

# WHAT AND WHY THE CHURCH?

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*How could the world have become so mixed up? Out of this spiritual wilderness, a voice cries out in clarity and power, with the reassuring truth of the world's only and sure hope!*

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by Herbert W. Armstrong

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*Editor's note: We are printing here, serially, the new book by Herbert W. Armstrong with the same title as this series. The book will appear later in bookstores.*

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## Chapter 7

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## Part Three

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**U**NTIL NOW, I have not been able to give a clear, concise explanation of precisely **WHAT** and **WHY** is the **CHURCH**.

And **WHY NOT?**

People naturally and normally think only of and about physical and material things. People do not realize it, but they have been **CUT OFF** from God! The human mind, unless and until it receives the Holy Spirit of **GOD**, cannot think

spiritually—cannot know spiritual knowledge—cannot understand human problems, troubles, evils or purposes of human existence.

But the **CHURCH** is **GOD'S** Church. And the things of **GOD** are a mystery—not understandable to the natural carnal mind. So people may have some kind of human idea of what and why the Church is, but it is not **GOD'S** concept.

God has communicated to man in our day through His printed Word, the Holy Bible. But the real central meaning in the Bible is spiritual. And natural minds without God's Spirit cannot think spiritually or comprehend spiritual knowledge. To make it still more a **MYSTERY**, the Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle, made up of thousands of parts which, for understanding, must be put together "here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept" (Isaiah 28:9-10, 13). And it requires the addition of the Holy

Spirit to the human mind to put this spiritual "jigsaw puzzle" properly together. Even then it requires time, diligence, patience. I have not been able to give this "what and why" of the Church to the reader all at once briefly. I want fully to reveal the **MYSTERY!**

The **CHURCH** is the Church of **GOD!** God is working out a **PURPOSE** here below. Even **GOD** could not work it out quickly, all at once! Even **GOD** has had to exercise patience and work out His supreme **PURPOSE** a step at a time, according to His pre-laid **MASTER PLAN!**

God's **PURPOSE** is to reproduce Himself through humans composed, first, of matter. To change material humans into Spirit-composed immortal **GOD BEINGS!** And **WHAT** and **WHY** is **GOD?** First of all **GOD** is **CREATOR**. To **CREATE** describes what God **DOES**.

But what *IS* God? God is the supreme Divine **FAMILY**—consisting of more than one **Person**—

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# Voice Cries Out

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(Continued from page 7)

age, forming ONE GOD! In reproducing Himself, God is creating by begetting and birth of humans into HIS OWN SUPREME GOD FAMILY! And that FAMILY is GOD. And what is GOD? God is that FAMILY, all but two Personages, yet in process of being born—being created!

Yes, HOW WONDERFUL!

How beyond the most brilliant and highly educated, natural mind to grasp! So incomprehensibly MYSTERIOUS to the highly educated of this world!

The preceding two chapters have laid the groundwork.

God created man with MIND power. The human mind is physical brain with the addition of the "human" spirit, which imparts to physical brain the power of intellect. But even so, human comprehension and human thought is confined to the PHYSICAL and MATERIAL.

The addition to that "human" spirit of the HOLY Spirit of God imparts power for SPIRITUAL comprehension—receiving spiritual knowledge—understanding spiritual problems, conditions and truths.

Before the first man Adam were placed the two symbolic trees—one the tree symbolizing God's Holy Spirit and with it the gift of immortal GOD-life. But Adam had to make a CHOICE—it was necessary for him to reject Satan and Satan's WAY, in order to choose GOD'S GOVERNMENT and God's WAY OF LIFE. He was compelled to choose between God and Satan. Adam chose Satan's way by taking to himself the knowledge of good and evil. He rejected God—and thus rebelled against GOD'S Government, even as Lucifer had.

Adam was making the decision not only for himself, but for his progeny, the world. It was MAN'S decision, and God made it binding on MAN UNTIL the Government of GOD could be restored!

That meant the rejection of

Satan's way—defeating Satan—which only the "Second Adam" could do!

