

## **The Bible – the Most Read Book on Earth**

### **Introduction to God’s Plan of Salvation**

Among the most widely circulated books on earth, the Bible ranks in first place by a large margin. From 1960 to 2010 alone, around 3.9 billion copies were sold worldwide. As of January 2015, it had been translated into 563 languages and dialects according to the United Bible Societies (UBS). The Bible is the only book that provides us with information spanning from the beginning of time up until what will take place at the end. In it, the entire history of mankind was already written down in advance. Even what is currently happening was foretold in the biblical prophecy of the Old and the New Testament.

This exposition is addressed to all people of good will from all nations and languages across the entire globe. Beside the six major religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, some people broaden the number to twelve world religions. It is entirely understandable that all people claim they are the ones who believe the right thing. Then there are the numerous nature and tribal religions. All of them are convinced that they are on the right path, in the right religion. Can there even be a “right religion” that developed in the course of time and traces back to a mortal human being? Of course, the personal core belief and the dignity of man is inviolable, for every individual has the right to believe what he or she considers to be correct. However, it is also true that every single man-made religion lacks the finality, the real absolute, which is beyond all doubt. The religious movements are temporal and, strictly speaking, only apply to this passing life. Every philosophy and ideology as well as theology has its human limits and ultimately leaves the most crucial questions unanswered.

There are things that are entirely beyond our assessment and yet are final in themselves. The fact that man was created in the image of the Creator and was equipped with creative abilities is one such example. Due to unbelief and disobedience, which led to the fall of man in paradise, mankind was removed from the eternal fellowship with the living God and was surrendered unto death, and nothing in life is as certain as death.

Everything temporal has a beginning and will have an end. Only that which has never started will also never end. The access to eternity was not laid into our cradles. Our birth was our entry into time. As temporal creatures, we do not automatically have eternal life: Only the eternal God can give it to us.

The only book that is rightfully called the Holy Scripture and the Word of God is the Bible. Together we will consult it further on for a number of

important issues. Only therein are we told everything from the beginning – from the creation of the heavens and the earth – until the end of time and beyond.

Before we deal with that which goes beyond time, we want to look at the entry of the Eternal One into contemporary history. We first see God in the creation. The majestic creation of the universe is a fact and, hence, contingent upon the existence of a creator – something every logically thinking individual can deduce. The divine order of all creatures in the water, on earth, and in the air; all plants, all trees, sowing and harvest; life itself; the reproduction within the visible creation – all of this remains in place as a living self-testimony of the Creator. What is the evolution theory supposed to achieve in regard to the reality of divine creation, for instance? After all, it is just a desperate attempt to deny the creation and its Creator. It is merely a theory while creation itself is a reality. Proven facts simply speak for themselves. Until this day, everything brings forth after its own kind, just as the Creator established it (Gen 1:12). When man has heard of the omnipotence and omnipresence of God, he can see them with spiritually open eyes in the creation.

Mankind has been accompanied by tragic events in its history from the beginning, events which have shaken the faith of many again and again. The LORD of heaven has not yet commenced His eternal reign. The prince of this world of darkness still reigns, and all of mankind is under his influence. Only through a personal experience of conversion to the Redeemer can the individual withdraw from the influence of the evil one and open himself or herself to the divine influence. In the LORD'S Prayer, we still pray, "Thy kingdom come!" And it shall surely come! The time is at hand. The signs of the time point to it.

### For Orientation

The Bible, the Old Testament, was initially written in the Hebrew language. Hebrew was the only language on earth in the first 1,750 years, until the construction of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:6-7). In Gen 14:13 Abraham was called a "Hebrew." In Ex 7:16 Moses said to Pharaoh, "***The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness ...***" The LORD Jesus also spoke Hebrew after His ascension – this was Paul's testimony: "***And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue ...***" (Acts 26:14). In the Hebrew language, persons and names as well as locations often have a meaning that sometimes gets lost in the translation into other languages.

The Old Testament ends with the Prophet Malachi, who lived approximately 400 years before Christ. Until then, there were the five books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms in the form of scrolls. It was not until the time period 300 to 200 years before Christ that the Old Testament with its 39 books was collectively combined. However, the individual scrolls did remain as well. Between 1947 and 1956, the oldest known handwritten scrolls were found in Qumran at the Dead Sea. Among them was a 7.3 m long, virtually undamaged scroll of the Book of Isaiah, the Psalms, and the Book of Daniel. They can be viewed in the “Shrine of the Book” at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. In Lk 24:44-45 Jesus, our LORD and Savior, emphasized the tripartition into the law of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets: “... **that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.**” In the synagogue in Nazareth, He once read from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah (Isa 61:1) and then said, “**This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.**” (Lk 4:16-21). In fact, more than a hundred prophecies of the Old Testament that are part of the Plan of Salvation were fulfilled at that time.

The Hebrew Old Testament was first translated into the then-existing Greek world language around 250 B.C. by Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. The Hebrew scholars of the Torah in Israel, however, did not acknowledge this translation, which was referred to as “Septuagint LXX.” Even in that early translation, there are precious and important significations, which effortlessly emerge from the Hebrew text, that are oftentimes no longer recognizable for the reader. For that reason, the original meaning, as discernible from the Hebrew text, shall be included in this exposition wherever necessary. But even those who speak multiple languages have to depend on the guidance and revelation by the Spirit of God. We believe in the absolute inspiration of the Holy Scripture, which is legitimized within itself by the perfect agreement between the Old and New Testament.

The New Testament with its 27 books came into existence in the course of the first Christian centuries as the “canon” – guideline. Luke stated in the introduction to his Gospel what initially took place: “**Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us ...**” Of the “many,” four remained, namely Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, whose records were entered into the biblical canon as the “Gospels.” They were ordained to leave unto the future generations an account of what took place in the life and works of Jesus Christ as part of the Plan of Salvation. Each Gospel has its own composition. In their diversity, they produce a

comprehensive picture of our LORD and Savior, starting with His birth up until His ascension.

**Matthew**, for instance, straightaway presents the evidence that with the birth of Christ the prophecy from Isa 7:14 has been fulfilled: ***“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel ...”*** (1:18-25). In chapter 2:1-6 he reports of the birth in Bethlehem and emphasizes the fulfillment of the promise from Mic 5: ***“And thou Bethlehem ... out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”***

**Mark** begins with the two Old Testament prophecies in regard to the ministry of John the Baptist, namely Isa 40:3: ***“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD ...”*** and Mal 3:1: ***“Behold, I will send my messenger ...”***

**Luke** reports right in the first chapter of Zechariah’s visitation by the Angel Gabriel in the Temple, who predicted unto him the birth of John the Baptist, and of Mary’s visitation by the Angel Gabriel, who announced unto her the birth of the Redeemer: ***“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS (Yahshua).”***

**John** goes back to the very beginning and testifies: ***“In the beginning was the Word ...”*** (Jn 1:1) ***“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ...”*** (v. 14).

Only by reading all four Gospels does one gain a complete overview of the life and works, the ministry, the suffering and dying, and the resurrection and ascension of our Redeemer as the point of culmination of the Plan of Salvation, just as it was already announced in the Old Testament.

The Gospels were followed by the “Book of Acts” of the Early Church, then came the Epistles of the apostles, and finally the “Book of Revelation of Jesus Christ,” which was given to the Apostle John on the Greek island of Patmos.

Initially, the Gospels and also the Epistles of the apostles were read and passed on in the local congregations: ***“And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”*** (Col 4:16). The proclamation went out into all the world as the LORD had commanded it in the Great Commission.

Prior to the invention of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the texts were transcribed by hand over and over again. With the translations into

other languages came the partitioning into chapters and then the verse assignments. It should be emphasized once again that it is not the comparisons of the many translations – as valuable as they might be – which bring us clarity, but that only the Spirit of God truly searches the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10) and leads into all truth (Jn 16:13). The letter, the written Word must become the revealed, living Word unto us. The Word of God remains forever (1 Pet 1:25; Isa 40:8).

