

MALACHI'S MESSAGE

To God's Church Today

GERALD FLURY

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CONTENTS

VII

Preface

IX

Introduction

ONE | 1

A Call to Remembrance

TWO | 19

Hold Fast

THREE | 32

Laodicean Era

FOUR | 49

Following Elijah

FIVE | 64

End-Time Joshua in Bondage

SIX | 76

‘Man of Sin’

SEVEN | 102

‘Prophecy Not’

EIGHT | 114

Church Division

NINE | 132

Malachi’s Message

147

Afterword

SUBJECT INDEX | 150

SCRIPTURE INDEX | 154

PREFACE

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT GOD’S CHURCH GONE OFF TRACK AND what God did to correct the tragedy.

Herbert W. Armstrong founded the Worldwide Church of God in 1934 (though it began with a different name) and led it for over 51 years to its height in membership, global impact and income at the time of his death in 1986. The successor he chose, Joseph Tkach, began as pastor general with the spoken aim to “follow his example.”

Soon, however, disturbing and significant changes in Church doctrine began to be introduced. The changes revealed a diversion in course, one that led to catastrophe.

Malachi’s Message was originally written in 1989, when the new direction in God’s Church was, to many of its members, not very perceptible. The book was primarily intended to alert the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) as to what was really happening and, secondarily, to alert the Church membership. When an early draft of the book was brought to the attention of WCG leadership in Pasadena, California, Gerald Flurry and his assistant, John Amos, were fired from their positions as WCG

ministers. As this book explains, the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) began immediately.

Since its first printing in 1990, more than 100,000 copies of *Malachi's Message* have been distributed. In early reprints of the book, the PCG tried to keep up with doctrinal changes as they emerged from the WCG. The changes came very fast and became increasingly apparent to people both within and outside the Church.

By the late 1990s, however, so much had changed, and the landscape of the now-fractious Church of God was so different, we decided to preserve the book essentially as it was in the midst of the WCG's doctrinal metamorphosis. The WCG today is hardly recognizable as the one Herbert Armstrong founded. Various other churches have formed, after leaving the WCG, each with varying degrees of the truth Mr. Armstrong established. These groups continue to change and splinter at a fast rate. Rather than making minor changes throughout the body of *Malachi's Message*, we have chosen to bring the reader up to date by addressing major developments that have occurred since 1995 in an afterword.

INTRODUCTION

IN HER BOOK *ANOTHER GOSPEL*, RUTH TUCKER CONGRATULATED Joseph W. Tkach for “the direction” in which he has led the Worldwide Church of God (wCG)—away from most of the fundamental teachings of the late Herbert W. Armstrong.

“It’s clear that the Worldwide Church of God has changed its thinking about Herbert W. Armstrong,” she said during the religious radio interview on “Truths That Transform.”

Vast changes have been made in the Worldwide Church of God since Herbert W. Armstrong died. If you understand the doctrines Mr. Armstrong taught, then you can see why that church is being fundamentally changed from the top. Even other religions can clearly see that the Worldwide Church of God “has changed its thinking about Herbert W. Armstrong.” But is it clear to the members of the Worldwide Church of God? **ALL OF MR. ARMSTRONG’S MAJOR BOOKS AND BOOKLETS HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED!**

Several groups have left the wCG since Mr. Armstrong died. Your Bible says **ONLY ONE** of those groups can be doing God’s Work. That means only one church truly follows in the

footsteps of Mr. Armstrong. If you make a wrong choice, it will bring physical and spiritual *curse*s. A right choice will lead to incredible physical and spiritual *reward*s. It is crucial that we find the church which is delivering God's final warning MESSAGE.

Scholars today still can't determine where prophets like Nahum or Malachi came from. But these men still had God's MESSAGE! Today, the Philadelphia Church of God has access to over 300 million people via television. God is opening that door to deliver His MESSAGE.

Notice what a leader of one group that left the WCG stated about what would happen if Mr. Armstrong were to be resurrected (I have omitted the names he referred to):

But he [Mr. Armstrong] would look for [evangelist one] and he would look for [evangelist two] and he would see a work was being done, not perfectly. And he would say, "Well, [evangelist two], I didn't think you had that good of a radio voice, but you're doing a broadcast you know." And he'd kind of wonder and he'd say, "Well, you're still preaching the truth. And [evangelist one] is there, your leading editor and writer. And he's preaching the truth. And now [another minister], he's there—oh that's wonderful." And he'd think, "Well now, I knew [evangelist three] was a good man, and now I'm glad [he] is with you," he'd say. "And I'm thankful that some of my lieutenants have carried on the Work of God and it's still being done." And he would be very grateful. And I mean that.

He named three evangelists and one pastor who came out of the WCG. But there are at least four or five times as many high-ranking evangelists *still in* the WCG. So should we go back to the WCG? Ridiculous! Satan has gotten this man's mind FOCUSED ON MEN—NOT THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST! As one of our members said, "It doesn't matter who the postman is as long as he brings the right mail!"

If you will prayerfully consider this man's reasoning, you can see he doesn't have a clear focus on God's MESSAGE. In the last few months of his life, Mr. Armstrong told WCG members, "Most of you don't get it! And many of you ministers don't get it either!" This is what Mr. Armstrong was referring to! Men were losing their focus on God's MESSAGE.

God said He would send a MESSENGER to us in this end time. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1). The messenger of the covenant is Jesus Christ. The other messenger prepared the way for Christ's return. This was the end-time *type* of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ's Second Coming. "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (verse 2). This is obviously referring to Christ's Second Coming. His first appearance was not like a "refiner's fire."

For years Mr. Armstrong said repeatedly that he fulfilled this office. He was an end-time *type* of John the Baptist. But *only* the PCG today agrees with Mr. Armstrong's teaching on this verse. All—and I mean all—of the Laodicean churches say *by their teachings* that Mr. Armstrong "twisted and perverted" this verse—and many other prophecies that refer to his end-time work. They don't believe Mr. Armstrong fulfilled this office, when there is superabundant evidence that he *did*.

Why do the Laodiceans fail to see that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled all of these major end-time prophecies? Because their focus is too much on the man—not on God and His MESSAGE!

There are three parts to this equation: 1) God, 2) His message and 3) the human messenger. Keeping your focus on God and His message is the only way to follow the right messenger. MAN'S BIGGEST SPIRITUAL FLAW HAS ALWAYS BEEN LOSING SIGHT OF GOD'S MESSAGE!

Christ said there would be a great falling away from *God's truth* just before His return (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Satan would be the power behind that rebellion (verses 8-9). Why did they rebel? "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (verse 10). The word *perish* should read "are perishing." God's own Laodicean Church is perishing! Why? Because they don't love the truth—God's MESSAGE!

