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**CHAPTER 16**

**THE REMNANT CHURCH—CORPORATE OR SPIRITUAL**

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## INTRODUCTION

*God has a church. . .it is the people who love  
God and keep His commandments  
The Upward Look, p. 315*

According to the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and pioneer Seventh-day Adventist literature, the true Church of Christ in the end of time, the remnant Church, is made up of two entities – the spiritual and the corporate. Unfortunately, (as history so vividly attests), as an organized Church becomes large in membership the truth is compromised, and ultimately cast aside. In the end of time the spiritual and the corporate are two separate Churches. This is why the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy speak of a “remnant.” Truth cannot be mixed with error. Thus the apostle Paul says,

*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.” (1 Corinthians 10:21).*

God has always had a true Church, though it has not always been a visible establishment, such as General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals and other visible structure. Church building structure would come later. **Elected church offices of leadership would only be necessary as a vehicle or catalyst for coordinating the work of proclaiming the gospel to the world. It would never be mandatory for Church leadership to define doctrine, or to punish dissidents who would not adhere to a creed, Church Manual, or official Statement of Beliefs, defined and voted by leadership.**

Thus Ellen White wrote,

*“Vengeance will be executed against those who sit in the gate, deciding what the people should have, and what they should not have.” (The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters, page 55, emphasis supplied).*

It has never been the work of corporate Church leadership to compel unity among God’s people. The work of unifying the Church is the work of the Holy Spirit – through the truth that was inspired by that same Holy Spirit. Only the truth can bring complete unity to the Church of Christ, be it corporate or spiritual.

*It is the will of God that union and harmony should exist among his people. Our Saviour prayed that his disciples might be one, as he is one with the Father. It should be our constant aim to reach this state of unity; but to do this we are not to sacrifice one principle of truth. It is through obedience to the truth that we are to be sanctified; for while Jesus prayed that his followers might be one, he prayed also, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” We are exhorted to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. This is the evidence of our discipleship. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;” and conversely, our Saviour*

*desired that his disciples might be one, that the world might know that the Father had sent him. What a thought! that the love and unity among Christians are presented as proof of our Saviour's divine mission to the world.*

Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, May 12, 1881. (emphasis supplied).

Notice again that, “It is through obedience to the truth that we are to be sanctified” and unified. “It should be our constant aim to reach this state of unity; but to do this we are not to sacrifice one principle of truth.”

### **The Church Of Abel**

The Church of the first centuries consisted of the people who were the descendants of Abel. “The holy life of Abel testified against Satan’s claim that it is impossible for man to keep God’s law,” Ellen White wrote. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 77). This first church believed and lived “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Revelation 14:12).

*“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” (Hebrews 11:4).*

In the Church of Abel there were no church buildings, no visible structure. Worship was in the open with an altar and a living sacrifice which pointed to Jesus Christ “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29b). The majority of earth’s population during this period did not believe the truth and followed after the descendants of Cain. Soon God’s people mingled with these unbelievers, which led to the destruction of the earth by water. (Genesis, chapter 6).

### **Persecution Of the Saints Begins**

*“The murder of Abel was the first example of the enmity that God had declared would exist between the serpent and the seed of the woman—between Satan and his subjects and Christ and His followers,” Ellen White wrote. “Through man’s sin, Satan had gained control of the human race, but Christ would enable them to cast off his yoke.” (ibid., PP, p. 77).*

Satan then began his warfare against this first Church, God’s little band of the faithful. The persecution of the true Church of Christ had begun and would continue and grow in intensity through the ages and would culminate in Satan’s final warfare against the “remnant” who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” and who “have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

### **The Church Of Noah**

By the time of Noah, God’s Church, His true people dwindled to only eight members. But “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” (Genesis 6:8). And further, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved [obeyed] with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” (Hebrews 11:7).

There were no General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals or other visible structure in the Church of Noah. The only visible sign of a Church structure was a small ship under construction. Again, in the days of Noah there were only eight Church members, and this “<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth.” (Genesis 6:1a, KJV). Jesus said, “<sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:37, KJV).

## The Church Of Abraham

The Church of Abraham also comprised a small number of believers. By this time in history there were still no General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals or other visible structure. The Church of Abraham also believed in “The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Rev. 14:12). “Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” (Genesis 26:5b). And further,

*“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (Hebrews 11:8).*

Abraham was a Seventh-day Adventist because “he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise,” and “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Hebrews 11:9, 10).

## The Church Of Moses

The Church of Moses was the first large member church. This was the first Church to go into the wilderness. This Church in the wilderness had no General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools or hospitals. Although housed in a tent, there was a visible sanctuary. Moses and his Church were Seventh-day Adventists because they were instructed to keep the Sabbath (Exodus 16), and they abstained from unclean meats (Leviticus 11), and they believed in the law of God. (Exodus 20).

The Church of Moses was blessed above all the previous churches that had gone before because “the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.” (Exodus 13:21). The Lord gave to the Church of Moses the ten commandments written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, and the Ark of the Covenant. This Church was also blessed with the visible presence of God in the Shekinah light above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.” (Exodus 25:22a). Notwithstanding all of these blessings, all the members of the Church of Moses, with the exception of two, did not make it to the promised land, but perished in the wilderness.

## The Church Of the Kings

After the wilderness experience, the children of Israel said unto Samuel, “make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” (1 Samuel 8:5b). Samuel did not agree with the policy of appointing an earthly king as the head of the Church. He sought the Lord in prayer for counsel on the matter. What was the Lord’s answer to Samuel’s prayer?

*“Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee,” a disappointed Lord replied to Samuel, “for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.” (1 Samuel 8:7b)*

**Notice that the reason the people wanted a visible earthly head of the church was that they wished to be “like all the nations.” We see the same spirit today in the Ecumenical movement within Adventism.** Jesus allowed the children of Israel to have their earthly king, and He has also allowed the Seventh-day Adventist Church to have their earthly head, but in sorrow Jesus still says, “they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”

This Church of the kings did have General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools and other visible structure. They received their wish. They had now become like the nations (churches) around them. Apostasy came into the Jewish church like a flood.