### **Whoever Truly Believes Accepts the Confirmed Word of God**

We ask and God answers through His Word: What does God have to say unto us through the Old Testament? What has God given unto us through the New Testament? What is the true faith and what is the falsified faith? Is the established Christendom, are the many churches the Church of Jesus Christ?

Anyone who has explored this subject knows that promises were given in the Old Testament which come to fulfilment in the course of the New Testament time of grace. It is also known that the Holy Scripture is being interpreted in various different ways within Christianity. This begins already with the first verse of the Bible and ends with the last.

Here it shall be demonstrated that God really is only in His original Word, through which He speaks to us, and how the enemy as God's adversary has sneaked in by way of interpretations and misleads the people in a religious manner. The enemy was the first one to twist the Word of God when he stood before Eve with the argument, "Yea, hath God said ...?" as it is reported in Gen 3. He sowed the seeds of doubt and thus caused the fall, the separation from God. Even until today, he still questions what God has said and offers his own interpretations. He tries to exert his influence wherever he can – even in the chairs of theology – and feeds the intellect of inquisitive minds who like to eat of the tree of knowledge even though it still leads to spiritual death.

### **God/Elohim – LORD/Yahweh Valuable Comparisons**

The Septuagint translates the Hebrew word "Elohim," which is written a total of 3,526 times in the Bible beginning with Gen 1, verse 1, and expressed in ours as "God," into "Theos"; and the word "Yahweh"/YHWH, which is represented in our Bibles 4,024 times from Gen 2:4 as "LORD," into "Kyrios." The word combination "Elohim-YAHWEH"/"LORD God" is found in the Bible 6,356 times.

It was and is clear to every Hebrew that “Elohim” stands for the One and Only God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. After all, He has already introduced Himself in the Old Testament as the “One,” the “I AM.” HE, the Eternal One, does not exist in a plurality of persons but reveals Himself in the diversity of His manifestations (Theophanies) as Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, King, Judge, etc. These are not names but personal attributes relating to God. God is not called “Creator”; He *is* Creator. HE is not called “King”; He *is* King. HIS name is not “Judge”; He *is* Judge. HE is not called “Savior”; He *is* Savior, etc. – and yet He is always **the Same**.

Just a few examples: In Gen 14:19 He presents Himself as “**El Elyon**” – as most high God: “*Blessed be Abram of the most high God (El Elyon), possessor of heaven and earth ...*”

In Gen 17:1 He appears to Abraham as “**El Shaddai**” – as Almighty God: “*I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai); walk before me, and be thou perfect.*”

In Gen 21:33 it states “**El Olam**” – eternal God: “*Abraham ... called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God (El Olam).*”

In Isa 9:5-6 we find the promise of the birth of the Son: “*... his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God (El Gibbor), The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*”

All Hebrew words that begin with **El-** or end with **-el** testify of God. In like manner, all words that begin with **Yah-** or end with **-yah** have a reference to YAHWEH, the LORD. This is absolutely important and excludes every interpretation. For instance, “**Emmanu-el**” means “God with us”; “**Isra-el**” = “Wrestler for God”; “**Beth-el**” = “House of God”; “**Dani-el**” = “God is Judge”; “**Eli-jah**” = “YAHWEH is God”; “**Isa-iah**” = “YAHWEH is Salvation”; “**Hallelu-jah**” = “Praise YAHWEH”; etc.

The Holy **Covenant Name** “**YAHWEH**” as written in the original Hebrew text is of particular importance. As already mentioned, “Elohim” was translated as “Theos” and “YAHWEH” as “Kyrios.” That does not entirely correspond with the original meaning. Kyrios is a ruler – this can be a king or any kind of ruler – but this designation **no longer conveys the revelation of the Name of God** as we find it attested in Ex 6, verses 2 and 3: “*And God (Elohim) spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD (YAHWEH): And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name JEHOVA (Elohim YAHWEH) was I not known to them.*”

The Name “YHWH,” which is called a *tetra gram*, is **the revealed, Holy Covenant Name of the “LORD God”** in the Old Testament. The

Covenant with Israel was imminent and that is why the LORD God revealed unto His Prophet Moses and His Covenant people **His Covenant Name** “YHWH” – YAHWEH.

In the law (Ex 20) the Almighty said, ***“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD (Yahweh) thy God in vain; for the LORD (YAHWEH) will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”*** This Name was so holy to God that He wanted to ensure that His people Israel recognized its sanctity. For instance, the Name of the LORD God was not allowed to be mentioned when a deceased was carried out of the house (Amos 6:10): ***“... Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD (YAHWEH).”*** – for God is not a God of the dead but of the living (Mt 22:32). But also this Scripture from the Prophet Amos was misunderstood and reinterpreted so that the Covenant Name of the LORD God “YAHWEH” is not used at all by the Orthodox Jews, even until today, and is substituted with “Adonai.” The Hebrew word “Adon” means “king,” “ruler,” also “sovereign.” Sarah called Abraham “Adon” (Gen 18:12; 1 Pet 3:6). **But Elohim-YAHWEH/the LORD God is not only King, He is “the Eternal,” “the I AM,” “The in Himself existing One”** (Ex 3:14; Ex 34:5-6; and others). **“YAHWEH” is specifically the revealed Covenant and Redemption Name of God in the Old Testament.**

The entire Plan of Redemption is contained in the following seven designations: “YAHWEH-JIREH” means “the LORD will choose a sacrifice for Himself” (Gen 22:1-14); “YAHWEH-RAPHA” = “the LORD heals” (Ex 15:26); “YAHWEH-NISSI” = “the LORD is my Banner” (Ex 17:15); “JAHWEH-SHALOM” = “the LORD is my peace” (Jgs 6:24); “YAHWEH-TSIDKENU” = “the LORD our righteousness” (Jer 23:6); “YAHWEH-SHAMMAH” = “the LORD is present” (Eze 48:35); “YAHWEH-SABAOTH” = “the LORD of Hosts” (1 Sam 1:3).

**Elohim/God, the Invisible, Who is Spirit by His very nature** (Jn 4:24), Whom nobody has seen (Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 4:12), was hidden in eternity in His fullness of Spirit, Light, and Life (1 Tim 1:17). At the beginning of time, He revealed Himself as YAHWEH (LORD) in visible form. HE spoke all things in the natural and supernatural creation into existence through His Almighty Word and walked in paradise.

The first “profession of faith,” which was left unto us in the Holy Scripture as the **“Sch’mah Israel,”** came from the mouth of the LORD God Himself. The LORD spoke commandingly: ***“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD ...”*** (Deut 6:4-9). In Mk 12:29 we have the confirmation from the mouth of our LORD and Redeemer: ***“Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD ...”***

## The original credo states:

**YAHWEH Elohim YAHWEH Echat – YAHWEH/the LORD is our God; YAHWEH/the LORD is ONE!**

It testifies of the true faith in the One, true God. Even if the Eternal One reveals Himself in various different ways, namely as Creator, Redeemer, King, Judge, etc., **He still remains the Eternal One** beside Whom there is no other. ***“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me ...”*** (Isa 45:5-6). ***“I am the LORD thy God ... Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”*** (Ex 20:2-3).

## The Realization of God’s Plan of Salvation in the New Testament

For the realization of His eternal Plan of Salvation with humanity, God has revealed Himself from the beginning of the New Testament as Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ (Hebrew: “Yahshua HaMashiach”), the Anointed One of God. The New Testament Covenant Name “Yahshua” is derived from the Old Testament Name “YAHWEH” and is embedded therein. The Hebrew word “yasha” means “to save” (Ex 14:30). We need only compare Joel 2:32: ***“... whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD (YAHWEH) shall be delivered ...”*** with Acts 2:21: ***“... whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD (Yahshua) shall be saved.”*** ***“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.”*** (Rom 10:13). YAHWEH of the Old Testament is Yahshua of the New Testament. In the Hebrew text it states: ***“... thou shalt call his name YAHSHUA: for he shall save (yasha) his people from their sins.”*** (Mt 1:21). **YAHSHUA means “YAHWEH-Savior.”** Unfortunately, this New Testament Covenant Name, in which God revealed Himself unto us as Father in the Son, was also not always recognized in its significance in view of the Plan of Salvation.