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (verse 11). God will send His own Church "*STRONG DELUSION*." What is the *strong delusion*? IT COMES FROM DECEIVED LEADERS INSIDE GOD'S OWN CHURCH! STRONG DELUSION INDEED! The great tragedy is that they get followers who look to men and not God. This is God's *supreme test* today to SEE IF HIS PEOPLE REALLY "GET IT" and TRULY LOVE HIM AND HIS MESSAGE.

God has wonderful praise for His VERY ELECT. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not" (Matthew 24:23). God is addressing His own people here. False Christianity has always worshiped a false Christ. GOD IS TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO WORSHIP THE TRUE CHRIST. Then many of them leave Christ and His message and follow a man.

This message is aimed directly at you and me!

Here is the key to avoiding deception. Once you are a part of God's truth and Work, you must cling to it like a drowning man to a helping hand. But notice, if "ANY MAN" tries to lead you into a false work of "Christ," don't believe him. That is the monumental sin of all the Laodicean churches today: They have left the Work of Christ for the work of a man! Several Laodicean leaders try to get you to focus on MEN! But the very elect's focus is on Christ and His message, and they cannot be deceived by one man or several men of stature. Once you are with Christ and His Work, never let a man deceive you away from it. But that is happening to thousands of God's people today—*many* thousands!

Soon it will be obvious to everyone which group comprises

the very elect. Then everyone will know why it was impossible to deceive them. They never lost sight of Christ's *message*.

If you want to know what sets the Philadelphia Church of God apart from all other churches, IT IS THE MESSAGE! "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (verse 24). The very elect *cannot* be deceived because they *always* focus on the MESSAGE! Not even great signs and wonders can deceive them.

I can give you this wonderful promise from God: Never lose sight of the message, and you'll *never* be deceived. Then your future will be secure and glorious!

What does it all mean? Did you know that those Laodicean changes were prophesied? Much of what has happened since Mr. Armstrong's death is revealed in the book of Malachi. If you will prayerfully study *Malachi's Message*, you will see that there are many urgent issues confronting all of God's people today. Please search the Scriptures as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11), and prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Then BELIEVE YOUR BIBLE—NOT MEN!

A CHRISTIAN IS A PERSON WHO FOLLOWS CHRIST. Would Christ lead His Church astray—in the wrong direction? No, He would not. If God's Church goes astray, Christ rebukes it. If they fail to repent, then He removes the lamp and raises up another Church or work. Most of the time this is what He did in the past (Revelation 2 and 3). Christ said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). So we know that the Church Christ leads is somewhere on this Earth and we, as Christians, have the responsibility to be in that Church, FOLLOWING CHRIST—not a man, church or any organization. Are you a true Christian? Do you follow Jesus Christ? This subject is so terribly important. We cannot leave it to chance. Our salvation hangs in the balance!

ONE

A CALL TO REMEMBRANCE

“**T**HEN THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and *a book of remembrance* was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Malachi 3:16). Why a book of remembrance? This is not the book of life. It is a *special* book which concerns a unique group of people who fear the Eternal and fellowship a lot.

These are the Philadelphians who *remembered*. We are WARNED TO REMEMBER what we were taught (Malachi 4:4-6). Many prophecies about the end time discuss a turning away from past instructions (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 15; Revelation 3:7-21). IT IS A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE BECAUSE THEY REMEMBERED WHAT THEY WERE TAUGHT! That is why God SPARES them from the Great Tribulation (Malachi 3:17; Matthew 24:21-22; Revelation 3:10) and gives them a headquarters position in His Kingdom forever (Revelation 3:12).

The Laodiceans fail to escape because they *forget*—and turn

to a lukewarm message. God *remembers* the Philadelphian group because *they remembered Him*.

“Then shall ye return, and *discern* between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not” (Malachi 3:18). If we are going to be able to discern between those who serve God and those who serve Him not, it will be because we REMEMBER WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT. Without that precious God-inspired knowledge, SATAN WILL DECEIVE US! That is a very serious statement—but it’s biblically based.

This is really more than a “book of remembrance.” It’s a message from Christ to those who remember past instructions. It’s a wonderful message of encouragement.

GOD CALLS THINGS WHAT THEY ARE! It all revolves around *remembering*—by Philadelphians *and* by God. Much of our remembering revolves around an “Elijah” and the things God taught us through him. Then God remembers the Philadelphians, and He protects and rewards them in the future.

The entire book of Malachi revolves around two groups—those who forget (the majority) and those who remember (the minority). Are you in that book of remembrance? Anyone who is not is destined to go into the Great Tribulation. And 50 percent of those who rebel will go into the lake of fire. We *must* take this warning seriously.

THE TEMPLE PROPHETS

Judah came back from Babylonian captivity to build the restoration temple about 515 B.C. After the temple was completed, it took only 40 or 50 years for them to turn away from God’s Word.

The book of Malachi was written around 450 B.C.

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are labeled the “temple prophets” by most commentaries, and for good reason. Anciently, Haggai and Zechariah came to the restoration temple of Zerubbabel *while* the temple was being built. Malachi didn’t come until *years later* when the priests had corrupted God’s way—*after* the temple was built.

Haggai mentions Zerubbabel seven times—God’s number of *completion*. Zerubbabel COMPLETED, or FINISHED, the temple (Zechariah 4:9). These prophetic books are precisely structured—just as all of the Bible is. They weren’t haphazardly thrown together.

Physical Israel was corrected by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah *while* the temple was being built.

We don’t want to overlook the meaning of the temple prophets’ writings for us today. We know that most prophecy is dual, with the main fulfillment being for this end time. If Malachi came *after* the temple was built anciently, what is his message for us today? How does his message apply to us RIGHT NOW?

Several commentaries say that Zerubbabel died an old man. Afterward, the Jews began to get off track. God sent Malachi to correct the ministry, first of all, and then the people secondarily. That was the very purpose of his coming.

There are no verses in Malachi about building the temple as there are in Haggai and Zechariah. The temple had already been completed by Zerubbabel. Mr. Armstrong said he was a type of Zerubbabel. We shall see that Mr. Armstrong also finished a work and that the book of Malachi is to be fulfilled primarily *after* he died.

MALACHI HAD NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT THE JUDGMENT OF NATIONS. Notice: His MAIN concern and major work was to keep the fear of God alive in the ministry (Malachi 2:1-8). There was a crisis in the ministry.

Malachi’s going to the temple priests was only a *type* of what is to occur in God’s Church today.

We’ll see that from Malachi 1:6 to 3:3, every verse is directed specifically at the ministry. God will purify His ministers first of all. Some ministers have a deep love for God (Malachi 3:16), but other ministers “despise” God’s name (Malachi 1:6).

“And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: THIS HATH BEEN BY YOUR MEANS: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 1:9). “This hath been by your means” would be better translated, “THIS HAS BEEN YOUR

DOING” (*Soncino* commentary). God labels the ministry as guilty. It is the main *cause* of the Church’s end-time crisis. “[Y]e have *caused* many to stumble at the law ...” (Malachi 2:8). God then purges the ministry (Malachi 3:3; 4:6). Remember, this is all to be fulfilled in the end time—just before Christ’s return.