Not only had Satan, the former cherub Lucifer, rebelled against God. Not only had the Government of God become unoperative on earth—the powerful Satan STILL SAT ON THAT THRONE!

Until Christ shall sit on that throne—restoring the Government of God—and Satan is banished from the earth, all Adam's human family must remain CUT OFF from God—EXCEPT THE MINUTE FEW GOD SHOULD SPECIALLY CALL TO OVERCOME SATAN AND SIT WITH AND



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*God began providing for the foundation of His Church through the comparatively few prophets in Old Testament times. . . . They had chosen, on God's calling them, God's Government.*

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UNDER CHRIST ON THAT THRONE!

Humanity continued under Satan's sway, as Satan's world.

WHAT, then, IS THE CHURCH?

It is that body God has specially called out of Satan's world—the body of humans who on being called have REJECTED and overcome Satan and his WAY OF LIFE—have surrendered to the GOVERNMENT OF GOD—have repented of sins by turning from them—have actually received what the first Adam rejected, the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. It is that body of repentant believers who have turned from Satan's way—TO the way of GOD'S GOVERNMENT based on HIS LAW—who are the begotten children of the living GOD!

God began providing for the FOUNDATION of His Church

through the comparatively few prophets in Old Testament times. They had turned from Satan's way. They had chosen, on God's calling them, God's GOVERNMENT. They qualified by overcoming Satan. However, no one of them could qualify for all humanity—only individually, each for himself. It required Christ, the Son of God, by whom humanity was created, to qualify for all humanity.

But I repeat, God has of necessity taken a single step of His Master Plan at a time.

The CHURCH, then, is that body called out from Satan's world *being prepared* to restore, with and under Christ, the GOVERNMENT of God. That shall be a time when Satan shall have been REMOVED. It shall be a time when all living shall be called to repentance and salvation with eternal life through the Holy Spirit of GOD! The CHURCH, immortal, shall be RULING with Christ—replacing the present rule of Satan!

The CHURCH, then, is that body of "called-out ones" which at the resurrection shall form the FIRSTFRUITS of God's harvest. That harvest is the reaping of physical flesh-and-blood, matter-composed humans converted into divine immortal GOD BEINGS—those in whom God actually *has* reproduced Himself!

## Church Still Carnal

WHY has God in wisdom gone slow—a step at a time? Few realize HOW GREAT is God's PURPOSE!

After all these years of sinning, human life CUT OFF from God, even with God's own Holy Spirit given to those *changed* by initial conversion, those in the Church are initially "babes in Christ"—still far more carnal than spiritual.

UNDERSTAND THIS!

The CHURCH, as initially called in this life, is NOT YET capable of RULING the earth—of sitting with Christ in the THRONE where God originally placed Lucifer—of administering THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. And THAT IS WHY God has

placed HIS GOVERNMENT in His Church. That is *WHY* God's Church Government is theocratic instead of democratic. That is *WHY* it is hierarchical in form—government from GOD at the top on down, not from the bottom up. Otherwise those at the bottom would be ruling GOD!

It is the SAME Government by which Christ shall rule all nations beginning with the Millennium!

And that is *WHY* Satan has subtly influenced dissidents in God's Church to become resentful and bitter over God's Government—why some have gone out of the Church!

The churches of this world! "traditional Christianity"—DO NOT speak of the Government of GOD. They do not picture Jesus as coming world RULER. They do not preach Jesus as coming KING—but only as Savior. They overlook—reject—scriptures speaking of Christ as King and coming Ruler, and *government* rule in the Kingdom of God. And that is to say, they deliberately REJECT and OMIT the Gospel MESSAGE of Christ in their teaching and preaching! They teach that one is *already saved* on "receiving" (GETTING) Christ!

I repeat, the individual whom God calls and adds to His Church is not, at initial conversion, remotely capable of being given POWER of rule over nations!