It requires the revelation through the Spirit of God to recognize this incomprehensible, unexplainable mystery in which we were included. At first this applies to everybody: ***“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*** The apostle, however, could testify: ***“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*** (1 Cor 2:10-15).

Before the Redeemer could fulfill His mission and give us the Redemption, He had to be born into this world as Son in a body of flesh:

*“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, made under the law ...”* (Gal 4:4).

*“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise ..., she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”* (Mt 1:18).

*“... for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”* (Mt 1:20).

*“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”* (Mt 1:22-25; Isa 7:14).

*“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”* (Lk 1:26-38).

This was the testimony of Elisabeth, who was filled with the Holy Ghost: *“And whence is this to me, that the mother of my LORD should come to me?”* (Lk 1:43) – not “the mother of God.”

We are informed clearly and precisely about the birth of the Son of God. This was how the angel proclaimed it to the shepherds on the field: *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the LORD.”* (Lk 2:11).

In the Word of God, we find our LORD and Redeemer described by the four meaningful “Son titles”: as *Son of Abraham*, *Son of David*, *Son of God*, and *Son of Man*.

As **Son of Abraham** (Mt 1:1), He is “the heir of the world” (Rom 4:13)

– and the Redeemed are ordained to be heirs of God and co-heirs of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:17).

As **Son of David** (Mt 1:1b), He is “the King” (Lk 1:32; Jn 18:37)

– and the Redeemed are ordained to share His Kingship with Him (Rev 5:10).

As **Son of Man**, He is “the Prophet,” Whom Moses had already foretold (Deut 18:15-19), as Peter emphasized in Acts 3:22-24: *“... every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”*

As **Son of God**, He is “the Redeemer,” through Whom the Redeemed received the adoption as sons and daughters of God: *“... that we might receive the adoption of sons.”* (Gal 4:4-9).

On this matter, the apostle wrote the following: *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our LORD, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name ...”* (Rom 1:1-5).

According to the flesh, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came from the lineage of David (Mt 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38), and He has reconciled us *“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight ...”* (Col 1:22). *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ...”* (Eph 1:7). Through His atoning death, He has given us the reconciliation with God: *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”* (2 Cor 5:14-21). HE died so *“... that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ...”* (Heb 2:14). Through His resurrection, we were given victory over death and immortality.

*“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ... For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ... And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”* (1 Cor 15:21, 25, 28).

All of the redeemed will experience it at the Return of the LORD: *“... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, ...”* then the redeemed shall call out: *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ.”* (1 Cor 15:51-57). Amen.

Never did the One God divide Himself into “three eternal persons.” Never does the Holy Scripture speak of a “triune” God, of a “trinity,” or of a “duality”; it only states that the Father manifested Himself in the Son for our salvation. The New Testament also testifies exclusively about the **One and Only God**: *“... honour that cometh from God only ...”* (Jn 5:44); *“... know thee the only true God ...”* (Jn 17:3); *“Seeing it is one God ...”* (Rom 3:30); *“... but God is ONE.”* (Gal 3:20); *“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God ...”* (1 Tim 1:17); *“For there is one*

*God ...” (1 Tim 2:5). “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the LORD, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Rev 1:8).*

The true, all-encompassing profession of faith of the apostles is only written in the Bible and has been established for the Church of the LORD once and for all:

*“ONE LORD, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph 4:5-6).*

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Tim 3:16).*

When He became man according to the Plan of Redemption, the LORD is shown as Redeemer in His duties next to God. He is **Mediator**: *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ...” (1 Tim 2:5);*

as well as **Advocate**: *“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ...” (1 Jn 2:1);*

and **High Priest**: *“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:11-12).*

### **It Is Worthwhile to Think About It**

In the 4,000 years from Adam until Christ, no one ever spoke to a Father in heaven – not Abraham, Moses, or any prophet – let alone to a Son of God. There was also no conversation in heaven between Father and Son. Later on, misunderstandings from the Trinitarian point of view were interpreted into the Holy Scripture, for instance, in regard to the statement: *“Let us make man ...” (Gen 1:26)* as well as Gen 11:7, where the LORD said, *“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”*

The LORD God was neither talking to Himself nor was He speaking to another divine person but instead to the angels who surrounded Him. We see this confirmed time and again, as in 2 Chr 18:18-22, where the LORD had a conversation with the heavenly hosts standing on His left side

and on His right side. In Isa 6:1-13 the LORD said to the seraphims who surrounded Him, **“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”** (v. 8). HE asked Job, **“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? ... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”** (Job 38:4+7).

The LORD became like us when He took on human form as Son of God: **“... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ...”** (Phil 2:7). HE gave His blood for the forgiveness of our sins: **“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”** (Mt 26:28), made the New Covenant with us, and gave us the adoption as sons: **“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts ...”** (Gal 4:4-7).

It is good to know that the LORD/YAHWEH of the Old Testament is THE SAME LORD/YAHSHUA of the New Testament. Beginning in the Garden of Eden, the invisible, eternal God revealed Himself throughout the Old Testament in visible form as LORD. Accompanied by two angels, He visited Abraham: **“And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre ... And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him ...”** (Gen 18:1-2). The LORD continued to speak with Abraham (v. 17) while the two angels went on to Sodom (chap. 19). Jacob saw Him on the ladder that reached to heaven: **“And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ...”** (Gen 28:12-15). HE appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3), and then He revealed Himself to all of the people of Israel in the cloud and the pillar of fire (Ex 40:34-38). To Moses the LORD even spoke face to face (Deut 34:10). The Prophet Micah saw the LORD on the throne (1 Kgs 22:19), as did the Prophet Isaiah (Isa 6). The Apostle John likewise saw Him on the throne: **“... and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and ONE sat on the throne ...”** (Rev 4:2). This was not a second person but God, Who is actually Spirit, as LORD in visible form.

In the New Testament, God has revealed Himself as Father in heaven in His only begotten Son on earth. As Son He said, **“I came forth from the Father ...”** The disciples replied, **“... by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”** (Jn 16:28-30). After He had completed His work of Redemption, He sat down as Son of Man at the right hand of God (Mt 26:63-64): **“I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ...”** (Jn 20:17). This had already been predicted in Ps 110:1: **“... Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”** (Mt 26:64; Lk 22:69; see also Heb 1:13; Heb 2:7-8; and others). As LORD – not as Son – He could say,

***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.”*** (Jn 8:58).

The I AM speaks in the Old and New Testament:

***“I AM the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.”***  
(Isa 43:15).

***“I, even I, AM he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”*** (Isa 43:25).

***“Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I AM he; I AM the first, I also AM the last.”*** (Isa 48:12).

***“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I AM a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”*** (Jn 18:37).

The designation “I AM” is found repeatedly in the Gospel of John: ***“I AM the bread of life; I AM the light of the world; I AM the good shepherd; I AM the resurrection; I AM the way, the truth, and the life.”***

***“I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the LORD, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”*** (Rev 1:8).

