

THE MISSION OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND ITS CURRENT SITUATION

0. INTRODUCTION

In addition to cooperating in the process of restoration, God's people act as a kind of guardians of God's secrets, i.e., information about God's plans and purposes (often "sealed") that have been made available over time throughout history. One of its tasks is to preserve this information for future generations.

But this information was to be gradually studied (La 1:1-3), "unsealed", supplemented and completed until it gave a complete picture of the current situation and a guide for the conduct of God's people during the "Day of the Lord" (Pr 4:18). This work was done by people with creative ability and personal initiative, such as the prophets (1Pe 1:10,11; 1Ki 19:9,10).

1. YHWH'S DAYS

The cycle of the periodic alternation of YHWH's days and nights has its precedent and beginning in the days of creation and continues to this day (Genesis chapter 1).

Note: Night here is the interval between evening and morning. God, because of the emergency situation here on Earth, could not enter into the planned "rest". Therefore, His work (the alternation of His days and nights) continues beyond the Creator's plan (Hebrews chapter 4; Joh 5:17; Re 21:5).

So even the meaning of these days and nights is still basically the same. YHWH's day signifies the period of His activity. It refers to the evaluation and completion of the previous stage, the announcement of new tasks and the beginning of the next stage. Communication with mankind is handled by prophets who study God's Word,¹ examine the social situation and then make public appearances.

Night, like the days of creation, is a time of testing. It is to demonstrate the quality of accomplishment of a set task (reaching vs. missing the goal!). During the night, God leaves His people to develop independently.

Since God's people have (or should have) the necessary and up-to-date data on YHWH's activity, they act as symbolic candlesticks (lamps) during the YHWH's night. This is because it is to serve as a source of spiritual light, both to itself and to all who seek this light.

1.1. Candlesticks

The candlesticks are physically separate (Christ walks among them, looking for the best church) and each congregation (church, candlestick) is evaluated separately (Re 1:10-13). By comparison, in the previous covenant, all the people (nation, seven lamps of the candlestick) were evaluated as a whole. Also, the virgins or bridesmaids (churches) in Jesus' parable each have their own lamp, some having oil, others not. This implies that they are not connected to a common source.

In the 3rd covenant, the knowledge of YHWH and all His laws will become so precise that Christians will have no reason to continue in disunity (Zep 3:9).

Jer 31:34	<i>"There will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbour or brother, saying, 'Learn to know Yahweh!' No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest, Yahweh declares, since I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind."</i> [NJB]
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2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Scriptures record a certain division of church members according to the degree of maturity:

1. Newly converted Christians, people at the very beginning of their spiritual growth, are figuratively called infants, babies (Mt 11:25; 1Jo 2:12). They are meant to consume "spiritual milk" (Heb 5:13; 1Th 2:7).

¹When it was not in the power of the prophets to obtain the necessary information from the Scriptures, this deficit was made up by direct revelation from God. Today, the work of the "prophets" is augmented by the study of the laws of creation (scientific knowledge). There should no longer be a need for direct contact.

2. Advanced Christians are called men or young men (1Jo 2:13; Eph 4:13). To them “thicker food” is served (Heb 5:12,14).
3. Spiritually mature Christians are called fathers (1Jo 2:13). Only these can be taught “the deep wisdom of God” (1Co 2:6,7).

The level of maturity determines the level of responsibility of individual Christians, and our demands on individual church members should rise or fall with it.

Note: Spiritual maturity is closely related to human maturity (there is not much difference between the two). It cannot be measured by performance in spiritual work or ministry. Unfortunately, it is often confused with this performance and a lack of maturity is often compensated for by performance (e.g., Saul of Tarsus). Spiritual maturity means first of all the ability to show the agape kind of love (1 Corinthians chapter 13). This is also true in everyday life.

Jesus used His own symbol when He divided the people into sheep and lambs (young rams; Joh 21:15,16). The sheep representing Christians willing to be led and the lambs (young rams) representing Christians accepting positions of responsibility, which are elders of congregations and deacons.

2.1. Saints – The Anointed Ones

In ancient times, anointing meant a commission for the demanding role of king (1Sa 16:13) or high priest (Ex 29:7).² In the same sense, from spiritually mature Christians originate “anointed” or “holy” Christians (2Co 1:21; Ro 12:13). Even this holiness can be understood more as a perspective (“prospect”; Ro 6:19). These are people who are already on the way to this holiness.

They are by no means people without sinful inclinations or somehow perfect (Ro 7:14-24). They still have a lot of difficult work to do on their personality, but they already know the way. The means of correction may be their own suffering (Jas 1:2; Ro 8:26-28; 2Co 12:7-10).

2.2. Calling

The act of anointing did not imply direct accession to office. For example, King David was crowned only years after being anointed. He had to earn his kingship, and this interim period was actually a period of his education. Similarly, the high priest was still to be sanctified, or approved, after his anointing. David is mentioned in many places in the Bible as a precedent for **the anointed one** or **Christ** (Jer 30:9; Eze 34:23). Thus, anointing meant rather an offer, a calling to a future office.