### **The Jewish Church At the Time Of Christ**

By the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem the Church had developed into a total “hierarchical” structure. The Church was governed by the Sanhedrin, a General Conference. This Church did have schools, even schools of “higher learning,” hospitals, church buildings, and other visible structure. This Church had a glorious temple – but the Ark of the Covenant was missing, *and the glory of the Lord had departed!* (Luke 13:35). Regardless of this fact, the people worshiped the temple. The Church was their God.

*“The Jews worshiped the temple,” Ellen White wrote, “and were filled with greater indignation at anything spoken against that building than if it had been spoken against God.” (Early Writings, page 198).*

Although the Jewish Sanhedrin did not have the power of death, they did have the power to persecute anyone who opposed their ecclesiastical authority. Like the Papacy, the great apostasy soon to follow, the Sanhedrin sought out the power of the state to enforce their man-made dogmas upon the people.

*“Christ was to be tried formally before the Sanhedrin; but before Annas He was subjected to a preliminary trial,” Ellen White wrote. “Under the Roman rule the Sanhedrin could not execute the sentence of death. They could only examine a prisoner, and pass judgment, to be ratified by the Roman authorities.” (The Desire of Ages, page 698).*

*“It was therefore necessary to bring against Christ charges that would be regarded as criminal by the Romans [or State],” Ellen White continued. “An accusation must also be found which would condemn Him in the eyes of the Jews [or Church].” (ibid., DA, p. 698, emphasis supplied).*

### **Undeniable Parallels**

*“Not a few among the priests and rulers had been convicted by Christ’s teaching, and only fear of excommunication prevented them from confessing Him. . . ,” Ellen White wrote. “The trial must be so conducted as to unite the members of the Sanhedrin against Christ.” (ibid., DA, p. 698, emphasis supplied).*

How many there are today, because the “fear of excommunication” keeps them from confessing the truth? Many believe historic Adventism but are afraid to speak. Many leaders and ministers believed the historic Adventist truth in the late 1950's, but were afraid to speak and let M. L. Andreasen stand alone.

*“If God abhors one sin above another, of which his people are guilty, it is of doing nothing in a case of emergency,” Ellen White wrote. “Indifference or neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime; and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.” (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, page 280, emphasis supplied).*

“There were two charges which the priests desired to maintain,” Ellen White continued. “If Jesus could be proved a blasphemer, He would be condemned by the Jews [the Church]. If convicted of sedition [disloyalty–treason], it would secure His condemnation by the Romans [the State].”

### **Accused Of Starting An Offshoot Church Opposed To the State**

*“The second charge Annas tried first to establish. . . ,” Ellen White explained. “He thought to draw out some statement to prove that He was seeking to establish a secret society, with the purpose of setting up a new kingdom [government]. Then the priests could deliver Him to the Romans as a disturber of the peace and a creator of insurrection.” (ibid., DA, p. 699).*

*The Saviour contrasted His own manner of work with the methods of His accusers. For months they had hunted Him, striving to entrap Him and bring Him before a secret tribunal, where they might obtain by perjury what it was impossible to gain by fair means. Now they were carrying out their purpose. The midnight seizure by a mob, the mockery and abuse before He was condemned, or even accused, was their manner of work, not His. Their action was in violation of the law. Their own rules [Church Manual] declared that every man should be treated as innocent until proved guilty. By their own rules the priests stood condemned.*

*ibid., Ellen G. White, “Before Annas and the Court of Caiaphas,” The Desire of Ages, page 699. (emphasis supplied).*

*“It was necessary that there should be the form of a legal trial,” Ellen White continued. “This the authorities were determined to hasten. . . .” (ibid., DA, p. 703).*

Notice that this devious method of dealing with a “dissident” was the policy of the highest leadership of the Church. Today we see these same principles practiced by “the undue assumption of authority” of Church leadership.

*Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees would not cease with the dispersion of the Jews. He had a prophetic view of the work of exalting human authority to rule the conscience, which has been so terrible a curse to the church in all ages. And His fearful denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees, and His warnings to the people not to follow these blind leaders, were placed on record as an admonition to future generations.*

Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, “The Scriptures a Safeguard,” page 596. (emphasis supplied).

It was because the Church leadership at the time of Christ had developed into an erroneous hierarchical form of government, and because the leadership practiced “the undue assumption of authority,” that Jesus declared, **“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matt. 23:38). Ellen White stated that Christ’s “warnings to the people not to follow these blind leaders, were placed on record as an admonition to future generations.” (ibid.)**

### **The Apostolic Church --Christ’s Message To the First Christian Church**

*“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles [ministers], and are not, and hast found them liars,” Jesus said. “And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” (Revelation 2:2, 3).*

The first Christian Church began under the power of the “early rain” of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2). The last or remnant Church will finish the work under the power of the “latter rain” of the Holy Spirit. (Hosea 6:3; Acts 2:17, 18; Rev. 18).

### **Devout Men Confess Corporate Guilt In the Death Of Christ**

On the day of Pentecost, when the apostle Peter pleaded with the people to repent and be baptized, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” (Acts 2:5b). Notice that the crowd Peter was speaking to were “devout” men. The Strong’s Greek dictionary states the word “devout” as “eulabes,” meaning:- “carefully, religiously, pious.” Although they were devout men and members in good standing of the contemporary Jewish Church, Peter called for them to, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38a). Again, these were “devout men.” What sin had they committed that they should repent?

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ,” Peter replies. (Acts 2:36, emphasis supplied). These devout men Peter was speaking to were “out of every nation under heaven,” and were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. They had not been present when Jesus was crucified, yet, as members in good standing of the Jewish Church, they were corporately responsible for the death of Christ. There was still probation for them to repent, and Peter called for them to repent. And they did repent. (Acts 2:37, 38).

