it will make our journey through history later much easier to see who is the true congregation, and who is the reprobate pagan counterfeit. The New Testament is extremely clear on how the early congregation started, what was their belief system, how they conducted their services and what was the cultural setting around the very establishment of it in 30 A.D. The cultural aspect of the early congregation cannot be ignored, and without it, you will never truly understand the above criteria mentioned to identifying the true Congregation of Yahweh from the apostate church of Rome.

Heb 9:16 *For where there is a testament, it shows the death of him who made it.*

Heb 9:17 *For a covenant is affirmed over those dead, since it never has force when he who has made it is living.*

Since Yahshua is the testator of the New Covenant or Testament, then, it is very clear that only He Himself can

make any changes to that covenant agreement. So it is vitally important to establish the doctrines, beliefs, customs, and cultural setting of this early Congregation started by Yahshua in Jerusalem in 30 A.D.

Around the world today there are several million different groups all calling themselves Christian, Messianic, or some form of a believer in the New Testament and the fact of believing in Yahshua as Messiah, who came to die for the penalty of our sins.

However, they all believe differently. They all have adopted a different set of doctrines, beliefs and creed based on their own private interpretation of Scripture, their own private history to their own faith, or merging beliefs with another apostate church through antiquity.

But one must honestly admit if he is truly a truth seeker that they cannot all be correct. If we honestly, from a logical standpoint, look at anything in this physical world we will see there is judicial order to everything, or else it simply will not work or produce any fruit of one's labor.

If you plug in a DVD player and stick all the wires haphazardly in erroneous positions the DVD player will simply not work. One will not reason that his heart was sincere in doing it correct, or his motives were pure in the DVD he purposed to watch, it simply doesn't matter, if the wires are not inserted correctly, it simply will not work.

So why, when it comes to religion and the Bible do people want to take a different approach, than anything else in life? Why now, all of a sudden, can everyone believe differently

and have their own doctrine, and it doesn't matter anymore? Because they think as long as your heart is right, then there is no wrong process to worship. This is nothing more than the evil end time ecumenical movement, which is trying to bring in a one world religion sowing their propaganda to an unsuspecting world.

Remember Satan doesn't care what you believe as long as it is not the truth, and just as with the example of the DVD, there are many wrong ways to insert the plugs, but only one correct way.

Mal 3:6 *For I am YAHWEH, I do not change. Because of this, you sons of Jacob are not destroyed.*

Heb 13:8 *Yahshua Messiah, the same yesterday and today and forever.*

Our Heavenly Father does have judicial order and our Master and Savior Yahshua clearly stated; He did not come to do His own will, or bring His own doctrine, but as He heard from the Father directly, this was the message He brought.

Joh 8:28 *Then Yahshua said to them, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM; and from Myself I do nothing; but as My Father taught Me, these things I speak.*

Joh 8:38a *I speak what I have seen with My Father.*

So the whole premise of examining congregational history must start on the “**rock**” of Yahshua Himself; the things He personally set out, and with the Apostles that He personally trained. Then, we will journey through history to see that this Congregation that was established by Yahshua in 30 A.D.

and administered by the Apostles themselves was persecuted, and suffered through many trials, but as Yahshua stated in Matthew 16:18 "*The gates of hell did not prevail against her*".

So let us start by looking at the cultural setting that prevailed in the first century when Yahshua started His ministry in 27 A.D. Remember, Israel had gone into captivity many hundreds of years before and were not a sovereign nation any longer, and although the tribe of Judah did return around 538 B.C., with a small remnant of Israelites, they were under Persian occupation at that time, and then, Greek after that.

Alexander the Great conquered the world in 332 B.C. in only twelve years of conquest, an amazing feat for his day. Unfortunately, one of his generals poisoned him and killed him and his kingdom was divided into four regions.

The two important regions we will discuss are the ones surrounding Israel, which were the Seleucids to the north in Syria and the Ptolemies to the south in Egypt. Since Israel was in the middle of these two kingdoms, whoever was strong at the time controlled Israel.

In 171 B.C. a Seleucid king named Antiochus Epiphanes was in power and wanted to unify his kingdom. He decided that he would not allow the Jews of Israel to worship according to the Torah any longer. They rebelled under a priest named Mathias Maccabees and his three sons, and they fought an amazing guerilla war and beat the powerful Seleucid king.

From the sons of Mathias Maccabees the Hasmonean dynasty was set up that we read about in the New Testament. However, Israel was still not a strong power or a true sovereign nation. Then in the year 63 B.C., Rome decided it was in their interest to attack Israel and conquer it and make it a Roman province. They called it Palestine, as an insult to the Jews due to the many battles that they had with the now dispersed Philistines throughout their history.

The Pharisees were a branch of pious, religious Jews who stemmed out of the Maccabean era, and the Sadducees were the priests of the descendants of the Maccabees. The Pharisees ran the synagogues, but the Sadducees the Temple. The Pharisees were extremely meticulous in trying to follow the letter of the Torah and adding thousands of rules and regulations to it. However, Yahshua stated that they say and don't do and follow their words from the Torah, but don't follow their actions, because they were mostly hypocrites (Math 23:3).

There was another set of priests called Essenes who believed the Temple to be corrupted by both the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they left the Temple to go and practice in Qumran, near the Dead Sea. They also believed that the Messiah was soon to appear and had a very separatist attitude.

There was also a group at this time called the Zealots. These were people who wanted to militarily take back sovereignty over Israel by force and physically fight the Romans. One of Yahshua's disciples was a Zealot (Luke 6:15).

So you can see that the political situation when Yahshua had His ministry in Israel was extremely unstable. As a matter of fact, during the Roman rule over Israel, they used to say that if a soldier was commanded to go to Israel he either really did something bad to his commander or was extremely unlucky. There were times that around 500 Jews a day were being crucified during the Great Revolt from 66 to 70 A.D.

So now, when Yahshua was coming to fulfill the First Covenant and pay the penalty for one's sins, the people were looking for the Son of David who was going to militarily overtake the Roman army and bring sovereignty and kingship back to Israel.

They did not understand their sinful nature, or the concept that the sacrifice of animals under the First Covenant could not pay the penalty for their sins, but simply remind them of the debt year after year that had to be paid.

Heb 10:1 *For the (Levitical) Law had in it a shadow of the good things to come, but not the substance of those things themselves. Appearing year by year with the same sacrifices, which they offer continually, they never are able to perfect those who offered them.*

Heb 10:2 *Otherwise, if they had once been perfected they would have ceased to be offered? For from henceforth, their minds would not have driven them into the sins from which they had once been cleansed.*

Heb 10:3 *But in those sacrifices they remembered their sins year by year,*

Heb 10:4 *for it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away (the penalty of) sins.*

Heb 10:5 *For this reason, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but You prepared a body for Me.*

Heb 10:6 *You did not delight in burnt offerings and sin offerings."*

Heb 10:7 *"Then I said, Lo, I come, as it is written about me in the beginning of the Books I delight to do Your will, O Elohim." (Psa. 40:6-8)*

Heb 10:8 *Above, when He said, "You did not desire nor were pleased with sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and sacrifices concerning sins," (which are offered according to the Levitical Law),*

Heb 10:9 *then He said, "Lo, I come to do Your will, O YAHWEH." He takes away the first in order that He may set up the second;*

Heb 10:10 *by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Yahshua Messiah once for all.*

Now, remember, when this was written it was in the year around 65 A.D. when the Temple was still standing. The Sanctuary or Temple of Yahweh was much more than just a place to sacrifice animals, it was a place to go and meet and commune with your Elohim; a place to refresh your spirit and feel the presence of Elohim with His people on earth.

Sin offerings were but one of many offerings; there were burnt offerings and fellowship offerings and peace offerings where the participants even got to partake of the offering with Yahweh.

So, since Yahweh's Tabernacle stood since the days of Moses, it would not have been an easy cultural transition for the people to understand that the purpose of the sacrificial

system under the Levitical order was now completed and a greater order with the High Priest of Melchizedek had now arrived.

This is something that Yahshua taught Paul over time, and although the early congregation believed and understood from the very beginning about Yahshua's substitutionary sacrifice for the payment of their sins, I don't believe they fully understood the completed order of the Levitical priesthood.

As a matter of fact when you look at the following scripture:

Mat 28:16 *But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mount where Yahshua appointed them.*

Mat 28:17 *And seeing Him, they worshiped Him. But some of them doubted.*

It is most clear that these disciples were not doubting the resurrection, as they were physically seeing Yahshua right in front of them. So what did they doubt? They were doubting why He had not taken His place as the Son of David on the throne of David and started His millennial kingdom.

They understood that a Messiah was prophesied to appear and redeem the Kingdom of Israel and the worldwide status of the nation, but they neglected to recognize that without the Messiah coming to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind, the Kingdom would not have anyone in it except the Messiah Himself. This was clearly the doubt that they wondered about. Even look at the question that is asked to Yahshua directly before His ascension to heaven forty days after His resurrection to life by Yahweh the Father.

Act 1:6 *Then, indeed, coming together they questioned Him, saying, Master, do You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?*

They still did not understand about the great 7,000 year plan of Yahweh and that there would be 2,000 years before Yahshua's return and setting up of the Kingdom of Yahweh on earth. As a matter of fact, due to different reasoning, the early believers after Yahshua's ascension to heaven actually thought that He would be returning forty years later in 70 A.D.

They equated this with the forty years that Israel had in the wilderness where they failed to enter the Promised Land with the New Covenant believers now succeeding in what Israel failed with, and then, the Kingdom being set up on earth. We know from the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Essene sect in Qumran, in which some priests also became believers (Acts 6:7), had a similar eschatology. We will discuss the ramifications for the early congregation due to this misconception in a later chapter.

So, this is why on the day of Shavuot the Apostle Peter gave a strong, dynamic sermon showing that before the Kingdom of Yahshua could be set up that they had to repent of their sins and accept in faith the sacrifice of Yahshua for the payment of those sins. First, Peter boldly proclaims that Yahshua fulfilled the prophecies in the Tanach (Old Testament) to indeed be the very Messiah prophesied to come, and then he states the following:

Act 2:36 *Then assuredly, let all the house of Israel acknowledge that YAHWEH made known this same Yahshua whom you crucified, He is both YAHWEH and Messiah.*

Act 2:37 *And hearing, they were touched in the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men, our brothers, What shall we do?*

Act 2:38 *And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, each of you in the name of Yahshua YAHWEH for the forgiveness of sins, that you may receive the gift of the Spirit of Holiness.*

Act 2:39 *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those afar off, as many as the Master our Elohim shall call.*

Act 2:40 *And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation.*

Also, remember that now for the first time the Ruach H' Chodesh (Holy Spirit) would be poured out on the ones who did repent of their sins and accept the sacrifice of Yahshua for the payment of those sins.

Act 2:1 *And in the fulfilling of the day of Shavuot, they were all with one mind in the same place.*

Act 2:2 *And suddenly a sound came out of the heaven, as a groaning spirit along by a violent wind! And it filled the entire house where they were sitting.*

Act 2:3 *And tongues as of fire appeared to them, being distributed, and it sat on each one of them.*

Act 2:4 *And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave ability to them to speak.*

Act 2:5 *And Jews were living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation of those under the heaven.*

Act 2:6 *And when that sound occurred, all the people gathered and were perplexed because they were hearing each man among them who were speaking in their own language.*

Act 2:7 *And all were amazed and marveled, saying to one another, Behold, we can't grasp this, are not all these, those speaking, Galileans?*

Act 2:8 *And how do we hear each in our own language in which we were born,*

Act 2:9 *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and those living in Mesopotamia, both Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*

Act 2:10 *both Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the regions of Libya over against Cyrene, and the temporarily residing Romans, both Jews and proselytes,*

Act 2:11 *Cretans and Arabians; in our own languages we hear them speaking the great wonders of YAHWEH?*

Act 2:12 *And all were amazed and puzzled, saying to one another, What could this be?*

It is important to note here what this gift of languages was. The Apostles were speaking in their Galilean, Aramaic dialect and the people present were hearing in their native languages.

This is very different from the modern, demonic Pentecostal movement that is mired in gibberish and demonic worship, which much of the false gibberish being done today in this false movement stems from ancient Hinduism and contemplative prayer.

Everything that Yahweh does has purpose, and what was the purpose of this miracle?

Mat 28:19 *Then having gone, disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son,*

Before Yahshua had ascended to heaven He instructed the Apostles that this Good News message was going to go to the whole world. This would be a major change, as previously we see the nation of Israel as an introverted state, which never left their land to proselytize other people.

However, now since the great commission given by Yahshua to His disciples was to go to all the world seeking the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Math 10:5-6), and since these Israelites were living in Diaspora for more than 700 years and no longer spoke Hebrew, the Apostles would not be able to bring the message unless they learned all of these local languages first. So instead, Yahweh gave the gift of languages whenever it would be needed.

It is interesting to note in verse 8 of Acts 2 that the miracle here was in the hearing not in the speaking, although depending on the situation, it can also be the other way around. But the important part is to understand that the gift of languages are real languages, and not gibberish. (Please see our Bible Lesson 21 on this subject www.coyhwh.com).

This also fulfilled another important prophecy in the book of Isaiah.

Isa 28:11 *For with stammering lip and another language, He will speak to this people;*

It was prophesied that due to their disobedience and being cast out of the very Promised Land of Israel that the Good News message (when the time came to bring it to the world) would not be through the original Hebrew language, but would be through the local vernacular languages of where the message went to. This has proved to be correct over the last 2,000 years.

It is also interesting to note that most of the places mentioned in verse 9 and 10 are places where the displaced Israelites lived and not gentiles. For the first 12 to 15 years of the New Testament congregation there were only Jews and Israelites and no gentiles as we will see; which brings us to an extremely important point to set a basis for the foundation of the belief system of the early congregation starting with Yahshua and continuing until today. When we look at the some odd 2 million Christian sects today, they are extremely different in doctrine and belief, and yet where did all of these different doctrinal heresies come from?

If we go back to the very beginning of the early Congregation starting with Yahshua Himself, what changes do we see in doctrine from the Tanach or Old Testament? Do we see anything in the language and words of our Savior that would ever make us think that the Torah (law) is done away with, or no longer binding on true covenant believers?

Mat 5:17 *Do not think that I came to annul the Torah or the Prophets; I did not come to annul, but to fulfill.*

Mat 5:18 *Truly I say to you, Until the heaven and the earth pass away, in no way shall one yod or one stroke pass away from the Torah until all comes to pass.*

Mat 5:19 *Therefore, whoever loosens one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the worst in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever does and teaches them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.*

Mat 5:20 *For I say to you, If your righteousness shall not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of YAHWEH, never!*

Mat 19:17 *And He said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One, YAHWEH! But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.*

If one is honest with himself, he would see that from the week before Passover in 30 A.D. before Yahshua was crucified on the tree, to the weeks after His resurrection, there was only one dramatic and important change in the belief and doctrine of the early believers.

There were some Jews and Israelites who believed that Yahshua was the Messiah prophesied in the Torah, and there were some who did not. It is that simple, there was no split from the synagogue at this point. There was no change in Holy Days or change in the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. There were simply people who believed in the resurrection of Yahshua and that He was the promised Messiah and Son of Elohim, and some who did not.

Since the Bible tracks the history of the early believers through the next some odd 70 years or so, do we see any major doctrinal shifts during this important first century and ground laying of the early congregation? The emphatic answer is **NO!** You simply can't find any premise whatsoever

for the changing of the Sabbath or Holy days by the early believers. The keeping of pagan Easter did not even become an issue until the 2nd century A.D., and it is clearly stated by the true believers through antiquity that they deny pagan Easter and keep instead the yearly Passover celebration on the 14th day of the first month, called Aviv, in the Biblical Calendar.

Look at the following scriptures to prove this point categorically.

Act 2:1 *And in the fulfilling of **the day of Shavuot**, they were all with one mind in the same place.*

Act 13:42 *But the Jews having gone out of the synagogue, the gentiles begged that these words be spoken to them on **the next Sabbath**.*

Act 13:44 *And **in the coming Sabbath**, almost all the city was gathered to hear the Word of Elohim.*

Act 16:13 *And we went out on **the day of the Sabbath** without the gate of the city to the bank of the river, because there was seen a house of prayer; and sitting down we spoke with the women who came together there.*

Act 17:2 *And according to Paul's custom, he went in to them and reasoned with them from the Scriptures on **three Sabbaths**,*

Act 18:4 *And he reasoned in the synagogue **on every Sabbath** persuading both Jews and the pagans.*

Act 18:19 *And he came to Ephesus, and he left those there. But he going into the synagogue, he reasoned with the Jews.*

Act 18:20 *And they asking him to remain over a longer time with them, but he did not agree,*

Act 18:21 but took leave of them, saying, ***I must by all means keep the coming feast as is my custom at Jerusalem; but I will come again to you, Elohim willing. And he sailed from Ephesus.***

Act 20:6 But we sailed along after ***the days of Unleavened Bread*** from Philippi, and came to them at Troas in five days, where we stayed seven days.

Act 20:7 And ***on one of the Sabbaths***, the disciples having been assembled to have a fellowship meal together, being about to depart on the next morning, Paul reasoned to them. And he continued his speech until midnight.

Act 21:20 And hearing, they glorified the Master, and said to him, You see, brother, how many myriads there are of Jews that have believed, and all are zealous ones of the Torah.

Act 24:14 (Paul speaking) But I confess this to you that according to the Way, which they say is a sect, I do serve the Elohim of my fathers, believing all the things written in the Torah and in the prophets.

Act 25:8 Defending himself, Paul said, ***Neither against the Torah of the Jews, nor against the sanctuary, nor against Caesar have I sinned in anything.***

Act 27:9 And we were there a long time, ***until after the day of Yom Kippur***. And it was hazardous then for anyone to go by sea; and Paul warned them,

Act 28:23 And having appointed him a day, more came to him in the lodging, to whom he expounded, earnestly testifying the kingdom of YAHWEH and persuading them the things concerning Yahshua, ***both from the Torah of Moses and the Prophets***, from morning until evening.

1Co 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens all the lump?

1Co 5:7 Then clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. **For our Passover is Messiah who was sacrificed for our sake.**

1Co 5:8 Therefore, let us perform the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and of evil, but with unleavened bread of purity and holiness.

Heb 4:8 For if Joshua the son of Nun had given them rest, then He would not have afterward spoken about another day.

Heb 4:9 It is therefore the duty of the people of YAHWEH to keep the Sabbath.

And even the Apostle John, the last Apostle to be alive and who lived to just about 100 A.D. wrote:

1Jn 2:3 And by this we know that we have known Him, if we keep His commandments.

1Jn 2:4 The one saying, I have known Him, and not keeping His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in that one.

1Jn 2:5 But whoever keeps His Word, truly in this one the love of YAHWEH has been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.

1Jn 2:6 The one claiming to rest in Him, ought to walk, himself, even as He walked.

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of YAHWEH: When we love YAHWEH and keep His commandments.

1Jn 5:3 For this is the love of YAHWEH, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not a burden to us.

You can read my book called “**The Great Falling Away**” to go into much depth as to why these things changed, and that

the Torah of Yahweh is His very character and is binding on New Testament believers according to Scripture.

My point in listing all the above scriptures is to merely show the conclusive evidence that the early believers were indeed keeping these days. I believe you must question the so-called scholars as to why they absolutely neglect to mention, in what is so evident, this fact according to Scripture.

They will mention that early believers were keeping Sunday as their day of rest without even one shred of evidence. As you can see from the scripture above in Acts 20:7, it should be rendered "*and on one of the Sabbaths*". Look in the word for word translation in J.P.Green's Interlinear Bible and you will see that this is what the proper translation should be.

The fact that almost every so-called scholar on earth neglects and dismisses all of the many scriptural references above concerning the belief and doctrines of the early congregation and the days they were worshipping on, is clear evidence that they cannot be trusted in bringing us the true history of the true Congregation that Yahshua built and stated that "*the gates of hell will not prevail against her*". For the very markers of identification of this group is the doctrine they held, the days they worshipped and the character they possessed.

As they went underground in the wilderness late in the fourth century they could not use a congregational name to identify themselves, as the leaders of the empire considered them heretics, and consistently set up pogroms to destroy them. As we will see from the annals of history their enemies called them by many different names, but their original doctrine of

the Apostles and the days they worshipped on and also their stellar character were the clear markers that identified them as the Congregation that Yahshua said, "*the gates of hell will not prevail against her*".

If we cannot trust the scholarly academic world in the simplest matter of Scripture, which is written in each person's own Bible, how can we trust them to give us the proper history of the true Congregation over the last 2,000 years? The answer is simply, we can't. We can clearly see that the Christian academics have an ax to grind and do not want to admit the obvious; that the early believers did indeed continue to keep the Sabbath day (sunset Friday to sunset Saturday), and also the biblical Holy Days of Leviticus the 23rd chapter, as well as the commandments in the Torah. Let's see the following scripture to prove this point:

Luk 23:56 *And returning, they prepared spices and perfume. And indeed **they rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.***

Now, logically think to yourself, if the Sabbath was no longer binding on New Testament believers, why on earth, would Luke (who supposedly was even a gentile) write this in the Good News message, considering he did not write this as it was happening, but wrote it around 60 A.D., a good 30 years later? If the Sabbath was no longer a binding commandment on believers, why would he stress this point when so many other points about the crucifixion could have been stressed some thirty years after the fact? Let's be honest, he wrote this to show that the Sabbath day still was a commandment and Yahshua, as Master of the Sabbath day, was indeed the true Messiah of Israel. In like manner, when we look at 1

Cor. 5:6-8 concerning the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, why would Paul write this in an epistle to mostly gentile believers, who knew nothing about Unleavened Bread or Passover before their conversion, if these days were not being kept?

1Co 5:6 *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens all the lump?*

1Co 5:7 *Then clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. **For our Passover is Messiah** who was sacrificed for our sake.*

1Co 5:8 ***Therefore, let us perform the feast**, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and of evil, but with unleavened bread of purity and holiness.*

Paul clearly states that Yahshua is our Passover and we should still be keeping the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread. The wording in verse 8 *“therefore let us perform the feast”* is written in the command form, clearly showing Paul was telling the brethren that they should be keeping this feast.

It is absolutely dishonest for scholars to write commentaries and completely ignore these facts. But, that is the reason that I am writing this book, because I have spent the last 32 years studying the true history of the Congregation that Yahshua started and said that *“the gates of hell will not prevail against her”*. I have been blessed to travel around the world and visit some of the areas where the congregations in the wilderness were, and it is my sole purpose in this writing to bring out the true history of the true Congregation from 30 A.D. until present. And, what we see from the history of the true Congregation of Yahshua for the last 2,000 years,

besides keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days of Leviticus 23, they also always kept to the basic belief system of Hebrews 6:1 and 2.

Heb 6:1 *Therefore let us leave the elementary word of the Messiah, and let us proceed on to the completion. Why do you lay again another foundation for the repentance from dead works, and for the faith in Elohim,*

Heb 6:2 *and for the doctrine of baptism, and for the laying on of hands, and for the resurrection from the dead, and for the eternal judgment?*

When we follow the trail of the true Congregation of Yahshua through antiquity until today we will find that they always preached repentance from sin and faith in Yahshua as Messiah for the forgiveness of those sins, were a prerequisite for baptism.

Baptism was then full immersion, with the laying on of hands of an ordained elder for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. They believed that the dead are asleep in the grave, and not in heaven, until Yahshua will literally return to this earth for His 1,000 year millennial rule; and the resurrection will take place, and all will be judged for what they have done, good or evil, and the righteous will inherit eternal life and the wicked will be burned in the lake of fire and cease to exist. (Please see Lesson 6 and 7 in our Bible Correspondence online at www.coyhwh.com)

2Co 5:10 *For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he did, whether good or bad.*

If we look at these doctrines now, individually, we will see that these are the core doctrines that made one a true believer in the first century. First and foremost was for a person to repent of his sins and to believe in faith that Yahshua was the eternal Son of Yahweh, who came to earth to die for the forgiveness of their sins. We see this basic outline carried throughout the New Testament teaching starting with Yahshua starting His public ministry in 27 A.D.

Mar 1:4 *John came baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for remission of sins.*

Mar 1:14 *And after John was delivered up, Yahshua came into Galilee proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of YAHWEH,*

Mar 1:15 *And he said, The time is complete and the Kingdom of YAHWEH has arrived. Repent and believe in the good news.*

Luk 13:2 *And answering, Yahshua said to them, Do you think that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans, because they were killed this way?*

Luk 13:3 *No, I say to you, But if you do not repent, you will all likewise be destroyed.*

Act 2:37 *And hearing, they were touched in the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men, our brothers, What shall we do?*

Act 2:38 *And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, each of you in the name of Yahshua YAHWEH for the forgiveness of sins, that you may receive the gift of the Spirit of Holiness.*

Act 3:19 *Repent, therefore, and be turned so that your sins may be blotted out and times of rest come to you from before the presence of YAHWEH.*

Act 26:19 *(Paul speaking) Upon this, king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,*

Act 26:20 *but to those first in Damascus, and Jerusalem, and to all the country of Judea, and to the nations, I proclaimed the command to repent and to turn to YAHWEH, doing works worthy of repentance.*

Rev 3:19 *"I, as many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten." Be zealous, then, and repent.*

This was a basic, but foundational belief to all those who were part of the true Congregation of Yahshua; that coming to faith was not simply joining a new organization or even making a public proclamation, but it was about a true change of life from our old rebellious way of sin and death to the new way of a life of righteousness, through the blood of Yahshua Messiah. They believed that Yahshua was the second Adam and that through baptism and the laying on of hands of an ordained elder that the Spirit of Yahshua was living in the new believer and they would die to the old self and bear fruit just as Yahshua did when He was on the earth.

Entering covenant with Yahweh at baptism is a complete surrender of our free will to the Spirit and judicial order of Yahweh to become a new creation bearing fruit for the soon coming Kingdom of Yahweh. So, it stands to reason if sin is the breaking of the Torah (law), then if we are commanded to repent of sin, and sin still exists, then so must the Torah still exist that defines what sin is.

1Jn 3:4 *Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is the breaking of the Torah.*

The early Congregation did not take sin or repentance lightly, as even John the Baptist boldly scolded the scribes and Pharisees who came to his baptism, to search first their hearts, and repent, and bring forth fruits of that repentance.

Mat 3:7 *But seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, Offspring of vipers! Who has informed you to flee from the wrath to come?*

Mat 3:8 *Therefore, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.*

Mat 3:9 *And do not supposed to say within yourselves, we have a father, Abraham. For I say to you that YAHWEH is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

Mat 3:10 *But already the axe is even laid at the root of the trees; therefore, any tree not bringing forth good fruit is cut off and is thrown into fire.*

True repentance of sin and unequivocal faith in Yahshua for paying the penalty of those sins was a foundational step in entering covenant with Yahweh and becoming a true believer of Yahshua in the first century and throughout antiquity. We will see later when Constantine arrives as emperor and takes the leadership of the Universal (Catholic) Church and administers the custom of infant baptism, that the true Congregation of Yahshua will vehemently fight against this and will never succumb to such heresy, but will always keep the foundational belief of repentance and faith in Yahshua and baptism only as an adult at an accountable age. Once the person has truly repented of sin and accepted the shed blood of Yahshua Messiah to pay the penalty of their sins, then they would be fully immersed in water and baptized, signifying the death to the old person and the new creation that one would become in Messiah.

Col 2:11 *in whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made by hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Messiah, **Col 2:12** being buried with Him in baptism, and by Him you were raised with Him for you believed in the power of YAHWEH, who raised Him from the dead.*

Then, the person would have the laying on of hands, only by an ordained elder, to impart the Holy Spirit to the New Covenant believer. This is actually what makes a person a child of Elohim and an actual member of His family and a firstfruit to Yahweh.

Rom 8:9 *But you are not in flesh, but in Spirit, since the Spirit of YAHWEH dwells in you. But if anyone has not the Spirit of Messiah, this one does not belong to Him.*

Rom 8:10 *But if Messiah is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

Rom 8:11 *But if the Spirit of the One having raised Yahshua from the dead dwells in you, the One having raised the Messiah from the dead will also make your mortal bodies live through the indwelling of His Spirit in you.*

Rom 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of YAHWEH, these are sons of YAHWEH.*

Rom 8:15 *For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again to fear, but you received a Spirit of sonship by which we cry, Abba! Father!*

Rom 8:16 *The Spirit itself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of YAHWEH.*

Rom 8:17 *And if children, also heirs; truly heirs of YAHWEH, and joint heirs of Messiah, if indeed we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together.*

Even look at Yahshua's own baptism at what is stated in Scripture.

Mar 1:9 *And it happened in those days, Yahshua came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*

Mar 1:10 *And going up from the water, immediately He saw the heavens being torn, and the Spirit coming down as a dove upon Him.*

Mar 1:11 *And there was a voice out of the heavens, You are My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am well pleased.*

Yahshua Himself did not need baptism as even John stated that he should be baptized of Yahshua, not the other way around. However, Yahshua told John to allow it, to fulfill all righteousness; meaning, to keep Yahweh's judicial order. Baptism is the mechanism that Yahweh has laid out to receive His Holy Spirit and to literally become a child in His family. Baptism and the laying on of hands, only by an ordained elder of Yahweh, is literally what makes a person a firstfruit.

Rev 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them. And judgment was given to them, and the souls of the ones having been beheaded because of the witness of Yahshua, and because of the Word of YAHWEH, and who had not worshiped the beast nor its image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they lived and reigned with Messiah a thousand years.*

Rev 20:5 *This is the first resurrection.*

Rev 20:6 *Blessed and holy is the one having part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of YAHWEH and of His Messiah, and will reign with Him a thousand years.*

The above scripture shows that one can only be eligible to reign with Yahshua for the thousand year millennial reign if they are a firstfruit; and one can only become a firstfruit and receive the Holy Spirit of Yahweh by being properly baptized with the laying on of hands of an elder of Yahweh.

All the rest of the people who ever lived will be part of the second resurrection after the thousand years are over. Revelation 20:11-15 clearly explains this. However, the second resurrection and the White Throne Judgment have no bearing on the first resurrection and true covenant followers and bride of Messiah, because they are already glorified spirit beings at His return. This is an extremely important part of why the true history of the true covenant believers of Yahshua is extremely important as only true covenant members will be in this first resurrection. And clearly the way to enter covenant with Yahweh through the blood of Yahshua is to be properly baptized and have hands laid on by a true ordained elder of Yahshua for the imparting of the Ruach H' Chodesh (Holy Spirit). Look at the following important scripture.

Act 8:12 *But when they believed Philip preaching the good news, the things concerning the kingdom of YAHWEH, and in the name of Yahshua Messiah, they were baptized, both men and women.*

Act 8:13 *And Simon himself also believed, and being baptized was continuing steadfastly with Philip. And seeing miracles and mighty works happening, he was amazed.*

Act 8:14 *And the apostles in Jerusalem hearing that Samaria had received the Word of YAHWEH, they sent Simon Peter and John to them,*

Act 8:15 *who going down prayed concerning them **so that they may receive the Holy Spirit.***

Act 8:16 *For it was not upon any one of them yet, but they were only being baptized in the name of the Master Yahshua.*

Act 8:17 *Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Act 8:18 *But when Simon Magus saw **that the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of the hands of the apostles,*** he offered them money,

Act 8:19 *saying, **Give to me also this authority that to whomever I may lay on the hands he may receive the Holy Spirit.***

Act 8:20 *But Peter said to him, May your silver be with you into destruction, because you thought to obtain the gift of YAHWEH through money.*

Act 8:21 *You have no part or portion in this faith because your heart is not straight before YAHWEH.*

Act 8:22 *Repent, then, from this wickedness of yours, and petition Elohim if perhaps you will be forgiven the thought of your heart.*

The above scripture is extremely telling; not only does it clearly prove that the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of hands of a true ordained elder of Yahshua, but it also clearly shows that there will be counterfeit imposters, such as Simon Magus, who through trickery and false signs deceive the people into thinking they are ministers of Yahshua. Look at the following scripture from the Apostle Paul.

2Co 11:3 *But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve in his craftiness, so your thoughts should be corrupted from the purity which is in Messiah.*

2Co 11:4 *For if, indeed one comes to you proclaiming another Yahshua, whom we have not proclaimed, or if you receive another spirit which you have not received, or another good news which you never accepted, you might have listened to him.*

2Co 11:13 *For such ones are false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Messiah.*

2Co 11:14 *There is no marvel in this; for if Satan disguises himself into an angel of light,*

2Co 11:15 *it is not a great thing then, if his ministers also pose themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

Paul is clearly stating that just as Satan deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that Satan would have a counterfeit faith and a counterfeit congregation, actually starting with Simon Magus, and strengthened later through Constantine, and that false religion is most universally accepted today.

This counterfeit congregation would preach a gospel about Messiah, but not the actual Good News message that He brought proclaiming the very Kingdom of Yahweh and its physical establishment on this earth, and the way to enter by repentance of sin, faith in His sacrifice, and baptism with proper laying on of hands by His ordained elders for the receiving of the Holy Spirit to become a literal child of Yahweh.

Then, after baptism, the new believer would have a new way of life based on the Torah of Yahweh, but not simply in the letter, but the actual spiritual intent which teaches us how to love Yahweh with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and how to love our neighbor as ourselves. The New Testament reveals the fallen nature of man, and that unless we surrender our human nature to Yahweh and allow His Holy Spirit to change us into the very nature of Yahweh Himself, then we will perish and not have part in His soon coming Kingdom.

Rom 8:13 *for if you live according to flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.*

Rom 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of YAHWEH, these are sons of YAHWEH.*

The New Testament also affirms the fact that the Torah is holy, just and good, and is not the problem, but we are the problem, due to our fallen nature; due to our rebellion against Yahweh and His Torah.

Rom 7:12 *So indeed the Torah is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

Rom 7:14 *For we know that the Torah is spiritual, but I am fleshly, having been sold under sin.*

It also teaches us that we cannot recognize sin without the Torah, as the Torah is what shows us sin from righteousness, and as mentioned in 1John 3:4, sin is the breaking of the Torah.

Rom 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the instruction sin? Let it not be! But I did not know sin except through the Torah; for also I did not know lust except the Torah said, "You shall not lust."*

Paul also clearly explains that without the Spirit of Yahweh, not only is it impossible to keep the Torah, but that our natural mind before baptism and the imparting of the Holy Spirit is actually hatred against Yahweh's Torah.

Rom 8:5 *For the ones that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh. And the ones according to Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.*

Rom 8:6 *To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace;*

Rom 8:7 *because the mind of the flesh is enmity towards YAHWEH; for it is not subject to the Torah of YAHWEH, for it is not possible to be so.*

Then, Paul clearly tells us that by being baptized and entering covenant relationship with Yahweh and having our sins paid for by the blood of Yahshua does not exempt us from the Torah, but it should establish the Torah in our lives and should be a living example to others of the true intent of the Torah.

Rom 8:3 *For the Torah being powerless, in that it was weak through the flesh, YAHWEH sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,*

Rom 8:4 *so that the righteous demand of the Torah might be fulfilled in us, those not walking according to flesh, but according to Spirit.*

Rom 3:31 *Do we then nullify the Torah by faith? Far be it. On the contrary, we establish the Torah!*

Rom 2:11 *For there is no respect of persons with YAHWEH.*

Rom 2:12 *For as many as have sinned without the Torah will also perish without the Torah. And as many as sinned within the Torah will be judged through the Torah.*

Rom 2:13 *For not the hearers of the Torah are righteous with YAHWEH, but the doers of the Torah shall be justified.*

However, as mentioned in 2 Cor. 11, there would be a counterfeit congregation established parallel to the true Congregation of Yahweh. This false church would not bring the true message of mankind's fallen nature and rebellion against Yahweh and His eternal Word, but it would preach another gospel, a gospel that Paul states does not even exist; about a false personage of Yahshua unconditionally loving everyone and not coming to save us "*from*" our sins, but "*in*" our sins.

This false gospel would be promoted through false signs and wonders and an easy feel good message with no true substance. It would also be centered around money and power as Simon Magus tried to bribe the Apostles with. However, Yahweh gave us a clear sign to know the true Elohim guided servants that He ordained from the false, satanically inspired messengers of Satan.

Isa 8:20 *To the Torah and to the Testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light to them!*

The sign was not doing humanitarian works or simply stating that they love everyone, as we have already seen that Satan's messengers come masqueraded as angels of light, as he does also; but the true sign of a true ordained elder of Yahweh is that they keep and teach His Torah.

The Torah also is the very book that outlines with around 300 messianic prophecies who the Messiah of Israel is. How could one know the true Messiah from all the false ones without the Torah? Remember, what we know as the New Testament was not written and codified until late first century or early 2nd century, so what did the Apostles use to teach that Yahshua was the prophesied Messiah of Israel?

Act 28:23 *And having appointed him a day, more came to him in the lodging, to whom he expounded, earnestly testifying the kingdom of YAHWEH and persuading them the things concerning Yahshua, **both from the Torah of Moses and the Prophets**, from morning until evening.*

The true apostolic congregation faithfully kept the Word of Yahweh and the doctrines given to them by Yahshua Himself. They also kept the original judicial order laid out by Yahshua.

Eph 4:11 *And indeed He (Yahshua) has assigned some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some shepherds and teachers;*

Eph 4:12 *for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Messiah,*

Eph 4:13 *until we all may come to the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a full-grown*

man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah,

Eph 4:14 *so that we may no longer be children, being blown and carried about by every wind of false doctrine of men, who through their craftiness are very skillful in deceiving the people;*

Eph 4:15 *but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, the Messiah,*

Yahshua set a judicial order in His Congregation with ordained elders that would care for and nurture the brethren who He would call. Satan, as we saw from 2 Cor. 11:14-15 would do the same. Satan would imitate Yahshua's Congregation but change doctrine and protocol in extremely important, subtle ways.

But remember, someone cannot simply ordain himself. Yahshua clearly ordained the twelve, who ordained others, and they ordained others in a successive, unbroken chain until today. We will clearly see this unbroken chain throughout the history in this book.

Mar 3:14 *And He ordained disciples of twelve, that they might be with Him; and that He might send them to proclaim,*
Mar 3:15 *and to have authority to heal diseases, and to cast out the demons.*

Joh 20:22 *And saying this, He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.*

Joh 20:23 *If you forgive a man's sins, they will be forgiven. And if you retain the sins of a man, they will be retained.*

Notice how Yahshua not only physically laid hands on these men and ordained them, but He gave them authority. The

authority that He gave them through ordination was to be able to transfer His Spirit through the laying on of hands after water baptism for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. In addition, as John 20:22-23 shows us, they also had the ability, as with Simon Magus, to refuse baptism to someone who had not repented and was not in the proper frame of mind or heart to receive the gift of Yahweh's Spirit. In Acts 8, why did Simon Magus have to beg and even offer money for Peter to ordain him? It is because he realized that although he could fake miracles through sorcery, he could not fake the transferring of the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit could only be transferred through true, ordained elders of Yahshua who had the authority from Him to do so.

Act 8:18 *But when Simon Magus saw that the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money,*

Act 8:19 *saying, Give to me also this authority that to whomever I may lay on the hands he may receive the Holy Spirit.*

Today, Satan's messengers, who sell the Word of Yahweh and market the words of the Bible for gain, do not have the authority from Yahweh to transfer His Spirit to others, because they have never been properly ordained themselves by another true, ordained elder of Yahweh and given such authority. The Apostle Paul also sent out Titus (who was ordained by him) to ordain elders in each city. In order to lay hands on and ordain someone for elderhood, it stands to reason, the person must himself have been ordained properly first.

Tit 1:5 *For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things lacking and ordain elders in every city, as I ordered you:*

In Acts 8, we see that Philip, a deacon, had gone preaching in Samaria, and many were accepting the message and coming to faith. However, a deacon does not have the authority to do the laying on of hands, only an elder can, who is acting in the office of the New Testament priesthood of Melchizedek. So, when the elders came from Jerusalem and Simon Magus saw that only an ordained elder of Yahweh can transfer His spirit through baptism and laying on of hands he offered them money for “**this authority**”.

I cannot stress this point enough, as this is one of the most important points of going through the true history of the true Congregation of Yahshua, to show that there is indeed two trees set; one tree is the true tree that came directly from Yahshua with His ordained leadership, and continues until today, keeping the commandments of Yahweh with the faith of Yahshua; and the other is a tree started by Simon Magus, replanted by Constantine the Great, and which hates the commandments of Yahweh and is a false, pagan religion of Satan.

Revelation 12:9 clearly states that Satan has deceived the whole world, and if we look at Christianity as a whole and compare it to the original faith of the Apostles and early believers, we must admit they are two different congregations with two different sources of authority.

The Apostle Jude states the following:

Jud 1:3 *Having made all haste to write to you about the common salvation, beloved, I had need to write to you to exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.*

Jud 1:4 *For certain men stole in, those of old having been written before to this condemnation, wicked ones perverting the grace of our Elohim into lasciviousness, and denying the only Sovereign Elohim, and our Master Yahshua Messiah.*

This is what we need to do today as prophecy is moving ahead and the Kingdom of Yahweh is right before us. We must earnestly contend for that early, original faith and repent of the sins of the past and move on in simplicity and truth.

Matthew 24:14 states that *“the good-news of the Kingdom will be preached to all nations, and then, the end will come”*, and the return to earth of Yahshua Messiah for the establishing of His eternal Kingdom.

We need to decide which congregation we want to belong to; is it the corporate, gigantic, moneymaking church of the world, or do we want to be part of the true, little flock that Yahshua started in spirit and truth, the congregation that He stated *“the gates of hell will not prevail against her”*.

Chapter 2 – Gentiles Being Grafted In

In the first chapter I took extensive time to lay the foundation of the belief system of the early congregation, started by Yahshua in 30 A.D. with the foundation being of the prophets and the Apostles, Yahshua being the chief cornerstone. If the congregation had stayed primarily Jews and Israelites, then we would not even need this discussion, as it would look very similar to Judaism today with the exception of the oral law that the believers of Yahshua did not recognize or keep.

However, that did not happen. As we know, the wonderful plan of Yahweh was when Judah rejected the Good News message of Yahshua (Joh 1:11), then Yahshua sent His disciples out to the world to call and gather the tribes of Israel in Diaspora back into covenant relationship. My book called “**The Chosen People**” goes into this in detail.

Mat 10:5 *Yahshua sent these twelve out, charging them, saying do not go into the way of the heathen, and do not go into a Samaritan city.*

Mat 10:6 ***But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.***

Mat 28:19 *Then having gone, disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son,*

Mat 28:20 *and the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age. Amen.*

However, Yahweh is not a respecter of persons and when the Apostles and disciples were to go into the four corners of the world seeking the Israelites in Diaspora to come back

into covenant relationship with Yahweh, anyone of any race or creed who truly repented of their sins and accepted the shed blood of Yahshua for paying the penalty of those sins could also join the covenant of Yahweh and be a full equal citizen of the spiritual Kingdom of Israel.

So now, as we see in Romans 9-11, there would be a spiritual nation of Israel made up of the converted believers around the world, and there would be the physical nation of Israel, where the physical nation dwelt in the Middle East. This will prove to be a major change and also bring a most unwelcome social upheaval to the Congregation of Yahweh.

However, I must emphatically state the fact that this did not take place for around 12 to 14 years after the New Testament congregation had started. In order to be able to trace the true Congregation that Yahshua started in 30 A.D., we must understand that the heresies and social upheaval brought in by gentile converts did not take place for around 12 to 14 years after the congregation was firmly established.

This point must be stressed as when we travel through antiquity we will see doctrinal heresies and many false changes brought in by the Universal Church under bishops and overseers, and if someone is trying to contend for the faith once delivered, as spoken by our beloved brother Jude, then we must go back to the original doctrine and tenets set out by the Apostles themselves who got them directly by Yahshua.

There is a reason why Yahshua had a two to two-and-a-half year ministry, as He could have simply come and died and paid the penalty of sin without this. The reason for the

extended ministry was to be able to train leadership and ordain the Apostles to set a proper foundation for the New Testament congregation that He would begin.

You must also understand, as we laid out in the last chapter, in Ephesians the fourth chapter Yahshua set judicial order and a governmental structure in His congregation that started in 30 A.D. with the Apostles, and has continued throughout the last two thousand years until today.

Becoming a true believer and entering covenant with Yahweh is not just about you and your sins; it is about joining the very family of Yahweh and entering His spiritual nation, which has elders and deacons and true servants of Yahweh all over the earth for the edifying of the saints and the building of the body of Messiah till we all come to the fullness of Yahshua at His return.

In this end time Laodicean era, this fact has been greatly diminished and even nullified in many circumstances due to mankind's wicked nature and selfish ambitions, instead of the spirit of outgoing concern and submission to Yahweh in all things, including the very ordained elders that He has on this earth to represent Him.

The word Laodicean means ruled by the people, and we see that attitude all over the world today. We see the mob mentality of taking to the streets and violently demanding whatever it is that they want that particular day. Yahshua said that in the last days it would be like the days of Noah, and in Genesis 6:11 it states that '*the earth was corrupt before Elohim, and violence filled the earth*'. These are the days we are living in today.

However, if you are one of the not only called, but chosen ones and you want to truly enter the mindset and covenant of Yahweh Almighty, then you must forget about the evil democracy mindset of the world today and strive to have a Kingdom mentality. As in a Kingdom each subject is 100% dedicated to the King in all things, and the King is 100% dedicated to make sure all His citizens are cared for.

So the judicial order and governmental structure that Yahshua set in the New Covenant cannot be dismissed or downplayed if one truly wants to enter covenant with Yahweh and prepare to be a servant in His soon coming Kingdom. In the Kingdom of Yahweh there will be full judicial order in all things and the Torah will be the foundation of truth and law.

Mic 4:2 *And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YAHWEH, and to the house of the Elohim of Jacob. And He will teach us from His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For the Torah shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of YAHWEH from Jerusalem.*

As we see from the above scripture the Kingdom of Yahweh started in Jerusalem with the Garden of Eden, continued with the nation of Israel, and will be the place that Yahshua reigns from in His soon coming millennial reign.

That is why there is no coincidence that in these end times Yahweh has once again established His end time work from Jerusalem, His headquarters, through this ministry. I also recognize that Yahweh has many administrations around the world that He is also working through, but Jerusalem has

been and always will be His headquarters, and He has blessed His end time work from here to the nations mightily. He has also blessed this branch of His work with elders and brethren and congregations around the world.

Again, I am taking the time to explain this so that the truly converted being led by the Holy Spirit can understand the importance of judicial order and how the Universal or Catholic Church has hijacked the true congregation Yahshua started, and replaced the true doctrine with heresies and falsehoods, and almost every Christian congregation on earth has to one form or another come out from that Universal or Catholic Church.

It is important to lay these facts out now as we enter a time in the early congregation where gentiles (non-Israelites) will be coming into the covenant. At first, these non-Israelites were more semi-proselytes than they were really gentiles. What is the difference? A semi-proselyte was one who went to synagogue, kept the Sabbath and the Torah with the dietary laws, but stopped short of circumcision because ethnically he was not an Israelite. We see this situation with Cornelius, who was the first non-Israelite proselyte to enter the New Covenant.

Act 10:1 *But a certain man, Cornelius by name, was in Caesarea, a centurion of a cohort being called Italian,*

Act 10:2 *one **righteous and fearing YAHWEH** with all his house, both doing many alms to the people and praying continually to YAHWEH.*

Act 10:3 *About the ninth hour of the day, he saw plainly in a vision a cherub of YAHWEH coming to him, and saying to him, Cornelius!*

The fact that this scripture mentions Cornelius as a righteous Elohim fearing man is clear proof that he was indeed a semi-proselyte to Judaism. The term Elohim fearing or righteous gentile is a term used of non-Israelites who went to synagogue, and kept the Sabbath day and the Torah, stopping short of circumcision because they were not ethnically Jewish. ¹

So even the first non-Israelites to enter the New Covenant were already semi-proselytes, and from a cultural standpoint, were not much different from their Israelite brethren. This is important to note, as we will see that when the true gentiles from the Greek and Roman areas enter the New Covenant, they will at times bring with them baggage from their pagan backgrounds. However, these gentiles, such as Cornelius, who were also living in Israel and semi-proselytes to Judaism, had no such problems.

Also, let's look closer at the story of Cornelius, as many have wrongly assumed that the story is giving credence to it being permissible to eat unclean food. The truth of the matter is much different as we will see. Let's look at Peter's vision and see the true meaning behind it, taking into account the cultural changes that will be taking place, with non-Israelites now coming into the New Covenant as 100% equals with their Jewish brethren.

Act 10:9 *And the next day, as they passed along on the road, and drawing near to the city, Simon Peter went up on the roof to pray about the sixth hour.*

Act 10:10 *And he hungered and desired to eat. And while they prepared for him, a stupor fell over him.*

Act 10:11 *And he saw the heaven being opened and a certain vessel like a great sheet coming down on him, being bound by four corners, and let down onto the earth;*

Act 10:12 *in which were **all the four-footed animals of the earth**, and the wild beasts, and the creeping things, and the birds of the heaven.*

Act 10:13 *And a voice came to him, Rise up, Peter, **slay and eat.***

Act 10:14 *But Peter said, Elohim forbid my Master, because I never did eat anything **common** or unclean.*

Act 10:15 *And again a voice came to him a second time, What things YAHWEH made clean, you do not make common.*

First of all, it must be noted that those who hold to the belief that Yahshua said that believers can eat unclean food are being completely dishonest to the truth of Scripture. If you look at the following scripture that this erroneous belief stems from we will see that it states nothing of the sort.

Mat 15:2 *Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.*

Mat 15:3 *But answering He said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of YAHWEH on account of your tradition?*

Mat 15:7 *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, saying*

Mat 15:8 *"This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips honor Me; but their heart holds far off from Me.*

Mat 15:9 *But in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Isa. 29:13)*

Mat 15:10 *And calling the crowd near, He said to them,
Hear and understand*

Mat 15:11 *It is not the thing entering into the mouth that
defiles the man, but the thing coming forth out of the mouth,
this defiles the man*

Mat 15:15 *And answering, Simon Peter said to Him, Explain
this parable to us.*

Mat 15:16 *But Yahshua said, until now, even you do not
understand?*

Mat 15:17 *Do you not yet perceive that everything entering
into the mouth goes into the belly, and is thrown out into the
waste bowl?*

Mat 15:18 *But whatever that proceeds from the mouth
proceeds from the heart and becomes a defilement to a
man.*

Mat 15:19 *For from the heart go out evil thoughts Murder,
fornication, theft, false witness, blasphemy.*

Mat 15:20 *These things are the things defiling the man. **But
eating with unwashed hands does not defile the man.***

Some Bible translators erroneously add the words in verse 17 “*making all food clean*”. This is not in any manuscript, Greek or Aramaic, and would be an absolute ridiculous thought, as in the first century Jewish mindset pig was not even considered food, nevermind thought of to eat. If one is honest with themselves, it is extremely clear that this scripture is speaking about the unbiblical traditions of the Pharisees in washing their hands a certain way before eating. Even today, the Ultra-Orthodox Jews wash their hands by pouring a certain way with a specific vessel for the water.

The Pharisees were trying to get any offense against Yahshua that they could, and even at His trial before being crucified they had to bring in false witnesses because He committed no offense against anyone. If Yahshua had said that pork and unclean food were ok to eat, which would have greatly violated the Torah; don't you think that the Pharisees, who went to any length to trap Him even in His speech, would have condemned Him for this?

The truth of the matter is that pigs and unclean food were not even allowed in areas where Jews lived in the first century. So rigid was the Pharisaical thinking that they would not even use olive oil that was pressed by a gentile, as they considered it common. The word common was a term for something that was not unclean by Scripture, but something that was used or even touched by non-Jews. So with this rigid way of thinking it is ludicrous to think Yahshua would state that unclean food is ok to eat. Anyone stating such nonsense knows nothing about the cultural setting of Israel in the first century A.D.

As someone who has lived here in Israel for the better part of the last 15 years I can clearly understand the cultural problems of the 1st century A.D., considering that many of the same cultural divides still appear today. As a matter of fact, when you look at Peter's reply to the vision in Acts 10:14 he clearly states that he has never eaten anything common or unclean. Now remember, not only is this taking place around 12 years after the resurrection, but it was not written down by Luke until around the year 61 A.D. This is further proof that Yahshua never declared unclean food to suddenly be proper to eat. Now, let's look a little deeper into the story in Acts to show that Yahweh was not declaring

unclean food, according to Leviticus the 11th chapter, now legal to eat.

Act 10:11 *And he saw the heaven being opened and a certain vessel like a great sheet coming down on him, being bound by four corners, and let down onto the earth;*

Act 10:12 *in which were **all the four-footed animals of the earth**, and the wild beasts, and the creeping things, and the birds of the heaven.*

Act 10:13 *And a voice came to him, Rise up, Peter, **slay and eat**.*

Now if you are honest with this scripture, nowhere does it state for Peter to eat unclean food. If you read verse 12 there were every kind of four footed animal on this sheet including sheep, cows, goats, etc. Then, the voice in verse 13 simply states to slay and eat; it NEVER mentions eating the unclean food. Then Peter's answer is as follows:

Act 10:14 *But Peter said, Elohim forbid my Master, because I never did eat anything **common** or unclean.*

Peter did not only state that he never ate anything unclean, but he also mentions that he never ate anything "*common*". Peter could have eaten the clean animals on the sheet, but as we mentioned, according to the Jewish custom of the first century if something that was non-kosher came in contact with something that was kosher, then it made the kosher or clean food common. In the same manner, if a non-Jew touched the food of a Jew the food would become common and not be able to be eaten or even touched again. This was the crux of the problem. It really had nothing to do with food whatsoever, as Yahweh never states that unclean food is

now edible; but Yahweh was using the analogy of clean and unclean food to show Peter that people who Yahweh will graft into the covenant of Israel should not be considered as common or any less than an Israelite-born covenant believer.

Act 10:15 *And again a voice came to him a second time, **What things YAHWEH made clean, you do not make common.***

Now let's look at what Peter tells Cornelius when he meets him.

Act 10:28 *You know that **it is not lawful for a Yehudean man to associate with or come near to a foreign man** who is not a son of his tribe, but YAHWEH showed to me concerning a man not to say that he is common or unclean.*

Act 10:34 *And opening his mouth, Peter said, Truly I see that **YAHWEH is not a respecter of faces,***

Act 10:35 *but in every nation the one fearing Him and working righteousness is acceptable to Him.*

Peter claimed in verse 28 that it was unlawful for a Jewish man to come near a gentile; but yet, if you search the entire Torah you will not find such a law. This was part of the manmade traditions of the Pharisees with their non-biblical oral laws; and yet, because of the extremely strong cultural pressure in those days, Yahweh had to show a powerful lesson to Peter to allow him to understand that there is total equality of brethren in the New Covenant. Let's see the result of this.

Act 10:44 *As Simon was yet speaking these words, the Holy Spirit rested on all those hearing the Word.*

Act 10:45 *And the brothers, those circumcised, who came with him, were amazed and astonished that the gift of the Spirit was even poured out upon Gentiles.*

Act 10:46 *For they heard them speaking in different languages and magnifying YAHWEH. Then Simon answered,*

Act 10:47 *Can anyone forbid the water that these not be baptized, who the Holy Spirit received, even as we also?*

Act 10:48 *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of our Master Yahshua the Messiah. Then they asked him to remain some days.*

So Peter understood the message but this would not end the deep cultural separation that was present between Jews and Gentiles in the first century. As a matter of fact, later on, several years after this story, the Apostle Paul actually rebukes Peter for succumbing to peer pressure and not wanting to sit and eat with Gentiles.

Gal 2:11 *But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was to be blamed.*

Gal 2:12 *For before some came from Jacob, he ate with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, being afraid of those of the circumcision.*

Gal 2:13 *And all the others who were from Judah submitted with him on this issue, so that even Barnabas was lead into their hypocrisy.*

It is almost impossible to truly understand the Holy Scriptures and their original intent without understanding the cultural setting behind them. That is why I believe taking a

pilgrimage to Israel, and actually seeing with your eyes the setting of the entire Bible will dramatically change your life and you will never read the Scriptures the same again. According to Jewish custom, a Jew could not sit and eat with a gentile or an uncircumcised person; this was a major problem for the early congregation. On the other hand, as the Apostle Paul started to go out to the nations, at first he went to Jewish synagogues and dealt with many Israelites as well as gentiles, but as the message was being rejected by many Jews, Paul started to build almost exclusively gentile congregations.

Act 18:4 *And he reasoned in the synagogue on every Sabbath persuading both Jews and the pagans.*

Act 18:5 *And when both Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul felt he was not free to speak, because the Jews oppressed him and blasphemed as he earnestly testified that Yahshua is the Messiah.*

Act 18:6 *So he having shaken his garments, he said to them, Your blood be on your head. I am pure from it; from now on I will go to the nations.*

Act 18:7 *And moving from there, he went into the house of one, Titus by name, one worshiping YAHWEH, whose house was next door to the synagogue.*

Act 18:8 *And Crispus, the synagogue ruler, believed in our Master along with all his house. And hearing many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.*

This caused much greater problems as many gentiles were bringing their pagan customs into the congregation; and this is the era around 50-65 A.D. where many heresies arose from such beliefs as Gnosticism (worship of knowledge) and

Asceticism (worship of angels). Paul had to write about these false beliefs in some of his epistles:

Col 2:8 *Watch that there not be one misleading you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Messiah.*

Col 2:16 *Therefore do not let anyone (outside the body) judge among you about eating, or drinking, or in how you keep the feast days, or the new moon, or the Sabbath day,*

Col 2:17 *which remain shadows of coming things, but the body of Messiah.*

Col 2:18 *Let no one, by pretense of sincerity, doom you so that you worship cherubs; for he is bold about things which he has not seen, and foolishly he is vainly inflated in his intellectual superiority.*

Col 2:19 *That person does not uphold the Head, by whom all the body is constructed and stands with the joints and members, and grows through the discipline of YAHWEH.*

Col 2:20 *If, then, you died with Messiah from the elements of the world, why are you under its decrees, as living in the world?*

Col 2:21 *Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch,*

Col 2:22 *for these things are customs which are changeable; and they are the commandments and doctrines of men.*

These Ascetics and Gnostics thought anything dealing with the mortal side of life was vanity and should be avoided, and they were judging brethren in the way they were observing the Sabbath and New Moon celebration with feasting as something sinful. They also claimed false visions of seeing angels and tried to portray a false higher spirituality that was

not indeed real but imagined. Coming from pagan cultures, as many of these new brethren did, was quite a challenge for the Apostle Paul and the other elders to keep the brethren on the straight path of truth, and from going outside of Yahweh's judicial order and the leadership He ordained to the false teachings of others.

In the next chapter we will see about the great disappointment that happened when Yahshua did not return as some had thought, and the struggles that the early believers went through as the Sanctuary of Yahweh was destroyed and the Romans clamped down on their rule in the Holy Land and the rest of the Roman Empire.

Chapter 3 – Disappointment When Yahshua Doesn't Return

I stated earlier in the book that to really understand the mindset of the early congregation you must understand the cultural setting that was in the background as the congregation was developing. One of the most predominant things going on during this time was the controlling power of the Roman Empire. Remember, Yahweh's Sanctuary was initially destroyed by the Babylonians around 586 B.C. after the northern tribes of Israel had already been in captivity by Assyria for some 140-150 years.

There was a small remnant of Jews that returned to Israel during the rule of Persia around 538 B.C., during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. However, Israel was not a sovereign nation and was controlled by the Persians first, then the Greeks and eventually the Romans. The cultural setting and daily living conditions cannot be downplayed or diminished, as at times during the Roman rule Josephus tells us that up to 500 Jews a day were being crucified. There was a great distain between the Romans and the Jews in general and the two cultures did not mix much in Israel at this time. As a matter of fact, it was the Romans who, to mock the Jewish nation, started calling the land of Israel Palestine after the Philistines who, from the time that Israel entered the Holy Land under Joshua, were a thorn in their side continually. Interesting enough, the land of Israel remained being called Palestine until 1948 when the modern state of Israel was formed.

The Hasmoneans were a group of aristocrats who urged appeasement with the Roman's; whereas, the Zealots were

a group of militia fighters who wanted to take the country by force. At least one of Yahshua's Apostles was even a Zealot (Luk 6:15). By the time of 66 A.D. and the Great Revolt against the Romans, many Jews had joined into the mindset of independence through physical fighting.

Today, the average new believer coming into covenant relationship with Yahweh through the shed blood of Yahshua, His Son, would have a totally different mindset than an Israelite who came to faith in the first century. As today most of those who come to faith do so, as they understand that they are sinners and have a death penalty hanging over their heads for the sins committed, and that only by repenting and accepting the great sacrifice of Yahshua, our Savior, can we have that penalty removed.

However, in the first century the mindset was completely different. They looked at the Messiah as a son of David who was coming to restore Israel to its predominance as a nation under the kingship of David and Solomon. It took some time for even the Apostles to understand that the Kingdom of Yahweh was not to come immediately, and had to be instituted as a mindset and way of life, in which we live in a kingdom mindset daily before the physical Kingdom of Yahweh would be set up on the earth at a later time. Look at the following scripture to prove this point.

Act 1:6 *Then, indeed, coming together they questioned Him, saying, Master, **do You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?***

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Israel still did not understand about the great 7,000 year plan of Yahweh and

that there would be 2,000 years before Yahshua's return and setting up of the Kingdom of Yahweh on earth. As a matter of fact, due to different reasoning, the early believers after Yahshua's ascension to heaven actually thought that He would be returning forty years later in 70 A.D.

They equated this with the forty years that Israel had in the wilderness where they failed to enter the Promised Land, with the New Covenant believers now succeeding in what Israel failed with, and then, the Kingdom being set up on earth. We know from the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Essene sect in Qumran, in which some priests also became believers (Acts 6:7), had a similar eschatology.

You can understand their thought pattern; with daily suppression going on by the Romans to the point that the Roman governor actually held the garments of the high priest that he needed on Yom Kippur and would only release them if the Jews were stemming any violence in their opinion.

They were living in extremely harsh circumstances; as remember, it was not being widely accepted in the Jewish faith that Yahshua was the Messiah, and many believers were being ostracized and even kicked out of the synagogues.

Joh 9:22 *His parents said these things because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Him as Messiah, he would be expelled from the synagogue.*

So, very clearly they were looking for a kingdom now. Let's look at a few scriptures that would have added to these early believers' conviction that Yahshua would be returning by 70 A.D., in their lifetime.

Joh 21:20 *But turning, Peter saw the disciple whom Yahshua loved following them, who also leaned on His breast at the Supper, and said, Master, who is the one betraying You?*

Joh 21:21 *Seeing him, Peter said to Yahshua, Master, and what of this one?*

Joh 21:22 *Yahshua said to him, What is it to you if I desire that this man remain until I return? You come and follow me!*

Joh 21:23 *Therefore, the word went out to the brothers that that disciple does not die. Yet Yahshua did not say to him that he does not die, but, If I desire him to remain until I come, what is that to you?*

Mat 16:27 *For it is necessary for the Son of man to come in the glory of his Father. And then with his holy cherubs he will reward each man according to his work. (Psa. 62:12)*

Mat 16:28 *Truly I say to you, There are men standing here who will not taste of death, never, until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*

Mat 24:33 *so also you, when you see all these things, know that it is near at the doors.*

Mat 24:34 *Truly I say to you, In no way will this generation pass away until all these things have occurred.*

There already were wars and rumors of wars, there was a worldwide famine that occurred and also great earthquakes, and a horrific persecution that started on the believers after

Nero burned down Rome in 64 A.D. So you can see why the early believers would have thought that Yahshua was returning in their lifetime by 70 A.D, after another 40 year period of a spiritual wilderness, in which Israel would be overcomers this time, until His return.

Even the Apostles thought that Yahshua's return was imminent.

1Co 10:11 *(Paul writing) And all these things happened to those as examples, and it was written for our warning, on whom the ends of the ages have come.*

1Th 4:15 *For we say this to you in the Word of YAHWEH, that we the living who remain to the coming of our Master will not at all go before those who have fallen asleep.*

1Th 4:16 *Because the Master Himself shall come down from Heaven with a commanding shout of an archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of YAHWEH. And the dead in Messiah will rise again first.*

1Th 4:17 *Then **we who remain alive** will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet with our Master in the air. And so we will always be with our Master.*

1Pe 1:20 *(Peter writing) indeed having been preordained for this very purpose before the foundation of the world, but revealed **in the last times because of you,***

1Pe 4:7 ***But the end of all things has drawn near.** Be of sound mind then, and be mindful of prayers;*

1Jn 2:18 *(John writing) Little children, **it is a last hour,** and as you heard that the anti-Messiah is coming, even now many anti-Messiahs have risen up, from which you know that it is a last hour.*

Rev 22:6 *And he said to me, These Words are faithful and true. And YAHWEH Elohim of the holy prophets sent His cherub to show His slaves what must happen quickly.*

Rev 22:20 *The One testifying these things says, **Yes, I am coming quickly.** Amen. Yes, come, Master Yahshua!*

Ja 5:7 *(Jacob writing) Therefore, brothers, be patient until the coming of our Master. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it may receive the early and the latter rain.*

Ja 5:8 *You also be patient. Set your hearts firmly, **because the coming of our Master has drawn near.***

Clearly, the Apostles and the early believers thought that Yahshua was returning in their lifetime, and although they were living in such dire situations with extreme persecution they thought if they could hold on just a few more years, Yahshua would return and the Kingdom would be here.

Let's look at the timeline from the early 60's and see how this mindset affected the early congregation. 62 A.D. was a sabbatical year that they believed started the last seven years before the return of Messiah. 63 A.D. was exactly 666 years from 604 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar first invaded the Temple in Jerusalem. 62 A.D. was also the year that the Apostle Jacob, the half-brother of Yahshua was killed which started a great persecution.

Also in 62A.D. a man by the name of Joshua Ben Annais started a 7 ½ year prophecy before the destruction of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem. He prophesied over and over that the Sanctuary of Yahweh would be destroyed.

