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Herbert W. Armstrong

And 50-year Jubilees (Revised 5-16-2016)

One of the most influential proponents of the 50-year jubilee was Loma Dillon Armstrong. “All Mrs. Armstrong’s active interest in things Biblical was reawakened when she became acquainted with Mrs. Runcorn. One day Mrs. Runcorn gave her a Bible study. She asked my wife to turn to a certain passage and read it. Then a second, then a third, and so on for about an hour. Mrs. Runcorn made no comment -- gave no explanation or argument -- just asked my wife to read aloud a series of Biblical passages.” ([Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, page 146](#)).

Upon further research, we find that, low and behold,

it can be assumed that Loma and Herbert Armstrong were being exposed to their neighbor in Oregon, the wife of Horatio "Ora" J. Runcorn, a minister of the Church of God Seventh Day.

After extensive study of church literature published in Stanberry, Missouri, Mr. Armstrong received a preaching certificate in 1932 from the Oregon Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day, signed by O. J. Runcorn as President.



[The Plain Truth, September, 1957](#)

Under Gilbert Cranmer, the Church of God Seventh Day rejected the visions of Elen G White in 1858, five years before she founded the Seventh Day Adventist Church as a branch of the previous Millerites.

Armstrong became a writer for the *Bible Advocate* (previously called *The Hope of Israel*) published in Stanberry.

The above connections with Runcorn’s church likely accounts for Mr. Armstrong saying in *The Plain Truth* in 1944-45 that Christ would return to fight Hitler and Mussolini after 1944. This was 100 years after the Millerites expected Christ to return in 1843/44, allegedly in a jubilee year.

The Millerites believed 1843 was a fulfillment of the 2300 days mentioned in Dan 8:14 if these days actually represent 2300 “prophetic years”. When did these 2300 years allegedly begin? When Ezra returned from Babylon to Jerusalem allegedly in 458/57 BC (50 x 46). If these 2300 years represent 46 jubilees, then the jubilees are allegedly 50 years apart. This would mean that 457 BC and 1843 AD were jubilee years, and Christ would allegedly return in a jubilee year.

And moreover, 458/57 BC back to Joshua in 1408/07 is also divisible by 50. Therefore, jubilees would allegedly also be in 1844, 1894, 1944, 1994 and 2044.

Many branches of the Armstrong church still believe in a 50-year cycle, but it also seems interesting that 457 BC to 1994 AD equals 49 x 50, and 1407 BC to 1975 equals 49 x 69. This perhaps explains Armstrong’s *1975 In Prophecy*.

In the 1890’s, Dr. Guinness of Australia published a work on prophecy and his ideas appeared in the *Advocate*. As a result, 1975 became an important date in the writings of A.F. Dugger and his son, A.N. Dugger of the Church of God Seventh Day. Search for “1975” [HERE](#)

John Kiesz Information on Herbert Armstrong [HERE](#)

John Kiesz was a member of the executive board that issued Armstrong’s preaching certificate, and he also approved giving him credentials from the Salem, Oregon, branch of the church. Kiesz later became an elder in the Church of God Seventh Day, Denver, CO.

Kiesz recalls Armstrong’s response after the Israelis took Jerusalem in the war of. 1967:

“The recent Israeli victory gave them complete control of the city of Jerusalem—including the original site of Solomon's Temple. The stage is now set for the construction of the ‘Temple’ prophesied in II Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 11:1, 2.” (*Plain Truth*, March 1968: “*Watch Jerusalem! Watch Israel!*”).

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SABBATICALS & JUBILEES
Herbert W. Armstrong 50-year Jubilees
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“What is the real significance? The Israelis won a flash war—a blitzkrieg, Israeli style! The news reporters do not know what it means. But you can know! For this is one of the major fulfillments of Biblical prophecy!

Several commentators have expressed the importance of events happening in 1917, 1967 and 2017 being 50 years apart as in Jonathan Kahn’s *Mystery of the Shemitah* covered on page 3 found [HERE](#). These align with 50-year jubilees between 1217, 1917 and 2017 allegedly set by Rabbi Judah ben Samuel found [HERE](#). 1917 is when General Allenby captured Jerusalem and 53 nations signed the Balfour Declaration, which guaranteed a Jewish homeland. (Note, however, that most of Kahn’s work is based upon Sabbaticals in the fall of 1999, 2007, 2014 and 2021 AD.)

Armstrong says, “There will be a Jewish Temple built in Jerusalem, with animal sacrifices once again being offered, probably within about four and one half years [emphasis mine]. It is going to take some time to build such a Temple. And I don't see how they are going to have another month to spare—in taking over the ‘old city’ now in Arab hands—if they are going to have the Temple built by the time indicated by prophecy” (*Plain Truth*, June, 1967, *JEW’S TAKE JERUSALEM*).

Eventually, the Church of God Seventh Day ousted Armstrong for preaching that Britain and the United States are modern-day Israelite tribes descended from the two sons of Joseph and for preaching that, in order to be saved, true Christians must observe the annual feast days found in Leviticus 23.