However, for the Church leadership there was no more probation. Their house had been “left unto them desolate.” (Matthew 23:38). Later when Peter was called in before the Jewish Church leadership for preaching in the name of Christ, he also accused the leadership of being responsible for the death of Christ – but Peter did not call for the leadership to repent! Why? Because they had passed their time of probation.

*“And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem,” the Scripture records. “And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, `By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?’” (Acts 4:5-7, emphasis supplied).*

*“Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,” Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost replied. “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.” (Acts 4:8-10, emphasis supplied).*

Notice again that Peter did accuse the leadership of the death of Christ, “whom ye crucified.” But he did not call for them to repent! Their probation was past. There was, however, a limit to God’s mercy for the people. They were given a short period of about forty years to accept the truth of the gospel. In A.D. 70 God’s judgments on the Jewish Church were carried out when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman armies led by Titus. Most of the people in the Jewish Church were killed. Those who survived were scattered throughout the world. There was no way that the early Christians could compromise, or seek recognition and acceptance from the Jewish Church of that day. If they had, they would have been destroyed with the Jewish

Church at the destruction of Jerusalem. The early Christians had to separate from the mother Church in order to preach and practice the gospel of Christ. In the end, during the time of trouble, the remnant will also separate from Babylon and all organized church denominations. They will flee into the wilderness, there to await the coming of the Lord. (See The Great Controversy, "The Time of Trouble," pages 613-634).

### **Home Churches In the Apostolic Church**

*The first Christian Church at the time of the apostles had no church buildings, schools, hospitals, or other visible structure. This early Church met in "home churches," and sometimes in the open by a river side. (Acts 16:13).*

*"Likewise greet the church that is in their house," the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans. "Salute my well beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ." (Romans 16:5, emphasis supplied).*

*"The churches of Asia salute you," Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." (1 Cor. 16:19, emphasis supplied). "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea," Paul wrote to the church at Colosse, "and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." (Colossians. 4:15, emphasis supplied).*

*"And to our beloved Apphia," Paul wrote to Philemon, "and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house." (Philemon. 1:2, emphasis supplied).*

*"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God," Paul wrote to Timothy, "which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15, emphasis supplied).*

Notice that the apostle Paul does not identify the Christian Church as a cathedral, or denomination, but he saluted "Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." (ibid., Col. 4:15b). Then Paul stated that the Church of the living God is "the pillar and ground of the truth." (ibid., 1 Tim. 3:15). Does the Spirit of Prophecy agree with Paul? Yes, indeed.

*"God has a church, it is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations;" Ellen White wrote, "it is the people who love God and keep His commandments." (The Upward Look, page 315, emphasis supplied).*

### **Analogy From the Early Christian Church to today**

It is interesting to note the similarities between the first Church, the Church of the early rain, and the last remnant Church, the Church of the latter rain. Both Churches display primitive Godliness.

*"Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth [seven last plagues] there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times," Ellen White wrote. "The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children." (The Great Controversy, page 464, emphasis supplied).*



## The Times Or the Seasons

At the formation of the first Christian Church, the apostles were concerned about future events. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven they asked Him, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6b).

*“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,” Jesus replied to their question of future events. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:7,8).*

Notice that it was not Christ’s wish that all His disciples should understand future events. Why? Because they had a mission to accomplish. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15). Later, around the year A. D. 90, Jesus did reveal future events to the apostle John on the isle of Patmos. (Revelation 1:1).

After the ascension of Jesus the apostles along with the small group returned to the upper room. There they were to await the outpouring of the Holy Spirit before they embarked on their mission of taking the gospel to all the world.

*“[Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.” (Acts 1:4b).*

*Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

*(Acts 1:12-14).*

Scholars of the Greek concur that this was the same upper room in which the Lord celebrated the last supper with the twelve apostles. Notice that while the main body of the Jewish Church was meeting in the temple during this holy period of Pentecost, God’s little band of true people (“the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,” Acts 1:15b) were meeting in an upper room, and not in the corporate Church. And they “all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” (Acts 1:14a).

## The First Christian Church Business Meeting

The Lord had told the little company to wait, but did they continue to wait? No. They decided to have a church business meeting. Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said,

*“Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.” (Acts 1:15,16). Peter was referring to a text in Psalms, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” (Psalms 41:9).*

*“For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry,” Peter continued. “Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.” (Acts 1:17, 18).*

Then in this business meeting Peter made a motion that they should ordain a new apostle to take the place of Judas. Although Jesus had chosen the twelve (“he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles,” Luke 6:13), the little company chose two men, and asked the Lord to choose between the two.

*“Wherefore of these men. . . ,” Peter asked, “must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” (Acts 1:21a, 22b, emphasis supplied).*

The Bible records that “they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.” (Acts 1:23). Then they prayed and asked the Lord to select one of the two men.

*“Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,” the apostles prayed, “that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” (Acts 1:24b, 25).*

Then they drew lots, “and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:26). It is interesting to note that Matthias is spoken of only in these two verses, Acts 1:23 and 26. Matthias is not mentioned again in Scripture!

But was Matthias the Lord’s choice to be numbered among the twelve? Remember that during his ministry among men Jesus chose the twelve. (Luke 6:13). If Matthias was not the Lord’s choice, then, pray tell, who was the Lord’s choice?

*“Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man,” the Scriptures record, “but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.” (Galatians 1:1, emphasis supplied).*

*“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God,” Paul wrote to the Corinthians. “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:9, 10, emphasis supplied).*

Notice the following nine Scriptures that confirm the apostleship of Paul.

- (1) Called to be an apostle. (Rom. 1:1).
- (2) Called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. (1 Cor. 1:1).
- (3) An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. (2 Cor. 1:1).
- (4) An apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father. (Gal. 1:1).
- (5) An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. (Eph. 1:1).
- (6) An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. (Col. 1:1).
- (7) An apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 1:1).
- 8) An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. (2 Tim. 1:1).
- (9) An apostle of Jesus Christ. (Titus 1:1).

