

# Whatever happened to the Davidians?

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It is difficult to obtain information today, since all types of Davidian groups tend to be shadowy. Their members frequently attend, or belong to, local Seventh-day Adventist churches.

The Branch Davidians split from the Shepherd's Rod group about 30 years ago. They proclaimed triumphantly that believers should reject the "dead rod" and join the "living branch."

The strongest non-Waco faction of the Branch Davidians is in Alabama. They never accepted David Koresh as their leader.

The Waco Branch Davidians are back at Waco, Texas—at least about 20 of them. They say they have between 50 and 100 adherents worldwide, according to Clive Doyle, a survivor of the fire that burned the Mt. Carmel compound to the ground in 1993.

This group could more accurately be called "Koresh Davidians." They believe they are living in the 5th seal of Revelation, that everything Koresh taught was true, and that soon David Koresh will arise in the special resurrection (just before the return of Christ for His people) for a special work.

They eagerly await Koresh's return, since they now have no other prophet to lead them. But if someone comes along who can quote Scripture and play rock music as well as David did, they are likely to give him credence.

Nine of their members are now in prison. In the opinion of many people, including the present writer, they did not deserve that imprisonment, which silenced their mouths

for many years to come.

What about the Davidians who are not part of "The Branch"?

The present writer was told several years ago, by one of them, that there were about six main Davidian groups. What is perhaps the largest segment is headquartered in Exeter, Missouri. They have a publishing work and about 30 employees. Although supported by about 5,000 followers, over 90 percent are quietly attending (and often members of) local Adventist churches.

All Davidians view Victor Houteff, the founder of the Shepherd's Rod, to be the primary prophet of these last days. Why they should is remarkable, since one of his leading predictions was that he would not see death before Christ returned in the skies.

Houteff centered his messianic messages around Ezekiel 9 and "the men with the slaughter weapons."

At the time of the spring 1993 siege at Waco, we received a number of letters, which we printed from time to time, from people who were Davidians or had contact with Houteff and his followers in the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. They told us that, although it is officially denied today, Houteff DID teach, and his followers DID believe, that they were the ones who, just prior to the return of Christ, were—on signal from heaven—to kill all the Adventists who did not accept Houteff's message. (Houteff's official books deny that the believers will do the killing.)

David Koresh added the seals of Revelation 5:1-8:1 to the hodge-

podge of teaching. He said he was Christ reincarnate, the "Lamb" of Revelation 5:6-9, who alone was "worthy to open the seals." When the time finally came for him to open those seals, he said, he would be in charge of bringing the wrath of God upon an unrepentant world.

This theme, from Houteff onward, that the Rod (later calling themselves Davidians or The Branch) would master, even conquer, their "adversaries," was more than bad theology—it was bad for the mind!

Many of our readers will recall the present writer's tract, *Message of Ezekiel 9 [WM-469]*, which was essentially a compilation of Spirit of Prophecy statements on the subject. The statements are clear and simple. There was no reason for Adventists to ignore them and believe Houteff's errors about that chapter.

In preparation for their coming moment in history, when they would fulfill Ezekiel 9, David Koresh and his followers stockpiled legal weapons. Then came the raid on February 28, 1993, and the rest is history.

For a rather in-depth history of the Rod, the Davidians, and The Branch, read the present writer's book, *The Davidians of Waco (\$5.95, plus p&h)*. The book also includes an overview of their teachings.

To this day, faithful Advent believers, many of them young people, are deluded into joining up with the Davidians.

This is unfortunate, but it is a warning to the rest of us. —vf