***“I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”*** (Rev 22:13).

### A Decisive Comparison

The testimony of the Old and New Testament of our Savior Jesus Christ agrees harmoniously. In contrast, in the catechism and many other theological textbooks we find recorded the statement of faith that was formulated by men. The Apostle John clearly stated, ***“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”*** (1 Jn 4:2-3). On the subject of the confession to Christ, the Son, he got to the point and asked, ***“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ (= the Anointed One)? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”*** (1 Jn 2:22). The word “anti” means “against, contrary to, instead of.” It refers to the *spirit of the antichrist*, namely the spirit which operates in opposition to Christ, and the *antichrist*, who is under the influence of this wrong spirit. **Every**

**one of the teachings that is contrary to what the Spirit of God has proclaimed in the doctrine of Christ in the Bible is antichrist, is directed against Him, and separates us from God – from the tree of life (Rev 22:19).**

When we heed the apostolic warning that every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ biblically, namely as the Son Who appeared in the flesh, is not of God, then the following question arises: **What about all of those who confess the Son, Whose virgin birth was announced in Isa 7:14 and Who was born in Bethlehem as foretold in Mic 5:1, as a second eternal person of the Godhead, which is not found anywhere in the Bible?** The Apostle John had to emphasize, “... *every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist ...*” (1 Jn 4).

The formulations of the church creeds, as created in Nicaea in the year 325 and expanded in Constantinople in 381, do not correspond with the testimony as it has been left unto us in the Holy Scripture. For example, they speak of “... **the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.**” The Son was supposedly born as God from the Father in heaven before time began, meaning in eternity? That is entirely wrong.

Therewith they cannot possibly mean Christ, the Son, the Anointed One. After all, the Holy Scripture says in Ps 2:7: “***Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.***” But eternity has no today and no tomorrow; it always was and always will be. The Angel Gabriel came from heaven and announced **the birth of the Son on earth**. He said to the virgin Mary, “***And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS (Yahshua).***” (Lk 1:31).

The creed “**the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; the Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal**” is entirely unscriptural and ultimately antichrist. There is only One eternal God: “... ***even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.***” (Ps 90:2). The terms “**God the Son**” as well as “**eternal Son**” are not found in the Bible a single time, and neither is “**God the Holy Spirit.**” Therein it only speaks of the *Son of God* and of the *Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is not a third person but the Spirit of God, Who at the beginning moved upon the face of the waters (Gen 1:1) and is mentioned 378 times in the Bible as “Ruach YAHWEH” and was poured out upon the New Testament Church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Only in the year 381 was the Holy Spirit declared to be the third person within the Godhead at the Council of Constantinople. The so-called “apostolic creed”

is neither apostolic nor biblical. **Only that which originates from the apostles can be apostolic, and only that which is written in the Bible is biblical:** *“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one LORD Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”* (1 Cor 8:6). **The ONE God revealed Himself as LORD – the Father in the Son.**

It is of no use to any church to emphasize in their creed the words from Eph 4:5, *“One LORD, one faith, one baptism,”* if a totally different LORD, a totally different faith, and a totally different baptism from the one in the Holy Scripture are being testified, taught, and practiced.

The theological dispute in the third Christian century only arose because the human mind tried to depict the Godhead, in an effort to comprehend it, and to explain the revelation of the Father in the Son, even though it is written: *“... no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”* (Mt 11:25-27; Lk 10:21-22). Apostles and prophets never had discussions on the subject of the Godhead because what the LORD had said to Peter also applied to them: *“... flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”* (Mt 16:16-19).

**The true profession of faith of the one true Church, which itself is the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim 3:15), can only be found in the Bible.** Only therein are we told who Jesus Christ, the Son of God, really is. **The everlasting, biblical-apostolic profession of faith was defined by God Himself.** After all, it is about the Redemption and eternal life: *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* (1 Jn 5:11-12).

It is an experience of salvation that everybody can make personally by His grace. *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”* (Jn 1:12).

*“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”* (1 Jn 5:20). Amen, yes, Amen!

For the true Church of Jesus Christ, which is no organization but a living organism, solely the biblical doctrines are valid as they are written in the Holy Scripture. In His Church, only that **which was established in the everlasting Testament** can be believed and taught, because nothing may be changed therein and nothing may be added thereto (Gal 3:15; Rev

22:18-21). *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”* (Gal 1:8).

Whoever has received a direct divine calling like the original apostles Peter, John, James, and Paul can and will only stand up for God and God’s Word. Likewise, all those who are in the service of a church promote that which is believed, taught, and practiced there, such as, for instance, professions of faith and dogmas that were decided in councils and synods since the fourth Christian century. Even after the Reformation, all newly-founded Christian denominations determined their respective doctrines, which also did not always agree with those in the Bible. Presently, there are more than two billion devotees of Christianity worldwide, divided into the Catholic, the Orthodox, the Protestant, and the Anglican Church as well as a large number of various smaller churches.

### **The Tragic Development in the Established Christendom**

Everyone can, of course, decide for himself or herself whom and what he or she believes. The following shall just briefly demonstrate the tragic development in the course of church history.

In early Christianity, the proclamation was scriptural. The apostles were instructed by the LORD Himself and were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The first Christians were of one heart and soul. The Early Church was no religious organization but a living organism. God Himself had set into His Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors (1 Cor 12; 1 Cor 14; Eph 4; and others). Local congregations with elders and deacons were established that were independent and of no political importance. The fast-growing Christian assemblies, however, were viewed as a threat to the traditional religion and social order by some of the people who bore responsibility in the Old Roman Empire. Under Nero (AD 64), persecutions set in, which increasingly spread in the course of the first centuries.

After the last horrible persecution of Christians under Emperor Diocletian (AD 284-305), Christianity was officially given governmental recognition by Emperor Constantine in the year 313. That was when Christianity, which by then had already started falling away, began to conform to the power interests of the Empire. Already one year prior to that, Constantine had appointed himself as “Pontifex Maximus,” the ruler over state and church. That is how the “state church” came into existence in the Roman Empire.

In the year 380, the Trinitarian faith was declared to be the official state religion by Emperor Theodosius I, and not only the numerous Christian denominations but all of the citizens in the Roman Empire were required to belong to it. The proclamation was: “No salvation without the church!” and: “Only someone who has the church as one’s mother can have God as one’s Father.” What did this politically and religiously motivated development of the state church still have to do with the Church of Jesus Christ? Nothing, absolutely nothing!

The title “Pontifex Maximus,” which had originally been assigned to the chief priest in the ancient Roman idolatry, was first transferred to the Roman Emperors and later to the popes: Pope Leo the Great (AD 440-461) was the first bishop of Rome who gave himself this title. The primacy of the pope and the dominance of the Catholic Church overall are based on the assertion that Jesus established the church on the Apostle Peter, whom He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that Peter was supposedly the very first bishop of Rome and thus the first pope.

In doing so, they also refer to the words of Jesus: “... *upon this rock I will build my church* ...” But there is probably no theologian who would not know that two different words are used in Mt 16:18. Our LORD said, “... *thou art Peter* ...” (petros = a stone, a fragment of a rock). However, He did not say, “... upon thee I will build my church ...” but rather: “... *upon this rock* (petra = a massive rock) ***I will build my church*** ...” How is it possible to claim that Peter is supposed to be the rock upon whom the church was founded?

The Church, of course, was built upon Christ, the rock of salvation, the cornerstone, as the Apostle Peter himself testified in 1 Pet 2:4-8: ***“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”*** In reference to the biblical Church, Paul wrote in Eph 2:20: ***“... built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ...”***

By God’s commission, he also wrote: ***“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*** (1 Cor 3:10-11).

In the one true Church of God, which is comprised of the redeemed, Jesus Christ is the Head (Eph 4:15). After all, our LORD and Redeemer Himself said, ***“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*** (Mt 16:18) – not many churches but ***“my church.”***

This refers to the small flock of the true believers (Lk 12:32) for which the Good Shepherd gave His life, and His sheep hear only His voice (Jn 10).