The attitude of some ministers toward God is scornful. “[Y]e have snuffed at it ...” (Malachi 1:13). This literally means: “You snort at me.” *Soncino* says the change of the pronoun from “me” to “it” is a deliberate alteration by the scribes in order to remove the harshness of the expression.

There is no greater honor than being in the ministry. Also, there is no greater responsibility. The ministry must always be spiritually alert. The history of the Church of God is FILLED WITH DISASTERS when the ministry failed to do its job!

CHURCH ERAS

In 1982, a sermon was given by a WCG evangelist of many years, Dr. Herman Hoeh. It was transcribed and sent to the hard-of-hearing members. The title was “Church Eras” (Revelation 2-3). In that message, he said, “The congregation of Ephesus had a great responsibility. It was told they must acquire the love that pertains to the love of God; the love that is reflected in brotherly love. This type of love is so important that even though they did the rest of the Work, but did not have love, God said, *I will come and REMOVE YOUR LAMPSTAND from its place unless you repent*. It ultimately meant that INSTEAD OF THOSE CONGREGATIONS AS A WHOLE CARRYING ON THE WORK, PEOPLE HAD TO LEAVE THOSE CONGREGATIONS AND A WHOLE NEW ORGANIZATION DEVELOPED. Those congregations that had no love when the light went out became the basis of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Greek world” (emphasis mine throughout).

Dr. Hoeh said “people had to *leave* those congregations and a whole new organization developed.” What if they had stayed with the leadership and the Church in that era? Dr. Hoeh said they would have ultimately become “the basis of the Greek Orthodox

Church in the Greek world"! A similar scenario happened in other eras.

Undoubtedly, the leadership and members of the Ephesus era condemned those who left as being disloyal to Christ. Undoubtedly, those of the Ephesian Church sincerely believed they were right, but they were tragically **WRONG**. Christ somehow led a group of His deeply converted people to **START A NEW** organization which **ADHERED TO THE TRUTH HE HAD ESTABLISHED** in the Ephesus Church. Then God stopped using the Ephesus Church to do His Work. Christ removed the lampstand.

The Apostle John tells us, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and **CASTETH THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH**" (3 John 9-10). John wrote this letter several years before he died. The *few* faithful brethren who were left were being "cast out," or **PUT OUT**, of a local assembly.

Were these members who were "cast out" still in God's Church? Actually, they were the *only* ones who constituted the *true* Church of God! They *were* the Church because they were joined to Christ through God's Holy Spirit.

So how did the people leave the Ephesus-era organization and develop a whole new organization? Certain members were "cast out." This is probably how God's loyal people started a new Church in the Ephesus era. It would seem many, if not *all*, of those loyal to Christ and John were "cast out."

The point is, **THOSE CLOSE TO GOD FOLLOWED JESUS CHRIST—not the deceived leaders in God's Church!**

John spoke out in **FAITH**! One of Herbert Armstrong's *main* complaints in the 1970s **WAS AGAINST MINISTERS WHO KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT FAILED TO SPEAK OUT!** Paul openly challenged Peter (Galatians 2:11). Sometimes it has to be done to keep the spirit of God's Word!

Often Church members ask, “Is he out of the Church?” But that *isn't* the MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION. That isn't the question the Apostle John was most concerned about. His followers were “CAST OUT” of the Ephesus Church—but it was because they were actually FOLLOWING CHRIST! They were kicked out of the Ephesus Church, but they still followed God. Following Christ has caused many members to be kicked out of a Church *era*—when those churches were going astray. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO FOLLOWS CHRIST—not a man or a church organization.

Of course, it is a monumental decision to take such a stand, not one to be taken casually, because the consequences are so serious. You *must* EXAMINE THE ISSUES and determine where CHRIST is leading.

Did you know that historically, MOST of God's churches or Church eras have gone astray? (Read Revelation 2 and 3.) Why were they deceived? Because the people BLINDLY followed *human* government—not the government of Jesus Christ!

We started mailing *Malachi's Message* in January 1990. Since that modest beginning, God has raised up the Philadelphia Church of God with thousands of supporters and readers worldwide. As time goes on, many more members of the Worldwide Church of God are becoming deeply disturbed by the Worldwide Church's movement away from what Jesus Christ taught through Herbert W. Armstrong.

Several different churches have been formed by former Worldwide Church of God ministers. All of these churches—including the WCG—are Laodicean, except one. So says YOUR Bible! ONLY ONE church has God's lamp. Do you know where that lamp is?

God is not the author of confusion. You can *prove* which group Jesus Christ is leading—from your own Bible. You have nothing to fear from reading this message. But you have everything to fear if you are DECEIVED! YOUR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL SALVATION DEPENDS ON IT!

Many members of the Philadelphia Church of God have left or been cast out of the Worldwide Church of God—WE HAVE NOT

AND NEVER DID STOP FOLLOWING CHRIST. But a statement like that must be supported by ample Bible proof. FOLLOWING CHRIST is exactly what *Malachi's Message* is all about.

John Amos and I were disfellowshipped in late 1989 for seriously questioning the WCG leaders' doctrinal changes away from what Mr. Armstrong taught and for believing what was later printed as *Malachi's Message*. We NEVER preached against Pasadena to the WCG members while we were in that church. If you will read this book, then at least you will better understand *why* we and other PCG members were disfellowshipped from the Worldwide Church of God.

Let's begin by understanding an important fact about the seven Church eras of Revelation 2 and 3. It is quite revealing. Apparently, *five* of the seven eras were LED into oblivion and disaster! Every Church era except the Philadelphia and Smyrna eras had leaders, at least in the end, who led them astray. That is *why*, in most cases, NEW ERAS WERE RAISED UP BY GOD.

The Sardis era did God's Work *until* it died spiritually. Then Herbert Armstrong was raised up to start a new era. A *few* of the Sardis people have qualified to be in God's Kingdom in spite of their SPIRITUALLY DEAD LEADERS (Revelation 3:1-5). They made it because THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW THEIR LEADERS! God commanded the leaders to repent. But they didn't. Later, God led some of the Sardis members into the Church of God during the Philadelphia era under Mr. Armstrong's leadership.

When five out of seven Church eras were prophesied to be led away from Christ, do you think it can't happen to you—EVEN WHEN A LAODICEAN ERA IS PROPHESED TO APPEAR?

GOD COMMANDS—TEST YOUR LEADERS

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which

are evil: and thou hast *tried* them which SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, AND ARE NOT, AND HAST FOUND THEM LIARS” (Revelation 2:1-2). Some men were *saying* they were apostles when THEY WERE NOT. God then *praised* the Ephesus Church for detecting this error. Those men were not apostles in a worldly church. God wouldn’t have praised them for detecting false apostles of the world. These false apostles were *in* God’s Church—or somehow affiliated with it!