He is called a "babe in Christ." He has, if repentant and really converted in this preliminary human state, actually received the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed in Romans 8:16 we read: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

We are already, though yet unborn, the begotten children of God. By direct comparison the impregnated embryo or fetus in a mother-to-be's womb is *already* the child of its parents, though not yet born. Therefore I remark, in passing, *abortion is MURDER!*

But this brings us to a most important PURPOSE and FUNCTION of the Church!

Beginning verse 22 of Galatians 4 is an allegory about the two covenants—the Old Covenant made with national Israel at Mount Sinai, and the New Covenant to be made at Christ's return. However, ministers in the Church are "able ministers of the New Testament" (II Corinthians 3:6).

The CHURCH is a part of, and preliminary to the final making of, the NEW TESTAMENT.

In this allegory of the two covenants, the Church is called "THE MOTHER OF US ALL"—that is, of those in the Church.

So notice the direct comparison. God is reproducing Himself through humans. He endowed us with power to reproduce *ourselves*. And human reproduction is the exact type of God's SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION!

#### How Human Reproduction Pictures Spiritual Salvation

Now see and UNDERSTAND how human reproduction pictures spiritual SALVATION!

All human life comes from a tiny egg, called an ovum. It is produced inside the human mother. This ovum is about the size of a pin point. Inside it, when highly magnified, can be seen a small nucleus. But this ovum has a very limited life, *of itself!* Some doctors and scientists believe it has a life of some 24 hours, unless fertilized by a sperm from a male.

But human life may be imparted *to* it by a sperm cell, produced in the body of the human father. The sperm cell is the smallest cell in the human body—about one-fiftieth the size of the ovum. The sperm—technically named a spermatozoon (plural, spermatozoa)—on entering an ovum, finds its way to and joins with the *nucleus*. This imparts *life*—physical *human* life—to the ovum.

But it is not yet a born human being. Human life has merely been *begotten*. For the first four months it is called an *embryo*. After that, until birth it is called a *fetus*. This human life starts very small—the size of a tiny pin

point—and the sperm that generates it is the *smallest* cell in a human body!

Once begotten, it must *be fed* and nourished by physical food from the ground, through the mother. From this physical nourishment it must grow, and *grow* and *GROW*—until physically large enough to be born, after nine months. As it grows, the *physical* organs and characteristics gradually are formed. Soon a spinal column forms. A heart forms and begins to beat. Other internal organs form. Then, gradually, a body, a head, legs, arms. Finally hair begins to grow on the head, fingernails and toenails develop, facial features gradually shape up. By nine months the average normal fetus has grown to a weight of approximately six to nine pounds, and is ready to be born.

A human has to be BEGOTTEN by his human father. To be born *again* of the Spirit—of GOD—one must first be begotten by the SPIRITUAL FATHER—Almighty God.

#### The Amazing Comparison

Now see how HUMAN begettal, the period of gestation and birth is the astounding identical TYPE of spiritual salvation—being BORN of God—being given ETERNAL LIFE in the Kingdom of God—the God FAMILY into which we may be BORN!

Each adult human is, spiritually, an "egg" or "ovum." This spiritual "ovum" has a very limited life span, of itself—compared to ETERNAL LIFE—an average of some 70 years. But spiritual, *divine immortal* life may be imparted *to* it by the entrance into it of the HOLY SPIRIT, which comes from the very Person of GOD the Father. This divine Spirit of GOD imparts to us also the *divine nature* (II Peter 1:4). Heretofore we have had only human, fleshly or carnal nature.

As the human sperm cell is the very *smallest* of all human cells, even so, many newly begotten Christians start out with a very *small* measure of God's Holy Spirit. Many may

still be, at first, about 99.44 percent carnal! Apparently those in the Church of God at Corinth were (I Corinthians 3:1-3). The apostle Paul said he still had to feed them on the spiritual *milk*—not yet adult spiritual “food.” They certainly were not yet “BORN AGAIN.”

Now, as the physical male sperm finds its way to, and unites with the *nucleus* in the ovum, so God’s Spirit enters and combines with the human MIND! There is, as explained before, a *spirit* IN *man*. This human spirit has combined with the brain to form human MIND. God’s Spirit unites with, and witnesses with *our* spirit that we are, now, the children of GOD (Romans 8:16). And God’s Holy Spirit, now combined with our human spirit in our MIND, imparts to our mind power to comprehend SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE (I Corinthians 2:11)—which the carnal mind cannot grasp.