*“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man,” Paul wrote to the Galatians. “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11, 12, emphasis supplied).*

### **The Twelve Foundations On the Holy City**

In the Revelation the apostle John saw the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. (Rev. 21:2). This city had twelve foundations upon which were written the names of the twelve apostles. (Revelation 21:14). Now, the question is, Who’s name will be on the foundation? Will it be, “Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him?” (Matt. 10:4). No, we cannot believe that Judas Iscariot’s name will be on the foundation of God’s holy city. There are twelve foundations, there needs to be twelve names. Will the name of Matthis be on the foundation to take the place of Judas? Will the name inscribed on the foundation of God’s holy city be that of the apostle Paul?

Friend, the name on the foundation of the city of God must be the name of, “Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.” (Galatians 1:1).

### **The Apostate Roman Catholic Church Of the Dark Ages**

#### **Christ’s Message To the Apostate Church Of the Dark Ages:**

*“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols,” Jesus said. “And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.” (Revelation 2:20-22, emphasis supplied).*

The apostate Church of Rome did have a General and local Conference (Diocese) offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals, monasteries, convents, and other visible structure. This Church used ecclesiastical and state authority to persecute the saints of the Most High. (See *The Great Controversy*). There was and is a distinct parallel between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish Church at the time of Christ.

#### **The Church Of Rome and the Jewish Church**

*“There is a striking similarity between the Church of Rome and the Jewish Church at the time of Christ’s first advent,” Ellen White stated. “While the Jews secretly trampled upon every principle of the law of God, they were outwardly rigorous in the observance of its precepts, loading it down with exactions and traditions that made obedience painful and burdensome.” (The Great Controversy, page 568, emphasis supplied).*

*“As the Jews professed to revere the law, so do Romanists claim to reverence the cross,” Ellen White concluded. “They exalt the symbol of Christ’s sufferings while in their lives they deny Him whom it represents.” (ibid., p. 568, emphasis supplied).*

In the fourth century the Church at Rome apostatized when she accepted the traditions of Paganism into the Church at the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine: “The Roman emperor Constantine's grant of toleration to Christianity (the Edict of Milan, 313) and its rise to the status of an official religion.” (Grolier’s Encyclopedia, Art. “Papacy”). The Church had now committed fornication with the heathen nations around her. The Emperor Constantine passed the first Sunday law (321 A.D.), and at the Council of Laodicea (336 A.D.) the Church ratified Sunday as the day upon which Christians should worship instead of the hated seventh day Sabbath of the Jew. With this apostasy, the birth of the Papacy had begun in fulfillment of the apostle Paul’s prophecy.

*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,” Paul prophesied. “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).*

### **Apostasy In Displaying the Cross**

*Papists place crosses upon their churches, upon their altars, and upon their garments. Everywhere is seen the insignia of the cross. Everywhere it is outwardly honored and exalted. But the teachings of Christ are buried beneath a mass of senseless traditions, false interpretations, and rigorous exactions. The Saviour’s words concerning the bigoted Jews, apply with still greater force to the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church: “They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” Matthew 23:4. Conscientious souls are kept in constant terror fearing the wrath of an offended God, while many of the dignitaries of the church are living in luxury and sensual pleasure.*

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 568. (emphasis supplied).

Does this testimony now apply to Seventh-day Adventists? Today we see that Seventh-day Adventists also “place crosses upon their churches, [and] upon their altars.” Will the next step be for Adventists to place the cross “upon their garments?”

Notice that, “The Saviour’s words concerning the bigoted Jews, apply with still greater force to the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church.” Moreover, the people who believe in this apostate church system live in fear “while many of the dignitaries of the church are living in luxury and sensual pleasure.” Today one could apply this testimony to the contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Church. The leaders are “bigoted,” while the people who believe in the SDA Church system live in fear of ecclesiastical authority, “while many of the dignitaries of the church are living in luxury and sensual pleasure.”

### **Rome Ruled Supreme For 1, 200 Years**

*“The periods here mentioned—‘forty and two months,’ and ‘a thousand two hundred and threescore days’—are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome,” Ellen White wrote. “The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798.” (The Great Controversy, 1888 Edition, page 266, emphasis supplied).*

## The True Church In the Wilderness

### Christ's Message To the Church In the Wilderness:

*“I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith,” Jesus said, “even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” (Revelation 2:13, emphasis supplied).*

**The Church in the wilderness had no General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals or other visible structure. They conducted their services in the mountains and caves of the earth. (See *The Great Controversy*, “The Waldenses,” pages 61-78). This Church met in the wilderness because of persecution from the Roman Catholic Church. There is a distinct parallel between this Church in the Wilderness and the Remnant Church near the close of probation.**

*Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished. In every age there were witnesses for God—men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true Sabbath. How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know. . .*

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 61.

Notice that “men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man,” also “held the Bible as the only rule of life.” Moreover these men of God “hallowed the true Sabbath.” The final “remnant” Church will also hold the Bible as the only rule of faith.

*“God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms,” Ellen White wrote. “The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority--not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. . .” (*The Great Controversy*, Page 595, emphasis supplied).*

*“They were branded as heretics, their motives impugned [attacked], their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, or mutilated,” Ellen White wrote about the Waldenses. “Yet they stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come.” (ibid.).*

Pioneer Adventist writings have been “revised” many times.

### The Roman Catholic Church Receives A Deadly Wound

*“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death. . .”(Revelation 13:3a).*

*“At that time a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile,” Ellen White concluded. “Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.*

### **The Deadly Wound Healed**

*“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed.” (Revelation 13:3a, emphasis supplied).*

*“The Lateran Treaty, signed on Feb. 11, 1929, by Benito Mussolini for the Italian government and Cardinal Pietro Gasparri for the papacy, settled the vexatious question of the relationship between the Holy See and Italy.” (Robin Buss, “The Lateran Treaty,” *The New Groilers Multimedia Encyclopedia*, Release 6).*

Reporting on the signing of this document, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Tuesday, February 12, 1929, carried the story on the front page with a photograph of Cardinal Pietro Gasparri and Benito Mussolini signing the document. The caption above the photograph read, “Heal Wound Of Many Years.” Ellen White knew, as did all pioneer Seventh-day Adventists that the deadly wound would be healed.