God said, “[T]hou hast *tried* them.” *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* defines the word “tried” this way: “to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality.” Does that sound like we should just go along with the Church leadership? God says you either put them to the *test* or you can easily be deceived.

Our focus must *not* be on an organization or an era but on the great Christ, who is in the *midst* of those eras. “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And *in the midst* of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle” (Revelation 1:12-13). The emphasis is not on the seven candlesticks or eras—the emphasis is on Christ who is in the *midst* of all seven eras. Christ is right in the *middle*. But He will allow His followers to go astray. Then He usually has to start a new era—or work with those who remain loyal to Him.

Let’s continue the description of Christ: “His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (verses 14-16). This great Being is described to INTRODUCE the seven eras of Revelation 2 and 3. If we let Christ and His Work slide from the *middle* of the picture, all we have left are DECEIVED churches. So the emphasis is not on being “in the Church,” BUT FOLLOWING THIS GREAT GOD! When John saw Christ in this vision, he “fell at his feet as dead” (Revelation 1:17).

Unless this same God leads the Church, we are in serious trouble; and if Christ isn't leading the Church, **WE SHOULD NOT FOLLOW!**

If the Ephesus Church members, in a right attitude, tried those who said they were apostles, shouldn't you? This was the same Ephesus Church discussed in 3 John 9-10. Was Diotrephes one of those false apostles? How did he get all those people to follow him while casting John's followers out of the Church? How much authority did he have? It's difficult to say. John's followers, who stood by John and Christ, were "cast out." The point is, John discerned Diotrephes's evil motives and rebuked him.

I WOULD NEVER SUGGEST ANYONE TRY TO OVERTHROW MR. TKACH. As David said, we can't lift our hand against the Lord's anointed. I wouldn't **DARE** try to do that. But **NEITHER WOULD I FOLLOW MR. TKACH OR ANY OTHER LEADER INTO THE TRIBULATION OR THE LAKE OF FIRE!**

Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul said **THE LEADER** is to follow Christ. Follow a man *only* as he follows Christ. We can't do that unless we are testing and proving all things. It's very biblical to do so.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but **TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD:** because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). John pleaded with God's *beloved* people to "try the spirits." Why? Because there are "many" false prophets and false leaders. Often these deceivers were in God's Church. We must always test our leaders with God's Word. That certainly includes me. You **MUST PROVE** what I say in this book!

Individuals go astray. Churches go astray. **CHRIST NEVER GOES ASTRAY!** A man is not the trunk of the tree. An organization is not the trunk of the tree. God's Word is the trunk of the tree. And what Christ established through Mr. Armstrong for over 50 years is a big part of the tree trunk.

Anybody who has been loyal to God's Church for very long is used to *change*. But not all change is good. The Laodicean Church is prophesied to change. But that change is **AWAY FROM THE PHILADELPHIA STANDARD**—not a good change. The Laodiceans

are prophesied to turn away from the trunk of the tree. God warns us to be vigilant.

“These [Bereans] were MORE NOBLE than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures *daily*, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Do you realize, brethren, that your *approach* to Bible study helps reveal to God how *noble* you are? Do you search the Scriptures daily “with all readiness of mind,” eager to see what the Bible says, so you can FOLLOW CHRIST more perfectly? God’s *elect* are very *noble* people when it comes to their Bible study.

Thayer’s Lexicon says the word “searched” is often used as the verb “judge” in the Bible. The Bereans approached their Bible study by investigating and examining the evidence. That includes examining our leaders—as long as it is done with a Berean attitude. God knows if an attitude is right. It is good to have righteous indignation when the *direction* is wrong in God’s Church. God certainly does!

Luke said these people had greater nobility because of this attitude. That means a higher reward in God’s Kingdom. The NOBLE ELECT have fallen in love with God’s truth. They love God so much they will stand alone or even die for Him. They are not deceived by “hugs and kisses” without real substance. And they are not DECEIVED BY ENDLESS TALK OF “LOVE”! They know what the true love of God is. They judge by “fruits” (Matthew 7:16), *not* outward appearance.

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11). GOD WILL PERSONALLY SEND STRONG DELUSION! But WHY? Why would God send STRONG DELUSION to His own people? Does He want us to fail? Of course not. This is God’s way of testing who “received not the love of the truth” (verse 10). God wants to know how much you love Him and His Word. IT’S NOT POSSIBLE TO DECEIVE GOD’S VERY ELECT (Matthew 24:24).

Paul is not talking about normal delusion being sent to God's people—it is “STRONG DELUSION.” You're going to see multiple thousands of people deceived because they are “blind” to their own spiritual condition (Revelation 3:17). They *assume* there is safety in numbers, and they *assume* they are God's very elect who cannot be deceived. If they are not careful, these assumptions will lead them into the Tribulation and possibly the lake of fire!

We all think we love God. God requires that we have the depth of love necessary to withstand strong delusion. GOD SENDS “STRONG DELUSION” TO HIS CHURCH TO DETERMINE WHO WILL BE HIS VERY ELECT. God wants to know who LOVES THE TRUTH—and WHO JUST HAS IT. With a wrong attitude, some are going to die for all eternity! (2 Thessalonians 2:10). God is deadly serious about our calling.

God's Church has been flooded with His precious truth. Now God is going to see if we JUST TALK about faith—or REALLY LIVE BY FAITH—by His Word. Do we *remember* what we were taught and live by it?

God sends strong delusion to see if His people are Philadelphian or Laodicean. God is re-creating Himself. We're either going to BE GOD—or WE'RE GOING TO BE NOTHING! God wants to know who will qualify for His Kingdom. That is the whole purpose for our existence.

There are probably more warnings in the New Testament about false teachers than any other subject.

Let's examine two vastly different teachings—one by Herbert Armstrong and one by Joseph Tkach.

DON'T ASSIGN SCRIPTURES TO LEADERS?

Mr. Armstrong applied scriptures to individuals like himself. Mr. Tkach said “it is not appropriate.” WHICH VIEW IS BIBLICAL? (I hope you will answer that question throughout *Malachi's Message!*)

Mr. Tkach said, “It is not appropriate ... to assign various scriptures to Mr. Armstrong or me personally as though our leadership were specifically prophesied in the Bible. Besides being *erroneous*

and *spiritually presumptuous*, this kind of thinking only serves to falsely brand God's Church as a cultish sect that worships its human leaders." This quote was taken from Mr. Tkach's "Personal" in the *Worldwide News*, January 9, 1989. He made this church-wrecking statement less than three years after Mr. Armstrong died.

Mr. Tkach assisted Mr. Armstrong for seven years. Mr. Tkach and most of God's people heard Mr. Armstrong say he fulfilled Matthew 17:10-11, Malachi 4:5-6 and other scriptures. Mr. Tkach agreed—even *after* Mr. Armstrong was dead!