The Apostle Simon Peter was never in Rome – that is a purposely invented legend. There was merely a sorcerer called Simon Magus, who made a great impression on the senate. According to Acts 18, Emperor Claudius, who reigned from AD 41 – 54, even had all Jews expelled from Rome, including the married couple Aquila and Priscilla. The Apostle Peter did not write his letter from Rome but from the city of Babylon at the River Euphrates (1 Pet 5:13), whose ruins are still there today, 92 km south of Baghdad in Iraq. The missionary journeys of Peter and those of Paul are described in the Book of Acts. Paul, who repeatedly stayed in Rome during his journeys – once even for 2 years (Acts 28:30), did not greet Peter in his Epistle to the local believers there, although he mentioned 27 persons by name (Rom 16).

Also this statement made by Jesus: ***“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ...”*** was later completely misinterpreted. At the time of the apostles, it did not take place as an official act according to the discretion of a priest but as an offer through the preaching of Jesus Christ, the Crucified One, Who as the Lamb of God carried away the sins of the world. The apostolic commission of the risen LORD is as follows: ***“... and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations ...”*** (Lk 24:47; Acts 13:38).

The first sermon on the day of Pentecost after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the founding of the New Testament Church in Acts 2 touched many listeners deeply, “they were pricked in their heart,” which led them to ask the question: ***“Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”*** (vv. 37-41).

In reference to the completed Redemption, Peter wrote: ***“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ...”*** (1 Pet 1:18-19). The apostle and all true servants of God have preached the Gospel, namely the forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation with God, and could call out to anybody who believed: “Your sins are forgiven in His Name!” Those who did not believe retained their sins (Mk 16:16; Jn 20:23). Unfortunately, the Word of God has been misinterpreted many times, and every doctrine and practice has

been changed. All interpretations arise from misunderstandings about certain Scriptures. According to the divine order in the Plan of Salvation, every subject, including every biblical doctrine, must be founded upon two, three, or more witnesses/Scriptures (2 Cor 13:1).

### A Fateful Path

The church fathers who came from paganism were more or less under the Hellenistic influence of idolatry and superstition. Obviously, they did not know or abide by the Old Testament and therefore interpreted the New Testament according to their own understanding. They slandered the Jews, who could not accept their trinity doctrine, calling them murderers of Christ and of God, and persecuted and cursed them in the newly invented Trinitarian formula “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Already in the year 321, they were prohibited by decree to observe the Sabbath, which God Himself had commanded them to keep: ***“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”*** (Ex 31:12-18). Some of their synagogues were even used as pigsties. That was the beginning of the Anti-Semitism sown by the church which has persisted to this day. Time and again it escalated into pogroms, and it reached its horrific climax in the Holocaust during the “Third Reich” from 1933-1945.

“In honor of the trinity,” the cruelest crimes were committed against a countless number of people of different faiths. In the seven Crusades (between AD 1096 and 1270), millions of people died in the name of the “trine God.” On November 27, 1095, Pope Urban II called for the expulsion of the “unbelievers” from Jerusalem and a takeover of the holy sites, and the people called out: “Deus lo vult!” – “God wants it!” On Friday, July 15, 1099, the great massacre at the hand of the crusaders began in Jerusalem: Up to 80,000 Muslims, Jews, and others were murdered by the crusaders – and all of that “for the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”!

The crusaders’ main objective was to put an end to the Muslim rulership in Jerusalem and to establish the authority of the church. Their pretext was their concern over the so-called “Church of the Holy Sepulchre” in the center of the city. In reality, however, the empty tomb of Christ is located outside of the city; this is how the Evangelist John wrote it: *“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a*

*new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.*” (Jn 19:17+41; Mt 27:32). At that time, they were aiming to establish a new Christian world order with “the Kingdom of Jerusalem” under the rule of Gottfried von Bouillon.

In the chart shown below, we also see the large number of victims even among the crusaders. The middle column shows the original number of participants in each Crusade; the last column lists the number of remaining crusaders upon arrival in the Holy Land.

Kreuzzug	Teilnehmer	Teilnehmer (im Heiligen Land angekommen)
1. Kreuzzug (1096/99)	330000	40000
2. Kreuzzug (1147/49)	240000	90000
3. Kreuzzug (1189/92)	350000	280000
4. Kreuzzug (1202/04)	30000	—
5. Kreuzzug (1228/29)	70000	60000
6. Kreuzzug (1248/54)	25000	10000
7. Kreuzzug (1270)	25000	10000
Insgesamt	1070000	490000

(Source: Alfred Läßle, *Illustrierte Geschichte der Kirche*)

There are varying opinions about the number of the ones murdered between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, those who fell victim to the so-called “Holy Inquisition”; in any case, there were many thousands of them. After many Jews all over Europe had died at the stake and many others had fled, all those who did not want to convert to the Catholic faith had to leave Spain by July 31, 1492. Thereafter, Catholic Spain was declared to be “free of Jews.”

The Bartholomew’s Day Massacre during the night of August 23/24, 1572, was the beginning of a massacre of thousands of Huguenots in France. In the course of the Counter-Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, which dates back to Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), thousands of Protestants were driven out of their homeland by force and many lost their lives. “For,” it was claimed again and again, “there is no salvation without the church.” How can a church that is stained with so much blood possibly invoke Christ and the God of love? To which city might Rev 18:24 be refer-

ring: “*And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*”? That was the question posed by revivalist preachers.

Upon closer examination, nothing within the state church, which came into existence in the fourth century in the Roman Empire, is in agreement with God or God’s Word and the Early Church. Especially after the split of the church in 1054 into the Greek East church and the Latin West church, which later gave rise to the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches, they both proceeded to build their own traditions without adhering to the Bible and to what Peter, John, James, and Paul had proclaimed, taught, and practiced as apostles commissioned by God. The apostles did not, for instance, beatify or canonize the dead. Likewise, the LORD Himself only ever addressed His message, including the nine beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5), to the living: “*But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*” (Mt 13:16).

The association with the dead is expressly forbidden in the Holy Scripture (Lev 19:31). Mary had fulfilled her particular task with the birth of Jesus Christ and is mentioned for the last time in Acts 1:14, when she was among the 120 who were waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. For the Church of Jesus Christ, she is neither mediator nor advocate, and no “Hail Mary” was ever recited in the early days of Christianity. The Holy Scripture testifies only of the bodily ascension of the Redeemer (Lk 24:50-52; Acts 1:11), not of an ascension of Mary.

## Baptism

The following fact remains true: When there is no divine revelation, then there is also no biblical orientation, which leads to discussions and interpretations. That is the case with all biblical subjects, even water baptism. Why is baptism since the fourth century no longer being administered like it was by Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 2:38), by Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:16), and by Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:5)? Because the church fathers did not understand that it is about the Name, in which lies the salvation of God (Acts 4:11), into which believers shall be baptized. Because of the misconception about God, the commandment of baptism given by our LORD in Mt 28:19 was also changed into a Trinitarian official act which has absolutely nothing to do with the original meaning but is still being practiced to this day.

The **biblical baptism** is preceded by the preaching of the Word, because faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Acts 2; Rom 10:16-17; and others). That is how the LORD commanded it in the Great Commission:

***“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ...”*** (Mk 16:15-16).  
 Whosoever is baptized confirms as a believer that he or she has received the forgiveness of his or her sins.

The critical history of the church has proven that the **original version** of the Great Commission in Mt 28:19 states as follows: ***“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into my name (onto onomati mou), Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...”*** That is how it is recorded in the footnote of the “Novum Testamentum Graece Et Germanice” published by Nestle-Aland, 1973 edition. The version known all over the world, “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” the one that is commonly used in all the churches for every official act or ceremony, is not found in any original manuscript. That is the conclusion of the critical Bible research. In Martin Luther’s translation, it states in the footnote to Mt 28:19: “The precise wording is: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, by baptizing them **into the name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...” Before we can baptize into the Name, in which God made Himself known as Father in the Son and by the Holy Spirit, it must be revealed to us. In the most widely used German translations of the Bible it likewise states: **“Baptizing them in the name ...”!** That is exactly what the apostles did. In the Bible, the Trinitarian formula is not used a single time, indeed, not even once. We find this confirmed in the Greek-German “Interlinear-Translation:”

οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. 19 πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ	Himmel und auf der Erde. Hingegangen also, macht zu Jüngern alle -
ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ	Völker, <b>taufend sie auf den Namen</b> des Vaters und des Sohnes und
τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, 20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα	des heiligen Geistes, lehrend <b>sie</b> , zu halten alles, was

Peter did not give a long explanation about baptism in his first sermon on the founding day of the New Testament Church: It was clear to him, as one who had heard the original words from the mouth of the Master, exactly how baptism should be administered. Hence he acted according to the Great Commission of the risen Redeemer and commanded all of the believers **to be baptized in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ** (Acts 2:37-41).