### **The Roman Catholic Church Today**

*“The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties,” Ellen White warned. “She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged.” (The Great Controversy, page 571, emphasis supplied).*

*“Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exist today,” Ellen White continued. “The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held.” (ibid., GC, p. 571, emphasis supplied).*

Notice that the Roman Catholic Church “now presents a fair front to the world.” The Catholic Church now covers “her record of horrible cruelties” with apologies. She wears “Christlike garments, but she is unchanged.” The apostate doctrines “devised in the darkest ages are still held.”

*Let none deceive themselves. The papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High.*

*ibid.*, Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 571. (emphasis supplied).

Today, “his deadly wound [is] healed” *and all the world is wondering after the beast.* (Rev. 13:3b, emphasis supplied). Are we also wondering after the beast?

*“When men who profess to serve God ignore His parental character and depart from honor and righteousness in dealing with their fellowmen, Satan exults, for he has inspired them with his attributes,” Ellen White counseled. “They are following in the track of Romanism.” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 362, emphasis supplied).*

## **The Fallen Churches Of Modern Babylon**

### **Christ’s Message To the Churches Of Modern Babylon**

*“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:4, emphasis supplied). The modern-day Churches of Babylon do have headquarter offices and local diocese, church buildings, schools, hospitals and other visible structure. To these churches the angel, “cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” (Rev. 18:2).*

## **Laodicea, the Corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church**

### **Christ’s Message To Laodicea**

*“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot,” Jesus said. “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” (Rev. 3:15,16, emphasis supplied).*

*“Will the churches heed the Laodicean message?” Ellen White asks. “Will they repent, or will they, notwithstanding that the most solemn message of truth--the third angel's message--is being proclaimed to the world, go on in sin?” (Manuscript Releases, Vol. 19, page 176, emphasis supplied).*

“If the church of God becomes lukewarm, it does not stand in favor with God any more than do the churches that are represented as having fallen and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird,” Ellen White warned.

*“Those who have had opportunities to hear and receive the truth and who have united with the Seventh-day Adventist church, calling themselves the commandment-keeping people of God, and yet possess no more vitality and consecration to God than do the nominal churches, will receive of the plagues of God just as verily as the churches who oppose the law of God.” (ibid., MR, Vol. 19, page 176, emphasis supplied).*

*“Only those that are sanctified through the truth,” Ellen White concluded, “will compose the royal family in the heavenly mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him and keep His commandments.” (ibid., MR, Vol. 19, page 176, emphasis supplied).*

*“Licentiousness, unlawful intimacy, and unholy practices are coming in among us in a large degree; and ministers who are handling sacred things are guilty of sin in this respect,” Ellen White wrote. “They are coveting their*

*neighbors' wives, and the seventh commandment is broken.” (Manuscript Releases, Vol. 21, page 380).*

## **The Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Church – A Sister To Babylon**

*“We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hateful bird. . .” (ibid., MR, Vol. 21, page 380, emphasis supplied).*

## **Ancient and Modern Israel- similarity between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Jewish Church at the time of Christ.**

We have learned that there was and is a distinct similarity between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish Church at the time of Christ. There is also a distinct similarity between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Jewish Church at the time of Christ.

*“The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ,” Ellen White wrote, “illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ.” (Review and Herald, 1890, No. 7, emphasis supplied).*

*“Satan’s snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan,” Ellen White warned. “We are repeating the history of that people.” (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, page 160, emphasis supplied).*

*I was pointed back to ancient Israel. But two of the adults of the vast army that left Egypt entered the land of Canaan. Their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness because of their transgressions. Modern Israel are in greater danger of forgetting God and being led into idolatry than were His ancient people.*

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, page 609. (emphasis supplied).

*“The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts,” Ellen White wrote. “Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.” (ibid., 5T. p. 94, emphasis supplied).*

*When I study the Scriptures, I am alarmed for the Israel of God in these last days. They are exhorted to flee from idolatry. I fear that they are asleep and so conformed to the world that it would be difficult to discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. The distance is widening between Christ and His people, and lessening between them and the world. The marks of distinction between Christ’s professed people and the world have almost disappeared. Like ancient Israel, they follow after the abominations of the nations [churches] around them.*

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, page 277. (emphasis supplied).



*“I saw that many who profess to believe the truth for these last days think it strange that the children of Israel murmured as they journeyed; that after the wonderful dealings of God with them, they should be so ungrateful as to forget what He had done for them,” Ellen White stated. “Said the angel: ‘Ye have done worse than they.’” (ibid., 1T. p. 129, emphasis supplied).*

*Like ancient Israel the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character. Her members have violated their covenant to live for God and Him only. They have joined with the selfish and world-loving. Pride, the love of pleasure, and sin have been cherished, and Christ has departed. His Spirit has been quenched in the church.*

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, page 442. (emphasis supplied).

*“Ancient Israel were enticed into sin when they ventured into forbidden association with the heathen,” Ellen White wrote. “In a similar manner are modern Israel led astray. . .” (The Great Controversy, page 568, emphasis supplied).*

*“How frequently ancient Israel rebelled, and how often they were visited with judgments, and thousands slain, because they would not heed the commands of God who had chosen them!” Ellen White warned. “The Israel of God in these last days are in constant danger of mingling with the world and losing all signs of being the chosen people of God. . .” (ibid., 1T, pp. 283, 284, emphasis supplied).*

*“The condition of society to-day is the same as when God presented before Israel the abominations of the heathen,” Ellen White concluded, “and the same warnings are necessary to the remnant people. . .” (The Signs of the Times, August 26, 1889, emphasis supplied).*

Notice the date, 1889, over one hundred and 26 years ago! What in the world would Ellen White say today about the condition of the world and the condition of the Church? It is clear from these passages of inspiration that there is an undeniable parallel between ancient Israel and the corporate “Laodicean” Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### **The Remnant Of Israel**

There is a distinct similarity between this Remnant Church and the Apostolic Church. Christ’s message to the Remnant Church *at the end of the Christian era* is the same message He gave to the Apostolic or first Christian church *at the beginning of the Christian era*.