In 64 A.D. Nero the Emperor was advised to move the headquarters of Rome to Jerusalem; however, he never followed through with the plan.

In 63 A.D. the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Colossians and stated that *"the good news which you have heard and which has been preached in all the creation under Heaven"*, thinking he was fulfilling the commission in Matthew 24:14 to take the Good News of Yahshua to all the world so Yahshua could return.

However, by 66 A.D. the believers realized that the things that needed to happen for Yahshua to return by 70 A.D. was not going to happen. Then, also in 66 A.D., the Great Revolt against the Romans broke out and many Israelites decided to join the war against the Romans.

Then, the believers in Israel, after hearing a voice from the Holy Spirit, fled to Pella, which is on the other side of the Jordan River, in the north across from the city of Bet Shean. Also, since many believers in Israel were seeing that Yahshua was not going to return immediately at that point as they thought, many also joined in the Great Revolt and started to fight against the Roman occupation. The Apostle Peter writes the following in his epistle in this regard.

2Pe 2:10 *and especially will He punish those who follow after the filthy lusts of the flesh, and have no respect for authority. Self-willed and arrogant they are and they do not tremble when they blaspheme;*

2Pe 2:11 *where cherubs being greater in strength and power do not bring against them the condemnation of blaspheming.*

2Pe 2:12 *But these men, like the dumb beasts, which by nature are for slaughter and destruction, speak evil of the things that they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption;*

2Pe 2:17 *These are springs without water, clouds being driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of darkness has been kept forever.*

2Pe 2:18 *For, while they speak astonishing words of vanity, they seduce, with obscene lusts of the flesh, them who have almost abandoned these, that walk in error,*

2Pe 2:19 *while promising to them freedom, though themselves being slaves of corruption; for a man is overcome, by whatever it is that enslaves him.*

Notice how Peter rebukes these brethren for going against the authoritative government of the Romans and taking matters into their own hands. He also warns against these false brethren, who were trying to persuade other brethren to join the war promising them freedom from the Roman occupation, yet neglecting the role of Yahweh and His sovereignty over Israel in this decision making.

Peter also writes the following scripture because some of these disgruntled brethren were even claiming that Yahshua was not ever coming back to the earth at all.

2Pe 3:3 *first, knowing this, that during the last days scoffers will come walking according to their own lusts,*

2Pe 3:4 *and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For from which time the fathers fell asleep, all things remain so from the beginning of creation.*

2Pe 3:7 *But the heavens and the earth now, having been stored up by the same Word, are being kept for fire to a day of judgment and destruction of wicked men.*

2Pe 3:8 *But let not this one thing be hidden from you, beloved, that one day with the Almighty is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (Psa. 90:4)*

2Pe 3:9 *YAHWEH is not negligent concerning His promises, as some count negligence, but is patient toward us, not wishing any to perish, but all to come to repentance.*

Then in 68 A.D. both the Apostles Peter and Paul are martyred, and the early congregation loses their two greatest leaders of that crucial time period. By the time of 70 A.D., the very Sanctuary of Yahweh where He dwelt since the days of King David and Solomon had been sacked and destroyed; and Josephus tells us that Jerusalem was so devastated that it looked as if there had never been a city there before. ²

This was a most devastating time for the early congregation, not only because of the discouragement of losing its two main leaders, but also for the stark realization that Yahshua would not be coming back at that time and the Romans had beaten them and taken away any hope of them having sovereignty any time soon.

Also, with many believers in Israel either dying through martyrism or defecting to fight against the Romans, the leadership in the congregation was splintering with part of the leadership still being in Asia Minor and Pella in the east, where many believers in Israel fled to, competing with the newly growing stronghold of bishops cropping up in Rome and in the Western Empire.

This was the beginning of the great rift that would occur in both doctrine and the perception of who Yahshua was and what the true Good News message was that He brought.

At first the divide was in many ways semantically motivated, with many bishops in the west having no connection with or allegiance to the customs and doctrines set out by Yahshua and the Apostles such as the Sabbath day, the Holy Days of Leviticus 23, and many other aspects of the Torah that were such an integral part of the life of Yahshua as a Jew, and also the early congregation.

The western bishops, with their almost fully gentile congregations, were starting to drift away from anything considered Jewish because of the Great Revolt and the desecrating of Jerusalem and Yahweh's Holy Sanctuary; and anything even remotely considered Jewish was quickly becoming anathema. Unfortunately, this was not just a passing phase, but would be the beginning of a string of anti-Jewish sentiment that would last well into the Arab conquest in the seventh century and beyond, and in many ways even until today.

The Apostle John, who was the last apostle to live- almost until the turn of the century, was even considered a heretic in some of the western churches who were quickly losing all identity to the Congregation that Yahshua started in 30 A.D.

3Jn 1:9 *I wrote to the Congregation, but he loving to be first of them, Diotrephes, does not receive us.*

3Jn 1:10 *Because of this, if I come, I will recall his works which he does, ranting against us with evil words. And not being satisfied with these, neither does he receive the*

brethren; and he forbade those intending to receive them, and cast them out from the Congregation.

John was dealing with the western churches adopting many pagan ideas into their doctrines, and even denying that Yahshua literally had come in the flesh. This, again, was from gnostic influence that was growing rapidly in the Western Roman Empire; and again, these bishops due to cultural influence were trying to avoid any appearance of looking Jewish. Take a look at what John writes due to these circumstances.

2Jn 1:6 *And this is love, that we should walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, even as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.*

2Jn 1:7 *Because many deceivers went out into the world, those not confessing Yahshua Messiah to have come in the flesh, such a person is a deceiver and an anti-Messiah.*

2Jn 1:8 *Watch yourselves, that we may not lose the things we worked out, but that we may receive a full reward.*

2Jn 1:9 *Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Messiah does not have YAHWEH. The one abiding in the doctrine of Messiah, this one has the Father and the Son.*

2Jn 1:10 *If anyone comes to you and does not bear this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and do not speak a greeting to him.*

2Jn 1:11 *For the one speaking a greeting shares in his evil works*

Notice that John is not only stressing the importance of a true believer to fully accept the virgin birth and that Yahshua was indeed a human being, a man born by a human mother

only by the miracle of the virgin birth, but he also stresses about the need to keep the commandments of Yahweh and live a life walking in the commandments. He is even bolder in this regard in another letter.

1Jn 2:3 *And by this we know that we have known Him, if we keep His commandments.*

1Jn 2:4 *The one saying, I have known Him, and not keeping His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in that one.*

1Jn 2:5 *But whoever keeps His Word, truly in this one the love of YAHWEH has been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.*

1Jn 5:2 *By this we know that we love the children of YAHWEH: When we love YAHWEH and keep His commandments.*

1Jn 5:3 *For this is the love of YAHWEH, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not a burden to us.*

Besides the Roman bishops adapting many of the pagan ways of their culture, they were also almost fully starting to disregard the Torah, as at this point without the Temple being there anymore, the Torah was being connected now more with Jewish culture, than it was before with the Elohim of the Jews, named Yahweh. This will result in major doctrinal changes through the next three hundred years for the western church with their Catholic bishops. Now let's go next to the book of Revelation and look at the historical aspect of the seven congregations that Yahshua lists that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them.

Chapter 4 – The 7 Congregations of Revelation and Their Historical Setting

The name of this book is “The Gates of Hell Will Not Prevail Against Her”. It is from the scripture in Matthew 16:18 when Yahshua was in Caesarea Philippi with His disciples and this was the first time that He revealed His true identity to them.

Caesarea Philippi is in the most northern part of Israel, with what would have been Syria behind them on the other side of the mountain. This place however, in the days of Yahshua was filled with paganism and was even the place where the half man, half goat, false deity called Pan was worshipped and had a pagan temple.

One might wonder why Yahshua would pick such a place to reveal Himself to His disciples. However, right next to this Pan worship is a stream going to a beautiful waterfall, one of the most magnificent in all of Israel. Yahshua was making a contrast that as all these pagan people were worshipping their false gods that He was the true living water of Yahweh and all who believed into Him would have rivers of true living water also flow from them.

Joh 7:37 *Now on the great day, which is the last of the feast (The eighth day), Yahshua was standing and He cried out and said, If a man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*

Joh 7:38 *Anyone who believes in me as the scriptures have said, rivers of living water will flow from his belly.*

Joh 7:39 *But He said this concerning the Spirit, whom the ones believing into Him were about to receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Yahshua was not yet glorified.*

In Scripture, going back to the Garden of Eden, water is typified with life, as there is no human element more important to the very existence of life than water. Yahweh the Father, in Scripture, is also typified many times with water; and also the Temple that was built in Jerusalem was built over the Gihon Spring, one of the very water sources from the Garden of Eden. So Yahshua was making a very profound statement to proclaim not only Himself as Messiah in Matthew the 16th chapter, but He was also proclaiming that for anyone who believed in Him that nothing, not even death, could prevail against them.

Mat 16:13 *And coming into the parts of Caesarea of Philip, Yahshua questioned His disciples, saying, Whom do men say Me the Son of Man to be?*

Mat 16:14 *And they said, Some say John the Baptist, and others Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.*

Mat 16:15 *He said to them, But you, whom do you say Me to be?*

Mat 16:16 *And answering, Simon Peter said, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living Elohim.*

Mat 16:17 *And answering, Yahshua said to him, Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven.*

Mat 16:18 *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My assembly, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against her.*

The Catholic or Universal congregation has mistaken verse 18 to mean that the congregation is built on Peter and they claim that he was the first Pope, which is an absolute lie and unsubstantiated by history. Yahshua was saying nothing of the sort.

The name or title “*Peter*” means pebble or small stone, as where the word “*Petra*” means large rock mass. So what Yahshua was saying was that because Simon the Apostle was the first to boldly proclaim that Yahshua was not only the Messiah but was the eternal Son of Yahweh out of heaven, that he would have a new name or title called “*Peter*”, little stone.

But on this “*Petra*” (large rock), the actual belief that Yahshua was the Messiah and eternal Son of Yahweh, He would build His Congregation and nothing, not even death, could destroy it. Remember, from the last chapter, I mentioned the horrific conditions that Jews were living in Israel during the days of Yahshua under Roman occupation. Many were being martyred and persecuted and many were discouraged, and that is why they were looking for the Kingdom of Yahweh NOW!

Joh 6:14 *Then seeing what miraculous sign Yahshua did, the men said, This is truly the Prophet, the One coming into the world.*

Joh 6:15 *Then knowing that they were about to come and seize Him, that they might make Him king, Yahshua withdrew again to the mountain alone by Himself.*

Act 1:6 *Then, indeed, coming together they questioned Him, saying, Master, do You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?*

You can understand, because of the dire living conditions they were subjected to, why they wanted the Kingdom to come immediately and restore Israel to its former glory. However, even though Yahshua knew that He would not be setting up the physical Kingdom of Yahweh in Jerusalem for

another two thousand years, He still gave His true disciples great hope that the Kingdom of Yahweh is within each true believer who has been properly baptized into His name and has had hands laid on him by a true ordained elder of Yahweh and has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him.

Act 19:1 *And it happened, in the time Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was passing through the higher parts to come to Ephesus. And finding some disciples,*

Act 19:2 *he said to them, Believing, did you receive the Holy Spirit? And they said to him, We did not even hear whether the Holy Spirit is.*

Act 19:3 *And he said to them, Then to what were you baptized? And they said, To the baptism of John.*

Act 19:4 *And Paul said, John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe into the One coming after him, that is, into the Messiah, Yahshua.*

Act 19:5 *And hearing, they were baptized into the name of the Master Yahshua.*

Act 19:6 *And Paul laying hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in different languages and prophesied*

To the true, called out, covenant Congregation of Yahweh that Yahshua had started, not even death could prevail against it, as Ecclesiastes 9:5 states “*For the living know that they shall die; but the dead do not know anything*”. So even if a person was martyred for this belief, as long as they were a true, firstfruit covenant believer, and had the Holy Spirit, then from the second they were killed, even if a thousand years went by, it would seem as a second, the twinkling of

an eye and they would be resurrected in the Kingdom of Yahweh.

1Co 15:21 *For since through man came death, also through a Man is a resurrection of the dead;*

1Co 15:22 *for as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all will be made alive.*

1Co 15:23 *But each in his own order: Messiah, the first-fruit; afterward those of Messiah at His coming*

1Co 15:51 *Behold, I speak a mystery to you: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed.*

1Co 15:52 *In a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet; for a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.*

1Co 15:53 *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

(For more information on the state of the dead and the reward of the saved please see Lessons 6, 7, & 17 in our Bible Study course online at www.coyhwh.com)

What comfort this would have been to the true believers of Yahshua, to know that as long as they were obedient to His Word and kept their faith in Him, that not even death could prevail against them; and the exact opposite; as one moment they would be alive and as soon as they died, in the twinkling of an eye, they would be resurrected in His Kingdom. For true believers this was powerful and gave them boldness to live for the eternal Kingdom, and not for this world that will perish.

This is the reason why Satan knew that he was defeated. He already knew that Yahshua defeated him at the Mount of

Temptation when He started His ministry and that Satan's authority, that he tricked Adam into abrogating in the Garden of Eden, was now taken back by the second Adam (Yahshua), who paid the penalty of sin and qualified to reign as King over all the earth.

So, since he knew he could not defeat Yahshua and His Congregation, he decided to do what he has always done; he decided to counterfeit his own congregation, and to make Yahshua into a new character and base his congregation on the personage of this new Yahshua, and disregard the message that Yahshua actually brought. That is why the true name of the true Messiah Yahshua is so important. It is not only that there is no name "Jesus" in Hebrew, as Hebrew has no letter "j", but it is because the true Good News message of the true Yahshua has been covered up by the false Jesus that Christianity has created.

Christianity would have one believe that Yahweh the Father is a harsh old man with a long beard, who has a harsh law and judgment, and that Jesus was a long haired rebellious son who came to earth to do away with his father's harsh law. This is actually a false, pagan teaching of Marcion and could not be further from the truth, as Yahshua only came to do the will of Yahweh who sent Him and never did away with any of the Torah, but actually magnified it and made it honorable by bringing out the true intention.

Joh 8:28 *Then Yahshua said to them, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM; and from Myself I do nothing; but as My Father taught Me, these things I speak.*

Isa 42:21 YAHWEH is delighted for His righteousness' sake; **He will magnify the Torah** and make it honorable.

Mat 19:16 And, behold, coming near, one said to Him, Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

Mat 19:17 And He said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One, YAHWEH! **But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.**

Mat 5:17 **Do not think that I came to annul the Torah** or the Prophets; I did not come to annul, but to fulfill.

Mat 5:18 Truly I say to you, Until the heaven and the earth pass away, in no way shall one yod or one stroke pass away from the Torah until all comes to pass.

Mat 5:19 Therefore, whoever loosens one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the worst in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever does and teaches them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 5:20 For I say to you, If your righteousness shall not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of YAHWEH, never!

Mat 4:17 From that time Yahshua began to preach and to say, Repent! For the kingdom of Heaven has drawn near.

Yahshua brought the wonderful Good News message of repentance and turning back to Yahweh and having the penalty of one's sins paid for by His shed blood, but Satan's counterfeit religion has no true repentance because he claims the Torah (law) of Yahweh is done away with.

So if the Torah is done away with, and according to 1 Joh 3:4 *"sin is the breaking of the Torah"*, then there would be no sin, and it would nullify our Savior's great sacrifice He made to conquer sin. (For extensive information and proof on this subject please ask for our free book entitled "The Great Falling Away".)

I am stressing this point because we have come to the point in this book where we are now around the year 100 A.D. and we have exhausted the Bible's historical references for the early Congregation of Yahweh that Yahshua started, and will now have to turn into the annals of history to find this Congregation that Yahshua stated, *"the gates of hell will not prevail against her"*.

Unless you realize that Satan had also started his congregation in the first century under Simon Magus, a false apostle and worker of iniquity, and then, magnified his church under Constantine the Great in the fourth century, then you will never find the true Congregation of Yahweh that Yahshua started. Remember the following scripture written by the Apostle Paul.

2Co 11:12 *But what I do, I also will do, that I may cut off the occasion of those desiring an occasion, so that in that which they boast, they will not be equal with us.*

2Co 11:13 *For such ones are false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Messiah.*

2Co 11:14 *There is no marvel in this; for if Satan disguises himself into an angel of light,*

2Co 11:15 *it is not a great thing then, if his ministers also pose themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

This was written around 57 A.D. when the false congregation started by Simon Magus, but inspired by Satan himself, was starting to flourish and bring in all kinds of heresy against the true Congregation of Yahshua. Then, by the end of the first century, the false paganized congregation was already growing in numbers and power from western Rome to fight against the true flock of Yahshua. Remember, Yahshua never said that His Congregation was going to be a powerful political entity, but He stated the opposite:

Luk 12:32 *Stop being afraid, **little flock**, because your Father was pleased to give you the kingdom*

However, what we are going to see through the archives of history is that just as Ishmael, the son of the slave woman persecuted Isaac, the son of the promise, that the counterfeit church that Satan started has persecuted the true Congregation of Yahshua for almost 2,000 years until this present day.

We will see that it is not only in the changing of doctrine, and even trying to change history for that matter, but that through antiquity the counterfeit church that claims they believe in the Holy Scriptures as we do, and claim the blood of Messiah for forgiveness of sins as we do, also physically persecuted the true believers and had many, many of them martyred and killed throughout the ages. Whether it was under Constantine, a pagan Roman Emperor, or his successor going all the way to the Inquisition by the Catholic Church, when thousands were murdered and tortured, or even till World War II and the Holocaust of our times when the Catholic Church acquiesced with Hitler and around 50 million people died, true believers were persecuted and killed.

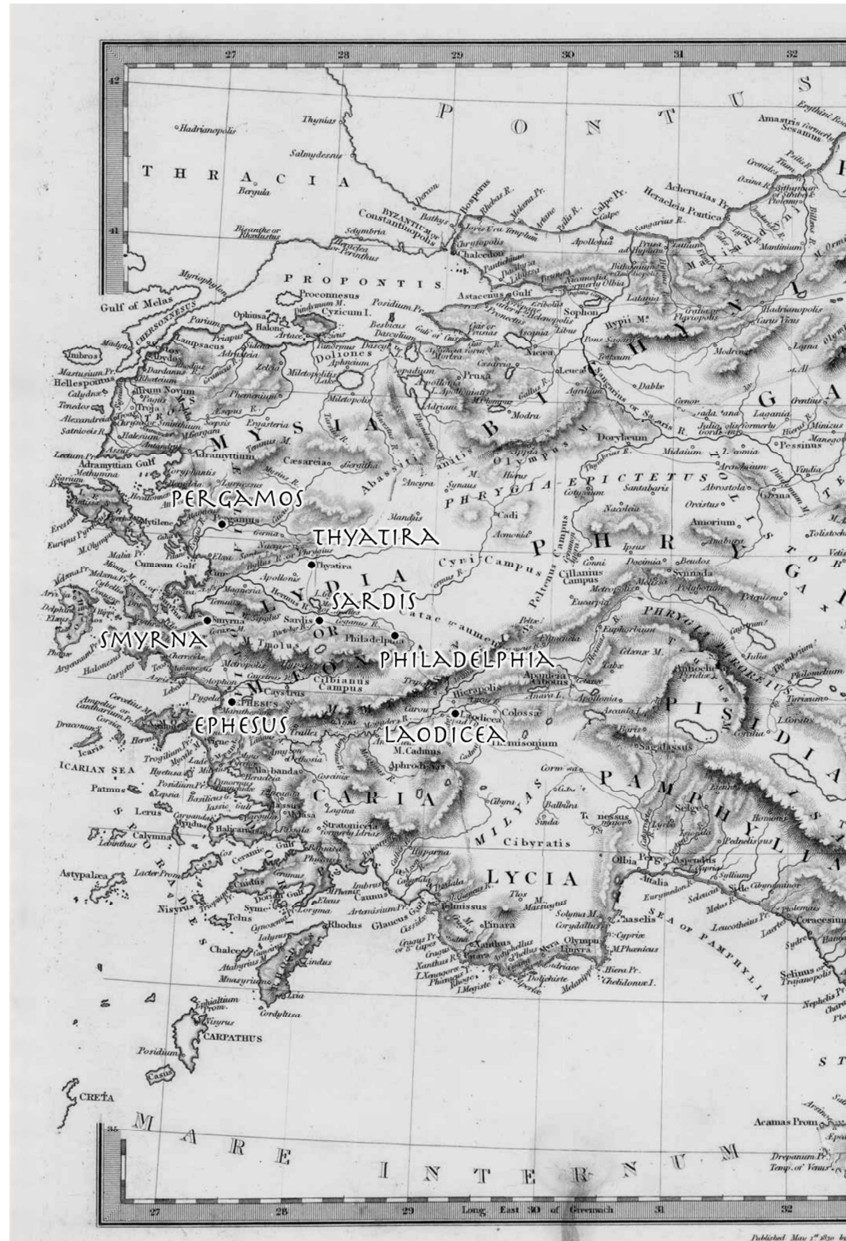
Unfortunately, it is the conquerors and not the conquered who write history, so they have been pretty good trying to cover their tracks, but Yahweh is Sovereign and He has left us an undeniable, markable trail for us to follow the Congregation that Yahshua stated, "*the gates of hell will not prevail against her.*"

That trail is etched out and outlined in the book of Revelation in the second and third chapters, identifying the seven congregations that are mentioned there. To be able to properly identify Yahshua's true Congregation from the false, masqueraded one established by Satan I will use the 7 congregations of Revelation as our historical marker, following each congregation from Revelation and knowing them by the characteristics that Yahshua gives us of each group in the book of Revelation.

Let me also state that although I fully believe that these congregations in Revelation are indeed historical, I also believe that they are seven literal characteristics of the seven spirits of the congregation here in the end times.

The seven congregations of Revelation 2 and 3 were an actual mail route, and they are named because there are characteristics that will identify where the true Congregation of Yahshua was; and also there are identifying markers for each congregation to grow and change, and in some cases even repent.

See below the following map that shows the exact geographical location of these seven congregations located in Asia Minor, which is modern western Turkey today.



Understanding the geographical position of these congregations will also help us later to be able to map out their migration as they had to flee horrific persecution by the Roman Empire and the false church of Satan. This will be the core of the history of the true Congregation that Yahshua started compared to the counterfeit one of Satan. Satan's congregation throughout history was always ready to stop their persecution of Yahshua's true covenant Congregation if they recanted their doctrine given to them by Yahshua through the Apostles, and if they acquiesced and joined the Universal church. We should not be surprised that Satan would use such tactics as this is exactly how he tried to tempt Yahshua Himself.

Luk 4:5 *And leading Him up into a high mountain, Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*

Luk 4:6 *And the Devil said to Him, I will give all this authority and their glory to You, because it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.*

Luk 4:7 *Then if You worship before me, all will be Yours.*

Luk 4:8 *And answering, to him, Yahshua said, Go behind Me, Satan! For it has been written: You shall worship YAHWEH your Elohim, and Him only you shall serve.*

Can we start to understand the importance of judicial order and that everything in life has authority from Yahweh, and we must choose whose authority we will put ourselves under; the true authority of Yahweh, or the usurped authority of Satan? Because of the pride of man Satan has deceived many for the last two thousand years to submit under his authority of his false religion; because people want to hold on to their own will and, just as Adam and Eve in the Garden

of Eden, make their own decisions on how they will live their lives, instead of unconditional surrender to Yahweh and His holy, just, and good Torah (Ro 7:12). In doing so, they are deceived and not realizing that they are putting themselves under the authority of Satan who allows them to make any decision in life they want as long as it is disobedient to Yahweh's Torah, which is His very character.

Rom 8:5 *For the ones that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh. And the ones according to Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.*

Rom 8:6 *To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace;*

Rom 8:7 *because the mind of the flesh is enmity towards YAHWEH; for it is not subject to the Torah of YAHWEH, for it is not possible to be so.*

However, we will see throughout history that the true covenant believers of Yahshua who did have the Holy Spirit, did indeed uphold, honor, and keep the Torah of Yahweh with the true seventh day Sabbath and His eternal, moral law. We will also see throughout history that these true believers of Yahweh would never submit under the authority of the Universal Church, even to the point of death for many of them. They considered the Universal Church as the church of Satan, and would always stay completely separate from them even to the point of having to leave society late in the fourth century, as we will see in a later chapter, and having to hide in the wilderness for 1260 years. So let's start to unravel the pages of history and go through time era after time era, and congregation after congregation, and see the true history of the Congregation that Yahshua said, "*the gates of hell will not prevail against her*".

Chapter 5 – The Ephesus Congregation

Rev 2:1 *To the messenger of the congregation of Ephesus, write: These things says He who holds all things, and the seven stars in His right hand, He walking in the midst of the seven golden menorahs:*

Rev 2:2 *I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and that you cannot bear evil ones; and you tried those pretending to be apostles and are not, and found them to be liars.*

Rev 2:3 *And you have patience and have borne burdens on account of My name and have not wearied.*

The Ephesus congregation was called the apostolic congregation as it was started with the 12 Apostles, and then, several years later, the Apostle Paul joining this very unique group. The apostolic congregation is referred to as “*the Ephesus Congregation*” and they are the pillars of the Congregation that Yahshua started.

Eph 2:19 *So, then, you are no longer strangers and family members living abroad, but you are natives of the same family of the saints and children of the family of YAHWEH,*

Eph 2:20 *being built up on **the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Yahshua Messiah Himself being the cornerstone of the building,*

As we have thoroughly seen, the apostolic “*Ephesus congregation*” was the one who laid the very foundation of doctrine and faith in Yahshua to the early believers, and in verses 2 and 3 it states they also had to have patience in bearing with the false, lying workers of iniquity, such as

Simon Magus of Samaria. As a matter of fact, if we take a historical look at Simon Magus we find out the following:

“Simon Magus” proclaimed a doctrine in which the Jewish faith was strangely and grotesquely mixed with BABYLONIAN myths, together with some Greek additions. The mysterious worship ... in consequence of the widened horizon and the deepening religious feeling, finally the wild SYNCRETISM [that is, blending together of religious beliefs], whose aim WAS A UNIVERSAL RELIGION, all contributed to gain adherents for Simon.” ³

“The sect of the Simonians appears to have been formidable, for he speaks four times of their founder, Simon; and we need not doubt that he identified him with the Simon of Acts the 8th chapter. He states that he was a Samaritan, adding that his birthplace was a village called Gitta; he describes him as a formidable magician, and tells that he came to ROME in the days of Claudius Caesar (45 A.D.), and made such an impression by his magical powers, THAT HE WAS HONORED AS A GOD, a statue being erected to him on the Tiber, between the two bridges, bearing the inscription `Simoni deo Sancto.’” ⁴

So we clearly see that after he left Israel Simon Magus went to Rome, and through sorcery had combined and syncretized Yahshua's Good News message and mixed it with filthy paganism and deceived many. The Universal or Catholic Church has falsely claimed that the Apostle Simon Kepha, or Peter in Greek, went to Rome and was inaugurated as the first Pope. The Bible tells us that Simon Kepha (Peter) was primarily in Babylon and working with the eastern congregations there.

1Pe 5:13a *The chosen congregation in Babylon greets you;*

This scripture clearly shows Simon Peter to be in Babylon and not in Rome. Also, look at the following scripture clearly showing that it was the Apostle Paul who was to go to the gentiles of Rome, and Peter was to lead the other Apostles going to the east to the lost tribes of the house of Israel.

Gal 2:7 *but on the contrary, seeing that I have been entrusted with the good news to the uncircumcision, even as Peter to the circumcision,*

Gal 2:8 *for he who encouraged Peter being sent to those who are circumcised, also encouraged me to be sent out to the Gentiles.*

This was exactly the commission that Yahshua had given Simon Peter and the Apostles earlier.

Mat 10:5 *Yahshua sent these twelve out, charging them, saying do not go into the way of the heathen, and do not go into a Samaritan city.*

Mat 10:6 *But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

And this is exactly what they did. Look at what it states about the Apostle Simon Peter's journey in "Caves Antiquities Apostolicae", and where he was when his brother Andrew came and met him.

"Andrew went next to Trapezus, a maritime city upon the Euxline Sea, whence after many other places he came to Nice, where he stayed two years, preaching and working miracles with great success: thence to Nicomedia, and so to Chalcedon whence sailing through the Propontis he came by

the Euxline Sea to Heraclea, and from thence to Amastris. He next came to Sinope, a city situated upon the same sea, here he met with his brother Peter, with whom he stayed a considerable time.” ⁵

1Pe 1:1 *Peter, an apostle of Yahshua Messiah, to the elect sojourners of the Diaspora of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia,*

The areas Peter is writing to are mostly on the Black Sea region exactly where a majority of Israelites were carried to during their Diaspora about 750 years prior. And even in Galatia we know it was northern Galatia as Paul was not allowed in this area due to Peter's presence.

Act 16:6-8 *And passing through the Phrygian and the Galatian country, being forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia, coming against Mysia, they attempted to go along Bithynia, and the Spirit did not allow them. And passing by Mysia, they came down into Troas.*

Paul was forbidden to go into these areas because the lost tribes were there, and it was given to the twelve, not Paul to preach to them. Paul did preach in southern Galatia, in the cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, but nowhere in Scripture do you find Paul journeying to northern Galatia, the area that was assigned to Simon Peter. I am laying out this point most conclusively to prove the fact that Simon Peter did not spend much, if any time, in Rome. However, history does record that there was a leader of this newly found Christian sect named “*Peter*” in Rome doing miracles and magic arts, so who could have been this Peter?

The word '*Peter*' or '*Pater*' in Latin can mean father and there is no doubt that this Peter or Pater who went to Rome and was the father of this pagan Christianity was none other than Simon Magus who was being called "*Simon Pater*". The pagan priests of the mystery religions were also called PATORS or PETERS. They had the power to interpret the heathen mysteries. This is further brought out by Bunson in his Hieroglyph, page 545, where he shows that the Egyptians -- as the Bible also indicates -- called their "interpreters" or priests: PETR, that is, PETER.

Notice some references to these sacred PETRAS found throughout the pagan world. At the temple of Delphi in Greece, the chief object in the ritual was the PETRA (Pausanius, Bk. 10). At the Acropolis in Athens, Euripides tells us, the niches which held the idols were called the PETRAE (verse 935). You can see these very niches even still today in Israel in Caesarea Philippi, the very place Yahshua revealed Himself to His disciples and that Simon Peter proclaimed Yahshua to be Messiah and Son of Yahweh. Can you see what a counterfeiter Satan truly is?

*"It is well known that even the sacred book which was used in the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, was entitled "Book PETROMA," PETER-ROMA -- PETER'S BOOK."*⁶

Remember that the pagan temples were also called after the PETERS. The temple at Elis in Greece was called PETRON. These PETER stones and temples were found all over the ancient world. The world and history are scattered with many examples of the term PETER used as a title for a god. I believe this leaves little doubt that the title of Peter would be given to someone that claims to be, and was seen to be a

god. There are just too many instances that this title has been given and used in historical accounts. This change from Simon Magus to Simon Peter is how the good Apostle was mistaken to be the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, but as we have clearly proven Simon Peter the Apostle was not even in Rome, but in the Eastern Empire witnessing to the lost sheep of Israel.

Peter, however, did go later in his life to Great Britain, to the lost tribes there and may have passed through Rome afterward; and some legends even have him beheaded there. However, he certainly did not spend the majority of his ministry there and was never considered a Pope. So we can see how even early on during the apostolic days that Satan was already counterfeiting the one and only true faith that Yahshua founded. And the way that Satan did it back then and still continues to work in Christianity today, is by replacing the true Good News message that Yahshua brought with a false message about the personage of Him, but totally neglecting the message itself. And without the actual message of repentance and true faith in Him in all things and the change of life through the imparting of the Holy Spirit, the pseudo-believer will be kept in an inferior weakened state never receiving the Holy Spirit to begin with. And although, as mentioned in Revelation 2:1-3, Yahshua uplifts the Ephesus congregation for their good work and faith, He also had some issues with them that they needed to work on.

Rev 2:4 *Nevertheless, I have something against you, because you left your first love.*

Rev 2:5 *Then remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works. And if not, I am coming to you*

quickly, and will remove your menorah from its place, unless you repent.

As we mentioned, after all the hard work that this congregation put in between 30 A.D. and the start of the early congregation till about 65-66 A.D., some 35 years later when they realized that Yahshua was not returning at that time and most of the Apostles were martyred, many of them lost their first love and some even joined the rebel forces to fight the Romans. I believe that all believers throughout time can learn a valuable lesson from these early believers; because Yahshua offers us a way out of Satan's society and control, and although our ultimate goal and hope is in the great anticipation of the soon coming Kingdom of Yahweh, we cannot let prophecy and that anticipation for the Kingdom make us lose heart and get so discouraged that we lose our first love.

Just think back when you were first brought to the knowledge of the truth; think about how happy and free you felt to finally have the truth of Yahweh and not to be any longer under the bondage of religion from the lies of the Devil.

Think about how you were willing to give up and sacrifice anything for that love of the truth that you had and the newly found relationship that you had with Yahweh and Yahshua. Think how strong and peaceful you felt to know the true doctrine of Yahweh and to know Him and Yahshua in a personal way in spirit and truth, and not to have only false religion any more. Look at the words of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews that he wrote in the year about 66 A.D., the very time that they started to lose their first love and fall away.

Heb 10:23 *let us hold fast the confession of the hope unyielding, for He who has promised is faithful.*

Heb 10:25 *not forsaking the assembling together of ourselves, as is the custom of some, but exhorting, and by so much more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Heb 10:32 *Therefore, remember the former days, those in which after you received baptism, you endured much tribulation;*

Heb 10:33 *indeed being exposed both to trouble and reproach you became an object of ridicule; and you have become companions of those men who have endured these things.*

Heb 10:34 *For also you had pity on those in prison; and you accepted the seizure of your possessions with joy, knowing yourselves to have a better and abiding possession in Heaven.*

Heb 10:35 *Then do not throw away your confidence, which has great reward.*

Heb 10:36 *For you have need of patience, that having done the will of YAHWEH you may obtain the promise.*

Heb 10:37 *For, the time is very short and He who is to come, will come, "and will not delay." (Hab. 2:3)*

Heb 10:38 *"But the righteous shall live by faith;" "yet if he draws back," "My soul is not pleased in him."*

Heb 10:39 *But, we do not belong to those drawing back, which leads to perdition; but to the faith which restores our soul.*

May we all heed this great warning to the Ephesus congregation, and with zealousness finish the great work of Yahweh in our life to our last breath.

Chapter 6 – The Smyrna Congregation

Rev 2:8 *And to the messenger of the congregation of Smyrna, write: These things says the First and the Last, Who became dead, and is alive:*

Rev 2:9 *I know your works, and the affliction, and the poverty; but you are rich. And I know the evil speaking of those saying themselves to be Jews, and they are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.*

Rev 2:10 *Do not at all fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw you into prison, so that you may be tried; and you will have affliction ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

The congregation of Smyrna was more than likely started by the Apostle Paul and is typical of the persecuted congregation. The Ephesus era started in 30 A.D. and ended about 80 A.D in which the Smyrna era started at about 80 A.D. and went until Constantine came to power in 313 A.D.

*"Smyrna comes from the word "myrrh", which being bitter of taste, is expressive of the bitter afflictions, and persecutions, and deaths, the people of Elohim in this interval endured; and yet, as myrrh is of a sweet smell, so were those saints, in their sufferings for Messiah, exceeding grateful and well pleasing to him; wherefore nothing is said by way of complaint to this congregation; not that she was without fault, but it was proper to use her tenderly in her afflicted state."*⁷

It is also interesting to note that in order to get the fragrance out of myrrh it must be beaten. These brethren were full of faith, strong in spirit, and sound in doctrine, which they attested came directly from the Apostles.

As we saw with the Ephesus era, after Yahshua did not return in 70 A.D. and instead the sanctuary of Yahweh was destroyed and the two main leaders of the Apostles, Paul and Peter were martyred, many believers fell away and many were discouraged. However, by the end of the 1st century the congregation started to pull together and those that were left were people who were full of faith and purpose. Most of these believers were in Asia Minor where the seven congregations of Revelation were, but there were also many east of them.

In the Western Roman Empire it was a different story. Although there still was a remnant of true believers in that region, the Roman bishops had taken much control by the end of the first century. There was also a great anti-Semitism arising since the destruction of the Sanctuary of Yahweh and even in the book of Acts we see the Jewish people being expelled from Rome.

Act 18:2 *And finding a certain Jew by name Aquila, of Pontus by race, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome, he came to them.*

While the Temple of Yahweh stood there was a curious sensation about the Temple itself and also the Elohim of Israel who dwelt there, but after the Great Revolt from 66-70 A.D. and Israel losing to the Romans, the Jewish people in the Roman Empire were then looked down upon and disregarded in most respects. By the end of the first century many western congregations were starting to meet on the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection, as well as meeting on the Sabbath day according to the

commandment. However, as the 2nd century drew on into the second decade and the anti-Semitism grew most were looking to distance themselves from anything that looked Jewish, many of these congregations started to drop the Sabbath day and only keep Sunday.

Then, when Rabbi Akiva claimed that Simon Bar-Kokhba was the Messiah and declared war and independence from Rome in a war from 132-135 A.D, the Roman Emperor Hadrian had enough and greatly clamped down on Jews and believers alike. It is believed that the Roman Bishop Sixtus, around the year 116, was the first Bishop with authority to formally substitute Sunday worship in place of the Sabbath.

“Bishop Sixtus (ca. A.D. 116-ca. 126), for instance, administered the Church of Rome right at the time of Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) who, as we noted earlier, adopted a policy of radical repression of Jewish rites and customs. These repressive measures would encourage Christians to substitute for customs regarded as Jewish, new ones 8.”

There was another great controversy that was starting around this time, and it was whether the congregation should keep the Passover on the 14th day of the first month according to the Biblical Calendar, or whether they should start to keep a weekly Sunday celebration in honor of the resurrection. It started out by the Western Roman Churches simply arbitrarily starting this practice with Bishop Sixtus as a chief provocateur of this heresy. Most congregations of the east simply rejected the practice and continued to keep Passover on the 14th day of Aviv according to Scripture; however, as time went by Rome and its bishops started to

put more and more pressure on the eastern congregations to respond to their demand.

*"In 135 A. D. Bishop Marcus, an Italian, became bishop of Jerusalem. Crimes of heresy and schism were imputed to the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes who refused to accompany their Latin bishop in pagan worship but rather continued in the Apostles example of Sabbath and Passover."*⁹

In the second century Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was the primary leader of the congregation in his day. Polycarp had been a personal disciple of the Apostle John and had kept the Passover with him on several occasions. Polycarp was arrested on the charge of being a Christian. When the Roman soldiers came to get him he cooked them a meal and asked them for one hour to pray before they would take him. He was so fervent in his prayer that the guards were regretful that they even had to arrest him and tried to persuade him to deny Yahshua in order to be let go, but he refused.

They, then, took him to the Roman proconsul who took pity on such a gentle old man and urged Polycarp to proclaim, "Caesar is Lord". If only Polycarp would make this declaration and offer a small pinch of incense to Caesar's statue he would escape torture and death. To this Polycarp responded, "Eighty-six years I have served Messiah, and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Steadfast in his stand for Messiah, Polycarp refused to compromise his beliefs, and thus, was burned alive at the stake.

They tied him to the sticks and lit them but the fire did not burn him, and then a guard went up and stabbed him to death as where his blood gushed out and put out the fire. He was a true man of faith, who staunchly until his death kept the traditions handed down to him directly from the Apostle John, and he fervently kept the Sabbath day and also the Passover on the 14th day of the first month Aviv according to the Biblical Calendar.

“In his old age, before his death, Polycarp even made a journey to Rome, seeking to convince the bishop of Rome, Anicetus, of his errors in not celebrating the biblical Passover and observing in its place an annual Easter Sunday worship, with a weekly celebration of the Eucharist. Anicetus answered that he must keep Sunday in honor of the Roman forefathers before him, while Polycarp declared that he had always observed it (the 14th Passover) with John, the disciple of our Master, and the rest of the Apostles with whom he associated.” ¹⁰

Anticetus had to keep Sunday and Easter in honor of his Roman forefathers, and Polycarp had to keep the Sabbath and Passover as the Apostles did and as Scripture states.

I believe it is a good time now in the history of the congregation, around 150-160 A.D. to again reflect and ask the question, which congregation do I want to belong to? Do I want to belong to the Congregation that Yahshua started with the foundation being the Apostles and prophets with Himself being the chief cornerstone? Or do I want to be part of the counterfeit congregation established by Satan with Simon Magus and his false doctrines at the core, run by Roman pagan bishops and solidified by Constantine the

Great as we will shortly see. Clearly, at this point in history we are seeing a vast divide from the remnant of the true, apostolic Congregation started by Yahshua, compared to a Roman congregation, led by its own bishops and hierarchy, quickly growing in power and stature.

This divide will only grow stronger over the next 150 years or so until Constantine the Great will actually 100% fully support the Roman hierarchy and officially state the Universal or Catholic Church as the only option in the Roman Empire. During this strenuous period the true believers, who were concentrated in Asia Minor and also some scattered remnants in the Western Empire, were simply trying to stay separate and not compromise, and stand firm in the truth.

This was not so difficult at first as we can see with Polycarp and Anicetus; that although neither could persuade the other there was a cordial respect, and the controlling hierarchy of the Roman church with its bishops was not firmly established enough to force universal acceptance of its heresies.

It is also important to express the fact that several of the most predominant church historians come out of this era, and although they also have an admiration for the apostolic successors such as Polycarp, they are definitely united with the Universal or Catholic bishops from Rome.

“Many of the supposedly “Christian” writings that have been preserved from the second century onward put forward a totally different theology from that of the Apostle John, who wrote just 10 or 20 years earlier. “Ignatius, Barnabus, and Justin, whose writings constitute our major source of

information for the first half of the second century, witnessed and participated in the process of separation from Judaism which led the majority of the Christians to abandon the Sabbath and adopt Sunday as the new day of worship.”¹¹

Two of these predominant church historians, named Justin Martyr (95-167 A.D.) and Irenaeus (130-202 A.D.), were actually baptized in congregations under Polycarp's leadership; and although they had a great admiration for Polycarp, (a direct descendent of the Apostle John, who even kept Passover with him on more than one occasion), they were influenced by the peer pressure of Rome and allowed themselves to be hoodwinked by Satan into a so-called spirit of unity.

As the saying goes **‘the more things change, the more they stay the same’**; and in our modern Laodicean era how many heresies were brought into Yahshua's true covenant Congregation under the same demonic reasoning? For how can there ever be unity without judicial order of doctrine, and how could the congregation ever stay to the original apostolic faith if they arbitrarily change the true doctrine of Scripture into pagan heresies and lies? Remember, it is Yahshua's doctrine and not man's, and Yahshua clearly stated that His doctrine was not His own but from Yahweh who sent Him (Joh 7:16).

Irenaeus respected Polycarp because he was a man of truth and integrity but he swayed toward the teachings of Rome.

“Irenaeus though he departed from much of Polycarp's teaching, maintained a lifelong admiration for Polycarp as a great man of Elohim.”¹²

Let's take a look at the background and beliefs of both Justin and Irenaeus to see the thought pattern of two of the earliest Christian theologians who have greatly shaped the perceived history and thought pattern for many to follow for the last 1800 years.

"Justin was a Greek from Samaria who became a Platonist philosopher and then under the influence of Polycarp and his disciples, was baptized as a Christian at Ephesus in about 130ad. He came to Rome in 151 A.D., founded a school and was subsequently martyred in 167A.D.

After arriving in Rome, Justin sought to steer a middle course on the subject of the law. Henry Chadwick writes: "Justin believed that a Jewish Christian was quite free to keep the Mosaic law without in any way compromising his Christian faith, and even that a Gentile Christian might keep Jewish customs if a Jewish Christian had influenced him to do so; only it must be held that such observances were matters of indifference and of individual conscience. But Justin had to admit that other Gentile Christians did not take so liberal a view and believed that those who observed the Mosaic law would not be saved" (The Early Church, pp. 22–23).

Irenaeus grew up in Asia Minor and, when a teenager, heard Polycarp preach. He came to Rome as a young man and later became bishop of Lyons in France in 179A.D. Irenaeus is considered the first great Catholic theologian and seems to have gone to great lengths to promote peace and a conciliatory spirit. His desire for peace was so great, however, that he was willing to compromise with the Truth to maintain church unity. The churches in Asia Minor under

Polycarp's leadership observed the Sabbath and the Holy Days. Yet, when Irenaeus came to Rome, he readily adapted to the Roman practices of observing Sunday and Easter. In Lyons there were some who kept Passover on Aviv 14 and some who kept Easter.

Irenaeus kept Easter but sought to be tolerant of those who still observed Passover. A theological revolution was indeed taking place in the Church of the second century. Notice: "Justin Martyr occupies a central position in the history of Christian thought of the second century.... Justin also molded the thinking of Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons" (Chadwick, p. 79).

Though Justin became a professing Christian in Ephesus, he "did not understand this to mean the abandonment of his philosophical inquiries, nor even the renunciation of all that he had learnt from Platonism" (p. 75). He believed that the God of Plato was also the Elohim of the Bible. "Justin does not make rigid and exclusive claims for divine revelation to the Hebrews so as to invalidate the value of other sources of wisdom. Abraham and Socrates are alike Christians before Christ" (pg. 76). This approach set the stage for a reshaping of Christian theology to embrace much of Greek philosophical thought concerning the nature of Elohim." ¹³

Do most professing Christians understand that the change that we are seeing take place here in the middle of the second century A.D. is coming from pagan Roman bishops and Platonists and philosophers? As we have extensively proved from Scripture and even historical sources, the early apostolic Congregation started by Yahshua was grounded in the Torah and clearly kept the Sabbath and Holy Days of

Leviticus the 23rd chapter. But, as we will see as history continues to unravel, once the door of heresy has been opened through pagan assimilation and modern philosophical ideas there will be no end to the schism that it will bring or the separation that will come.

Toward the end of the second century the Easter/Passover controversy grew in much debate. The true believers who were keeping to the biblically mandated 14th of Aviv Passover started to be called Quartodecimans by their Roman counterpart, which literally means “14ers” because they kept the true biblical Passover on the 14th day of the first biblical month, Aviv. They would not acquiesce and change the biblically mandated Passover for a new Roman tradition that stemmed from paganism and worship toward the mother goddess “Ishtar”, of which in English is being translated Easter.

The whole Easter Sunrise Sunday tradition stems from worship of the sun god and false paganism. Ishtar, Ashorah, Astarte, Mother Earth, Semeramis – was celebrated as the pagan rites of spring. It was also known as the equinox of Venus, which is when they believed the Mother Earth was being impregnated by the sun. Nimrod stood for the sun god, Baal. People had great sex orgies on this day. Early gentile churches, as early as a little after 100 A. D., began to keep this holiday instead of Passover. Supposedly Ashorah hatched from a giant egg when born. The egg represented the sun.

Anyone who is a lover of truth could clearly see there is no biblical justification or mandate to do such a thing. Remember, Passover was not just any ceremony, but it was

the very memorial of Yahshua's death and also the renewing of a believer's covenant relationship with Yahshua, and a command by Him directly to keep this day on the 14th of Aviv exactly as He did.

Luk 22:19 *And He took bread and gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them and said, This is My body, which for your sake is given. Do this for My memorial.*

1Co 11:23 *For I received from the Master what I also delivered to you, that the Master Yahshua in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;*

1Co 11:24 *and giving thanks, He broke and said, take, eat, this is My body which is broken on behalf of you, this do in remembrance of Me.*

1Co 11:25 *In the same way the cup also, after supping, saying, this cup is the New Covenant in My blood, each time you drink it, do this in remembrance of Me. (Luke 22:19, 20)*

1Co 11:26 ***For each time that you may eat this bread, and drink this cup, you solemnly commemorate the death of our Master, until His coming.***

So this was a major issue that went to the very core of their faith. And we clearly see that there are two distinctive camps here; one camp that was apostolic and wanted to stay to the original mandate of Scripture, and one camp that was infiltrated by pagan bishops and Platonists and philosophers who had no connection to the biblical Hebrew Yahshua or the apostolic faith that the early true Congregation was built on.

There was an elder at this time period, late in the second century, called Polycrates, who was a direct descendant and disciple of Polycarp, the direct disciple of the Apostle John.

He was a humble man, but filled with faith and one who would not compromise with the truth, or be pressured into accepting heresy in his jurisdiction. It happened that a leading bishop in Rome at this time, called Victor, wrote a letter and threatened Polycrates with excommunication if he did not drop the biblically mandated Passover for the paganized Roman Easter in its place. Let's look at the following original letter that Polycrates wrote back to Victor in response to his threat.

"We therefore observe the genuine date Passover, neither adding to it or taking away.

For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again in the day of our Master's appearing, in which he will come with glory from heaven and will raise up the saints.

Philip, one of the 12 Apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis...

John, who rested on the bosom of our Master... Polycarp of

*Smyrna, **all these observed the 14th day as the Passover according to the Gospel**, deviating in no respect, but*

following the rule of faith, and my relatives always observed the day when people threw away the leaven from the house, (the 14th of Abib). Therefore brethren, I am now 65 years in our Master, who having conferred with the brethren around the world, and having studied the whole of the sacred scriptures, am not at all alarmed at those things which are threatened, to intimidate me. For they who are greater than I have said we ought to obey Elohim rather than men." ¹⁴

Here was a true man of Yahweh who had faith and character not to compromise for the sake of convenience or even to avoid persecution, but he realized the great responsibility he had to preserve the truth of Scripture and to be able to hand it down to the next generation.

Yes, during the Smyrna era (80-313 A.D.) the Congregation of true believers that Yahshua started may not have been big or mighty, and they were indeed a persecuted body, even by their own so-called contemporaries, but they still were a congregation filled with faith and zeal of the truth and would not compromise. Also, and of importance to note, is that out of the seven congregations listed in Revelation 2 and 3, except for Philadelphia, Smyrna is the only other congregation that Yahshua has no rebuke for to repent, as they kept the commandments of Yahweh and also the faith of Yahshua (Rev 14:12).

Rev 2:9 *I know your works, and the affliction, and the poverty; but you are rich. And I know the evil speaking of those saying themselves to be Jews, and they are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.*

Paul tells us the following in Romans 2:28-29:

Rom 2:28 *For it is not the one who is outwardly a Jew that is the real Jew, nor is circumcision that which is seen in the flesh;*

Rom 2:29 *but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not literally; of whom the praise is not from men, but from YAHWEH.*

The point Paul is trying to make is that we are a spiritual nation and that Sabbath keeping and commandment keeping is not a “*Jewish thing*”, but is from Yahweh, and the Sabbath was generated at Creation; and if one keeps these true biblical mandates from Yahweh, then they are spiritual Jews. So those claiming to be spiritual Jews and yet hating anything in the Bible that looks Israelite, are frauds and liars

and anti-Semites, in which many in the Universal Church were from the very beginning, even until today. Since Smyrna is the persecuted, and even martyred congregation, and since John writes about their suffering in Revelation, let me now briefly show the ten Roman pogroms that betook these holy saints until the rise of Constantine the Great.

Rev 2:10 *Do not at all fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw you into prison, so that you may be tried; and you will have affliction ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

10 Persecutions of Believers 67-313 A.D.

The First Persecution, Under Nero, A.D. 67

The first persecution of the Congregation took place in the year 67, under Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome. This monarch reigned for the space of five years, with tolerable credit to himself, but then gave way to the greatest extravagancy of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. Among other diabolical impulses, he ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which order was executed by his officers, guards, and servants. While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macaenas, played upon his harp, sung the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared that 'he wished the ruin of all things before his death'. Besides the noble pile, called the Circus, many other palaces and houses were consumed; several thousand perished in the flames, were smothered in the smoke, or buried beneath the ruins.

This dreadful inferno continued nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe

odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the believers, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of persecuting the believers with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the brutalities exercised on the believers were such as even roused the sympathy of the Romans themselves.

Nero even refined upon cruelty, and manufactured all manner of punishments for the believers that the most miserable imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewn up in skins of wild beasts, and then apprehended by dogs until they died; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axletrees, and set on fire in his gardens, in order to light them. This persecution was general throughout the whole Roman Empire; but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of true believers. In the course of it, the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter were martyred.

The Second Persecution, Under Domitian, A.D. 81

The Emperor Domitian, who was naturally inclined to cruelty, first slew his brother, and then raised the second persecution against the believers. In his rage he put to death some of the Roman senators, some through spite; and others to confiscate their estates. He then commanded all the lineage of King David be put to death.

Among the numerous martyrs that suffered during this persecution was Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, who was crucified; and the Apostle John, who was boiled in oil, and afterward banished to Patmos. Flavia, the daughter of a Roman senator, was likewise banished to Pontus; and a law was made, "That no Believers, once brought before the

tribunal, should be exempted from punishment without renouncing his faith."

The Third Persecution, Under Trajan, A.D. 108

In Mount Ararat and surrounding Armenia many were crucified, crowned with thorns, and spears run into their sides, in imitation of Yahshua's passion.

The Fourth Persecution, Under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, A.D. 162

The cruelties used in this persecution were such that many of the spectators shook with horror at the sight, and were astonished at the fearlessness of the sufferers. Some of the martyrs were obliged to pass, with their already wounded feet, over thorns, nails, sharp shells, etc. upon their points, others were scourged until their sinews and veins lay bare, and after suffering the most excruciating tortures that could be devised, they were destroyed by the most terrible deaths.

Polycarp, the respected bishop of Smyrna, hearing that persons were seeking for him, escaped, but was discovered by a child. After feasting the guards who apprehended him, he desired an hour in prayer, which being allowed, he prayed with such fervency that his guards repented that they had been instrumental in taking him. He was, however, carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place.

It has been said that the lives of the early believers consisted of "persecution above ground and prayer below ground." There, beneath Rome are the excavations which we call the catacombs, which were at once temples and tombs. Both pagans and believers buried their dead in these catacombs.

When the believers' graves had been opened the skeletons told their own terrible tale. Heads were found severed from the body, ribs and shoulder blades were broken, and bones were often calcified from fire.

The Fifth Persecution, Commencing with Severus, A.D. 192

Severus, having been recovered from a severe fit of sickness by a believer, became a great favorer of the believers in general; but with the prejudice and fury of the ignorant multitude prevailing, obsolete laws were put in execution against the believers. The progress of the true faith alarmed the pagans, and they revived the stale distortion of placing accidental misfortunes to the account of its professors, AD 192. With the persecutions now extending to Africa, many were martyred in that quarter of the globe;

The Sixth Persecution, Under Maximus, A.D. 235

A.D. 235 was in the time of Maximinus. During this persecution, raised by Maximinus, numberless believers were slain without trial, and buried indiscriminately in heaps, sometimes fifty or sixty being cast into a pit together, without the least decency. The tyrant Maximinus dying, A.D. 238, was succeeded by Gordian, during whose reign, and that of his successor Philip, the Congregation was free from persecution for the space of more than ten years; but in A.D. 249, a violent persecution broke out in Alexandria, at the instigation of a pagan priest, without the knowledge of the emperor.

The Seventh Persecution, Under Decius, A.D. 249

This was occasioned partly by the hatred he bore to his predecessor Philip, who was deemed a believer, and partly

by his jealousy concerning the amazing increase of the true faith; for the heathen temples began to be forsaken, and the believers' congregations were flocked to. The heathens in general were ambitious to enforce the imperial decrees upon this occasion, and looked upon the murder of believers as a merit to themselves. The martyrs, upon this occasion, were innumerable.

Denisa, a young woman of only sixteen years of age, who beheld this terrible judgment, suddenly exclaimed, "O unhappy wretch, why would you buy a moment's ease at the expense of a miserable eternity!" Optimus, hearing this, called to her, and Denisa avowing herself to be a believer, she was beheaded by his order soon after.

Alexander and Epimachus, of Alexandria, were apprehended for being believers; and, confessing the accusation, were beaten with staves, torn with hooks, and at length burnt in the fire; and we are informed, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, that four female martyrs suffered on the same day, and at the same place, but not in the same manner; for these were beheaded.

The Eighth Persecution, Under Valerian, A.D. 257

This persecution began under Valerian, in the month of April, 257, and continued for three years and six months. The martyrs that fell in this persecution were innumerable, and their tortures and deaths as various and painful.

It is here proper to take notice of the singular but miserable fate of the Emperor Valerian, who had so long and so terribly persecuted the believers. This tyrant, by a ploy, was taken prisoner by Sapor, Emperor of Persia, who carried him into

his own country, and there treated him with the most unexampled indignity, making him kneel down as the meanest slave, and treading upon him as a footstool when he mounted his horse. After having kept him for the space of seven years in this miserable state of slavery, he caused his eyes to be put out, though he was then eighty-three years of age; this not satisfying his desire of revenge, he soon after ordered his body to be scourged alive, and rubbed with salt, under which torments he died; and thus fell one of the most tyrannical emperors of Rome, and one of the greatest persecutors of the believers.

The Ninth Persecution, Under Aurelian, A.D. 274

Aurelian was succeeded by Tacitus, who was succeeded by Diocletian who mounted the imperial throne in A.D. 284; at first he showed great favor to the believers. In the year 286, a most remarkable affair occurred; a legion of soldiers, consisting of six thousand six hundred and sixty-six men, contained none but believers. This legion was called the Theban Legion, because the men had been raised in Thebias. They were quartered in the east until the Emperor Maximian ordered them to march to Gaul, to assist him against the rebels of Burgundy.

Their worthy commanders, at length joined the emperor. Maximian, about this time, ordered a general sacrifice, at which the whole army was to assist; and likewise he commanded that they should take the oath of allegiance and swear, at the same time, to assist in the extermination of believers in Gaul. Alarmed at these orders, each individual of the Theban Legion absolutely refused either to sacrifice or take the oaths prescribed. This so greatly enraged Maximian

that he ordered the legion to be annihilated, that is, every tenth man to be selected from the rest, and put to the sword.

This bloody order having been put in execution, those who remained alive were still inflexible, when a second extermination took place, and every tenth man of those living was put to death. This second severity made no more impression than the first had done; the soldiers preserved their fortitude and their principles, but by the advice of their officers they drew up a loyal protest to the emperor. This, it might have been presumed, would have softened the emperor, but it had a contrary effect; for, enraged at their perseverance and unity, he commanded that the whole legion should be put to death, which was accordingly executed by the other troops, who cut them to pieces with their swords on September 22, 286.

The Tenth Persecution, Under Diocletian, A.D. 303

The tenth pogrom was the last for the Smyrna era but also the worst. The fatal day fixed upon to commence the bloody work, was the twenty-third of February, A.D. 303, that being the day in which the Terminalia were celebrated, and on which, as the cruel pagans boasted, they hoped to put a termination to the believers. On the appointed day, the persecution began in Nicomedia, on the morning of which the prefect of that city repaired, with a great number of officers and assistants, to the congregation of the believers, where, having forced open the doors, they seized upon all the sacred books, and committed them to the flames.

All the believers were apprehended and imprisoned; and Galerius privately ordered the imperial palace to be set on fire, that the believers might be charged as the culprits, and

a plausible fabrication given for carrying on the persecution with greater brutalities. A general sacrifice was commenced, which occasioned various martyrdoms. No distinction was made of age or gender. Many houses were set on fire, and whole believers' families perished in the flames; and others had stones fastened about their necks, and being tied together were driven into the sea. The persecution became general in all the Roman provinces, but more particularly in the east; and as it lasted ten years, it is impossible to ascertain the numbers martyred, or to enumerate the various modes of martyrdom.

Racks, scourges, swords, daggers, crosses, poison, and famine, were made use of in various parts to dispatch the believers; and invention was exhausted to devise tortures against such as had no crime. A city of Phrygia, consisting entirely of believers, was burnt, and all the inhabitants perished in the flames. Tired with slaughter, at length, several governors of provinces represented to the imperial court, the impropriety of such conduct. Hence many were relieved from execution, but, though they were not put to death, as much as possible was done to render their lives miserable; many of them having their ears cut off, their noses slit, their right eyes put out, their limbs rendered useless by dreadful dislocations, and their flesh seared in visible places with red-hot irons.

Then came Constantine, sufficiently appointed with strength of men, his journey coming towards Italy, which was about the last year of the persecution, A.D. 313. Maxentius, understanding of the coming of Constantine, and trusting more to his devilish art of magic than to the good will of his subjects, laid wait for him by the way in sundry straits, as he

should come; with whom Constantine had different skirmishes.

Notwithstanding, Constantine yet was in no great comfort, but in great care and dread in his mind (approaching now near unto Rome) for the magical charms and sorceries of Maxentius, wherewith he had beaten before Severus, sent by Galerius against him. Wherefore, being in great doubt and perplexity in himself, and revolving many things in his mind, what help he might have against the operations of his charming, Constantine, in his journey drawing toward the city, and casting up his eyes many times to heaven, in the south part, about the going down of the sun, saw a great brightness in heaven, appearing in the similitude of a cross, giving this inscription, '*In hoc vince*', that is, "In this overcome."

Constantine won the battle and immediately claimed that he had become a Christian, but his action therewith to follow were far from the actions that one would expect from such a one who supposedly had a miraculous conversion.

Yes, the great persecution that went through the Smyrna era was over, for at least the moment, but it would not last for long; as we will see what happens in the next chapter as Constantine doesn't actually become a Christian, but in reality he starts a new religion called Christianity.

These true faith-filled believers of the Smyrna era very much can be compared to the faith martyrs of Hebrews chapter 11.

Heb 11:33 *who through faith overcame kingdoms, worked out righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,*

Heb 11:34 *quenched the power of fire, escaped the mouths of the sword, acquired power from weakness, became strong in war; made armies of foreigners to yield.*

Heb 11:35 *Restored to women their sons, raised people from the dead; but others were beaten to death, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.*

Heb 11:36 *And others received trial of mockings and of scourgings; yea, more, of bonds and of prison:*

Heb 11:37 *they were stoned; they were tried; they were sawn in two; they died by murder of sword; they went about in sheepskins and in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and ill-treated;*

Heb 11:38 *of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts, and mountains, and caves, and the holes of the earth.*

Heb 11:39 *And having obtained witness through the faith, these all did not obtain the promise,*

Heb 11:40 *YAHWEH having foreseen something better concerning us, that they should not be perfected without us.*

Yes, truly the world was not worthy of such true spirit filled believers who would not compromise and kept the commandments of Yahweh and had the faith of Yahshua, and were part of the Congregation that Yahshua said, *“the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.”*

Chapter 7 – The Pergamos Congregation

Rev 2:12 *And to the messenger of the congregation in Pergamos, write: These things says the One having the sharp, two-edged sword:*

Rev 2:13 *I know your works, and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is. And you uphold My name, and did not deny My Faith, even in those days when that witness of mine appeared, my faithful witness, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.*

The next congregational era we will explore is called Pergamos, in Revelation chapter 2. Pergamos means “fortified”; and as we will see with this congregation, that although it starts with the great persecution just ending, it will not last for long and actually cause the true Congregation of Yahshua to have to flee to the mountains so not to be completely destroyed. This era of the true Congregation of Yahshua will start from 313 and last until about the year 700.

It also states that they dwell where the throne of Satan is, this is a most interesting statement. Remember that from 30 A.D. and the very beginning of the New Testament congregation it actually started with Yahshua, the leader by the very act of His own martyrism. And it was persecuted from day one up until this point in 313 A.D.

And although they did receive much persecution from their Jewish brothers, and even many were put to death under the rule of a council established under Rabbi Akiva during the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132-135 A.D., still most of the suffering and especially martyrdom was done by the Roman soldiers under the direct authority of the Roman government.

According to Roman law, there was no freedom of religion except by those religions officially sanctioned by the Roman government. Initially, the Congregation of Yahweh in the first century was not considered a new religion by the Roman authorities, but merely as another branch of the Jewish religion. The reason that the persecution got so much worse during the Smyrna era was that once Rabbi Akiva declared independence from Rome and also declared Simon Bar-Kokhba as the messiah, then, the believers could no longer fight in the battle for independence as they would be fighting under the banner of a false messiah. At this time in the history of the true believers of Yahshua, the true Congregation of Yahweh completely separated from Judaism and could no longer be protected according to Roman law as a sanctioned religion of the state.

So, even though believers were indeed persecuted from day one of the New Testament congregation, when they no longer had the umbrella of protection under the official title of Judaism, the persecution not only got stronger, but the intent went to completely wipe out the movement.

There was a rule of law in Rome, but if you were on the wrong side of that rule of law the Roman government and army could be brutal. Because of their wealth and stature they were also able to hire many mercenaries as fighters for them who wanted to show their worth by the brutality they could cause. So, now that Constantine, the Roman Emperor, had defeated Maxentius, and the Roman Empire went from Rome to Constantinople, Rome could enforce their brutality throughout nearly the entire world.

So this is why the Christians were so jubilant with Constantine claiming Christianity as the official religion of the state, even after his false conversion (he actually never even was properly baptized), because it would for the first time ever give legitimacy and calm to Christians worldwide. However, remember that Revelation states that this era is where the seat of Satan was. It stated this because now the heresies and pagan influence that started with Simon Magus and continued up until this point with the Roman bishops, was now going to be legally mandated by the very emperor himself.

The word Christian is used three times in Scripture and in the 1st century was a term used in the Gentile world to refer to believers of Messiah. It was not a common term used in Israel by the Aramaic speaking congregation. What we see from the early Congregation is that 12 times in Scripture believers were called "The Congregation of Yahweh".

1Co 1:2a *to the Congregation of YAHWEH which is in Corinth*

1Ti 3:5 *But if anyone does not know how to rule his own house, how will he care for a Congregation of YAHWEH?*

Gal 1:13 *For you heard my way of life when I was in Judaism, how I followed and persecuted the Congregation of YAHWEH and greatly devastated it.*

Yahshua stated that He was to keep His true Congregation in the name of the Father Yahweh.