Likewise, anointed Christians will inherit the power of God once they have been approved! Then there will be no higher executive authority over them. They must therefore come to the capacity for such self-analysis and self-criticism that they will not only be in control of their own defects, but they must be able to complete their own process of correction autonomously, without the help of others.³

Paul even claims that no man has the right to judge them (1Co 2:15,16; 4:3,4; Joh 3:8).⁴

Note: Our entire existence is indeed a constant process of growth and improvement. There is no final goal, only milestones. This perspective of holiness (or rather, at that time, a requirement) was already established by the Law for the Israelites (Le 19:2).

The called group is not a chosen elite, but only a vanguard and a model, attainable by all others. These “saints” are again people with creative abilities and talents that call them to personal initiative. They are thus analogous to the ancient prophets. It is these people who have always been the engine of the development of God's people in the 2nd covenant, just as the prophets once were in the 1st covenant.

Throughout history, therefore, these people have sometimes been at odds with the official Church and have become, in today's terms, persecuted spiritual dissidents. Sometimes they even ended up at the stake (Jan Hus). It was those of the “heretics” whose aim was to correct the Church (and they knew how)

²The act of anointing was exceptionally granted to the prophet Elisha. The prophets were not called in a way so that the people would see it. Their own initiative played a part (Isa 6:8; De 18:22). There was no other proof of a prophet's authenticity than the result of his work. Prophets were not put in office by anyone (1Ki 22:5-28).

³And eventually, without the help of God, by learning from their own mistakes.

⁴Here we come to the phenomenon of the incommunicability of certain experiences. Therefore, in general, in the process of adolescence, a person must cross a threshold from which they begin to work independently and purposefully on their education and growth. It is only through one's own efforts that one can become an adult (one can know oneself best only by oneself; 1Co 2:11; 13:11). If a person does not “bootstrap” oneself in this way, one becomes permanently immature and dependent on others in some form. This is another, very difficult part of the parental task.

or to help her in some way (e.g., by translating the Bible), not those who only wanted to criticize (albeit rightly) but lacked the creative spirit and enough love of agape.

For the truly anointed, whose commission is to work, are aware that the Church, though spiritually corrupt, remains God's people and in need of help. They try to act accordingly, even though it is extremely difficult.

Note: This attitude is again comparable to that of King David (1Sa 24:6-8). The lawful development of bureaucracy generally made correction impossible, and therefore, as predicted, the Church began to split. Reformation churches were formed to enable the further development of God's people. This created a competitive environment that in turn forced even the "mother" church to make some progress.

2.3. Anointed Nation of Kings and Priests

This group of anointed ones will play a key historical role as they are the ones who are to directly enter into the 3rd covenant with Christ (inherit the 3rd covenant kingdom of God; Lu 12:32). Their anointing will come to fruition here as they will receive the "royal" and "priestly" functions promised as a prospect already to the Israelites (Ex 19:6).

Re 5:9,10	<i>"And they sing a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought people for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.'"</i> [NWT]
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Notice further that in the parable of the ten virgins, these virgins are not the bride. The Greek term used allows the word to be translated as bridesmaids (Mt 25:10). And indeed, elsewhere Jesus explains that this action takes place just after the new covenant is made (i.e., just after the wedding; Lu 12:36). The marriage to the bridegroom is made by the bride, who are the anointed "saints" (Re 19:7,8), while these bridesmaids are churches of various qualities. Of these, only the more mature ones who understand what is actually happening, will accompany the events of the new covenant, i.e., perform the tasks entrusted to them.

2.4. Friends and Slaves

Jesus no longer calls anointed (called) Christians slaves, but friends or even brothers (Mt 25:40; Heb 2:11). He therefore does not treat them as slaves, but as partners. He no longer gives orders, but expects their own initiative (Lu 17:7-10).

Joh 15:15	<i>"I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because I have made known to you all the things I have heard from my Father."</i> [NWT]
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Unlike slaves, these friends should have the right information!

Note: Are contracts made with slaves? The 1st covenant was made with the nation as a whole, but the 2nd covenant was already made with selected individuals (Ga 4:1).

By the end of the 2nd covenant, the churches will again be so mired in bureaucracy that the anointed will not be in charge. Only slaves will run the churches! This process is still inevitable at our stage of development and cannot be avoided.⁵ That is why Jesus says of slaves (servants) that they are appointed by the Lord (Mt 24:45). They are in charge of the churches with his approval. They have to perform appointed duties and will be judged individually according to their performance (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). Unlike their "friends", these "slaves" will mostly grope in the dark (Lu 12:45-48).