#### **Christ’s Message To the Remnant Church**

*“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles [ministers], and are not, and hast found them liars,” Jesus said. “And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” (Revelation 2:2, 3; emphasis supplied).*

*“The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. . .,” Zephaniah prophesied.(Zephaniah 3:13, emphasis supplied).*

*“And in their mouth was found no guile,” the apostle John agreed, “for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Revelation 14:5, emphasis supplied).*

**The remnant Church at the time of the end will not have General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals or other visible structure. There is a distinct similarity between this Remnant Church and the Church in the Wilderness. Like the Apostolic and the Wilderness churches, the last Christians who live just before Jesus comes again will also worship in home churches, in the wilderness and remote places of the earth. Some will be cast into prison.**

### A Time Of Trouble

*“Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble,” Ellen White wrote. “As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.” (The Great Controversy, “The Time of Trouble,” page 614, emphasis supplied).*

### The Remnant Church Again In the Wilderness

*As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for “the munitions of rocks.” Isaiah 33:16. But many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bondage. The beloved of God pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready to lend them help.*

Ellen G. White, “The Time of Trouble,” *The Great Controversy*, page 626, emphasis supplied).

Notice that at this time God’s true people are not working at their jobs in the General, Union, or local Conference offices. Neither are they attending the local churches. Neither will God’s people be working at or attending church schools, or universities. Neither will they be working in the “Health Systems/East/West/North or South. Neither will they be working at other Church hospitals. Neither will they be working at any other visible Seventh-day Adventist Church institution. Where will God’s remnant people be?

*“The people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places,” Ellen White replies. “Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for ‘the munitions of rocks.’ Isaiah 33:16.” (ibid., *The Great Controversy*, page 626, emphasis supplied).*

### **What Is the True Remnant Church and Who Are the Members?**

If the church is not General and local Conference offices, church buildings, schools, hospitals or other visible structure, then, what is the Church? Who are the members of the true remnant church in the end time?

*“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” Jesus replies. (Matthew 18:20).*

*“Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ’s church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church,” Ellen White comments on Matthew 18:20. “Where two or three are present who love and obey the commandments of God, Jesus there presides, let it be in the desolate place of the earth, in the wilderness, in the city enclosed in prison walls.” (The Upward Look, page 315, emphasis supplied).*

Notice that in the above statement Ellen White declares that where two or three Christians are gathered together, “who love and obey the commandments of God,” this is God’s true church and “Jesus there presides” among them. Not only that, but in stronger language Ellen White stated that this “alone constitutes a church.”

### **True Remnant Church A Spiritual Temple Of Living Stones**

*“All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord,” the apostle Paul wrote, “in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:21, 22).*

*“The Stones which are in God’s sacred temple are not collected from the mountains of Judea but gathered from the nations, kindreds, and tongues and people,” Ellen White comments on Ephesians 2:21, 22. “They are not lifeless material that must be prepared with hammer and chisel, but living stones which emit light.” (ibid., UL, p. 373, emphasis supplied).*

Notice that the stones of Christ’s church “are not lifeless material . . . but living stones which emit light.” These living stones are gathered from all “nations, kindreds, and tongues and people.”

*“The great cleaver of truth has taken them from the quarry of the world and placed them under the hand of the great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple,” Ellen White continued, “and He is polishing them in His workshop, which is this world, that all the rough edges and crookedness may be removed and then hammered and chiseled and squared by the truth of God, polished and refined, ready to fill their place in God’s spiritual temple, that they may grow up a holy temple for God.” (ibid., UL, p. 373, emphasis supplied).*

Notice the following four important points in this statement.

- (1) It is the truth that brings the living stones into God's spiritual temple.
- (2) They are placed there under the hand of Jesus Christ, the great Master Builder. They are not placed there under the hand of man.
- (3) It is Jesus, and not man, that is polishing all the rough edges and crookedness from the living stones.
- (4) The reason for the polishing is that *the living stones may be fitted for a place in God's spiritual temple!*

### The Members Of God's Spiritual Temple Are An Holy Priesthood

*"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood," the apostle Peter wrote, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5, emphasis supplied).*

*"This building represents God's spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue, and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned," Ellen White commented on 1 Peter 2:5. "These are not dead substances, to be fitted by hammer and chisel. They are living stones, quarried out from the world by the truth, and the great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple, is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple." (ibid., UL, p. 281, emphasis supplied).*

Notice once again that, (a) it is the truth that brings the rough stones into the living temple, and,

(b) it is the Master's hewing and polishing that fits the living stones for a place in the living temple. It is not the work of man to build the living temple of God.

### The Completed Living Temple

*"When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts," Ellen White concluded, "the object of admiration of angels and men, for its builder and maker is God." (ibid., UL, p. 281, emphasis supplied).*

The perfecting of the saints, fitting them for translation. This will be the condition of God's final, remnant, last generation, living temple or living church, during the latter rain and the seven last plagues. This is the time when man must stand without a heavenly High Priest mediator between the Father and mankind. Notice also that the reason why this final generation, spiritual temple or church is "the object of admiration of angels and men," is because "its builder and maker is God" and not the building and maker of man.

*"Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times," Ellen White prophesied. "The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. . . ." (The Great Controversy, page 464).*

*The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.*

*ibid.*, Ellen G. White, "Modern Revivals," *The Great Controversy*, page 464. (emphasis supplied).

## What Is Not the True Remnant Church

*"God has a church," Ellen White stated. "It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments." (ibid., UL, p. 315, emphasis supplied).*

Notice that Ellen White states that the church is not "the national establishment," and it is "not the great cathedral," and, "neither is it the various denominations." This includes the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. If God's true church is not the "established" General Conference, if it is not "the cathedral" or church buildings, if it is not the "denomination," then what is the true church? "It is the people who love God and keep His commandments," Ellen White replies. It is the community of believers, the people, the living stones that make up God's living temple. That, dear reader, is God's true church in these last days.