Joh 17:6 *I revealed Your name to the men whom You gave to Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your Word.*

Joh 17:11 *And no longer am I in the world, yet these are in the world; and I come to You. Holy Father, **keep them in Your name**, those whom You gave to Me, that they may be echad (united) as We are echad (united).*

Joh 17:12 *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name;*

Eph 3:14 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Master Yahshua Messiah,*

Eph 3:15 *of whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named,*

So, it is quite evident from Scripture that the true Congregation of Yahshua should be named after Yahweh, the Father in Heaven, and as we see from Scripture, this is the way the early believers addressed each other in their local congregations. The term “congregation” can also be translated as “assembly”, but the word “church” implies more of a building or institution, than the true word “Edah” in Hebrew or “Ecclessia” in Greek, denoting the people.

As mentioned, the term Christian was mostly used in the Gentile areas in the first century, and if you look at the word used most in Scripture to describe believers it is actually the word “disciple”, which is used around 250 times to describe the true believers of Yahshua. This word in Hebrew literally means an apprentice, or one who learns to do exactly as his master or teacher. And that is exactly why what happens during this time period is a crucial point to the true Congregation of Yahweh compared to the counterfeit religion of Satan, because now at the head of the throne of Rome, the very seat of Satan himself, Constantine is not going to become a Christian, but he is going to create a new religion called Christianity.

Before Constantine's so-called conversion he was a pagan sun worshipper, and instead of repenting of his pagan ways before this, he will actually syncretize and merge his pagan sun worship beliefs with his newly found religion.

Constantine, then, after his so-called conversion, had his wife and son murdered. Listen to what Gibbons tells us of Constantine's sun worship.

"Constantine's religious devotion was 'peculiarly' directed toward the genius of the Sun... and he was pleased to be represented with the symbols of the God of Light and Poetry. The unerring shafts of that deity, the brightness of his eyes, seem to point him out as the patron of a young hero. The altars of Apollo were crowned with the votive offerings of Constantine, and the credulous multitude were taught to believe that the emperor was permitted to behold with mortal eyes the visible majesty of their tutelary deity... The Sun was universally celebrated as the invincible guide and protector of Constantine." ¹⁵

Constantine never repented of his sins and was never baptized and never was a true disciple and follower of Yahshua Messiah. He actually was a pagan, sun worshipper who never changed his paganism but simply merged it with his newly found Christianity.

"Under Constantine and the later Catholic Church, Pagan temples became church buildings, the English word church refers to a pagan temple and not the biblical ecclesia (people). In time pagan priests became 'Christian' priests, pagan and heathen ceremonies came into the now apostate

church which resulted also with incorporating Easter and Christmas ¹⁶.”

This was only the beginning, Constantine decided that he wanted to unite the whole empire under his new pseudo, pagan/Christian religion and in 324 A.D he had a meeting with all the leading bishops and elders to incorporate his new doctrine. Here are the results of this conference.

“Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday (the Sabbath), but shall work on that Day: but the Lord’s Day (Sunday), they shall especially honor; and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ ¹⁷.”

*“The church was brought under one authority, from Constantine the Emperor to the Bishop of Rome that he would set up. The Catholic Church officially set at Nicea Sunday laws brought into effect. Anyone caught Judaizing (keeping of Sabbath or Holy Days] would be penalized with death. Constantine says all things that are a duty to do on the Sabbath we will change to Sunday, **the venerable day of the Sun**. We will have nothing to do with the hostile rabble of the Jews.” ¹⁸*

“On the venerable Day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.” ¹⁹

So it was not just that Constantine was strengthening his edicts toward Sunday worship from his pagan past, but he was also now legally regulating that those who would

continue in the true, apostolic faith of Yahshua would not be tolerated, would have their property confiscated and would be persecuted and punished most severely. The following is part of another edict that Constantine made on this subject and is recorded in Eusebius' book, "Life of Constantine".

*Constantine continues: "For as much, then, as it is no longer possible to bear with your pernicious errors, we give warning by this present statute that none of you henceforth presume to assemble yourselves together. We have directed, accordingly, that you be deprived of all the houses in which you are accustomed to hold your assemblies: and (we) forbid the holding of your superstitious and senseless Sabbath meetings, not in public merely, but in any private house or place whatsoever... Take the far better course of entering the Catholic Church... We have commanded... that you be positively deprived of every gathering point for your superstitious meetings. I mean all the houses of prayer... and that these be made over without delay to the Catholic Church; that any other places be confiscated to the public service, AND NO FACILITY WHATEVER BE LEFT FOR ANY FUTURE GATHERING, in order that from this day forward, none of your unlawful assemblies may presume to appear in any public or private place. Let this edict be made public."*²⁰

Authoritatively outlawing Sabbath worship and officially replacing it with Sunday worship was only the beginning of the vast changes that came out of the Nicean Council. It was also mandated that all Christians must keep Easter, and abandon the celebrating of the biblical Passover. Constantine also instituted a pagan holiday called Saturnalia, which is modern day Christmas.

*"After the triumph of Constantine, the church at Rome assigned December 25 as the date for the celebration of the feast (Messiah's birth), at the council of Nicea. The choice of December 25 was influenced by the fact that on this day the Romans celebrated the Mithraic feast of their sun-god (Mithras), and that SATURNALIA also came at this time."*²¹

"The original name of Rome was Saturnia, meaning the city of Saturn. Saturnalia was one of Rome's great feasts. It was celebrated from December 17-24. It was their ancient belief that the winter sun was slowly dying because it was seen rising further and further to the south each morning. By December 25, it could be recognized that it was coming back north, and it was said to be reborn on this day each year. This day was called Brumalia. During this ungodly festival, the city of Rome was covered with drunken people, and orgies were taking place everywhere; ivy, ribbons, wreaths, and garbage covered the streets. This was the pagan festival of the winter solstice then called Saturnalia, and now called Christmas!

*Mithraism was the largest pagan religion in the Roman and Greek world at the time of its rival religion, Christianity. The Mithraists were keeping the winter festival called "the nativity of the sun", thus named because they believed that the sun was born each year on December 25. They also celebrated December 25 as the date of Mithras' birthday because he was their sun god. The religious headquarters of Mithraism was at Rome."*²²

There was also a man who was at this conference named Arias, who was a church maverick of a sort, but was challenging the bishops present that Yahshua was not

indeed the Son of Yahweh and Elohim, but was merely a man. This caused a separate council to be named and to discuss the nature of Elohim and the outcome was the trinity doctrine that most of Christianity accepts today. The word trinity is not once found in Scripture, and again, was adopted from paganism as most pagan, cult religions had a triune god such as Mithraism which consisted of Mithra, Rashnu, and Volhumana.

Even the ancient pagan religion of Babylon had a triune head of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz. Tammuz was the child created from Nimrod to Semiramis after Nimrod had died and it was believed that he was reincarnated in the baby Tammuz. Constantine changed the names of Semiramis and Tammuz to the cultic worship of Mary and baby Jesus or Iezeus in Greek (the son of Zeus). Although the virgin birth is 100% accurate according to Scripture, Constantine changed the virgin birth story to the adoration of mother/child worship of Semiramis and Tammuz.

Let's look at another edict that Constantine had forced on all believers. This is what Constantine would demand, with the cooperation of the Church with its bishops, elders and teachers. All of which were appointed by him. Anyone in order to become what is termed, '*Christian*', as a prerequisite to becoming part of the Universal Roman Church; he must adhere to Constantine's Creed set out in 325 A.D.

"I confess denounce the whole of Hebrew people, Forthwith declare with a whole heart and sincere faith desires to be received among the Christians. I renounce openly in the church all Jewish superstitions. I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened breads and sacrifices of lambs of the

Hebrews, all the other fasts of the Hebrews, all the other sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purifications, sanctifications, propitiations, fasts, new moons, Sabbaths, hymns, cants, observances in the synagogues, and the food and drink of the Hebrews; in one word, I renounce absolutely everything Jewish, every law abiding custom.....

And if afterwards I shall wish to deny and return to Jewish superstition, or shall be found eating with Jews, or feasting with them, or secretly conversing and condemning the Christian religion instead of openly confuting them and condemning their vain faith, then let the trembling of Cain and the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, as well as the legal punishments to which I acknowledge myself liable. And may my soul beset down with Satan and the devils.”²³

Furthermore, any follower of the “Jewish Messiah” (Yahshua HaMashiach) who was forced to join this “unholy community” was compelled to adopt a different set of rules and customs. Subsequently, special creeds were drafted, to which the Christian would have to swear such as:

“I accept all customs, rites, legalism, and feasts of the Romans, sacrifices. Prayers, purifications with water, sanctifications by Pontificus Maxmus (high priests of Rome), propitiations, and feasts, and the New Sabbath “So! dei” (day of the Sun,), all new chants and observances, and all the foods and drinks of the Romans. In other words, I absolutely accept everything Roman, every new law, rite and custom, of Rome, and the New Roman Religion.”²⁴

Now, let’s remember that up to this point as we have conclusively proved, the early believer’s doctrine was one that kept the 10 commandments, including the 7th day

Sabbath, and also the Passover on the 14th day of the first month, according to the Biblical Calendar. They believed in baptizing adults into the covenant with Yahweh after they have repented of their sins and accepted Yahshua as Savior, who paid the penalty for their sins. Now, under Constantine there are not a few minor changes taking place, but it is a complete remaking of not only a different doctrine, but an entirely different religion. A religion not built on the Apostles and prophets, but one built on pure paganism and sun-worship.

Not only that, but where, before, the western bishops were straying away from the Sabbath and Torah due to anti-Semitism in the Roman Empire, but now, since Constantine was the actual emperor and had legalized Christianity and even took the title Pontius Maximus, which means "The Great Pontiff", but literally means the "*great bridge builder*," he could enforce this anti-Semitism throughout the empire on believers keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days.

Yes, Constantine was actually really the first Pope with supreme rule over the newly formed Christianity and he was the great bridge builder merging westernized Christianity with his pagan, sun worship religion. This was much worse for the true believers than any pogrom that was before it, as now they were not fighting against rogue elements in the movement of believers of Yahshua, but they were up against the very invulnerable Roman Empire itself. Just as the Bar Kokhba Revolt completely separated the disciples of Yahshua from Judaism at that time, this was an intractable, permanent break from the true Congregation of Yahshua and the Universal Church that Constantine had established and throughout history would become their arch nemesis.

I want to stress this fact because from this point forward the two congregations were two completely separate, distinct groups with virtually nothing in common. As a matter of fact, we will see from this point that actually the Universal (Catholic) Church that Constantine started was not only a completely separate entity than the Congregation of Yahshua, but actually declared war on the true believers of Yahshua. Constantine had his seat where Satan dwelt and Satan would cause war on the true Remnant of Yahshua for many centuries to come even until today.

You saw the edicts that Constantine signed against Yahshua's Congregation to confiscate their property, imprison and torture them and cause them all kinds of distress and troubles. Praise Yahweh, under Constantine due to the great persecutions that had befallen believers up until his appearing he did not start a new pogrom of martyrdom against the true believers immediately.

However, his nephew and successor named Julian the Apostate took over the empire in 360 A.D., and was much worse than Constantine in the fact that not only did he embrace the same pagan religion as Constantine, but Julian decided that he was going to militarily enforce these decrees on the true believers at the cost of death to anyone who did not comply.

He had another conference in 360 A.D. called the Council of Laodicea, in which he more firmly established his pagan ties with Christianity, but also laid out severe punishments to those who refused to conform. Here are a few of the decrees made at this conference.

- Maintaining order among bishops and clerics (canon 3-5, 11-13, 21-27, 40-44, 56-57)
- Regulating an approach to heretics (canon 6-10, 31-34, 37)
- Outlawing the keeping of the Sabbath day (Saturday) (canon 29)

So, now, if someone was a true believer and an ordained elder, according to the canons set out at this meeting they would not be recognized as such any longer, and termed a heretic, as well as the other true followers of Yahshua.

It should also be mentioned that there were many thousands of true brethren who were indeed keeping the Sabbath day and Yahweh's commandments at this time. The fact that Constantine and Julian would have to make formal decrees specifically against Sabbath keeping and Passover is clear evidence that the true Remnant was indeed keeping these days, or what would be the purpose of such an edict if no one was actually Sabbath and Holy Day keepers?

In the 29th canon of that official synod of the Council of Laodicea in the 360 A.D. it states: "*Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord's Day (Sunday); and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be Judaizes, let them be anathema from Messiah.*"

This particular decision of the bishops who gathered at Laodicea is remarkable because it clearly reveals to us that

the true Congregation of Yahshua continued to worship on the seventh-day Sabbath long after 324 A.D., when Constantine issued his Sunday law.

The synod recognized that many true believers were still observing the Sabbath by what they called Judaizing; that is, by refraining from labor as the Jews did. The bishops condemned the practice and urged these believers to do their resting on Sunday instead.

The mere fact that the bishops at Laodicea felt it necessary to address this issue is additional proof that more than 300 years after Yahshua, many true believers still observed the Sabbath day according to the fourth commandment.

The fact that Julian was also equipped and ready to physically carry out military action to arrest, and kill such believers left the true Congregation of Yahweh with little choice to flee the area and go underground. There were primarily two groups that fled the empire. One group was in the western part and fled up to the northern mountains of Italy, France and some even went as far as Great Britain. A second group that we will focus on now went east to eastern Turkey and Armenia where strongholds of brethren were, from about the second century A.D.

*“The remnants of the true Church were in large part forced to flee the bounds of the Roman Empire into the mountains of Armenia, and later into the Balkan areas of Europe. They were few in number, utterly lacking in prestige or wealth and labeled as enemies of the state by a supposedly “Christian” Roman Empire.”*²⁵

This is where the Pergamos congregation truly starts to take shape as the fortified congregation. As they will be outcast and outlawed for the next 1260 years, living underground lives and continually fleeing from the wrath of the Roman emperors. Revelation the 12th chapter prophesied about this time period.

Rev 12:6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place, it having been prepared from Elohim, that there they might nourish her a thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

Many times in Scripture Yahweh used prophecy so that a day can represent a year.

Num 14:34 *by the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year; you shall bear your iniquities forty years; you shall know My alienation from you.*

And so the Congregation would spend the next 1260 years in isolation and hiding until the time of the pilgrims coming to the New World in 1620. As we begin to move forward with the history of the true Congregation of Yahweh at this point, we must remember that now that they are completely separate from the Universal (Catholic) Church, the historical record will be much different than before as the true history of the Remnant of Yahshua will be completely different than the history of Constantine's Universal Church.

Let us also remember that history is written by the conquerors, not the conquered; and in many circumstances our only source of reference will be the documents left in

antiquity of their enemies. However, I am also going to include many ancient references from the true Congregation themselves.

Another thing that must be mentioned is that according to the Roman Empire and Roman Church there were only two types of people; those who were part of the Universal Roman religion and those who were heretics. Many times in their historical writings the Romans will lump true believers in with outright heretics who were nothing like them, except that these heretics also would not succumb to the authority of the Universal Church.

So in order to be true and accurate to the proper history of the true Congregation of Yahshua, we must follow the geographical trail that they will etch in the annals of history, but we must also match up the geography with the doctrine they kept, the character they provided and the unbroken chain of succession that followed them. It is a most amazing story of courage and faith and perseverance of this true line of believers that started with Yahshua and the Apostles, and continued with Polycarp, and survived through Constantine and has continued, even until this very day.

So, let's look now at where the true Congregation went after they had to flee from the edicts of Constantine and Julian. The Roman Empire at this time spanned from Rome to Constantinople, which is modern day Istanbul in Turkey. Also, the Byzantine Empire was starting to take shape around this time. The concentration of the true believers as we have witnessed so far were mostly in the area of Smyrna, Laodicea and the like, with small pockets of scattered believers in the Roman Empire west, near Rome.

So, when these believers were forced to flee or suffer great persecution, and even death, it was logical that they would travel to the east to hide in the mountainous areas of Armenia, which today is part of eastern Turkey bordering with Armenia, the borders being a little different in that time, but the mountain ranges of Ararat and others are of course the same.

In the time of the true Congregation of Yahshua in the wilderness during these 1260 years, they take no formal name as they are outcasts hiding from their imperial overlords, and would not want to put a mark of capture on them. However, their adversaries and enemies call them by different names of clearly the same sect. In Armenia, the congregations were called Paulicians or Thonraki. The reason for this was that one of the early leaders of this apostolic congregation was a man named Paul of Samosata; and also many of the congregations, after migrating lived in Thonrak, Armenia.

As we will see from the historical records that we have, these believers migrated here late in the fourth century after the heretical mandates of Rome became law and they had no choice except to acquiesce to the heresy of Rome or flee the empire. It should also be stated that there was a small group of true remnant believers already in Armenia from at least the 2nd century to accept these fleeing brethren.

There is an amazing book that was written in 1898 by a man named Fred Conybeare, which outlines the migration and belief of these Paulicians. It also has an incredible original document in the book, which is called "The Key of Truth" that

was written by the Paulician believers themselves and clearly shows their doctrine and belief system. In the introduction of the book Conybeare clearly states that the document itself, with the beliefs of the Paulicians goes back to around the fourth century.

“It’s age attested both by the colophon and by the style and the liturgical parts of the book are older than the rest and belong perhaps to the fourth century A.D.” ²⁶

This document, I believe, has been vital in connecting the apostolic congregation started by Yahshua to the Waldenses and other groups of the 6th to 12th centuries. As a matter of fact, Conybeare clearly shows that these people were one and the same group. Let’s take a look at what he states in “The Key of Truth”.

“And now I at last understood who these Paulicians really were. I now realized that I had stumbled on the monument of a phase of the Christian Congregation so old and so outworn, that the very memory of it was well-nigh lost.” ²⁷

“As most of the early Armenian historians admit, Christianity (from the Paulicians) was not planted by Gregory the Illuminator (a famous Paulician) but was long anterior to him and had an apostolic origin.” ²⁸

“Like a rising tide soon swept over Christendom, everywhere effacing literary and other traces of the adoptionist faith, which seems thenceforward to have only lived on in Languedoc and along the Rhine as the submerged Christianity of the Cathars, and perhaps also among the Waldenses.

In the reformation Catherism comes once more to the surface, particularly among the so-called Anabaptists and Unitarian Christians, between whom and the most primitive congregation, The Key of Truth and the Cathar Ritual of Lyon supply us with two great connecting links.” ²⁹

The Waldenses, as we will see thoroughly throughout this book, were the longest and largest group of the true Congregation of Yahshua in the wilderness, and we will give extensive references to their congregation in a later chapter.

It is also quite certain, as we will see with the Waldenses that they were also called by various names such as Cathars, Albigenses, Insabbati, Picards, etc, and Conybeare and others, clearly connect these groups with the Paulicians and even later with the Seventh Day Anabaptists. Now let's look at what "The Key of Truth" tells us about the migration of the Paulicians to Armenia.

"Through Antioch and Palmyra this faith must have spread into Mesopotamia and Persia; and in those regions became the basis of that Nestorian Christianity which spread over to Turkestan, invaded China and still has a foothold in Urmiah and Southern India.

From centers like Edessa, Nisibis and Amida it was diffused along the entire range of the Taurus, from Cilicia as far as Ararat, and beyond the Araxes into Albania on the southern slopes of the Eastern Caucasus. Its proximate center of diffusion in the later region seems to have been the upper valley of the great Zab, where was the traditional site of the martyrism of the Apostle Bartholomew, to whom the

Armenians traced back the succession of the bishops of the canon of Siuniq north of Araxes. In Albania, Atropatene and Vaspurakan to the east of Lake Van

*There was moreover, an early and persistent tradition among the Armenians themselves that the Christianity of Armenia along the Median border, especially in Siuniq, the region east of Ararat along the Araxes and bordering Albania (modern Daghestan) was older than that of Gregory the Illuminator, and went back to St Bartholemew and St Thadeus to whom **its succession of (ordained) bishops** went back.”³⁰*

Notice the mentioning of a succession of ordained elders, which we will conclusively prove from the historical records of Yahshua's true Remnant that this succession that started with the Apostles still continues until today. This migration is also very telling to say the least. First of all, they are coming from Asia Minor and modern day western Turkey, which is no surprise as we mentioned that this is where the concentration of the true Congregation of Yahshua was.

The interesting part is where “The Key of Truth” tells us that they went to, which is primarily Armenia, but which is today eastern Turkey on the Armenian border. What makes this interesting is that not only is this where Noah's ark landed (Mount Ararat), but it is also close to Urfa, which is the biblical Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham was born.

One of the teachers at our bible school, who is a renowned archaeologist for over 30 years, is Yossie Stepanski who recently made a trip to this area and actually even saw the well of Laban where Jacob met Rachel.

This area near the Black and Caspian Sea is the very area where many Israelites migrated to when the northern tribes of Israel were cast out of the land, and would make perfect sense of the believers fleeing to this area where there would be other remnants of their faith and where even the apostle Bartholomew traveled.

Also this was a stronghold for the Aramaic speaking true believers throughout antiquity, and the very area where the oldest copy of a complete New Testament text was found written in the original Aramaic language and dating back to the second century A.D.

The Khaburis Manuscript is a copy of a second century New Testament, which was written in approximately 165 A.D. Carbon dating has found this copy of the New Testament to be approximately 1,000 years old. Given its origins, this would make it a copy of the oldest known New Testament manuscript. It was scribed on lamb parchment and hand bound between olive wood covers adorned with gold clasps, hinges and corner-brackets. In the Colophon, the Bishop certified (with his inverted signature and seal) that the Khaburis was a faithful copy of the second century original. Of particular interest, is the fact that the Khaburis is written entirely in Aramaic, the tongue of Yahshua our Savior.

“The Key of Truth” also confirms that the earliest New Testament came from this region. *“The primitive Syriac Christianity of South East Armenia, which the Grecizing Armenian fathers ignored even though it provided them with their earliest version of the New Testament.”* ³¹



So the migration to this area makes perfect sense at the time of fleeing in the fourth century, and also fits the historical mandate perfectly and even explains why the original Aramaic Manuscripts of the New Testament were found in this area.

It also confirmed the unbroken chain of ordination starting at Jerusalem and now making its way to this area by the Apostles themselves ordaining other bishops to continue the work and baptize and ordain other elders. Conybeare continues:

“In the west the Adoptionist faith (Paulileans) was anathematized at Rome in the person of Theodotus as early as 190A.D..... It still survived in Moorish Spain, and was there vigorous as late as the ninth century; and it lived on in other parts of Europe, in Burgundy, in Bavaria, and in the Balkan Peninsula, where it was probably the basis of Bogomilism. It is even not improbable that it was the heresy of the early British Church.” ³²

It is important that Dr. Conybeare is connecting the Paulicians to the Bogomils of the 7th and 8th centuries and from them to the believers who came later from Peter Waldo, a famous Waldense, to Bavaria, where also the Seventh Day Anabaptists rose from. By the 8th and 9th centuries many of these Paulicians had to flee to the western mountains and other places once the Muslim conquest entered their area. Others were displaced by Rome.

It is also of great importance that the above quote states that the Paulician's doctrine was anathematized at Rome as early as 190 A.D., as this was the same time of the great Quatrodecimen debate of whether to keep the biblical Passover on the 14th day of Aviv, (the first biblical month) or the newly adopted pagan Easter. Polycrates wrote his letter to Bishop Victor on this subject at this very time. “The Key of Truth” also states that *“the Paulicians were indeed quatrodecimens.”* ³³

As I mentioned, it is of most importance that we can separate the true Congregation of Yahweh from other false rogue heretics that also refused to join the Universal Church at that time. I believe we can make a similar comparison at

the anomaly that is also happening in our day and age, in these end times. Since the mid 1990's there have been Christians in the millions leaving their formal, church organizations and either meeting in home groups or small congregations or even just roaming from conference to conference. At first this seemed like a movement from Elohim, as many of these people were coming to the truth of Sabbath and Torah keeping and were leaving the paganism of their churches behind.

However, without judicial order and structure and ordained elders as the true Congregation of Yahshua had in the wilderness, this movement in our modern times has turned into a spiritual nightmare, as the Internet has been exchanged for true spirit led congregational elders and leadership, and heresy has abounded. These rogue Laodicean anarchists in our day have no connection to the true Remnant Congregation of Yahshua that is scattered all over the earth today. However, false church leaders of major corporate groups may lump all non-denominational people into the same lump.

If you read propaganda from organized religion, many times they will lump all Sabbath and Torah observant believers in the same lump as the heretics, just as happened in the 3rd to the 15th centuries. That is why they call these Paulicians, adoptionists, as they are lumping them into the same mold as Marcionites, and Manichaens, who were gnostic heretics and had very little in common with the Paulicians except that they both abhorred the hierarchy of the Roman Empire and Church. Marcionites and Manichaens did not believe in Yahshua's deity as the eternal Son of Yahweh, and they believed that Yahweh was a cruel Elohim that had a harsh

law, and that Yahshua came to do away with it. Christianity today looks much more like Marcionites, than the early Paulicians and Waldenses who never believed such lies. This even came to the surprise of Fred Conybeare when he discovered "The Key of Truth". Look at what he states in the preface of the book.

"My first impression on looking into it was one of disappointment, as I had expected to find in it a Marcionite, or at least a Manichean book; but beyond the extremely sparse use made in it of the Old Testament, I found nothing that savored of these ancient heresies." ³⁴

The fact of the matter is that the Paulicians or Thonrakis were not heretics, but were the remnant of the very apostolic Congregation that Yahshua started. They also did not reject Yahshua's deity as the Marcionites did, but simply rejected the false idea of the trinity, and the pagan idea that Yahshua was half man and half god. Let's read from "The Key of Truth" from their own doctrine on how they completely worshipped and honored Yahshua as the Eternal Savior and Son of Yahweh.

"Then it was that He received authority, received the high-priesthood, received the kingdom and office of chief shepherd. Moreover, He was then chosen, then He won lordship., Then He was glorified, then He was praise., It was then He became chief of beings heavenly and earthly, then He became light of the world, then He became the way the truth and the life. Then He became the door of heaven, then He became the rock impregnable at the gate of hell, then He became the foundation of our faith, then He became savior of all sinners; then He was filled with the Godhead (divinity).

*Yea, then also He was ordained King of beings in Heaven and on earth and under the earth; and all this besides all this in due order the Father gave to His only born Son; even as He Himself being appointed our mediator and Intercessor, says to His holy, universal apostolic congregation. And Yahshua came and spoke in heaven and on earth and stated 'therefore all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, and as the Father sent me, so do I send you.' Thus, the Lord having learned from the Father, proceeded to teach us holy baptism and all His other commands at an age of full growth."*³⁵

So, we can clearly see from the Paulicians' own handwriting that not only did they believe in the deity of Yahshua, but they revered Him as the King of Kings and Master of the entire universe. We can also clearly see that the Paulicians believe in the full authority that the Father gave to Yahshua and that Yahshua gave to the Apostles and then to their ordained elders. They would actually do a ceremony with ordination of an elder where they would publically state, after laying hands on the newly ordained elder, that he now had the authority from Yahshua to both baptize and ordain and also for binding and loosening according to Matthew 16:19.

Where the Paulicians are misunderstood is that they did not believe that Yahshua the Son and Yahweh the Father are the same being, a false teaching of the trinity, and in doing so they were falsely accused of denying Yahshua's deity, which was not true according to their own writings. The other heretics who denied the deity of Yahshua did no such thing. Some believed Yahshua simply to be a righteous man but having no divinity at all, such as the group of probably

Essene priests, called Nazarenes. This group lasted until about 400 A.D., and then, was either destroyed or simply petered out, but history tells us no more of them after that. The Paulicians clearly believed in Yahshua's supremacy and also the apostolic succession of judicial order that Yahshua gave to the Apostles, and in the late fourth century, had come down to them.

"The writer and reader of the Key of truth did not call themselves Paulicians, or Thonraketzi. They were the Holy, universal, and apostolic, Congregation founded by Yahshua Messiah and His apostles." ³⁶

They also felt Yahshua was the only mediator between man and Elohim, and sins could only be forgiven by His power. Here is a literal prayer that they used to commence:

"Oh sweet Master of mine, Yahshua Messiah, we worship, we pray, we entreat and beseech thine all- powerful Lordship, who are at the right hand of thy Father, mediate and intercede for us sinners now and in the hour of our death." ³⁷

The Paulicians strongly believed that one had to repent of their sins and be baptized, only as an adult, to join the New Covenant and that they must also have the laying on of hands, only by an ordained elder. Here are a few more quotes from "The Key of Truth".

*"As we learned from the Lord of the Apostolic and universal congregation, so do we proceed: and we establish in perfect faith those who till then have not holy baptism: **Nor have they tasted of the body, nor have they drunk the holy***

blood of our master Yahshua Messiah. Therefore according to the word of our Master, we must first bring them into the faith, induce them to repent, and then give it to them.” ³⁸

Notice, clearly, that only a baptized member in covenant relationship with Yahweh could partake in the yearly symbols of the bread and wine.

*But unless a man has borne these thorough tests, it is not right for the president or rulers **to lay their hands on his head**. Since our Master and universal apostolic holy congregation inhibit us **from laying hands on such ones** and becoming sharers and partakers of their sin.*

*See and mark my loved ones, how the Master forbids us to lay hands on such as these, that is on false prophets, deceivers, disobedient, foolish, and so forth. Again, it is not meet **for you Elohim loving rulers and arch-rulers, to rashly lay your hands on such men.**”* ³⁹

Let's look deeper now at the beliefs of these Paulicians, or Thonrakis, and see the doctrinal connection to the true, apostolic Congregation Yahshua started.

“In the Key of Truth we for the first time recover a long past phase of Christian life, and that not in the garbled account of an Epiphanius, or in the jejune pages of Irenaeus or Hippolytus; but in the very words of those who lived it.

A lost congregation rises before our eyes; not a dead anatomy, but a living organism. We can, as it were, enter the humble congregation, be present at the simple rites, and find

ourselves at home among the worshippers. And it is remarkable how this long-lost congregation recalls to us **the TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES**. There is the same Pauline conception of the Eucharist indicated by the stress laid on the use of a single loaf, the same baptism in living water, the same absence of a hierarchy (like Catholicism), the same description of the President as an Apostle, the same implied Messiahship of the elect who teach the word, **the same claim to possess the Apostolical tradition.**" ⁴⁰

"The canon-lore of the patriarchs they reject and say that the councils of the patriarchs were false (such as Nicea, Laodicea) and that their canons were written by the devil. Except Messiah we have no other intercessor including the mother of Messiah or saints. In the time of baptism it is unnecessary to anoint with oil, for this is an ordinance of man not Elohim. You shall keep the 10 commandments that Elohim gave to Moses." ⁴¹

A Paulician leader states, "they also condemned fasts, stated feasts, prayers for the dead, and the celebration of Easter; but he urged a purer morality and a stricter observance of the Sabbath. He had many followers, whose numbers were greatly augmented by one Paul of Samosata, from whom they were called Paulicians. Notwithstanding the opposition of the prelates, who invoked the secular arm to prevent the defection of their spiritual subjects, the tenets of this sect struck deep root in Armenia and many of the eastern provinces, and finally the great body of Christians in the former country, withdrew from the Episcopal communion, and publicly espoused the sentiments of the Paulicians. After a candid examination of their tenets, one must concede that they were principally distinguished for an adherence to

the strict letter of the sacred text, and for the primitive simplicity of their forms of worship. The standard of piety was changed from absurd penances to purity of life and morals. Houses of charity were endowed for the support and education of orphans and foundlings, and the religious teachers were obliged to depend for temporal support upon the voluntary subscriptions of their brethren and the labor of their own hands. To these congregations, famous throughout the East no less for the purity of their worship than their exemption from ecclesiastical tyranny, myriads of fugitives resorted from all the provinces of the Eastern empire, and the narrow bigotry of the emperors was punished by the emigration of their most useful subjects. Among the mountains of Armenia, and beyond the precincts of the Roman power, they seemed to have- found a new world, where they might breathe the air of religious freedom.

During this time the Paulicians had increased in a wonderful manner. The desire of gaining souls for Elohim, and subjects for the congregation, has, in all ages, fired the zeal and animated the activity of the Christian priesthood. It must not be supposed that the Paulicians were less arduous in the prosecution of their spiritual enterprises. Assuming the character of travelling merchants, or in the habits of pilgrims, a character to this day sacred throughout the East, they joined the Indian caravans, or pursued without fear the footsteps of the roving Tartar, and illiterate shepherds and gruesome warriors forsook their flocks and deserted their camps to listen to the simple eloquence of an Armenian pilgrim.” ^{41A}

The Thonraki, or Paulician, believers clearly believed that they were the remnant of the original Congregation started

by Yahshua, and utterly detested and rejected all forms of heresy and paganism that the Roman emperors brought into their newly found Universal Church.

*“The writer and reader of the key of truth did not call themselves Paulicians still less Thonraketzi. **They were the holy, universal and apostolic Congregation founded by Yahshua Messiah and His apostles.***

*Where we read of the Paulicians after anathematizing the ancient sects (Roman Universal Church), would say, “we do not belong to these for they have long ago broken connection with the Congregation. **It is also clear from their letter to the Syrian Catholicos that they represented themselves as belonging to the true Congregation.**”* ⁴²

Here’s what the Paulicians also said about the importance of baptism, and it being the sign and way to enter into the one and only true Congregation of Yahshua.

*“The Congregation consists of all baptized persons and preserves the apostolic tradition which Messiah revealed to the apostles and they to the congregation, which has handed it down **to an unbroken transmission** from the first. Of divine ordinances, **they did the laying on of hands as the apostles received from Messiah.** All true baptism in accordance with the precepts of Messiah, especially Mark 16:16, must be preceded by repentance and faith.*

Consequently, infant baptism is invalid; and in admitting it, the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians have lost their Christianity, lost the sacraments, forfeited their orders and have become a mere Satanic mimicry of the true faith. If any

of them even their patriarchs would rejoin the true Congregation, they must be baptized.” ⁴³

Also, they again stress the importance of the laying on of hands during the baptism ceremony as was done in apostolic times. They also state above that if someone from the false church was to repent and join the true Congregation he must be baptized; they do not say re-baptized, as they did not even recognize the false baptism done in the false church at all.

“Baptism is only to be performed by an elect or ordained member of the Congregation and in answer to the personal demand of the person who seeks to be admitted into the congregation.” ⁴⁴

They did not openly proselytize or try to coerce anyone into the baptism rite, as the Roman Church was now doing. The Romans were trying to get uniformity in the empire and were even baptizing outright pagans and blending the mixture of the two religions into one.

The Paulicians however, were serious to make sure that the desire and repentance of the new believer was genuine and sincere and that they understood that this was not simply making a rash vow, but was a heartfelt, life-long decision in following Yahshua and His Congregation and way of life.

“It is right and fitting that those to be baptized should shed tears like Peter, like Paul, like the harlot Mary, or like Simon’s wife’s mother, and others resembling them. For they with great contrition received glory and honor from Yahshua Messiah our Savior, as is clear in the holy gospel, and in the

acts of the holy Apostles and elsewhere. Again, what is meet for those who wish to receive Holy baptism? It is meet that they should approach in gentleness, in humility to the elect one, solicit from him release from demons, and that they may serve our Master Yahshua Messiah and His holy Congregation.” ⁴⁵

Let's examine some more of the Paulician doctrine from "The Key of Truth". It tells us that during Passover they use only "one unleavened loaf and wine are to be offered." ⁴⁶ It also tells us, concerning judicial order:

*"There is but a single grade of ecclesiastical authority and that is of the elect one. He has the authority to bind and loose **given by the Father to Yahshua in the descent of the Holy Spirit, in the Jordan, handed on to by Yahshua to the apostles and by them to their successor.***

*It also states that in order to present a bishop as a candidate for election and in conjunction with **the bishop laying hands on him for ordination, that he himself would have had to be an elect and ordained one also.***" ⁴⁷

This goes back to the situation that took place in Acts the 8th chapter with Simon Magus and why, although he was a sorcerer with magical powers, he had to still try and bribe the apostle Peter to give him the authority to transfer the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, as only a true ordained elder of Yahweh would have such authority.

Act 8:18 *But when Simon Magus saw that **the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of the hands of the apostles,** he offered them money,*

Act 8:19 saying, ***Give to me also this authority that to whomever I may lay on the hands he may receive the Holy Spirit.***

Act 8:20 But Peter said to him, ***May your silver be with you into destruction, because you thought to obtain the gift of YAHWEH through money.***

The Paulicians knew they were the true remnant of the original Congregation of Yahshua and they repudiated the heretical, conniving Roman Universal Church with all of its paganism and falsehoods.

“The Paulicians utterly rejected church and (Roman) church ordinances, infant baptism, the mass, the cross, and fasts. They necessarily rejected the ordinances of churches which having willfully corrupted the institution of baptism in its evangelical, primitive, and only genuine form, as they regarded it, and had also lost their orders and sacraments and apostolic tradition. But they themselves in repudiating the innovation of infant baptism, had kept all these things, and so formed the only true Congregation, and were the only real Christians left in the world.” ⁴⁸

We see that the newly formed Universal or Catholic Church was not based on the truth of Scripture, but on sun worship and other pagan customs. Let's look at the following quote from Isaac Catholicos, an early church father from Armenia.

“The custom of turning to the east (toward the sun) in prayer was so ancient in Christianity, being already attested to by 2nd century fathers, that it is surprising, although not impossible, that the Paulicians had not adopted it, as the

Paulicians would state “ Messiah did not enjoin us to pray toward the east. Let them not either pray toward the east.” 49

As we already mentioned, Christmas was not the birth of Messiah but was the pagan, evil Saturnalia winter solstice festival that Constantine in 324 A.D. turned into the birth of Yahshua. The Paulicians abhorred the pagan Christmas festival and refused to recognize it, but rather memorialized January 6th as the day they believed that Yahshua was baptized and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

“The Paulicians did not keep the feast of the annunciation; that they refused to adore the images of Messiah, and of the mother of god, and of the saints, and called them idols; that they denied the nativity of Messiah, which must mean that they regarded the Baptism as the real Nativity of Messiah.” 50

Luk 3:21 *And it happened, in the baptizing of all the people, Yahshua also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened;*

Luk 3:22 *and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the likeness of the form of a dove. And there was a voice out of Heaven, saying, You are My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am pleased.*

Act 13:33 *Behold Elohim has completed it to their children, to us, that He raised Yahshua. It is written in the second Psalm that "You are My Son, today I have begotten You.*

“It is not until the close of the fourth century that the modern Christmas, the birth of Yahshua from the virgin emerges among the orthodox festivals, and displaces in the minds of the faithful his spiritual birth in the Jordan (River). First in Rome, and soon in Antioch and the nearer east, the new

*festival was kept on Dec 25. In the farther east, **however, in Egypt, in Armenia, and in Mesopotamia, the new date for the chief festival was not accepted**, and the commemoration of the earthly or human birth of Yahshua was merely added alongside of the older feast of his baptism, both being kept on the old day, January 6th.”*⁵¹

December 25th, and the winter solstice, and Christmas were never celebrated by the true Congregation of Yahweh, as they knew it was of pagan origin, which Yahweh forbids (Deut 12:29-32). As a matter of fact, even though you have hundreds of dates and even births described in Scripture to everyone from Adam, to Moses, to Samuel and John the Baptist, and even Yahshua Himself, and yet not one actual date of birth is even mentioned once in Scripture showing that the celebrating of birthdays with making wishes, giving out presents, and blowing out candles on cakes all come from pagan origins and is not the example that either Yahshua or the early believers have set for their followers throughout the ages. Here is another quote stating the beliefs of the early Paulicians and the feasts that they observed.

*“But it was especially in its fasts and feasts that the Adoptionist Christianity contrasted with the Great Church (Roman Universal). On January 6th, they celebrated the feast of the Baptism and spiritual re-birth of Yahshua as the Messiah and Son of Elohim. Then, began the quadradesimal fast commemorating the forty days and nights on the mountain, during which He was fortifying Himself against the temper, of the institution of the Master’s Supper which was kept on the 14th of Nisan (Aviv). **The Sabbath was***

perhaps kept and there were no special Sunday observances.

Of the modern Christmas and of the annunciation, and of the other (Roman) feasts connected with the life of Yahshua prior to His thirtieth year, this phase of the Congregation knew nothing. The general impression, which the study of it leaves on us is that in it we have before us a form of a Congregation (Paulilians), not very remote from the primitive Jewish Christianity of Palestine.” ⁵²

“Also, Gregory of Narek taxes that the Thonraki reckon Sunday as the same as any other day.” ⁵³

Gregory also states the following in an ancient manuscript called, “The Canons of Sahak”.

“That the Paulicians of Thonrak reckoned the Lord’s Day (Sunday) to be just like any other day. And that the earliest Christians kept the Sabbath may indeed be inferred from the persistence in the vernacular tongues on the races which first adopted the religion of the word ‘Sabbath’, namely in the Romance tongues, in Greek, in Armenian, Syrian, and Georgian. And the Armenians have always spoken of Sunday simply as the first day of the week. The Greek word for Sunday, hardly occurs before John of Otsun (5th century). It is also certain from the works of Philo and Josephus that to most Gentile proselytes, the Sabbath observance was the most attractive feature in Judaism.” ⁵⁴

As we have most profoundly proven, the early true Congregation of Yahshua, who was forced to flee to the mountains in the late fourth century by the harsh and forcible

edicts of Rome, stayed completely separate in all ways from the newly found, paganized Roman Universal Church. They neither kept the pagan festivals that Rome kept or the pagan Sunday worship that Constantine initiated. Remember, when the Roman bishops started to commemorate and meet on the first day of the week in the early second century, it was to commemorate the resurrection of Yahshua; and although it had a pseudo mixture with sun worship, these bishops still observed Saturday as the Sabbath day, and no special abstinence was applied to the first day of the week.

However, Constantine by official Roman law, as we have already mentioned, initiated not only Sunday observance, but Sunday worship and abstinence of anything that was to be observed on the Sabbath day. He also even forbade any kind of meeting on the Sabbath day by the Congregation of Yahshua. Here, we clearly see the true Remnant of Yahshua called Paulicians, keeping the original Passover, and Sabbath day for hundreds of years later in the area of Armenia and Mesopotamia and other regions in which was now the Byzantine Empire. We also see that these Paulicians did indeed fully worship Yahshua not only as Messiah, but also Elohim and Son of Yahweh out of heaven, and were not in any way connected with the gnostic movement of Marcionites, or Manicheans, who clearly fully rejected Yahshua's deity and claim for Him to be the Son of Elohim.

"The historian Photus as well as other Greek writers including Gregory Magistros (a contemporary of the Paulicians) attests that the Paulicians anathematized and rejected Marcion and Manichean." ⁵⁵

*“Of their being descended from or even connected with the Marcionite Church, as Dr. Mkrtschian and others have suggested, there is **NO** prove whatsoever; any more than there is of their being Manicheans, as the Greeks pretended. The true descendants of Marcion were certainly the Manicheans and Mani was anathematized by the Paulician congregation along with other heretics of the old time.”* ⁵⁶

“But although the Paulicians had so little in common with the Manicheans, it does not follow that there were no Manicheans in Armenia. There were, and Gregory Magistros, Nerses Claiensis, and Paul of Taron clearly distinguish them from the Thonraki or Paulicians.” ⁵⁷

These true believers were misrepresented because they denied the false, cultic, trinity doctrine stating that Yahweh and Yahshua and the Holy Spirit are simply different personalities of the same being. They fully believed as Scripture states, that Yahweh is a family and that the new believer once he/ she repented of their sins, and accepted Yahshua's sacrifice to pay the penalty of their sins, and received the Holy Spirit through baptism and the laying on of hands of a true ordained elder of Yahweh, that the new believer became a new creation and through the Holy Spirit should exemplify Yahshua living in them.

“Accordingly to it, the entire life of the Christian should be a rehearsal of the life of Messiah; and the body of believers, the Congregation, is in a mysterious manner the body of Messiah. I have been crucified says Paul (Gal 2:20) with Messiah; yet I live, and not no longer I, but there lives in me Messiah. And that life, which I now live in the flesh, I live through faith in the Son of Elohim, who loved me and

surrendered Himself up for my sake. John 17:23, 'I am in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one.' In some such way the Paulician elect were assuredly regarded, and the very idea of an elect one, as the name implies, was that of a vessel of election, of a man chosen of the spirit in the same way the man Yahshua was chosen. The spirit had descended upon him and abode in him, rendering him as a new man, one in soul and body with Messiah. The idea of such a union of the believer made perfect through faith in Messiah was very old in Christianity."

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The false Universal Catholic Church could not understand such a theology of actually being a new person through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the responsibility to bear fruit unto Yahweh, the same as Yahshua bore fruit. Since Constantine the Great, they had embarked on another form of religion through paganism in which the religious participant merely was granted mystic favors for his pagan worship of the deity, but in their pagan practice the worshipper had no moral obligation for a true, sincere change of life as the true Good News message of Yahshua taught. So you can see why this most ancient, true remnant of the Congregation that Yahshua states, "*the gates of hell will not prevail against her*" would be misunderstood and distorted by their pagan counterparts. However, in this true remnant of Paulicians and Thonrakis we see the original apostolic faith that all true believers today should be striving to return to.

Jud 1:3 *Having made all haste to write to you about the common salvation, beloved, I had need to write to you to exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.*

Jud 1:4 *For certain men stole in, those of old having been written before to this condemnation, wicked ones perverting the grace of our Elohim into lasciviousness, and denying the only Sovereign Elohim, and our Master Yahshua Messiah.*

*“The Paulicians arose out of religious conservatism. They were ‘the old believers’ not innovators, but enemies of Catholic innovations, of infant baptism and abhorred the fourth century Christology of all the circle of ideas summed up in the words.... of images and pictures, of intercession of saints, of purgatory, of papal pretensions, of nearly everything later than Tetullian’s age (around 200 A.D.). **They did not desire new things, but only to keep what they had got; and that as pointed out was peculiarly primitive, and might well prove to be the most ancient form of all the Christian liturgies.**”* ⁵⁹

The Paulicians were true guards of the original faith of Yahshua and the Apostles, and were not looking to add onto the perfect faith handed down to them, but simply to ‘preserve’ it. What a lesson to the modern Laodicean, Internet congregation that is almost daily surfing the Net to find some form of so-called newer understanding, such as the rotating Sabbath, denying Yahshua’s deity, even some calling the Apostle Paul a heretic, which are not new understandings as they claim, but ancient heresies as we have unveiled. The true remnant of the Congregation of Yahweh that Yahshua started was one that preserved the original faith of the Apostles neither adding to it, nor taking away from it (Deut 4:2).

“It must not be forgotten, however that from the reign of Constantine onwards, the cruelest edicts forbade the use of

their churches to all heretical sects, and ordered their destruction. However, in this particular, also the Paulicians preserved the primitive teaching of the Christian Congregation.” ⁶⁰

Yes, first Constantine, and then Julian, persisted to hunt down these true faithful believers and either eradicate their original apostolic faith and doctrine or simply wipe out the one true apostolic sect.

“Then, came The Council of Chalcedon (451), summoned by Emperors Marcian (396-457- Eastern Emperor) and Valentinian III (419-455-one of the last Western Roman Emperors) and attended by approximately 600 bishop-pastors from the East and the West (Asia, Pontus, Thrace, Egypt, Rome, Africa, et al). The emperors sought a common declaration against Christological heresies that would be in accord with Nicea and Constantinople.

The council confirmed that the Lord Messiah is one person, his two natures preserved in one prosopon and hypostasis (hypostatic union). Both natures, God and man, are unimpaired, ‘perfect’, consubstantial with God and man, and born of the Virgin. The distinct natures are fully God and man, thus securing salvation by a saving Elohim and a man identified with men. Unfortunately, Monophysitism continued to spread after the Council of Chalcedon. Those Monophysites who rejected the Councils orthodox teaching did so because they felt that this was the only way to protect the teaching of the unity of Messiah’s person. According to Monophysitism, to ascribe two natures to Messiah was a denial that man could gain ultimate oneness with Elohim, which was the goal of salvation. The result of this emphasis

is to play down the manhood of Messiah and relegate it to the realm of unimportance. Scholars have noted that this heretical teaching had roots in early Christian monastic teaching.” ⁶¹

The council not only confirmed all edicts from Nicea and Laodicea, but added to them and expanded the definition of the trinity to clearly mean that Yahweh was one being in three ‘*hypostasis*’ or personalities and that He merely manifested Himself as the Son while on earth as a half man/half god being. This is taken directly out of paganism and couldn’t have been further from the truth. The truth, as we have proven, is that Yahweh is a family consisting of two beings; Yahweh the Father and Yahshua the Son and they are one (united) by His one, set apart Holy Spirit. (See Bible Lesson 3 & 10 online at www.coyhwh.com)

Php 2:5 *For think this within you, which mind was also in Messiah Yahshua,*

Php 2:6 *who existed in the very form of Elohim, thought it not robbery to be the equal with Elohim,*

Php 2:7 *but emptied Himself, taking the image of a servant, having become in the image of the sons of men.*

The Paulicians, as the Apostles and other true believers before them, believed that Yahshua did pre-exist as a separate being from Yahweh the Father, and He (Yahshua) put His divinity aside and came down to earth and was completely a man for 33 some-odd years before He died and was raised up to life again, by Yahweh the Father.

Psa 16:10 *For You will not leave My soul in Sheol; You will not give Your Holy One to see corruption.*

Yahshua never claimed to be Yahweh the Father, but the Son of Yahweh; and He came to do the will of Yahweh in Heaven.

Joh 8:14 *Yahshua answered and said to them, Even if I witness concerning Myself, My witness is true; for I know from where I came, and where I go. But you do not know from where I came, and where I go.*

Joh 8:15 *You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one.*

Joh 8:16 *But even if I judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent Me.*

Joh 8:17 *And in the Torah it has been written that the witness of two men is true. (Deut. 19:15)*

Joh 8:18 *I am the One witnessing concerning Myself, and He who sent Me, the Father, witnesses concerning Me.*

Yahshua never said that He was the Father Yahweh, but that He and His Father are united by His Holy Spirit. Adam was a human man who failed, and the second Adam (Yahshua) had to be born as a human and reclaim what Adam had lost.

Rom 5:12 *Even as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, inasmuch as all sinned.*

Rom 5:16 *And the effect of the gift of YAHWEH was greater than the effect of the offence of Adam; For while the judgment of one man's offence resulted in the condemnation of many, but the free gift of YAHWEH in the forgiveness of sins resulted in justification to many more.*

1Co 15:20 *But now Messiah has been raised from the dead; He became the first-fruit of those having fallen asleep.*

1Co 15:21 *For since through man came death, also through a Man is a resurrection of the dead;*

1Co 15:22 *for as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all will be made alive.*

That is why He was a literal seed of Adam, through Abraham, and through David, so all promises of Yahweh the Father could be fulfilled to the very elect seed of Abraham that He promised to them.

Gal 3:29 *And if you are of Messiah, then you are seeds of Abraham, even heirs according to the promise.*

An early gnostic belief was that the Messiah could never have been a human being, as human nature is too sinful to have Elohim dwell in human form. The Apostles John and Paul wrote against much gnostic heresy in their epistles. The pure gnostic belief was that under no circumstance could the Messiah have come in the flesh as a human. John refutes this false teaching in the following scripture.

2Jn 1:6 *And this is love, that we should walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, even as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.*

2Jn 1:7 *Because **many deceivers went out into the world, those not confessing Yahshua Messiah to have come in the flesh, such a person is a deceiver and an anti-Messiah.***

2Jn 1:9 *Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Messiah does not have YAHWEH. The one abiding in the doctrine of Messiah, this one has the Father and the Son.*

2Jn 1:10 *If anyone comes to you and does not bear this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and do not speak a greeting to him.*

2Jn 1:11 *For the one speaking a greeting shares in his evil works.*

John calls this heresy the spirit of anti-messiah as it denies the very human existence of our Savior Yahshua. The Romans, under the Council of Nicea and Laodicea, and then, confirmed in the Council of Charcedon, did not go as far as the Gnostics in completely denying Yahshua's human existence, but they claimed that Yahshua was simply Yahweh the Father in human form still having His divinity and being half man/ half god, which again comes from paganism. You also had groups such as the early priestly Nazarenes and Ebionites who believed Yahshua to be the Messiah, but also denied any form of deity in Him and that He was simply born a human being with no pre-existence whatsoever, period.

Since the Paulicians simply accepted what was handed down from the Apostles, that Yahshua did indeed pre-exist as Elohim and as Philippians states, *'he put His divinity aside and came to earth as a 100% human man to fulfill Yahweh's will'*, the Roman Catholic Church misrepresented this and lumped them in with the gnostic Manicheans who completely denied Yahshua's deity in any way. We have already proved that theory to be false and the Paulicians had nothing in partnership with such heretics. The edict through the Council of Charcedon brought further persecution, trial and even martyrdom to this faithful, true Congregation of Yahshua. They may have been persecuted but they were never defeated as Yahshua's clear word of prophecy was then, and is still today that *"the gates of hell will not prevail against her"*. Here is an early historical account of their persecutions by the empire.

“The bishops of Syria, Pontus, and Cappadocia, complained of the defection of their spiritual flocks. Their murmurs, induced the Grecian emperors to commence, and continue for nearly two centuries, the most terrible persecutions against the Paulicians. During these frightful convulsions, Armenia was ravaged from border to border with fire and sword ; its monarchy then held by a younger branch of the family of the Parthian kings — extinguished ; its cities demolished, and its inhabitants either massacred by the hands of the enemies, driven into exile, or sold into servitude. Great numbers fled for safety and protection to the Saracens, who permitted them to build a city for their residence, which was called Tibrice.” ^{61A}

This persecution continued until the Arab conquest of the Middle East and beyond in the late 7th century; and due to the persecution by the Universal Church and the Arabs together, it forced the true Congregation of Yahshua to migrate back to the west and bring the wonderful Good News of Yahshua to hundreds of thousands in Europe from 700-1600 A.D.

“The persecution had, however, some intermission, until at length Theodora, the Greek Empress, exerted herself against them beyond all her predecessors. She sent inquisitors throughout all Asia Minor in search of the Paulicians, and is computed to have killed, by the gibbet, by fire, and by the sword, a hundred thousand persons.” ^{61B}

In the next chapter, we will explore that migration and follow this courageous little flock that withstood such trial and tribulation under such persecution

Chapter 8 – The Thyatira Congregation

Rev 2:13 *I know your works, and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is. And you uphold My name, and did not deny My Faith, even in those days when that witness of mine appeared, my faithful witness, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.*

Rev 2:14 *But I have a few things against you, that you have there those holding the teachings of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumblingblock before the sons of Israel, to eat idol sacrifices, and to commit fornication.*

As I mentioned in the opening of the last chapter that Pergamos means fortified, and the Pergamos congregation that lasted from about 313 to 700 A.D. was at the very throne of Satan when Constantine and the Roman Empire took over the congregation and brought in all their pagan customs and laws. As we have thoroughly examined, the main sect of the true remnant of believers fled to the east and had many pockets of strongholds in Armenia and the surrounding areas, with their main concentration being in Thonrak, Armenia. Primarily, these groups were called Paulicians or Thonrakis by their predators.

They were faithful and true believers and lasted strong from about the mid 300's A.D. until about the early to mid-8th century when the Arabs and Islam started to make a tremendous move throughout the whole Eastern Empire, and they started to receive persecution from the Arabs from the east and the Romans from the west. However, as we see from Revelation 2:14, Scripture states that they have compromised like Baalam did. This will start the

congregational era of Thyatira that will last somewhere between the early 700's and end about 1350 A.D.

There are actually remnants of Paulicians in Armenia, even up until today. However, what we will see is that after the bulk of the Paulicians either fled the area under great duress, or were forcibly removed and migrated to Thrace to divide and break up the movement, some of the few scattered remaining Paulicians compromised with the Armenian Orthodox Church and accepted and mixed many of their beliefs and lost their standing as a true remnant of the Congregation that Yahshua built. However, we must admit, the number of people who compromised was nominal and most Paulicians were strong people of faith who would have never given in to the threat of Rome or Islam, even to the threat of death.

"When the Saracenic Empire became supplanted by that of the Tartars, the consequences to the Eastern Christians were most deplorable. These ruthless conquerors destroyed, wherever they went, the fair fruits that had arisen from the labors of the missionaries, extirpated the religion of Yahshua from several cities and provinces where it had flourished, and substituted the Mohammedan superstition in its place. The Armenian churches, in particular, experienced the most deplorable evils from the ruthless and vindictive spirit of Timur Bee, or Tamerlane, the Tartar chief. This implacable warrior, having overrun a great part of northern and western Asia, exerted all his influence and authority to compel the Christians to apostatize from their faith.

To the stern dictates of unlimited power he united the compulsory violence of persecution, and treated the disciples

of Messiah with the most unrelenting severity; subjecting such as magnanimously adhered to their religion, to the most cruel forms of death, or to the horrors of unmitigated slavery. Under the successors of Timur they were subjected to many variations, being alternately protected and oppressed, according as the caprice of the reigning sovereign seemed to dictate. Nevertheless, under the rod of oppression their zeal was intrepid and fervent, nor could the sunshine of prosperity warm in their hearts an undue love of the world, and renders them careless or indifferent to the interests of Christianity. In numberless instances they preferred the crown of martyrdom to the turban of Mohammed, and have sacrificed the dearest of temporal interests, and fame, wealth, and preferment, to a scrupulous adherence to the Christian profession, and a strict regard for its duties.” ⁶²

However, Islam and other persecutions did cause these faithful believers to migrate and disband to other areas. As the Thyatira era will begin, there will be a major shift of the area of concentration where the true Congregation of Yahshua will settle next. We will travel through this migration and clearly show you that the groups who will next show up in Europe, called Bogomils, and after that Cathars and Albigenses and Picardites and Waldenses and Puritans, are indeed the same exact sect and people as the Paulicians who were clearly the remnant of the original, apostolic Congregation started under Yahshua. Praise Yahweh that history will give us a clear path to conclusively prove this fact without any ambiguity. As we start to follow the trail of the true Congregation of Yahshua from Armenia to the west to Europe and away from the coming invasion of Islam, let's first look at what Revelation tells us about the Thyatira congregation.

Rev 2:18 *And to the messenger of the congregation in Thyatira, write: These things says the Son of Elohim, the One having His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished brass:*

Rev 2:19 *I know your works, and the love, and your service, and the faith, and your patience, and your works; and the last being more than the first.*

Rev 2:20 *But I have a few things against you, that you allow the woman Jezebel to teach, she saying herself to be a prophetess, and to cause My servants to go astray, and to commit fornication, and to eat idol sacrifices.*

Rev 2:21 *And I gave time to her that she might repent of her fornication. And she did not repent.*

Rev 2:22 *Behold, I will cast her into a coffin, and those committing adultery with her into great affliction, unless they repent of their works.*

Rev 2:23 *And I will kill her children with death; and all the congregations will know that I am the One searching the inner parts and hearts. And I will give to each of you according to your works.*

Rev 2:24 *But I say to you and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this teaching, and who did not know the deep things of Satan, as they say: I am not casting another burden on you;*

Rev 2:25 *but what you have, hold until I shall come.*

First, Yahshua tells the congregation that He understands and knows the great faith and patience and trials that they have been going through for so many hundreds of years, and the last being more than the first, as we will see the greatest work of this underground congregation will actually come from around 1000 to 1300 A.D, in its later end, before the Sardis era will start.

Then, Yahshua makes a comment against them by allowing the woman Jezebel to teach and some accepting it. I believe this is a metaphor of the false, Catholic, or Universal Church and the left behind Paulicians, as well as some of the remnants of the Thyatira congregation accepting some of the false teachings of the Universal Church and some even baptizing their babies or compromising in ways even worse.

When in verse 21 Yahshua states that He gave her time to repent, I believe He is speaking of the time period between the beginning of the second century up until the time of Constantine and the full merger of the Universal Church with paganism. During these some-odd 200 years Yahshua had much patience and gave the Roman bishops time to repent and change back to the original faith, but when they did not and when they embraced Constantine's newly formed pagan religion, Yahshua cast them away as a dead congregation in a coffin, simply waiting their judgment when He returns.

He, then, tells the true Remnant to hold fast to the truth they have and He will give them no further burden. This is exactly what that faithful remnant did, as they were scattered and persecuted; and we will now document their migration and unravel the most amazing of stories of the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua; not the one who was cast into the coffin of death, but the one He stated that *"the Gates of hell will not prevail against her"*.

This is a great dichotomy that Yahshua makes between the true Congregation and Bride of Messiah and the false apostate church. I also believe it is a warning to all true believers today; just as Moses and the congregation in the

wilderness stayed in one place until the cloud would move, and then, they had to move with it. They needed to watch the spiritual cloud of Yahweh carefully and where He was moving, and move with it, even as we are told today. For those who are making a union with the world and not keeping their lives sanctified by the Holy Spirit, also risk not seeing when the cloud is moving in these last days, and being left behind to a life of compromise and misery after falling from the grace and truth of Yahweh and Yahshua.

So, here is how the cloud moved the Paulicians westward in the Roman Empire.

“For we must never forget that the Paulician congregation was not the national religion of a particular race, but an old form of the Apostolic congregation; and that it included within itself Syrians, Greeks, Armenians, Africans, Latins and various other races. Lurking in South-eastern Armenia, when it was nearly extirpated in the Roman Empire, it there nursed its forces in comparative security under the protection of the Persians and Arabs, and prepared itself for that magnificent career of missionary enterprise in the Greek world, which the sources relate with so much bitterness.

These sources make it plain that many of their apostles were Armenians: and so notorious was it to the Greeks that the center of the new religious revolt was in Armenia, that by the tenth and eleventh centuries the very name Armenian was synonymous to the mind of a Greek believer with Paulician.”

63

“Disguised under the name of Paulician this form of faith survived for centuries among the mixed Greek and Armenian inhabitants of the Taurus range in its entire length. There the

teaching fell on good ground and bore fruit in hundreds of villages on hill or plain. There it maintained a steady war against images, Mariology, and much else that the degenerate Greek world had adopted from paganism. It was a congregation in which the 7 councils had no significance; for were these not synods of men who having abandoned the true baptism had lost their sacraments, their priestly orders, the apostolic tradition, nay the very character and essentials of Christian communion?

It was a congregation of hardy mountaineers, the rampart of Christianity and Roman civilization against the Arab and Tartar hordes. Nor was it without its martyrs, who were counted by hundreds of thousands and whose slayers invariably took their orders from the persecuting clergy of old and new Rome.

*And when reasons of state or bigotry failed to excommunicate this primitive congregation among the ranges of Taurus **its members were deported by hundreds of thousands to Thrace.** There they thrived for centuries, and spread their tenets into Bohemia, Poland, Germany, Italy, France and even into our own England, which must have helped not a little to prepare the ground for the Puritan Reformation.”* ⁶⁴

As we can see from the above numbers, this was not simply a small remnant of obscure people who were basically Armenians by race, but a great movement that went across the entire empire through many races of people.

However, where they were concentrated in what is known today as eastern Turkey and Armenia, we are seeing the

clear proof from history that they were physically transported by several hundred thousand to Thrace and also Albania, and then, migrated to Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Slovakia, Austria, and even as far as Great Britain.

Let's continue on this migration as it is a fascinating story of a congregation that the Roman government could not stamp out; and it seemed the more they were hunted and persecuted, the greater they were blessed and the larger it grew.

*“Large bodies of Paulicians were transported to Thrace in the 8th century and again in the 10th century. The first of these emigrations was organized by Constantine Copronymus, himself in all probability a member of the Paulician congregation. Cedrenus following Theophanes related that in its new home the heresy spread and flourished. It was again an Armenian emperor, John Tzimiskes, who in 970 deported another body of 100,000 Paulicians to the line of Danube. One hundred years before the later date we learn from Peter of Sicily, who resided nine months in the Paulician stronghold of Tephrik, that the Paulicians of the Taurus were sending missionaries to convert the young Bulgarian nation to their religion. **It is certain that in a large measure they succeeded in their object, and the result was the movement of the Bogomiles.** We only know this sect from their enemies, who true to their habit of distorting facts, half willfully, half in ignorance, portrayed its adherents as Manicheans. We must then be doubly cautious not to believe all we read about the Bogomiles. What has been written about them appears to me to be for the most part hopelessly confused and untrustworthy.*

*Accordingly to Mr. Authur Evans who has written more fruitfully about them than any other author whom I have consulted, states there are still communities of Bogomiles in existence in the Balkan Peninsula. Their literature is indispensable **as a connecting link between the Paulicians and the mediaeval Cathars of Europe.**"* ⁶⁵

"During these convulsions several companies of the Paulicians passed into Bulgaria, Thrace, and the neighboring provinces, where their opinions became the source of new dissensions. After the Council of Basil had commenced its deliberations, these sectaries removed into Italy, where they became amalgamated with the Albigenses and Waldenses."

^{65A}

So we can see a clear historical and emigrational route of the Paulicians leaving the confines of the Armenian mountains and the surrounding region to migrate westward to Thrace, to Bulgaria, and afterward to Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, and even as far as Great Britain.

Also, and of most importance, because the true underground Congregation held no traditional title or name in their hiding for obvious reasons, and were only named by their enemies with obscure titles and references, we can undeniably mark these true faithful believers of Yahshua, who formally were called Paulicians, now in their new environment as being Bogomils, and are now merging with the ancient western, original, true believers from the time of the Apostles called Cathars, and Albigenses who are clearly the same as the Waldenese.

Let's continue to dissect the migration of the one and only true apostolic Congregation of Yahshua to even assemble a

tighter knot on the fact that these different groups were indeed one of the same sect.

*“In the year 692 Justinian II, called the sixth general council to convene at Constantinople, as an edict from Rome. He says that this council made decisions among various regulations of discipline, and also It condemned Saturdays.”*⁶⁶

*“We note that in this century there were so many Christians observing the Saturday Sabbath that this council that this council also found it necessary to legislate against it. The Paulicians were undoubtedly the most numerous sect of this century (600 to 700A.D).”*⁶⁷

“The names of the apostolic churches were applied to their congregations. The teachers were distinguished by their scriptural names, by their zeal and knowledge, and by their austerity and simplicity of their lives. They were, however, soon involved in the horrors of persecution. Under the reign of Theodore, one hundred thousand were extirpated.