God said He would send an end-time Elijah and that "he" (singular) would turn the hearts of the fathers. The Bible clearly states *one* man would fulfill that office. "Behold, I will send my *messenger*, and *he* shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (Malachi 3:1-2). The subject is obviously referring to Christ's Second Coming. Christ said He would send His "messenger" (singular) and "he" (singular) would prepare the way for Christ.

Just as *one* John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ the first time, so *one* messenger (Mr. Armstrong) has prepared the way for Christ's Second Coming. Christ puts a personality in numerous scriptures. What could be more plain? These are some of the most PIVOTAL PROPHECIES in the Bible. No longer assigning scriptures to leaders is not a small change. This is a colossal change!

Was Mr. Armstrong "erroneous" and "spiritually presumptuous" for assigning scriptures to himself?

ASSIGN A NAME TO MATTHEW 17?

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias [Elijah] is come already, and THEY KNEW HIM NOT, but have done

unto him whatsoever they listed [desired]. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the *disciples* understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:11-13).

Dr. Donald Ward, a former WCG minister, said, “Let’s not put a personality in these prophecies—let God do it.” The *disciples* had the faith to assign John the Baptist (a type of Elijah) as the man who prepared the way for Christ. The *disciples* did it—God approved and canonized it—and *disciples* (Church members) can do it today!

How shamefully tragic if the WCG doesn’t recognize that Herbert Armstrong came in the spirit and power of Elijah and “restored all things.” Yet Scripture says, “[A]ND THEY KNEW HIM NOT” (verse 12).

The *Worldwide News*, August 25, 1986, enumerated 18 truths restored by Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Tkach introduced the article. Here are his words:

Jesus said, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things (Matthew 17:11). Jesus was referring to something that was to happen in the future. John the Baptist had already come, and Jesus didn’t begin His ministry until John had been put in prison. John didn’t restore anything. Jesus was referring to ANOTHER MAN, not John.

Shortly before the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, SOMEONE would come in the spirit and power of Elijah, in the spirit and power of John the Baptist, and would restore all things to the Church.

Then followed a listing of those 18 truths. Mr. Tkach, at that time, said this referred to Herbert Armstrong. Then, on January 9, 1989, in the *Worldwide News*, Mr. Tkach said, “It is not appropriate ... to assign various scriptures to Mr. Armstrong or me personally as though our leadership were specifically prophesied in the Bible.”

Mr. Tkach simply said “IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE.” No scriptures were given to support such a MASSIVE RESTRUCTURING OF HIS THINKING. This is a crucial, earthshaking issue! He is CHANGING FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS!

“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). This verse is about a *vision* of Christ’s Second Coming (Matthew 17:9). “And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things” (verses 10-11). An “Elijah” (Herbert Armstrong) *did* come—A MAJOR EVENT THAT OCCURRED IN THIS END TIME!

DO GOD’S DISCIPLES TODAY know that Christ is talking about an end-time Elijah *type* who fulfilled the role of John the Baptist in preparing for the Second Coming of Christ? Do we know this by *faith* based on God’s words? God’s people must walk by the faith *of* Christ!

And remember, the Elijah discussed in these verses is the same Elijah discussed in Malachi 4:5-6.

Mr. Armstrong said he fulfilled the Elijah role. Most WCG members heard him say that. Mr. Tkach heard *and agreed*—when Mr. Armstrong was alive and shortly after his death. But not now.

The Bible says only *one* man would restore truths to prepare the way for Christ’s Second Coming (just as there was only one John who prepared the way for Christ’s first coming).

The big issue in this subject is this: Christ said an end-time Elijah would come and restore all things. “Elijah” (Herbert Armstrong) *did* come. NOW IF WE DENY THAT, WE ARE CALLING CHRIST A LIAR!

This is no tiny issue to be casually pushed aside while Pasadena leaders act like they are *not* changing foundational beliefs! CHRIST SAYS WE *MUST* APPLY A PERSONALITY TO MATTHEW 17!

‘WIFE OF YOUR YOUTH’

God gives a serious WARNING to some END-TIME ministers. “And now, O ye priests, this COMMANDMENT is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name,

saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Malachi 2:1-2). We need to heed this warning, because it’s about ministers who have departed out of the way and cause people to stumble at the law (verse 8).

Who else but God’s Church keeps His law today?

The context of Malachi 2 (and the whole book) is about a ministry that has gone astray. Verse 13 discusses the *altar*, which pertains to the ministry and worship within the Church. Then comes a strange change in the subject. Or is it a change?

“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and THE WIFE OF THY YOUTH, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she THY COMPANION, and THE WIFE OF THY COVENANT. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against THE WIFE OF HIS YOUTH. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously” (verses 14-16). Malachi discusses *marriage* immediately after discussing the ministry. Is this a sudden turn in thought—or is it the same story flow? The *context* here is very important.

God says *He* was a “witness” between us and the wife of our youth. This could not have applied to many of our physical marriages. God certainly wasn’t a witness when we got married physically if we were living sinful lives in the world and then were later called into His Church. And in many of our marriages, we didn’t *covenant* with God. Often, we didn’t even *know* God at that time!

Notice that God says she is “*the* wife of your youth,” NOT “*your* wife of your youth.” This wife is “your companion,” NOT “YOUR WIFE.” She is “*the* wife of your covenant”—NOT “*your* wife of your covenant.” (The New King James translation is inaccurate here.) The King James Version is an accurate translation and it *never*

says she is “YOUR WIFE.” THAT IS BECAUSE THIS IS CHRIST’S WIFE!

The Church became “the wife of your covenant” when you became a baptized member. When we entered God’s Church, we entered into a covenant with God. We became a part of Christ’s wife (Revelation 19:7). EVEN SOME COMMENTARIES say this “wife” of Malachi 2 applies to God’s Church. *The International Critical Commentary* mentions that the term “wife of your youth” designates the Yahweh religion.

The second chapter of Malachi is addressed to the priests—PLURAL—or *ministers* (verse 1). Verse 13 discusses the *altar* where the priests serve. Then verse 14 begins discussing a wife—ONE wife. If this verse is discussing physical marriage, the words “priests” and “wives” (both plural) would be used instead of the plural word “priests” and singular word “wife,” which is referring to the Church. Christ only has one wife, and that is the subject of the whole book of Malachi. SOME VERY EVIL THINGS ARE HAPPENING TO CHRIST’S WIFE!

Christ is discussing His WIFE—and our companion. The Church becomes our loving companion, family and life.

The whole book of Malachi, and this chapter in particular, tells us the MINISTRY IS DEALING TREACHEROUSLY WITH CHRIST’S WIFE. This is directly referring to Elijah’s, or Mr. Armstrong’s, teaching from the beginning—from the early days of the WCG when he was “restoring all things.” That was the Church in which many of us grew up spiritually (the wife of our youth).