At the next opportunity, he again preached forgiveness: ***“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”*** (Acts 10:43) and straightaway also baptism: ***“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be bap-***

*tized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"* (v. 47). ***“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the LORD.”*** (Acts 10:48). After Paul’s sermon, even the disciples of John the Baptist who believed in Jesus Christ were baptized again: ***“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the LORD Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”*** (Acts 19:5-6). The apostles and everybody in early Christianity understood that it is about *the Name*, wherein lies the salvation of God, into which believers shall be baptized.

Faith, water baptism, and baptism by the Holy Spirit belong together. In the water baptism the believer professes his or her decision for Christ, and in the Spirit baptism God affirms Himself to the believer. ***“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”*** (1 Cor 12:13).

International church history uniformly testifies that from early Christianity until the third century, baptism took place only in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ and this by a single immersion. Addressing the believers in Rome, the apostle wrote: ***“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death*** (namely by immersion [baptismo]), ***that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*** (Rom 6:3-4). ***“Buried with him in baptism ...”*** (Col 2:12).

In Acts 8:38 we are told: ***“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”*** Likewise, John the Baptist baptized *in* the Jordan River (not near the Jordan River): ***“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ...”*** (Mt 3:16).

In the year 337, when Emperor Constantine was on his death bed in the palace at Ankyron, Bishop Eusebius sprinkled water on his forehead three times while reciting the Trinitarian formula. Was that a baptism? Through this act, Constantine supposedly became a Christian, even though he worshipped the sun god Sol even until his death. The Trinitarian formula was added by the spiritually blind church fathers in the time of the formation of the trinity doctrine. A Trinitarian formula was a perfect addition to the invented trinity doctrine in order to make it credible. This is the “Roman baptismal creed.”

If the church fathers in the third and fourth century and subsequently all theologians would have carried out the commandment of baptism like Peter did on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and later on also Paul (Acts 19:5), then there would not have been any dispute about it at all. However, none of the church fathers was able to give account of a conversion to Christ or a true experience of salvation, let alone a divine commission.

In the Bible, we find neither the trinity doctrine of three eternal persons nor the baptism in the Trinitarian formula. There is not a single Scripture in which even one act would have been administered in the formula “in the Name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” – **not a single one!** Every prayer, in fact, everything took place in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ, for that was the command given to the true believers in Col 3:17: **“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD Jesus ...”**

The Trinitarian formula is used in all churches for every religious act or ceremony, for the induction into all orders and lodges, even for spiritualistic sessions, and all the more throughout the entire occultism. It is not biblical; therefore, it can only be unbiblical. It is not of divine origin; therefore, it is false inspiration and deception. Everybody should think about it, also the charismatics who use the Name “Jesus Christ” in the prayer for the sick but vehemently reject to be personally baptized in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ.

However, false christs and false prophets must appear so that what our LORD has foretold would be fulfilled: *“Many will say to me in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”* (Mt 7:22-23).

Who can comprehend that in all of Christendom there is no clarity about the fundamental teachings of Godhead, baptism, and the LORD’S Supper, even though they are very well documented in the Bible? This is only because people did not remain in the doctrine of Christ and the apostles. Regrettably, the original revelation, as given to the apostles, got lost already in the first Christian centuries. Unfamiliar political and religious ideas were incorporated into Christianity by the church fathers.

The well-known Swiss theologian Hans Küng covered this important subject in his book *Das Christentum* (The Christendom), which contains more than a thousand pages. On page 126 he asks the question: **“Is there any mention of a trinity in the New Testament?”** Immediately thereafter he writes: **“No trinity doctrine in the New Testament.”** He also discusses

the “Comma Johanneum”: *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”* Küng explains: **“However, historical-critical research has exposed this sentence as a forgery that came into existence in the third or fourth century in North Africa or in Spain. It was of no use to the Roman inquisition authority when it tried to defend this sentence as being authentic even at the beginning of our century. In plain terms, it means nothing other than this: Within Judeo-Christianity, in fact, in the entire New Testament, there is indeed the faith in God, the Father; in Jesus, the Son; and in God’s Holy Spirit, but there is no doctrine of a god in three persons (forms of existence), no doctrine of a triune god or of a trinity.”** (pp. 126-127).

### The LORD’s Supper

Pagan ideas also flowed into the celebration of the LORD’s Supper. So it is not surprising that recurring theological disputes about this subject arose already before, during, and even after the Reformation.

In order to understand the original meaning of the LORD’s Supper, one must read the corresponding Scriptures. The early Christians called the LORD’s Supper simply “the breaking of bread.” They also gathered for this purpose in each other’s homes (Acts 2:42-47; Acts 20:7). It was at the Feast of Passover when our Saviour introduced the LORD’s Supper (Jn 13; Mt 26; Mk 14). In Ex 12, when the LORD God gave the instructions for the first Passover, He called the people of Israel “Church” (Ecclesia = Called out Ones) for the first time. First, a lamb had to be sacrificed and the shed blood had to be applied to their door frames for their protection: ***“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you ...”*** (Ex 12:13). The meat of the lamb was prepared and eaten together with the unleavened bread. Paul referred to this in 1 Cor 5:7, when he wrote: ***“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ...”***

In Jn 6 we find the special parable where the LORD applied the symbol of the bread to Himself: ***“I am that bread of life ... I am the living bread which came down from heaven*** (first He is the bread, then He gives it): ***if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. ... he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”***

In Mt 26 the disciples asked, ***“Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?”*** (vv. 17-19). *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.”* (v. 26). Then comes verse 27: *“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.”* Only then He said, ***“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*** (see also: Mk 14:24-25). The bread was eaten; the wine was drunk. In reference to the wine in the cup, our Redeemer said, ***“I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*** (Mt 26:29).

The Redeemer has shed His blood and thus has given us the forgiveness of our sins and the reconciliation with God. **Bread and wine cannot and need not be transformed; Christ cannot and need not be sacrificed again; He has done that once and for all.** According to the divine Plan of Salvation, ***“... by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”*** (Heb 9:12). Amen.

The main principle is already written in Lev 17:11: ***“For the life of the flesh is in the blood ...”*** In the blood of the Redeemer was the divine, eternal life. And in all those who were redeemed by the blood of the Son of God and born again through the Word and Spirit (Jn 3:3; Jas 1:18; 1Pt 1:23), in them is the same eternal life that was in the Son of God (1Jn 5:11-13). Paul wrote it in a manner that is easily understandable for everyone in 1 Cor 10:16-17: ***“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”***

In 1 Cor 11:23-34 the apostle wrote: ***“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the LORD’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the LORD, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the LORD.”*** (vv. 26-27). The celebration of the LORD’S Supper is the culminating moment during a worship service. Everyone examines himself or herself before God and asks for forgiveness. In sincere prayer and reverence, the LORD’S Supper is celebrated in remembrance of the offering of His body as a sacrifice and of His holy blood, which He shed for us. The bread, which is baked without leaven, is blessed by prayer and broken before the congregation and distributed; the cup is likewise blessed by prayer and handed to everybody. That is how it was practiced by the first Christians, and that is how it was left unto the New Testament Church.