2.5. Current Situation

We are living at the end of "this age", in the final period of the 2nd covenant. According to Bible prophecy, Christians have indeed divided into a multitude of churches. Their history is marked not only by successes but also by many failures. The history of Christianity is even marked by very flagrant violations of God's laws. In His name, the churches have driven nations into fratricidal wars. The Inquisition has gotten out of hand in the Church, and has been responsible for acts of boundless injustice and cruelty.

On the basis of these works, disunity and doctrinal errors, some churches (though themselves in error in many ways and unwilling to admit it) have concluded that the rest of "Christendom" has ceased to be

⁵The people of God are also subject to the general laws of society and are in no way exempt from them. The laws of the development of bureaucracy were first described in detail by Professor Parkinson. Jesus (Mr 7:1-13) had already fought against the excessive bureaucracy of the Jewish state, and the Apostle Paul (2Co 3:6) warned against it.

God's people. Supposedly, soon after the death of the apostles, the early church lost that status and became an organization of Satan.

Note: These statements reflect the "black and white" tendency to divide our world into God's organization and Satan's organization, which supposedly fills an imaginary vacuum outside of God's organization. But Satan is currently the god of anarchy. Building organizations is not the goal of his evolutionary strategy. It is not even the goal of YHWH's strategy, which Satan even wanted to surpass.

Along with the early church, all the others were supposedly later in Satan's organization. But did not the Jews also commit fratricidal wars, lawlessness and idolatry? Did they not even sacrifice their children to pagan gods? And yet they did not cease to be God's people (Ro 11:1). Because of these deeds, they were judged on the basis of their covenant with God. They were punished precisely because they were God's people!

The above assumption by some churches is not justified and there is no precedent for it.

3. THE PRECEDENT OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

Ro 11:1,2,11	<i>"I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! ... God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. ... Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious." [NIV]</i>
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Again, God's "rejection" of Israel has an educational purpose.

Ro 11:19-21, 24	<i>"You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!" [NIV]</i>
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These words were written by the apostle Paul at the time when God's covenant with Israel was ending! Jesus did at one point call the Pharisees children of the devil (Joh 8:44), but throughout His earthly ministry He was troubled by the hardness of the Jews and tried to turn them back.

Mt 23:37,38	<i>"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused! Look! Your house will be deserted," [NJB]</i>
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The Jews were not the devil's organization, but God's. By referring to the Pharisees as children of the devil, Jesus did not mean their participation in a (non-existent) devil's organization. By this statement he was referring to them as the genetic offspring of people severely afflicted with Satan's development strategy,⁶ for they constitute the **"seed (offspring) of the serpent"** (Ge 3:15). So much for the precedent. The truth is that many churches are indeed acting like harlots and breaking the covenant. In doing so, they are condemning themselves to just punishment (it does not have to involve individuals).

3.1. Fathers and Sons, Genetic Connection

Mt 23:29-32	<i>"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you build the graves of the prophets and decorate the tombs of the righteous ones, and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have shared with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' Therefore, you are testifying against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Well, then, fill up the measure of your forefathers." [NWT]</i>
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This statement of Jesus Christ cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the laws of evolution and genetics. The only difference between the Jews who stood before Jesus and their fathers was that they were in a different time period in their development. Jesus basically said to them:

"If you were living in the same time as your fathers, you would act in the same circumstances exactly the same as they did, because you are their genetic descendants.⁷ Right now you are in exactly the same situation as your fathers were, and because you acknowledge their wrongdoing but not your own, you have condemned yourself."

⁶This only underscores the Bible's statement: *"The whole world is in the power of the wicked one."* (1Jo 5:19) For all are affected by its power and influence (Lu 13:16). Jesus was the first to break out of it, and he did not declare it until the end of his life (Joh 14:30). Those who think that they have already broken out of its power, and who condemn others for not having done so, are unhealthily self-confident and dangerously mistaken (Lu 6:37).

⁷This rule applies primarily to the nation as a whole. Individuals have an incomparably greater chance to reshape their personality and influence the direction of their development.

Today's members of churches (even Reformed ones) are also genetic descendants of their predecessors. Therefore, the quoted words of Jesus are addressed to them as well, though not all to the same degree. Critics who condemn Christians to the role of reprobates are apparently ignorant in this regard. Their opinions reek of condescension, self-righteousness, and a desire to completely displace the often already disgraced competition (Re 3:17-20).

They do not understand that they are actually trying to impose their own covenant rules on God when they claim that He has already abrogated the covenant He made with His people.

This attitude can be fatal to its bearers (Mt 24:45-51). Did not Christ promise the following to the whole people of the 2nd covenant:

Mt 28:20	<i>"... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."</i> [NIV]
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And has not God also promised salvation to those who believe in Christ (Joh 3:16)?

4. CONCLUSION

Just as the Jews have not been definitively condemned to this day, despite their repeated violations of the covenant made with YHWH, so Christianity has not yet been condemned for its bad behavior.

And just as the Jews were punished in accordance with the covenant they made, so will Christians be punished if they do not obey the covenant that applies to them.