## Man's Visible Temple

In contrast to God's living temple is man's visible temple. The claim is made that Jesus Christ is the head of this visible temple, but in reality man is the head of this visible temple. **Throughout the history of the Christian church, be it Protestant or Roman Catholic, members have been conditioned to believe that God has bestowed special ecclesiastical authority upon leaders of the corporate church structure. But is this dogma really Biblical? This belief, that God has given to certain men special ecclesiastical authority over the flock, has led to the formation of the Papal Church system, or what the Bible calls the Beast and the Antichrist. (Dan. 7; Rev. 13; Rev. 17). This will and has led the Christian world into forming an image of the Papacy – an image of the beast.**

The visible, corporate structure of the Christian Church was formed for the purpose of organizing the work for the spreading of the gospel to the ends of the earth. It has never been the duty of the corporate Church to rule over the flock of God. The leadership of the Christian Church were not to define doctrine or to form a creed or a Church Manual filled with worldly policies that men must obey. The leaders were not given the power to excommunicate (disfellowship) from the Church those who do not follow their Creeds, "Statement of Fundamental Beliefs," or recognize their undue assumption of ecclesiastical authority.

*"In the very courts of the temple [church], scenes will be enacted that few realize..," Ellen White warned. "Vengeance will be executed against those who sit in the gates deciding what the people should have." (Manuscript 15, 1886, emphasis supplied).*

## The Roman Catholic Church Claims To Interpret Scripture

*“Since Christ, however, did not determine many points of worship in non-essential matters, the Church has the authority to do so.” (Bertrand L. Conway, *Miniature Question Box*, page 63, *emphasis supplied*).*

*Catholics are subject to their respective leaders who rule them. They must recognize the supreme authority of the Church in matters of religion. A person who deliberately refuses to accept the legitimate and supreme authority of the Church and their Priests in matters of religion cannot be a Roman Catholic.*

*ibid.*, Bertrand L. Conway, *Miniature Question Box*, page 63. (*emphasis supplied*).

*“The Holy See reserves to itself the right to pass finally on the origin of the present reading [1 John 5:7].” (Footnote, Saint Joseph, New Catholic Edition, 1962).*

### **The Contemporary SDA Church Also Claims To Interpret Scripture**

*“It is our responsibility to study the Scriptures for ourselves, to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to submit our understandings to those in the church who are able to judge our findings, and then to abide by the decisions of the church in order to maintain the unity of the church. (Senior Sabbath School Lessons Quarterly, “God and Our Destiny,” First Quarter, 1987, page 92, *emphasis supplied*).*

In this statement contemporary Seventh-day Adventist leadership concurs perfectly with this Roman Catholic concept that, The Holy See,” or Church leadership, “reserves to itself the right to pass finally on the origin of the present reading,” or interpretation of Scripture. Leadership also concurs with the Catholic statement that Adventists are also “subject to their respective leaders who rule them.” They agree that Adventists “must recognize the supreme authority of the Church in matters of religion.” Leadership agrees that “a person who deliberately refuses to accept the legitimate and supreme authority of the Church and their pastors in matters of religion cannot be a Seventh-day Adventist.” But this policy is in direct opposition to the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy.

*The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. . . . Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church.*

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 596. (*emphasis supplied*).

*“Notwithstanding the Bible is full of warnings against false teachers, many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy,” Ellen White wrote. “There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders. (*ibid.*, GC, p. 597, *emphasis supplied*).*

*“They pass by the Saviour’s teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers,” Ellen White stated further. “But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God’s word that they are light bearers?” (ibid., GC, p. 597, emphasis supplied).*

*“A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world leads many to follow in the steps of learned men,” Ellen White warned, “and by their reluctance to investigate for themselves, they are becoming hopelessly fastened in the chains of error.” (ibid., GC, p. 597, emphasis supplied; See entire chapter, “The Scriptures A Safeguard,” The Great Controversy, pages 593-602).*

## **Peter and the Keys**

*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [Petros:- a piece of rock], and upon this rock [Petra:- mass of rock] I will build my church; and the gates of hell [hades:- grave] shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18, 19).*

The Roman Catholic Church uses this text from the gospel of Matthew to prove that the Popes receive a direct line of authority given to Peter, and as such they receive the “Keys of the Kingdom.” As they do the cross, the Roman Church places the insignia of the “Keys” upon almost everything. The Roman Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church believe that “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” But how does the Spirit of Prophecy comment on these texts?

*“When every specification which Christ has given has been carried out in the true, Christian spirit,” Ellen White wrote, “then, and then only, Heaven ratifies the decision of the church, because its members have the mind of Christ, and do as He would do were He upon the earth.” (Letter 1c, 1890; Selected Messages, Bk. 3, page 22, emphasis supplied).*

*“As surely as men in responsible positions become lifted up in their own esteem, and act as though they were to lord it over their brethren,” Ellen White commented, “they will render many decisions which heaven cannot ratify.” (The Home Missionary, February 1, 1892, emphasis supplied). Notice the counsel is that, “When every specification which Christ has given has been carried out in the true, Christian spirit . . . because its members have the mind of Christ,” and only as the leadership “do as He would do were He upon the earth . . . then, and then only, Heaven ratifies the decision of the church.” (ibid., Letter 1c, 1890). However, “As surely as men in responsible positions become lifted up in their own esteem, and act as though they were to lord it over their brethren, they will render many decisions which heaven cannot ratify.” (ibid., The Home Missionary, 2/1/92).*

If the leadership of the Church does not possess the Keys, who then does have the Keys?

Who Has the Keys?

*“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen,” Jesus replies, “and have the keys of hell [hades:- grave] and of death.” (Revelation 1:18)*

### **The Voice Of God On Earth**

Is the General Conference, while in session, the voice of God to Seventh-day Adventists? The leadership of the Church claim that it is.