*However, they spread westward, and disseminated a secret though powerful discontent among the pious against the Church of Rome, and settled in Bulgaria, Italy, and in the southern provinces of France among the Albigeois. These Christians were called after their settlements. These names by which they were commonly known, however are only terms applied to them by the world, **for the Albigenses were the same sect as the Waldenses.**”*⁶⁸

Let's look at further proof linking the Abigenses to be the same sect as the Waldenses.

*“Gretzer the Jesuit, who wrote against the Waldenses, and has examined them fully, **declares his firm belief that the Toulousians and Albigenses... were no other than Waldenses.** In fact, their doctrine, discipline, government, manners and even the errors with which they are charged (by the Catholics), show that **the Albigenses and Waldenses were distinct branches of the same sect**, or that the former sprang from the latter.”* ⁶⁹

“Sometimes they received their names from their manners, as ‘Catherists’ (Puritans), and from the foreign country from whence it was presumed they had been expelled, they were called ‘Bulgarians or Bougres. In Italy they were commonly called Fraticelle, that is, man of the brotherhood, because they cultivated brotherly love among themselves, acknowledging one another as brethren in Messiah. Sometimes they were denominated ‘Paulicians’, considering them to be sprung from the ancient sect, which in the seventh century spread all over Armenia and Thrace, and which, when persecuted by the Greek emperor, migrated into Europe and mingled with the Waldenses in Piedmont. Sometimes they were named from the country or city in which they prevailed, as Lombardists, Toulousians, and Albigenses. These branches, however, sprang from one common stock, and were animated by the same religious and moral principles.” ⁷⁰

“They were particularly distinguished in France by the name of Albigenses, from the great numbers of them that inhabited the city of Alby, in the district of Albigeons, between the Garonne and the Rhone. After the Council of Alby, which condemned them as heretics, that name became general

and confirmed. In the records of this Council the following passage occurs: 'They savor of Judaism as they practice circumcision (for children), **they observe the Jewish Sabbath**, but say the holy Dominical day (Sunday) is no better than other days ; let them be accursed.'

When the popes issued their fulminations against the Albigenses, they expressly condemned them as Waldenses ; by the legate of the Holy See they were accused of professing the faith of the Waldenses, the inquisitors formed their processes of indictments against them as Waldenses ; the leaders of the crusades made war upon them as Waldenses ; they were persecuted on all sides as such ; nor did they attempt to rebut the charges made against them, but readily adopted the title thus imposed upon them, which they considered it an honor to bear. The Pasaginians, or Passignes, were another branch of this same sect, who derived their appellation from the country of Passau, where it is computed that eighty or one hundred thousand of them resided. That these were all one people is evident from the fact that the provincial councils of Toulouse in 1119, and of Lombez in 1176, and the general councils of Lateran, in 1139 and 1176, do not particularize them as Pasaginians, or Albigenses, but as heretics, which shows that they existed and were generally known before these names were imposed upon them. Their enemies confirm their identity as well as their great antiquity. Father Gretzer, a Jesuit, who had examined the subject fully, and who had every opportunity of knowing, admits the great antiquity of the heretics, and, moreover, expresses his firm belief that the Toulousians, Albigenses, Pasaginians, Amoldists, Josephists, and the other heretical factions, who, at that time, were engaging the attention of the popes, were no

other than Waldenses. This opinion he corroborates by showing wherein they resembled each other. Among other points he mentions the following : ' Moreover, all these heretics despise the fasts and feasts of the church, such as Candlemas, Easter, the Dominical day ; in short, all approved ecclesiastical customs for which they do not find a warrant in the Scripture. They say, also, that Elohim enjoined rest and holy meditation upon the seventh day, and that they cannot feel justified in the observance of any other.' 70A



It is extremely evident, and there is no ambiguity to either whom the true remnant was or where they migrated to as you can see from the above map, the actual migration that took place from the true remnant of Yahshua from Armenia to Thrace, and then, to spread over Europe. I intend to fully document the historical and amazing activities of the Waldenses, Albigenses, Cathars, Picards, Paterines, etc, from this Thyatira era, but let's first continue to show the historic link between these groups so as when we are speaking about any one of them, it will be indefinitely clear that they are all one of the same group of the true Congregation of Yahshua at this time.

As we have already shown, many of the original Paulicians migrated from Armenia and that region to Thrace, and from there went just north to Bulgaria where historians recognize them as Bogomils. The name Bogomils comes from the Bulgarian language meaning '*Beloved of Elohim*', in which they surely were. These Bogomils then migrated westward to Serbia and Albania, and after that large numbers took refuge in Bosnia in the twelfth century.

"The Bogomils were only one heretical sect that flourished across Asia Minor and southern Europe during the middle ages under a variety of names, the best known being the Paterines, Cathars, and Albigenses. From their Balkan base, the Bogomil influence, initially fostered as a merchant's trading network, extended into Piedmont Italy and also southern France." ⁷¹

It is interesting to note here that the Piedmont Mountains of Italy were indeed the very headquarters of the Waldenses from the eighth century even until this day, and I have

personally traveled to this region and have uncovered some amazing historical documents that I am sharing in this very book that I was allowed to copy directly from the Waldensian archives in Angrogna, Italy, in the Piedmont region.

“There was a Castra Publicanorum held by Armenians in the valley of Antioch; and there was in 1099A.D. a fortress manned by them called Arche, near Tripolis. It is nearly 60 years later from this date that we have our first notices of them in Europe under the name Publicani, which is the eastern way of pronouncing Paulician.

According to the chronicle of Gulielmus (1197A.D.) several Paulicians were condemned at the Council of Oxford in the year 1160. They were Germans, adds Gulielmus, who, having taken their rise in Gascony, from an unknown author, and multiplied like the sand of the sea in France, Spain, Italy and Germany.

A few years later in 1179A.D., the Publicani were condemned by name in the third council of Lateran, Can 27. In this council they were identified as the same with the Albigenses about Toulouse and also the Cathari and Patrini. Thus it was agreed on all hands that the center of the diffusion of the heresy was in France and Gascony. That the heresy mentioned by these writers is akin to Paulicianism is certain.” ⁷²

“Let’s notice what Eckbert Abbot (1160A.D.) says about the movement at that time. “These heretics were very numerous in all countries and were called in Germany “Catheri” in Flanders Piphles, in France Tixerant because they were weavers. They were well equipped with sacred texts to

*defend their own errors and assail the Catholic faith; they taught that the true faith of Messiah only existed in their own conventicles, which they held in cellars, in workshops, and in such underground places. They said they lived the life of apostles: **they alone had a genuine priesthood**, which the Roman Church had lost. They rejected the belief in purgatory, and taught that baptism of infants availed nothing, because they could not seek baptism by themselves, nor make profession of faith.”* ⁷³

The Paulician's had a book called the Key of truth outlining their doctrine, ordinances, and the way of life as a believer. The Cathars also had a document called the Cathar ritual, which has almost the same exact ordinances such as the the ritual used for ordination of an elder into the ministry.

“In regard to the Albigenses we are on safer ground for we have a genuine writing of the sect to build our conclusions upon. This is the so-called Cathar Ritual, which is preserved in a manuscript of the first half of the thirteenth century in the Library of Lyon. Composed in the Old Provençal tongue, it is certainly older than the manuscript in which alone, it has survived to us.

*We are immediately struck by the resemblance there is between the rite of Consolamentum, which it contains from the Cathars and the Paulician rite of election; and the resemblance is punctuated by the independent information, that a member of the sect who was admitted for this grade of initiation was commonly called an “**elect**” one. It was a spiritual baptism by the imposition of hands, which communicated to him who received it the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, along with the power to bind and loose. It*

*was not the baptism John instituted with water, but the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. Yahshua bestowed it upon His apostles when He blew on them and said 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit,' **And they had handed it down in an unbroken tradition** to the Christians and good men who had formed the Congregation.*

It had involved a higher degree of abstinence from all forms of moral evil, a higher degree of self-renunciation than was expected of a layman or mere believer.” 74

This is a most interesting quote, as not only do we see the clear connection between the Albigenses/Cathars and the Paulicians, but we see the commonality of the ritual of ordination, and that “The Key of Truth” clearly states that there was ‘*an unbroken line of ordained elders*’ from the time of Yahshua laying hands on the twelve Apostles (Mar 3:14) until this time and continued throughout the wilderness and even unto today.

The true remnant of Yahshua's Congregation knew, going all the way back to Acts the 8th chapter, that there was a great authority and responsibility involved with ordaining an elder and that only an ordained elder had the authority from Yahweh to baptize and to also lay hands on someone for either baptism or ordination (Acts 8:12-18). They fervently did not believe that the Universal and Orthodox Churches had this authority as we quoted earlier. If someone from those churches came to the true faith they were required to be baptized by a true ordained elder from Yahshua's Congregation in order to receive the Holy Spirit.

The reprobate, dissident Laodiceans of today hate the fact that we can conclusively prove a clear line of ordination and authority from the Apostles until today. It destroys their heretical position that elders are not necessary and anyone can baptize another person.

It was also the ritual of these true believers that when they were ordained that they would receive a copy of Yahshua's prayer outline in Matthew the 6th chapter and also a copy of the Good News of Yahshua to preach from. ⁷⁵

The history of the true Congregation is so valuable to us, to know how the early Congregation lived, believed, and survived, but it is also invaluable that we can be assured that when Yahshua stated, "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against her*" that not only was He quite accurate but also quite literal. That in order to keep the original faith laid down by Yahshua Himself, there would also have to be an unbroken line of ordination so that there would always be true elders who would have the authority to baptize and to ordain other elders so that the one true line of leadership would continue. The Scriptures testify to this fact, as well as it is confirmed by "The Key of Truth" of the Paulicians, and the "Rite of Consolamentum" of the Cathars, that only elders in this original true line of ordination, through the laying on of, first Yahshua's hands, then the Apostles, and then, to others, and others, and even until this day today, have the authority of transferring Yahweh's Holy Spirit to a new believer by the laying on of hands.

I, Don Esposito do testify this to be true and factual as I also have been ordained in this very line. It is not a line of corporate religion, but an actual, unbroken, spiritual chain of

the faithful, true Congregation started by Yahshua in 30 A.D. And today it is functioning in not one, but hundreds of different sects, just as we see in the congregation in the wilderness under Paulicians, Bogomils, Cathars, Waldeneses, Albigenses and many others.

It is not a corporate presence that unites the true body of Messiah, but a spiritual connection through faith and doctrine and purpose. This was what kept the congregation in the wilderness separate and part of the true body of Messiah, but when they strayed into mixture with the world and started compromising on doctrine, it was also what severed them from the true spiritual organism, which is the very body of Messiah.

For just as a finger or toe cut off from the body cannot survive on its own, but will lose life and die, so will someone who makes this commitment, and then, cuts himself off from the body and leadership that Yahshua has ordained to keep His Congregation separated, pure, and stable with sound doctrine and strong faith.

Eph 4:11 *And indeed He (Yahshua) has assigned some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some shepherds and teachers;*

Eph 4:12 *for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Messiah,*

Eph 4:13 *until we all may come to the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah,*

Eph 4:14 *so that we may no longer be children, being blown and carried about by every wind of false doctrine of men,*

who through their craftiness are very skillful in deceiving the people;

Eph 4:15 *but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, the Messiah,*

Eph 4:16 *it is through Him that the whole body is closely framed together and united at all joints, according to the gift that is imparted by measure to each member, for the guidance and control of the body; in order to complete the edifying of the body in love.*

History repeats itself; and the importance of connecting the dots to the identity of the true Congregation of Yahweh throughout antiquity is not only to show the past, but to connect to the present, and to see the glorious future of the called out firstfruits and children of the very Elohim of the universe.

*“The very form of the name Publicani (A.D. 1167) in the history of Hugo Pictorus (1167) shows that the name had come westward by Greek intermediaries, either from Antioch or Constantinople, in the neighborhood of which both of which places the Crusaders had come into contact, friendly or hostile, with Paulicians at a much earlier time, namely 1090-1100. It is not until fifty years after Hugo’s identification, and over a hundred years after the crusades , namely in 1223, that according to Mathew Paris Conrad, the Pope’s legate, complains of direct relations with the Albigenses of France with the heretics of the east; but then, **it is not Paulician Armenians but Bulgarian Bogomiles, with whom they were in relation.** The story indicated that by the year 1223 **the Bogomiles of the Balkans had entered into some sort of association with the Cathars of Toulouse.**”* ⁷⁶

“In 1028, 1031 they were condemned at the council of Charroux, and again in 1049 at the Council of Rheims. Such evidence all points to the conclusion that the Albigensian heresy was an old and native growth of Languedoc. We have it as a true statement in Reinerius Saccho that the two Congregations of Bulgaria and Dugranicia were the parent congregations of the various Cathar Congregations of Europe, of which he gives the list as follows: The Congregation of the Albanenses of Sansano, of Contorezo, of Bagnolo, of Vicenza, of Florence, of Spoleto, of France, of Toulouse, of Cathors, of Albi, of Sclavonia of the Latins Constantinople, of the Greeks of the same city.” ⁷⁷

Let's continue to connect the dots on the journey of these faithful believers and look a little closer at the Paulician's, “The Key of Truth”, compared to the Cathar's “Rite of Consolamentum”. This is what Fred Conybeare writes about the two early documents:

*“These considerations all point to the fact that the common source, which after all we must surely posit for the Paulician book and for the Cathar ritual, **must lie far back somewhere about the year 200.***

*Between the common starting point on the one hand, and the ninth and late twelfth centuries on the other, when we get glimpses of these two primitive survivals, there had been time for the two systems, The Paulician and the Cathar, to drift widely apart, all the while **however, retaining those common traits in their ritual, which oblige us to assume a common source.***” ⁷⁸

*“There is a clear affinity between them; and the easiest way of accounting for the facts is to suppose **that both are descended from a common source**. But the common source must have lain far back in the most primitive age of the Congregation. It was beyond question a very early Christianity, which survived, perhaps variously modified, in the Albigensian Congregation.*

*The same primitive faith after going through another cycle of change of its own, has survived in the Paulician Congregation. How far back does the common source lay? We cannot tell; **probably no later than the second century; and there can hardly be any common development of the two systems later than the fourth.***

For similar reasons it is not possible to regard Catharism of the Rhinelands in the early middle ages as a transplantation to the west of the Paulician Congregation of Asia Minor.” 79

This is an extremely important fact! If you look at and read many of the historical accounts of the true Sabbath keeping congregations from Yahshua until today, these writers seem to always want to try to make the true Congregation of Yahshua into one single organization instead of one single spiritual organism; that is why they will consistently try to show that starting with the Ebionites and continuing with the Paulicians, and then, the Waldenses, that these were one corporate church banner all under the same administration.

However, if we look at the true facts and reality, you cannot come up with that false premise. That is why writings will have the Paulicians from 400 to 700, and then, the Bogomils from 700 to 900, and then, the Waldenses from 900 to 1500.

However, the truth of the matter, is that both the Paulicians and Albigense Cathars (who are the same group as the Waldenses), were existing simultaneously together from the second century onward and some small, scant congregations even exist until today.

Let's look at an important quote from a book written in 1851 by Tamar Davis called, "A General History of the Sabbatarian Churches", which includes the migration of the Paulicians from Armenia and even the early believers from India under the Apostle Thomas.

*"In the decree of Pope Lucius III., dated 1181, we find the Catharists, Paterines, Josephists, Arnoldists, Pasaignes, and those calling themselves the ' Poor of Lyons,' all considered as one, and laid under a perpetual anathema. Nevertheless it appears that some distinction existed between these different parties. The old Waldenses were not secedes from the Church of Rome; for neither themselves nor their ancestors had ever embraced its faith. **Claudius Seyssel, a popish archbishop, declares that the Waldensian heresy originated from one Leo, who, in the days of Constantine the Great, led a party of heretics from Rome into the valleys. Pope Gregory VII observes that it is well known that in the days of Constantine the Great, some assemblies of Jewish Christians being persecuted at Rome, because they persisted in obedience to the Law of Moses, wandered off into the valleys, where their descendants remain unto this day.***

*Reiner Sacco declares that, **in the opinion of many authors of note, their antiquity could be traced to the***

apostolic age. He also observes that never, within the memory of man, have they acknowledged allegiance to the papal see. But that there were seceding parties, who, at different times and under particular leaders, withdrew from the communion of that church, and became amalgamated with the old Waldenses.” 79A

So, it is quite clear from the historical records that the Waldenses, who were the true remnant of faithful believers in the Western Empire, existed and fled to the mountains and valleys for refuge around the time of the edicts of Constantine the Great and Julian the Apostate after him.

It is also quite clear that they were indeed the very seed and offspring of the original Apostles of the first century. They were not started by Peter Waldo in the 12th century, neither were they secedes from the Roman Universal Church; they were simply the true remnant who would not compromise with the newly formed pagan Catholic Church or emperor and they fled to keep the purity of doctrine handed down to them from Yahshua and the Apostles themselves.

The importance of this though, as I stated above, is the fact that these branches of administration all came from the same tree, which was the true, apostolic line starting with Yahshua and the Apostles.

Some of these congregations could have been started by the Apostles Peter and Andrew and Bartholomew and others, maybe by the Apostles John or Paul. The fact of the matter is that when the persecution started under Constantine there were different administrations of the one true faith scattered throughout the Roman Empire, but concentrated in Armenia

and the surrounding region as many persecuted believers also fled to this area.

However, as is clearly stated in the annals of history, there were also remnants of this same Congregation of Yahshua in Asia Minor, Europe, and even the confines of Rome and Great Britain that emerged larger and stronger after the Paulicians were displaced to Thrace and Western Europe.

Remember, that most of the history is written by their enemies and the enemies would only write about primarily the largest and most heretical groups in their mind. That is why we don't hear as much about the Cathars and Albigenses before this, but clearly we see from history that they were there and part of the same faith of the Paulicians, but simply a different administration. The Bogomils, however, were a direct result of the dislocation of the Paulicians to Thrace in the 8th century as shown, and the Waldensian movement was one that grew out of the expansion of the Cathars' and Albigenses' missionary expeditions. Many times, when the wilderness congregation had to flee they naturally went to areas that were already established by other true believers of the true remnant sect of Yahshua.

I stress this fact as history is repeating itself today, and as we will see later in this book, that there are still many administrations of this one true original faith of Yahshua existing today, but not all under the same corporate banner or administration but under the same direct line of laying on of hands going back to Yahshua and the apostles.

I will conclusively show that at the beginning of the 20th century and the start of the Laodicean era that the true

Congregation of Yahshua splintered into many dissections and there are numerous branches of this one true faith today.

There are some who have the spirit of the Nicolaitans that want to try to suppress this fact and call any believer who does not belong to their corporate Church a heretic. “*Nico*” means conqueror and “*laitan*” means laity, and the spirit of the Nicolaitans is having a hierarchical leadership that has a controlling spirit that wants to suppress and control the brethren, and not lift them up and build their gifts in the body of Messiah. Remember, Yahweh’s true elect body does have judicial order, but judicial order is ‘*voluntary*’ and ‘*reciprocal*’ and led by His one true Spirit, submitting to His ordained leadership and people as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

These modern day Nicolaitans will use the very history that I am outlying in this book to say that it belongs to them and only them, and yet if these Paulicians or Waldenses were alive today, these same Nicolaitan congregations would call them heretics because they did not join their corporate church.

The fact of the matter is; the strongest and most profound doctrine of these true believers in the wilderness is that they would not acquiesce and compromise and join with the Roman Church/government entity. And yet today, these misguided Nicolaitan congregations have done exactly that.

They have incorporated and become one with the end time government of the beast. The word corporation comes from the word “*corpus*” which is Latin for a corpse or dead person. A corporation is creating a third entity that doesn’t exist and

uniting the two corporate partners into one, therefore making a complete union, as with marriage, between the newly formed corporation and the state. It also limits the corporation on what they can preach or do as they must now submit to the government who formed them.

The Church of Rome started by Constantine was never a part of the true congregation of Yahshua, and the Roman emperors after Constantine named pagan cronies as bishops and popes who were steeped in paganism and greatly persecuted the true remnant congregation of Yahshua. It would have been unheard of by this true remnant of believers to sign any document giving authority of Yahshua's congregation to the Church or government of Rome.

The true Congregation of Yahshua would have never done this in a million years, and was founded by being firmly against acquiescing with the government of Rome in any manner or form, even to their death. As we have seen and will see that many times when an individual congregation or person has went this route they soon ceased being part of the one and only Congregation of Yahshua, which is a spiritual organism, not a corporate organization. This point is vital in identifying the remnant of this true Congregation of Yahweh today.

Chapter 9 – The Waldenses Congregation

Rev 2:24 *But I say to you and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this teaching, and who did not know the deep things of Satan, as they say: I am not casting another burden on you;*

Rev 2:25 *but what you have, hold until I shall come.*

Rev 2:26 *And the one overcoming, and the one keeping My works until the end, "I will give to him authority over the nations,"*

Rev 2:27 *and "He will shepherd them with an iron staff" like the vessels of the potter they shall be shattered, as I also have received from My Father.*

As the Thyatira era continues, let's now start to look at the Waldenses who were a major part of this true Congregation in the wilderness for almost 1,000 years.

As we have already seen, the Waldenses were a counterpart, and maybe even an offshoot of the earlier Cathar congregation that was in France and other parts of Europe. It is not 100% clear whether the Bogomils, who were the remnant in Bulgaria of the earlier Paulicians were the missionaries who brought this true apostolic faith to Albania, Croatia, and Germany, or if it was the Cathars, but I believe we have given ample proof that we can state with 100% certainty that these groups both came out of the original apostolic faith and were the leaders in spreading the Good News of Yahshua in the Roman Empire throughout the 2nd to 8th centuries.

It seems most probable that the Cathars from France were the ones who brought the Good News to Switzerland and

northern Italy in the groups to come to be known as, the Waldenses. Many wrongly assume that the Waldenses were called such after their famous missionary of the 12th century named Peter Waldo, but as we shall see, the Waldenses were around hundreds of years before Waldo was born and the name Waldenses or Valdenses, or Vaudois (*remember in German as in the ancient Semitic Hebrew language the 'v' had the "w" sound*) more than likely came from the name "vaudois" meaning valley dweller.

"The fleeing Christians who escaped from the wrath of the Roman church and state, found a haven in the mountains and valleys of the north of Italy, and the south of France, in main, although they fled into all nations wherein they could find an entrance and protection from the persecutions of the papacy. Though these Christians were known by many names for various reasons in their new homes, yet the predominating name for them seems to have been "Vaudois," which means "Valley Dwellers." From the fact they dwelt in the valleys of the mountains they received the name "Valley Dwellers," or, in the native tongue, "Vaudois."

They observed the seventh day of the week, according to the commandment, baptism for believers as full immersion, and kept the Passover, or the Lord's Supper, once a year, in the first month." ⁸⁰

"They occupy a mountain district . . . and yet from this secluded spot, have they disseminated doctrines, whose influence is felt over the most refined and civilized part of Europe. They . . . speak the same language, have the same patriarchal habits, and simple virtues, and retain the same religion, which was known to exist there more than a

*thousand years ago. They profess to constitute the remains of the pure and primitive Christian congregation, and those who would question their claims cannot show either by history or tradition that they were subscribed to the popish rituals, or bowed down before any of the idols of the Roman church. . . . In short, there is no other way of explaining the political, moral, and religious phenomenon, which the Vaudois have continued to display for so many centuries, than by ascribing it to the manifest interposition of Providence, which has chosen in them the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty.”*⁸¹

The above quote clearly shows that the Waldenses were in the Piedmont Mountains for hundreds of years before Peter Waldo’s mission in the twelfth century. Let’s look at a few more quotes as to who the Waldenses truly were and how they got established, and then, we will continue to search their doctrine and most amazing stories of faith throughout this wilderness period.

*“Theodore Beza, contemporary and colleague of Calvin, says, “As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer Christian church.” . . . “And as for their religion, they never adhered to papal superstitions.”*⁸²

“Beza affirms the Waldenses were the relics of the pure primitive Christian churches; some of them were called ‘the poor of Lyons.’ Paul Perrin asserts, that the Waldenses were time out of mind in Italy and Dalmatia, and were the offspring of the Novatianists, who were persecuted and driven from Rome, A.D. 400 (rather 413); and who, for purity in communion, were called Puritans. The name of Paterines

was given to the Waldenses; and who, for the most part, held the same opinions, and have therefore been taken for one and the same class of people, who continued till the Reformation under name of Paterines or Waldenses. There was no difference in religious views between the Abigenses and Waldenses. All those people inhabiting the south of France were called, in general, Albigenses; and, in doctrine and manners, were not distinct from the Waldenses. The celebrated Matthew Francowitz says, the Waldenses scent a little of Anabaptism. **The Waldenses were, in religious sentiments, substantially the same as the Paulicians, Paterines, Puritans, and Albigenses.**" ⁸³

"It will be observed that the people called by the world "Waldenses," were driven by Rome into the Piedmont valleys. "There was no kingdom of Southern and Central Europe to which these missionaries did not find their way, and where they did not leave traces of their visit by the disciples whom they made. On the west they penetrated into Spain. In Southern France they found congenial fellow laborers in the Albigenses, by whom the seeds of truth were plentifully scattered over Dauphine and Languedoc. On the east, descending the Rhine and the Danube, they leavened Germany, Bohemia, and Poland with their doctrines, their track being marked with the edifices for worship and the stakes of martyrdom that arose around their steps. Even the Seven-hilled City they feared not to enter, scattering the seed on ungenial soil, if perchance some of it might take root and grow. Their naked feet and coarse woolen garments made them somewhat marked figures in the streets of a city that clothed itself in purple and fine linen; and when their errand was discovered, as sometimes chanced, the rulers of Christendom took care to further, in their own way, the

springing of the seed, by watering it with the blood of the men who had sowed it.” ⁸⁴

“In Languedoc, the Catholics confirmed that the origin there of the sect was recent, and they derived their name Vaudois or Waldenses from Peter Waldo one of their barbes or preachers, but this was rather the renovation of the name from a particular cause, than its original. For in other districts the people who were branches of the same original sect. Sometimes they received their name from their manners such as ‘Catherists’ (Puritans) and from the foreign country in which it was presumed that they were expelled, they were called Bulgarians or Bourges. Sometimes they were denominated Paulicians and by corruption of the word Publicans, considering them sprung from that ancient sect, which in the 7th century spread over Armenia and Thrace, and when persecuted by the Greek Emperors might migrate into Europe, and mingle with the Waldenses in Piedmont.

*Sometimes they were named from the country or city in which they prevailed, as Lombardists, Toulousians (Cathars), and Albigenses. **All these branches however, sprang from a common stock,** and were animated by the same religious and moral principles. Albigenses became latterly their common name in France from the great number of them that inhabited the city of Alby, and the district of Albigeois between the Garonne and the Rhone.”* ⁸⁵

“The enemies of the congregation, and also others, who do not understand, attribute the beginning of the Waldenses, also known by other names, to the time of Peter Waldo, the leading preacher of his time; but a careful search will reveal

that the Waldenses, as a people separate and distinct from Rome, existed prior to the ministry of Waldo.

Further, the provincial councils of Toulouse in 1119, and of Lombez in 1186 [sic., 1186?], and the general councils of Lateran in 1139 and 1179, do not condemn them, as Albigenses, but as heretics; and when they particularize them, they denominate them as bons homet,' (i.e., good men) Cathari,' Paterini,' Publicani,' etc., which shows that they existed before they were generally known as Albigenses. It is also proved from their books that they existed as Waldenses before the times of Peter Waldo, who preached about the year of 1160. Perrin, who wrote their history, had in his possession a New Testament in the Vallese language, written on parchment, in a very ancient letter, and a book entitled, in their language, Quai cosa sia l'Antichrist?' that is, What Is Antichrist?' under date of the year 1120, which carries us back twenty years before Waldo. Another book, entitled The Noble Lesson,' is dated A.D. 1100." ⁸⁶

Now that we have conclusively proved that the Catharists, the Albigenses, the Waldenses and others are clearly the same people simply being called by different names by their enemies from the districts in which they lived, let's look now at the doctrine of these true believers and see how they acted. Louis the XII, the King of France sent a delegation to investigate about these Waldenses, also known as Catharists and Albigenses, and here are the results.

"Investigators made a report to Louis XII, king of France, that "They had visited all the parishes where they (Waldenses) dwelt, and had inspected their places of worship, but that

they had found no images, nor signs of the ornaments belonging to the mass, nor any of the ceremonies of the Roman Church; much less could they discover any traces of those crimes with which they were charged. On the contrary, **they kept the Sabbath day, observed the ordinance of (adult) baptism according to the primitive church,** instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith and the commandments of Elohim.”⁸⁷

“These Heretics are known by their manners and conversation, for **they are orderly and modest in their behavior and deportment. They avoid all appearance of pride in their dress.** They neither indulge in finery of attire nor are they remarkable for being mean and ragged. **They avoid commerce, that they may be free from deceit and falsehood.** They get their livelihood by manual industry, as day laborers or mechanics; and their teachers are weavers or tailors. **They are not anxious about amassing riches; but content themselves with the necessities of life. They are chaste, temperate, and sober.**

They abstain from anger. Even when they work, they either learn or teach. In like manner, also, **their women are modest, avoiding backbiting, foolish jesting, and levity of speech, especially abstaining from lies or swearing,** not so much as making use of the common asseverations, ‘in truth,’ ‘for certain,’ or the like, because they regard these as oaths, contenting themselves with simply answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’⁸⁸.”

“They can say a great part of the Old and New Testaments by heart. They despise the decretals, and the sayings and expositions of holy men, and they only cleave to

the text of Scripture.” . . . “They say that the doctrine of Messiah and his apostles is sufficient to salvation, without any church statutes and ordinances. That the traditions of the (Catholic) church are no better than the traditions of the Pharisees; and that greater stress is laid on the observation of human traditions than the keeping of the law of Elohim.

*They condemn all approved ecclesiastical customs which they do not read of in the gospel, as the observation of Candlemas, Palm Sunday, the reconciliation of penitents, the adoration of the cross, of Good Friday. They despise the feast of Easter and all other [Roman] festivals of Messiah and the Saints, because of their being multiplied to that vast number, . . . and work upon holy days [of the Roman church] where they can do it without being taken notice of . . . **“They declare themselves to be the apostles’ successors, to have apostolic authority, and the keys of binding and loosing.***

They hold that none of the ordinances of the church that have been introduced since Messiah’s ascension ought to be observed, having no worth; the feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church, and the like, they utterly reject.” ⁸⁹

*“Indeed, of all the multitude of writers who have treated of this people, all, without exception, are unanimous in declaring that they rejected all the feasts and festivals of the church, as well as infant baptism, and would not observe any ordinance which they did not read of in Scripture. Others, especially the ancient Catholics, accuse them of Judaism, because, according to their testimony, **they kept the Jewish Sabbath.** The Council of Lombez derided the Good Men of*

Lyons as Sabbatharians. They were condemned by the Lateran Council of 1139 for refusing to observe the festivals of the church.” ⁹⁰

These true believers of the original faith of Yahshua and the Apostles were similar in character to the Paulicians, as we have seen, as they not only were commandment keepers, including the 4th commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but they had extraordinary character and lived a life separate from the world as so not to be influenced or even tempted by worldly desires. Alluding to the churches of the Waldenses in Piedmont and those scattered throughout the diocese of Italy, Claudius Seisselius, archbishop of Turin, tells us that the most cruel persecutions had not been able to extirpate them or hinder them from a constant defense of that doctrine which they had received from their ancestors.

The true early believers and the Congregation of Yahweh throughout the ages not only vehemently held on to the original doctrine and faith of Yahshua and the Apostles, but they were even willing to die for their doctrine and their faith; and unfortunately, as we will see many did succumb to martyrdom holding on to the commandments of Yahweh and the faith of Yahshua, till the last breath.

Of the persecution against the Vaudois of La Guardia, Wylie says: *“Enticing the inhabitants outside the gates, and placing soldiers in ambush; they succeeded in getting into their power upwards of sixteen hundred persons. Of these, seventy were . . . tortured, in the hope of compelling them to accuse themselves of practicing shameful crimes in their religious assemblies. No such confession, however, could the most prolonged tortures wring from them. ‘Stefano*

*Carlino,' says M'Crie, 'was tortured till his bowels gushed out;' and another prisoner, named Verminel, 'was kept eight hours on a horrid instrument called the hell but persisted in denying the atrocious calumny.' Some were thrown from the tops of towers, or precipitated over cliffs; others were torn with iron whips, and finally beaten to death with fiery brands; and others, smeared with pitch, were burned alive."*⁹¹

Of the Roman persecutions against the true followers of the Lamb in the town of Pragens, Wylie says:

*"It was in midwinter," . . . "and the inhabitants dreaded no attack, believing, themselves sufficiently protected by the snow which then lay deep on their mountains. They were destined to experience the bitter fact that the rigors of the season had not quenched the fire of their persecutor's malice. Borelli, at the head of an armed troop, broke suddenly into Pragens, meditating the entire extinction of its population. The miserable inhabitants fled in haste to the mountains, carrying on their shoulders their old men, their sick, and their infants, knowing what fate awaited them should they leave them behind. In their flight a great many were overtaken and slain. Nightfall brought them deliverance from pursuit, but no deliverance from the horrors not less dreadful . . . without shelter, without food, and frozen snow around them, the winter's sky overhead, their sufferings were inexpressibly great. When morning broke, what a heart-rending spectacle did day disclose! Some of the miserable group lost their hands and feet from frostbite; while others were stretched out on the snow, stiffened corpses. Fifty young children, some say eighty were found dead from cold, some lying on the bare ice, others locked in the frozen arms of their mothers, who had perished on the dreadful night along with their babes."*⁹²

In the 12th century, a great congregational leader arose among the Waldenses, called Peter Waldo. Let's take a look at this amazing man's story and how he impacted the Congregation of Yahshua in the 12th century.

"The Cathari, who were evidently a people of Elohim, received great accessions of members from the learned labors and righteous zeal of Peter Waldo, an opulent merchant of Lyons, toward the close of the twelfth century. They were gloriously distinguished by a dreadful series of persecution, and exhibited a spectacle, both of the power of Divine grace, and of the malice and enmity of the world against the real gospel of Yahshua Messiah." 93

"These people were numerous in the valleys of Piedmont. Hence the name Vaudois, or Vallenses was given them, particularly to those who inhabited the valleys of Luverne and Argorgne.

About 1160, the doctrine of transubstantiation was required by the court of Rome to be acknowledged by all men. This led to idolatry. Men fell down before the consecrated host and worshiped it as God. The impiety of this abomination shocked the minds of all men who were not dead to a sense of true religion. The mind of Peter Waldo was aroused to oppose the abomination, and to strive for a reformation. A fear of Elohim, in union with an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, led him to conduct with courage in opposing the dangerous corruptions of the hierarchy. He abandoned his mercantile occupation, distributed his wealth to the poor, who flocked to him to share his alms, received the best instructions he was capable of communicating, and

reverenced the man, of whose liberality they partook, while the great and the rich both hated and despised him.

It appears that the Christian world under providence was indebted to Waldo, for the first translation of the Bible into a modern tongue. No pains had been taken, by those who were attached to popish system, to diffuse Biblical knowledge among the vulgar. The benevolent attempt to send the bread of life among the common people, by giving them the Scriptures in their own tongue, if we accept the single instance of the Sclavonian version, was purely and exclusively of Protestant origin.

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures, he saw that the general practice of nominal Christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only no foundation in the divine oracles, but were even condemned by them. Inflamed with equal zeal and charity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices, and the arrogance of the pope. He did more: as he advanced in the knowledge of the true faith and love of Messiah, he taught his neighbors the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Yahshua Messiah.

John de Bekes Mayons, archbishop of Lyons, a distinguished member of the corrupt system, forbade the new reformer to teach anymore, on pain of excommunication, and of being proceeded against as a heretic. Waldo replied that though he was a layman, yet he could not be silent in a matter that concerned the salvation of men. On this, the archbishop endeavored to apprehend him.

But the great affection of Waldo's friends, the influence of his relations, who were men of rank, the universal regard paid to his integrity and piety, and the conviction which, no doubt many felt, that the extraordinary circumstances justified his assumption of the pastoral character; all things operated so strongly in his favor that he lived concealed at Lyons three years.

Pope Alexander III, having heard of the proceedings of Waldo, anathematized him and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed against him with the utmost rigor. Waldo fled from Lyons, and his disciples followed him. By this dispersion, the doctrine of Waldo was widely disseminated throughout Europe. In Dauphiny, whither he retired, his tenets took a deep and lasting root. Some of his people probably did join themselves to the Vaudois of Piedmont, and the new translation of the Bible, was, doubtless, a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that people.”⁹⁴

“Information of these things (the ministry of Waldo) was then conveyed to Pope Alexander III, who no sooner heard of such heretical proceedings than he anathematized the reformer and his adherents, commanding the archbishop to proceed against them with the utmost rigor. Waldo was now compelled to quit Lyons. His flock in a great measure followed their pastor; and hence dispersion took place not unlike that which arose in the congregation of Jerusalem on the occasion of the death of Stephen. The effect is also similar. . . . His (Waldo's) principles took deep and lasting root, and produced a numerous harvest of disciples, who were denominated Leonists, Vaudois, Albigenses, or Waldenses, for the very same class of Christians is

*designated by these various appellations at different countries, or quarters of the same country, in which they appeared. The following facts are indisputable: "that the general body of the Albigenses received the doctrines of Peter Waldo, **and that the Waldenses and Albigenses were two branches of the same sect.** . . ."* ⁹⁵

Mat 13:45 *Again, the kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a merchant seeking excellent pearls;*

Mat 13:46 *who finding one very precious pearl, going away has sold all things, as many as he had, and bought it.*

Waldo was a great man of faith, who like the man in the parable above, was a very successful, rich merchant, who when he found the truth, gave up all his riches to live a simple life as a believer bearing fruit wherever he went.

After Pope Alexander's attack against the believers of Lyons, Peter Waldo, then went to Germany where he also bore much fruit and built congregations all the way to Hungary.

"It appears that, at this time, Waldo fled into Germany, and at last settled in Bohemia, where he ended his days about the year 1179. He appears to have been one of whom the world was not worthy, and to have turned many unto righteousness. The word of Elohim then grew and multiplied. In Alsace and along the Rhine the gospel was preached with a powerful effusion of the Holy Spirit: persecution ensued, and 35 citizens of Nantz were burned at one fire, in the city of Bingen, and at Mentz, 18. In those persecutions, the bishop of Mentz was very active, and the bishop of Strasburg was not inferior to him in vindictive zeal: for, through his means, 80 persons were burned at that place.

Everything relating to the Waldenses resembled the scenes of the primitive congregation. Numbers died praising Elohim, and in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection; whence the blood of the martyrs became again the seed of the congregation; and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and in Hungary, many churches were planted; which flourished in the thirteenth century, governed by Bartholomew, a native of Carcassone, a city not far from Poulouse, which might be called in those days; the metropolis of the Waldenses, on account of the numbers who there professed evangelical truth.

In Bohemia and the country of Passaw, the churches were reckoned to have contained in the former part of the fourteenth century eighty thousand professors. Almost throughout Europe Waldenses were then to be found; and yet they were treated as the off-scouring of the earth, and as people against whom all the power of wisdom of the world were united. But, the witness continued to prophesy in sackcloth,' and souls were built up in the faith, hope, and charity of the gospel." 96

The amazing part of what Peter Waldo was able to do, besides the great zeal and faith that he had for Yahweh, was that when he was first called and was a lay person in the congregation before he was ordained a Pastor he saw the need for the proper training of believers for both public ministry and also for those who would qualify for ordination and elderhood. He, then, set up a system for doing this and spread this knowledge to other branches of the true Congregation throughout Europe.

One of these training places and Waldensian headquarters was in Angrogna, Italy near Turin in the Piedmont Mountains. I had the great privilege to actually visit this Waldensian headquarters and see the school of the “*barbes*” (which means teachers, but literally uncles) that is still standing today. In many ways, seeing this history of the true Congregation first hand was what inspired me to open up the Hayahad Bible Training School in Israel that has been operative here by the Sea of Galilee the last ten years; the very place that Yahshua first instructed His disciples.

The way that the Waldenses operated was that after a believer was properly trained through the school he was sent out as an apprentice (two by two) with an elder whom he could watch and learn from. Since many of the Waldenses were tailors and weavers by trade, they would bring their merchandise as a way to give them opportunity to meet people and discern their interest in the truth. If they saw interest they would then pull out their Scriptures. If the customer had no money they would simply give the merchandise away. They were fully committed to the Good News of Yahshua and His command of “*Freely you have received, freely you give*” (Math 10:8).

“The Church of the Alps, in the simplicity of its constitution, may be held to have been a reflection of the Congregation of the first centuries. The entire territory included in the Waldensian limits was divided into parishes. In each parish was placed a pastor, who led his flock to the living waters of the word of Elohim. He preached, he dispensed the sacraments (on Passover), he visited the sick, and catechized the young.

With him was associated in the government of his congregation a consistory of laymen. The synod met once a year, and its most frequent place of meeting was the secluded mountain-engirdled valley at the head of Angrogna. Sometimes as many as 150 barbes (pastors-teachers) with an equal number of lay-members would assemble.

We can imagine them seated- it may be on grassy slopes of the valley- a venerable company of the humble, learned, earnest men, presided over by a simple moderator: and only suspending their deliberations respecting the affairs of their congregations, and the conditions of their flocks, to offer their prayers and praises to the Eternal, while the majestic snow-clad peaks looked down upon them from the silent firmament.

The youth, who here sat at the feet of the more venerable and learned of their barbes, used as their textbook the Holy Scriptures. And not only did they study the sacred volume; they were required to commit to memory, and to be able accurately to recite, whole gospels and epistles. This was a necessary accomplishment on the part of public instructors in those ages when printing was unknown, and copies of the word of Elohim were rare. Part of their time was spent in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, or portions of them, which they were to distribute when they went forth as missionaries. By this and by other agencies the, the seed of the divine word was scattered throughout Europe more widely than is commonly supposed.

After passing a certain time at the school of the barbes many Waldensian youth left the seclusion of their mountains for further study and many of them became dialecticians, and

often made converts of the rich merchants with whom they traded and the landlords in whose houses they lodged. The priests seldom cared to meet in argument the Waldesian missionary.

*To maintain the truth in their own mountains was not the only object of this people. They felt their relations to the rest of Christendom. They sought to drive back the darkness, and re-conquer the kingdom that Rome had overwhelmed. They were an evangelistic as well as an evangelical congregation. It was an old law among them that all who took orders in their congregation should, before being eligible to a home charge, serve three years in the mission field. The youth on whose **head the assembled barbes laid their hands** saw in prospect not a rich benefice, but a possible martyrdom.*

The ocean they did not cross. Their mission field was the realms that lay outspread at the foot of their own mountains. They went forth two and two, concealing their real character, under the guise of a secular profession, most commonly that of merchants and peddlers. They carried silks, jewelry, and other articles at that time not easily purchasable save at a distant mart, and they were welcomed as merchants where they would have been spurned as missionaries.

The door of the cottage and the portal of the baron's castle stood equally open to them. But their address was mainly shown in selling, without money and without price, rarer and more valuable than the gems and silks which had procured them entrance. They took care to carry with them, concealed among their wares of about their persons, portions of the word of Elohim, their own transcription commonly, and this they would draw the attention of the inmates. When they saw

a desire to possess it, they would freely make a gift of it where the means of purchase were absent.”⁹⁷

The Waldenses were an amazing branch of the true Congregation of Yahshua as they not only held fast to the original, apostolic doctrine and faith, but they instituted a systematic, orderly manner for training pastors and leadership for the future. It is no wonder that during the height of the Waldensian legacy congregations were growing all over the Roman Empire.

“In spite of the fact that Rome was ruthlessly on the trail of every leader among the churches during this century, the truth continued to prevail regardless of sword, fire, or dungeon. True children of the Lamb were found throughout Europe, and especially numerous in France, Italy, Germany and Bohemia. According to the work of Benedict, there were 80,000 heretics in Bohemia, who were called Waldenses, in the year 1315 A.D.”⁹⁸

The Waldenses, as we have also seen with the Paulicians, understood the great privilege and responsibility that they had in being a link in the chain of the one, true, original Congregation of Yahshua Messiah and what that meant to making sure the true faith given to them from the first century Apostles would continue to the next generation; as living in Italy, they fully knew the Universal or Catholic Church was corrupted and filled with paganism. Let's look at what J.A. Wylie, a Church historian who lived in the 1800's and was extremely familiar with the Waldenses states.

“The rest of Italy had turned aside to idols, The Waldensian territory alone had been preserved for the worship of the one

true Elohim. And was it not meet that on its native soil a remnant of the Apostolic Congregation of Italy should be maintained, that Rome and all Christendom might have before their eyes a perpetual monument of what they themselves had once been, and a living witness to testify how far they had departed from their first faith.” ⁹⁹

Wylie continues on the accepted fact that the Waldenses were a link of the unbroken chain of ordination of the true remnant Congregation from Yahshua and the Apostles.

“Rome manifestly was the schismatic, she it was that had abandoned what was once the common faith of Christendom, leaving by that step to all who remained on the old ground, the indisputably, the valid title of the True Church.

*Behind this rampart of mountains, did the remnant of the early apostolic Congregation of Italy kindle their lamp, and here did that lamp continue to burn all through the long night which descended on Christendom. There is a singular concurrence of evidence in favor of their high antiquity. Their traditions invariably point to the **unbroken descent from the earliest times**, as regards to their religious belief.”* ¹⁰⁰

The Paulicians were the remnant of the early eastern original congregation starting in Jerusalem and migrating to Asia Minor and then east to Armenia by the second and third centuries, and the Waldenses/ Albigenses/ Cathars were the western branch of the original, true Congregation from the apostolic times, that was in Rome and never compromised with the wicked, paganized Roman Universal Church.

When we look at the commonality of both groups we not only see a united front on faith and doctrine, but we see a repeated historical statement that they would not acquiesce or compromise in any way with the Roman Catholic Church, and due to this stance, they put up with pogrom after pogrom for more than 1500 years. The Waldenses, just as their counterparts the Paulicians, considered the Catholic Church, under the control of the Roman emperors, to be the very seat of Satan and a battle, not just over ideas, but over good versus evil and the very existence and survival of the one true Congregation of Yahweh with the faith of Yahshua.

Reinfrius Saccho was a heretic who left the true faith and joined with the Catholics in persecuting the Waldenses very harshly. He published a catalogue of the errors of the Waldenses in the year 1250 A.D. This is what he wrote:

*“They mix their erroneous doctrines with the heretics of old and add their own inventions. **They affirm that they alone are the true Congregation of Messiah and His disciples. They declare themselves to be the Apostles successors, to have apostolic authority and the keys of binding and loosing.** They hold the Church of Rome to be the whore of Babylon, and that all who obey her are damned, especially the clergy that have been subject to her since the days of Pope Sylvester.”* ¹⁰¹

Pope Sylvester was the pope of Rome during the days of Constantine up until about the year 330 A.D. So, again, we clearly see that to the faithful true believers who were the remnant of the original Congregation of Yahshua and the Apostles, not only did they consider themselves to be the true, valid, continuation of the original apostolic

Congregation, but they also clearly did not recognize the Church of Rome as being part of the true Congregation of Yahshua, but actually, being the whore of Babylon.

“Peter Waldo was the first person to accuse the Pope of being the anti-Christ. He wondered, and then asked, ‘What biblical authority did the pope have when he indirectly attacked a group, The Waldenses, who were following the bible explicitly?’

Back during the times of the emperor Constantine, there was supposedly a document put forth by him called the Donation of Constantine. The document seemingly transferred all earthly power from the empire to the papacy (Pope Sylvester I). The Waldenses considered this an act of seduction.” ¹⁰²

The Waldenses were also known for using the phrase “*the bible and the bible only.*”

*“The Waldenses believed in the complete obedience to the commands of the gospels, which they followed. **The Bible to them was supreme, and anything it did not authorize had no place with them.** Their criticism of church doctrine clearly developed after their rejection by the Catholic Church. With only the bible as their guide they found, upon close study, that the Catholic Church deviated from biblical principles in a number of areas.*

This is why they denounced additional doctrines like indulgences, holy water, excommunications, images, church music, worship of the cross, prayers in Latin (since no one could understand them), the adoration of dead saints, and various other statutes of the Church. These things were

totally unnecessary to the Waldenses and not supported by the bible.” ¹⁰³

The other thing the Waldenses refuted was the pagan Sunday worship that Rome had incorporated since the days of Constantine. The Waldenses, as their counterparts the Paulicians, were clearly Sabbath keepers. Jean Paul Perrin writes about the Waldenses and their Sabbath belief and practice in a book entitled, “History of the Ancient Christians”; in a chapter called “Exposition of the Waldenses and Albigenses, Upon the Ten Commandments of the Law of Elohim.” He states the following:

“They that keep and observe the Sabbath of Christians, that is to say, sanctify the day of the Lord, must be careful of four things: The first is to cease from all earthly and worldly labors: the second not to sin: the third, not to be idle in regard of good works: the fourth, to do those things that are for the good and benefit of the soul.

Of the first it was said; six days thou shall labor, and do all that thou hast to do but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy Elohim: in it thou shall do no manner of work. And in Exodus it is said, keep my Sabbath, for it is Holy; and he that pollutes it shall die the death: and in the book of numbers we read, that one of the children of Israel being seen to gather sticks on the Sabbath day, he was brought to Moses; This man shall die the death, all the people shall stone him with stones, and he shall die.

Elohim would that His Sabbath should be kept with such reverence, that the children of Israel should not gather manna there on, when it was given them from heaven.” ¹⁰⁴

Many of the Church Councils that were administered by Rome, such as Nicea and Laodicea and Charcedon and Friaul, were specifically meant, not only to legislate Sunday worship, but also to restrict Sabbath observance by the true Congregation of Yahshua.

Satan knows that the Sabbath was a sign from Creation to distinguish the only true Elohim, whose name is Yahweh, from all the false gods that man would create throughout antiquity. So, it is no surprise that out of all the doctrines that the true Congregation of Yahshua observed throughout history, which the Devil would try to attack, that the Sabbath day would be attacked more than just about any other doctrine or belief.

The hieroglyphic word picture for the word 'Sabbath' is 'to return to the house (family) of the covenant', and it is also no coincidence in these end times that the Sabbath is usually the first thing that an apostate Christian will change and start to observe when coming back to the true, original faith of the Apostles.

"The Apostolical Constitutions", though not written in apostolic times, were in existence as early as the third century. They do therefore, furnish important historical testimony to the practice of the Congregation at that time, and also indicate the great progress which the apostasy had made Guiricke speaks thus of them:—

"This is a collection of ecclesiastical statutes purporting to be the work of the apostolic age, but in reality formed gradually in the second, third, and fourth centuries, and is of much

value in reference to the history of polity, and Christian archaeology generally.” ¹⁰⁵

The Apostolical Constitutions, while teaching the present obligation of the Sabbath, plainly indicate its origin to have been at creation:—

"O Lord Almighty, thou has created the world by Messiah, and hast appointed the Sabbath in memory thereof, because that day thou has made us rest from our works, for the meditation upon thy laws.” ¹⁰⁶

Let's look at a testimony of a Waldensian about a Sabbath that was kept back in the 14th century.

“How tranquilly the Sabbath opened in this lonely valley—still and peaceful as a Scottish Sabbath in Scottish hamlet! It seemed to me that Sabbath did not cross the Clusone. On the other side of that river, and scarce two miles from the village of Pomaret, was the Roman Catholic town of Perosa, and the most unmistakable signs told us that there the Sabbath was being kept after a very different fashion. All day long the sounds of piping, dancing, and making merry came borne on the breeze towards us from that town. A great festival was being held in honor of some Romish saint, and at times a perfect thunder-burst of noise would strike upon the ear, made up of the ringing of bells, the beating of drums, the blowing of clarinets and trumpets, and the shouting of men. This only gave me a keener relish for the deep quiet (of the Sabbath) at Pomaret.

At eleven o'clock we went to the “temple.” The congregation might amount to betwixt five and six hundred. Cordial, indeed, were the greetings which M. Lantaret received from

his flock at the church-door on his return from Scotland; but more flattering still was the compliment paid him within doors, in the marked attention with which they listened to his discourse—a discourse rich in its statements of divine truth, and eloquent in illustration and appeal. In a Vaudois congregation there is little to remind the visitor from Scotland that he is out of his own country, save the foreign tongue, which is too purely French to be easily comprehensible by the bulk of the people, whose vernacular is a compound of Italian and French. The worship is conducted much as at home, with this difference that a somewhat greater amount of duty is allotted to the regent. He is required to begin the service by reading what is termed the Liturgy, and which consists of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and two or three chapters of the Bible, with the observations of Ostervald thereon.

The interior of the churches of the Valleys is extremely simple; the whitewashed walls are without the least attempt at ornament. Commonly, however, the simple but most significant symbol of their church is to be seen, if not within, yet outside the building, --the candlestick, with the seven stars (menorah), surrounded by the motto, "Lux lucet in tenebris." How truly apocalyptic the imagery! Read here—this motto is a sermon of itself: nothing but Elohim's sovereign grace and almighty power could have preserved alive this candlestick amidst the all-encompassing gloom. As a grain of corn in the earth, Elohim kept the Evangel in the very heart of Antichrist's kingdom.

The dress of the people is plain to severity. The garments of the men are of coarse woolen; and those of the women of equally coarse cotton, made up in the most primitive style.

Nor is there any variety of color to atone for the homely materials which compose their attire; the color of all is a deep blue, and the somber aspect presented by a mass of several hundred may easily be imagined. The monotonous and dreary expanse is unrelieved, save by the white caps of the women, and the high shirt-necks of the men. In fact, the commonest ornaments with us are unknown to them, and would be accounted a most extravagant finery. And the whole aspect of the people is in keeping with their dress. Their appearance bespeaks continual familiarity with privation and toil. They are of low stature, their frames are, as it were, pressed down, their faces are furrowed, many of them wrinkled with premature age. There is, with them, an entire absence of that unthinking clownish gaiety, that childish mirthfulness, which mark the faces of the peasantry of the surrounding countries. The Vaudois face is earnest, deep, grave—grave to sadness. It betokens, nevertheless, a most extraordinary power of passive endurance. Through the air of sorrowful seclusion that hangs upon that face, **there can be traced a quiet resolute courage which could enable its owner to face death a thousand times rather than yield**—a settled purpose of soul not to be shaken or overborne by any power that may be brought against it, and suggesting the very sentiment which Wordsworth has clothed in so fitting expression-- “But who would force the soul, tilts with a straw Against a champion cased in adamant.”

We must bear in mind that the Vaudois face was molded under persecution—a persecution which far exceeded in severity, as it did in duration, any persecution that ever befell any other race. The Waldenses have, from first to last, endured upwards of thirty persecutions. In these we do not

include the perpetual kidnappings of their children, the ever-recurring martyrdoms of their pastors and missionaries, the civil and political grievances under which they lay, which made their state, for five long centuries, a normal state of persecution: we have respect, in this enumeration, to outstanding periods of violence and martyrdom which were inflicted upon them. Timidity and endurance, a manner betraying at once submission and a lofty indomitable courage, mark the inhabitants of the Valleys. The sounds of merriment and uproar, which all day long had proceeded from Perosa, were waxing louder as the day advanced, and I felt a strong desire to visit it, and witness with my own eyes the Sabbath of Popish Perosa in contrast with the Sabbath of Protestant Pomaret. At my request, M. Lantaret walked out with me, as the evening was setting in, across the Clusone, which separates the Protestant from the Popish portion of the Val Perosa. We passed on, and entered the little town. The revels were proceeding without control; the streets were filled with noisy loiterers and the shops with still noisier carousers. Beneath them, in the enclosed space devoted to that purpose, the dance was proceeding. There could not be less than a hundred persons of either gender engaged in it at the time.

I expected to have seen an air of recklessness and conscious guilt upon the faces of the dancers. There was nothing of the sort. On the contrary, I was struck with the animal decency which almost every face before me bore. They were grievously profaning that "day" which the Fourth Commandment requires us to "remember" and to keep "holy"; but these persons had never read the Fourth Commandment, and therefore were quite unconscious that they were violating it. Were one to witness a Sabbath-revel

of this sort in Scotland, he would find the persons who should take part in it wearing an appearance very different indeed; and for this reason, that in Scotland none would engage in such a scene save those who had broken loose from religion. We remained only a few minutes, and then recrossed the Clusone. What a transition! I felt that this Valley of Perosa contained two worlds, and that the Clusone was the boundary betwixt them. Two worlds there were, widely different in their intellectual and moral state; and, though lying side by side, they were nevertheless as far apart as if the one had been Italy and the other Scotland.

Sweet, indeed, was the peace that brooded around Pamaret! It was felt to be holy even, after witnessing the troubled scene we had just left. It was M. Lantaret's first Sabbath after his return from Britain, and I could not but mark how the Vaudois heart within him clung to his vale.” ¹⁰⁷

The wilderness congregation known as Paulicians, Catharists, Albigenses, Waldenses, etc. were people of great faith and character. As we can see from the story above, they not only kept the Sabbath day but they were delighted in it. They were a humble, modest group of faithful saints who cherished Yahweh's Sabbath because they understood that it was a sign of their very special relationship that they had with Yahweh, the Creator, as children of His. They didn't see the Sabbath as a day of restriction as many worldly nonbelievers do, but a day of sanctification from Satan's world of caurousings and self-pleasures. For this they were extremely grateful and there was a clear line of sanctification in their lives. The majority of these true remnant believers would not compromise and stayed separate from the world. They had the highest degree of integrity, truthfulness and

honor in even dealing with their enemies; and the Holy Scriptures were their strength, and they knew and memorized them quite well.

“Though these eminent witnesses for the truth are now termed generally Waldenses and Albigenses, yet they were formerly known by a variety of names, - some derived from their teachers, some from the fate they suffered, and some from the malice of their enemies. The valleys of Piedmont, first gave them the name of Vallenses, Waldenses, or Vaudois, a name which has since been employed to distinguish them as a primitive congregation. Those in the south of France were termed Albigenses, or poor men of Lyons, from their residence in or about Albi and Lyons. In like manner, they were called Picards, Lombards, Bohemians, Bulgarians, &c. from the countries in which they dwelt. The epithets Cathari and Paterines, were applied to them as terms of reproach; and that of Lollards, either from the same cause, or from a Waldensian pastor, Walter Lollard, who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century.

They also received the names of Josephites, Arnoldists, Berengarians, etc. from some of their principal teachers: and, order to render them odious in the eyes of the world, their enemies branded them with the names of several ancient heretics.

There were differences of opinion among these various classes of men, but of all of them it may be affirmed, that they ardently opposed the absurdities of the church, and the tyranny of the Papal see, and boldly preached, according to their light, “the truth as it is in Yahshua.” Whatever might be

the errors, however, of any of these branches, the parent stock, the Waldensees of the Valleys of Piedmont, never deviated from the pure doctrines of the word of Elohim.

Having made these remarks concerning the various branches of opponents to the Romish church, who have all been denominated by the general term Waldenses, we shall now take notice more particularly of a number of sincere and humble Christians, who, in the beginning of the twelfth century, attracted the notice of the Papal see, and who, among other names, were by their enemies termed Cathari. They were found chiefly in the south of France, Savoy, and Milan; and in Cologne, Flanders, and Lombardy.

Their doctrines resembled, in many particulars, those of Claudius of Turin (810-827); and it is not at all improbable that they were the fruit of his labors, and had existed from the age in which he lived. These heretics, as they were called by their enemies, were accused of holding the most detestable opinions; and many of them were put to death in the cruelest form, by the supporters of the Romish church.

*One of their enemies, Evervinus, after throwing out innumerable abuses and false statements against a people, of whose manners he acknowledges he knew but little, with a strange inconsistency adds: **"If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian; if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless; and what they speak, they prove by deeds.** You may see a man, for the testimony of his faith, frequent the church, honor the elders, offer his gift, make his confession, and receive the sacrament. What more like a Christian? As to life and manners, he circumvents no man. He fasts much, and eats*

not the bread of idleness, but works with his hands for his support. The whole body, indeed, are rustic and illiterate, and all whom I have known of this sect are very ignorant." Egbert, too, a monk, tells us, that he had often disputed with those heretics, and that they maintained their sentiments by the authority of Scripture." They are armed," says he, "with all those passages in Holy Scripture, which in any degree seems to favor their sentiments; which these they know how to defend themselves, and to oppose the Catholic faith." 108

What a striking representation to be given of a people from their enemies, and we can only imagine the full aspect of the character of these faithful and pure saints. When you look around at the Laodicean, lukewarm, halfhearted attitude prevalent in the churches of today, we can only aspire for the true and lasting faith and sustainability as the wilderness congregation had.

Many today come to faith and so quickly drift into heresy and a worldly, self-seeking lifestyle, that they actually never had given up at their baptism, and never surrender their whole self to Father Yahweh in any way. They refuse to submit to the leadership ordained by Yahweh in His congregation and self-centeredly seem to question every last detail to prove their lack of faith or respect for Yahweh's sovereignty over all.

The Waldenses, however, were a people who never lacked in faith or doctrine. They trusted in Yahweh's sovereignty and promise of sustainability of Yahshua's statement that *"the gates of hell would not prevail against His Congregation"*, and that He personally left an unbroken string of ordained leadership from generation to generation

to make sure that the one true faith and doctrine started by Him in 30 A.D. would continue until His return.

The problem at times in tracing the exact footsteps of the Waldenses is that most of what is written about them comes from testimony from their enemies. However, there is an amazing document that was found of eye-witness testimony of an actual Waldensian believer who was writing at the time that the Congregation was still illegal according to the Roman Church. Paul Tice puts this full testimony in writing in his book called "The History of the Waldenses". Look at what he states in the forward.

(As to the Waldenses) "Very little has been written from their point of view, in fact it was always claimed that everything we know about them was written by their opponents. Those making this claim had apparently never heard of this book. This book (a firsthand eye-witness testimony from an actual Waldense believer) provides a powerful testimony for a people whose story has, in large part, remained untold." 109

Now let's look at some of the stories written from this actual Waldensian member of the horrific persecutions that the true Congregation of Yahshua had to suffer in faith for the beliefs which they cherished.

"Having desolated a country which was considered the principal residence of the Albigenses, and massacred thousands of its inhabitants, we might have expected that the votaries of Rome would have been satiated with human blood. But it is long since the spirit of inspiration predicted, that nothing less would serve the Popish Church, than being

“drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Yahshua.”

It would be painful to enter into detail of the relentless barbarities and heart-rending cruelties which, on the renewal of the war, were committed on the Albigenses by the Earl of Montford. An outline only of a few of his atrocities, and of the sufferings to which he subjected those unoffending people, is all that can be given here.” ¹¹⁰

“A company of these poor despised people, consisting of about thirty men and women, appeared in England in 1159, and soon attracted the attention of the government by singularity of their religious practices and opinions. They were immediately apprehended, and brought before council of the clergy at Oxford. Being questioned concerning their religion, Gerrard their teacher answered that they were Christians, and believed the doctrines of the Apostles. Upon a more particular inquiry, it appeared that they denied several of the received doctrines of the church, such as purgatory, prayers for the dead, the invocation of the saints, etc.; and on refusing to abandon these heretical opinions, they were condemned as being incorrigible, and delivered over to the secular power to be punished. At the instigation of the clergy, the king, Henry II Commanded them to be branded with a red hot iron on the forehead, to be whipped through the streets of Oxford, and then, deprived of part of their clothes, to be turned out into the open fields, all persons being prohibited from affording them any shelter or relief, under severest penalties. This cruel sentence was executed in its utmost rigor; and it being the depth of winter, they all perished with cold and hunger!

*“Such was the provision of divine grace,” says Milner, speaking of the true piety of the persecuted Waldenses, “**to take out of a corrupt and idolatrous world of nominal Christians, a people formed for himself, who should show forth his praise, and who should provoke the rest of mankind by the light of true humility and holiness, a people, singularly separate from their neighbors in spirit, and discipline**, rude indeed, and illiterate, and not only discountenanced, but even condemned, by the few real good men who adhered altogether to the Romish church; condemned because continually misrepresented. I know not a more striking proof of that great truth of the divine world, that in the worst of times, the congregation shall exist, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* ¹¹¹

This was the beginning of the Inquisition and one of the most horrible, wrenched, brutal times in the history of man, where the Catholic Church and government under the full asperity of its Roman bishops and popes, systematically went out and beat, tortured and killed anyone who they considered a heretic. The true faith of the Waldenses, being blessed with hundreds of thousands of converts, was the principle reason that instigated the Inquisition.

However, it wasn't just so-called heretics that the popes and Catholic Church persecuted during this time; it was anyone whom they deemed to be a potential adversary or even challenger to their claim of complete and full control of the entire empire. And even then, if one posed absolutely no threat at all, if they even had valuable property or possessions that the Papacy deemed viable to their purpose, they would systematically arrest the person, bring up false accusations and trumped up charges with false witnesses

and proclaim guilty verdicts, in which the so-called perpetrator would immediately be tortured and murdered and all their possessions given over to the Roman Catholic Church. The accused had no way to give a defense, and even if he did, it wouldn't have mattered as the results were confirmed well before the pseudo-trial ever took place.

“The form of proceeding of the inquisitors, is an infallible way to destroy whomsoever the inquisitors wish. The prisoners are not confronted with the accuser or informer. Nor is there any informer, or witness, who is not listened to (whether credible or not). A public convict, a notorious malefactor, an infamous person, a child, are in the holy office, though nowhere else, credible accusers and witnesses.

Even the son may depose against the father, the wife against her husband. This procedure, unheard of till the institution of this court, makes the whole kingdom tremble. Suspicion reigns in every breast. Friendship and quietness are at an end. The brother dreads his brother, the father the son.” – In addition to the judges, (often the most abandoned of characters,) whose number generally was three, and who are called Lords of the inquisition, there were many Familiars, who mingled in all societies, and acted the part of spies and informers. No person dared to open his mouth against this court, as he knew not but some of the familiars might give information, and the officers of the inquisition drag him within the walls of their prison, from which few ever returned.” ¹¹²

Let's look at some more stories of the faith and courage and persecution of the true remnant of Yahshua during this dark time in the history of mankind.

