

The Most Amazing Prophecies of Zechariah 11 *Revealed!*

Hidden in the mysterious book of Zechariah are two of the most incredible prophecies one could imagine which directly relate to the END-TIME CHURCH of this present "last days"! Who is the "idol shepherd" -- the "foolish shepherd"? What is the "flock of the slaughter"? Who are the "three shepherds" who will be cut off in "one month"? Why does God warn of the "howling of the shepherds"? It's time you woke up and realized the very serious danger you are in -- the TRUTH stands revealed!

William F. Dankenbring

The Amazing Prophecies of Zechariah

In the 11th chapter of Zechariah is a most amazing prophecy! It is clearly a prophecy for the "End time," the last days. Speaking of the end, God says, "For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

"Woe to the IDOL SHEPHERD that *leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened*" (Zech.11:15-17).

Who could this end-time "shepherd," or minister and leader of an End-time remnant of the Church of God, be? Who could it refer to?

Anyone who has studied the history of the Worldwide Church of God, and its leader and founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, must notice some striking parallels here. For example, it is a fact that during his tenure as head of the Worldwide Church of God, Herbert Armstrong built a large and successful church, with over \$150 million in annual income, before his death in 1987. It is also a fact that he had a violent temper,

and "fired" some executives in the Church multiple times, such as Floyd Lochner, former principal of Imperial Schools, Jon Hill, former evangelist -- and yet tolerated terrible sexual escapades by his own son, Garner Ted Armstrong. Back in the 1930's, it is known that Herbert Armstrong was guilty of having sexual relations over a period of many years with one of his own daughters.

Yet, despite his flaws, God used this man and his wife Loma to bring back much truth into the End-time Church of God -- including the holy days, and the identity of the Lost Ten Tribes!

Herbert Armstrong did not "visit those who were cut off," or put out of the Church, or the poor and disenfranchised, but rather disfellowshipped members on the least pretext -- especially such sins as "bad attitude," "insubordination," "rebellion," and "disrespect" of his own authority. He viewed himself as the "Elijah to come" before the 2nd coming of the Messiah!

Was Herbert Armstrong the "foolish" shepherd of Zechariah 11:15, whom God said he would raise up in the land in the last days? The Hebrew word for "foolish" here is *evily* and means "silly, impious, foolish." It comes from the root *evyl* meaning, "to be perverse," figuratively, "foolish, silly, foolish man." Gesenius explains it as "to be foolish, to be perverse." Of the root word, he says, "a fool, foolish," opposed to the prudent or wise. He adds, "it includes the notion of impiety." This word is also used in Job 5:2-3, where we read:

"For wrath killeth the *foolish* man, and envy [indignation, margin] killeth the silly one. I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them" (Job 5:2-4).

Interestingly, the oldest son of Herbert Armstrong, Richard David Armstrong, was killed "in the gate" -- that is, in a freeway accident in 1958, going the wrong way on a freeway off ramp, resulting in a head-on collision. Surely, Herbert Armstrong "took root" and built a large work of God -- but he himself drank water on the Day of Atonement, when he taught the Church should fast and do without food and water on that day; he taught for forty years that not even adultery was grounds for divorce, and had his ministers prying into the lives of people even before they were in the church, to ascertain whether their marriage (if a second or third one, etc.) was "valid" in God's sight, thus breaking up thousands of loving homes and dispossessing thousands of innocent, poor children, heart-broken to see their parents have to split up. Herbert was very unwise -- the very epitome of a "foolish shepherd."

For fifty years, Herbert Armstrong did not "heal that which was broken." In fact, he caused the deaths (and his teachings even led to many suicides) of hundreds who denied themselves and their families any and all MEDICAL ATTENTION when they became sick, fevered, or ill. Documented cases in his church show men becoming blind because they refused to allow doctors to treat their glaucoma, and many died because they refused all medicines, or surgery, including small children! Only in his

latest years did Herbert Armstrong begin to question his own teaching in this regard. When he was sick and his life threatened, when he was old, he permitted doctors to treat him around the clock, taking heart medicine and every drug which he had so callously forbidden to church members on pains of disfellowshipment!

Doesn't this prophesy begin to sound more and more like Herbert W. Armstrong, whom many even today still "worship" as God's "one and only true servant" of his time, and as the "Elijah" to come?