*“The General Conference, while in secession, is God’s voice on earth to Seventh -day Adventists in all matters of faith and practice,” William G. Johnsson, Editor of the Adventist Review stated. “The 27 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs are to be adhered to by all employees and members of the church, under threat of discipline by the local church board or ruling conference committee.” (William Johnsson to Dr. Walter R. Martin, (author, The Kingdom of the Cults). Statement made on The John Ankerberg Show. (CBN Television Network, 1986).*

Does God indeed speak through the General Conference? Does the Spirit of Prophecy endorse the view that “The General Conference, while in secession, is God’s voice on earth to Seventh-day Adventists?

*“The people have lost confidence in those who have the management of the work,” Ellen White stated. “Yet we hear that the voice of the Conference is the voice of God. Every time I have heard this, I have thought it was almost blasphemy. (Manuscript 37, 1901, p. 8: Manuscript Release 365, emphasis supplied).*

*“And in reference to our conference,” Ellen White wrote, “it is repeated o’er and o’er and o’er again, that it is the voice of God, and therefore everything must be referred to the conference and have the conference voice in regard to permission or restriction or what shall be and what shall not be done in the various fields . . . the principle is wrong.” (Spalding-Magan manuscript, p. 163, emphasis supplied).*

*The Lord declares that His church is not to be governed by human rules or precedents. Men are not capable of ruling the church. God is our Ruler. I am oppressed with the thought of the objectionable human management seen in our work. God says, Hands off. Rule yourselves before you attempt to rule others. Strange things have been done, things that God abhors. For men to claim that the voice of their councils in their past management is the voice of God seems to me to be almost blasphemy.*

Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 35*, 1901 (emphasis supplied).

*Over one hundred years ago Ellen White stated, “As for the voice of the General Conference, there is no voice from God through that body that is reliable.” (Manuscript Releases Vol. 17, p. 178, emphasis supplied).*



What would she say today? Is the General Conference more spiritual, more in touch with Christ today than they were one hundred years ago? I think not.

*“They [the General Conference] have sought to establish their own authority, while betraying the cause of God,” Ellen wrote one hundred years ago. “While making decisions, and devising and planning, they have tried to make their oppressive human orders as the voice of God to His people.” (ibid., MR., Vol. 17, p. 209, emphasis supplied).*

*“The man who magnifies his own office in working in any line to bind about the conscience of another, be he the president of the General Conference, president of a smaller conference, or the elder or deacon or lay member of a church, he is out of God’s line.,” Ellen White concluded. “But in the present condition of things, if one stands fast to his integrity, he is by some scorned, scouted, criticized, and dropped out if it can be brought about.” (ibid., MR, Vol. 17. p. 225, emphasis supplied). This principle is still true today. One only has to observe the number of persons excommunicated from the Church in recent years.*

It is more than clear from these statements that Ellen White did not believe that the General Conference is the voice of God to the people. **Why is it that throughout the history of the Christian church, leadership insists on appointing to themselves the place of God on earth? This, without doubt, is one of the identifying marks of Antichrist.**

### **The True Condition Of the Corporate “Laodicean” SDA Church**

If God is not speaking through the General Conference, then who’s voice is being heard? It is possible for the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be led by Satan. The leadership of men is not infallible. If this were true we would be Roman Catholics. They were the first to believe that their Church leaders were infallible.

*The result of this has been in various ways. The sacred character of the cause of God is no longer realized at the center of the work. The voice from Battle Creek [or Silver Spring], which has been regarded as authority in counseling how the work should be done, is no longer the voice of God; but it is the voice of— whom? From whence does it come, and where is its vital power? This state of things is maintained by men who should have been disconnected from the work long ago. These men do not scruple to quote the word of God as their authority, but the god who is leading them is a false god.*

Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 17 (pages 185, 106) (emphasis supplied).

**Notice that the establishment of the Church structure was intended for “authority in counseling how the work should be done.” Never was the authority of Church leadership intended to dictate doctrine in a creed, a Statement of Beliefs, or a Church Manual, telling the people what they should have, or what they should believe.**

*“Under the cloak of Christianity and sanctification, far-spreading and manifest ungodliness will prevail to a terrible degree and will continue until*

*Christ comes to be glorified in all them that believe,” Ellen White warned. “In the very courts of the temple [Church], scenes will be enacted that few realize.” (Manuscript 15, 1886, emphasis supplied).*

*“God’s people will, be proved and tested, that He may discern ‘between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not,’” Ellen White concluded. “Vengeance will be executed against those who sit in the gates deciding what the people should have [believe].” (ibid., Manuscript 15, 1886, emphasis supplied).*

### **The Bible Alone Is the Voice Of God To the People**

*“We are not to turn from One Mighty in counsel to ask guidance of men,” Ellen White replies. “Let those who are inclined to do this read and receive the Bible as the word of God to them.*

*The Bible is the voice of God to His people.” (Review and Herald, Vol. 5, p. 224, emphasis supplied).*

The Bible is the voice of God to his people. Amazing! Has not this always been the by-word of all true Protestant Christians? But the Seventh-day Adventists have taken the Reformation a step further – “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

### **Jesus Is the Head and Foundation Stone Of the Church**

*“Consider, my brethren and sisters, that the Lord has a people, a chosen people, to be His own, His own fortress, which He holds in a sin-stricken, revolted world,” Ellen White stated, “and He intended that no authority should be known in it but His own.” (Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 15,16, emphasis supplied).*

*The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon men, nor be controlled by men. Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction. The Saviour declares, ‘All ye are brethren.’ All are exposed to temptation, and are liable to err. Upon no finite being can we depend for guidance. The rock of faith is the living presence of Christ in the church. Upon this the weakest may depend, and those who think themselves the strongest will prove to be the weakest, unless they make Christ their efficiency. ‘Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.’ The Lord is ‘the Rock, his work is perfect,’ ‘blessed are all they that put their trust in him.’”*

Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (page 491) (emphasis supplied).

Is the apostle Peter the rock upon which the church is built? No. The church is not built on weak and finite man. Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the church is built.

*“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded,” the apostle Peter said. “He is the chief corner stone.” (I Peter 2:6).*

*On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other  
ground is sinking sand.*

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