“His inquisitor’s court soon extended its authority, and enlarged the number of its tribunals in every kingdom of Europe, where any of the people were suspected of heresy. Everywhere its progress was marked with blood. Racks, dungeons, and flames, awaited the miserable beings who were dragged within its walls; and under the cloak of religion, all the malice and ingenuity of hell were manifested by its supporters, in their unhappy victims.

The Waldenses were the first objects of inquisitorial cruelty. By the aid of the civil power, multitudes of them were put to the most cruel deaths, for their steadfast adherence “to the word of Elohim, and the testimony Of Messiah.” Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Papal see, however, the heresy of the Vaudois remained as far as ever from being unable to destroy the enemies of the church, by the engines already in operation, the blood-thirsty Pope had recourse to another and a more summary method of exterminating a people, of whom it may be said, “the world was not worthy.” This was nothing less than open war, to assist in which, all the Romish princes and nobles were invited to take up arms, and abbots and priests were commissioned to preach throughout Christendom a crusade against the Albigenses. ***These heralds of cruelty promised paradise, and the remission of sins, to all who should take the cross in this holy war, and serve against the Albigenses for forty days;*** together with the utmost extend of indulgence, which former Popes had granted to those who labored for the deliverance of the Holy Land.

To preserve some appearance of decency, however, the court of Rome pretended that nothing would give the church

greater satisfaction, than the prevention of bloodshed, provided the heretics could be reclaimed by persuasion. Relying too implicitly on these assurances, the Albigenses proposed to hold a public conference with their opponents, where the points in dispute might be discussed by and appeal to scripture (to decide doctrine), on condition that the business should be conducted with impartiality and propriety. For the sake of amusing the Albigenses till their own plans were ripe for execution, the bishops acceded to the proposal, and the conference took place in 1206 near Carcassone. But while the parties were engaged in dispute, the army of the Crusaders advanced, and decided the controversy, according to the custom of the Roman church, by the slaughter of an immense number of these unsuspecting people.” ¹¹³

“By fire, by sword, by prison, and every imaginable form of persecution and death, the Roman apostates sought to destroy the people of Elohim; but the more she persecuted, the more she slew, the greater the congregation, and the stronger her people became, until Rome at last threw all her strength against the unyielding people of the most High. Rome’s endeavors to stamp out the truth and the constancy of the saints of this age are ably summed up by the able historian Wylie in these words:

“Rome saw that she was making no progress in the extermination of a heresy which had found a seat amid these hills, as firm as it was ancient. The numbers of the Waldenses were not thinned; their constancy was not shaken, they still refused to enter the Roman church, and they met all the edicts and inquisitors, all the torturings and burnings of their great persecutor, with a resistance as unyielding as that offered by their rocks to the tempests and

hail and snow which the whirlwinds of winter hurled against them.” ¹¹⁴

The Catholic bishops had made a proposal to the Congregation of Yahshua stating that if they renounce their beliefs and accept the authoritative rule of the Roman Catholic Church that their lives would be spared; and here is their faithful response to the Pope in writing.

*“To the first of these proposals only, the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Beziers lent an ear, and used every entreaty with the Albigenses to induce them to submit to the religion of Rome. The latter, however, replied,” That they never could consent to purchase a prolongation of the present perishing life, at the price of renouncing their faith; that they were fully persuaded Elohim could, if he pleased, protect and defend them; but they were as fully persuaded, **that if it were His good pleasure to be glorified by the confession of their faith, it would be a high honor conferred upon them to lay down their lives for righteousness’ sake; that they preferred displeasing the Pope, who could only kill their bodies, much more to incurring the displeasure of Elohim, who could destroy both soul and body at once; that they hoped never to be ashamed of, nor forsake a faith by which they had been taught the knowledge of Messiah and His righteousness, nor at the hazard of eternal death, barter it for a religion which annihilated the merits of the Savior., and rendered his righteousness of none effect.**”* ¹¹⁵

And here is the result of their brave and steadfast proclamation and conviction.

“They therefore left it to the Roman Catholics and the Viscount to make the best terms they could for themselves, but entreated that they would not promise anything in their behalf inconsistent with their duty as Christians.” The Roman Catholic inhabitants next had recourse to the legate, representing their uniform attachment to the Roman faith; but that bloodthirsty ecclesiastic declared with an oath, that unless every individual within the walls of Bezier acknowledged his guilt, and submitted to the judgment of the Holy see, no mercy would be extended to any. Scarcely had this message been conveyed to the inhabitants, when orders were given to make an assault upon the city. Resistance was vain. The besiegers were immediately masters of Beziers, and a scene of bloodshed and cruelty followed, of which the most uncivilized barbarians might have been ashamed.

As the murderers were entering the gates, some of the knights inquired of the legate how they should distinguish the Catholics from the heretics; to which Arnold instantly replied, “Kill them all, - the Lord will know well those who are his.” So dreadful was the slaughter of the Albigenses on this occasion, that seven thousand dead bodies were counted in one of the churches of the city, and in all the others a spectacle equally lamentable was exhibited. When the murderers had completed their awful work, they set fire to the city, and consumed it to ashes. The number of victims who fell a prey at that time to popish cruelty is differently stated, some historians making it amount to sixty thousand, while others reduce it to twenty-three thousand; but whichever of these numbers is correct, we see, in the whole transaction, the “wrath of the dragon” displayed in a manner the most fearful against the seed of the congregation of Yahshua.” ¹¹⁶

*“Having attacked and carried several castles, all the inhabitants in which were put to the sword, he laid siege, in the beginning of June 1210, to Minerva, a place strongly fortified by nature, and situated in the territory of Narbonne, on the confines of Spain. A great majority of the inhabitants of this castle were Albigenses, and so completely had the Popish worship been disregarded in it, that Montfort himself declared that “no mass had been sung in it for thirty years.” For seven weeks the besieged defended themselves with great valor, but on the 22d of July the crusaders obtained possession of the place. Adding insult to cruelty, the infamous Montfort, at the time he had given orders to collect an enormous quantity of dry wood to burn the inhabitants, sent a Popish ecclesiastic to offer pardon to all who should embrace the Romish faith. “Resisting, however, unto blood,” the Albigenses unanimously exclaimed, **“we have renounced the Church of Rome: and neither death nor life will make us abandon the opinions that we have embraced.”** Fire was accordingly set to the pile, and by Montfort’s orders one hundred and eighty men and woman were committed to the flames. **These martyrs died steadfast in the truth, praising Elohim that he had counted them worthy to suffer death for their Redeemer’s sake.”** ¹¹⁷*

Numbers of the Waldenses were accordingly burned in the city of Rome, in 1231; and in 1232, Gregory wrote to the Emperor Frederick II informing him, “That the Catharines, Paterines, poor of Lyons, and other heretics, formed in the school of the Albigenses, had appeared in Lombardy and the two Sicilies,” and soliciting from him an edict for their destruction. With this request the Emperor complied, and commanded, and “commanded all judges immediately to

deliver to the flames every man who should be convicted of heresy by the bishop of his dioceses, and to pull out the tongue of those to whom the bishop will think it proper to show favor, that they might not corrupt others.”

The flames of persecution were not, however, confined to Italy. In Arragon the inquisition was introduced, in 1232, and for a century and a half made fearful havoc among the Waldenses, till at length there were none of them left in that kingdom. In Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, and other countries, the same atrocities were committed; and, in short, wherever a professor of the Waldensian faith could be found, the adherence of Rome thought it a praiseworthy service to bathe their hands in his blood!” ¹¹⁸

“From the borders of Spain, throughout the South of France for the most part, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and even to Bohemia, thousands of righteous souls were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Messiah, against whom malice could say no evil, except that which admits the most satisfactory refutation: men distinguished for every virtue, and only hated because of righteousness itself. Persecutors with a sigh owned, that, because of their virtue, they were the most dangerous enemies of the church. But of what church? Of that, which the thirteenth century, and long before, had shown itself to be antichristian. How faithful is the promise of Elohim in supporting and maintaining a congregation, even in the darkest times! But her livery is often sackcloth, and her external bread is that of affliction, while she sojourns on the earth.

*The Waldenses were conscientiously obedient to established governments, and their separation from a church, so corrupt, as that of Rome, was with them only a matter of necessity. We shall now see what they were in point of doctrine and discipline. **'The leading principle of this congregation was, that we ought to believe that the holy Scriptures alone contain all the things necessary to our salvation, and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what Elohim hath revealed to us.'** Wherever this principle dwells in the heart, it expels superstition and idolatry."* ¹¹⁹

The Waldenses and the rest of the true remnant of Yahshua went through great trials and afflictions to stay true to the tenets of their virtuous faith and never wavered for their sacred beliefs, which they cherished so dearly, knowing that the origin was directly from Yahshua Himself and the apostolic succession and the sacrificed, martyred lives of those who died to preserve these truths for each coming next generation.

The brutal, inhumane, barbaric systematic murder and expulsion of the true remnant of Yahshua by the Roman Catholic Church with its leader, the Pope, should be a stark reality for anyone wanting the truth in these end times to know they must completely leave such false churches.

Under the auspices of the World Council of Churches starting in around 1901, Roman Catholicism has rewritten history to hide the brutal, murderous history of their clergy and organization. You can hide the truth, but you can't change it. The fact of the matter is that Roman Catholicism, with its apostate Protestant sisters, were founded on murder,

confiscation of property and every false lie and heresy. However, although they were allowed to persecute the true Congregation of Yahshua through the ages to the purification of this one, true, elect body of believers, as we mentioned, Yahshua never allowed them to completely extinguish the flame of this faithful, courageous Congregation planted by Yahshua Himself. As He stated, *"The gates of hell would not prevail against her."*

"Honorius III, who had succeeded Innocent III, In the Papal See, directed that another crusade should be formed against the Albigenses. For this purpose he sent the following rescript into every province of France: - "We excommunicate all heretics of both sexes, and of whatsoever sect, with their favorers, receivers, and defenders; and, moreover, all those who cause any edicts or customs contrary to the liberty of the Catholic Church to be observed, unless they remove them from their public records in two months after the publication of this sentence.

Honorius also wrote to Louis VII. King of France, exhorting that monarch to take up arms in defense of the Church. "It is the command of Elohim," said his Holiness, "who says, If thou shalt hear say in any one of thy cities which the Lord your Elohim has given thee to dwell there, saying, "Let us go and serve other Elohims, which ye have not known, you shall smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword." It is worthy of remark here, that the ambitious and perfidious Roman Pontiffs, and their no less perfidious supporters, uniformly use, and grossly pervert, the words of Scripture to sanction their most detestable and bloody deeds, "One would imagine," says the late writer, "that they had only studied the bible to make sacrilegious applications of it."

Next to last, Louis, who did not yield in fanaticism, or in hatred against the Albigenses, to any of the monks, immediately began to collect an army of crusaders, at the head of which he placed himself, and joined Amaury, in 1219, in besieging the castle of Marmande. After holding out for some time, the besieged offered to surrender, provided they were guaranteed their lives. "I will receive you to mercy," replied Louis, "and suffer you to go away, carrying only your bodies with you." These conditions being of course accepted, the gates of the place were thrown open to the crusaders; but instead of fulfilling their agreement with the inhabitants, the Bishop of Saints advised Louis "immediately to kill and burn them all as heretics." His advice was, alas! But also, implicitly followed, for all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, to the number of five thousand, were massacred." ¹²⁰

You would think that after massacring so many innocent people, including many women and children, that the Roman Catholic Church with its bishops and popes would have even a little remorse of guilt for rendering such judgment against holy people of Yahweh. However, that was not the case; in fact, it was the opposite; the Papacy upped its persecution and tried to wipe out every true believer in the empire. Truly, it was a spiritual war between Satan and Yahshua's holy Remnant.

"Thus, after nearly thirty years of cruel persecution, the Albigenses were almost either wholly destroyed, or driven from their country. During all that period blood never ceased to flow, nor the flames to devour their victims, in Albigeous and the surrounding country: and the few who escaped the edge of the sword fled to refuge to the valleys of Piedmont

(Italy), or took up their abode in Austria, Bohemia, and other kingdoms to which the horrors of persecution had not yet extended.

But besides those who fell in war, or were murdered by the Crusaders, that horrid engine of Popish cruelty, the inquisition, was continually at work, making fearful havoc among the disciples of Messiah. From 1206 to 1228, the numbers which were apprehended were so immense, that, in the latter year, the Archbishops of Aix, Arles, and Narbone, found it necessary to intercede with the inquisitors, to defer for a little their work of imprisonment, until the Pope should be apprised of the numbers already confined, it being impossible to procure a sufficient quantity of materials to build prisons in which to contain them. But these courts were not content with imprisoning heretics; the rack and the flames were daily employed, as the most summary methods of ridding themselves of all who had incurred their diabolical vengeance.

*To render this horrid court permanent, and to subject it wholly to the power of the ecclesiastics, a Council was assembled at Toulouse, in 1229. After agreeing on the manner in which heretics who fell into their hands were to be treated, **that infamous assembly decreed that the people should be prohibited from reading the Bible.** “We prohibit,” says the 14th canon, “laymen from having the books of the Old Testaments; only they who out of devotion desire it, may have a psalter, a breviary, or the Hours of the blessed Mary; but we forbid them, in the most express manner, to have the above-mentioned books translated into the vulgar tongue.” It is true that, indirectly, the Church of Rome had for a long time acted up to the spirit of this canon;*

but this appears to be the first instance of a direct prohibition of the people reading the word of Elohim. "What an honor," says Milner, "was this canon to the cause of the Albigenses! What a confession of guilt on the side of the Romanists! The people of Elohim were thus, at length, for the most part, exterminated in Toulouse, and found no other resource than, by patient continuance in well-doing, to commit themselves to their Elohim and Savior.

*Antichrist, for the present, was visibly triumphant in the south-west parts of France, and the witnesses, clothed in sackcloth,' there consoled themselves with the hope of heavenly rest, being deprived of all prospect of earthly enjoyments." **It is computed that upwards of a million of the Albigenses perished within three years, by the hands of the crusaders.**"* ¹²¹

"But though the greater number of the Albigenses in France had perished, and though those of them who escaped had been driven into exile, yet their doctrines were as far as ever from being eradicated. Their dispersion scattered throughout Europe those sparks of divine truth, which the inquisitors still labored to extinguish, and the court of Rome beheld with alarm the rays of light bursting through the gloom which it imagined had been rendered everywhere impenetrable." ¹²²

It is unfortunate that this important history of the great persecution of the true Congregation of Yahshua is barely spoken about in most churches. When we think of why there are so few true Sabbath keeping covenant believers today, we can reminisce to a time when there were more than several million of these righteous, faithful believers who were systematically hunted down and slaughtered by the Roman

Catholic Church. When people are seeking the truth today, and wonder why Yahshua's congregation is so small and many times even unheard of in most places, they can know that they are joining the true faithful persecuted congregation and not the apostate congregation who martyred so many of the faithful remnant of Yahshua.

It is so sad to think about so many innocent Catholic, and Protestant and Evangelical people who have no idea that their origin is slated in an evil corrupt sinister organization that obtained its riches with the blood of the true saints of Yahshua.

They have no idea that the doctrines that they hold so dear such as the trinity and Sunday worship are not from Yahshua or the original apostolic faith but stem from Constantine, a murderous evil liar, who was a pagan emperor and not a true believer. And they don't know how wicked and pagan the bishops and popes were after Constantine and not named to office for their belief or character but simply because they were more ruthless than their opponent.

If one is honest with themselves they can see that the Roman Catholic Church with her Protestant offshoots that will follow were never a part of the true remnant congregation of Yahshua and never did and never will have any authority from Yahshua, but were planted as a seed and congregation of Satan himself.

There was also a man around this time called Walter Lollard who joined the Waldenses and became a mighty pastor in word and deed until his martyrdom, which also took place by Rome.

“A bold and intrepid teacher was raised up among the Boghards, or Picards, in 1315, in the person of Walter Lollard, who became an eminent barb or pastor among them, and from whom the Waldenses were called Lollards . .

. Moreland asserts he was in great reputation with the Waldenses, for having conveyed their doctrines into England, where they prevailed over the kingdom Walter was in unity of views in doctrine and practice with the Waldenses In 1320, Walter Lollard was apprehended and burnt His death was highly detrimental to their affairs, but did not, however, ruin their cause; for it appears they were supported by men of rank and great learning, and continued their societies in many provinces of Germany.” ¹²³

Yes, it is true that more than a million, maybe even 2 million of these true believers were tortured, beaten, and eradicated throughout the Roman Empire at this time, but it didn't stop the zeal or fervency of these true precious believers. They relocated to more secure areas and had to take a more subtle and underground approach, but The Roman Catholic Church could not stamp out the Congregation that Yahshua said, *“The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.”*

Chapter 10 – The Sardis Congregation

Rev 3:1 *And to the messenger of the congregation in Sardis, write: These things says the One having the seven spirits of Elohim, and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have the name that you live, and are dead.*

Rev 3:2 *Be watching, and establish the things which remain, which are about to die. For I have not found your works being fulfilled before YAHWEH.*

Rev 3:3 *Then remember how you received and heard, and keep, and repent. If, then, you do not watch, I will come upon you like a thief and you will not at all know what hour I come upon you.*

Rev 3:4 *You also have a few names in Sardis which did not defile their robes, and they shall walk with Me in white because they are worthy.*

Even though the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua was not stamped out, you can imagine how discouraged they must have been during this wicked time of the Inquisition by the Roman Church and government. It was not easy to live under such circumstances for not only decades, but centuries. However, although they had to back down some on their public evangelizing, they still wisely went on with their work in good character and judgment.

“Sismondi has thus traced the total extinction of the first reformation: The slaughter had been so exceptional, the massacres so universal, the terror so profound, and of so long duration that the Popish Church appeared to have completely obtained her object. The worship of the reformed Albigenses had everywhere ceased. All teaching had become impossible. Almost all the doctors of the new

*Congregation had perished in a frightful manner; and the very small number of those who had succeeded in escaping the crusaders, had sought an asylum in the most distant regions, and were able to avoid new predicaments, **only by preserving the most absolute silence respecting their doctrines and their ancient destinies.***

*The private believers, who had not perished by the fire and the sword, or who had not withdrawn by flight from the scrutiny of the inquisition, knew **that they could only save their lives by burying their secret in their own bosoms.** For them there were no more sermons, no more prayers, no more (open) Christian communion, no more instructions. The triumph appeared so complete, that the persecutors, in the confidence of their victory, became divided, made war reciprocally against each other, and were ruined. But this momentary interruption to the persecution served only to render it the more destructive. The momentary toleration in Albigenses recalled thither the preachers who had escaped the first massacre, and involved them all in a second.”* ¹²⁴

However, the persecution would continue for some time in now what would be the beginning of the Sardis era of the congregation, spanning from around 1350-1380 A.D. till around 1620 A.D. While the Albigenses were being mercilessly persecuted in France, the Waldenses of Piedmont, at this time, were actually experiencing somewhat of a relative quiet. However, around the year 1400 A.D. persecution also came to them.

“While the Albigenses in France were exposed to all the horrors of persecution, the Waldenses in the valleys of

Piedmont enjoyed a considerable portion of tranquility. Their light continued all that time to shine amidst the darkness which surrounded them; and although the inquisitors frequently dragged several of them to the stake, yet no open attack was made on their country till the year 1400.

In that year, however, a violent outrage was committed on those who inhabited the valley of Pragela. Their invaders chose the month of December, when the mountains were covered with snow, for accomplishing their horrid work, when, falling unexpectedly on these peaceable people, they put many of them to the sword, and took possession of their caves. Those who escaped this massacre fled to the highest mountains of the Alps, the mother carrying the cradle in the one hand, and in the other leading those little children who were able to walk. Pursued by their persecutors, many of them were overtaken and murdered, without respect to age or sex, while those who avoided the sword of their enemies were either starved to death, or perished among the snow. Eighty children were next morning discovered bereft of life, having fallen a prey to the inclemency of the season; many mothers were found in the very agonies of death! Of the few who escaped, some fled to Calabria, and others sought an asylum in Provence, where they were pursued by the cruel hand of persecution.

This outrageous attack made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the Vaudois; and although a season of some repose followed, yet for more than a century afterwards, they were wont to speak of it as a dreadful scene which was still present to their view; and from generation to generation, they continued to relate, with deep impressions of horror, that

sudden surprise which had occasioned so much affliction and calamity among them.” ¹²⁵

Although the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua went through many sufferings for their faith, there were the times that Yahweh mightily intervened and protected them for their amazing faith and courage during those trying times.

“In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a decree, or bull of extermination, against the Vaudois people of the Piedmont valleys of Italy. Their consistent refusal to accept Romish doctrine, long prior to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, had made them objects of papal hatred.— The Inquisition had been refused permission to set up its machinery of espionage and torture in the valleys, the people turning its agents back by force of arms. This brought the papal bull ordering total destruction.

Troops came in thousands, eighteen thousand regulars of France and Piedmont, joined by a host of plunderers and brigands who were after the spoils of the happy valley homes. Some of the accounts of deliverance that saved the people from total destruction in this first general persecution of the Vaudois, read like stories from the days of Israel.

The campaign of massacre, watched by a legate named Cattanee (or Cataneo), in behalf of the Pope, began in an attack on the valley of Angrogna. The enemy was breaking the line of the Vaudois defense, at a point behind which were the women and children and aged. Dr. Mauston says:

“Seeing their defenders yield, these families threw themselves upon their knees with many tears; women, and children, and old men united together in fervently crying, ‘O

Die aijutaci! O Adonai help us! O my Elohim, save us!’ This cry of prayer was the only cry which broke from their heart in their distress, and arose to heaven. But their enemies laughed at it, and seeing this company upon their knees, hastened their advance. My fellows are coming — they are coming to give you your answer,’ exclaimed one of their chiefs, surnamed ‘The Blace of Mondovi,’ because of his swarthy complexion; and immediately, joining bravado to insult, he raised the visor of his helmet, to show that he was not afraid to encounter the poor people whom he insulted. But at that moment a steel-pointed arrow, let fly by a young man of Angrogna, named Peter Revel, struck this new Goliath with such violence that it penetrated into his skull, between his eyes, and laid him dead.

Histroop, struck with terror, fell back in disorder; a panic seized them; the Vaudois took advantage of the moment, and impetuously rushed forward, hurling their adversaries before them, and, eagerly continuing the pursuit, swept them into the very plain, where they left them vanquished and dispersed. Then, re-ascending to their families so miraculously delivered, they likewise flung themselves upon their knees, and all together gave thanks to the Elohim of armies for the victory which they had just gained.”¹²⁶

But the invaders were by no means defeated; they had only been turned back and angered. On the next day they came, fiercer than ever. Let’s hear the story from Wylie:

“It seemed impossible for their prey to escape them. Assembled on this spot, the Waldensian people had but one neck and the papal soldiers, so Cataneo believed, were to sever that neck at a blow. “But Elohim was watching over the

Vaudois. He had said of the papal legate and his army, as of another tyrant of former days, 'I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will cause thee to return by the way which thou camest.' But by what agency was the advance of that host to be stayed? Will some mighty angel smite Cataneo's army, as he did Sennacherib's? No angel blockaded the pass. Will thunderbolts and hailstones be rained upon Cataneo's soldiers, as of old and Sisera's? The thunders slept; the hail fell not. Will earthquake and whirlwind discomfort them? No earthquake rocked the ground; no whirlwinds rent the mountains.

The instrumentality now put in motion to shield the Vaudois from destruction was one of the lightest and frailest in all nature; yet no bars of adamant could have more effectually shut the pass, and brought the march of the host to an instant halt. "A white cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, unobserved by the Peidmontese, but keenly watched by the Vaudois, was seen to gather on the mountain's summit, about the time the army would be entering the defile. That cloud grew rapidly bigger and blacker. It began to descend. It came rolling down the mountain's side; wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven — a sea of murky vapor. It fell right into the chasm in which was the papal army, sealing it up, and filling it from top to bottom with a thick, black fog. In a moment the host were in night; they were bewildered, stupefied, and could see neither before nor behind, could neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state bordering terror.

"The Waldenses interpreted this as an interposition of Providence in their behalf. It had given them the power of repelling the invader. Climbing the slopes of the Pra, and

issuing from all their hiding-places in its environs, they spread themselves over the mountain, the paths of which were familiar to them, and while the host stood riveted beneath them, caught in the double toils of the defile and the mist, they tore up huge stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down the ravine.

“The papal soldiers were crushed where they stood. Nor was this all; some of the Waldenses boldly entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked them in front. Consternation seized the Piedmontese host. Panic impelled them to flee, but their effort to escape was more fatal than the sword of the Vaudois, or the rocks that, swift as arrow, came bounding down the mountain. They jostled one another; they threw each other down in the struggle; some were trodden to death; others were rolled over the precipice, and crushed.”

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The early Waldenses were pacifists, but now around 1500 these Waldenses were willing to stand up and fight for their survival. However, as we have seen, not every story turned out with a heroic ending. Here is yet another story of the horrific evil that the Roman Catholic Church bestowed on the Waldenses during that time.

“No sooner had Albert received this infamous commission, than he proceeded with the French king’s lieutenant, and a body of troops, to the valley of Loyse. Aware of his approach, the inhabitants fled to their caves at the top of the mountains, carrying with them their children, and what was thought necessary for their support. The lieutenant immediately went in search of their places of retreat, which having found, he caused great quantities of wood to be placed at the entrance of the caves, and set it on fire. The

consequence was that four hundred infants were suffocated in their cradles, or in arms of their also deceased mothers, while multitudes were either precipitated over the rocks and dashed in pieces, or slaughtered by the brutal soldiery. Upwards of three thousand of the inhabitants of this valley perished on that occasion; and so effectually was the work of destruction accomplished, that it was afterwards peopled with entirely new inhabitants.” ¹²⁸

*“Francis I. having conquered Piedmont and Pope Paul III, who then filled the Papal throne, persuaded the parliament which that monarch had assembled at Turin, vigorously to proceed against the Waldenses, as “most pernicious heretics.” The consequence was that multitudes of the Vaudois were seized and committed to the flames. In vain did they petition the king to grant them the same privileges under his government which they and their forefathers had enjoyed under the house of Savoy. Both Francis and his parliament commanded them, under pain of death, to renounce their religion, and conform to the worship of the Popish church. The Waldenses, however, replied, “**That in what regarded their religious worship, they could obey no commands which interfered with the laws of Elohim, to whom they chose to be obedient in everything that concerned his service, rather than to follow the fancies and inclinations of men.**”*

In Calabria, especially, the Waldenses were subjected to the most cruel sufferings. A bull for their extermination was issued by the Papal see, and no mercy was shown to those who refused to be baptized by a Romish priest. “The pastors were carried in chains to Rome, some were starved to death in prison, others were tortured in the dungeons of the

*inquisition, after witnessing the utter destruction or dispersion of their flock; and two were burnt at the stake, to gratify the malignity of **Pope Pius IV, who could not be satisfied unless he saw with his own eyes the expiring agonies of the heretics, who had dared to question his infallibility.***” In short, the Waldenses of Calabria were wholly exterminated.” ¹²⁹

There is a quote that states ‘*power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely*’, and this is exactly what had taken place at this time around 1500 A.D. Not only were the Waldenses and the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua suffering horrific persecution, but the popes with insane, out of control power were killing anyone who got in their way. They were also collecting a major power base and estate from all the confiscated money and possessions of those they tortured and murdered. It was at this time, that, actually priests within the Vatican started to stand up against a power, which was fully out of control and having nothing to do with Yahweh or Yahshua, but simply an evil, satanic, power hungry monopoly.

*“The Reformation began as an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church, by priests who opposed what they perceived as false doctrines and ecclesiastic malpractice—**especially the teaching and the sale of indulgences or the abuses thereof, and simony, the selling and buying of clerical offices**—that the reformers saw as evidence of the systemic corruption of the Church's Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, which included the Pope.”* ¹³⁰

“Sixtus IV (1471–1484) established the practice of selling indulgences to be applied to the dead, thereby establishing a

*new stream of revenue with agents across Europe. Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) was one of the most controversial of the Renaissance Popes. He fathered seven children, including Lucrezia and Cesare Borgia, by at least two mistresses. Fourteen years after his death, the corruption of the papacy that Pope Alexander VI exemplified—particularly the sale of indulgences—prompted Martin Luther to write The Ninety-Five Theses, which he nailed to the door of a church at Wittenberg in Saxony.”*¹³¹

*“Martin Luther brought his 95 theses and nailed them to the Vatican door in the year 1517 A.D. Luther was a German monk, former Catholic priest, professor of theology and seminal figure of a reform movement in 16th century Christianity, subsequently known as the Protestant Reformation. He strongly disputed the claim that freedom from Elohim's punishment for sin could be purchased with monetary values. He confronted indulgence salesman Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar, with his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517. His refusal to retract all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the Pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Emperor.”*¹³²

This is how despicably corrupt the Roman Catholic Church had become, to not only torture and murder any opponent to Catholicism, but to also make their members pay indulgences (money to remove their sins), making a complete mockery of Yahshua's sacrifice and also their repugnant false religion; even collecting indulgence money for the dead, telling the ignorant unsuspecting people that this money would grant the dead relative entrance into

heaven from purgatory. Martin Luther, a former priest, had his own reasons behind the Reformation and actually believed in the Sabbath day, but did not include this important commandment in his theses.

*“The Sabbath Recorder of June 11, 1868, says: “In 1552 many in England were known as Sabbatarians.” Luther himself, while it is said believed in and practiced the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, did not prescribe it in his articles of faith for his followers, in the copies that we now have access to. However, it has been said that in his original thesis, **Luther advocated the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath**, but that his colleagues objected on the grounds that it was an unpopular doctrine, which would have a tendency to repulse supporters of the Reformation who were not as pious as they should have been, but were of great assistance against the usurpations of the papacy. Luther in his works has written of his belief in the Sabbath as follows: “The Sabbath was before the Law of Moses came, and has existed from the beginning of the world. Especially have the devout, who have preserved the true faith, met together and called upon Elohim on this day.” — Luther’s Work, XXXV, p.330.”* ¹³³

The reality of the situation is that Martin Luther did believe in the fact that Saturday is the scriptural Sabbath day and should be observed by true believers, but Luther was also an anti-Semite who did not like Jews and felt the Sabbath was “*too Jewish*” for the Reformation and that it would have possibly caused some to not join in the Reformation due to that fact.

“As the Reformation gained traction, Luther had anticipated that more Jews would convert to his reconstituted form of Christendom. When such conversions failed to occur, Luther grew more acerbic toward the Jews. His Von den Jüden und ihren Lügen—in modern German spelling Von den Juden und ihren Lügen (On the Jews and Their Lies)—thus took its place among the most anti-Semitic treatises already identified with Rome and Constantinople.” ¹³⁴

*“In his later years, in deteriorating health, **Luther became increasingly antagonistic toward Jews, writing that Jewish synagogues and homes should be destroyed, their money confiscated, and liberty curtailed.** These statements and their influence on anti-Semitism have contributed to his controversial status.”* ¹³⁵

Remember, in 1517 it was still the height of the Inquisition, which officially did not end until 1834, and also remember that the Jews were only expelled from Spain by King Ferdinand 24 years earlier in 1492, the same year Columbus sailed to America. The anti-Semitism was high and there was nothing that was connected more to Judaism than the keeping of the 7th day Sabbath.

This also caused somewhat of a split in what was known as the Waldensian movement in France at this time. Some Waldenses wanted to compromise on some beliefs and join in with Luther and the Protestant Reformation, and others wanted to keep to the staunch beliefs that they held for the last almost 1500 years, and still others were starting to even compromise with the Roman Church. It should be noted that the Waldenses who were left in Piedmont never considered compromise, and actually either took martyrdom or fled to

Bohemia, Germany and Great Britain in the mid sixteenth century. Here is a letter from that time trying to persuade the brethren not to compromise.

“The Reformation from Popery, which was accomplished at that period, through the instrumentality of Zuinglius, Luther, Melancthon, and others, was hailed with joy by the Waldenses; and a friendly intercourse was immediately commenced, and uniformly kept up, between them and the Reformers. Some of the Waldensian pastors, of Provence, wrote to Ecolampadius, about the year 1530, for advice respecting the compliance of several of their flocks with the unscriptural practices of their Roman Catholic neighbors. To this communication, the Swiss Reformer returned the following remonstrance, which, for its sound and scriptural reasoning, deserves a place here. “Ecolampadius wishes the grace of Elohim, through Yahshua his son, and the holy spirit, to his well-beloved brethren in Yahshua, called Waldenses.

“I have heard, that from fear of persecution, you dissemble and conceal your faith; that you communicate with unbelievers; and that you attend abominable mass. Now with the heart we believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. But those who are afraid to confess Yahshua before the world shall find no acceptance with Elohim; for our Elohim is truth; and as he is a jealous Elohim, he cannot endure that any of his servants should take upon them the yoke of Antichrist. For there is no fellowship or communion between Messiah and Belial; and if you communicate with unbelievers, by going to their abominable masses, you will there hear blasphemies against the death and sufferings of Messiah. For when they boast,

that by means of such sacrifices they make satisfaction to Elohim for the sins both of the living and the dead, what naturally follows, but that Messiah, by his death, has not made sufficient expiation, and consequently that Messiah is not a Savior, and that he died for us in vain! If we participate in that impure table, we declare ourselves to be of one and the same body with the wicked; however contrary we may pretend it to be to our wills and inclinations. And when we say Amen to their prayers, do we not deny Messiah?

“What death ought we not to undergo, - what torture and torment ought we not to endure, - nay, into what abyss of woe and misery ought we not plunge ourselves, rather than by our presence to testify our consent to, and approbation of, the blasphemies of the wicked. I know that your infirmity is great. But those who have been taught that they were redeemed by the blood of Messiah ought to be courageous, and always to stand in awe of Him who can cast both soul and body into hell. And what? Is it enough for us to have preserved this life alone? Shall this be more precious to us than that of Messiah? And are we satisfied with having enjoyed the delights and pleasures of this perishing world? Are there not crowns laid before us, and shall we flinch and recoil? Who will believe that our faith was true and sincere, if it lacks zeal and ardor in the time of persecution? I beseech the Almighty to increase your faith.

“Surely it is better for us to lose our lives than to be overcome by temptations. And, therefore I beseech you thoroughly to consider this matter, for it be lawful for us to conceal our faith under the tyranny of Antichrist, it must be lawful for us to do so under that of the Turk; or you might worship, with Diocletian, at the altars of Jupiter or Venus;

and what then will become of our faith towards Elohim? If we do not give to Elohim that honor which is his due, and if our lives be nothing but dissimulation and hypocrisy, he will spew us out of his mouth. How shall we glorify Elohim amidst sufferings and tribulations, if we deny him? When once we have put our hand to the plough, we must not, brethren, look back; nor must we yield to the dictates and instigations of the flesh, which, by prompting us to sin, though it may endure many things which distress us in this world, it may at last suffer shipwreck in the haven.” ¹³⁶

We must remember at this point that not only had the Waldenses went through more than 1,000 years of persecution, but they also just lived through a great part of the Inquisition where up to two million of the true flock of Yahshua had been killed. With many Waldensian communities completely wiped out and other faithful brethren fleeing to more friendly territories, the alternative in the Protestant Reformation, or even compromising with Roman Catholicism seemed a viable alternative to the weak in faith brethren who were left behind.

When the faithful fled to the other areas, those weak of faith and afraid to leave their common confines, simply did not realize how much they were truly lacking in faith until it was too late, and instead of following their faithful leaders, those left behind simply got assimilated in other false groups. What a stark reality this may also prove to those left behind in end time Babylon.

As we have conclusively shown that the true remnant of the original Congregation of Yahweh was scattered over the earth from as far east as Armenia and even beyond, to

Western Europe between the 3rd and 16th centuries. And as the Inquisition grew against this remnant, commonly known in the 15th century as Albigenses, Catharists, Lollards, and Waldenses, these groups migrated to Bohemia, Austria, Holland, Germany, Hungary, and even as far as Great Britain. At this time, the true remnant of Yahshua's Congregation started to be called Anabaptists, and later on Seventh Day Baptists. The reason for this is because they firmly believed that a new convert must be re-baptized properly into the covenant of Yahweh, and did not accept the infant baptism that may have been done in Catholicism at birth.

The reason for the migration to northwestern Europe was quite simple, as the Church of England was gaining power and also different kings and dukes who did not acquiesce with the Roman Catholic Church, and even at times went to war with them, gave at least some religion or ethnic protection to the fleeing remnant. Henry the Eighth was a loyal Catholic until the Church refused him an annulment, and then, he broke off and started the Church of England and married 4 more wives. The friction between the newly formed Protestant religions with Roman Catholicism gave temporary protection to Yahshua's remnant Congregation only for a time, but soon the Protestants would also be a persecutor over the issue of the Sabbath Day. Luther also quickly started to attack Sabbath worshippers, like the Waldensian Anabaptists.

Martin Luther states, "Thus all other religious tendencies act, aside from the true doctrine of Scriptures, as Mohammed of the Turks, the Talmud of the Jews, as also our Anabaptists, are almost the same; all forsake and abandon the true works

*and life Elohim's Word requires and urges..." Luther goes on to state, "the fanatical revilers of the sacrament (Anabaptists) were for all practical purposes indistinguishable from the Jews..." Luther writes Against the Sabbatarians in 1538 and accuses the Anabaptists of (infant) circumcision and partaking in Jewish ritual. Luther was less tolerant of the Anabaptists than Jews since they "insinuate themselves upon the church and at the same time refuse to submit to its authority..." **Luther also signed a memo in 1536 assessing the death penalty to all Anabaptists.**" ¹³⁷*

The Protestant Reformation dealt with many of the pagan heresies that the Roman Catholic Church had adopted, such as Mary worship, purgatory, paying indulgences, etc., but the reason the true Congregation of Yahshua did not join in this movement was the fact that they were not keeping the all-important 4th commandment of honoring Yahweh the Creator on the Sabbath day (Saturday) and also they were not keeping the biblical Passover. The Anabaptist Waldensian remnant would have no compromise on such important issues; and these very same issues were the reason that the true Congregation of Yahshua went underground back in 360 A.D., and they were not going to give up on these truths now after almost 1200 years in the wilderness.

During the time from 360 until 1517 A.D. and the beginning of the Reformation, the main theme above everything else was rejecting Rome's authority as the legitimate assembly of Messiah, and then, rejecting all the pagan practices that go along with it. In doing so, as we have seen throughout this book, there were several main doctrines that the true remnant of Yahshua kept sacredly and would not

compromise an inch on, as they were the very core of their faith.

The most important point of Yahshua being the Son of Yahweh and Savior from our sins was never questioned by the true Congregation of Yahshua or the apostate, paganized Church of Rome. The only difference was that Rome added cultic, pagan theology into their doctrine including such adopted pagan practices as the trinity and Mary worship. Of course the true Congregation of Yahshua rejected such heresy. Also, Catholicism neither preached the conversion of the new believer into a new life through the imparting of the Holy Spirit, but simply physically paying money for sins.

But the main doctrinal point of contention, after we get past the point of Rome's falsely claimed authority, was the two most important signs of the New Covenant, baptism and the true Sabbath day, being the seventh day of the week (Saturday), not the eighth day Sunday. The Roman Church had adopted infant baptism and also worshipping on Sunday after what Constantine called *"the venerable day of the sun"*.

So, even though we will see shortly the literal geographical and communal connection between the Paulicians to Bogomils to Cathars and Albigenses to Waldenses and Lollards and Anabaptists, I believe it is of most importance to see that the main connection with these groups was also their pure original doctrine as the very sign that put one in covenant relationship with Yahweh, through the shed blood of His eternal Son Yahshua.

Also, and of equal importance, is to prove the one and only true continual line of succession from Yahshua and the Apostles until this day, by the fact that these newly called Anabaptists and Seventh Day Baptists were indeed the remnant of the Paulicians and Waldenses, respectably. The fact that the Anabaptists were indeed the continuation of the Paulicians and Waldenses is unquestionable according to the evidence of history.

Let's look at the many quotes that I will show to conclusively prove this point, so once we establish the clear undeniable line that they emerged from, then, we can get more into the relevance of their special history in the true remnant of Yahshua that the gates of hell could not prevail against.

"The Thonraki claim to have the apostolical tradition. They repudiated the sacraments and orders of the Grecizing Armenians as false. The archaic nature of their baptismal views proved by their agreement with Tertullian, who like them denounced infant baptism.

Deportation to Thrace of Paulitians of the Taurus, where they created the Bogomile Congregation. *The Crusaders met with Paulicians in Syria. First mention of them in Europe is Eckbert's description of Rhenish Cathars indicates a sect akin to the Paulicians. The Cathar ritual of Lyon is an Albigeous book and has affinities with the Paulicians ordinal; though in some respects it is more primitive. Did the Albigeous baptize with water? The common ritual use of the name Peter in the Albigeois Consolamentum and Paulician election service proves their common origin. Both sects had the same conception of the Congregation as the communion of saints.*

These Armenian refugees and colonists in Europe contributed to the Anabaptist movement states Wiszowaty on the origin of the Anabaptists and Unitarians.
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The above quote comes from Fred Conybear's book on "The Key of Truth", the oldest and most original manuscript that we have of the early apostolic believers and what they believed from their own mouths. I put this as the very first quote to show how important baptism was to this early, true remnant of Yahshua and also to show that it clearly states about the Anabaptists later coming out from this movement. Let's continue with the exhaustive, compelling evidence on the subject.

"The survival of this tenet among the Anabaptists of a later age (who seem to have been the Paulician Congregation transferred to Western Europe)." 139

"It was a congregation for which the seven councils had no significance; for were not these synods of men who, having abandoned the true baptism had lost their sacraments, their priestly orders, the apostolic tradition, nay, the very character and essentials of Christian communion (true Passover on 14th of Aviv)?

*Nor was it without martyrs, who were counted by hundreds of thousands, and whose slayers invariably took their orders from the persecuting clergy of old and new Rome; and when reasons of state or bigotry failed to exterminate this primitive Congregation among the ranges of the Taurus, **its members were departed by hundreds of thousands of Thrace.** There they throve for centuries, and they spread out their tenets into Bohemia, Poland, Germany, Italy, France, and*

even into our own England, must have helped not a little to prepare the ground for the Puritan Reformation.” ¹⁴⁰

“We have already glanced at the fortunes of the early Adoptionist Congregation. Driven out of the Roman Empire, we find it at the beginning of the fourth century and later encamped along the borders of the Greek and Latin worlds, in Mesopotamia, in Armenia and in Spain, in Bavaria, perhaps in Britain. It would seem also to have lingered on in the ancient Church of Phrygia. Perhaps it was the pressure from behind of the advancing tide of Islam, both in Spain and in the Taurus, which, in the centuries immediately following, hurled it back into the Roman Empire, there to take a fresh start.

Yet, it was not stamped out, but only driven underground. It still lurked all over Europe, but especially in the Balkans, in Lombardy, in Gascony, and along the Rhine. In these hiding-places it seems to have gathered its forces together in secret, in order to emerge once more into daylight when an opportunity presented itself. That opportunity was the European reformation, in which, especially under the form of Anabaptist and Unitarian opinion, this leaven of the early apostolic congregation is found mingling with and modifying other forms of faith. In engendering this great religious movement, we feel sure that the Bogomiles of the Balkan States played a most important part. They were the chief purveyors to Europe of Adoptionist tenets, partly imbibed from Paulician missionaries.” ¹⁴¹

“We shall afterwards show that the rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the continent

of Europe, small hidden Christian societies who have held many of the opinions of **the Anabaptists, have existed from the time of the apostles.** In the sense of the direct transmission of divine truth, and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probably that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Church.” ¹⁴²

“Erasmus (1466-1536) wrote of Sabbatarians in Bohemia early in the Reformation, ‘Descendants of the Waldenses in Bohemia and Holland formed material for Sabbath-keeping churches, which appeared with the dawn of the Reformation.’” ¹⁴³

“In the middle of the sixteenth century the breath of Protestantism from the north began to move over these Italian Colonies. The pastors who visited them told them of the synod which had been held in Angrogna in 1532, and which had been as ‘the beginning of months’ to the ancient church of the valleys. More glorious tidings still did they communicate to the Christians of Calabria. In Germany, in France, in Switzerland, and in Denmark the old gospel had blazed forth in a splendor unknown to it for ages. The Lamp of the Alps was no longer the one solitary light in the world: around it was a circle of mighty torches whose rays, blending with those of the old luminary, were combining to dispel the night from Christendom.” ¹⁴⁴

“That the Waldensian faith and worship existed many centuries before Protestantism arose is undeniable; the proofs and monuments of this fact lie scattered over all Europe; but the antiquity of the Waldenses is the antiquity of Protestantism.

The Church of the Reformation was in the loins of the Waldensian church ages before the birth of Luther; her first cradle was placed amid these terrors and sublimities, those ice-clad peaks and great bulwarks of rock. In their dispersions over so many lands over France, the Low Countries, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, England, Calabria, Naples, — the Waldenses sowed the seeds of the great spiritual revival which, beginning with the days of Wycliffe, and advancing in the times of Luther and Calvin, awaits its full consummation in the ages to come.” ¹⁴⁵

*“It appears to me morally certain that **the Seventh-day Baptists may trace through the Waldenses**, at least that portion of them who were never united to the Church of Rome, **an uninterrupted succession to the apostolic age.**”* ¹⁴⁶

*“The Anabaptists continued observing many of the same external points as the Waldensians, such as they viewed the Old Testament of great importance, retained the Waldensian translations of the Bible, which had the epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, continued to worship using the same forms of prayers and hymns, the same observations of the (Passover) once a year, the same view towards congregation buildings free from idols and crosses, simple plain dress... **all showing that the 16th century Anabaptists descended from the Waldensians.**”* ¹⁴⁷

“Says Dr. William R. Williams: “Amid the sufferers under Alva, when the Netherlands were so drenched with human gore, multitudes were of our faith; and they had their share in that land in early versions of the Scriptures for the general use of the faithful. ...Indeed, many of the Holland Mennonites hold the Waldenses to have been the first

*propagandists on Holland soil, of these views, in their flight northward from persecution in France and Italy. **It has been said by one of the early Mennonite writers that the oldest families of the Mennonites, in certain towns of Holland, had names of Waldensian origin, and claimed to be the progeny of such exiled forefathers.***"¹⁴⁸

A movement of Anabaptists, or Mennonites, moved to Holland.

*"We have now seen that the Baptists who were formerly **called Anabaptists and in later times, Mennonites were the original Waldenses**, and have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin.... **The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses**, who were driven by persecution into various countries' and who during the latter part of the 13th C. fled into Flanders, and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand."*¹⁴⁹

*"Turning more directly to the subject, **that the Anabaptists are the continuation of the Waldenses** and of others which were Waldenses under other names, says Dr. A. H. Newman: "Has incidentally shown that the relation between the Romanic and the German Waldenses was more intimate than has been supposed by Herzog, Dieckhoff and Preger, and that they were practically identical in faith and practice. ...Haupt has also demonstrated the fact that all German Bibles printed before the reformation were derived from this Waldensian version, three of the editions having been completely Waldensian."*¹⁵⁰

“Thus harassed and distressed, these afflicted people were ready to submit to almost any terms, for the sake of gaining new friends and protectors; and one company after another of those who had been driven into exile, and were settled in Bohemia, Germany, and the Netherlands, became associated, as an incipient measure, and in the end were amalgamated with, the Reformed or Presbyterian party, under the direction of Calvin and Zuinglius. Of the fact of this union of the Waldenses with the Reformers there can be no dispute.” ¹⁵¹

“Bohemia was once the headquarters of those Waldenses who had been driven from the valleys by persecution. Later it became the main headquarters for the Swiss Baptists, namely Hutterites (Mennonites).” ¹⁵²

“The modern Mennonites affirm that their predecessors were the descendants of the Waldenses.” ¹⁵³

So we have named roughly 15, mostly independent sources, all confirming the fact that the Anabaptists, or Seventh Day Baptists, also having break off branches such as Mennonites and Hutterites, all go back to some form of Paulician or Waldensian origin. This is undeniable as clearly the Paulicians and Waldenses traveled to these areas in laying new mission fields and the historical record most conclusively shows that all of these groups do indeed have one common origin, and as this book has proven well beyond a reasonable doubt, that origin was the very Congregation that Yahshua Messiah started and ordained the 12 Apostles to take to the whole inhabitable world.

The fact that these early original Anabaptists were also Sabbath keepers is also clearly evidenced by their very own histories and I will show this with a quote by Dr. Francis White (a bishop of Eli in 1635) as follows:

“They who maintain the Saturday Sabbath to be in force, comply with the Anabaptists.” ¹⁵⁴

The early Anabaptist movement started in two directions; it had those who were more sympathetic toward Luther and Protestantism, and it had the older purer form of the original faith started through the Paulicians/Bogomils and Waldenses.

At first, these two did not collide head to head as both were still reeling from the Spanish/Roman Inquisition, but it did not take too long until Luther’s anti-Semitism made a clear distinction that any true believer holding firm to the Sabbath tradition would not have any association with Luther.

The Sabbatarian strongholds became Austria, Bohemia, southern Germany, Switzerland, and even, as mentioned, to Hungary, Holland and even the Netherlands.

*“Some refugees from Tyrol valley gave this account of themselves to citizens of Coire in Switzerland in 1685: They were “a remnant of the old Waldenses. They worshiped neither images nor saints, and they believed the sacrament (of the Lord’s Supper) was only a commemoration of the death of Messiah; and in many other points they had their opinions different from those of the Church of Rome. **They knew nothing of either Lutherans or Calvinists**; and the Grisons, though their neighbors had never heard of this nearness of theirs to the Protestant*

*religion.” In 1603 an explanatory declaration was made by the Waldenses in refutation of the false accusation of the Romanists against them. “It begins by stating, that, **from time immemorial, and from generation to generation, the same doctrines and religious profession had been maintained by their predecessors** in the Marquisate of Saluces.” ¹⁵⁵*

This quote clearly shows that this remnant from the Tyrol valley in Austria was indeed a remnant of the Waldenses. It also shows that these Anabaptists were not connected to Martin Luther in any way and were evidently separatists to the mainstream Protestant movement under him.

This is important because an important leader called Andreas Fischer stemmed from this very congregation in Tyrol and continued to be a mighty voice, not only for the Anabaptists as a whole, but in particular, in the promotion of the seventh day Sabbath as a binding commandment on the true followers of Yahshua.

“Andreas Fischer was an active leader and missionary in the cause of Sabbatarian Anabaptism in East Central Europe during the fourth decade of the sixteenth century. When attention is focused, however, only on East central Europe, the image of Fischer as a marginal figure disappears. Anabaptists research has centered mainly on the Hutterian Brethren in this part of Europe overshadowing the wide diversity of Anabaptist opinion there during the earliest decades of the Reformation. Their movement was fed mainly by refugees from the Tyrol. They were the main beneficiaries of the disbanding of other groups in the area, such as that of Andreas Fischer.” ¹⁵⁶

Andreas Fischer, with a man by the name of Oswald Glaidt, worked together in this region with the fleeing remnant of the Waldensian movement and used it as a training base to send missionaries to other areas of Europe such as Germany, Bavaria, Bohemia, and even Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

“Fischer and his followers were doggedly pursued by the authorities in Slovakia, first by the representatives of King John Zapolya and later by those of Ferdinand of Austria. This extreme persecution precluded the natural growth that the movement might have had. But in the sources relating to the 1530s, Fischer’s Anabaptism appears as the only viable Reformation alternative to Lutheranism.” ¹⁵⁷

“Fishcher started the Sabbatarian Anabaptists in Silesia in late 1527 or early 1528. By that time Fischer was recognized as an educated man and a leader of the Anabaptist congregation(s) in the area of Liegnietz.” ¹⁵⁸

“Glaidt was born in Cham, in the Upper Palatinate in Germany. He was trained in theology and originally was a monk, probably a “barefooter” that is, a Franciscan. In the early 1520s Glaidt got involved in the religious reform and worked as a Lutheran in Leoben, Styria and all of Austria in 1525, Glaidt moved on to Moravia, and worked, along with several other “evangelical” parties such as the Bohemian Brethren.” ¹⁵⁹

Notice that Glaidt went to **Moravia** and worked with the **Bohemian** Brethren; these are again two strongholds of Waldenses mentioned by many historians that we have quoted in this book, again, conclusively connecting the Waldenses to the Anabaptists.

“Anabaptism as a whole gained its largest hearing among the Germanic people of Europe. Among these people, new research has distinguished three main fountainheads of Anabaptism-the Swiss, the South German – Austrian, and the Dutch-among which the dissimilarities are as instructive as the similarities. The early Anabaptist movement in Lower and Upper Austria, with the provincial capitals of Vienna and Linz respectively, is seen as part of the South German movement. As the Austrian Anabaptist refugees (including some from the Tyrol) moved into Moravia after 1530, the unique South German characteristics began to cross-fertilize with Swiss Biblicism.” ¹⁶⁰

So we can unmistakably see that not only did these groups start as remnants of the Waldensian and Paulician missionaries, but they also worked together, and although they may have had separate administrations, they were clearly all united as one body. As we mentioned above, Tyrol, Austria was a transit route for these leaders and elders passing through, and although they may have been out of the immediate confines of the Pope himself, they certainly were not out of the confines of persecution. So, as happened to their Waldensian predecessors before them, they also had to endure great suffering for the true word of Yahweh.

“The Hapsburgs became alarmed quite early about the spread of Anabaptism in their domain. From 1527 on, Ferdinand issued one mandate after another to check the spread of this “criminal” movement. Enforcement of these mandates was in the hands of roving constables on horseback. When even the brutal methods of these constables did not check the spread of this movement, enforcement was given over to “professional” Anabaptist-

hunters of the likes of the infamous Dietrich von Hartitsch, appointed by Ferdinand himself. These Anabaptist-hunters acted outside of any civil law and simply executed suspects on sight, without trial or chance to appeal. Their favorite method was beheading.

The mandates of Ferdinand were reinforced by the imperial diet of Speyer in 1529. His bestial treatment finally crushed the Anabaptist movement in Austria. The demise of the movement can be symbolically dated with the destruction of its backbone, the congregation in Linz. In that terrible year of 1529, two Linz elders and at least 75 other persons were executed.

Although executions for the crime of Anabaptism were reported as late as 1605, by the early 1530's a sizeable percentage of the Austrian Anabaptists had been executed, and an even greater number had made their way toward the more tolerant areas of Moravia. From 1530 onward, it was impossible, to have anything like a permanent Anabaptist congregation in Upper and Lower Austria, where Hapsburg influence was strongest among the nobles. These areas became for Anabaptists only dreaded transit routes between the Tyrol and Moravia." 161

Yes, the mission ground for the Waldenses may have been on new soil, and now with the Reformation, even being referred to by a new name (Anabaptists); however, the severe persecutions and suffering continued. Now let's continue the story of Oswald Glaidt and Andreas Fischer as they stand strong in faith for the true word of Elohim.

*“There is definite source information substantiating the arrival of Oswald Glaidt in Silesia (Poland) in late 1527 or early 1528. At that time, there was likely already an existing congregation of Anabaptists in or around the town of Liegnitz. It is also likely that Glaidt brought with him some refugees fleeing persecution from Austria proper, where Glaidt was last seen before his arrival in Silesia. It is likely but not certain that Andreas Fischer was among this group of refugees. In any case, Fischer was in Silesia at that time as a coworker of Glaidt’s, and together they assumed the leadership of the Antibaptist’s community there. They brought with them not only the teaching of adult baptism but also new emphasis on the Decalogue and with that **the literal observance of Saturday/Sabbath worship**. Thus, the stage was set for the encounter between the Sabbatarian Anabaptists and the Schwenckfelders.”* ¹⁶²

Schwenckfeld was a Lutherist who had parted with Luther over the pagan doctrine of Transubstantiation, which is a Catholic doctrine stating the unleavened waver and wine at Passover, or in their case, Easter, literally becomes the body of Messiah. This, as we mentioned, was about as pagan as you can get, even with the Catholic priest saying over the symbols in Latin the words “*hocus pocus*”. So, Luther holding on to this false pagan belief, as well as Christmas, Easter, and the rest to avoid any hint of Jewishness, would not observe the true Sabbath and Holy Days, clearly showed that truth was not his number one motive in the Reformation and caused a split with Schwenckfeld.

Schwenckfeld, however, was also not a true reformer and actually was born of noble birth that dated back to the thirteenth century. He worked as a court advisor to several

dukes and princes and his motive in entering the Reformation seemed to be somewhat more political than substantial. There was now a considerable amount of Anabaptist brethren forming in Silesia, Poland and Schwenckfeld was trying to persuade the new believers against the 4th commandment of keeping the 7th day Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) sanctified.

Schwenckfeld and Glaidt then wrote several papers back and forth trying to persuade each other to their point of view. Here is a sample of the 36 points that Glaidt wrote to Schwenckfeld in defense of the true Sabbath day.

- “1. One has a duty to celebrate the Sabbath, Saturday, because it is the word, will, and commandment of Elohim. (Ex 20)*
- 2. The Decalogue is the basis for the moral law, and therefore Sabbath worship is part of the moral law.*
- 3. There are not eight or nine commandments but ten. It cannot be said that some should be kept while others can be forgotten.*
- 4. The Sabbath commandment is one of the strong commandments.*
- 5. One who does not live according to the moral law, i.e., the Decalogue, lives a godless life.*
- 6. The Sabbath was celebrated by the patriarchs, even by Adam at creation (Ex 16).*
- 7. Abraham “kept the commandments” (Gen 26: 5) and therefore also the Sabbath. The Sabbath is part of a long oral tradition that predates even the written form of the Decalogue.*
- 8. One of the arguments given against observing the Sabbath is that if the Sabbath is binding, then circumcision*

also is binding. But circumcision is under the ceremonial law (priestly law). Circumcision then, unlike the Sabbath is not binding.

9. the Greek phrase “en meri eortis” used in Colossians 2:16 excludes from Paul’s judgment the biblical Sabbath.

10. The law says “Do not murder”. None would argue that this law is no longer in effect, nor would anyone argue that simply not to murder is an attempt at “works righteousness”.

11. Yahshua taught us to keep the commandments, and he must have meant to include the Sabbath commandment.

12. Yahshua did not abolish the Sabbath by performing his miracles on that day. Rather, he honored the Sabbath by choosing just that day to perform miracles of healing.

13. If Yahshua of Nazareth had actually abolished the Decalogue, then he could not have been the true promised Messiah.

14. Adam was thrown out of Eden for violating the law. Therefore if people violate the law, they cannot hope to enter Paradise with Yahshua.

15. Just as the Sabbath was a sign to the Jew of old of the coming rest in the kingdom, so it remains a sign to Christians, who are also waiting for that kingdom.

16. Because the eternal rest is postponed, people should continue to keep the Sabbath.

17. The Sabbath was not a sign of the first coming of Messiah. It is rather a sign of the second coming.

18. The day of the Lord (Rev. 1) was not a Sunday. Sunday worship was introduced by the Popes.

19. But if the Sabbath is commanded even for animals, it cannot be seen as only spiritual.

20. The seventh year of rest in Leviticus 25 should be instituted along with the observance of the seventh day.” ¹⁶³

Schwenkfeld then had a man, by the name of Valentin Krautwald, continue in the writing debate on the issue of the Sabbath, but when Glaidt saw he was not making any headway, he gave the project over to Andreas Fischer who wrote the following to Krautwald about keeping the fourth commandment.

“There are Ten Commandments of Elohim which constitute the covenant. The Sabbath commandment is included in the Ten Words. Therefore, if one does not keep the Sabbath, one breaks Elohim’s covenant and only eight commandments remain. (Fischer probably had in mind here that to break any of the commandments willfully is to break automatically the first commandment as well. Fischer may also have been implying that the Christian disregard of the Sabbath commandment is to forsake the fifth commandment.)

Moses and the Old Testament prophets, as well as the apostles in the New Testament, all teach that one should keep the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath commandment is included here and therefore ought to be kept. The New Testament teaches that the Ten Commandments should be followed. This includes the Sabbath teaching. The Old and New Testaments speak with one voice in regard to the Decalogue. Messiah works in the heart of the believer the desire to keep the Sabbath. If one consults the Decalogue as given in exodus 20, one sees that the Sabbath commandment is one of the longest commandment’s of relative importance.

Faith in Messiah does not abolish the Law (Rom. 3: 31). On the contrary, through faith in Messiah we uphold the Law.

And this includes the Sabbath. Since even before Moses the patriarchs kept the commandments of Elohim, they must have kept the Sabbath; otherwise they would not have kept the commandments, i.e., the Decalogue. Therefore, Christians ought also to keep Sabbath. If you break even one of these laws, you are guilty of breaking the whole Law (Ja: 2: 10).

It is to be understood that when Paul or any of the other apostles in the New Testament repeated one or two of the Laws, they were actually referring to the whole Decalogue. (This argument of Fischer's parallels the argument that Yahshua's words in Mark 15:34 refer to the entire twenty-second Psalm)

Paul and all of the New Testament apostles held their meetings on the Sabbath. (In these references to Paul and the Apostles Fischer was trying to build parallels between the Jewish patriarchs and the Christian apostles. Their common ground, he believed, was the Decalogue.) While the Sabbath day is spoken of repeatedly in the bible, Sunday is not. If Sunday were spoken of as often as the Sabbath, said Fischer, he too would agree to keep Sunday.

We cannot know exactly what was in Crautwald's reply to Glaidt, but it is certain that Crautwald relied heavily on the charge that the Sabbatarian had simply lapsed back into Judaism.

Fischer replied: Christians and Jews have much in common theologically- they worship the same Elohim and insist that this Elohim is the only Elohim. Christians furthermore believe that "salvation has come through the Jews." But Christians

are not simple Jews. Nevertheless, it is a false distinction between Christians and Jews which is based on Sabbath versus Sunday worship. Christians should rather welcome Sabbath worship as another point of commonality between themselves and Jews.

Fischer began a series of arguments based on the history of the early congregation. His opening statement was that Messiah, the Apostles, and all of the earliest church fathers taught Sabbath worship.

Fischer repeated Glaidt's argument that "the popes instituted Sunday worship" but went on to give more detail. He stated that it was Pope Victor 1 (d. 198) who first instituted Sunday worship. Victor 1 did indeed argue vigorously that Easter day was a Sunday. His opponents were the Quartdecimans, led by the bishop of Ephesus, Polycrates. As Fischer probably saw it, it was Victor's insistence on a Sunday Easter that resulted finally in the Council of Nicaea's (A.D.324) endorsing the Sunday Easter and Sunday worship. It was in this context that Emperor Constantine issued the statement that "the day of rest should be the venerable day of the sun." The syncretist tendencies of Constantine are obvious here. Fischer's argument was that what was started by Victor was finished by Constantine. His mention of Pope Victor 1 is significant, because Victor was the first pope to take a Latin name.

In singling him out for special attention, Fischer was demonstrating a reaction against the Latinization of the church, which effectively cut the church off from its roots in Judaism. It was in this context that he raised the issue of the Sabbath. Fischer said, in effect, "Here you have on one side

what the Latin Church, through its popes and emperors, bids (worship on Sunday, the day of the pagan sun-god) and on the other side what the one true Elohim bids (Sabbath worship). All of the assemblies of Christians for many years after the time of the Messiah met on the Sabbath.” ¹⁶⁴

We have already amply showed that the true Congregation of Yahshua, after the reign of the Apostles, had many administrations throughout antiquity but was still one body. As we mentioned in some of the quotes above that some of the Waldenses at this time, in the mid 1500's, went to the Netherlands, Holland, and parts of Germany, Poland and even Russia. Let's read some about these remnants of Yahshua's true Congregation.

“The epithet of Semi-Judaizers’, which was applied as a term of reproach to a sect which flourished in Transylvania, Holland, and some parts of Germany, and even extended itself into Russia and Poland, in the latter part of the fourteenth and during the commencement of the fifteenth centuries, is of itself sufficient to show the Sabbatarian character of the people it was designed to distinguish. To Judaize, Judaizing, and Judaizers, being synonymous terms of reproach, or rather terms appellative, to the former to signify the action of sabbatizing, and the latter to designate the person by whom the Sabbath was thus observed.

Of this we have abundant testimony. The Council of Laodicea, in 360, passed a decree, in which Christians are reproved for Judaizing. "If any be found Judaizing, let him be anathematized," was the language of these pretended fathers of the church." Athanasius says, "We assemble on Saturday, not that we are infected with Judaism;" thus

repelling a charge which, in every age and country, has been affixed as a stigma to Sabbath-keepers.

*The first glimpse that I have been able to obtain of this sect is given by an old German author, whose works were published at Antwerp, in 1667. In speaking of the religious parties and factions, which agitated the country, he says: "As to the people called by their enemies the Semi- Judaizers, **it is certain that they originated from a colony of the persecuted Waldenses**, who fled from Lombardy into Bohemia about 1450, and thence removed into Transylvania, which subsequently became their head-quarters. They say that the Law of Moses is binding upon Christians, and, accordingly, **solemnize divine service upon Saturday, or the old Sabbath.***

Will not Balaam, the son of Bozor, rise up in judgment against these men? For though, he loved the "wages of unrighteousness, he had enough of the fear of Elohim before his eyes to make him hesitate about cursing those whom Elohim had not cursed. These, however, are bold in cursing those whom Elohim has blessed, such as those who observe his Sabbath." ¹⁶⁵

"About 1500, a large company of the Semi-Judaizers moved into Transylvania, where they experienced many variations until the dawn of the Reformation in Germany. At this time they had many large and flourishing congregations, and being generally of the poorer class, and withal extremely peaceable and inoffensive in their manners, they were permitted by the princes and nobility of the country to live upon their estates without molestation. In 1565, they first appear in history as a people obnoxious to the rulers of

Transylvania ; and then it was chiefly in consequence of the success which had attended the propagation of their doctrines, and the conversion of Francis Davidis, superintendent of the Socinian churches in that country, to their creed.