## Back to the Word – Back to the Beginning

*“But the word of the LORD endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”* (1 Pet 1:25).

After centuries during which the state church wielded the worldly sword and spiritual power over individuals and entire nations, a spiritual renewal and return to the Bible was on the horizon toward the end of the Middle Ages.

In all of the revivals before and after the Reformation, the believers of the Bible left the state church and were persecuted by her. John Wycliffe (1321-1384), who translated the Vulgate into the English language, recognized the significance of the Word of God and confessed publicly, **“As far as I am concerned, only what is written in the Bible is valid!”** He rejected the papacy and was declared to be a heretic even 30 years after his death. Also Jan Hus (1370-1415) preached from the Bible after he had received enlightenment and decided to stand in opposition to the all-encompassing claim of the papacy. For him, the Bible became the only authority for all questions of faith. Thus he wrote in his commentary on Jn 8:31-32: **“Seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, hold the truth, and defend the truth until death!”** On July 6, 1415, after being sentenced to death by the Council of Constance, he committed his soul unto his Redeemer Jesus Christ as he stood amidst the flames, bound at the stake, all the while praying for forgiveness for the enemies of the truth.

Martin Luther renounced the papal selling of indulgences and preached repentance and justification through faith. Already in the year 1520, he published the treatise “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church” and conveyed his standpoint that not any church sacrament but only the faith in Jesus Christ leads to salvation. He likewise adhered to “Sola Scriptura” – only the Scripture! At the end of his speech at the Imperial Diet of Worms on April 18, 1521, Martin Luther spoke these famous words: **“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.** At the climax of the spiritual dispute, the reformer viewed himself as the mouthpiece of God against the pope and the church.

In Switzerland, the Reformation achieved its triumph in 1531 through Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich; John Calvin facilitated its breakthrough in Geneva in 1536. They and many others contributed their part to the Protestant revival in all of Europe at that time. People who had become believers, who were being labelled as “heretics” by the established church, came together everywhere for prayer. The small congregations that thus came into existence, including the Anabaptist movement, were called “sects” and were persecuted.

But the Reformation could not be held back anymore, and the Holy Scripture was revealed and proclaimed ever deeper and clearer during the revivals of the subsequent centuries. Revivalist preachers like Earl Zinzendorf for the Moravian Church, John Wesley for the Methodists, John Smith for the Baptists, Menno Simon for the Mennonites, William Booth for the Salvation Army, and many others came on the scene. All of the preachers of the biblical truth were in agreement when it came to the vicar of Christ, who appropriated for himself all power on earth and who exalted himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, whom Paul calls the son of perdition (2 Ths 2). They emphasized that God’s Word mentions neither a “vicar of Christ” (Vicarius Filii Dei) nor a “successor of Peter,” and they also placed great emphasis on what our LORD said in Mt 23:9: *“And call no man your father upon the earth (let alone “Holy Father”): for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”*

### Someone Has to Say It

It is known that religions have assumed control of entire nations and countries: Here it is Christendom; there it is Islam; elsewhere it is Hinduism or Buddhism. Thus the South of Europe from Italy to Spain and Portugal is dominated by Catholicism, whereas the North up to Sweden, Norway, and Finland is predominantly Protestant. Looking at North America, the USA and Canada are also greatly influenced by Protestantism, while the countries of South and Central America are shaped by Catholicism. In India it is primarily Hinduism; in the entire Middle East it is Islam and in Asia mainly Buddhism. What all of the religions have in common are promises that have not originated from God and consequently cannot lead to a union with Him. Therefore, it must be made abundantly clear: **The salvation of God is not in any religion or church but only in Jesus Christ.** All human promises of heaven and of paradise have nothing to do with God. There is only One, namely the Redeemer Himself, Who can say, *“Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”* (Lk 23:43).

Not one of the so-called Christian churches, not the Catholic, or the Orthodox, or the Anglican, or the Lutheran, or the Calvinist, also not the Coptic or any other one, is the Church established by Christ, the Redeemer. Thus the pope, for instance, is indeed the head of the Roman Catholic Church, and the patriarch is the leader of the Orthodox Church, but neither is the head of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Archbishop of Canterbury is indeed the spiritual head of the Anglican Church but not the head of the Church of Jesus Christ. This applies to all Christian denominations that, despite their differences, still have one thing in common with the church of Rome, namely the “Nicene-Chalcedonian Creed.” According to Wikipedia, the first theological prerequisite for membership in the Protestant communities that belong to the World Council of Churches is the **“profession of faith in the triune God as expressed in the Bible and in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.”**

**But that is not the profession of faith of the Church of the living God.** The Church of Jesus Christ believes in the One and Only God as the Bible actually bears witness of Him. She is at all times comprised of Bible believers from all countries, nations, races, and languages. The LORD Himself said, **“My kingdom is not of this world ...”** The Church of the living God is not a state-approved religion but rather forms the body of the LORD, as it is written: **“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”** (1 Cor 12:27). In the one true Church of the redeemed, **Jesus Christ is the Head (Eph 4:15), and the Bible as the Word of God is the only authority.**

### True Faith

**“... he that believeth not God hath made him a liar ...”** (1 Jn 5:10).

**“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”** (Rom 3:4).

The following is said about Abraham: **“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”** (Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6). Abraham is the best example of the true faith: True faith is only possible when God can speak to each and every one personally through His Word. Unbelief is caused by allowing the enemy to question what God has said in His Word. Faith as well as unbelief already began in paradise. After the LORD God had spoken to Adam, Satan roped Eve into a discussion about what God had said. Satan always takes what God has said, sows doubt, adds, takes away, twists, interprets. The result was unbelief, which led to disobedience and eventually to the beguilement into the fall. Satan also

approached our Redeemer with the argument: “It is written ...” That is the actual temptation. Temptation, beguilement, and transgression are only ever possible when the Word of God is called into question. But the LORD replied to him, *“It is also written ...”* (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 4:1-13). This can also be the case with theologians: The subject may be biblical, but what is said about it can be the opposite. When someone takes a Scripture and presents doubt, then it is the enemy who wants to turn it into a temptation, which leads to the fall. True children of God always consult the next corresponding Scripture that illuminates the subject clearly.

### **The First and the Second Coming of Christ Are Part of the Plan of Salvation**

At the first coming of Christ, the prophecy from Mal 3:1 was fulfilled with the ministry of John the Baptist: *“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ...”* (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:27). This is the promise that finds fulfillment before the Return of Christ: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD ...”* (Mal 4:5). It was confirmed by our LORD after the ministry of John the Baptist: *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.”* (Mt 17:11). In Mk 9:12 our LORD confirmed it once again: *“Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things ...”*

The *“Return of Jesus Christ”* is mentioned repeatedly in the New Testament. Right from the beginning, the expectation of His Return was a central topic for all believers. This expectation is founded on the promise that He Himself has given: *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* (Jn 14:3).

When the disciples asked about the sign of His Return and of the end of the world (Mt 24:3), the LORD answered them with the following words: *“... this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”* (v. 14). Never before has there been a time in which the Gospel has reached the remotest corners of the world through modern media as it does now. The principal purpose of the proclamation of the full Gospel is that **the believers are made ready for the Return of Jesus Christ**, for thus it is written: *“... and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”* (Mt 25:10).

**The Return of Christ** was the main subject of the proclamation at the time of the apostles and still is in our time. In the first Epistle to the

Thessalonians, the apostle wrote: *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our LORD Jesus Christ at his coming?”* (1 Ths 2:19). The Apostle Paul could end his testimony with the words: *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”* (2 Tim 4:8).