Meanwhile, Herbert Armstrong knew how to bring in the money to the Work. He stressed his own "authority" as God's only true servant, as the "head" of the only true Church, but he taught members had to tithe one, two and even three tithes (every third and sixth year out or seven) on their incomes -- or they would be cast out of the Church and burn alive in the Lake of Gehenna Fire!

In addition to this, however, he often wrote hard-hitting, tear-jerking "co-worker" letters, pleading for the members to send money to the "Work" which always seemed to be suffering one financial "crisis" after another. Interestingly, in a co-worker letter dated December 9, 1969, he wrote the following:

"If ever we needed large sums -- into five figures and more . . . it is right now!"

Sounds like the Work was in a real "crisis," doesn't it? But according to receipts and financial records from the same period of time, on January 2, 1970, he purchased a pair of "Marbo Antique Rock Crystal Candelabra" for his Pasadena home, costing \$6,090.00.

In his March 31, 1970 co-worker letter he implored the membership to even borrow and GO INTO DEBT because of the horrifying "needs" of the Work! He begged:

"I ask of all who can and are willing . . . go to your local bank and borrow whatever you are able -- \$100 to \$1,000. . . . And you should not obligate yourself to monthly payments except what you will be able to pay over and above tithes and offerings for the Work. . . For this is serious -- the most serious crisis since 1947 and 1948."

That was March 30. The next day, March 31, Herbert Armstrong went shopping and bought a "pair of French porcelain vases." The cost? A mere \$2,079.00.

On January 29, 1969, in a co-worker letter, Armstrong announced that he himself had made a large "loan" to the Work, and said, "I have just given the entire amount as a donation." He asked, "What, then, if some unexpected emergency should come along, that I would need this sum of several thousand dollars I am donating? I have thought of that, of course. The answer is, I have a God to trust, and I shall rely on Him!"

Apparently Herbert's trust and faith did not last very long, because an Ambassador College computer printout titled "Worldwide Church of God Listeners Loan Report, Dec. 1971" lists the name of Herbert Armstrong and says regarding the status of his loan #49: "Repayment Date -- 12/31/71; Repayment check number -- Miscellaneous; Amount of Repayment -- \$50,334.54." So it appears he took the money back, after all! His "faith" lasted not quite two years.

"The IDOL Shepherd"

The prophecy goes on, "he shall eat the flesh of the fat" (Zech.11:16).

Even more after the death of Loma D. Armstrong in 1967, Herbert Armstrong lived a life of luxury and wealth. With a personal expense account of a million dollars a year, and final say over all the tithes flowing into the coffers of Worldwide, he fulfilled this prophecy. He ate the flesh of the fat. His own salary was about \$500,000 per year, which he justified saying all heads of major corporations, such as General Motors, had salaries even greater than his. In his mansion on South Orange Grove Avenue in Pasadena, Herbert Armstrong used to delight in showing people, and students, through his home, to marvel at his acquisitions -- expensive paintings, dinner ware, gold faucets, marble bath tub, and other *objets d'art*.

At one dinner where he hosted Ambassador students he asked them what they thought the items on the table were worth. When none had the slightest idea, he boasted, "Over \$125,000!" Among these objects were two sculptured solid-gold foot-high salt cellars, the only known copies of those once owned by King Louis XIV of France! The crystal goblets were identical, he said, to those on Queen Elizabeth's table; the cutlery was solid gold; the tablecloth was the finest Belgian lace; the gold-covered china was the finest craftsmanship and once belonged to Nicholas II, Czar of Russia! Yet even while Herbert was living the life of royalty, his Church was publishing *Quest* magazine, out of New York, a magazine which was worldly in tone, used outright profanity in its articles, and preached a message of humanistic philosophy -- not the gospel of the Kingdom of God!

After his wife Loma died in 1967, Herbert Armstrong began travelling around the world, meeting with world leaders, giving them expensive gifts, and getting his picture taken with them. Notice what God's Word says about this:

"WOE to the idol shepherd *that leaveth the flock!*" (Zech.11:17).

Because of Herbert Armstrong's frequent and lavish travels, around the world, the state of the Church began to deteriorate both spiritually and in leadership. Says an article in the 1977 *Ambassador Report*:

"In the last nine years, Herbert has been on the move more than at any other period in his 85 years. Due to his jet aircraft, he has been able to move from one Hilton hotel suite to another throughout Southeast Asia as he calls on dictator after dictator. But while Herbert has been away, the mice have been at play. During his travels -- when he should have

been home mending fences and settling doctrinal disputes -- two costly blowups rocked his church, causing him to lose thousands of tithe-paying members. (One came in 1974, and the other was in England in 1976.)" ("Herbert Armstrong -- Man on the Move," by Perry Prescott, *AR*, 1977).