Besides taking advantage of every opportunity to disseminate his own peculiar views, he boldly attacked the doctrines of the adverse party, disputing in person with the Socinian doctors, and contending that the ten commandments of the Decalogue were of a moral and immutable nature, and, consequently, that the seventh day of the week should be observed as a sabbatical rest. His views were highly offensive to Christopher Bathori, prince of Transylvania, who threw him into prison, where he died in 1579, at an advanced age. His doctrines thus brought into public and general notice, spread rapidly, and was embraced by several men of eminence. Of these the most distinguished were Christiern Francken, who disputed in public for three days with Faustus Socinus, upon the question of the Sabbath, and John Somers, Master of the Academy of Clausenberg. The violent contentions that ensued made a noise in all parts of Germany, and reached the ears of Luther, who wrote a book upon the subject.

In 1585, Jacob Paleologus, of the isle of Ohio, was burned at Rome for Judaism. At his trial, he declared that the Ten Commandments were moral and immutable in their nature. In other countries executions of a similar character took place; and the Semi-Judaizers were persecuted from region to region, like the vilest of mankind. Many of them fled into Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, where, mingling with the other dissenters from the established churches, they formed

congregations, and became quite numerous. Under the mild reign of Udislaus II., king of Poland, their numbers greatly increased, and many persons of wealth and respectability united in their communion.” ¹⁶⁶

“At Dorpat, in Livonia, there was a church containing five hundred members, where, in 1816, a small remnant still resided. From Poland they extended themselves into the middle and southern provinces of Russia, where they remained in a state of general peace until the year 1638, when a persecution began in Poland, through the instigation of the Catholics, extended to this country, and multitudes of dissenters of all ranks and classes were barbarously put to death. At this time the Semi-Judaizers were known in these countries under the name of Sabbaton, a name sufficiently descriptive of their peculiar and distinguishing tenets. In consequence of these terrible persecutions, they retired into the most obscure and unfrequented districts, and their history is wrapped in a great degree of obscurity, until the reign of the Empress Catherine II., Under her persecuting edicts, their churches were demolished, their congregations broken up and scattered, and the more eminent for piety and learning put to death by a variety of cruel tortures.

But a remnant was saved to perpetuate the truth. Since that period they have experienced many variations, but, upon all and every occasion, they have found their safety in obscurity. They are distinguished for their ardent love of the Holy Scriptures, for their opposition to the use of images or pictures, and for their uniformly pious and consistent conduct. They have no paid or salaried body of ecclesiastics. They consider the invocation of saints to be idolatry; a circumstance that renders them highly obnoxious to the

Russian priests. They only admit professing believers to the rite of baptism.

In 1824, a large community of these Christians were found by a celebrated French traveler settled on the banks of the river Moskwa. They numbered several thousand, and wore the Armenian costume, which people they strongly resembled in manners and customs. He gives as their peculiarities that they accounted as no better than fable whatever was preached without Scripture proof, and affirm that the traditions of the (Catholic) church are no better than the traditions of the Pharisees. They look upon a church built of stone as no better than any other building; neither do they believe that Elohim dwells there. They say that to suppose that Elohim is found in churches, monasteries, and oratories, any more than in any other place, is limiting the divine majesty. Their prayers and sermons are extempore. Their ministers, like themselves, are generally mechanics or laborers; they admit all the sacraments instituted by Messiah, but none others. They regard the Ten Commandments as moral and immutable, and, moreover, are conscientious observers of the old Sabbath, or Saturday.”¹⁶⁷

What an amazing and interesting remnant of Yahshua's Congregation; and the fact that they wore Armenian clothes gives the probable impression that they were actually a remnant from the ancient Paulicians. Let us continue with this fascinating group.

“All testimonials concur in stating that their numbers are considerable, but that, through fear of a recurrence of persecution, they courted obscurity ; being content with the

humblest stations, and only seeking to keep the commandments of Elohim and the faith of Yahshua. "Of the sect called Sabbaton, who reside in Russia," says Voltaire, "some say one thing and some another. **It is evident, however,**" he continues, **"that they originated from the Vaudois,** who fled before the Crusaders into Germany, Bohemia, and Poland, and thence into the imperial territories. They pay great attention to the Bible, and but little to the priests, for which reason, probably, they have been so hated by the latter."

Again, he observes, "that it is quite impossible to ascertain their numbers, or the proceedings of their meetings, since, through fear of persecution, they keep both entirely secret." A Russian historian testifies to the same. "I have no means of determining the numbers of the sect denominated Sabbaton, as they have been estimated by various authorities from 10,000 to 100,000. It is certain, however, that they are harmless, simple, and inoffensive in their lives, and that they avoid all publicity, having a good reason for so doing." "I have been credibly informed," says the Rev. Joseph Wolfe, in private correspondence, " that the Sabbatarians in Russia are quite numerous, and are called Sabbaton." ¹⁶⁸

And once again, to solidify the fact of these Sabbaton who were called semi-Judaizers were remnants from the Waldenses let's see the quote below:

*"In my foregoing statements I have been governed entirely by the language and opinions of the writers from whom I derived my information, and **who are almost unanimous in supposing that the Semi-Judaizers of Bohemia and***

Transylvania were descendants of the primitive Waldenses." ¹⁶⁹

And of the true remnant followers of Yahshua in Holland we know the following:

"Here I would remark, that the Sabbatarians in Europe, at this period, were engaged in a controversy, - as sabbatical statutes had been abrogated, and consequently that, under the present dispensation, it was a matter of perfect expediency, whether or not any day of rest was observed. On the contrary, the Sabbatarians maintained that a Divine law could only be abrogated by its institutor that the law of the Sabbath had not been so abrogated, and consequently, that it must be still in force. SABBATARIANS IN HOLLAND. appealed to the Scriptures ; the opposite party appealed to the sword : and though the arguments of the former could never be answered in a satisfactory manner, their upholders could be hushed in death or driven into exile. One of the most eminent and learned men of this age, was a Sabbatarian, and a bold advocate of Sabbatarian views. I refer to Grotius, who wrote and published a book, in which he proved that the Ten Commandments are moral and immutable, and consequently the law of the Sabbath is still binding. This book was condemned in the celebrated council convened at Dort in 1618, and its author denounced in the severest manner. But, however, much this distinguished man contributed to support the Sabbatarian cause, he was certainly not its founder.

A Catholic historian, in treating of the Anabaptists in Holland, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, remarks, that, " these heretics, through the instigation of the devil, for

their overthrow, were divided among themselves, part teaching one thing, and part another ; for, though all unanimously rejected the holy sacraments of the church, and refused to obey its ordinances, a certain set were for going back to Moses for a Sabbath, in which matter, they went so far as to form congregations, and hold meetings on the seventh day."

Again, "The followers of Moses being chiefly among the poorer classes, they escaped for a long time the notice of the civil authorities, and so greatly increased in numbers, that they had teachers and congregations in all the principal cities of Holland, but when the persecutions broke out, some fled, others conformed, and their meetings were generally broken. The Anabaptists had not the power of persecution; for their disposition, particularly in some cases, I would not be answerable.

"It is well known that the Lutheran princes and prelates practiced upon the Anabaptists all the cruelties to which themselves had been subjected by the Roman hierarchs. The names of Luther, Calvin, and Zuinglius, have been marked in this manner with a permanent stain. The conscientious Sabbatarians neither expected nor found sympathy in the bosoms of these men. Luther, who could send a circular to the princes of the empire, urging them to execute summary vengeance upon the heretical sect, and who bitterly denounced Carlostadt for sympathizing with them ; Calvin, who could smile with complacency over the tortures of those who refused to be governed by his own opinions ; and Zuinglius, who, when questioned regarding the fate of certain Anabaptists, replied, " Drown the Dippers," and what sympathy could be expected from princes whose

consciences were guided, and whose opinions were influenced by such men? and is it a wonder, that while the horrible scenes of the Inquisition were re-enacted in Protestant countries ; that while women and children, old men and maidens, indeed, a multitude of all classes, were being drowned, hung, burned, racked, and crowded into prisons to be literally starved to death ; is it a wonder, I say, that under all these circumstances, posterity is beginning to inquire whether they were reformers or deformers, and whether pure and undefiled religion was really benefited by their services ?

This inquiry appears the more rational, when we consider that it was for being baptized as baptism was practiced in the primitive church, and, so far as the Sabbatarians were concerned, for observing the Sabbath that Elohim had commanded, that these frightful persecutions were carried on. Although many Sabbatarians doubtlessly perished, the name of only one martyr known to have been of that faith has been preserved. This was Barbary Von Thiers, who had been baptized by a Sabbatarian minister named Stephen Benedict. At her examination, she declared her rejection of Sunday and the holydays of the church, but said that "the Master Elohim had commanded rest on the seventh day," in this she acquiesced, and it was her desire, by the help and grace of Elohim, to remain as she was, for it was the true faith and right way in Messiah. At the time when the Armenian schism was creating such a great excitement in Holland, the Sabbatarians appear to have become amalgamated, at least to a certain extent, with that people. Both were equally obnoxious to the state, and that of itself would have created sympathy between them.

It is well known that Grotius embraced the Armenian tenets. Maurice, at that time the reigning prince, exerted his utmost efforts to crush both parties. Inquiries were set on foot with all the rigors of the Inquisition. The suspected were tortured not so much to make them criminate themselves, as to betray their friends and associates. Some were beheaded, and others escaped into foreign countries. Of the latter class was Grotius, who, being condemned to perpetual imprisonment, escaped his doom by flight. Their houses were demolished, their property confiscated, and every measure that tyranny and malice could invent, was exerted for their extirpation. Partially, at least, these efforts were attended with success, and since that period few Sabbatarians have been found in that country.” 170

I think it is evident by the factual history that we are reading that the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther was not much better than, and just about as heretical as the Roman Catholic religion. And what would you expect as one came out of the other and Luther was formerly a Catholic monk.

There has only been one true body of sanctified believers since the days of the Apostles, and that true Congregation that started with Yahshua in 30 A.D. needed no reason to reform or protest from, but simply tried to stay faithful to the commandments of Yahweh and the faith of Yahshua in spite of the Roman Catholics and Protestants and their pogroms against them. They struggled through enormous adversity; but praise Yahweh, there was always a faithful remnant that fought till death to hold on to their cherished truths and doctrine, and to be able to have it handed down to His true remnant Congregation of today. Also at this time many believers had made their way up to Great Britain where there

had been a congregation of true believers going all the way to the Apostles' time. There is an apocryphal book called "Acts 29" which states the Apostle Paul went to Great Britain called Britannia in that day to preach.

***“Acts 29** And Paul, full of the blessings of Messiah, and abounding in spirit, departed from Rome, determining to go to Spain, for he had proposed to go there for a long time, and also from there to Britain. For he had heard in Phoenicia that some of the children of Israel, about the time of the Assyrian captivity, had escaped by sea to "the Isles afar off" as spoken by the prophet, and called by the Romans, Britain And the Almighty commanded the gospel to be preached to all the nations of the gentiles, and to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And no man hindered Paul; for he testified boldly of Yahshua before the tribunes and among the people. He took with him certain brethren which were with him at Rome, and they boarded a ship, and many people were gathered together from the towns and villages, and the hill country; for they had heard of the conversion of the apostle, and his many miracles. And Paul preached mightily in Spain and great multitudes were converted, for they perceived that he was an apostle sent by Elohim.*

And when leaving Spain, Paul and his company found A ship in Armorica, which was sailing to Britain, they sailed along the south coast until they reached a port called Raphinus. Now when it was known that the apostle had landed on their coast, great multitudes of the inhabitants met him, and they treated Paul courteously and he entered in at the east gate of their city, and stayed in the house of a Hebrew, one of his own nation. The next day he came to Mount Lud and the people thronged the gate, and

assembled in the Broadway, and he preached Messiah to them, and they believed the word and the testimony of Yahshua.” ¹⁷¹

The fact of the Apostle Paul preaching in Britain is also confirmed by the following author:

“Venantius Fortunatus, A. D. 560, says, “St. Paul passed over the ocean to the Island of Britain, and to Thule, the extremity of the earth.” ¹⁷²

There is also a written history about where the Apostles went, such as Cave’s “Antiquities Apostolicae”, which states that Peter also went to Great Britain and there were displaced Israelites already living there. Let’s look at a few more historical quotes to show that true believers of Yahshua were indeed living in Great Britain long before the Waldenses or Anabaptists came there.

“About sixty years after the ascension of our Lord, Christianity was first introduced into Britain, and many of the nobility, as well as those of inferior birth, were happily converted. As it can be proved that, at this early period, the seventh day was observed by the Christians in general, we may conclude that these primitive churches were Sabbatarian.

The British Christians experienced various changes of prosperity and adversity, until about the year 600, when Austin, the monk, with forty associates, was sent hither to subject the island to the dominion of Rome. Various ancient authors might be quoted to prove the Sabbatarian character of the English at this period. In the Biography of Austin,

published in the Lives of the Saints, we are told that he found the people of Britain in the most grievous and intolerable heresies, being given to Judaizing, but ignorant of the holy sacraments and festivals of the (Catholic) church.”

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After Austin returned to Rome it was determined what must be done to convert these true believers to conform to the Roman Church. Here is the result of what happened.

“The author then goes on to relate the prodigies wrought in their conversion. The terms of conformity proposed to these Christians by Austin related, among other things, to the observation of Easter and the festivals of the Romish church. A division among the people immediately ensued, and the different branches of the church were designated as the old and the new. The old or Sabbatarian Baptist church retained their original principles; while the new adopted the keeping of the Dominical day, infant baptism, and the other superstitions of the Romish hierarchy Benius' Councils, fol. 1448, says that a council was celebrated in Scotland in 1203, in which the initiation or first bringing in of the Lord's day was determined.” 174

So, we see that originally the true remnant of Yahshua's Congregation was a triangle of such with Italy, Britain, and Armenia being the three main hubs, and then, the believers would expand their regions to proselytize the Good News message to surrounding areas. And through antiquity as persecution clamped down, we see the migration of the one and true remnant of Yahshua would travel to areas where they knew the true apostolic faith was already firmly rooted for safety. It should be stated, however, and confirmed from the above quote that Britain was by far the smallest area of

believers until the 16th century at best, and the place where we have the least amount of historical records of these early believers before the 16th century.

Here is another quote showing that this small group of Sabbath keepers, who during the Reformation had come to be known as Anabaptists or Seventh Day Baptists, was indeed a remnant of the true Congregation of Yahshua through the line of the Waldenses as follows:

"In the thirteenth century the Waldenses had spread abroad through twenty-two countries of Europe, Britain being one."

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Most of our history of them is from other areas confirming their existence, but we only have actual scant history before the 16th century of their activities. With the dawn of the Reformation, however, it gave new opportunity for this small remnant in Britain to expound their beliefs and multiply.

"With the dawn of the Reformation a new spirit of inquiry was awakened in regard to the duties of practical godliness. Among the subjects for discussion we find the Sabbath early introduced and thoroughly examined. There was one class of reformers who, dwelling alone on the sufficiency of faith and the freeness of the Gospel, trembled at the thought of imposing rules upon men, and expressed a sort of holy horror at the term "law." Of this description were Luther and Calvin. It is well known that the former recommended to Christians "to ride, dance, and feast," on Sunday, rather than to submit to any infringement of the liberty of conscience. But there were others, who contended that an institution given in Paradise, and enforced by one of the commandments of the Decalogue, could not have been abolished; yet, finding

themselves in the dilemma of observing another day than that originally appointed, they maintained that the day had been changed so early as to justify us in allowing it.

*A third class contended that an institution so early given, and so often enforced, could not have been abolished or changed without explicit authority; that this explicit authority had never been given; and, therefore, **the seventh day of the week, and that only, should be observed.** Compared with the whole, the number who acknowledged the perpetuity and morality of the Sabbath, and manifested a sacred regard for either the first or the seventh day, was small. However, they were sufficient to prove that wherever the subject of the Sabbath has been considered, there has always been found those who, by precept and example, have witnessed for the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.”* ¹⁷⁶

This division continued, and in the early 1600's a group of Protestant ministers conspired to write information that the Sabbath was no longer binding on believers, and many during the Protestant Movement followed into Sunday worship. However, the true remnant of Yahshua kept strong and used this period to bring the Sabbath question to the fore-front of the heresy of Rome and now the daughter of Rome, the Protestant Movement, which in many ways followed in the Roman Catholic footsteps in paganism and political maneuvering.

“In 1595, a book was written and published by Dr. Bound, in which the morality of the Sabbath, and a change of the day, was advocated in quite a masterly manner. This excited a controversial spirit, and was soon followed by many others,

both for and against his view. The orthodoxal doctrine of the Church of England, by bishops and historians, then was, that the Sabbath had been abolished, and that the Lord's day, so called, was altogether another institution, which could not be enforced by the fourth commandment.” ¹⁷⁷

“Many true Sabbatarians, however, stood opposed to both these parties, maintaining not only the morality of the Sabbath, but the obligation to observe the seventh day of the week. A work supporting this view, from the pen of Theophilus Brabourne, appeared in 1628.” ¹⁷⁸

“About the same time, small dissenting parties began to organize congregations and to boldly maintain the worship of Elohim upon the Sabbath. Of these the Natton Congregation has been much celebrated. It is situated in the west of England, near Tewksbury, and about fifteen miles from Gloucester, thirty-five from Birmingham, and ninety from London. The first pastor of this church whose name has come down to us was Mr. John Purser. He is represented as a very worthy man, and a great sufferer for conscience, sake. Notwithstanding this wrong, it pleased Divine Providence to bless him abundantly in the little that he possessed. He became a respectable farmer, and lived at Ashton upon-Carrant, in the Parish of Ashchurch, in the county of Gloucester, during the reigns of Charles and James the Second. In common with other nonconformists, he experienced much oppression and great opposition on account of his religion.” ¹⁷⁹

“It is probable that Mr. Purser commenced his ministry in 1660, but did not receive ordination until some years later. In the meantime one Mr. Cowell was the chief preacher at

Natton, and an author of some eminence, having published a book entitled 'The Snare Broken'.

The Sabbatarians at this time were widely scattered. There was no meeting-house, and Mr. Purser opened his dwelling for that purpose. He also held meetings at various other private houses, in different places, by which those living at a distance were accommodated by his labors. It may be remarked, that although this worthy man steadily pursued the occupation of husbandry, and reared a large family, he faithfully served the congregation. While his hands were industriously employed, his meditations were upon things above, and upon these occasions he was highly favored with manifestations of the divine presence. His successor, Mr. Edmund Townsend, was plain and unobtrusive in his manners, but was highly respected for his candor and integrity. Soon after his ordination he took up his residence for a time with the Mill- Yard Church.” 180

The Mill Yard Congregation is known to be the oldest existing Sabbath congregation in the world, which started in the late 1500's. Frances Banefield, who wrote the book "Shem Asher", started a congregation called the Pinners' Hall Sabbatarian Congregation, and mentioned that they were one of three congregations in Britain at the time with the Mill Yard Congregation. It is also of most importance that this writing shows the very first congregation that I can find in the year 1574 using the sacred name of Yahweh and Elohim, although it is apparent they did not know the proper vocalization of it at that time as there is no letter 'J' in Hebrew, and Jehovah is an incorrect corruption of the true name of our Creator Yahweh.

"I find that the Pinnars Hall Sabbatarian church was established at Devonshire Square E. C., on March 1, 1574, and 1830 came to Mill Yard church to hold their services." The Pinnars Hall Sabbatarian church mentioned above was organized by Frances Banefield, who was a noted author and a gifted Hebrew scholar. He is the author of a book entitled Shem Acher, There is but one copy of this book on record, and it is found in the British Museum Library, London. On page 29 he says, "The final cause, or the great end, or ends, for which Jehovah (Yahweh) has formed his church.", he continues to use the term of Jehovah (Yahweh) and Elohim interchangeably, when speaking of the Old Testament congregation, and he brings forth evidence to show that the Congregation of Elohim of that day, like the Sabbath, is a continuation of the Congregation of Yahweh in the Old Testament." 181

It was originally stated that there were 11 congregations in the greater Britain area, but now we see in the late 1600's there were only three. This accounted because of the great divide on the Sabbath question that continued throughout the seventeenth century until great religious persecution by the King of England caused many of the true remnant of Yahshua's Congregation to set sail for the New World across the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the original Pilgrims made the decision to sail to the New World based on Sabbath persecution by the British King.

Many in the Sardis church joined in with Luther and that is why it is called a spiritually dead church. Yet, Scripture states that there are some in Sardis who kept their clothes white. Although these brethren were great of conviction and true to their faith, they were a relatively small sect, compared

to the overwhelming majority of Roman and Orthodox Catholics and the newly formed Protestants, which were already splitting into many different denominations. But the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua kept to the original tenets of their faith; as we get into the Philadelphia era of Yahshua's Congregation, we will see the blessing they receive for this, and an open door that had never been there before.

Let's continue this amazing journey of the true Congregation of Yahshua across the mighty Atlantic Ocean, and see how it started and continued in the New World until this present day, to confirm the words of our great Master and Savior about His Congregation that *"the gates of hell would not prevail against her."*

Chapter 11 – The Philadelphia Congregation

Rev 3:7 *And to the messenger of the congregation in Philadelphia, write: These things says the Holy One, the True One, "The One having the key of David, the One opening, and no one shuts; and shuts, and no one opens:" (Isa. 22:22)*

Rev 3:8 *I know your works. Behold, I have given a door being opened before you, and no one is able to shut it, for you have a little strength and have kept My Word, and have not denied My name.*

Rev 3:9 *Behold, I give out of the synagogue of Satan those saying themselves to be Jews, and they are not, but they lie. Behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they shall know that I loved you.*

Rev 3:10 *Because you kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial which is going to come upon all the world in order to try those dwelling on the earth*

We now come to what is mentioned as the Philadelphia era of Yahshua's Congregation. Of course Philadelphia means brotherly love, and this is what this era will be categorized from; explicit outward concern for their neighbors and righteous character exposed in their lives.

This congregation is also classified as '*having an open door that no man can shut.*' This does not mean that they were without trials, but this will be the very first congregational era that can freely bring the Good News of Yahshua and keep the commandments of Yahweh without open persecution of their retractors in the New World of America.

Let me state, though, that I fully recognize that remnants of the true Congregation of Yahshua still existed in Europe and also east to Armenia, and even as far as India, and some of these remnants even exist until this day. However, the growth and strength of the Congregation would now come from the free world of America.

There was another development at this point in history that happened in 1440 with the creation of the printing press. With this new form of printing books in mass production, it would stand as a great median to advance the Good News not only in America, but around the world.

As we come more into our modern day and a very important part of the history of the true Congregation of Yahshua, I want to once again give a few more quotes to continue to conclusively prove that the branch of true believers coming to America being called Anabaptists, Seventh Day Baptists, Mennonites, Puritans and even some Quakers were indeed the remnant of the earlier true Congregation, called by its enemies, mainly Paulicians and Waldenses.

"The beginnings of the Anabaptist movement are firmly rooted in the earlier centuries. The Baptists have a spiritual posterity of many ages of liberty-loving Christians. The movement was as old as Christianity; the Reformation gave an occasion for a new and varied history.

The origin of the sect, who from their repetition of baptism received in other communities, are called Anabaptists, but who are also denominated Mennonites, from the celebrated man to whom they owe a large share of their present prosperity, is involved in much obscurity [or, is hid in the

remote depths of antiquity, as another translator has it]. For they suddenly started up, in various countries of Europe, under the influence of leaders of dissimilar character and views; **The modern Mennonites affirm, that their predecessors were the descendants of those Waldenses**, who were oppressed by the tyranny of the Papists; and that they were of a most pure offspring, and most averse from any inclinations toward sedition, as well as all fanatical views. In the first place I believe the Mennonites are not altogether in the wrong, when they boast of a descent from these Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and others, who are usually styled witnesses for the truth before Luther. Prior to the age of Luther, there lay concealed in almost every country of Europe but especially in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, very many persons, in whose minds were deeply rooted that principle which the Waldenses,..... that the visible congregation, is an assembly of holy persons; and ought therefore to be entirely free from not only ungodly persons and sinners, but from all institutions of human device against ungodliness.” ¹⁸²

The purity and holiness of the true Congregation of Yahshua, called by the world Paulicians and Waldenses and Albigenses and now Anabaptists, has largely been overlooked by the severe persecution and martyrdom that they experienced, but now that they were in a basically free world for religious practice and belief, their holy righteous character would be more displayed and magnified as well as the important doctrines of Sabbath keeping and baptism.

Alexander Campbell, in his debate with Mr. Macalla, says:
“I would engage to show that baptism as viewed and practiced by the Baptists, had its advocates in every century

*up to the Christian era and independent of whose existence (the German Anabaptists), clouds of witnesses attest the fact, that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age, to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced.”*¹⁸³

Robert Barclay, a Quaker who wrote largely upon this subject, says of the Baptists:

*“We shall afterwards show the rise of the Anabaptists, which took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the times of the apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of Divine Truth, and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Church.”*¹⁸⁴

Even Roman Catholic historians and officials, in some instances eye-witnesses, testify that the Waldenses and other ancient similar communities were the same as the Anabaptists, and their lineage goes back to apostolic times.

“That Cardinal Hosius dated the history of the Baptists back twelve hundred years, to 360A.D., is evident, for in yet another place the Cardinal says: The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem to have been although some of them lately, as they testify in their apology, declare that they will no longer re-baptize, as

was their former custom; nevertheless, it is certain that many of them retain their custom, **and have united with the Anabaptists.**" ¹⁸⁵

*"The Augustinian, Bartholomaeus von Usingen, set forth in the year 1529, a learned polemical writing against the "Rebaptizers," in which he says that **"Anabaptists, or Catabaptists, have gone forth from Picardism."*** ¹⁸⁶

Father Gretacher, who edited the works of Rainerio Sacchoni, after recounting the doctrines of the Waldenses, says: "This is a true picture of the heretics of our age, particularly of the Anabaptists;" Baronius, the most learned and laborious historian of the Roman Catholic Church says: **"The Waldenses were Anabaptists."** ¹⁸⁷

*"In those places where the Waldenses flourished there the Baptists set deep root. This statement holds good from country to country, and from city to city. Innumerable examples might be given. For long periods there were Waldenses in Cologne. The Beghards were spread all over the Flemish Netherlands; and in Switzerland, along the Rhine, and in Germany, where afterwards we meet the Baptists Metz was a place of refuge for the Waldenses); they spread through Austria-Hungary, as far as Transylvania; the Cathari were found in the heights of the Alps, in Switzerland; they came to Bern and they came to Freiberg They were found in Strassburg. In all of these places were the Waldenses in mediaeval times; in all of them were the Baptists in Reformation times. **The ground along the banks of the Rhine was so well prepared that a Waldensian in the fifteenth century could readily travel from Cologne to Milan without spending the night with any but a fellow-***

believer. It was precisely in these places that the Baptists flourished in great numbers.

Many able **preachers of the Waldenses became widely known as Baptist ministers.** Such were the martyrs, Hans Koch, Leonard Meyster, Michael Sattler and Leonard Kaser, who were all renowned Baptist ministers Koch and Meyster were put to death in Augsburg, in 1594; Sattler in 1527, at Rotenburg, and Kaser was burnt August 18, the same year, at Sherding. At Augsburg, in 1525, was a Baptist congregation of eleven hundred members. **Hans Denck was the pastor, and he was of Waldensian origin.** Ludwig Hatzer was expressly called by a contemporary a Picard; and Hans Hut was an adherent of the "old Waldensian brethren" Leonard Scheimer and Hans Schaffer were Baptist preachers. There was also Thomas Hermann, who, in 1522, labored as a Waldensian minister but he was martyred, in 1527, as a minister of the congregation of the Baptists (Conrad Grebel, the distinguished Baptist leader of Switzerland, received his learning from the Waldenses).

Many of the distinguished Baptist families of Hamburg, Altona and Emden were of Waldensian origin. Moreover, the trade unions and much of the weaving business which was originally in the hands of the Waldenses all became Baptist. There are many external points between the Anabaptists and Waldenses, which force themselves upon us. The peculiar attitude, which the Waldenses, as well as the Anabaptists, took toward the historical books of the Old Testament can by no means be accidental. The Waldenses translated the Bible into the Romance and Teutonic languages early in the thirteenth century; the Baptists retained these versions of the Bible two hundred years after Luther's version. The oldest

German Bible is of Baptist origin. In these versions alone the Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans appears. **The attitude of the two bodies toward the question of grave yards, the use in the worship of certain forms of prayers, the singing of the same hymns, of observing the Supper, the principles in church, buildings, the gray dress of the apostles, the itinerant preachers, in the form of asking a blessing and many other details mark the Waldenses and the Baptists as of the same origin.**" ¹⁸⁸

It is most clear that the Anabaptists were indeed the continuation of the true Congregation of Yahshua that started in 30 A.D. and continued into that time period as well as today. They even had a letter professing that they were a link in a chain to a progressive continuation of the one true Congregation of Yahshua from the time of the Apostles.

*"The Baptists of the Reformation claimed that they had an ancient origin and went so far as to suggest a **"succession of congregations"**. This claim was put forth by them at the very beginning of the Reformation A. D. 1521. An old letter is in existence founding. "Successio Ana-baptistica." The letter bears its own date as "that of the Swiss brethren, written to the Netherland Anabaptists, respecting their origin, a year before, Anno 1522" **The letter is particularly important since it shows that the Baptists as early as 1521 claimed a succession.**"* ¹⁸⁹

"The author of the "Successio Anabaptistica," says of the Anabaptists:

*"I am dealing with **the Mennonites or Anabaptists, who pride themselves as having the apostolic succession, that is, the mission and the extraction from the apostles.***

Who claim that the true Congregation is found nowhere, except among themselves alone and their congregations, since with them alone remains the true understanding of the Scriptures. To that end they appeal to the letter of the S. S. and want to explain them with the S. S.... If one charges them with the newness of their sect, they claim that the "true Congregation" during the time of the dominion of the Catholic Church, was hidden in her." ¹⁹⁰

This was one of the main reasons that their detractors were calling them Anabaptists, as since the Protestant Reformation was now here and many Protestants were joining the true Congregation of Yahshua, they were not allowed to join the congregation without having true repentance and being re-baptized by the proper ordained elders, who had the authority to do so with the laying on of hands through the unbroken chain of succession coming from Yahshua and the Apostles.

Anabaptists was a slang of the original anti-Baptists, and anti- means "*in the place of*", as a new convert had to be re-baptized in the place of the false baptism which would not have given them the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, as we have shown earlier in the book. Only a proper ordained elder has the authority to lay hands on and transfer the Holy Spirit during baptism. The fact that they had an official letter in 1521 stating their succession from the Apostles is quite convincing of their claim of an original chain of ordination all the way back to the Apostles.

"A notable proof of the antiquity of the Baptists of Moravia is here recorded. Johanna Schlecta Costelacius wrote a letter from Bohemia, October 10, 1519, to Erasmus, affirming that

for one hundred years the Picards had been dipping believers and that they re-baptized and were therefore, Anabaptists.” ¹⁹¹

Here, again, is even more proof of the apostolic succession of the Paulicians and Waldenses and Anabaptists. The claim of the Dutch Baptists to apostolic origin was made the object of a special investigation in the year 1819, by Dr. Ypeij, Professor of Theology in Gronigen, and the Rev. J. J. Dermout, Chaplain to the King of the Netherlands, both of whom were learned members of the Reformed Church. Many pages might be filled with the reports that they made to the King. Here is the synopsis of the opinion of these writers:

“The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries; and who during the latter part of the twelfth century fled into Flanders; and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand, where they lived simple and exemplary lives, in the villages as farmers, in the towns by trades, free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.

*We have now seen that the Baptists who were formerly called Anabaptist, and in later times Mennonites, **were the original Waldenses,** and who have long in the history of the congregation received the honor of that origin. **On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian society which has stood since the days of the apostles,** and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages. The*

perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish Church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century was in the highest degree necessary, and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics, that their denomination is the most ancient.” ¹⁹²

“It may be observed ...that the Mennonites are not entirely mistaken when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians and other sects, who are usually considered as witnesses of the truth in the times of universal darkness and superstition. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine which the Waldenses, Wickliffites and Hussites had maintained, some in a more disguised, and others in a more open and public manner.” ^{192A}

*"According to Pilichdorffius, the Waldenses themselves carried up the date of their commencement as a body, as high as three hundred years after Constantine, i.e. to about the year 637. For my own part, I believe their antiquity to have been higher still. I agree with some of our oldest and best Protestant divines, in considering the Albigenses, or Waldenses (for they were, in fact, one and the same), to have been a branch of that visible Congregation, against which the gates of hell could never totally prevail; and that **the uninterrupted succession of Apostolical doctrine continued with them, from the primitive times, right down to the Reformation.**"* ¹⁹³

*"Of the Baptists it may be said that they are not reformers. These people, comprising bodies of Christian believers known under various names in different countries, are entirely distinct and independent of the Roman and Greek churches, **and have an unbroken continuity of existence from apostolic days down through the centuries.** Throughout this long period, they were bitterly persecuted for heresy, driven from country to country, disfranchised, deprived of their property, imprisoned, —tortured and slain by the thousands; yet they swerved not from their New Testament faith; doctrine and adherence."*¹⁹⁴

Let's see what Sebastian Franck, the father of modern German history, wrote in 1531, about these true believers.

*"Out of the chronicles of the Picards, of Bohemia, in 1394, says: "The Picards in Bohemia are divided into two, or some say three parties, the large, the small, the very small, who hold in all things with the Anabaptists, have all things common, "He tells many additional things concerning these Baptists of 1394. He says the Roman Catholics reported very shameful things in regard to them but that the Bohemian historians tell otherwise. Ziska, a Bohemian king, tried to exterminate them, but later they increased greatly until they numbered eighty thousand. They were a pious, child-like and sincere people; and many of them suffered on account of their faith. These Baptists are still living, writes Frank, in Bohemia. Their fathers had to live in the forests and caves. They supported each other mutually. The Lord's Supper they held in a house set apart for that purpose. They had no Articles of Faith other than the Bible. They accepted no interpretations of the fathers. They held the Scriptures to be the word of Elohim."*¹⁹⁵

So let's trace these faithful believers to the New World.

*"The Pilgrims came out of three English churches. The first one was the Southwark church. The story begins with John Greenwood. John Greenwood, a clergyman, was ordained at Lincoln in 1582, and served in Lincolnshire from 1582-83. Greenwood was arrested in Norfolk in 1585 probably for preaching without a license, or against the Church. Also, all of Britain was required to attend the Church of England. Under the 1559 Act of Uniformity, it was illegal **not** to attend official Church of England services, with a fine for each missed Sunday and a holy day. The penalties for conducting unofficial services included imprisonment and larger fines. In 1586 he was the recognized leader of the London Separatists, of whom a considerable number had been imprisoned at various times.*

In 1592 Greenwood, Barrowe and John Penry gained a temporary reprieve and began meeting at a house in the Borough and formally constituted the Southwark Independent Congregation. This new congregation was being organized around Francis Johnson as its new Pastor, and John Greenwood as its Teacher. However the reprieve was short-lived and Greenwood and Barrowe were executed on 6th April 1593. Eight imprisoned members of the Johnson-Greenwood congregation were released in April 1593. Others congregation members were released in the fall of 1597, these made their way to their former congregation members in Holland. On his release Francis Johnson finally settled in Holland where many of the Southwark dissenters had fled to. The remaining members of the group continued to meet in secret before being brought into the open by

Henry Jacob in 1616. Jacob had been influenced by the writing of Johnson and in 1620 some members of the Southwark Church were given permission to sail to America. It was this group who went on the Mayflower. They were a 7th day Sabbath-keeping congregation.” ¹⁹⁶

“Among the Scrooby congregation which fled to Holland but who did not come to America until a decade later was John Dunham, whose grandson, Reverend Edmund Dunham, founded the Seventh Day Baptist church in Piscataway, New Jersey, nearly a century later in 1705.” ¹⁹⁷

It is interesting that the Pilgrims sailing on the Mayflower to America in 1620 is the real beginning of the Philadelphia era of Yahshua's Congregation, and the official ending of the congregation as a whole being in the wilderness, as we earlier stated from Rev 12:6.

Rev 12:6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place, it having been prepared from Elohim, that there they might nourish her **a thousand two hundred and sixty days.***

The most interesting point of this prophecy is that, as we have seen, the congregation went into the Wilderness in 360 A.D. at the commencement of the edict from the Council of Laodicea; here it is, exactly 1260 years later, in 1620 A.D. they are coming out of the wilderness with the open door of freedom that America would provide, according to the message to the congregation of Philadelphia. The point of these original pilgrims being Sabbath keepers and part of the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua is proved as follows:

*"Among these early settlers of the region now known as Pennsylvania, were Christians known as Quakers. These people were of the Puritans from England, and **among them we also find Sabbath-keepers, preserving the true faith.** In a book by Dr. Samuel Kohn, chief Rabbi of Budapest, Hungary, from which we have previously quoted, he says, "In 1545 we find a Sabbatarian sect among the Quakers in England." Also that leaders and preachers of the Puritans had retransferred the rest day from Sunday to Saturday. — Sabbatarians in Transylvania pp. 8, 9. This information corresponds with that recently published in a newspaper of California, that Benjamin Franklin, the famous Pennsylvania Quaker, was an observer of the seventh-day Sabbath.*

*All familiar with the early history of the United States remember that the Puritans, coming here in the Mayflower, landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. They had fled from persecutions in England, coming to what was known as "the new world," The Pilgrims were the same as the Puritans, Nonconformists, and Separatists. The Puritans were zealously endeavoring to purify the Church of England, as well as the Catholic Church. They were called Separatists because of their separation from these churches, and those who risked their lives on the pilgrimage to the "new world," have since been called Pilgrims. Chief Rabbi Kohn of Budapest, Hungary, in a work entitled, Sabbatarians in Transylvania, says of the Puritans, "Certain leaders and preachers of the Puritans have [1554] retransferred the rest day from Sunday to Saturday." -- p.38. **It is evident that the Pilgrims were Sabbath-keepers**, and unmistakably from the same line of Sabbatarian-Puritan preachers mentioned in this work. The following editorial appeared in the St. Joseph,*

Mo., Daily Gazette, during the Christmas season, written by the editor, Mr. Hugh Sprague.

*"Strange as it may seem, in the early history of America there was an attempt at suppression of Christmas spirit. The stern Puritans at Plymouth, imbued with the rigorous fervor of the Old Testament, abhorred the celebration of the orthodox holidays. **Their worship was on the Sabbath (Saturday), rather than Sunday, and Christmas in particular they considered a pagan celebration.** Later immigrants attempted to observe Christmas as a time of joy, but were suppressed. Governor Bradford, Elder Brewster, Miles Standish and other leaders were firm against the yuletide spirit as we know it today."*

*The author's wife, having first noticed the above editorial, called his attention to it. He immediately drove over to the Gazette office where, upon finding Mr. Sprague, he asked him where he obtained the evidence of the Pilgrim Fathers keeping the Sabbath or Saturday. He said he did not know of any book mentioning this, but that he had additional evidence. He said, "The Pilgrims are his direct ancestors, and we know very well their religious practice, and belief." He assured him that all his grandparents and great-grandparents knew **that the Pilgrims of the Mayflower days were strict Sabbath-keepers on the seventh day of the week instead of Sunday.**"* ¹⁹⁸

Here is more evidence that a remnant of the original pilgrims were indeed Sabbath keepers and part of the true Congregation of Yahshua.

"It is worthy of note here also that adherents of the early Puritan and Pilgrim religion strictly taught the observance of the ten commandments literally, and also the seventh-day Sabbath. The Puritans being citizens of England were subject to her state religion. They were so named because of their ardent desire and untiring work in attempted church reform, on the Sabbath, Christmas, Easter, and other erroneous teachings.

*The Pilgrims were a body of these people who embarked from England about 1619 on the Mayflower, bound for America, where they could worship Elohim according to the dictates of their own conscience. Landing at Plymouth Rock, under divine favor and blessings, they zealously taught the true faith in this country, Benjamin Franklin being a follower, and a zealous Sabbath-keeper. Much history is accessible of the doctrine and faith of these early adventurers to this new world, where their influence meant so much in establishing religious freedom and liberty, through which this nation has blessed humanity. **That the succession of apostolic power has come down unbroken to the days of our pilgrim ancestors,** as taught by the school in the days of Richard Cartwright, is further proven by Cotterill's 'Genesis of The Church', where mention is made of the "Seven," who looked after the business of the church, before the divisions of Eastern and Western Rome, 395 A.D. This view of apostolic succession, and heavenly virtue being thus transferred unbroken to the days of the Puritans, is strongly supported by the history of the Eastern churches, as well as by living schools of the Anglican." 198A*

"Koger Williams, who fled from the persecuting Puritans, became the founder of the first Baptist Congregation in

America, which was instituted at Providence, 1644, and from which originated a church at Newport, in 1652, under the auspices of Rev. William Vaughan. From this community seven persons seceded in 1671, and established the first Seventh-day Baptist, and the Third Baptist Church upon the American continent. This secession took place in consequence of the teachings of Stephen Mumford, who emigrated from England in 1665, and who contended, with zeal and fervor, for the perpetuity and unchangeable nature of the Sabbatical ordinance.

The Sabbatarian church at Newport was instituted in 1641. It then contained seven members, who had withdrawn from the communion of the First-day church on account of the differences subsisting between them with respect to the Sabbatical ordinance. Their names were Stephen Mumford, William Hiscox, Samuel Hubbard, Tracy Hubbard, Roger Baster, and sisters; William Hiscox became their first pastor. It is very probable that Mr. Hiscox had acquired a reputation for public speaking before he was chosen or ordained to the ministerial office by the infant congregation at Newport. The prosperity of the congregation under his ministry, and the successful manner in which he vindicated the Scriptural tenets which he had espoused, displayed the wisdom of their choice. He fell asleep in Yahshua in 1704, in the 66th year of his age. Rev. William Gibson, from London, where he received his ordination, was his successor.

But the actions of Mumford speak loudly in his behalf. He was evidently a lover of the truth, and one neither ashamed nor afraid to advocate unpopular tenets if they agreed with the Word of Elohim.

While a conclusive testimony of his generally irreproachable character, and the piety of his little band of followers, is demonstrated by the fact that they were not excluded from the First-day community, but voluntarily withdrew from it, in consequence of the "hard things" which were spoken against them by their brethren. It is probable that Mr. Mumford was one of those amiable and worthy characters, who, possessing a humble and unassuming disposition, never dream of worldly distinction or popular applause, or that their actions, or the continuation of their memories, can be beneficial or grateful to posterity." ¹⁹⁹

Samuel and Tracy Hubbard, two members of the First Baptist Church of Newport, withdrew from the First Baptist Church and joined with Stephen Mumford, a Seventh Day Baptist from England, and 4 others, covenanting to meet together for worship, calling themselves Sabbatarian Baptists. Mumford, for his part, arrived in Rhode Island in 1665, and was mentioned as an advocate for the seventh day Sabbath in many records of that time. Other congregations rose in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and soon spread north into Connecticut and New York, and south into Virginia and the Carolinas. Sabbatarianism also emerged among the Germans at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, (founded in 1735).

"Besides this succession of pastors, the congregation at New-port had several highly eminent men in its connection. Of these, the Wards were distinguished for holding high official stations in connection with the royal government of the province. They were descended from an ancient and highly respectable family in England, whose elder members espousing the cause of the Parliament in the civil wars

thereby became obnoxious to the dominant party at the time of the Restoration. Mr. Thomas Ward, Esq., emigrated to America, and joined the Sabbatarian church, of which he continued a member until his death.

Richard Ward, his son, was one of those rare characters, who, with talents and capacities fitted to adorn the highest circles, are, nevertheless, not ashamed of godliness, or of a consistent observance of the humble duties of religion. He made a public profession of Christian faith, in 1753, and uniting with this, then infant congregation, contributed greatly by his talents, and wealth, and influence, to its support. Determined likewise to give his brethren a solid proof of his affection and regard he bequeathed five hundred pounds sterling to the congregation at his death, which occurred in 1766. This eminent man, as a citizen and statesman, was distinguished for patriotism and philanthropy. In his executive character as royal governor of the province, he displayed a singular ability, and his memory will long be remembered with affection and respect by the people whom he served. Samuel Ward, his son, was also governor in the years 1762 and 1765; the duties of which office he administered with fidelity and zeal. In the years 1774 and 1775, he was a member of the Continental Congress, in which difficult station all his conduct was signalized by an inflexible integrity and unfailing patriotism. As a man, a scholar, a statesman, and a Christian, his character was equally respectable.”²⁰⁰

There was also a most interesting Quaker group in the late 1600's that were part of the early Sabbath keepers called Keithians.

“The Keithian Baptists were seceders from the Quakers of Pennsylvania, and were so called from their leader, the famous George Keith, who, in 1691, with forty-eight other individuals, withdrew from the communion of the Quakers, and set up separate meetings in different places, and a general one at Burlington, in opposition to that of Philadelphia. Subsequently, they published several works of a controversial character, and finally, by resigning themselves to the guidance of Scripture, they became altogether Baptist in their religious practices. At the time of this change in their denominational character they numbered four churches, of which one was situated at Upper Providence, another at Philadelphia, a third at Southampton, and a fourth at Dublin. These continued for some time, but in 1700, a difference arose among them concerning the Sabbath, that broke up their societies. Some of them contended rightly that the original Sabbath remained unchanged, and that its observance was still incumbent upon Christians.

The division appears to have been fomented by one Abel Noble, who, according to Morgan Edwards, came to this country in 1684, and who appears to have been the first Seventh-day Baptist in the state of Pennsylvania. His name is found among those who, in 1691, signed the articles of the Keithian separation. By him was the first Keithian baptized in 1697, and by him were they gained over to the observance of the seventh day. Through his instrumentality four congregations of that order were constituted. The first at Newtown, in Upper Providence, about twenty-four miles from the city of Philadelphia, their meeting was held at the house of one David Thomas.” ^{200A}

We next see the true remnant congregation of Yahshua spreading north to Rhode Island in the First Seventh Day Baptist Congregation, Hopkinton, Rhode Island.

"This congregation was first organized in 1708, although Seventh-day Baptists, in connection with the congregation at Newport, had resided here for a long period.

Rev. John Maxson, their first pastor, and one of the earliest ancestors of the large and respectable family of that name. His voice is said to have been remarkably strong, his countenance noble and expressive, and then he knew so well how to touch the hearts of his auditory: always beginning his discourses in a low and subdued tone, but warming with his subject, and exhibiting throughout the general course of his argumentation an air of vivacity and glowing energy; and in his appeals, an ardor, pungency, and force altogether irresistible. When addressing sinners, he would weep from sympathy and feeling; but how would his countenance irradiate and brighten when he told of a Savior's love! He died in 1720, in a ripe old age." ²⁰¹

Let's look at the following letter from a Seventh Day Baptist Congregation in New Jersey that we had mentioned earlier.

In the year 1705, a church of Sabbath-keepers was organized at Piscataway, N.J. The first record in the old church record book, after the articles of faith, was the following statement,

"The Congregation of Elohim keeping the commandments of Elohim and the faith of Yahshua Messiah, living in Piscataway and Hopewell, in the province of New Jersey,

being assembled with one accord, at the house of Benjamin Martin, in Piscataway, the 19th day of August, 1705 -- we did then, and with one mind, choose our dearly beloved Edward Dunham, who is faithful in the Lord, to be our elder and assistant, according to the will of Elohim; whom we did send to New England to be ordained; who was ordained in the church-meeting in Westerly, Rhode Island, by prayer and laying on of hands, by their elder, William Gibson, the eighth of September, 1705.” ²⁰²

We can clearly see from this letter that even in the early days of the Congregation of Yahshua in America there was definitely judicial order, official ordination through the laying on of hands of the elders, and a unity of congregations working together. Remember, as we quoted earlier, this congregation was from the believers in England who 100 years earlier fled to Holland when their other brethren sailed to America on the Mayflower, and here we see the relative of the Dunham family also being ordained.

Now, let's see about the true remnant believers in the stronghold of Pennsylvania. In the Philadelphia era of the Congregation, Pennsylvania was a true stronghold for these faithful believers with, of course, the city of Philadelphia playing a big role in their history.

“We shall now consider the congregation in Pennsylvania especially. After William Penn had received his grant of land, including all of Pennsylvania, he visited Germany and other places in search of colonists. Because of persecutions in Europe many sought refuge in “the New World.” Thirteen families were the first to immigrate, arriving at Germantown, in October, 1683. Another company arrived from Friesland in

1684. June 24th, 1694, another large company arrived, under the leadership of Kelpius. In 1719, twenty families arrived, settling in Germantown, near Philadelphia, but now a part of the latter city. Numerous others came, and the most of these people were Sabbath-keepers. The last to come were the Moravians, in 1740, permanently settling where Bethlehem now stands, thus the town was settled and named by zealous Sabbath-keeping people, known as Moravians.”²⁰³

“Now we come to a band of forty men coming to this country under the leadership of Brother Kelpius, mentioned previously, and forming a society called the “Society of the Woman in the Wilderness.” These men left Germany during the summer of 1693, coming to **Holland, London, and to Plymouth**, where they spent the winter, then leaving on the actual voyage to America on April 25th, and reaching Philadelphia on June 23rd. After holding a solemn religious service they walked two by two, they went to Germantown and found Brother Jacob Isaac Van Bebber, one of their countrymen, who had formerly lived on the borders of Holland.

“It is a fact conclusively attested that as early as 1699 Kelpius was in communication with the congregations of Rhode Island and Connecticut.” Randolph says further of the people in Pennsylvania, “When Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian church in Germany, visited America in 1741, he was astonished to find **the hold the Sabbatarian doctrine has upon the entire German population of Pennsylvania.**” Mr. Saches gives assurance of the close affiliation between the Sabbath-keeping body known as “The Order from the Wilderness,” with the

Sabbatarian brethren of New England, and also with the Sabbatarians at Ephreta.” ²⁰⁴

“It is a fact familiar with the history of these Sabbatarians, as well as the history of our nation, that when the constitutional congress sought a man competent and skilled in languages, they chose Peter Miller, pastor of this Ephreta Congregation, to translate the Declaration of Independence into seven languages. He was an honored man from the University of Heidelberg, a member of the American Philosophical Society, a personal friend of the Penns, and of Benjamin Franklin.

He was also personally acquainted with George Washington, and invited him to Ephreta, and to bring his soldiers, suffering from the frigid weather of that memorable winter at Valley Forge, when the fate of the colonists seemed hanging in the balance. We saw a graveyard at Ephreta where hundreds of the loyal soldiers lay at rest, the tombstone inscriptions identifying them with the victims of the revolution, who did not survive, after coming there wounded.

Peter Miller is the central figure of one of the most touching narratives of Revolutionary times, and his name is mentioned in many old schoolbooks of the nation. One of his bitterest enemies was caught sleeping on sentinel duty, the penalty of which was death. He was to be executed at a certain set time. Peter Miller traveled all night to reach the president, George Washington, in hope of saving his enemy. Washington, knowing Miller, expressed the thought of the condemned man being his good friend. Then Miller informed him that the condemned man was his bitterest enemy and incessant reviler, but that his Master taught him to pray for

his enemies. So impressed was Washington that he took him by the hand, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, thanked him for his example of Christian forbearance and generosity, and granted him the request. In the fall of 1744 Israel Eckerlin, Samuel Eckerlin, Alexander Mack and Peter Miller set out upon a pilgrimage to New England for the purpose of visiting the Sabbath-keeping communities there and those lying between in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.”

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The strongholds at this time of the true remnant of Yahshua were in the northeastern states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and then lower in the states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and even some into Ohio and West Virginia.

It is important to mention here that, of course, not every pilgrim or early settler in America was a Sabbath keeper and part of the true Congregation of Yahshua. There was definitely a mix of Protestants, who also came over to the New World looking for the same freedom as the Congregation of Yahshua.

However, when you look at the movement of groups that came out of the 1600's and 1700's such as Mennonite, Amish, Quakers, etc., it is evidently clear from the evidence and historical records that we have shown that the origin of these early groups were from the true congregation of Sabbath keeping believers.

It must also be stated most clearly that the wing of those early settlers coming out of the Protestant Reformation, although they may have been quite modest and trustworthy, they were never considered a part of the true Congregation

of Yahshua by the true Anabaptists who kept the succession of line of both ordination and baptism as we have shown from their very own records. Since they were a break-off faction from the Roman Catholic Church, the true Congregation of Yahshua merely saw them as another dissident sect, as they had no true elders that were ordained in the proper, unbroken line from Yahshua and the Apostles through antiquity until their day; without the proper authority through the proper ordination the Anabaptists did not believe they had authority to baptize and made all Protestants that converted to the true Congregation of Yahshua get re-baptized properly, therefore, making their name called "*Ana-Baptists*."

Let me also state that it was not only the doctrine of baptism, and the true line of ordination and the Sabbath that separated the Protestant Movement from the true Congregation of Yahshua, but there were also several other doctrines that the false Protestant Movement under Luther kept from their mother Rome, which were steeped in paganism.

One of these doctrines was the false notion of the immortal soul and that the incorrigibly wicked will still receive eternal life, but in a hell fire. This cannot be found in Scripture and comes from paganism, and was never believed by the true Congregation of Yahshua. Also, the false teaching of the trinity that taught Yahweh the Father and Yahshua the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one person with three personalities of that one entity was never believed by the true remnant of Yahshua, as they always believed from the days of Yahshua that He and the Father Yahweh are two separate beings, but one in spirit, goal, and purpose.

Let's look at the following historical record about the Seventh Day Baptists' early days in America to see this contrast in doctrine from the Protestants.

"Questions asked of the early Sabbatarian congregations to a candidate minister, among others, was this one: "Have you entire freedom to administer the ordinances of Elohim among them as a Congregation of Elohim, to pray with them and for them, and endeavor to build them up in the faith?"

The following charge was given Elder Davis, an early Sabbatarian minister by the church in Shrewsbury, N.J.: "Brother Davis, I charge thee before Elohim, and the Master Yahshua Messiah, that thou take the charge of the Congregation of Elohim dwelling at Shrewsbury. Preach the word in and among them; be instant in season: and out of season; administer the holy ordinances amongst them; exhort and rebuke with all long suffering and patience, with meekness and humility of mind, as thou shalt answer the same, when thou shalt give up thy account to Elohim, at his appearing and kingdom. Amen."

*"The Congregation of Elohim keeping the commandments of Yahweh and the faith of Yahshua Messiah, living in Piscataway and Hopewell, in the province of New Jersey, being assembled with one accord, at the house of Benjamin Martin, in Piscataway, the 19th day of August, 1705 -- we did then, and with one mind, choose our dearly beloved Edward Dunham, who is faithful in the Lord, to be our elder and assistant, according to the will of Elohim; **whom we did send to New England to be ordained**; who was ordained in the church-meeting in Westerly, Rhode Island, **by prayer***

and laying on of hands, by their elder, William Gibson, the eighth of September, 1705."

The faith of the Piscataway congregation reads as follows:

"I. We believe that unto us there is but one Elohim, the Father, and one Master Yahshua Messiah, who is the mediator between Elohim and mankind, and that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Elohim (not a person). I Corinthians 3:6, I Timothy 2:5, II Timothy 3:6, II Peter 1:21.

"II. We believe that all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration, are the Word of Elohim -- II Peter 1:19, 20, 21, II Timothy 3:16, Mark 7:13, I Thessalonians 2:13, Acts 4:29, 31 -- and are the rule of faith and practice.

"III. We believe that the Ten Commandments, which were written on two tables of stone by the finger of Elohim, continue to be the rule of righteousness unto all men. Matthew 5:17, 18, 19, Malachi 4:4, James 1:21, Romans 7:25, Romans 3:21, Romans 13:8, 9, 10, Ephesians 6:2.

"IV. We believe the six principles recorded in Heb. 6:1, 2, to be the rule of faith and practice.

"V. We believe that the Lord's Supper ought to be administered and received in all Christian congregations. Luke 2:19, I Corinthians. 11:23, 26.

"VI. We believe that all Christian congregations ought to have congregational officers in them, as elders, and deacons. Titus 1:5, Acts 6:3.

"VII. We believe that all persons thus believing ought to be baptized in water by dipping or plunging, after confession is made by them of their faith in the above said things. Mark 1:4, 5, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:37, Romans 6:3, 4, Colossians 2:12.

VIII. We believe that a company of sincere persons, being formed in the faith and practices of the above said things, may truly be said to be the Congregation of Yahshua. Acts 2:41, 42.

"IX. We give up ourselves unto the Lord and one another, to be guided and governed by one another, according to the Word of Elohim. I Corinthians 8:5, Colossians 2:19, Psalms 84:1, 2, 4-10, Psalm 133:1."

That there were members of the Congregation of Yahshua among the Sabbatarians which organized as the Seventh Day Baptist Churches in America, we know, and from the records of the Baptist people themselves, which are very accurate, we learn the truth of this fact. A recorded letter of one William Davis, a Sabbatarian Baptist elder, states the following:

*"Now all this enmity among seventh-day men arose against me originally from a noted seventh-day man and soul sleeper in this country, who above twenty years ago **opposed me about my principles of immortality of human souls, and afterward proceeded to differ with me about my faith in Messiah and the Trinity**, who, having poisoned several other seventh-day men with the mortal and atheistical notion, and set them against me, he secretly conveyed this drench over to Westerly to the persons before named, who, complying with him in their judgments in the*

Socinian and Anti-Trinitarian error, drank it greedily down before I came among them”

One of the main points of doctrine of the Congregation of Elohim, which distinguishes it from other bodies of believers, is the belief in the separateness of Almighty Elohim, His Son Yahshua Messiah, and the Holy Spirit of Elohim, as pertains to entities, but one as to unity of purpose and spirit. This Scriptural truth..., is still dear to the Congregation of Elohim in our day, and was to the saints during the colonization of America. Another tenet of faith which distinguished the Congregation of Elohim is its teaching of immortality only through Yahshua Messiah, that is, a conditional immortality, which is given to the saints only, and not to all mankind. The third article of faith which should be noted, is Sabbath-keeping, that is, the observance of the seventh day of the week.

*From the quotation taken from the letter of the Sabbatarian Baptist, Elder William Davis, it is noted that this noted Sabbatarian of whom he speaks was not only a Sabbath-keeper, but also one who held to the truth of the individuality of Yahshua Messiah and his heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit of Elohim, and to the truth of immortality only through Messiah. **There is no body of Christians in the world, with the exception of the Congregation of Elohim, which teaches all three of these beautiful truths,** hence, we know this man was of the Congregation of Elohim, and contended for the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints." 206*

The doctrines that this true Congregation of Yahshua had, they cherished dearly and held to them tight, knowing that

they were the very mandates of Scripture that Yahshua had given to the original Apostles. And as we have seen, throughout the ages from the Apostles, to the Paulicians, to the Bogomils, to the Waldenses, and now to the Anabaptists, and Seventh Day Baptists, they knew they were the guardians of these precise truths to bring to the next generation and protect them from the heresy and wiles of Catholicism and her daughters who broke off to Protestantism. Let's continue to trace the remnant of the Congregation of Yahshua going now from the late 1700's into the early 1800's.

"Rev. John Maxson, their next pastor, was a man of eminent piety. He was not a proficient in the wisdom of this world, but he possessed that without which all learning is vain. He was eminently distinguished for his knowledge and love of the Scriptures. He died in 1778. Rev. William Bliss received the mantle of the ascending Elijah. Mr. Bliss; soon after his public profession of religion, he became exercised on the subject of the ministry. He had frequently improved his gift for speaking, in the prayer and conference meetings; and he received a public call of the church in 1773. In 1780, he was installed pastor of the congregation, in which station he continued during the remainder of his life, which was about twenty-eight years.

Mr. Bliss was a warm and steady friend of his country, and suffered much by the English soldiery, during the Revolutionary war, being completely in their power while the city of Newport remained in their possession. They took possession of a part of his farm, on which they erected forts, and a part of his dwelling, in which were quartered many of their officers. They also cut down his orchards to barricade

the roads, and committed many depredations of a similar character. As a minister of the gospel, Mr. Bliss was more distinguished for logical and spiritual argumentation, than for oratorical fervor. Few have excelled him in solidity of judgment, and the happiest consequences uniformly resulted from following his advice. As a Christian he was remarkably exemplary, and adorned his profession in both public and private life. He was warm and tender-hearted, circumspect in his deportment, and always anxious to promote the happiness and usefulness of all about him. He was distinguished for a pleasant cheerfulness, which made his conversation agreeable to persons of all ages.

The circumstances attending his death were quite remarkable. For a few months previous to his decease, he experienced several paralytic strokes, which, though light, greatly reduced his physical strength. Still he retained his mental faculties to the last, and was not confined to his house but a few days. For a few days before his death, he found his strength decaying, but felt no other disease than a gradual loss of physical power. The day before his death, he was visited by his intimate friend, the Rev. Mr. Eady. To him, he remarked, "I am going to try the truth of my doctrine." The morning before he died, he was visited by a grandson who had recently returned from Spain. With him he conversed freely on the political and religious state of that country. From these subjects, he referred to his own circumstances, observing that he no longer possessed any interest in the busy scenes of this world, as he was on the point, he believed, of departing for a better one. He signified that he thought himself to be dying, and appeared animated with the prospect before him. He seemed like Moses, who in his full strength, was permitted to ascend the summit of Mount

Pisgah, and thence view the fair and fertile fields of the promised inheritance.

Towards evening he was visited by Deacon B., from Hopkinton, who called, not intending to tarry through the night. He observed to this gentleman that he was going to die, and thought he would be needed about his person. He also made, with great deliberation, further arrangements for calling assistance, as he believed he should leave them before morning. When Deacon B. retired to rest, he was walking the house without exhibiting any unusual symptom except a strange coldness of the hands and the feet. He had left him but a short time when he heard an unusual stir below, and immediately arose and repaired to his bedside; but his spirit had fled. Thus closed his long and useful life on the 4th day of May, 1808, in the 81st year of his age.

The Rev. Henry Burdick, was his successor, and was assisted in the ministry by Rev. Arnold Bliss. Subsequent to the death of Elder Bliss, which occurred in 1826, this church appeared to sink under an accumulation of misfortunes and unpleasant influences. This deplorable state of things continued for several years, when the General Conference took into consideration the utility of appointing a missionary to labor in that vicinity.”²⁰⁷

I want to mention here, as we continue with the history of the true Congregation of Yahshua now through the nineteenth century, that just as before coming to America there were many administrations of this one true faith, also in the New World the Congregation did not all come under one corporate umbrella.

In a time when there were no telephones or automobiles, it would stand to reason that many groups would not be as interactive as they may have liked to. And just as it is today, some groups would keep separate for as simple a reason as believing in wearing a different style of clothing or some other small doctrinal diversity. There was a Seventh Day German Baptist separatist group that arose from the Reformation of Europe. The following is their history and testimony.

*"In the year 1708, Alexander Mack, of Schriesheim, and seven others in Schwartzenen, Germany, met together, regularly to examine, in a careful and impartial manner, the doctrines of the New Testament, in order to ascertain what obligations it imposes upon professing Christians. These inquiries terminated in the formation of the society now called the Dunkers, or **First-day German Baptists**. In 1723, they formed a church at Germantown Pennsylvania in Lancaster County, under the pastoral care of Peter Becke. In this county, another community was soon after established by Conrad Beissel, a native of Germany. Beissel being determined to seek out the true obligations of the Word of Elohim, independent of all preconceived opinions and traditional observances, he was soon led to perceive that the sentiments of the Dunkers were erroneous so far as they related to the day designed to be hallowed as the Sabbath. It appeared evident to him " that the seventh day was the command of the Almighty Elohim, and that day being established and sanctified by the Great Jehovah (Yahweh), forever, and no change, nor authority for change, ever having been announced to man, by any power sufficient to set aside the solemn decree of the Almighty, he felt it to be his duty to contend for the observance of that day.*

By this time many members of the society at Mill Creek had become convinced of the truth of his proposition relative to the Sabbath, who now removed and settled around him in solitary cottages. They rested from secular labors and celebrated the public services of religion upon the original Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, which has ever since been observed by their descendants. In 1728, they resolved themselves into an ecclesiastical body, and a monastic society was instituted in 1732, for the accommodation of which suitable buildings were erected. Other buildings were likewise erected by the community, and all together constituted the irregular, yet lovely village of Ephrata.

They wore the habit of the Capuchins, or White Friars, which consisted of a shirt, trousers and vest, with a long white gown and cowl, of woolen web in winter, and linen in the summer. That of the sisters differed only in the substitution of skirts for trousers, and some slight peculiarities in the form of the cap. All who entered the cloister received monastic names. Their first Prior was Onesimus, (Israel Eckerlin,) who was succeeded by Peter Miller, surnamed Jabez.

In the year 1740, there were thirty-six single brethren in the cloister, and thirty-five sisters; and at one time the society, including the members living in the neighborhood, amounted to near three hundred." They were bound by no vows, neither had they any written covenant. The New Testament was their confession of faith, their code of laws, and their rule of discipline. Such property as accumulated with the society, by donation and from the labor of the single brethren and sisters, was held as common stock, but none were obliged to devote their personal property to this purpose or to resign any of their temporal possessions. A considerable

income was derived from the farm, which, with the proceeds of the grist-mill, paper-mill, oil-mill, fulling-mill, and the industry of the brethren and sisters, sufficed to support the society in a comfortable manner.

They receive the Bible as the only rule of faith, covenant, and code of laws for church government. They do not admit the least license with the letter and spirit of the Scripture, especially with the New Testament, do not allow one tittle to be added or rejected in the administration of the ordinances, but practice them precisely as they are instituted and made an example by Yahshua Messiah in his word. They contend for the observance of the original Sabbath, believing that it requires an authority equal to that of the Great Institutor to change any of his decrees.