Now, so close to the Return of Christ, all those who are part of the Church of the LORD must have the same experiences of salvation as the early believers in the beginning and have to be brought back to the original, scriptural standing before God. That is how the Apostle Peter foretold it already back then in reference to Christ and the believers: *“Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”* (Acts 3:21). **Before the Return of Christ, everything in the Church of the living God must be as it was at the beginning; the first and the last sermon, the first and the last baptism, every doctrine and practice must be in agreement with the original one.** The same Gospel, the same faith, the same baptism are now being preached worldwide, and all those who truly believe as the Scripture says experience the forgiveness of their sins and are baptized in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as at the beginning. **This is the only true apostolic and biblical pattern (Acts 2:38-39; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 10:43-48; Acts 19:5-6), which is valid before God until the end.**

### **This Must Not Be Kept Secret**

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”* (Jn 13:20).

As God Himself called and sent Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, so He also sent John the Baptist, and so He Himself also sent Paul, and He entrusted them with a specific commission that was part of the Plan of Salvation for the entire Church. The same God gave the promise that He would send **a prophet like Elijah** before the day of salvation comes to its end and the day of the LORD begins (Mal 4:5-6). This promise for the very last period of the time of grace, in which we are now living, before the sun turns into darkness and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20; Rev 6:12), has come to fulfillment. On June 11, 1933, after an evangelization in Jeffersonville, Indiana, USA, the Baptist preacher William M.

Branham was baptizing around 300 new believers in the Ohio River when something extraordinary happened: At around 2 p.m., when he was about to baptize the 17<sup>th</sup> person, a supernatural light came down, which was also seen by over a thousand people standing at the river bank, and it rested just above the man of God. Then the following words sounded forth: **“As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Christ, so the message given to you will be a forerunner of the second coming of Christ.”** The Associated Press in the USA and Canada reported on it back then. It is generally known that after the Second World War, and especially since May 1946, William Branham was used by God to bring about the worldwide breakthrough of the healing and revivalist movement.

Through the confirmed ministry of the man of God William Branham, the LORD Himself has brought His people back to the biblical truth about the Godhead, baptism, the LORD’S Supper, and all of the doctrines. The whole Counsel of God was proclaimed, and the pure biblical message is going forth worldwide for the calling out, separation, and preparation of the true believers for **the glorious day of the Return of Christ** (Jn 14:1-3; 2 Cor 6:14-18; 1 Ths 4:13-18).

Elijah took the 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel and thus rebuilt the altar of God on Mount Carmel and called upon God’s people to make a decision (1 Kgs 18:17-40); likewise, in our time, in this most important time period of the Plan of Salvation, the doctrine of the 12 apostles was anew set upon the candlestick, the Church of Jesus Christ was rebuilt upon the original foundation of the apostles, **and everybody is called upon to make a decision: “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.”** (1 Kgs 18:21).

### A Final Warning

Today, all theologians know that John the Baptist was a promised prophet (Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1) who prepared the way for the LORD but who was rejected by the scribes: **“But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”** (Lk 7:30). Is what happened back then being repeated right now? In Lk 19 our Redeemer even wept over Jerusalem and said, **“... because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”** (v. 44). When people refuse to believe according to the Bible and decline the biblical baptism, are they not, in fact, rejecting the Counsel of God even today? It is certainly not enough to sincerely recite the LORD’S Prayer in line with religious tradition: “... Thy

kingdom come. Thy will be done ...” if one has no intention of carrying out **the Will of God, which is revealed solely in the Word of God.**

Are we not likewise seeing this repeated in our time, what the LORD said back then: *“Woe unto you, lawyers! **for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.**”* (Lk 11:52)? Are they not all building their own kingdoms, their own churches? Do they not all have their own agendas? What about those who came forth from the Reformation, even the Pentecostal movements, and who nevertheless continue to proclaim their own gospels (Gal 1:6-10)?

The world church is working determinedly toward the religious unity of all Christian denominations and, ultimately, of all religions under the leadership of one head as the reigning world authority, by invoking Jn 17: *“That they all may be one ...”* Pope Francis vicariously asked the forgiveness of all people of different faiths who at some point in times past had been persecuted by the Catholic Church, from the Waldensians to those in the Pentecostal movement. Yes, emphasis is no longer to be placed on the things that divide but instead only on those that unite, like the collective confession of the “triune God.” With a view to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in the year 2017, the unification of the churches has absolute priority.

What about the unification of all Bible believers with God through Jesus Christ, our LORD, as the Head of the Church?

Who among those bearing responsibility in the many Christian mission works, and the world-famous preachers of the prosperity gospel, and the millions of listeners is actually preparing himself or herself for the impending Return of Christ? The challenge to which each and every one of us must rise is: Back to God! Back to the beginning! Back to the everlasting Word that went forth from Jerusalem! **Who will stand on God’s side and follow only the guidance of the Word and not make any compromises?**

Isaiah had to exclaim: *“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”* (Isa 53:1). Paul experienced it as well: *“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, LORD, who hath believed our report?”* (Rom 10:16). Who can believe as the Scripture says? Who respects the Word of God and lets oneself be corrected? Everyone must decide for oneself whether to hold fast to a totally unbiblical confession of faith **or to accept the validity of the true confession of the apostles and prophets.** It is of no use to switch from one religion to

another or from one church to another. The Word of God must be received as the seed (Lk 8:11) into one's heart and by the Spirit of God bring forth within each individual person new, eternal life through the new birth (Jn 3:7; 1 Pet 1:23). It is getting very serious, and we must make the decision with which we shall enter into eternity.

All those who find and accept God's grace examine themselves in order to determine whether they are in line with what our LORD said: ***“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”*** (Jn 4:23-24). Whosoever does not worship God in Spirit and in truth according to the Word of truth is indeed worshipping in vain: ***“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”*** (Mt 15:8-9; Mk 7:6-7).

In closing, it should be emphasized once more: The true profession of faith, the true doctrine is only written in the Bible, and we must examine ourselves before God to ascertain whether we accept Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church and return to the doctrine of the apostles, which went forth from Jerusalem, or are holding on to the one that originated from the state church in the Roman Empire. Do we recognize and honor the sole validity of God's Word or do we remain in religious traditions? The admonition is directed at all of us: ***“To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”*** (Heb 4:7). **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to all those who are in the Church of Jesus Christ! That is how it is written seven times in the Book of Revelation (chap. 2 + 3).**

### **End-Time Prophecy Comes to Fulfillment**

We all notice that everything on earth has changed: Marriage, family, and society are no longer what they once were. Global warming and climate change have reached an alarming level. The number and intensity of natural disasters have markedly increased. Worldwide unrests have people fearing for their future. Trouble spots are on the rise everywhere, in particular in the Near and Middle East. The entire world is in turmoil, and millions are on the run. Governments are looking for solutions but seem unable to cope with these challenges.

Our LORD spoke in Mt 24, in Mk 13, in Lk 21, and in other Scriptures about that which would take place before His Return, and we can see it

coming to fulfillment. All of the end-time developments, which we cannot expound on here, are foretold in Bible prophecy. With a last message, a last call the people on earth shall be given the opportunity to make the right decision before God.

The everlasting Gospel is now being preached to all nations for a witness, as our LORD Himself announced it: ***“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”*** (Mt 24:14). We are now very close to the promised Return of Christ (Jn 14:1-3). The signs of the end time clearly indicate this; therefore, all people who truly want to believe according to the Bible must abandon their own ways and find the way to God. After all, the LORD Himself said in Lk 21, ***“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”*** (v. 28).

This exposition shall not come to an end without one final biblical appeal to all those who fear God and believe His Word:

***“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty.”*** (2 Cor 6:14-18).

***“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).

***“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”*** (1 Jn 2:28).

***“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”*** (Rev 22:7).

***“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”*** (Lk 21:33).

***“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”*** (1 Cor. 13:14).

*“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” (1Jn 5:20).*

**If Thy Word is no more valid  
Where upon should my faith rest  
I’m not concerned with a thousand worlds  
But only try to do thy Word the best  
(N. L., Count von Zinzendorf)**

Whoever would like to know more about what God has done and is still doing in our time may get in contact with us at any time at the address provided below.

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