But the prophecy goes on. Zechariah records:

"The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened" (Zech. 11:17).

What does this mean? Who was Herbert Armstrong's "right arm" during his many years as head of the Worldwide Church of God? None other than his son, Garner Ted Armstrong. Beginning in the 1950's, Ted began making many of the World Tomorrow radio broadcasts, and soon the whole responsibility fell on him. He became the only speaker on the World Tomorrow television show every week. When his father travelled abroad, he left Ted in "charge."

The true story of Ted Armstrong, and his own spiritual profligacy, is enough to fill a book! Suffice it to say, that during the course of his ministering in the Worldwide Church of God, Ted was also "boffing" girls right and left -- like a "spiritual" Hugh Hefner of *Playboy* fame! In fact, Ted's sex-capades became so famous that he was written up in an article "America's Playboy Preacher" in a well-known American "girlie" magazine! The list of his "conquests," he himself admitted, ran into the hundreds -- and that was prior to 1974!

Herbert Armstrong's own spiritual "right arm" -- his own son, Garner Ted Armstrong -- "withered" up spiritually, sought the comfort of the flesh, and polluted the house of God!

Thinking he would inherit the Church and Work from his father, when he died, Ted decided in 1978 to move Ambassador College to Big Sandy, Texas, from the campus in Pasadena, California. Thinking he had his father's approval, he initiated the move, but unknown to him, Ray Wright, then over the church accounting department, secretly flew to Tucson, where Herbert Armstrong was ensconced, and gave him a report on the cost of the move, showing it to be over \$5 million. Herbert exploded -- and rescinded the move, and removed his own son from being over the operations of the Church!

This was more than a distraught Ted could bear, and he smelled the scent of Church attorney and treasurer Stanley Rader, in this fateful decision. He felt he had been politically "outmaneuvered," out-flanked, and "done in." In anger, he went to the press, and complained about the way he had been mistreated. Herbert then accused him of rebellion, and disfellowshipped him from the Church! With anger piling on anger, Ted decided not to submit to the status quo in the Church, and finally rebelled totally and split off from his father's church, beginning his own Church, the Church of God, International. Thus Herbert "lost" his own "right arm." It became completely "withered up," spiritually!

Herbert Armstrong's right eye, literally, became darkened, and he could barely see out of his remaining eye. Yet from 1967 until 1986 he continually "left the flock" so he could travel around the world, giving expensive gifts to foreign leaders and diplomats, so he could get his picture taken with them. He never preached the gospel to these leaders, but only "hinted" that a "strong arm from somewhere" would be needed to correct man's ills on this planet!

Notice! God says, "Woe to the *IDOL* shepherd" (Zech.11:17). The word for "idol" here is *elyil*, meaning ""good for nothing, vain, vanity, specifically an idol, a thing of no value, thing of naught." It is derived from *al*, a deprecativ meaning "nothing," "not."

God calls this End-time minister, "the *IDOL* shepherd" -- that is, a religious shepherd who in the final analysis amounts to "nothing" in God's sight, who is worthless, full of self-inflated egotism, vanity, yet who is **WORSHIPPED LIKE AN IDOL** by his followers! Many still idolize Herbert Armstrong, today -- including Gerald Flurry, and Roderick C. Meredith, who refuse to believe that Herbert Armstrong was guilty of any of these things! There can be no doubt that this "idol shepherd" perfectly describes the later years of the ministry of Herbert W. Armstrong!

"The Flock of the Slaughter"

But notice even further! Let's now go back to the beginning of Zechariah 11. This whole chapter is a **WARNING** against the **END-TIME CHURCH OF GOD!**

"Thus saith the LORD my God: Feed the *flock of the slaughter*; whose possessors [minister-owners] slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that **SELL** them [into perdition and destruction] say, Blessed be the LORD; for I am rich: *and their own shepherds pity them not* " (Zech.11:4-5).

The "flock of the slaughter" describes a church which must go through the Great Tribulation and suffer greatly for its sins! It will be "slaughtered" mercilessly. The next verse describes civil war in the land. There is already "civil war" in the Church of God, and infighting between the various off-shoots that have sprung out of the fallen trunk of the tree of Worldwide. What we see today is a fierce competition among the shepherds for dominance over the remaining flock -- a quest for "market share." It is like pirhannas furiously devouring the carcass of a cow thrown into the Amazon river -- like vultures picking the bones of a dead animal.