They maintain, that as he blessed and sanctified that day for ever, which has never been abrogated in his word, or any scripture to be found to warrant that construction; it is still as binding as it was when it was reiterated amid the thunders of Mount Sinai. To alter so positive and hallowed a commandment of the Almighty, they consider would require an explicit edict from the Great Jehovah (Yahweh). It was not foretold by any of the prophets, that with the new dispensation there would be any change in the Sabbath or any of the commandments. Messiah, who declared himself the Lord of the Sabbath, observed the seventh day, and made it the day for his special ministrations; nor did he authorize any change. The Apostles have not assumed to do away the original Sabbath, or give any command to substitute the first for the seventh day.

They hold to Apostolic baptism” and administer trine immersion, with the laying on of hands and prayer while the recipient yet remains kneeling in the water. Their ministers never received a stated salary. In their opinion the Gospel was destined to be free, "without money and without price," and they thought that every one called to preach the word, should do it from the love of the cause, and in this matter, as in that of celibacy, to follow the advice and example of Paul. Nevertheless, their ministers were always well supplied with such necessities as the brethren themselves enjoyed. Individual members gave as presents whatever they could conveniently spare, in money, goods, and the like; and whenever the minister travelled for religious purposes, he was supplied from the treasury to bear his expenses. This is not the place, neither am I disposed to institute any comparison between the doctrines of the Scripture, according to its literal interpretation, and the great and leading tenets of the German Seventh-day Baptists of Pennsylvania.

In their regular worship, they commence with singing; then prayers, the assembly kneeling; then singing again; after which the minister requests any brother to read a chapter out of the Scriptures, which they are at liberty to choose from either the Old or the New Testament. This the minister expounds, tracing its bearings and historical connections with the other parts of the Bible. Then the exhorters enforce the duties it inculcates; and should any brother or single sister be able to improve the subject to the edification of the others, or to make any remarks relative to the topic, there is perfect liberty for such an expression. Prayer and singing, with the reading of a psalm, conclude the service, and then which nothing can be more solemn and impressive. Few

societies have suffered more in their reputation from ignorant and unprincipled authors, than the society of Ephrata; others, however, have borne honorable testimony to its merits. The society was a social community organized for mutual support and assistance. Its members were distinguished for kindness, hospitality, and promptness in affording relief to the suffering, whatever might be their character or denomination. The following account of them is taken from a work, entitled the Journal of an Officer, which was published in 1784. He says, "I came among this people by accident, but I left them with regret. I have found out, however, that appearances may be delusive, and that where we expected to meet with a cold reservedness, we may sometimes be surprised by exhibitions of the most charming friendliness and disinterested compassion.

They all acted the part of the good Samaritan to me, for which I hope to be ever grateful ; and while experiencing the benefits of their kindnesses and attentions, witnessing the sympathies and emotions expressed in their countenances, and listening to the words of hope and pity with which they consoled the poor sufferers, is it strange that, under such circumstances, their uncouth garments appeared more beautiful in my eyes than ever did the richest robes of fashion, and their cowls more becoming than head-dresses adorned with diamonds, and flowers, and feathers ? Until I entered the walls of Ephrata, I had no idea of pure and practical Christianity. Not that I was ignorant of the forms, or even of the doctrines of religion. I knew it in theory before; I saw it in practice then. ' Many a poor wounded soldier will carry to his grave the sweet remembrance of those gentle sisters, who watched so patiently by his side, supported his fainting head, administered the healing draught, and cheered

him with both earthly and heavenly hopes. What mattered to him was not that their words were couched in an unknown dialect; he read their meaning in the deep, earnest, liquid eyes. Eternity likewise will bear a glorious testimony to the labor of the Prior, who could converse in the English language. Many a poor fellow, who entered there profane, immoral, and without hope or Elohim in the world, and left it rejoicing in the Savior." This officer had been wounded in the battle of Brandywine, and had been, with many of his comrades, dispatched to the hospital at Ephrata.

Mr. Winchester makes the following declaration: "Elohim will always have a visible people upon earth, and these (speaking of the Society at Ephrata), are his people at present, above any other in the world. They walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, both in public and private. They bring up their children (alluding to the married members), in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; no noise, rudeness, shameless mirth, loud laughter, is heard within their doors. The law of kindness is in their mouths; no sourness or moroseness disgraces their religion, and whatsoever they believe their Savior teaches, they practice, without inquiring or regarding what others do. They read much; they sing and pray much; they are constant attendants upon the worship of Elohim; their dwelling-houses are all houses of prayer." 207A

Remember, that when the remnant believers fled Europe for the New World they were already in different locations in Europe under the banner of different names such as Anabaptists, Seventh Day Baptists, Mennonites, Lollards, Waldenses, etc. Also, remember that not all true believers fled Europe and a remnant remained all over the European

continent even going through Armenia, Russia, Ukraine and as far as India, and there is still a remnant from some of these groups, even today.

“It is evident that there were other Sabbath-keeping groups besides the Seventh Day Baptists, before and during the time of William Miller's preaching and prediction of the end of the world, in 1844. Elder Gilbert Cranmer of Michigan wrote in his memoirs that he received his first light on the Sabbath in 1843 from an article in the Midnight Cry, a Millerite publication, written by J. C. Day of Ashburhan, Massachusetts. S. C. Hancock of Forestville, Connecticut, also advocated the doctrine in the same year ... Many isolated groups had sprung up in various areas. These sabbatarian groups were variously known as Seventh-day people, Sabbath-keeping Adventist Believers, Sabbath-keeping Adventists, Seventh-day Brethren, Sabbath-keeping Remnant of Adventists, The Church of God and Church of Christ.” ²⁰⁸

When they came to America and had more religious liberty some groups wanted to be of a more organized fashion and have an official name, and yet others wanted to keep it more simple and not draw attention to themselves still fearing persecution as many Sabbath keepers, even after coming to America, were still persecuted, and at times put in prison and had their houses burned down. The largest and most organized of these Sabbath groups by far were the Seventh Day Baptists, which were very organized and set up many congregations all throughout the east coast of the New World at that time. Although there may have been different administrations, it seemed these groups worked together also.

“The earliest Sabbath-keeping churches in America were composed of local congregations, not formally incorporated or organized into conferences. The local groups went by various names, such as: Sabbatarians, Church of God, Church of Christ, Seventh Day Baptists, and even Independents. The Seventh Day Baptists were among the earliest ones to effect a General Conference organization (in 1802), and no doubt embraced the majority of the known Sabbatarians then.” ²⁰⁹

There was, however, a movement that started in the 1930's that I want to discuss, which will shape the course of the modern remnant of Yahshua's true elect even until today. The Seventh Day Baptists at this time were a very conservative, well organized and stable group throughout this period, however, they did lack in one area, which was in end time prophecy. They believed in the return to earth of Yahshua and His 1,000 year millennial reign, but they did not preach much about the end times.

However, in the late 1830's a man by the name of William Miller started an Adventist movement based on prophecy from the book of Daniel, chapter eight, and showed what he thought was conclusive evidence that Yahshua would be returning in 1844. The movement gained considerable steam and many Sabbath keeping brethren and even ministers joined with Miller. At the height of the movement it was estimated that there were about 50,000 to 100,000 people.

“Miller began preaching in small towns at first, and then, with the help of Joshua Himes, moved to the larger cities, bringing his Second Advent message to many thousands.

Hundreds of ministers and laymen joined in preaching the message. By the expected time for Messiah's return, Miller had between 50,000 to 100,000 followers, commonly known as Millerites. He did not set a specific date for the Second Advent. At first he said only that it would be "about 1843." He finally set an ultimate time in the spring of 1844. Others picked the more precise date of October 22, 1844, which Miller and many of the leaders of the first movement accepted shortly before the date arrived. Many clergymen joined Miller in his preaching. At the same time, he was greatly opposed by others. So much so, that in the final months, most churches were closed to the second advent preaching, and many of those who accepted the message were put out of their churches. Miller was a farmer, justice of the peace, sheriff, and Baptist preacher, who, from 1831 to 1844, preached the immanent return of Messiah. Between the years of 1836 and 1844, William Miller, a student of prophecy, preached and stirred many thousands into believing that the Lord would return in 1844.

His conclusions were largely based on Daniel 8:13-14 respecting the 2,300 days (mornings-evenings), which he believed were symbolic and stood for years instead of literal days. He believed that the earth was the sanctuary, and that it would be cleansed by fire when Yahshua returned. The disappointment was great and caused much consternation. Miller honestly admitted that he had made a mistake, but there were other first-day Adventists who insisted he was right with his figures.”²¹⁰

When the prophecy turned out to be incorrect the movement basically died; however, many of the Sabbath keeping followers in the movement started to organize together as

they still believed the Adventist message, just that they simply had the meaning or timing of it off. One of the men who came through this movement was a man by the name of Gilbert Cranmer. He was a true man of faith and by coming into the Millerite Movement he came to the truth of the Sabbath day. Cranmer would wind up being the father of the soon to start Church of God Seventh Day Movement.

*"To have known Elder Gilbert Cranmer [1814-1903], founder of the Church of God in Michigan at any time during his life, and especially in his earlier ministry, is to have known one of the most powerful and eloquent ministers of his day."*²¹¹

*"In the 1840's, when William Miller's "end of the world" Advent doctrines were sounded, Cranmer "carefully examined" Miller's calculations and interpretations of prophecy, and in 1842 was convinced they were correct. Personally witnessing a meteor shower, Cranmer was convinced this was the fulfilling of the "falling of the stars from heaven," **Matthew 24:29**. He later wrote that he "sincerely believed" that the Advent was near, although his wife did not. On October 22, 1844, he and other Advent believers met in a school house, expecting the return of Messiah. Cranmer faced the bitter "Great Disappointment," and the taunts of those who jeered "Well, I thought you were going up last night," without losing his Christian faith, as some did.*

The Sabbath question was said to have come to his attention in 1843 through the Midnight Cry (Millerite publication), in an article by J.C. Day of Ashburnham, Massachusetts. S.C. Hancock of Forestville, Connecticut also advocated the doctrine at the same time. Cranmer was

*not fully convinced of the Sabbath until 1845, when Joseph Bates came to Battle Creek, advocating "the whole Law, the gifts of the Spirit, and many other glorious truths." Cranmer and David Hewett of Battle Creek began keeping the Sabbath the same day. At this time, Cranmer was living at Comstock, Kalamazoo County, Michigan."*²¹²

*"It is evident that there were Sabbath-keeping groups (independent) besides the Seventh Day Baptists, before and during the time of William Miller's preaching and prediction of the end of the world, in 1844. Elder Gilbert Cranmer of Michigan wrote in his memoirs that he received his first light on the Sabbath in 1843 from an article in the Midnight Cry, a Millerite publication, written by J. C. Day of Ashburhan, Massachusetts. S. C. Hancock of Forestville, Connecticut, also advocated the doctrine in the same year ... Many isolated groups had sprung up in various areas."*²¹³

Even though Miller's initial prophecy had failed, the Adventist Movement was still growing and actually getting more organized by the different Sabbath groups, even including some Seventh Day Baptist brethren and ministers, joining the Adventist Movement.

*"In the winter of 1843 or early 1844, Rachel Oakes, a Seventh Day Baptist, challenges a Sunday keeping Methodist Adventist minister in regards to keeping the fourth commandment. Through his study the minister, Frederick Wheeler, is convicted about a Saturday Sabbath and begins to meet with other Adventists on the seventh day of the week. This is the first recorded meeting of Sabbath-keeping Adventists."*²¹⁴

Among this newly formed Adventist group was a husband and wife team named James and Ellen White. The Whites separated from Cranmer's group and went on to start the Seventh Day Adventist group, which is the largest Sabbath keeping group in the world today, with more than 4 million members. It is still debated whether the Whites separated from Cranmer or if it was the other way around, but at any rate, it is important in the true history of the remnant of Yahshua's Congregation to tell the story of why the split occurred.

Ellen White, who was a sickly girl at a young age and even had epilepsy, in which some thought it was demons, was an extremely controlling person and also claimed to have the gift of prophecy. It is not the purpose of this work to get into all the false prophecies Ellen White made, but it stands to reason that most of her prophecies in which she claimed prophetic utterances never came to pass.

Gilbert Cranmer and the other elders were getting quite suspicious of Ellen White's prophecies which seemed to center on her and her husband getting more and more control of the congregation, so then, they made a proclamation that anyone who would be part of that Sabbath group had to confess Ellen White's prophecies as divine from Messiah.

"Under caption of "The Visions a Test" by Uriah Smith, we read: "And the principle applies to the subject of spiritual gifts just as it applies to every other. The perpetuity of the gifts is one of the fundamental points in the belief of this people and with those who differ with us here we can have union and fellowship to no greater extent than we can have with those

*who differ with us in the other important subjects of the coming of Messiah, baptism, the Sabbath, etc. And this is the sum and substance, the length and breadth, the height and depth, of the great bug-bear which Satan has conjured up to frighten the timid about making the visions a test of fellowship It is a fact that those who reject the gifts do not have true union with the body. From the very nature of the case, they cannot have it.”*²¹⁵

Gilbert Cranmer and the other elders including Elder Snook decided that there had to be a separation from the Whites, as they started to try to discredit Cranmer and any elder who did not profess Ellen White’s prophecies.

“Brother Snook in his report speaking of Marion, Iowa says, “We next began meetings in Marion, Jan. 28 and closed Feb. 13. . . . The church here has been in a very unhappy state, but we think now it is entering upon better days. It was the opinion of all that we had better organize. We accordingly did so, believing that nothing could be gained by waiting. Twenty-seven came in, and a number of others will soon come. Those who have come in seem united and strong, and we hope and think will get along well. The visions are a great stumbling block to a number who stand off There is something wrong somewhere. Either a few are right and the whole congregation wrong, or the congregation is right and they are wrong” (March 4, 1862, p. 109).

The circumstances were this: The evening before they left, being at the house of Bro. Thos. Hare, Eld. White in the midst of a roomful of the brethren and sisters, in a contemptuous manner stigmatized Eld. Snook as nothing but a ‘church pauper.’ This remark unkind and unjust as all of the

congregation then knew it to be, was by someone reported to Eld. Snook, and convinced him that Eld. White's pretended reconciliation and friendship was not real, but assumed, and of course this did not tend to calm the still troubled mind of the congregation. Bro. Hinton of Toledo, who was present, afterward remarked that it make his blood run cold to hear Eld. White speak so of Eld. Snook." ²¹⁶

Here is also the testimony of Gilbert Cranmer on this subject.

*"About ten years ago [1853] a Seventh-day Adventist minister, by the name of [Joseph] Bates, came to our town and advocated the whole Law, the gifts of the Spirit, and many other glorious truths. The gifts belonging to the Congregation, I had believed in for over twenty years. Hence I felt to rejoice supposing I had found the people I had been so long looking for. He told me that the gifts were realized among them, that they had the gift of prophecy and the gift of healing the sick. **But as long as I was with them I never knew of any being healed.** I have known them to try but they always failed. In this I was disappointed. **I also found the spirit of prophecy, with them, was confined wholly to a woman.** By this time I became suspicious that I had gotten on board the wrong ship. I then commenced to giving her visions a thorough investigation. **I found they contradicted themselves, and that they contradicted the Bible.** My doubts concerning the visions I made known to the brethren. At once they gave me the cold shoulder, and I was held at bay. Not knowing any people I could unite with, I remained with them for years, hoping they would get sick of the visions of E.G. White, and that we could yet walk together in unity of spirit. But instead of rejecting them, as I hoped they would,*

they only drew the reins the tighter. Gilbert Cranmer [founder of the Church of God (seventh day)]." 217

Here are a few other contradictions concerning Ellen White's visions.

"Early opposers to the Whites, including the Church of God in Marion, Iowa, saw the visions in a different light: they were primarily feigned to enable the Whites to gain control of the church. D.M. Canright, an early Seventh - day Adventist, was a close associate of the Whites. Canright left them in the 1880's because he saw that "Elder and Mrs. White ran and ruled everything with an iron hand. Not a nomination to office, or a resolution, not an item of business was ever acted upon in business meetings till all had been first submitted to Elder White for his approval. . . . [and Mrs. White's] revelations always favored Elder White and herself. If any dared question their course, they soon received a scathing revelation [based on a vision] denouncing the wrath of God against them." Canright painted a picture of a "coldly legalistic" Seventh-Day Adventist church governed by the fear of going against the "divine testimonies" of its "prophetess."

Canright too was the victim of its iron rule, forced to confess that he had been "blinded by Satan" for opposing the Whites' will. For years, Canright maintained, in the late 1860's, the main business at important meetings was the complaints of Elder White against leading ministers. Jacob Brinkerhoff, a Church of God leader, one time editor of the Bible Advocate, expressed a less critical view of the reason for her visions: they were the product of an unhealthy mind and body. From her childhood, when she was struck in the head by a rock

and was in a coma for days, until later life, Mrs. White suffered nervous and physical disorders. Later, when her health improved, her visions were less frequent and not as intense. Regardless as to the cause - and the source - of Ellen G. White's visions, their content naturally led to controversy. The content of many of them was to prove a constant source of embarrassment, and potential source of opposition to Seventh-Day Adventists. And even more were Mrs. White's visions a source of conflict among Sabbath Adventists in the 1850's and 1860's by those who never accepted them in the first place but were subjected to extreme pressure to accept the "gifts of the Spirit" from a woman "prophetess," or be forever out of the "true Church" and bereft of salvation." 218

As the Church of God Seventh Day group was forming and also the Seventh Day Adventists in another branch, going in a separate direction than the Church of God group, you could see the light starting to wane on the Philadelphia era of Yahshua's Congregation and the creeping in of the Laodicean one, which we will fully cover in the next chapter.

The exact year of this change is not completely evident, but the attitude certainly is, as with this problem that stemmed with the Whites, we see the Nicolaitan spirit of control coming into the congregation that will take many forms in the Laodicean times to come. Below is more testimony concerning the high handed tactics of Ellen G. White.

"Ellen G. White's visions consistently held that Elohim was working only through her and her church group. And as for others, "Satan has taken full possession of the churches as a body." Her church was the only true church, and it was the

end time church of the Laodiceans: "The Laodicean church is the church of Messiah for the period in which we live, and He has no other. Those who renounce membership in the Laodicean church place themselves outside the fold of Messiah."

For several years, the White party taught that after 1844 the time of salvation for sinners was past. Ellen G. White's visions supporting the shut door idea were later explained away and altered, to make the way open for increases in church membership. Yet once again, because of diametrically altering their position, both occasions supposedly due to the result of visions, the White party left themselves open to opposition and skepticism." ²¹⁹

There were also doctrinal differences that the Whites had started bringing into the congregation, such as rejecting the 1800 year old belief of a literal 1,000 year millennial reign of Yahshua from Jerusalem here on earth. They replaced this with a different doctrine of the millennium being in heaven instead. They also refused to admit the clear error of William Miller in predicting Yahshua's return in 1844. They simply changed the belief that instead of Yahshua returning to earth He went into the Holy of Holies in heaven on that date. Ellen White also claimed that until then, no atonement had taken place by Him for the forgiveness of sins, a heresy that none of the true remnant of believers would accept.

"Though other Adventist groups admitted the gross error in assuming that October 22, 1844 was the date of the return of Messiah to the earth, the group that later developed into Seventh-Day Adventists never recanted, but instead changed their interpretation of what happened prophetically

on that date. For them, on October 22, 1844, Messiah cleansed the heavenly sanctuary and began His work of "Investigative Judgment." This was based on the vision of Adventist Hiram Edson in 1844, quickly accepted by the White group. The "Sanctuary Question" was openly opposed by many within the Sabbath Adventist movement, and later continued to be a source of controversy between Seventh-Day Adventists and the Church of God.

The Adventist Sanctuary position is as follows: "Messiah did not make the atonement when He shed His blood upon the cross. Let this fact be fixed forever in the mind." Until October 22, 1844, Messiah was in the first, or outer, compartment of the heavenly sanctuary. Man's sins, represented by the blood of Messiah, were transferred to the heavenly sanctuary's second compartment - the holy of holies - thus defiling it. Messiah's blood was then defiling the heavenly sanctuary. And, on October 22, 1844 (the supposed fulfilling of Daniel 8:14, "Unto 2,300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed") Messiah entered the second compartment in heaven and cleansed it, and began His Investigative Judgment preparatory to His return to cleanse the earth with fire and take the saints to Heaven.

Numerous obvious objections were raised against the White Party's interpretations of prophecy from the earliest days of their movement. Based as they were, and supported by, Ellen G. White's visions, rejection of the 1844 prophetic beliefs led naturally to a rejection of Mrs. White's visions. One of the more notorious examples of Mrs. White's dubious quotation of scripture is found in her most famous work, The Great Controversy. She quotes only part of Isaiah 24:6 to "prove" that at Messiah's coming, all the wicked will be

*destroyed on the earth, leaving the earth desolate during the millennium, while the saints are supposed to be taken to Heaven. Yet the rest of the verse states that there will be a few men left. These and other objections have continually been raised by many who have confronted Seventh-Day Adventist doctrine.”*²²⁰

Many of the prophecies that Ellen G. White made simply turned out to be wrong. There were times that she would even claim an angel gave her these prophecies.

*“Ellen G. White wrote in her Testimonies for the Church that 'At the General Conference at Battle Creek, May 27, 1856, I was shown in vision some things which concern the church generally; . . . I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel, 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Yahshua'." All of the people alive at that conference have died, presenting a serious question as to the authenticity of Mrs. White's visions.”*²²¹

Here are some other doctrines that Ellen White changed from the original tenets of faith of the Sabbatarian groups.

“Mrs. White's visions supported the idea that Messiah was crucified on a Friday and resurrected on a Sunday, despite the fact that this idea weakened the Seventh-Day Adventist pro-Sabbath stance and is contrary to the Bible. Her Visions further supported the idea of a Trinity, which early American Sabbatarians, and the Church of God, rejected. Because Mrs. White was originally a Methodist, she was probably led to continue the practice of observing communion quarterly.

The Church of God observed it once a year, on the Jewish Passover. These and other doctrines of the Seventh-Day Adventists have been hotly disputed by the Church of God (Seventh Day).” ²²²

It is quite clear to see why there had to be a split, as the two groups were certainly not one in spirit and doctrine, and most of all, the ministers knew that it was not proper to have a woman running the congregation, especially by royal decree based on false prophecies, and many elders separated their congregation from the Whites' Adventist movement.

“Brother Smith: We conclude from present aspects that the name, ‘Seventh Day Adventist’ is being made obligatory upon our brethren. Without further light Ohio cannot submit to the name ‘Seventh Day Adventist,’ as either a test, or an appropriate name for Elohim’s people. Being appointed a finance committee at the last conference, and having now on hand means for carrying on the cause in Ohio, we could not conscientiously expend these means in any other than the advancement and extension of the truth and the ‘Church of God.” ²²³

“The Battle Creek conference, Oct. 1, 1860, voted ‘That we call ourselves Seventh Day Adventist,’ one brother dissenting. The brethren generally, as far as we can learn are adopting the name, and we never heard of, or thought of its being made a test until we read the above from Gilboa.” ²²⁴

“The statement continues: “. . . Therefore to bring matters to a crisis, Bro. Bartlett moved that they organize under the name of Seventh-day Adventists. This of course drew the line between them that wished to stand with the body of

*advent believers, and them that wished to stand independent—the very thing that had long been needed. About half of those present were very decided in the affirmative; others were not prepared to act, who, I trust, will yet see their way clear to unite with the body.”*²²⁵

“A portion of us were unwilling to accept these new planks in the platform of our Congregation; Certainly not until we had time to test their soundness and fitness. The result was, about one half of the Congregation decided to receive these volumes as valid Scripture, and drew off from us, or rather repelled us from them, denouncing us as rebels, &c., &c., distinctly intimating that they no longer desired, nor would tolerate our company in their religious meetings, otherwise than as spectators. We now discovered that the cry for our organization, had been made under false colors; and that while the plea of holding Church property, and securing the Congregation against impostors was held out, the real object was to put the visions of Ellen G. White on the same eminence with the Bible, and secure the recognition of Elder James White as the latter-day Moses.

*As it regards us being rebels, we boldly assert that we are not rebels. We have not rebelled against the constitution which we adopted, for west and firm on it yet. We have not rebelled against Ellen G. White, for we never endorsed her; nor have we rebelled against any of the messengers, for we never acknowledged allegiance to them; so the charge of rebellion reflects with shame on them, who have made it, they being the ones who have departed from their first position, (the Bible and the Bible alone), and have adopted a new one, Committee: V.M. GRAY, E.P. GOFF, M.N.KRAMER.”*²²⁶

So the Adventists, under the leadership of Ellen G. White and her husband, officially incorporated under the name "Seventh Day Adventists", and the other Sabbath keeping brethren from various different congregations had a meeting to decide on a congregational name, as at that time each group had a different name and some groups even used no name at all to distinguish themselves. At this most crucial time, Gilbert Cranmer continued to be a rock of faith to hold things together and to try to further the work of Yahshua. He started a magazine called, "*The Hope of Israel*" to promote the work of Messiah.

"In the first issue of the Hope of Israel, August 10, 1863, Cranmer records his break with the White Party: "At last I made up my mind I would not belong to a church that was ruled by a woman any longer. From that time the Bible has been my creed, with Messiah as the head of the Congregation. I started alone, with my Bible in my hand. Elohim has blessed my labors beyond my utmost expectations. We have some eight ministers and some hundreds of members in the State of Michigan. Elohim has manifested His power among us in a wonderful manner." 227

A great debate then started in about 1861 and continued for several years about what name this newly formed congregation should be called. Here are the records from the "Hope of Israel" magazine on how they came to adopt the name "Church of God".

"Another thing one observes by reading articles in the old issues of the Hope Magazine are that the Church of God people often referred to themselves as the "Advent People," or "Advent bands," or "Church of Christ." Vol. 1, No. 4

contains a letter from Eld. Phelps to Brother Easton. He makes comments on the principles laid down by the publishers of the Hope, some of which refer to the organization, denominationalism, sectarianism, and the matter of a name. This all caused confusion among those who professed to be Elohim's people. The organization of which Paul wrote, in I Cor. 12 is all-sufficient, Here is his letter.

TO THE BRETHREN OF THE EAST, organized under the name of the 'Church of the First Born,' greetings:—
Whereas, the Lord's children associated together in church relation in different parts of his vineyard, are known by different names, as 'The Church of God,' 'Church of Christ,' 'Christians,' 'Disciples,' 'Seventh Day Adventists,' & etc.; and whereas such differences of names is not convenient, and often leads to confusion. The brethren assembled in conference in Portland, Nov., 1864, feeling an earnest desire that the difficulty may be removed; and that a name may be adopted that all may be free to unite under; a name, if possible, free from all reasonable objections, appointed a Committee to prepare an address to the church to be published in the 'Hope of Israel,' giving the reasons for the adoption and preference of our own name, (Church of the First Born) and inviting suggestions for the accomplishment of this object. Our name was adopted as one of the names given to the congregation in the Word;

With these few remarks concerning our own feelings in the matter, we earnestly invite a free expression of the views of the different churches, that if possible the differences of opinions may be removed, and all unite under one name. May the Lord guide us into all truth, and prepare us for his

heavenly kingdom. J.C. Day, O. Davis, G. Cranmer,
Committee Portland, Nov., 1864.”²²⁸

Below we see some of the letters written back to J.C. Day,
O. Davis and Gilbert Cranmer.

“Marion, Iowa, Jan., 1865 DEAR BROTHER DILLE:—It appears that the time has come when we are called upon to express ourselves in regard to the taking of a name, to distinguish us from other religious sects, or denominations. And it appears conclusive to my mind, that if such a name is adopted, that the name itself should be indicative of our faith. And as suggestions upon this subject are invited by the Committee appointed at the Conference at Portland, upon this subject, I feel free to suggest that the name FREE SEVENTH-DAYADVENTISTS would be indicative of our peculiar views, and religious tenets. The name Adventist must necessarily attach to us a religious people. It matters not what name we take, we are in fact Seventh-day Adventists; and it is in this blessed hope of the soon coming of the great Head of the Congregation, that we rejoice continually, day and night, before the throne. . .Brethren, speak out on this subject. Let us have a general correspondence before we adopt any name. And let us live humbly before Elohim, so that he will give us a free, or an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom, at the advent of his dear Son.” V.M. GRAY

Union, Rock Co., Wis., Apr. 3rd.BRO. DILLE:—I remember my pledge, and I remember the ‘Hope,’ and I remember you, and the ‘congregation of the living Elohim,’ ‘the pillar and ground of TRUTH.’ For years I have felt that the name, ‘Church of God,’ had a power in it that no sectarian name

ever had, or ever could have. And I feel there is no name so appropriate . . . POLLY G. PITTS.

“The question of a name for the church seems to have been a problem for some time. Previously we had a suggestion to call the church ‘The Church of the First Born,’ and another suggestion to call it ‘Free Seventh-day Adventists.’ Next we have an article, first giving all kinds of texts which referred to Elohim’s people, by many appellations, and then adding, ‘Let us be living members of the church of God, by a living faith in Yahshua; and by the hope of being ‘GATHERED into the general assembly and church of the firstborn,’ when Yahshua shall come, and by his angels, gather the children of Elohim now scattered abroad, into one glorious, pure and perfect society, to dwell with Elohim in Messiah forever’. . . This was suggested by Samuel Everett.” ²²⁹

Some actually did not want to adopt any name:

“Bro. Harry Marsh, of Lapear, Mich., wrote: I see the subject of a name to be known by, is being agitated. Hope the name for convenience may be a short one. Christian, Disciple, or some such, with Seventh day attached, to distinguish it from others, thus, —‘Seventh Day Disciples,’ or such other name as may be suitable; but name it the shortest that may be. Another voice that was raised against adopting a name for the church was that of Moses J. Dunham of Dowagiac, Mich., published in the Hope of Israel, April 9, 1865. The Editor’s position on the name issue was published as follows: My Position.—Christians need no party names to distinguish them from brother Christians. Their daily walk is sufficient to distinguish them from partisan professors, and from the world. H.S.D.” ²³⁰

Then, from the following letter in 1866 we can see that the name “Church of God Seventh Day” was indeed the official name that they incorporated.

“Marion, Iowa “Church of God”

According to previous appointment the Church of God in Marion, Iowa, convened July 14 (1866), for the purpose of electing church officers, and transacting other business. (This shows that by this time they called themselves the Church of God. Previously they went by the name of Church of Jesus Christ.).” ²³¹

I place this documentation in this book not only to show the history of the remnant Congregation of Yahshua, but to also expose a great deception that the Church of God groups have perpetrated on the brethren for more than 100 years.

My personal background, baptism and ordination are through the branch of Yahshua’s remnant Congregation that is called Church of God. However, the Church of God leaders, with Herbert W. Armstrong as the worst offender, have erroneously covered up the true history of Yahshua’s Congregation and have taught their members for more than 100 years that the only true Congregation of Yahshua has always been called Church of God.

Not only is this a grievous lie and false statement, as we have clearly seen by hundreds of references that the congregation called by their peers and persecutors was Paulician, Waldensian, Anabaptist, Seventh Day Baptist, etc, and not Church of God. In addition, as the above letters prove, even up until the year 1865 the actual Church of God

group did not have one corporate name, but was referring to themselves by many names and even some congregations using no name.

Now I agree that in Scripture, in the original Hebrew and Aramaic, it was written that Yahweh's people in the Old Testament or Tanach were called the Congregation of Yahweh, as well as in the New Testament as we have discussed. But I also believe this to be a general term and certainly not a corporate banner, and never was it at any rate called Church of God. The word "*church*" comes from the pagan deity '*circe*', and the name "*god*" was the personal name of the Babylonian deity (Is 65:11). Any good encyclopedia can prove this and that the name of our Heavenly Father is Yahweh, as is stated in Exodus 3:15 and almost 7,000 other places in Scripture.

Exo 3:15 *And Elohim said to Moses again, You shall say this to the sons of Israel, YAHWEH, the Elohe of your fathers, the Elohe of Abraham, the Elohe of Isaac, and the Elohe of Jacob, has sent me to you. **This is My name forever**, and this is how I should be remembered from generation to generation.*

This is how the Sacred Name Movement came about from the true remnant of believers in the 20th century, as we will see in the next chapter. But I want to make this point now to conclusively show that the Churches of God were not being honest with the brethren over the last hundred years.

Not only this; but Herbert Armstrong, with other leaders of break-off groups from the Worldwide Church of God, also promoted and continue to promote that they are the only true

Church and not simply a branch of Yahshua's true Congregation. They have mischievously used some of the same history that I have outlined in this book and have taken that history to them only and not to the entire, holy remnant that Yahshua has called out from the darkness of Roman Catholicism and her daughters, the Protestants.

They use much of the history of the Seventh Day Baptists as their own and condemn any group including the Seventh Day Baptists as false because they are not part of their corporate banner, and yet as we have seen, the Seventh Day Baptists can trace their beginning to the time of the pilgrims and the Church of God only to Gilbert Cranmer in 1865 who came out from Seventh Day Baptist pastors and congregations.

I will have more to say about this hypocrisy later, in the last chapter, but for now we can see the attitude which will permeate the next and last era called the Laodicean.

Chapter 12 – The Laodicean Congregation

As I mentioned in the last chapter, it is somewhat ambiguous to the ending of the Philadelphia era and the beginning of the Laodicean one, but the change definitely was sometime in the late 1800's. After the separation of the Church of God Seventh Day with the Seventh Day Adventists and the Whites, several predominant ministers left the Whites and joined the Church of God. Among these men of faith were B.F. Snook, William Brinkerhoff and his younger brother Jacob Brinkerhoff.

Also, as the Church of God Seventh Day was growing in number and stature, Elder Cranmer with other elders started having combined Sabbath conferences with some other Sabbath groups of the true remnant of Yahshua such as the Seventh Day Baptists, but due to the rift with Ellen G. White very little communication went on with the Seventh Day Adventists, unless it was of a negative nature.

"The meetings were favored with presence of a delegate from the American Sabbath Tract Society, Eld. V. Hull, Seventh Day Baptist minister, who lived at Welton, Clinton Co., Iowa, who was accompanied by Elder B.Clement, S.D.B. minister, residing at the same place. Eld. V. Hull gave a synopsis of the history of the American Sabbath Tract Society and its workings for some time past; stating their sympathy with us and desire to cooperate in the Sabbath cause; also their desire for our success.

Hull also requested that a delegate be sent from this Conference to the meeting of their Association at its next session; also that a minister from this Conference be sent to

visit a body of Sabbath-keeping Adventists at Welton, Iowa. It was voted that this Conference send a delegate to the Seventh Day Baptist Northwestern Association, to be held at Albion, Wis., next June. M.N.Kramer was elected delegate, with H.E. Carver alternate.” ²³²

Another outstanding elder who worked with Gilbert Cranmer until his death in 1873 was Erastus Branch. William Brinkerhoff was named as editor of “The Hope of Israel” magazine in 1866 when it was moved from Michigan to Marion, Iowa. In 1868, Brinkerhoff was replaced by B.F. Snook and moved to La Porte City where he fell away and joined the Universalists. It was quite a blow to the congregation but his younger brother Jacob Brinkerhoff wound up being one of the strongest men of faith during that time. He would take over as editor of “The Hope of Israel” magazine and kept the job on and off until 1914.

“According to Brinkerhoff’s introductory editorial, the management of the Christian Publishing Company Association had incurred a lien against the equipment used to publish the paper. They had issued a mortgage against the property. This fell into default and the equipment was sold at public auction on February 18th, 1874. To save paper Jacob used funds which he had acquired, either to purchase a home, or from the sale of his home, which is unclear, and purchased the office press, printing materials and fixtures.”

²³³

Jacob Brinkerhoff was a wonderful, spirit filled elder and believer. Also at this time, another man joined the congregation and was ordained, named A.F. Dugger. He wrote several bible tracts including one on the Sabbath day. His son A.N. Dugger would go on to be one of the prolific

leaders of the Church of God Seventh Day, leading in the 20th century.

“Brother A.F. Dugger had been a first-day preacher, and after his denomination appointed him to write a book against seventh day Sabbath-keeping, he became convinced while he was preparing the material for the book, that the Sabbath must be kept in this dispensation. Some of our readers are acquainted with the little booklet “The Bible Sabbath Defended.” This was a result of his work after he became a Sabbath-keeper.” ²³⁴

Here is another quote from “The Hope of Israel” magazine to show the doctrinal stance of the Church of God Seventh Day on the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

“By reading the Hope of Israel one learns of some of the doctrinal beliefs that the Church of God brethren advocated in those days. So here with we present a short item from Vol. 1, No. 2, August 24, 1863. Mr. Tanton Ham, — of Bristol, Eng., in writing on the immortality of the soul says: ‘Let it be registered as the genuine genealogy, that Pagan Plato was its father, and the profligate Pope Leo its foster father. Born and bred by Pagan philosophy, the protégé of Popery, this notion of the soul’s immortality has become a pet dogma of popular Protestantism, which with a strange forgetfulness of its low lineage, openly declares it to be the honorable offering of a true orthodoxy.’” ²³⁵

Here is a quote showing that the Church of God Seventh Day kept the Passover on the beginning of the 14th day of Aviv (Nisan) according to Scripture.

“It was observed in former news items or reports of meetings that the Brethren in various places observed Communion at various times. Now, in the Hope of Israel, published Tuesday, April 23, 1867, is an excellent article by Samuel Cronce, Mt. Carroll, Illinois, contending that the early church, to the time of Constantine, observed the Lord’s Supper annually at the beginning of the 14th of Abib, and then we should now show His death until He comes, by also observing it at the beginning of the 14th.” ²³⁶

It is also of significance to mention that as early as 1866, the official congregational stance was that Israel would return to what was then called, Palestine, and be a nation again before the return of Yahshua. ²³⁷

Here is another amazing story from Elder Gilbert Cranmer about a miraculous healing at a conference meeting.

“My beloved brother Dille:—I have just returned from Trowbridge. We had a glorious meeting. I preached 4 discourses, to a large audience. The last discourse was on the ‘Law.’ I baptized 1, and some 8 or 10 confessed the Sabbath, and the most of them said they should keep the whole law, for time to come. The Lord manifested his power in a wonderful manner. Sister Carter, of Otsego, attended the meeting. She had been deprived of her speech for a long time. On the Sabbath, in the midst of a large Congregation, her speech was perfectly restored again. Glory to Elohim! There was a Methodist woman present, who arose in the congregation, and said, ‘This is the power of Elohim! I know there is no deception with Sister Carter, for she stayed with me last night, and I know that she could not speak a word. ‘Brethren, be of good cheer! The Eternal is for us, who can

prevail against us! Yours in hope of eternal life, when the Life Giver comes. GILBERT CRANMER.” ²³⁸

As we head into the turn of the century and the year 1900 many changes will start to take place from within and without. The Industrial Revolution, as well as World War I in 1914 and other circumstances that we will cover will show what molded the Laodicean era of Yahshua's Congregation.

As we will continue to follow the branch of Yahshua's remnant Congregation called the Church of God Seventh Day, and the Worldwide Church of God and its off-shoots, I want to stress the point that at this time in history there were still many other branches of Yahshua's remnant Congregation that were present such as the Seventh Day Baptists, the Seventh Day Adventists, the free-Sabbath keepers (called Church of the Firstborn), and small groups of seventh day Quakers and Mennonites still existed, as well as the remnants in Europe and Russia and Armenia that we mentioned earlier.

I will mention, however, that some of these groups such as the Mennonites and Quakers have almost completely abandoned the truths they had for a more Protestant image. Even the Seventh Day Baptists of today are hard to distinguish from Protestantism when we remove the issue of the Sabbath day. However, in the late 1800's look at the connection between some of the Seventh Day Baptist congregations of Gilbert Cranmer and the Church of God Seventh Day.

“One of the pioneer names in the early work of the Church, is that of Branch. The Branches were leaders in the Church of

God work for a number of years near Hartford, and later at White Cloud. At the present time, these groups seem to be associated with the Seventh Day Baptists. Anyway, the following letter is one of the first letters from a Branch, in the Hope of Israel.” ²³⁹

Also, the reason of stressing the Church of God line at this point is because of the many off-shoots that will develop out of this line over the next 100 years, and also because this branch of the congregation and its offsprings will be most important in the coming century and mark the identification of the Laodicean congregation.

Rev 3:14 *And to the messenger of the congregation of Laodicea, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Head of the creation of YAHWEH:*

Rev 3:15 *I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold, or hot.*

Rev 3:16 *So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit you out of My mouth.*

Rev 3:17 *Because you say, I am rich, and I am made rich, and I have need of nothing, and do not know that you are miserable and a wanderer and poor and blind and naked.*

Rev 3:18 *I advise you to buy from Me gold having been fired by fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, and your shame and nakedness may not be revealed. And anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see.*

Rev 3:19 *"I, as many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten." Be zealous, then, and repent.*

If you had to look at one characteristic of the true Congregation of Yahshua throughout the ages besides their consistent comment of “the bible and the bible only”, it was

the resistance of having any part to do with the world, or particularly, staying separate from the false apostate Roman and Protestant Churches. The Paulicians and Waldenses literally gave up their lives not to compromise with the world and false religion, and yet as we start the Laodicean era of Yahweh's Congregation, we will see that the very foundation of it started with incorporating Yahshua's true remnant Congregation, and in essence, merging and acquiescing with the pagan world.

This is what the Church of God Seventh Day did, as well as the Seventh Day Baptists, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Worldwide Church of God and most other branches of the true remnant of Yahshua's Congregation.

They have incorporated and become one with the end time government of the beast. The word corporation comes from the word "*corpus*" which is Latin for a corpse or dead person. A corporation is creating a third entity that doesn't exist and uniting the two corporate partners into one, therefore, making a complete union, as with marriage, between the newly formed corporation and the state. It also limits the corporation on what they can preach or do as they must now submit to the government who formed them.

In the Philadelphia era of Yahshua's Congregation, Yahweh stated that He opened a door that no man can shut (Rev 3:7), and part of that open door was that for the first time in the history of the Congregation of Yahweh, the Congregation would have legal freedom of religion from the government state to freely preach the original Good News message that Yahshua brought. Yahweh also allowed the inspiration of the printing press as the means to get that message out. In America there is no need to incorporate as the citizens

already have freedom of religion. However, due to when the IRS and tax codes came into existence, people were only allowed to write off donations made to a church if they were indeed 5013c incorporated and had tax exempt status. Let me clearly state that tithing is a biblical command of Yahweh and He is the owner of the tithe and brethren don't tithe to get a tax advantage, but to be obedient to Yahweh and His commands.

What incorporation also does is make Yahshua's loving little flock into a non-personal corporate entity that can be misused and manipulated by men. And unfortunately, this is what we will see has happened to the remnant Congregation in the 20th and now 21st centuries, until this very day.

Yahshua's Congregation is a '*spiritual organism*', not a '*corporate organization*', and once that spiritual organism is compromised by worldly government that is controlled by Satan himself, you will inevitably get pride, selfishness, greed and corruption that has followed every government entity of the Devil since his rebellion in the Garden of Eden.

What kept the Congregation of Yahshua pure in the wilderness for those 1260 years was their total separation from the world and its authority over the life of a true believer. They lived in tents, and at times mountain caves; they schooled their children themselves in the word of Yahweh with truth and honor in everything, and they saw that compromising with their faith, doctrine or separatist life-style would have been their death-knell.

"In 1899, the General Conference of the Church of God held its annual meeting in Stanberry, Missouri. This conference acted upon a pending proposal to incorporate in the state of Missouri. Incorporation was authorized by the Conference

and an application to incorporate was made. Articles of Incorporation were issued by the Gentry County Circuit Court in December of 1899.

In this period many of the early pioneer ministers and founders of the Congregation were taken by death. In 1900 A.C. Long a leader and one of the founders of the Missouri Congregation and past president of the Conference, died at his home in Browndale, Missouri. Gilbert Cranmer, at age 89 years, died on December 17th, 1903. A.F. Dugger, a pioneer in the Nebraska Congregation died in 1910, and Jacob Brinkerhoff died at the age of 75 in 1916.”²⁴⁰

Truly this was the transitional phase into the Laodicean era.

It did not take long until the spirit of Laodicea was causing dissention in the early days of this last era when A.C. Long, and later, W.C. Long took over as editors for the “Bible Advocate” magazine.

“All went well until shortly after the turn of the century. It was then that resolutions began to be introduced in first some of the state conferences and later to the general conference, requesting more accountability on the part of the editor. Matters began to grow worse until finally Long was accused of misappropriating funds for the Bible Advocate.

William C. Long eventually left the editorship of the Advocate in 1905. Hurt over the turn of events, Long and some of his colleagues in the congregation who sympathized with him wrote a circular calling for a show of loyalty, which created a serious division in the General Conference. The Michigan Congregations now under the direction of the Branch brothers (stepsons of Gilbert Cranmer) boycotted the meetings of the General Conference and eventually affiliated

with the 7th Day Baptists. The newly formed conference in Oklahoma all but disappeared over this struggle.” ²⁴¹

However, when the Laodicean era started around the turn of the century, not all things were so bad and congregational growth was about to begin a spike that would splinter in many directions, and actually last even into the 21st century.

The Seventh Day Baptists were growing quite strong and had organized congregations in many states at this time with several thousand members. However, in 1922 something called the Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy crept into their congregations from Protestantism. This teaching was growing out of the liberal, newly found, science based beliefs of Darwinism, etc., to diminish the literalness of Scripture and to bring in a more socially, easier accepted message, which was filled with error and falsehoods.

The Seventh Day Baptists started to accept the trinity, as well as other false Protestant beliefs, but felt they had conquered the day, since as an institution they still held to the Seventh Day Sabbath. However, as we have seen with the other branches of Yahshua’s true Congregation throughout the ages, as soon as major compromise would come in, they basically would cease to be any longer recognized as part of the true remnant.

The Seventh Day Adventists were growing rapidly but had done quite a makeover from their beginnings under Ellen G. White, and except for the Sabbath day, incorporated many of White’s former Methodist beliefs. They also tried to cover most of White’s false prophecies and simply tried to focus on the overall Adventist message, which they called the ‘*Three Angels’ Messages*’ for the end times. They also accepted the

trinity and many false Protestant doctrines, and today even celebrate such pagan holidays as Christmas and Easter.

The Church of God Seventh Day also went through many changes in the early 1900's with the death of their early pioneers and a somewhat leadership vacuum to come. It was during this transitional period that Andrew Dugger, the son of the respected Elder A.F. Dugger, took control of a large part of the congregational leadership, and also tried to bring in a more centralized form of congregational leadership compared to the former practice of a General Conference each year for credentials of an elder and congregational doctrine, but also leaving autonomy in the local congregation.

"In the period of this tumult, Andrew Dugger began his ministry with the Church of God in 1906. When Jacob Brinkerhoff retired from the editorship of the Advocate Magazine in 1914, Dugger became both president of the General Conference and editor. During his tenure as president and editor, Dugger exerted much influence upon the Congregation.

Throughout the early part of Dugger's leadership the Church of God experienced some of its most rapid and greatest growth. During the period of the 1920's the congregation experienced more growth than it had previously. A missionary spirit was exemplified by the church and its leadership.

In the 1923 General Conference session, a proposition was discussed to facilitate the publication of literature in German, Hebrew and two Indian dialects. The conference also proposed that 7 Chinese nationals be supported as ministers. The Churches contacts included people in Central

and South America, Western Europe, Africa, and the West Indies. The work also grew extensively at home. The September 22, 1925 issue of the Advocate reported a partial list of congregations containing 79 congregations scattered over 17 states.

As the number of congregations and members grew, the General Conference began to adopt new policies.... The General Conference itself had begun as a loosely knit confederation of state conferences in which congregations and members functioned quite autonomously. At the time the conference was organized some anti-organizational sentiment remained and was published in the Advocate.”²⁴²

One of the reasons for the surge in growth in the 1920's Church of God Seventh Day was the fact that true, uncompromising, remnant believers of the Seventh Day Baptists were leaving due to the liberal changes we mentioned that were going on at that time, and regrouping in with the Church of God Seventh Day remnant.

As the numbers started to grow, Dugger continued to bring in many centralized reforms during the 1920's, and one of these reforms was that tithes would no longer be collected locally by the local congregation, but all tithes would be sent to the centralized committee or State Conference treasurers to be sent to the centralized committee. Many elders disagreed with this tactic as it put too much control on the central committee, and in essence took away the autonomy of the leader, elder and the local congregation.

“Some of the leaders whose income was cut off expressed sentiment against this new policy. On the other hand, Dugger's policy resulted in a dramatic increase of funds available to the Conference. It permitted the Conference to

take an active role in supporting evangelization of new fields and resulted in the noticeable growth of the Church.” ²⁴³

In the 1927 conference, Dugger also instilled new policies on doctrine and a revised doctrinal statement of 40 points that would supersede the previous one they had from the Conference in 1888.

“The revised statement no longer referred to the statement originally adopted by the General Conference in 1888. A new enlarged statement containing 40 points entitled, ‘What the Church of God believes and why’, was published in the Advocate on March 3rd, 1917, over the name of editor A.N. Dugger. Shortly after its appearance as a magazine article, the same manuscript was advertised as a tract in the tract list published regularly in the Advocate.

Apparently, this enlarged statement of doctrine is the same one referred to in the Conference action of 1927. By this time those 40 statements, which appear to have originated with Dugger, seemed to have received official status with the Church. They were published in the Advocate as the Churches official statement for many years.

Actions like that of the 1927 Conference began to engender contention and strife within the Church. The leadership was divided over the questions of the amount of authority the Conference should exercise in matters of doctrine and policy. Unfortunately, the Conference’s attempts to solve these problems were not effective. Dissatisfaction was about to erupt into an explosion that would bring division.” ²⁴⁴

This situation really describes most of the congregations that broke forth from the Laodicean era. Either the congregations wanted no judicial order and wanted to be ruled by the

people (Laodicean means ruled by the people), or there was a spirit of the Nicolaitans, which was a hard handed controlling spirit over the beloved sheep of Yahshua. The word, '*Nico-laitan*' means conqueror of the people. In both cases Yahweh's true judicial order, which is voluntary and reciprocal was neglected.

This fluid situation, however, would temporarily be put on hold as the Council of Elders of the Church of God Seventh Day unanimously decided to send Elder Dugger to Jerusalem, Israel to prepare the way for Yahweh's end time work from the Holy Land. Also, remember that since the late 1800's, the Church of God was preaching that Israel would be restored as a nation again in the Promised Land in the Middle East before Yahshua's return, and here in 1931, it was a full 17 years before that would happen, and yet, they were still inspired to send Elder Dugger there to prospect about this question.

"In the fall of 1931, it was voted at the General Conference that the church should send someone to Jerusalem to look after the work, in view of moving the world headquarters there when conditions would permit. Arrangements were consequently made for Elder A.N. Dugger to go and look after this work. A printing press was given him, while holding meetings in London, by Brother Samuel Brown, of that city, which was shipped to Jerusalem. During the summer of 1932, with the assistance of Elder Henry Cohen, a Hebrew Christian, they published a hundred and fifty thousand gospel tracts in the Hebrew language, and in August of that year, in company with Jacob Futerman, David Golden, Jacob Kort, and Henry Cohen, Elder Dugger went all over Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, systematically distributing these gospel messengers among all the Jewish cities and towns. A

good number of Jewish converts were baptized during 1932 in Palestine, and a number of Hebrew workers started into the gospel work there. Sister Rose Miller helped much in the good work, which the Lord had laid upon His church to do in the Holy Land.” ²⁴⁵

Elder Dugger returned to the USA in the fall of 1932, but the seeds of discord had already been laid at the General Conference in Stanberry before that. There was a clear divide in the group, which some elders wanted to take a more liberal stand on doctrine, even including allowing the use of tobacco, and the eating of unclean meats; to this Elder Dugger refused. Then, in the General Conference in 1933 things came to a head and a split happened.

“In the meeting of the General Conference held at Stanberry in August 1933, the discontentment over doctrinal and policy differences came to a head. There had been contention in these areas for nearly a decade within the Church.” ²⁴⁶

“This seems to have been the fateful year for the Church of God, in so far that a separation came about late in the year. More and more pressure had been exerted by probably half of the membership, that all should speak the same thing. On the other hand, probably the other half felt that our people were denied their personal liberties and freedom of expression. This finally came to ahead at the General Conference session, which was held in Stanberry during the month of August, 1933, when, in the election of officers a tie-vote was cast for the President, which, the then presiding officer had to break.” ²⁴⁷

The outcome was that Elder Dugger was voted out and a split occurred. Dugger reorganized his group in Salem, W. Virginia with Clarence Dodd, who also wrote the

congregational history book with Dugger, and started a new form of congregational government where they chose lots for 7 men to run the business of the congregation, including the finances, and 12 elders over the overseeing of the work, and 70 elders who would go out two by two into the mission field.

“About three months after the General Conference and Camp meeting had been held in Stanberry in 1933, there was formed what was called the “Reorganization,” with headquarters being established at Salem, West Virginia. A new Bible Advocate appeared there, with the same name, volume, and serial number which was changed shortly thereafter.

The Salem Group professed a belief in the apostolic form of church organization, often referring to it as the Bible Organization. So at their meeting in Salem, in November 1933, through a lot system they chose the Twelve, the Seventy and the Seven. But not all those chosen accepted their positions, a number of them staying with the original Stanberry organization, and some were not accepted by the Salem Group, for various reasons, even after their names had come out by lot.

The Salem group established its own publishing house, although for several years their printing was done by a local printer in Salem. Finances and enthusiasm for the work seemed to pick up greatly throughout the country. In the spring of 1934 there was a wonderful camp-meeting held in Salem during the time of the Feast of Pentecost, and another one at St. Joseph, Missouri in the fall during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Many new and independent Sabbath-keepers were added to the fold for the next several years, but troubles soon also arose from within this group, which in

time led to the defection of a number of the leading Brethren.”²⁴⁸

Dugger knew the importance of getting the end time work of Yahweh started in Jerusalem and sent a delegation back there in 1935.

“Elder and Sister L.D. Snow were sent as representatives for the Church of God to Jerusalem to labor among the Jews and try to establish the world headquarters there. They spent nearly a year in the Holy Land, and met with many disappointments. Sometime before Elder and Sister Snow left for Palestine, Elders A.N.Dugger and Robert Young, a converted Jew, traveled extensively throughout the United States to raise funds to send the latter as a missionary to Palestine also. He and the Snows working together did not turn out well for the church.”²⁴⁹

When Elder Snow returned, there was no further action taken to institute a headquarters in Jerusalem, Israel until Elder Dugger went there in 1952. The split was not easy at first on either group, but both groups quickly moved on with their agendas that they wished to accomplish.

“The split in the church caused a lot of consternation and disturbances in the established policies and work of the church, but the Brethren went right on and recovered themselves shortly in a manner that was commendable. Even as the Salem group seemed to be sparked by new enthusiasm and zeal, so likewise there was much enthusiasm and zeal manifested in the Stanberry group.”²⁵⁰

However, the reality of history is that neither group ever truly fulfilled the great aspiration that once existed of growing into a large, united, worldwide work that would take the true

Good News message of Yahshua to the world with might and power. Instead they stayed relatively small and unknown with little growth throughout the next two decades, and many brethren as well as ministers, knew that the full blessing of Yahweh was lacking from their group, so they moved to re-organize and united the two groups together in 1949.

“There had been a general feeling among the membership of the two churches that they were not receiving the blessings from the Almighty to the extent promised in the Word. Therefore the joint Committee and the Executive Boards and about sixty-one ministers met at Fairview, Oklahoma from February 12 through 17, 1948 to form plans for the ministers to work in unity. The members of the Committees for Union were: Elders K.H. Freeman, E.A. Straub and W.W. McMicken for Salem, and Elders S.J. Kauer, Irl Rodgers and C.E. Adams for Stanberry, with Elder A.E. Lidell chairman. That Fairview Meeting went down in church history as being one of the very best ever held in our generation. It was reported that the Holy Spirit was very manifestly present, and that old feelings were changed to feelings of love for one another. A proposed Constitution was agreed upon tentatively. Then, the executive Boards of the two groups met and planned joint work for the final legal union at the 1949 meeting held in Stanberry, Missouri. Another noteworthy event was that the ministers present at Fairview were about equally divided in numbers between the Salem and Stanberry organizations. The names of those present follow. Not all ministers from either organization were present at that meeting.” ²⁵¹

Even after this reunion, there was something missing in the light and zeal of Yahweh on this congregation until this present day. They were a moral and set apart group of

brethren who from this point held the Sabbath day in the highest regard, but they lacked to also grow in the grace and knowledge of our Master Yahshua Messiah; and as Yahweh was moving in these last days with restored knowledge, such as His true set apart Holy name, and keeping all seven Holy Days according to Leviticus 23, and also the importance of restoring Jerusalem as His set apart headquarters in anticipation of Yahshua's return, they simply never embraced any of these crucial points and continued more in the spirit of the Sardis congregation, a remnant congregation who spiritually was doing very little of significance.

As of the early 2000's, this congregation, with its origins to Gilbert Cranmer in the 1840's had only about 11,000 members in the USA. However, they had formed several international congregations abroad. This congregation through the years, although filled with nice, loving, conservative brethren, has lacked the purity of understanding the Torah and also has been most insufficient in the area of Bible prophecy. However, they have held the basic tenets of the faith and continue to exist unto this day. Elder Dugger did not partake in the reunification in 1949 due to the fact that restoring the headquarters of Yahweh to Jerusalem was not in the Church of God Seventh Day's plan, even though a significant event had just happened in history in 1948 with Israel becoming a literal nation again, according to Scripture after 2520 years of Diaspora.

I want to digress here for a moment because in the 1930's, two significant ministries started after the initial split of the Church of God Seventh Day in 1933. Both of these ministries were extremely important in the 20th century, and also in shaping where we are today with the true remnant of Yahshua, and even in biblical prophecy. The first important

ministry that broke off from the Salem, West Virginia group in 1934 was through a man who was elected as one of the 70 evangelists under Dugger, named Herbert W. Armstrong. Herbert Armstrong had a Quaker background; and his wife Loma came to the truth of the Sabbath through a member of the Oregon Church of God Seventh Day. Herbert Armstrong, who was not a Sabbath keeper at the time, studied the issue trying to disprove his wife only to realize by his study that she was correct, and they started attending with the Church of God Seventh Day. He was baptized in 1927 and ordained by the Oregon Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day in the summer of 1931.

"I was ordained (said Herbert Armstrong) at an all-day meeting in June (1933). I do not remember the date, but it could have been at or very near Pentecost." ²⁵²

Herbert Armstrong stayed with Andrew Dugger after the split of 1933, but had a difference on doctrinal stance in two major issues. Herbert Armstrong believed that all 7 Holy Days of Leviticus 23 had to be observed; whereas, Dugger believed only the three main pilgrim feasts of Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot (which they referred to as Tabernacles) had to be observed. Herbert Armstrong was also taught the doctrine of British Israelism by G.G. Rupert, which teaches that America and Great Britain are the nations of Israel through the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. Dugger also disagreed with this doctrine, and in 1937 Herbert Armstrong had his ministerial credentials revoked by the Salem Church of God Seventh Day.

Herbert Armstrong went on to create the Radio Church of God which in 1967 became the Worldwide Church of God. Starting in the late 1950's, the Church grew in size and

financial power and by the 1970's it became the largest and most influential branch of Yahshua's remnant Congregation.

However, in the Laodicean congregation, money and power and numbers took the place of integrity, honesty and truth. Armstrong started to develop a powerful spirit of the Nicolaitans in this congregation by the 1960's and 70's and started to preach that they were the only true remnant of Yahshua's Congregation, instead of a mere branch of many works that Yahshua was performing. The Church started making a clear class structure between the ordained elders and the local brethren and also started teaching in the 1970's the primacy of Peter doctrine, that Peter was the chief Apostle with apostolic succession to another man in each generation, and that Herbert Armstrong was Peter's successor in that age. This was extremely close to the Roman Catholic doctrine of succession of the Pope of Rome.

This was a clever ruse by Herbert Armstrong, as the truth was that there was an unbroken line of succession from Yahshua and the Apostles through Yahshua's ordained ministry throughout the ages until today, but there was never any type of royal succession of any individual that we see in history. Clearly, the head is Messiah, and as ordained elders, we are collectively part of His one and only true body that has always existed, but individually there is no predominance to any one man. Armstrong, also at this time, actually even went so far as to claim he had a royal lineage that went back to King David. This was quite a hoax that some of his followers even believe until today, but the reality is that all royal records of lineage of King David were destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., which is why Judaism has a problem as there is no way for them to ever prove a true lineage for a messiah that would go back to King David.

There were also many financial abuses at the headquarters in Pasadena, California and many reports of money being squandered in all directions, including built- in swimming pools and expensive curtains for elders.

The ironic part of this blatant controlling spirit and misuse of Yahweh's judicial order under the Worldwide Church of God came in the fact that they vehemently started to preach that they were the Philadelphia era of Yahshua's Congregation and the only true believers in the world. Herbert Armstrong also started to preach at that time that he was the prophesied end time Elijah in Malachi chapter 4. How blind power and pride can make someone who was a true ordained servant of Yahweh when he began in the 1920's, and did such a great work and diligently served in faith the congregation in the early years of his life.

In reality, the truth of the matter was that the Worldwide Church of God, as the largest and most powerful branch of the end time Laodicean congregation, fit the following scripture to perfection of their true spiritual condition.

Rev 3:17 *Because you say, I am rich, and I am made rich, and I have need of nothing, and do not know that you are miserable and a wanderer and poor and blind and naked.*

Rev 3:18 *I advise you to buy from Me gold having been fired by fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, and your shame and nakedness may not be revealed. And anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see.*

Rev 3:19 *"I, as many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten." Be zealous, then, and repent.*

Yes, they thought their physical riches were a sign of great blessings from Yahweh when in reality it was their downfall.

They were much more faithful and true to the word when they were a small, unheard of group in the 1930's and 40's under the Radio Church of God, than when they became a corporate, wealthy, prideful church organization later.

The proof of this matter was when Herbert Armstrong died in 1986, the church he built crumbled within one decade and the Worldwide Church of God does not even exist today, but went back to pagan Christianity and accepted every false doctrine they preached against for 50 years.

More than 1,000 breakoffs formed from that organization, and most are run by spiritually blinded ministers who are simply trying to recreate the wealth and notoriety that Herbert Armstrong had. I am most sad to see this outcome as I was initially baptized through the Worldwide Church of God in the 1980's, when I was first called by Yahweh to His precious truth.

The second group that broke off from the Dugger group in 1938 was a group started by Clarence Dodd, the very partner of Dugger with their book, "A History of the True Religion". Elder Dodd, being a great man of faith, it would have had to be a major issue that would separate him from Dugger and the group in Salem. And indeed it was.

First, Elder Dodd came to the realization with Herbert Armstrong that all seven Holy Days of Leviticus 23 had to be kept. Also, after receiving information on the true names of our Heavenly Father Yahweh and His Son Yahshua, he realized the importance of using the correct biblical names for the Father and the Son. Proper names are not translated like other words, but transliterated. As an example, the word water in Hebrew is '*mayim*', and in English is '*water*', the two words are a translation of one another with no phonetic

sounding. Whereas names are transliterated, meaning that except for small phonetic modifications, the name stays the same in any language.

In Scripture, the Hebrew name 'Adawm' in English is 'Adam', 'Moshe' is 'Moses', 'Daveed' is 'David', etc. So Elder Dodd realized that in the original Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures the true proper name of Yahweh the Father and Yahshua the Son were actually changed during the Hellenization of Christianity to paganism, as the name "God" was the proper name of the Babylonian deity of fortune and the name "Jesus" had come as the masculine form of Iaso the female goddess of healing.

The other thing to remember is that one of the main doctrines that the true remnant of Yahshua preached throughout all the history of the true Congregation was the proper baptism of full immersion into the family name of the Creator. The book of Hebrews tells us the following:

Heb 1:1 *In many ways and in various ways of old, Elohim spoke to the fathers in the prophets;*

Heb 1:2 *in these last days He has spoken to us in the Son, whom He appointed heir of all; and by whom he made the worlds;*

Heb 1:3 *for He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being, and upholding all things by the power of His Word; having made purification of our sins through Himself, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Psa. 110:1)*

Heb 1:4 *and He is altogether superior to the cherubs, just as the name He has inherited is a more excellent name than theirs .*

Heb 1:5 *For to which of the cherubs did He ever say, "You*

are My Son; today I have begotten You?" And again, "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me." (Psa. 2:7)
Heb 1:6 *And again, when He brought the First-born into the world, He said, "And let all the cherubs of Elohim worship Him."*

These scriptures clearly show the superiority of Yahshua the Son of Yahweh over the angels because He has a more **excellent name** than theirs. Angels carry the generic Hebrew title of “*El*” in their name, such as Michael and Gabriel, but the Son has the family name of Yahweh in His name in **Yah-Shua**, meaning, Yahweh’s salvation.

So the fact that at our baptism into the very covenant of Yahweh we are being adopted as literal sons and daughters of Him, and just as a wife takes the family name of her husband when they enter the marriage covenant, we at our baptism are taking the family name of Yah Yahweh the Father and Yahshua Yahweh the Son; Yahweh being a family name. Once Elder Dodd realized the magnitude of the importance of the one and only true name of our Heavenly Father Yahweh, he could no longer stay under an administration that rejected the very name that Yahweh Himself said was His only personal name forever.

Exo 3:13 *And Moses said to the Elohim, Behold, I shall come to the sons of Israel and say to them, the Elohe of your fathers has sent me to you; **and they will say to me, What is His name? What shall I say to them?***

Exo 3:15 *And Elohim said to Moses again, You shall say this to the sons of Israel, **YAHWEH**, the Elohe of your fathers, the Elohe of Abraham, the Elohe of Isaac, and the Elohe of Jacob, **has sent me to you. This is My name***

forever, and this is how I should be remembered from generation to generation.

Also, knowing that the titles of lord and god come from pagan deities that Yahweh forbids us to recognize, Elder Dodd knew he had to break away and start fresh with this vital piece of truth given to him by Yahweh Himself.

Exo 23:13 And be watchful in all that I have said to you. And you shall not call upon another Elohim by name; it shall not be heard from your mouth.

Isa 42:8 I am YAHWEH; that is My name; and I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to engraved images.