Now we have the presence of ETERNAL LIFE—God life—through God’s Spirit, but we are not yet immortal spirit beings—not yet BORN of God—not yet inheritors, and possessors, but physical HEIRS (Romans 8:17). But *IF* God’s Holy Spirit dwells in us, God will, at the resurrection, “quicken” to immortality our mortal bodies *BY* His Spirit that “dwelleth in” us (Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 15:49-53).

Now we see how the astonishing analogy continues!

As yet we are not *born* divine beings. We are not yet *composed* of spirit, but of physical matter. The divine life has merely been begotten. This divine CHARACTER starts so very small it is doubtful if much of it is in evidence—except for the glow of that ecstasy of spiritual “romance” that we may radiate in that “first love” of conversion—spiritually speaking. But so far as spiritual KNOWLEDGE and developed spiritual CHARACTER goes, there is not much, as yet.

### The Spiritual Embryo

So now, once spiritually begotten, we are merely a spiritual

embryo. Now we must be fed and nourished on SPIRITUAL food! Jesus said man shall not live by bread (physical food) *alone*, but by EVERY WORD OF GOD (spiritual food)! This we drink in from the Bible! But we drink in this spiritual knowledge and character, also, through personal, intimate, continuous contact with God through PRAYER, and through Christian fellowship with God’s children in His Church. And also by the continual teaching imparted by the Church.

Now the *physical* embryo and fetus is fed physically through the mother. God’s CHURCH is called

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*God has set His called and chosen ministers in His Church to feed the flock — ‘for the perfecting of the saints . . .’*

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Jerusalem *above* “which is the MOTHER OF US ALL” (Galatians 4:26).

Notice the exact parallel! The CHURCH is the spiritual MOTHER OF ITS MEMBERS. God has set His called and chosen ministers in His Church to FEED THE FLOCK—“for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body [CHURCH] of Christ: TILL WE all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

It is the duty of Christ’s TRUE ministers (and *how scarce today*) to PROTECT the begotten but yet unborn saints from false doctrines, from false ministers.

The HUMAN mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best PROTECT it from *physical* harm; and that protection is part of her function,

as well as to nourish the unborn child! Even so, the CHURCH, through Christ’s ministers, instructs, teaches, counsels with, advises, and PROTECTS from *spiritual* harm the unborn members! What a WONDERFUL picture is human reproduction of spiritual SALVATION!

*Continue further!* As the physical fetus must grow *physically* large enough to be born, so the begotten Christian must *grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ (II Peter 3:18)—must overcome, must develop in spiritual CHARACTER during this life, in order to be BORN into the Kingdom of GOD!

And as the physical fetus gradually, one by one, develops the physical organs, features and characteristics, even so the begotten Christian must gradually, continually, develop the SPIRITUAL character—love, faith, patience, gentleness, temperance. He (or she) must live by, and be a DOER of the Word of God. He must develop the divine CHARACTER!

### Finally—Immortality!

Then in God’s due time—though the person may die meanwhile—by a resurrection, or by instantaneous CHANGE to immortality at Christ’s coming, he shall be BORN of God—into the KINGDOM OF GOD—because GOD *is* that Kingdom! He is no longer material flesh from the ground, but composed of spirit, even as God is a spirit (John 4:24).

HOW WONDERFUL is the TRUTH OF GOD!

Yet, by his dastardly deceptions Satan has DECEIVED THE WORLD—has blinded humanity to the fact that God *IS* this KINGDOM Jesus proclaimed—and that we may be *born* as spiritual individuals—as part of that Divine FAMILY—as part of the GOD KINGDOM!

How precious is GOD’S TRUTH! God designed reproduction to picture His truth in a physical manner and to KEEP US CONSTANTLY IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WONDERFUL PLAN OF SALVATION! □