Zechariah continues:

"For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land [because they have apostasized, and given themselves over to do evil, and have wickedly departed from the laws and love of God!], saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king [tyrant-demagogue ruler]: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. And

*I will FEED THE FLOCK OF THE SLAUGHTER, even you,
O poor of the flock " (v.6-7).*

This has happened! The Church of God has been divided up into fragments, and spiritual "civil war" is now raging! God is very angry with the church leaders of this End-time! He says,

"Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen [ie., Herbert Armstrong, like a tall "cedar" tree, is dead!]; because the mighty are spoiled [the Worldwide Church of God is being "spoiled" and destroyed by its new coterie of leaders led by Joseph Tkach and his son]: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan [you ministers, who are compared to "oaks"]; for the forest [the defenced forest -- the church] is come down.

"There is a voice of the HOWLING OF THE SHEPHERDS; for their *GLORY IS SPOILED*: a voice of the roaring of young lions [the young ministers];for the pride of Jordan is spoiled" (Zech.11:1-3).

This is a prophecy against the MINISTRY of the End-Time Church! God is going to punish them for their wickedness, obstinacy, stubbornness of heart, pride, and evil-doing! Now let us go on with this most amazing prophecy! God continues:

"Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will NOT feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be CUT OFF, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another . . . and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD" (verses 8-11).

Who are these "three shepherds"? Are there not three principal shepherds that have come out to Worldwide, each proclaiming themselves to be the "remnant church of God" and doing "God's End-time Work"? Who could they be? Look around. Take note. Are these three shepherds not specifically referring to

- 1) Garner Ted Armstrong, who left Worldwide in 1978 to begin his "Church of God, International;"
- 2) Gerald Flurry who left Worldwide in December 1989, to begin his "Philadelphia Church of God;"
- 3) and finally Roderick C. Meredith, who in January, 1993, began his own splinter church from the remaining members dissatisfied in Worldwide, calling his church the "Global Church of God"!

If none of these men REPENT, if they all refuse to return to God and His Laws -- including His truth concerning the Passover and Pentecost holy days -- then *their blood, and the blood of their followers, is upon their own heads!!!*

God thunders, "Son of man, PROPHECY AGAINST THE SHEPHERDS of

Israel, prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; WOE BE to the shepherds of Israel *that do feed themselves!* should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezek.34:1). Notice! This is not talking just about ONE "flock" or ONE "church"! God uses the PLURAL here -- "*flocks!*" And He speaks not of just ONE "shepherd," but the PLURAL -- "*shepherds!*"

This is a warning to the prophets and preachers and ministers of the various "churches of God," today! God continues:

"Ye eat the FAT, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye KILL them that are fed [by commanding three tithes, by oppressive church government!]; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with FORCE and with CRUELTY have ye RULED them. *And they were SCATTERED, because there is no shepherd:* and they became meat [prey] to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered" (Ezek.34:3-5).

The Hebrew word for "ruled" here, describing the force and cruelty of the oppression and tyranny of these ministers who uphold their own perverted, Nazi-version of "church authority," patterned after the Roman Empire, the Papacy, and ancient Nimrod's Babylon, is *radah*, which means "to tread down, subjugate, crumble off, have dominion, prevail against, reign." Doesn't that describe the End-time ministers -- all of them -- associated with Worldwide, and its three major splinter groups?

The prophet Jeremiah also describes these end-time "prophets" or spokesmen of God, or so they claim. He wrote:

"WOE be unto the PASTORS THAT DESTROY AND SCATTER THE SHEEP OF MY PASTURE! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the PASTORS that feed my people; Ye have SCATTERED my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:1-2).

Jeremiah continues his bitter lament because of the sad state of the End-time ministry of the church of God in its various branches:

"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

"For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course [margin, cursing] is evil, and their force is not right. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in mine house [in the church!] have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

"Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation" (Jer.23:9-12).

How amazing! These prophecies, uttered about 600 years before Christ, or some 2,600 years ago, have come to pass, just as the Word of God predicted! God calls the prophets or ministers of His End-time Church "windbags." As the Moffatt translation says, "The prophets are but WINDBAGS; the Word is not with them!" (Jer.5:13).

Truly, Zechariah 11 has been fulfilled -- in amazing detail! God's Word has spoken!!!