Some WCG ministers may think they are only pushing aside what Mr. Armstrong taught. BUT CHRIST IS TAKING IT PERSONALLY! Christ is saying that HE ESTABLISHED TRUTH THROUGH “ELIJAH,” and some ministers are now dealing treacherously with those instructions.

The whole second chapter of Malachi is directed to God’s ministers and their conduct in the Church. Some leading ministers are treacherous to the Church (verse 14) and to their fellow ministers (verse 10)—both of which are a part of Christ’s wife, the Church. The primary focus is SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE—NOT PHYSICAL MARRIAGE.

Paul discussed marriage between physical people in Ephesians 5:21-33. He still said, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (verse 32). The *main* subject is Christ and the Church, even here where he discusses the spiritual relationship in a *physical marriage*. Let’s look at an example: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (verse 21). All of us in the Body of Christ (the Church) must submit to one another IN THE FEAR OF GOD—not just in a physical marriage relationship. That way Jesus Christ leads EVERY ONE OF US—He is the Boss—NOT any man. Every Family member submits to our Leader, Jesus Christ—who submits to God the Father.

Every other verse in Ephesians 5 applies to Christ and the Church in that way. If Ephesians 5, where the subject is marriage between physical people, applies to Christ and the Church, then certainly Malachi 2 does!

ONE JOHN, ONE ELIJAH

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain” (Isaiah 40:3-4). *These verses apply to a John the Baptist*, but this was never fulfilled by John before Christ’s first coming. This is for an END-TIME WORK (verses 9-10). There was *one* John who prepared the way for Christ’s first coming. There was one *John* (Herbert Armstrong) who prepared the way for Christ’s Second Coming. Nothing could be more plain.

“And *he* shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). Only *one man* of God is in the spotlight to prepare the Church for Christ’s Second Coming.

John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah, but he never turned the hearts of the fathers to the children. Those people

following John did not yet have God's Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit this would have been spiritually impossible. It says "he" (end-time John) would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and prepare the way for Christ's Second Coming.

Mr. Armstrong clearly did the work of John the Baptist. That work intensified at the end of the Church's second 19-year cycle. That is when Mr. Armstrong began to travel around the world, meeting with world leaders, proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

wcg leaders now say to never apply a scripture to Mr. Armstrong or Mr. Tkach. They didn't learn that from Mr. Armstrong. They are rejecting most of what Mr. Armstrong taught—and those teachings are very biblical. In such a short time after his death, we have seen MAJOR SHIFTS IN HOW THE WCG VIEWS PROPHECY. There are major changes in other areas too. Every book by Herbert W. Armstrong HAS BEEN ABOLISHED! It's as if Mr. Armstrong HAS BEEN DISFELLOWSHIPED—POSTMORTEM!

TWO

HOLD FAST

THE BIBLE REPEATEDLY WARNS US TO HOLD FAST TO traditions: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). The word “traditions” is rendered “instructions” in other translations. So God warns us to hold fast to His past instructions. Our spiritual well-being depends on it! God warns us against neglecting “so great salvation” which was conveyed to us by Christ (Hebrews 2:3). The saints in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 were turning away from God’s truth. They failed to hold fast. Paul gave them the solution to this problem, if only they had accepted it.

If we fail to hold on to God’s past instructions, we will be easily deceived—as those Christians were. Since the death of Herbert Armstrong, many changes have occurred within the Worldwide Church of God. Today, these changes have become blatant and obvious. Let’s examine how some of these disturbing changes began.

MYSTERY OF THE AGES

The following quote is FROM MR. TKACH about *Mystery of the Ages*—it is taken from the November-December 1986 *Plain Truth* (emphasis mine throughout):

With this issue we complete our serialized publication of *Mystery of the Ages* by Herbert W. Armstrong. Although in declining health, and for all practical purposes blind, Mr. Armstrong persevered during the last year of his life to complete this, his last book. One of his last public appearances was to present it to the students of Ambassador College.

But he also wanted to make it available TO A MUCH WIDER AUDIENCE. He decided *Mystery of the Ages* should be published by installments in the *Plain Truth*—a parting gift to the millions he had served through radio, television and the printed word during his long life.

Herbert W. Armstrong often likened understanding the Bible to putting together a jigsaw puzzle. At first there is a jumble of unrelated pieces. But as you fit them together, a clear picture begins to emerge. Over the years, God gave him more pieces of the puzzle, and he never stopped learning. SHORTLY BEFORE HE DIED, HE SAID HE HAD UNDERSTOOD MORE IN THE LAST 10 YEARS OF HIS LONG LIFE THAN IN ALL THE PREVIOUS DECADES.

Mystery of the Ages IS THE PRODUCT OF THAT UNDERSTANDING. Mr. Armstrong did not underestimate the importance of this last work, for it contained *vital* keys to understanding the plan of God as revealed in the Bible. *Mystery of the Ages* in a very real sense was a *LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT*, TO BE PASSED ON TO THOSE WHO WOULD *VALUE IT*. As we come to the last installment of this remarkable book, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Herbert W. Armstrong, and his dogged search for

the truth. He freely shared his understanding with us, and we have been privileged to make it available to you. He loved and respected his readers and, IN A FIGURATIVE SENSE, HE REMEMBERED YOU IN HIS WILL.

On January 16, 1986—the day Mr. Armstrong died—Mr. Tkach wrote members and co-workers the following comment: “Even in the last year of his life, with declining strength, he completed with God’s help, HIS MOST POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE BOOK, *Mystery of the Ages*.”

Mr. Tkach wrote to the members and co-workers on January 19, 1986, after he returned from Mr. Armstrong’s funeral. Here is an excerpt from that letter: “I hope none of you will miss the January 26 telecast, which will be a SPECIAL TRIBUTE to Mr. Armstrong, and will offer to the viewers a softbound copy of Mr. Armstrong’s FINAL AND MOST IMPORTANT BOOK, *Mystery of the Ages*.”

Mystery of the Ages was removed from print in 1989. At that time, Mr. Tkach admitted the book contained “FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF GOD’S WORD,” but said that “peripheral or incidental points ... give occasion to critics to fault the whole book.” Do WCG leaders fear the critics and the world more than they fear God? (Malachi 2:4-8).

Why such a radical change in the way Mr. Tkach viewed this book?

Read Mr. Armstrong’s own words when he introduced *Mystery of the Ages* to God’s people in a letter dated September 12, 1985:

Dear Brethren and Co-workers with Christ:

Since last December I have been working diligently on the LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT BOOK OF MY LIFE. IN REAL FACT I FEEL I MYSELF DID NOT WRITE IT. Rather, I believe God used me in writing it. I CANDIDLY FEEL IT MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK SINCE THE BIBLE. ...

We want to reach the largest audience possible with this book. I know you will feel the same way when you read it. ...