Elder Dugger agreed with Elder Dodd that Yahweh and Yahshua were the true names of the Father and Son, but for unknown reasons did not embrace them and rarely used them, although acknowledging them to be correct. Herbert Armstrong, on the other hand, who was keeping some Holy Days with Elder Dodd at the time started using the sacred name of Yahweh for a short time, but because donations went down, he dropped it for that reason, and then, in the future lied and manipulated the doctrine to try to conceal the importance of the true family name of Yahweh to the brethren, but still preached that the way to recognize the only true Congregation of Yahshua was that they were called by the Father's name.

Joh 17:11 And no longer am I in the world, yet these are in the world; and I come to You. **Holy Father, keep them in Your name,** those whom You gave to Me, that they may be echad (united) as We are echad (united).

Eph 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Master Yahshua Messiah,

Eph 3:15 of whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named,

However, Herbert Armstrong, even after acknowledging that the true biblical family name of the Father was Yahweh, still did not use Yahweh, but used 'god', the name of the Babylonian deity of fortune. You can reference in an interlinear bible in Isaiah 65:11 and see where the King James uses 'troop' the word is 'god'. Yahweh is the personal name of the Creator, and the Bible was written in Hebrew and the name Yahweh appears 7,000 times alone in the Tanach or Old Testament.

Herbert Armstrong would go on throughout the years to state the clear importance of using the paganized name 'god' but also would write scathing articles against the name Yahweh. His chameleon break-off ministers continue to do the same until today and there has been zero growth in those Worldwide Church of God break-offs, and in reality, the numbers have simply dwindled lower by the decades as they split and splinter into more groups every few years.

Yahweh can have mercy on those who have no knowledge of His true name, and I don't doubt that people who read His word, the Holy Bible, and in faith prayed to Him, had their prayers answered, even if they used the wrong name, unwittingly. However, if someone was blessed with the true knowledge to know the very true name of the Creator and His Son, our very Savior, why on earth would someone reject that truth that is so clear and powerful? The sacred name of Yahweh and Yahshua is not a doctrine; it is simply a fact that these are their names. In my more than 30 years of research of congregational history of the true remnant of Yahshua, I cannot say that all the congregations in the

wilderness used the sacred name of Yahweh and Yahshua. However, I also can't say they didn't. As I mentioned earlier in the book, most of our history came from the enemies of the true Congregation and not themselves, although I have presented some amazing ancient literature in this work that shows some ancient first hand testimony. And within that testimony there is at times some usage of the sacred name, but it is not conclusive.

One must also remember that most of these works were in ancient languages such as Armenian, ancient Greek, Latin, and even Slavic, so the translators had the liberty on how they translated the name of our heavenly Creator and His Son. That is why in direct quotes, I simply used '*Elohim*', the generic Hebrew equivalent for deity in this book, unless the sacred name actually appeared.

However, whether the congregation in the wilderness used the names Yahweh and Yahshua really has no bearing on whether these are the true names or not, only whether these names are written in Scripture. Remember, the congregation in the wilderness, especially after the Paulician congregation left Armenia, had lost most of its connection to its Hebrew roots and traditions. Some of these congregations throughout antiquity at times even inherited an incomplete doctrine or had lost a small part of the truth.

As we see the true Congregation of Yahshua come out of the wilderness and sail to the new world of America, culturally they were a very different group than the early believers in the second and third centuries who were fleeing the land of Israel under Roman persecution.

I have had the blessing of being commissioned in the Promised Land of Israel by Yahweh starting since 1997, and

actually living here since the year 2000. I will give more of my own testimony in the next chapter, but I can honestly say that about 70% of my current knowledge and understanding of Scripture only came about from the time Yahweh allowed me to come back to our ancestral homeland here in Israel.

Yes, I learned the basic doctrines of Hebrews the 6th chapter when I was called by Yahweh through the Worldwide Church of God, but the full cultural understanding and Hebraic Roots of our faith, I only learned and was able to reestablish by coming home to Israel. So many things in Scripture, such as the Biblical Calendar, can only be understood when you put on a Hebraic mindset, and that can only be done here in the Promised Land of Israel. Like I always say, you can pray to Yahweh anywhere on earth and He will hear you, but when you are in Jerusalem, *it is a local call*.

So I am not criticizing or condemning those who have never heard the true names of our Father Yahweh or His Son Yahshua, Yahweh's salvation. Our ministry is one of reconciliation and not condemnation. But what I am saying is that this history of the true remnant Congregation is a circular history, as Yahweh is circular and not linear. He is eternal and His pattern of judicial order goes in a circular pattern from year to year.

And now in these end times it was prophesied that Yahweh would restore all things (Math 17:11), and I believe giving back to His children the knowledge of His true name; and also the restoration of His Torah in the life of a believer is a part of prophecy being fulfilled and a part of that restoration and a sign that we are close to Yahshua's return.

Mal 3:16 *Then those fearing YAHWEH spoke together, each man to his neighbor. And YAHWEH gave attention and*

heard. **And a Book of Remembrance was written before Him for those who feared YAHWEH, and for those esteeming His name.**

Mal 3:17 And they shall be Mine, says YAHWEH of Hosts, for the day that I will make up My treasure. And I will pity them as a man has pity on his son who serves him.

Mal 3:18 Then you shall return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves Elohim and him who does not serve Him.

Mal 4:4 Remember the Torah of My servant Moses which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, the statutes and judgments.

If you do a study in the Bible on the name of the Creator, you will find that when Yahweh's people were outside of the holy Promised Land of Israel, they refer to Him in Scripture by the generic title of Elohim by more than 2 to 1 to the name Yahweh. However, when they are living in the Promised Land in covenant relationship with Yahweh, the Bible used the personal name of Yahweh by more than 3 to 1. So the fact of Yahweh revealing His true covenant family name of Yahweh to His elect in these end times is a clear sign to me that He is ready to fulfill His covenant promise of bringing the house of Israel back home to the Promised Land. And the remnant of the house of Israel today is indeed the true Congregation of Yahshua scattered abroad. *(Please write for my book called "The Chosen People" for ample proof of where the house of Israel is today.)*

Let me now go through a brief history of the Sacred Name Movement starting in the USA in the last century.

"According to a letter from a Sacred Name believer, Ruth Fink of Philadelphia, Alexander McWhorter wrote a book or

tract, "The Memorial Name, or Yahweh-Christ," in 1857. He may have been one of the earliest Sacred Name believers."

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As mentioned above, there are scant references throughout history of the sacred name being used by Yahweh's true remnant, but now in these last days to give Him all the glory, there is a concerted effort to magnify His glorious name.

Here is the history of the modern movement in America. As I mentioned, I don't believe this is the beginning of what is called the '*Sacred Name Movement*' as that movement goes back to Creation and the giving of Yahweh of His name to His creation, but it is the beginning of the organized recognition of the importance of the name of the Heavenly Father in worship, and honor.

"It is interesting to note that Dodd co-authored the book, A History of the True Congregation with A.N. Dugger, which was published in 1936. Many in the Salem group did keep the Feast Days during these years. Elders John Kiesz and Frank Walker continued to keep them, with Herbert Armstrong, until at least 1945. But in 1937 at a camp meeting in Eugene, Armstrong was forced out of the Church of God, Seventh Day, because he would not cease preaching about the Feast Days and Anglo-Israelism. It is indeed significant that Dodd should break away and start The Faith magazine in the same year, March of 1937. Dodd "began to publish the [Sacred] Names [idea] in 1939," says Jacob O. Meyer, but according to L.D. Snow it was October of 1938.

At first he used the name, "Jehovah," but through continuous study (there is no letter 'J' in Hebrew), he began to see that the tetragrammaton should be transliterated as "YAHWEH,"

pronounced "Yah-way," Dodd was baptized into the name of Yahshua in 1941 by Elder Earl Bigford of Michigan.

Further, "quite a number of ministers [in the Salem Church of God] . . . accepted the Feasts ultimately and some of them eventually accepted the Sacred Name" Among these were Elders William Bishop and William Bodine." 254

Let's look at the following article about the start of this movement in the 1930's, written by a staunch pillar of Yahshua's end time remnant in Michigan, Bob Wells.

"The Sacred Name Movement began in the 1930's among the Church of God, 7th Day members who pondered the question of Proverbs 30:4, "What is His name and His Son's name if you can tell?" The Church of God 7th Day is a Sabbath-keeping group which came out of the Millerite movement of 1844 as did the 7th Day Adventists.

Most churches in Christianity taught that the Son's name was Jesus. They could not answer the first part of Proverbs 30:4. The Son said that He came in His Father's name. Would not His name be much the same or very similar?

Titles such as "God" and "Lord" certainly are not names, as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 8:5, "there are gods many and lords many" in heaven and in earth. A title is different than a name, it was freely admitted, but didn't the Heavenly Father have a name of His own? What was our heavenly Father's true name? Some of those precious few who can remember back to those early years contend that an initial discussion of baptism raised the question of which name is the candidate to be immersed into according to Acts 2:38.

Noteworthy of the early pioneers of the Sacred Name persuasion in the 1930's were John Briggs, Paul Penn,

Joseph Owsen, William Bishop, Larue Cessna, Ralph Kinney (who had a radio broadcast at that time), Angelo B. Traina, Clarence O. Dodd, William Bodine of Arkansas, L. D. Snow of Oklahoma, James Roley of Ohio, and Pearl Smith of Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

The following filler article Elder Dodd placed in "THE FAITH" magazine created a stir of interest: "It is interesting that throughout His life, Jesus Christ never heard Himself called by that name. 'Jesus' was the Greek word for the Hebrew 'Joshua' or 'Jeshua;' and 'Christ' or 'Christus' was the Greek word for 'Messiah' or 'Redeemer,' page 241, "Man's Great Adventure," by Edwin W. Pahlow, professor of history, Ohio State University."

The October 1941 issue of "THE FAITH" magazine commented that Elder Herb Armstrong would be holding the Feast of Tabernacles in Oregon. Although he kept the Feast days and the Sabbath, Mr. Armstrong, like the COG 7th Day, apparently decided the Third Commandment was not important and did not accept the Sacred Name. However, Kenneth Whitney and a few early Sacred Name believers contend that Mr. Armstrong did use Yahweh's name for a short while in his Radio Church of God broadcast in the early 1940's but lacking good response, he soon dropped the Sacred Name.

Now thoroughly convinced of the Name, in November of 1941 Elder Dodd placed the names of Yahweh and Yahshua in the masthead of "THE FAITH," and stated that in referring to the Father and the Son, the titles Lord, G-d, and Jes-s Christ would no longer appear in his publication.

Many were persuaded by the sound teaching of Elder Dodd's presentation of Bible truth. A group of Sabbath-

keepers rallied around his deeper teaching of truth and supported his efforts in publishing "THE FAITH" and other Bible literature. Following his death in December 1955, his wife continued to print and distribute his Bible-based literature. Today his daughter, Mary Dodd Ling, continues the distribution of tracts from Ohio.

The first charter in the Sacred Name Movement was issued in Michigan on July 11, 1939 to the Assembly of YHWH.

Elder Dugger joined with Elder Clarence Dodd in writing a history of the Sabbath-keeping groups. He was deeply interested in the Sacred Names and actively promoted them in this country before moving to Israel where he published the Mount Zion Reporter. Hindered from proclaiming the Sacred Name from Jerusalem, he nevertheless carried out an extensive ministry in Israel and Asia. He died in late 1975. His wife, Effie, died the following year. Gordon Fauth, their son-in-law has taken over publishing the Mount Zion Reporter, but does not use the Sacred Name.

The Assembly of Yahweh, Eaton Rapids, Michigan, began with a Bible study class meeting in a private home in the late 1920's where the Sabbath and the Commandments were stressed. Sister Pearl Smith felt moved to establish a "Camp of Yah," where from the early 1940's the Feast days were observed for many years. Eventually the Eaton Rapids Assembly acquired the present property at Gunnell Road. About 1969 they took over the publication of "THE FAITH." The Assembly continues with the magazine to this day.

Today, there are many autonomous groups, as well as organizations, that promote the Sacred Names and the whole word of Yahweh. Most of them have their roots, in one way or another, in the brief history described above." 255

This amazing little congregation in Easton Rapids, Michigan that started with Elder Dodd stepping out in faith in 1937 with "The Faith" magazine, continues until this day. I have had the great privilege of being invited as a guest speaker to this congregation on several occasions.

The Pastor, Sam Graham, has been an elder there for more than 50 years and has an amazing amount of memorable stories of the early days of this congregation and the faithful men who stood up for the truth of Yahweh to proclaim His glorious name. Pastor Sam is truly an icon and pillar of the Sacred Name Movement and a powerful example of leadership in these most difficult days we live in.

There were also some other notable men who played a major role in the furthering of the third commandment and true names of Yahweh and Yahshua in our day.

L.D. Snow was the minister that Elder Dugger sent to Israel in 1936 and was also a pivotal mover of the early Sacred Name Movement.

"L.D. Snow was first converted in 1929 under preaching of a Free Will Baptist minister in 1929 in Fort Smith, pastured by Elder R.A. Barnes. Barnes church went into the Salem Church of God of faction, and Snow became a minister. A.N. Dugger, General Overseer, called a ministers meeting during the Camp meeting at Galena, Kansas in 1936, requesting several months in advance that the ministers prepare to make a decision as to the exact words for the ceremony of water baptism. Snow privately felt that "Jehovah" was the proper name, and later believed that this conference, and the resultant discussion, was important in starting the name movement.

The first "name" camp meeting was the Feast of Tabernacles of the Church of God at Warrior, Alabama, held in the home of Church of God minister J.D. Bagwell. Dodd and A.B. Traina attended, as well as elders C.J. Ayers, J.A. McClain, Arthur Barnes, and L.D. Snow. Traina, though not a Church of God minister, was the main speaker, and given 4-6 hours a day to lecture on the name subject.

Snow considers October 1938 camp meeting as "the real beginning of the Name Movement." It was also the year that Dodd founded The Faith Bible and Tract Society.

Snow and his wife were convinced of the Name in 1943. He was credentialed with The Assembly of YHWH in Michigan in the early 1940s. At this time, Dodd was using the form Yahweh and Snow went along with this spelling but pronounced it Yah-WAH for a short time, later YAHWEH.. Others who supported Snow on this usage were Elder Squire La Rue Cessna (a former Church of God, Seventh Day, minister) and Elder Israel Kalr. Cessna in the Late 1920s called his group "The Assembly of Jehovah," and in the early 1930's, "The Assemblies of Yahweh." ²⁵⁶

Jacob O. Meyer and the Sacred Name Broadcast

"Born in Bethel, Pennsylvania, German-accented Jacob O. Meyer's ancestors arrived in America from Germany in 1732. They were among the founding fathers of the old German Baptist Brethren (which later took the name, Church of the Brethren). Meyer notes that one of the strange customs of this church was the annual spring deacon's visits to each member, to see if they still held fast to the teachings of the church. The tradition stemmed from a split in the church in colonial times, when Conrad Beissel preached the keeping of the Scriptural Sabbath, and founded the monastic

community at Ephrata, Pennsylvania. There is a strong possibility, Meyer notes, that some of his forefathers were in the Ephrata community, which observed the memorial supper four times a year, one of these at the Passover season.

Meyer learned the Sacred Names doctrine from a Bible course he took in conjunction with Albright College, sponsored by the Berks County Sabbath School association. He first associated with small groups all over the world. He noticed that "most of the Sacred Name believers were firmly committed to Feast Day keeping" as a result of "the able teaching of Elder Dodd."

Meyer was re-baptized into the Sacred Name, and volunteered his services to assist Elder Boyd, who was publishing a Sacred Name periodical called the Sacred Name Herald, in Wilder, Idaho. In 1965, Meyer kept the Feast of Tabernacles at Nevada, Missouri with 30-40 people. Meyer was ordained to the ministry there. A few months later in February of 1966, he initialed the Sacred Name Broadcast radio program, over radio WBMD, Baltimore. In 1968, Meyer began the Sacred Name Broadcaster magazine.

In 1969, Meyer launched the Assemblies of Yahweh, Inc. as a vehicle to unify all the Sacred Name elements. Meyer began a magazine for members only, called The Narrow Way. In 1972 his administrative assistant, and managing editor of The Narrow Way, was Henry D. McFarland, formerly of the Worldwide Church of God.

In 1971, Meyer was the only fulltime member of the staff, but by 1972 there were eight. A "School of the Prophets," that is, a college, was planned for the fall of 1972. Private tutelage would be given young men, who enrolled in local college

Bible courses. Both the Bethel and Holt groups worked together.” ²⁵⁷

Sad to say being in the Laodicean era there was not always unity in the Sacred Name Movement and for various reasons splinter groups erupted and separated from Jacob O. Meyer.

One such group is a sacred name group that was run by Elder Donald Mansager; the following is the brief history of Elder Mansager's work.

“In 1968, Don and Mil Mansager were immersed at the Feast of Tabernacles gathering with brethren of the Holt, Michigan Assembly. Elder Don and family joined Elder Jacob O. Meyer and the Assemblies of Yahweh of Bethel, Pennsylvania.”

Because Yahweh's work needed room to grow, Elder Mansager (ordained in 1969) urged acquisition of the Whitehall Motel during the Feast of Tabernacles in 1970 at Brightbill's Grove in Bethel, Pennsylvania. In March of 1980 Elder Mansager, along with several other elders and deacons, resigned from their association with the Bethel group and later that year formed Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah at Rocheport, Missouri.

At the 1988 Feast of Tabernacles, Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly came into being with Elders Ralph Henrie, Dennis Bitterman, Donald Mansager, and Roger Meyer, along with a number of dedicated brethren.

Elder Mansager passed away in July 2012, but his sons continue in the preaching of the name of Yahweh, and his son Alan Mansager formed Yahweh's Restoration Ministries.

Also, Jacob O. Meyer's son Jake Meyer has followed in his father's footsteps and pastors a congregation in Yahweh's name. I met some of these men at a Unity Conference in 2012 that the sacred name groups have been doing for more than 25 years. I was most impressed at these leaders' warmth and love and hand of fellowship that they gave me. Another pillar in the Sacred Name Movement that was at this Conference was Pete Vacca. Elder Vacca has been a longstanding sacred name believer who, as the early Congregation, has a no compromise attitude toward the truth that he has obtained.

I also want to note that as of this writing of this book in the Roman year 2014 there are still remnants of the original congregations left of the Seventh Day Baptists, Church of God Seventh Day, Seventh Day Adventists, Worldwide Church of God, and several different sacred name groups stemming from the Assembly of Yahweh.

I should also like to mention that there are also remnants of Armenian Paulicians in and around Armenia, as well as Waldenses throughout Europe and still headquartered in Angrogna in the Piedmont Mountains in Italy. There are also remnants of these groups as far as Russia and the Ukraine, even to China. As also mentioned, many of these remnants have compromised on various beliefs and can be recognizable as a true remnant congregation with only varying degrees. I should like in the last chapter of the book to tie in my personal journey and testimony and where Yahweh has placed me in this family album of His true covenant believers, who are the remnant of the Congregation that Yahshua prophesied, "the gates of hell will not prevail against them".

Chapter 13 – My personal Testimony and Summing Up the History

The history that I have displayed in this book of the one true spiritual organism of Yahshua's remnant Congregation through the ages is an amazing story of faith, courage and testimony of the true Congregation of Yahshua that has lasted the past almost 2,000 years.

The history is riddled with persecution, and at times discouragement and even martyrdom. However, this history clearly shows that there has been one true spiritual organism since the starting of the Congregation in 30 A.D. that has continued until our time. It shows that Yahweh has judicial order and is not the author of confusion. It shows that Yahshua ordained 12 in the summer of 28 A.D. and they went on to ordain others, who ordained others and which has kept an unbroken chain of ordination and proper baptism by this line of ordained elders until this very day.

I would now like to share my own personal testimony on where I fit into this most glorious history of the Congregation of the Lamb of Yah, who is the very begotten, eternal Son of Yahweh. My background is mostly of Italian decent, but my relatives were not the normal Italians who descended from Rome, but were a special group of Italians living in a province called, Latina, which is a place where many Jews came from. Although, my relatives have lost any connection they may have ever had to the true faith and in this 21st century are Roman Catholics. At a young age I always wanted to know the truth and hated to be lied to, and at the tender age of about 16, I was introduced to "The Plain Truth" magazine distributed by the Worldwide Church of God. I studied the literature for a few years and when I was 18, I

decided to contact a minister for questions, and soon after joined the congregation in Union, New Jersey and was baptized there. I stayed in the Worldwide Church of God until January 1995 when Joseph Tkach, who had taken over the leadership of the organization in 1986 after the death of Herbert Armstrong, changed most of the doctrines and took the Church into apostasy. I had temporarily joined an off-shoot of the Church of God called the United Church of God. At that time for about a year, we had mostly home fellowships while the United Church of God was forming.

It was late in 1995 that I was ordained into the ministry of Yahshua Messiah by an elder by the name of John Trescott. Elder Trescott was an extremely sincere minister that was originally part of the Radio Church of God under Herbert Armstrong and was ordained by M.L. Bartholomew, a leading minister, and even conference president in the Church of God Seventh Day, who had been ordained by Andrew Dugger himself.

Although Elder Trescott believed in the sacred name of Yahweh and Yahshua and even ordained and married me in that very name, he also used the generic titles for our Creator and Savior. I was re-baptized later in the family name of Yahweh and Yahshua once I came to the full knowledge of the sacred name of Yahweh.

I had never looked for ordination in the congregation, but my motto always was '*whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might.*'

I remember praying soon after this ordination and asking Yahweh what He wanted from me as His minister (servant) and I heard a voice as clear as day say in my ear '*unite my people.*'

I left the United Church of God soon after; as they took the spirit of the Nicolaitans with them from the Worldwide Church of God and only wanted allegiance to the corporate organization, rather than to Yahshua and His precious flock. While in the United Church of God, I was going once a month to preach to a small congregation that had broken off from the Church of God International under Herbert Armstrong's son, Ted Armstrong. When the United corporate minister had found out about this he told me I needed to make a choice, and I told him I did make a choice many years back to serve Yahweh and His people and not a corporation.

We started having home services for about a year and things were being really blessed. I then moved to Pennsylvania and that was the beginning of the biggest change in my life. The following is my testimony of the first time I went to Israel and what the results were.

"I was a Pastor of a small congregation in Pennsylvania. We were keeping the feast of tabernacles at a place called Lake Paradise in Mount Pocono. I had at this time read a scripture in Deut, which stated, "If you keep my feast faithfully, you could ask for a special blessing". So I prayed, "Dear Father, if it be your will, I really could use a helpmate for the ministry."

During the feast we saw a video of Ron Wyatt discoveries. Ron unearthed Noah's Ark in Turkey and also did diving at the Red Sea Crossing site in Sinai. The Holy Spirit compelled me when I got home from the feast to call Ron and ask him if he would take me to Israel. I had no idea why Yahweh wanted me to go to Israel. I assumed it was something that pertained to my ministry. I had never gone to

Israel before, thus it would be my first time. For about a week I put it off to call him. I wondered if he'd think that I am crazy if I tell him that Yahweh wants him to take me to Israel. I finally called him and I was talking to him for a few minutes when he said, "by the way Don, I have a trip going to Israel in three weeks, would you like to come?" I was speechless. He told me if I even called a few hours later that it would have been too late, as the deadline for tickets was that day. So I wired my money to him and got on the trip.

It was a ten-day trip, and during the whole trip, the other people with us kept asking me why I was on the trip. I kept saying, I don't know yet but Yahweh would show me. The last day of the trip was a free day to do as we wished. I had always wanted to go to Jordan to see the city of rock, Petra.

We had a small group who wanted to come with us. The night before we were going to Jordan to the city of Petra, Ron told me that I would not have enough time to go there and to still be able to catch our plane, so we could not go.

I told him **'He had no idea of how disappointed I was that I did not get to see Petra.'** Well instead I went to the Garden Tomb; the place which many believe is the place our Savior was resurrected. It is a beautiful tranquil place and I was deciding whether to go inside the actual tomb, as it was very crowded and they were filming there that day.

I went inside the tomb and to my surprise there was a beautiful young woman inside and I asked her for her name. Believe it or not, her name was Petra. We talked about twenty minutes and no person came in, even though minutes before there was a long line outside waiting to enter. **So I did get to see Petra on that day anyhow.** She told me that the bible says "sell all you have and follow me", so she had sold

all her things and volunteered in Israel for the past five months. For the two of us it was our last day in Israel at that time. We exchanged addresses and started writing and calling, six months later we got married at the same place (Lake Paradise) that I had prayed for a wife.

This is our testimony, so that if you trust in the true rock (Petra means rock) Yahshua, as Savior and Master of your life, that all things are possible. Also if Yahweh asks you to step out on faith, please do so, there may be a blessing waiting for you.”

The management at the Garden Tomb did a special article on how we met there and said that many things miraculous have happened in that tomb over the years but they never heard of anyone meeting in the tomb to be married.

In 1999, my wife and I left the USA over the belief from studying Scripture that it is end time Babylon. You can study Lesson 15 of our Bible Course for ample proof of this online at www.coyhwh.com . We initially went to Central America and it was there that Yahweh taught us about true living faith. I was a believer at that time in the Sabbath for about 18 years and baptized; I was also an ordained elder and someone who loved Yahweh and Yahshua with all my heart and soul.

However, when I left the USA/Babylon I had no idea how little faith I had. From the time I was 7 years old I had a paper route and worked and saved money and Yahweh seemed to financially bless just about everything I worked at. Still, with these financial blessings I never gave Yahweh opportunity to bless me. I had a refrigerator full of food, I had ample savings for paying my rent and utilities, and I had money saved for my future.

I never realized until I left commercial Babylon how little I had to rely on Yahweh in my life. We lived 2 years in Italy up in the top of a mountain range. We wondered why it was so inexpensive to live there, until we found out there was no city running water, only cisterns. And the day we moved in we found out our cistern had a crack and could hold no water.

Jer 2:13 *For My people have done two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, to hew out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

We had to climb into this dark, dirty cistern and fix the leak, but then, we also had to pray to Yahweh for rain to fill it. Do you know that it was the first time in my life that I remembered praying for rain? I remember praying many times for sunshine for picnics, etc., but I never remember praying for rain, as in the USA water is simply there and 30 minute showers and filling swimming pools, etc. are simply a way of life, but also waste.

I, then realized, how in Babylon how little I gave Yahweh opportunity to bless me, by being self-sufficient. In Babylon one is brought up with the mentality through capitalism to not have to rely on anyone for anything, and particularly the government. I am not against capitalism and you do reap what you sow, but at the same time Yahweh is left out of this equation.

I realized that Babylon was a created façade that had the government become the person's Elohim and they portray that, they the government, have all the answers for any ill in life, and the people under such a system have no idea that they not only are lacking completely in faith, but actually are even becoming slaves under this false façade. Revelation

18:13 states, that 'Babylon has made slaves of the souls of men.' Then, Yahweh brought the following scripture into my mind.

Rev 3:17 *Because you say, I am rich, and I am made rich, and I have need of nothing, and do not know that you are miserable and a wanderer and poor and blind and naked.*

Rev 3:18 *I advise you to buy from Me gold having been fired by fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, and your shame and nakedness may not be revealed. And anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see.*

Rev 3:19 *"I, as many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten." Be zealous, then, and repent.*

I realized that this was me, and the scariest part about it was that before this I thought the opposite; as the scripture states, that I was increased with goods, a baptized Sabbath keeper who kept the commandments, but I had no idea how little faith I had under such a self-dependent system as is in America/Babylon.

We were also going through purification there and were around an extremely bad environment with some other Babylonians who were not learning the lessons of humility and repentance from Babylon, but actually took the prideful spirit of Babylon with them and amplified it. I prayed to Yahweh what we should do and this was the scripture He opened up to me.

Mic 2:10 *Arise and go! For this is not your rest, because of uncleanness, it shall destroy you, even a painful destruction.*

One thing I had learned to that point was that if I ever wanted to truly build faith in Yahweh it was time to stop

playing games, and I had to obey in everything immediately no matter how hard the decisions would be. So we finished any commitment we had to do and left there within the month. We left Babylon with all of our life's work and savings and even brought a container of our goods from Babylon with us; however, we left Central America with 2 suitcases each and a few small articles.

Also, here is an interesting story about when we left Central America. When we arrived we needed to get a propane tank for gas. This is something I had never seen in the USA, as if you needed gas you simply turned on the stove. So I asked the gas man how long a tank would last. He said maybe 3 weeks if you don't use so much or 2 weeks if you do. Well, at that time we were living with a family with many children and using the tank day and night.

However, much to my surprise after one month the tank never ran out. Then after two and even three months the tank still never ran out. Local villagers started coming to our place and asking to see the miracle tank. Well, that tank went for about 6 months and ran out the night before we left.

Can you imagine? Just as Yahweh told the Israelites to follow the cloud, He was teaching us that daily in faith, we need to trust in Him, and follow the cloud when it moves.

He was also teaching us that He is the daily living manna (Joh 6:35) and that tank was our daily manna from heaven at that time. We can't be so overwhelmed and blind sighted by the cares of life not to see the hidden manna that Yahweh provides for His covenant children daily.

We were well on the road to start to follow the Lamb wherever He goes without question. In the USA, as a pastor,

I never took salary. Our congregation was small and I worked for a living and did not need this privilege that is afforded to true elders working in the harvest for Yahweh.

However, as we left Central America, and I prayed to Yahweh He spoke two things to me; one was to unconditionally obey and follow Him (which I have always done) and the second thing He told me was "*work for Me*". I was now a soldier in His spiritual army and I knew I still needed to grow in faith, but it is His faith, not mine that I would live by, so if I simply humbled myself and repented where I was in error and followed Him in all things, He would provide the faith to me.

This is where I saw that the corporate congregations in Babylon had failed. Instead of building simple, spirit filled congregations based on faith in Yahweh and the truth of His Word, they were built on pride and vanity, and money and prestige. Their success they only based on how many people and how much tithe was coming in, and not on how spiritual the congregation was. Truly, at this point I not only understood the Laodicean congregation, I plainly saw it in action.

The job of an elder or pastor is to be able to distinguish the spiritual gifts in each of his flock and help the brethren to build those gifts, not extinguish them. I now realized why the Laodicean congregation had splintered into now thousands of sects worldwide and nothing short of the return of Yahshua could solve this problem.

My mission now from Yahweh was to seek out the true remnant believers and nurture them with spiritual food as Yahweh would provide. Little did I know what amazing plans Yahweh had in store.

1Co 2:9 *according as it has been written, "Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard," nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which YAHWEH has prepared for those that love Him. (Isa. 64:4)*

1Co 2:10 *But YAHWEH revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of YAHWEH.*

Yahweh was showing me that if one wanted to truly live by faith, then you must surrender your human nature daily to Him and allow His Spirit to fill you and direct you on a daily basis. This is why Paul speaks about "*praying without ceasing*". It is because you are in constant contact with Yahweh through His set apart Spirit, leading, and directing, and even speaking to you, mostly through His Word, every day of your life. It is a real, living relationship.

Even through dire circumstances we never looked back to Babylon, as the children of Israel looked back to Egypt, knowing that Yahweh had removed us from there and we had to look ahead and not behind. Our walk of faith continued as Yahweh now had brought us to Israel, in which we were going back and forth from Europe to Israel and starting to understand the importance of keeping the feast days in Jerusalem.

In those early days around the year 2000, finances were very low and Yahweh used to provide for us by finding money in the street. At first, it was what would be equivalent to pennies and nickels, but we were not too proud to pick up a penny in the street that Yahweh provided, even though people would watch and scorn that we would be so trivial to pick up such a small amount.

But my wife Petra, used to always comment '*If we don't honor the little ones He will not allow us to honor the bigger ones*'. Well, bigger ones started coming and we were finding quarter and half dollar equivalents, and then, even bills started being found almost daily. On a monthly basis we were finding about \$150 a month, which just about fully paid our rent of \$180.

Also, as we walked the streets people we never saw or met would call us over and give us baskets of food and nuts and fruits and not even speak English, and when we would ask why, they would simply point up to heaven.

Yes, even as Elijah and Elisha were cared for by the widow women and even ravens, Yahweh showed us that if we put our faith in Him, He would not disappoint. It is a marvelous way to live, and to get up every day asking Yahweh to direct your steps and seeing His Spirit guide you daily. I meet so many people that always doubt and even when they make a decision they doubt if it was right, but when you live by faith there is **ZERO** doubt, only faith, and repentance if you were wrong, as no matter what the outcome you know that Yahweh has provided it for our good and purification.

In those early days in Israel I met very few true remnant believers, but mostly Christians that were there on pilgrimage. It seemed almost daily that I would have to defend the true faith of obedience to Yahweh, including the fourth commandment of keeping holy the Sabbath day and faith in Yahshua. And, even at times, when I would meet someone who was a baptized, covenant person who said they believed in the Sabbath and other commandments, they would argue that we do not have to keep the third commandment of honoring Yahweh's name.

I would clearly show them that within the third commandment it states you shall not take the name of Yahweh in vain. It doesn't say lord, god, or any other name, it clearly says the Hebrew name **YHWH**; The ancient 'vav' having a 'w' sound. The Hebrew word for '*in vain*' literally means to change, falsify or to make common, so taking the name Yahweh and arbitrarily changing it to god or lord is clearly breaking the third commandment, but many who were not being led by the Holy Spirit (Ruach H' Chodesh) of Yahweh simply refused to obey this commandment.

This was my wilderness experience and I was learning true faith in Yahweh daily, which I saw could only grow if I humbled myself before Him and repented where I was wrong. Then, Yahweh started to do an amazing work through this ministry and remnant branch of Yahshua's true Congregation.

We would go to the streets daily being led by the Ruach H' Chodesh (Holy Spirit) seeking Yahweh's will in our life each day. Everyday before leaving our room, we would pray for His Spirit to guide and direct us and that we could be living sacrifices to Him that day, and then, go out with no preconceived notion of anything but being led by His Spirit.

Some days that led to simply carrying an old woman's bags to her house, and some days it was feeding homeless people and witnessing of the Word. But in 2001 Yahweh's Spirit started to work mightily and it seemed that the more I grew in faith the more His spirit worked. It was then I realized that at times only we are stopping a great work of Yahweh's Spirit in our life by our own lack of faith and strong will to follow our own way instead of submitting to Him. The following is a true testimony that happened in 2001 while we

were living in a hostel in Jerusalem about the outpouring of Yahweh's Spirit and the casting out of a horrific demon.

"One day we were invited to a wedding; it was at an Arab hostel that we were staying at. We went down to the reception room where they were going to have a traditional toast. They were playing very loud music and Petra and I thought we would not stay long but would wait to leave until after the toast not to offend anyone. There was one Jewish man there, he sat next to me and started to talk to me, and the Holy Spirit took over.

*I started quoting all the scriptures to him of Yahshua being the Messiah. After a little while, the man yelled out, Don, **I believe, Yahshua is the Messiah**, to the amazement of all present. The Arabic worker turned down the music and for the next two hours everyone wanted to hear about the Good News of Yahshua. The Jewish man was baptized about a week later. A Japanese girl who was present also had been baptized a little later as she started to believe in Yahshua. The next two weeks were amazing. Every time I would open my bible, all that were staying in the hostel came around and wanted to have bible studies every day.*

One night I was on the roof counseling another Jew who also wanted to be baptized, when out of nowhere a man came up and said he was a Jew and heard everything I was saying about Yahshua and he needed to talk to me. He had a very proud way about him and an absolutely vulgar mouth. I left and went to bed. Around 2:00am, a sister came banging on the door, yelling that they needed Don. The man with the vulgar mouth was completely taken over by demons. I went upstairs and the man was crouched in the doorway to the roof. He was slapping the floor, ripping at his clothes, and

snorting green foam from his mouth. He also had two red dots in the center of his eyes veering down at me.

I walked up the narrow staircase towards him where he asked me in a deep demonic voice: 'what's your name.' I told him, "I come in the name of Yahshua Ha Masheach. He told me that Yahshua was a fallen angel. I told him, no "he" was the fallen angel and that Yahshua is the son of god. He asked me "Which god"? I told him, Yahweh, the only true Elohim of the universe. After this he told me he could drink my blood, and kill me.

He told me that I had no idea of the power he had. I told him that he had no power, that Yahshua already defeated him and that I was covered by Yahshua's blood. I then asked him if he wanted to be delivered. A frightened little boy's voice yelled out, 'please get the spirit out of me.' I then started to cast the demon out in Yahshua's name. He started to speak in a false tongue, like you hear in some churches. Also, as I looked to my right a man who was an atheist and mocking me earlier in the evening was there on his hands and knees and praying to Yahweh. And then, finally, after a few minutes, the man fell back and declared, "It's gone, it's gone, the spirit left me." The manager from the hostel came up and wanted to throw the man out, but he was crying like a little child saying, no it wasn't me, please ask them, it was a spirit. The next day the man was totally different and wanted to know more about Yahshua and asked for help." Testimony by Don Esposito while in Israel in March of 2001.

It was most interesting to me that when I stated to the demon that Yahshua was the Son of god, it asked, which god? Yes, there are many gods, but only one Yahweh. It was after that night that I started to only call our Creator by His personal

name Yahweh, and shortly after this, I found out that the name 'god' was actually the personal name of the Babylonian deity of fortune. I thought if I would not say amein if a Muslim prayed in the name of Allah, then how could I say amein if a Christian was praying in the name 'god'; the personal name of the Babylonian deity of fortune.

It was later that year that we would be blessed to host our very first Sukkot in Israel and Yahweh would start to bless His end time work from Jerusalem in ways that have not been seen in almost 2,000 years.

Before I continue on Yahweh's end time work from Jerusalem, let me digress back to the break-up of the Church of God Seventh Day and the reunification in 1949 in why Elder Dugger the leader of the Salem branch of the Church did not join the reunification. The main reason was that they changed the charter and no longer held Jerusalem as the world headquarters, but the new office was in Denver. Elder Dugger knew this was a mistake and still felt inspired about starting the end time work of Elohim in Jerusalem but still waited at this time.

In 1950 the Dugger family went on a missionary trip to Nigeria that produced much fruit. But when the family returned to America to its residence in Oregon, several of the Duggers had typhoid fever. Let us listen to Naomi Dugger Fauth, the 86-year-old daughter of Andrew Dugger, tell the story that changed their lives. The Duggers were living in the Willamette Valley in Oregon at the time.

"All of us recovered from the typhoid fever except my mother Effie [Andrew Dugger's wife]," began Mrs. Fauth. "She had the fever extremely bad and went into a coma."

"We took her to the hospital, and they did not give her any chance of survival. After being in a coma for more than a week, the nurse asked my father for a phone number where he could be reached that night because they did not expect my mother to survive through the night. This was a Friday afternoon. She was bleeding so bad that they were giving her blood infusions more than her body could take because it was coming out so quick. They told my father that, even if by some miracle she did not die, she would be a vegetable and would never regain consciousness again.

"My father had been praying and was told by Elohim that my mother would be healed, so he told the nurse there was no need to give a phone number that my mother was going to be healed. Well, we left and saw such a beautiful sunset, and for the first time since my mother was sick I knew she would be okay. My father had prayed that afternoon that if Yahweh would heal my mother he would keep his promise to Yahweh to go to Jerusalem and start the end-time work there. The next day we went to services, and then, went to the hospital. When we arrived, the nurse called my father frantically, saying, 'Come quickly.' When we came around the corner we entered my mother's room and she had come out of the coma and was awake and completely healed without even any side effects.

"The doctors were amazed and told my father that no one had ever recovered from typhoid that was that progressed. The doctors were so amazed at the miracle that they put my mother in the health medical books as an unexplained healing. "When my father went over to my mother, she told him that the first thing that happened to her when she awoke was that she heard a voice from the Holy Spirit clearly speak to her and say, 'Tell your husband to remember his promise.'

Needless to say, my parents moved to Israel a few months later.” ²⁵⁷

Elder Dugger stuck to the original mandate that was unanimously agreed upon in 1931 and set up a ministry in Jerusalem starting in 1952.

Elder Dugger opened up a printing press in a Jerusalem suburb known as Baka and opened up a church building and congregation in another suburb closer to the Old City of Jerusalem. He faithfully kept his word to Elohim to preach the end-time Church of God message from Israel. He started a magazine called “The Mount Zion Reporter” and also did missionary work to help people in several countries including Kenya, Nigeria, India and Jamaica, where many Church of God members and congregations live to this day.

In 1975 Elder Dugger passed away and his work was finished. However, Elder Dugger did fail in one important point. Yahweh clearly states in these end times that after He does all His miracles for Israel and His chosen children that all will know “**that His name is Yahweh**” (Ezek 38:23). So even though Elder Dugger knew the true names of Yahweh and Yahshua, he failed to magnify them or even to use them in preaching, and I personally believed that it limited the success of that work before Yahweh.

His son-in-law, Gordon Fauth, and his daughter, Naomi Fauth, took over the reins of the church when Elder Dugger passed away and continued in the Dugger work, to have and operate an end-time work out of Jerusalem. Because of the various Arab-Israeli conflicts and health difficulties, the Dugger church ceased operation in the mid-1980s. The Fauth’s did not use the sacred name at all and their work dwindled from the time of Andrew Dugger’s work until the

time we met them in 2002 when there was not even a congregation any longer. Elder Dugger ended the book he wrote with Elder Clarence Dodd with the following quote.

*"There are a number of other groups of this same faith with some slight non-essential doctrinal differences in various places carrying on a good work and printing various publications. We believe they are all gathering fruit for the Kingdom, and the foundation creed of all these groups is the same (Rev 12:17), **and some that make the sacred Hebrew names a special part of their message** (Pr 30:4, Ps 68:4, 91:14 69:35-36, Is 52:6).*

*"We believe these will all fall in line with the Holy Scriptures **and publicly affirm that Jerusalem was chosen of the Father, and must be recognized as the world headquarters by all of the remnant people holding to the New Testament name**, and the true faith once delivered to the Saints, as they are led further by the Holy Spirit."*²⁵⁸

This is where my path crossed with those of the Dugger work. In early 2002, while on a missionary trip to Kenya, I had learned about Naomi and Gordon Fauth, who were still living in Jerusalem, from the very churches in Kenya that Elder Dugger's work had produced.

I had been working with these Dugger churches, bringing aid to the suffering, African brethren, and also had recently finished a project to build a new stone church building for them to meet in, the first of its kind in Kenya

When we returned to Jerusalem in 2002, we met with Naomi, (Gordon was ill and confined to a chair and has since passed away) and we built a wonderful relationship with Naomi over several years of visiting with her. Naomi is a discerning sister

and has a wealth of stories from Church of God history and has wisdom beyond her years. She has learned, as her father learned also, once he moved to Israel, that the Congregation of Yahshua is not a corporate structure controlled by men but a spiritual organism of which any true baptized member is a part.

It is uniformity of our basic beliefs and faith in our Heavenly Father's Word and being baptized by a proper ordained elder of Yahweh that make us a member of the one and only true Congregation of Yahweh, not being on a church roll of one segregated church group.

In the fall of 2004 Naomi Dugger Fauth was inspired to reopen the Dugger church after all these years and asked me if I would be the overseer of that congregation. I was more than honored. Coming from a Worldwide Church of God background, I was never schooled in the importance of having an end-time work in the nation of Israel, but I have been taught this through the Holy Spirit, as I believe Elder Dugger was. We had our first service in the Dugger church after almost 20 years on Yom Kippur 2004, and we celebrated Passover with Sister Naomi and our little congregation in April 2005.

It was most nostalgic. We even had an elder from Kenya there with us on Yom Kippur named Joseph Ngathiah who was one of the original members in Kenya to meet Andy Shoemaker, who was sent to Kenya by Elder Dugger for baptizing and ordaining elders in the local congregations there. Elder Joseph passed away a couple of years ago, but he was a true friend and a true man of Yahweh. Sister Naomi shared many stories of faith and miracles that happened to her and her family while living in Israel.

I continued to pastor the congregation for almost two years, although we only met when we brought the brethren in, as there were no longer any local members left from the old Dugger congregation. It was a great honor for me to actually stand and preach from the very pulpit that one of the most inspired elders of the 20th century actually used. Keeping Passover in this building was also very nostalgic.

After close to 2 years of meeting there I came to Naomi's house one day and her son Naphtali was visiting from America. He was not friendly to me at all and was extremely upset that I was calling our congregation, by the proper name '*Congregation of Yahweh*', instead of the old '*Church of God*'. He had even gotten the old Church of God sign out from their basement.

He continued to try to belittle my work and accuse me that I was trying to steal the Dugger work. I told him that the work is not the Dugger or Esposito work, but the work of Yahweh and it is Yahweh who should get the glory, not man. We stopped meeting in the building at that time and it was never used again, and a few years ago it was torn down to build up new apartment buildings.

I often wondered why Yahweh had brought me to pastor in that building after so many years that Dugger's work was extinct, and the answer I received from Him was due to judicial order. My work is not the continuation of Elder's Dugger's work and I never made that claim. Elder Dugger had his work and I have mine from Yahweh. But unless Yahweh builds the house, the weary builders build in vain (Ps 127:1). This is not the work of man but of Yahweh, and to show judicial order with Yahweh and His one true remnant Congregation, not through a corporate organization, but

through a spiritual organism, I believe Yahweh had me at the old Dugger building for those almost 2 years.

Since that time Yahweh has blessed the Congregation of Yahweh Jerusalem through my efforts to be able to have a bible training school by the Sea of Galilee over the last ten years, which is the first training school of its kind that I know of since the first century. What Elder Dugger and myself had in common was the following scripture:

Mic 4:2 *And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YAHWEH, and to the house of the Elohim of Jacob. And He will teach us from His ways, and we will walk in His paths. **For the Torah shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of YAHWEH from Jerusalem.***

We both believed in the literal translation of Scripture that not only shows Israel being a nation again in these last days, but that Yahweh would also restore His headquarter work from Jerusalem and throughout the world.

Elder Dugger for whatever reason though, did not have a complete doctrine as he did not believe in keeping all seven Holy Days in Leviticus 23, he did not openly teach the true names of Yahweh and Yahshua, and he did not understand or teach the redemption of the 12 twelve tribes of Israel back to Israel in the last days. He taught the law was only the 10 commandments and that the Holy Days were nailed to the crucifixion stake.

I appreciate the work that Elder Dugger did, but the work of Yahweh is not finished and continues until today. Many thousands of brethren have joined in with us in the Congregation of Yahweh Jerusalem in taking the end time message of the good-news of Yahshua to the world, starting

from the headquarters of Yahweh in Jerusalem, and going throughout all the earth.

Luk 24:47 *And repentance and remission of sins must be preached on His name to all the nations, **beginning from Jerusalem.***

Yahweh has truly blessed myself and this work from Israel since its inception in 1997 beyond measure. We now have congregations all over the globe and host the three pilgrim feasts here in Israel every year.

Yahweh also opened up diplomatic working agreements with even some in the Israeli Knesset, the very highest law making faction in the land. I have been blessed to be invited to the Knesset well over 20 times and I am working closely with the conservative members who believe in the Torah and promises of Yahweh.

And Yahweh has opened a door for us to run a program called “*Ambassadors for Israel*” since 2010. It is the only program I know of in the world that teaches brethren how to achieve the high calling of our faith in being an ambassador for Yahweh. Brethren are taught how to recognize their spiritual gifts and how to functionally use them as ambassadors for Yahweh. They also learn the great sacrifice it took for our brother Judah to be a nation again after 2520 years of Diaspora, and what lessons we can learn as Ephraimites about our exodus to come.

Even though I realize that the Congregation of Yahweh Jerusalem is but one small speck in the wheel of Yahweh’s enormous plan of salvation, I am honored and extremely grateful to Yahweh that He has chosen me to head this great work from Israel over the last 15 years. I also know that my

work from Israel will end one day in the not so distant future and the Day of Jacob's Trouble will come upon Israel and all true believers of the true faith.

That is why I enjoy every day of my life here in the Promised Land and thank Yahweh every day for the truths He has shown the brethren through me here in Israel, and for the fact of being allowed to administer this branch of His work from His very headquarters; and I invite all true spirit led believers to partner with us in this great end time work of Yahweh from Jerusalem.

I want to try to sum up now all that we have learned in this most amazing story of Yahshua's true remnant Congregation. I have read many books over the last 32 years on congregational history. When I was first making my quest for the truth I knew that according to Yahshua's words in Matthew 16:18, that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Congregation so there had to be a remnant of that Congregation still alive today.

However, I was hoodwinked by the Worldwide Church of God that they were the only true remnant of that true Congregation of Yahshua on this earth. Much of the history that is public today on the true congregational history is put out by one of the Church of God off-shoots or the Seventh Day Adventists, who in both cases, always link the history I laid out in this book (although I have yet to see as thorough a work as I have submitted) to their particular corporate church, which this is quite erroneous and also misleading.

The history I have laid out in this book of the one true Congregation of Yahshua throughout the ages is not their history, and it is not my history, and it is not your history, but it's Yahshua's history and our history collectively. And when I

relate this history to the Congregation of Yahweh Jerusalem and myself, I only do so knowing that we are but a small link in a big chain of the one true line of believers that have been faithful over the last almost 2,000 years.

Some of these true remnant believers were called Paulicians, some Waldenses, and Albigenses, and Cathars; some were called Bogomils, and some Anabaptists and Seventh Day Baptists, and later some called themselves Church of God, and Assembly of Yahweh and Congregation of Yahweh, as well as many other names in our end time. Some of this faithful remnant in the wilderness went by no name at all and simply lived the life of true believers.

However, it is absolutely false to state that all these groups held to the same name in antiquity, as one corporate entity, as the evidence clearly does not show that. Also, and of most importance, is that remnants of many of these groups and their lineages are still around today including Waldenses, and Paulicians, and Seventh Day Baptists, and Church of God, etc., and even remnants of these original groups as far as Russia, the Ukraine and China.

The important part of all this though, is for the new believer coming out of paganized religion in these last days to recognize that there is a true remnant body of believers, who have the original tenets of faith and the authority through the laying on of hands to baptize and ordain others in the congregation.

As Yahshua stated, '*He would never leave or forsake His remnant bride*', He personally laid hands on twelve apostles and ordained them (Mar 3:14) and gave them authority to baptize others in His name for the forgiveness of sins

Joh 20:22 *And saying this, He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.*

Joh 20:23 *If you forgive a man's sins, they will be forgiven. And if you retain the sins of a man, they will be retained.*

It wasn't that He was giving them the actual power to forgive sins, but He gave them the authority to perform the baptism ceremony in His true name so one could enter the covenant. We find nowhere in Scripture where this authority was ever given to anyone else but His true elders through this unbroken chain of the laying on of hands; and we clearly see that evil pretenders, such as Simon Magus, knew the authority was given only to the Apostles by Yahshua to forgive sins and transfer His literal Holy Spirit to them.

Act 8:18 *But when Simon Magus saw that **the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of the hands of the apostles**, he offered them money,*

Act 8:19 *saying, **Give to me also this authority that to whomever I may lay on the hands he may receive the Holy Spirit.***

Yahshua said the following to the Apostles before He died.

Joh 15:20 *Remember the Word which I said to you, A servant is not greater than his Master. If they persecuted Me, they also will persecute you. **If they kept My Word, they also will keep yours.***

It is Yahweh who is transferring His Holy Spirit to the new believer, but due to His judicial order He also requires someone to humble himself and come to the true unbroken chain of proper ordained elders from Yahshua since the first century, to be able to receive that Holy Spirit from Him. In doing so He is assuring the fact that the prideful, self-willed

Laodicean who would never humble himself to do this would never be able to receive Yahshua's set apart Spirit, as neither did Simon Magus. These Laodiceans state they will never follow a man, and yet Yahshua was a man and if they cannot follow the men He ordained, then they would not follow Him.

This is why this history is so important; because the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua is alive and well today as it was in 30 A.D., and the original chain of baptism and ordination was never broken until this day, and only those elders who have been properly ordained in this true remnant line have the authority to lay hands on and ordain others and also to baptize new converts and transfer Yahweh's Spirit through the laying on of hands. Yahshua gave this authority to His chosen ordained elderhood so that new converts would have to humble themselves and come to the proper source, and in humility repent of their sins and ask for baptism.

This would also clearly prove that neither the Roman Catholic Church nor any of her Protestant sisters, which includes the modern day Evangelicals who came out of Protestantism, have any authority from Yahshua on this earth. As the early Congregation believed if someone from one of these corrupted churches comes to the truth that person would need first to have true repentance, and then, to be re-baptized properly by an ordained elder of Yahweh. And since Yahweh has restored His only true name, and since there is only one name under heaven and earth by which men can be saved, that any believer who Yahweh opens their mind to the truth of His name, out of obedience to the Word, would be re-baptized properly in the family name of Yahshua Yahweh.

Act 4:10 *let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that **in the name of Yahshua, Messiah**, the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom YAHWEH raised from the dead, in this name this one stands before you whole.*

Act 4:12 *And there is salvation in no other man, for **neither is there any other name under Heaven having been given among men by which we must be saved.***

Remember, many are called but few chosen, and to be a firstfruit of Yahshua and to be adopted as a literal child of Yahweh one must have Yahweh's Ruach H' Chodesh (Holy Spirit) dwelling in them.

Rom 8:9 *But you are not in flesh, but in Spirit, since the Spirit of YAHWEH dwells in you. **But if anyone has not the Spirit of Messiah, this one does not belong to Him.***

Rom 8:10 *But if Messiah is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

Rom 8:11 *But if the Spirit of the One having raised Yahshua from the dead dwells in you, the One having raised the Messiah from the dead will also make your mortal bodies live through the indwelling of His Spirit in you.*

Rom 8:14 ***For as many as are led by the Spirit of YAHWEH, these are sons of YAHWEH.***

Rom 8:15 *For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again to fear, but you received a Spirit of sonship by which we cry, Abba! Father!*

Rom 8:16 *The Spirit itself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of YAHWEH.*

It is also important to note that repenting and being baptized into the family of Yahweh is not just about you. Just as any physical family here on earth there is responsibility to love

and nurture and care for other members of Yahweh's called out family. However, the self-willed Laodicean needs no one but himself and only wants to join with other baptized family members to bring his wares and false doctrine, but he doesn't love the sheep of Yahweh, and only wants to destroy them. That is why Yahshua set in the congregation true elders directly ordained through Him that love the children of Yahweh and protect and nurture them.

In the chaotic Laodicean era we are living in, many an Evangelical or Protestant pastor will come out of their former paganized religion but they will not join a branch of Yahshua's true Congregation and get proper training. They will merely start to meet on Saturday instead of Sunday and start their own congregation without any training and that is why we have hundred's of thousands of Christian denominations preaching all kinds of heresies and falsehoods.

However, these self-proclaimed pastors have no authority from Yahweh to beget His one and only true Spirit into a new believer at baptism, or to ordain a man into the ministry if they themselves were never properly ordained or even baptized by a true elder of Yahweh.

It is quite clear that the true Congregation of Yahshua believed this fact firmly from the first century until this very day. The true remnant of the true Congregation of Yahshua still remains today, with true ordained elders from the very line of Yahshua and the Apostles of the first century. That is why the laying on of hands is such a sacred ceremony, as even Moses laid hands on Joshua to transfer his spirit upon him (Deut 34:9). And even Jacob laid hands on Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph to adopt them into his

family as his own children, as Yahweh does during the laying on of hands of the baptism ceremony through the elders that He Himself has ordained.

Deu 34:9 *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. And the sons of Israel listened to him and did as YAHWEH commanded Moses.*

Gen 48:5 *And now your two sons, those born to you in the land of Egypt before my coming to you in Egypt, are mine, Ephraim and Manasseh, like Reuben and Simeon, even they shall be mine.*

Gen 48:14 *And Israel sent forth **his right hand and put it on the head of Ephraim; and he was the younger. And he put his left hand on the head of Manasseh**, crossing his hands; for Manasseh was the first-born*

Another important aspect of writing this book is to also show where we are in the history of Yahshua's congregation. The book of Revelation clearly shows that there are seven congregational eras and although as we have proved that they are successive in nature and in historical content, they are also seven end time congregations with the largest in the end time being the last of the historical congregations being Laodicean.

The importance of this is as where in times past the brethren had no control over their historical era, but in the end, although most are indeed carrying the spirit of Laodicea, one can repent and change their spiritual state into a Philadelphian.

Rev 3:18 *I advise you to buy from Me gold having been in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, so your shame and nakedness not be*

revealed. And anoint your eyes with eye salve that you see.

Rev 3:19 *"I, as many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten." Be zealous, then, and repent. (Prov. 3:12)*

Rev 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door "and knock:" If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will enter to him, and I will dine with him, and he with Me. (Song 5:2)*

Rev 3:21 *The one overcoming, I will give to him to sit with Me in My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father in His throne.*

Rev 3:22 *The one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the congregations.*

Yahshua is giving a clear indication to His chosen elect to get rid of your pride and humble yourself and repent from rejecting His called out ordained elderhood and in a spirit of humility join in His end time worldwide preaching work.

The Kingdom of Yahweh is about service to Yahweh and others and no man who thinks he is an island alone will enter that Kingdom, but only those who can humble themselves and submit to Yahweh and the leadership that He has personally ordained and has maintained over the last 2,000 years.

There is a reason why Yahshua has preserved a spiritual priesthood of elders originally ordained by Him and continuing from generation to generation until this very day. The history itself is the proof of this and the Kingdom of Yahweh is about a collective effort and judicial order and not every man doing what is right in his own eyes.

The change of the carnal worldly person into the new creation of Yahweh is not in doctrine alone but it is about dying to your rebellious human nature that wants no authority over him. This spirit is from Satan, the king of

rebellion and must be wiped out of a believer's life in order for them to enter the Kingdom of Yahweh.

When people are wondering which branch of the true remnant should they associate with and join, I would say to look carefully to the ones who are truly keeping the commandments of Yahweh and have the faith of Yahshua, not those who are incorporated, worldly, institutions that have very little spirit or zeal left for the truth, but are fully Laodicean in all manners of thinking. And sad to say, many of these remnants that we have mentioned who have veered from the original truth of the true faith of Yahshua can hardly even be considered part of His true remnant Congregation any longer.

What we have seen throughout history is the remnant believers who stayed out of the world and never compromised at all with the truth have stayed true to the original line of Yahshua, but those that joined in with the worldly religions of their time and compromised on the basic doctrines fell further and further away from being a remnant of the true Congregation of Yahshua.

Also, we see that in each collective era when Yahweh would reveal a specific matter of His truth, if the remnant congregation rejected it, the blessing of Yahweh from that point was minimal at best and non-existent at worst. An example is in these end times with the restoration of the true names of Yahweh and Yahshua, which is part of prophecy being fulfilled for them to get the glory to their true name. How could one call themselves part of the true remnant of Yahshua in these end times if they will not even give the glory due to the name of Yahweh and Yahshua, but continue

to use pagan titles even after they are clearly shown Yahweh and Yahshua's true original Hebrew names from scripture?

I have given an outline of the history of the true remnant of the Congregation of Yahweh throughout the ages according to the seven congregations in Revelation, with the greatest number of members in these end times being part of the Laodicean, half-hearted, anti-leadership, self-willed congregation.

There are also the modern day spiritually dead Sardis brethren such as the remnants of most of the Church of God groups, or also the Thyatira congregation following the false prophetess Ellen G. White, consisting of the Seventh Day Adventists. I believe when we are praying about which branch of the true remnant Congregation of Yahshua to associate with, we want to be like the Philadelphia congregation who has little strength and is not a gigantic, corporate entity, but has been faithful and also has not denied Yahweh and Yahshua's name (Rev 3:8).

As I write, this great work of Yahweh continues to go forth from His headquarters here in Jerusalem, Israel through the Congregation of Yahweh Jerusalem, under my leadership. I want to thank all the elders worldwide that have willingly chosen to partner with me in this great end time work that Yahweh is blessing so much. We have congregations and ordained elders from North and South America, to Asia, Africa and the Middle East. I also want to thank the brethren who are part of this branch of the true remnant Congregation of Yahweh and are working alongside with me to bring this Good News message of Yahshua to the world before His soon return. I welcome all those of a kindred spirit to join in with us in furthering this great work.

I also want to thank all the other true remnant congregations who are not part of this particular administration but are also staying true to the original tenets of our faith.

At the end of almost all the books of the New Testament each book ends with the word '*amein*', meaning so be it, and showing it is the end of that particular book. Every book in the New Testament ends this way but three. One of those books that have no *amein* is the book of Acts. This is because the book of Acts is still being written.

I gave a reference earlier in this book to Acts 29, and the Apostle Paul going to Britain, but what about Acts 30 and 31? Just as the Bible and the history that I have displayed in this book has shown us the great legacy of the early Apostles and congregation in the wilderness until today, that history is still being written as I write.

The story is not finished yet, there is still history to write about me and about you. What will that history say; will you be remembered as the faithful Waldenses who remained true to the faith until death, or will you be a lukewarm Laodicean? The history is still being written so you still have your chance to stand strong as a faithful Philadelphian end time believer.

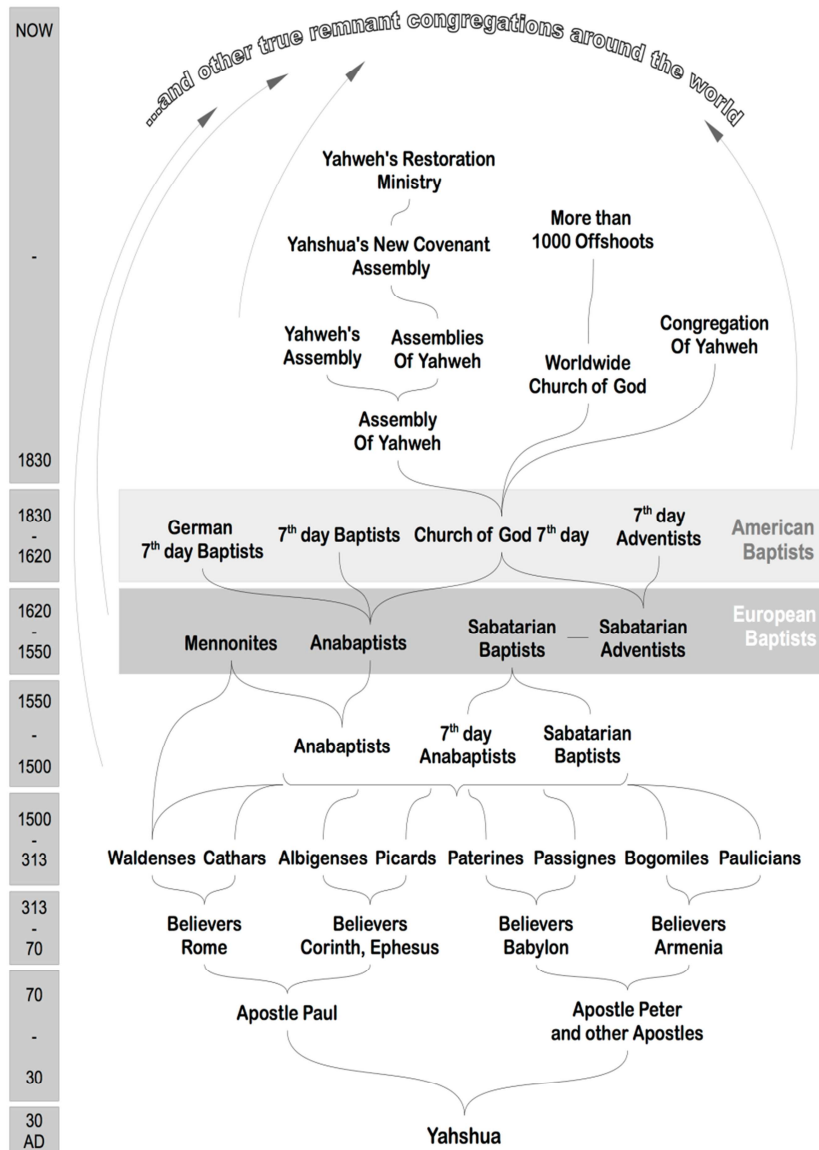
And one fact is undeniable; that the true remnant believers of Yahshua throughout the ages lived a life separate from the world and the earthly government of their time, so as never to compromise with these cherished truths of Yahweh. They were beaten, stripped of their property, and even were martyred, but they stood strong to their faith and doctrine knowing that they were called in a very special elect class of people to bring their doctrine, belief, and faith to the next generation, so that they could be a link in the 2,000 year old

chain of the Congregation who Yahshua said, '*the gates of hell could not prevail against her*'.

I want to end this book by thanking Yahweh, our Great Heavenly Father for allowing me not only to pen this great history of His true remnant Congregation throughout the ages, but also for allowing me to administer this work from Israel at this time. I also want to thank Yahshua, His eternal, begotten, Son, who sacrificed Himself to the shame of the torture stake and humiliation of being crucified, to pay the penalty of our sins, and allow us to inherit eternal life at His soon return.

I won't end this work with an amein, as the story still continues

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Footnotes for the Gates of hell cannot prevail against her.

- 1) The Ryrie Study bible confirms this point in the note on Acts 10:2
- 2) Josephus War VII.1,1.
- 3) Harnack Church History (Vol1, pg. 244)
- 4) Dictionary of Christian Biography, Vol. 4, pg. 682
- 5) Caves' "Antiquitates Apostolicae pg. 137
- 6) Potter's Antiquities, vol. 1, p. 356
- 7) John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible
- 8) Samuele R. Bacchiocchi "From Sabbath to Sunday" Chapter six
- 9) Gibbons, Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire
- 10) Eusebius Ecclesiastical Church History xxiv
- 11) Samuele R. Bacchiocchi "From Sabbath to Sunday" p. 213
- 12) Ogwyn, God's Church throughout the Ages pg. 11
- 13) Ibid pg. 11-12
- 14) Eusebius Ecclesiastical Church History
- 15) Gibbons, The Triumph of Christendom, pg.309
- 16) Johann Lorenz von Mosheim D.D. (1694-1755) An ecclesiastical history, ancient and modern, from the birth of Christ to the beginning of the present century
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