However, other Church of God ministers, such as, R.V Lyon, Merritt Dickinson, R.K. and Frank Walker, SS. and Roy Davison and others held similar views about British Israelism as early as 1861. This is reflected in *The Hope of Israel* (later named the *Bible Advocate*), and articles about the physical return of physical Jews to their physical homeland in Palestine when their Messiah comes.

Exposure to Seventh Day Adventism

Information on Armstrong’s exposure to Seventh Day Adventist and Church of God Seventh Day literature is found [HERE](#). *Roots of Worldwide Church of God* is found [HERE](#).

Genealogy of Horatio “Ora” J. Runcorn is found [HERE](#) at Rootsweb.com.

Genealogy of Herbert W. Armstrong is found [HERE](#) at Rootsweb.com.

Context of Gog, Magog and Armageddon

I recently heard a sermon on the battle of Gog and Magog (in Ezekiel 37-38) and I read how it is likely related to the last battle of Armageddon (in Rev 16:16). I immediately wondered who first identified these countries as Russians and Scythians. For views of the Church of God Seventh Day, search for words in quotes, such as: "church of god seventh day" "gog and magog" “Armageddon and Ezekiel 38”, “Meshech and Tubal”, and “Church of God Seventh Day”. In 1917, A.N. Dugger said the Russians would be part of the Gentile hordes coming to Armageddon in Israel. Search for “Gentile hordes” [HERE](#).

Then I wondered how recent archaeology might identify them, which led, for example, to this: <http://www.thecometsofgod.com/dwnlds/chap9.pdf>. Are H-bombs, helicopters and real comets mentioned in Revelation?

Captured by Conjecture

It didn’t take much research to conclude that the Bible is written in such a way that every generation would believe, with good reasons, that the Messiah and the last battle would happen in their own generation, and to set dates would be based upon conjecture.

Followers can be captured by conjecture!

Zionism Above and Zionism Below

Zionists who rejected their Messiah’s coming in the flesh were called antichrists in the first century (I John 2:18-22; II John 7). These were destined to continue setting dates for his future arrival, dates which were almost always associated with the year of the jubilee, when they would finally oust the foreigners occupying their Promised Land and return from all nations.

This happened in 132 AD with the bar Koshiba “second revolt”.

In 622 AD, 490 years after 132 AD, Mohamud was accepted by the Jews of Medina as a type of Messiah. These jubilees were allegedly 49 years apart.

The jubilees of the Millerites, Adventist, Church of God Seventh Day and the Armstrongites were allegedly 50 years apart, that is, in 1408-07 and 458-57 BC, and 1844-45, 1894-95, 1944-45, 1994-95 and 2044-45 AD.

However, Armstrong’s booklet, *1975 in Prophecy*, appears to have been 69 jubilees after Joshua in 1408-07 BC (if they were 49 years apart). Details on this seem to be “classified information”.

Conclusion and Reservations

Hindsight is almost always better than foresight. Those who claim to know the future breed, not just hope, but also “great disappointments”.

Armstrong’s special insights into British Israelism, holy days, three different tithes, 50-year jubilees, the “last 3½ years”, the “place of safety”, seven eras of the church made his followers unique and exclusive. The Church of God Seventh Day became the bad “Sardis Era” that couldn’t change and accept new truths.

The Armstrongs’ kept the feast of Tabernacles alone for about seven years, and others brought their families and joined them using what was coined as “the second tithe”.

Eventually, since church teenagers could not play basketball on Friday nights and Saturdays, there were expenses for church basketball almost equal to a fourth tithe.

Many drove over 50 miles one way for Bible studies.

Nevertheless, the news media prefers not to focus on American radical extremism.

Observations using hindsight should make us wonder if Armstrong’s new doctrines added to the Church of God Seventh Day “Sardis Era” were really mandatory for salvation.

Where exactly does the Bible say that his followers must join him with their families, along with other widows, orphans and elderly for the feast of Tabernacles every year even before Christ returns? Does Zacheriah 14:16 actually imply that every man, woman and child in all nations will come to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Tabernacles? If only the representatives must go to Jerusalem to keep the feast, then why should all family members go to the feast at this time... before Christ’s return?

On the other hand, it is common knowledge that having an annual convention can have very positive effects in other organizations and industries. In this view a “Church Convention” could be attended voluntarily at the time of the feast of Tabernacles without saying the feast is mandatory for all gentile converts to attend.

Note that the ministerial conference in Jerusalem in Acts 15 does not prohibit the Jews from practicing their religion based upon their own history. It merely itemized what the gentiles must do or avoid if they are allowed to live among the Jews (as covered in Leviticus).

Perhaps the Church of God Seventh Day had good reasons for removing Armstrong’s Ministerial License. Nevertheless, he remains an idol sheltered by and shared among offshoots of his impressive empire.

Rights to Dissent

There are some who feel they should live in castles while others should live in outhouses. This is called Feudalism, which, eventually, causes a feud.

The Royal Family hires overlords who manage the peasants who are required to get their hands dirty. The overlords collect taxes on the goods and services, pay their servants enough to serve for another season and hand the remains to the Royalty.

Not much has changed since Ptolemy, Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Marcus Antony and Herod the Great. Even in America, this mindset can squelch the God-given Rights to dissent, and the plot goes on, and on, and on... (<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Right+to+dissent>).