This new book, *Mystery of the Ages*, unveils all these mysteries. It puts the many different parts of

the ‘jigsaw puzzle’ together. It is, in fact, a synopsis of the entire Bible. It is my prayer that you will read it along with your Bible—that it will make your Bible come alive and understandable. And with God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in you, I feel sure that it will. I AM NOW IN MY 94TH YEAR, AND I FEEL THAT THIS BOOK IS THE MOST VALUABLE GIFT I COULD POSSIBLY GIVE TO YOU. This book is a partial expression of my thanks and gratitude to you for being a co-laborer with me and with Jesus Christ. With all my heart, I do appreciate and thank God for your part with me in the wonderful Work in these closing days.

Here is what Mr. Armstrong wrote in a member and co-worker letter dated November 25, 1985: “With the writing of the new book *Mystery of the Ages* God has helped me this year to DO THE BEST WORK OF MY 93 YEARS OF LIFE!”

Mr. Armstrong was sick during the 1985 Feast of Tabernacles. A tape was played of his sermon the previous year. It was preceded by a videotaped segment about *Mystery of the Ages* in which this book was called Mr. Armstrong’s “most important and significant work”! I repeat: It was his “MOST IMPORTANT AND SIGNIFICANT WORK”! (This was said about three months before his death.) Less than THREE YEARS after his death, the leaders of the WCG DISCONTINUED THE VERY HEART OF CHRIST’S WORK THROUGH MR. ARMSTRONG! How soon some forget—less than three years!

This video was of Mr. Armstrong presenting *Mystery of the Ages* to the sophomore Fundamentals of Theology class at Ambassador College. (After obtaining accreditation in 1994, the WCG changed the name of Ambassador College to Ambassador University.) It was probably his last time to speak publicly.

The book cover was a royal purple. That color was not commercially available. It had to be a special mixture made by R.R. Donnelley Printers. Mr. Armstrong’s autograph was in gold. The title was embossed in gold lettering. Mr. Armstrong showed a personal interest in every detail of its production.

Each member and co-worker was given a hardback copy. It was run serially in the *Plain Truth*. Ads were placed in trade journals around the United States. Full-page ads were run in the most prestigious business paper in the U.S., the *Wall Street Journal*. There were extensive ads in magazines and newspapers. It was even sold in bookstores.

Mr. Armstrong suggested it be read and studied a second and a third time. (That is still very good advice for us today.) It was stated that this book “MAY PROVE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOKS OF OUR DAY.”

Mr. Armstrong got very emotional when he said to the sophomore class, “This is a pretty big day in my life when I can hand this book out to each of you.” He gave this book to them to be used as a college textbook. Yet WCG leaders today have decided it is too “flawed” to continue printing.

No one coming into the Worldwide Church can receive these discontinued books. Here are the instructions from Pasadena to the ministry: “[I]t is inappropriate to photocopy and distribute obsolete articles. If the literature is not on our current literature index, THEN IT SHOULD NOT BE USED.” A strong decision with a ring of finality.

Mr. Armstrong instructed the ministers to insist that every baptismal candidate read *Mystery of the Ages*. That has been stopped “forever.” The WCG no longer prints this book. If these top men had made this suggestion before January 16, 1986, all of them would have been fired!

The *first* reason Larry Salyer gave in the *Pastor General's Report* in 1989 for discontinuing the book was COST. *Mystery of the Ages* is the CORNERSTONE of all the Church's literature and he said they could not afford to print it! GOD REVEALS SUCH POWERFUL TRUTHS—AND THE WCG CAN'T AFFORD TO PRINT THEM?

What a drastic change in Mr. Tkach's thinking! What are God's people going to think about this book now? Will they cast it aside as “flawed”? Lacking credibility?

Some ministers were critical of the decision to discontinue

Mystery of the Ages, but Mr. Tkach responded, “God has not commanded us to view every word Mr. Armstrong wrote as sacred scripture.” After all those wonderful statements by Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Tkach about the book, are questions regarding the decision to remove this *vital* book unreasonable? Did Mr. Tkach really think anyone who is critical of that decision believes every word of Mr. Armstrong is sacred?

There is a vast difference between being concerned about discontinuing this book and viewing every word of Mr. Armstrong as “sacred.”

Mystery of the Ages was like the magnificent SUMMARY OF ALL Mr. Armstrong’s work—THE ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE OF HIS ENTIRE MINISTRY. This book, more than any other piece of literature, was what Mr. Armstrong and God’s Work were about during the Philadelphia era.

Mr. Armstrong said, “I FEEL I MYSELF DID NOT WRITE IT. I believe God used me in writing it.” What does that mean? It means that if Mr. Armstrong was right, THESE MEN HAVE A DANGEROUS DISAGREEMENT WITH JESUS CHRIST! Still, in less than three years after Mr. Armstrong’s death, it was discontinued.

In the final meeting between John Amos and me and two of the top leaders at Pasadena, one of them said Mr. Armstrong put the book together by “just combining many different articles.” Mr. Armstrong’s letter of September 12, 1985 (quoted above), refutes that statement. Joe Tkach Jr., director of Church Administration in the WCG, had said earlier that *Mystery of the Ages* “was riddled with error”—a statement we challenged. He later changed that remark to “many significant errors.” He also talked about “racist statements” in the book. We strongly disagreed with what they both said and told them so.

MR. ARMSTRONG HAD SERVED IN GOD’S WORK FOR OVER 20 YEARS BEFORE THESE TWO MEN WERE EVEN BORN! Mr. Armstrong was in the Work full time for over 50 years. Joe Tkach Jr. has only BEEN IN THE WORK FULL TIME SINCE EARLY 1987 (one year *after* Mr. Armstrong’s death).



A LIFE'S WORK All have been discontinued by the wcc and even ridiculed by some.

Please read and study *Mystery of the Ages* again. I did. I wanted to see all the “errors” they were talking about. Now I am tenfold more convinced it was a TRAGIC DECISION TO REMOVE THIS BOOK FROM PUBLICATION. Study it again, prayerfully, and then tell me they made a right decision.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Volume 1, has also been discontinued. This is perhaps the second-most important book Mr. Armstrong wrote. It tells the *history* of the Philadelphia era BETTER THAN ANY OTHER BOOK. Volume 2 was not written entirely by Mr. Armstrong due to his failing health, but it is still a very important book.

Removing the *Autobiography* is another move away from “traditions” or the history of God’s Church (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Never was a better book written on HOW TO BE A MINISTER. ALL OF US are called to that office in the World Tomorrow. This is the story of how God prepared the end-time “Elijah.” It is a big part of the history of our modern-day “John the Baptist” preparing the way for Christ’s return.

Luke wrote the whole book of Acts about the history of God’s Church. God considers Church history VERY IMPORTANT.

The *Autobiography* is the best history book we have of God’s Work. It’s not just history of Mr. Armstrong. This is VITAL HISTORY of the BEGINNING AND GROWTH of the Philadelphia era of God’s Church.

THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL

Shortly before Mr. Armstrong’s death, a taped sermon was sent out by the WCG about the book *The Incredible Human Potential*. The speaker said this book should be “dog-eared” from use by Church members. Mr. Armstrong had the sermon tape sent to all of God’s congregations. The WCG also discontinued this book a short while *after* Mr. Armstrong died, and nobody explained *why* it was discontinued.

Why do these WCG leaders think so differently in such a short time? *The Incredible Human Potential* is one of THE MOST INSPIRING BOOKS GOD’S CHURCH EVER PRODUCED. It contains POWERFUL INSPIRATION FROM CHRIST. If you doubt its value, read and study it two or three times. This is the acid test. Then learn again, or more deeply, how glorious this truth is. I’ll comment on more of Mr. Armstrong’s canceled books later.

WHO WAS JESUS? BOOKLET

As the WCG discontinued *Mystery of the Ages*, it introduced *Who Was Jesus?* Mr. Armstrong said the big problem with the Protestants was their preaching ABOUT THE PERSON OF CHRIST while rejecting *His message*. *Mystery of the Ages* is about Christ’s MESSAGE.

The *Who Was Jesus?* booklet is mostly about the person of Christ. It is this booklet's *direction* we need to be concerned about.

Mr. Tkach said of the *Who Was Jesus?* booklet: "I believe this will be one of our most vital and important pieces of literature as we continue to do the job of preaching and teaching the full gospel of Jesus Christ"

I fail to see such importance in this booklet. I do see a DISTURBING CHANGE IN DIRECTION.

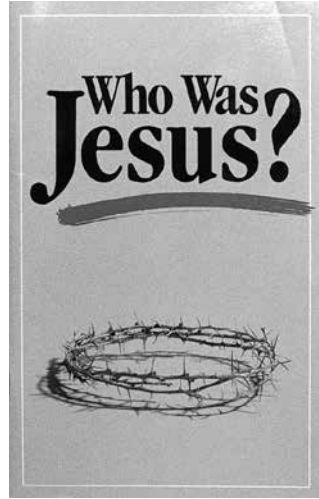
It is the focus that should disturb us. The WCG has moved AWAY FROM THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST and is focusing more and more on the Messenger. Just as the Protestants do.

When they discontinued *Mystery of the Ages* with criticism and then introduced *Who Was Jesus?* with great plaudits, it revealed a DANGEROUS DIRECTION—away from what God taught us through Mr. Armstrong. Please read the two books and compare them. That should be proof enough to a spiritually discerning person.

This is exactly the direction some Church leaders were going in the 1970s. Mr. Armstrong wrote in the June 24, 1985, *Worldwide News* about the trying times when the early Church changed its focus to a false Jesus and a false gospel. Here is what he said:

After Jesus's death and resurrection He ascended to heaven to sit with God on God's throne, where He is today. Ten days after His ascension—53 days after His death—the Holy Spirit descended and filled His disciples. That day of "firstfruits" the Church was born.

It thrived and grew amazingly, but soon opposition and persecution set in. By A.D. 51, much of the Church in Galatia had turned to another gospel



Who Was Jesus? booklet

(Galatians 1:6-7). A VIOLENT CONTROVERSY AROSE OVER WHETHER THE GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED was the gospel OF Christ or a gospel ABOUT Christ. THE LATTER WON OUT. There ensued a “lost century” in the history of the Church, from about A.D. 70 to 170. The original true Church survived, but gradually lost much of Jesus’s teaching and biblical truth. By the early part of the 20th century much of God’s purpose and truth had been lost—but the struggling true Church still had the name Church of God, the Ten Commandments including the Sabbath, and also tithing.

Let’s look at an amazing prophecy. “And as he [Jesus] sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you” (Matthew 24:3-4). This is dual. It’s addressed to physical *and* spiritual Israel. Christ is addressing His own disciples. The WCG has taught for years that when the Bible says “you,” it’s talking to God’s people. Christ said, “Take heed that no man deceive YOU.” That means *you* disciples—or God’s people.

So God’s people are WARNED TO BEWARE OF DECEPTION, aimed mainly at the end time. How would this deception occur? How could some man deceive God’s people? “For *many* shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; AND SHALL DECEIVE MANY” (verse 5). Many shall come saying JESUS IS CHRIST “and shall deceive *many*.” Or, many shall come teaching about the PERSON of Christ—not about His MESSAGE. This is what will happen in the very end time to God’s own people. It was prophesied to happen, and it’s happening in God’s Worldwide Church RIGHT NOW! Just as Christ said it would. The booklet *Who Was Jesus?* helps to fulfill that prophecy!

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of *many* shall wax cold” (verse 12). This word “love” is from the Greek word *agape* which is God’s love, not man’s love. Only God’s true Church has

God's love. This is a prophecy about what is to happen *in* God's Church. False teachers cause this to happen *within* the Church.

The Church is not apt to be deceived by people *from without*. The Bible shows that God's Church is usually deceived from *within*.

When WCG leaders moved away from *Mystery of the Ages* (and Christ's message) to *Who Was Jesus?* (and the person of Christ), it was time to start asking some hard questions about the *direction* of the WCG. One approach is focused on CHRIST—the other on Christ's MESSAGE.

The same mistake was made in the 1970s. That is why Mr. Armstrong was warning us in 1985 NOT TO LET HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF!

HOREB

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in *Horeb* for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments” (Malachi 4:4). *Horeb* is another name for Mt. Sinai. There is something about this word that we need to “remember.” Horeb is where it all *began* with physical Israel. It is where the Israelites began their spiritual lives (by the letter of the law). At Horeb, they received God's Ten Commandments. God told them to REMEMBER where it all began.

Malachi is an end-time book that keeps referring us back to the beginning. So what does this word mean for us today? “Horeb” is a coded word revealing essential truth. Horeb was a *beginning*. We, too, must *remember* where our spiritual history began in this age—“the wife of your youth.” We are spiritual Israel today. Therefore, we must *remember* what “Elijah” (Mr. Armstrong) taught us from the beginning of the Philadelphia era. We MUST have our names in the “book of remembrance” (Malachi 3:16).

Many people have Mr. Armstrong's books and booklets. Hang on to them! Don't forget what you were taught spiritually from the beginning. This time, there is no Herbert Armstrong to get the Church “back on track.” Those of us in the ministry today must

take the lead this time. It is through this struggle that God makes up His “jewels” (verse 17) and decides who will be taken to a place of safety. This is the test God has hurled at His spiritual leaders today!

We must *remember* where it all began. Malachi repeats this over and over. He does it for a powerful reason. This is WHERE THE CHURCH FAILS AT THE VERY END and becomes the Laodicean era. We are told to *hold fast* our crown (Revelation 3:11). It is through *remembering* that the Philadelphians qualify for the place of safety and to be pillars in God’s temple after Christ returns.

MALACHI'S MESSAGE PROPHESED!

God has revealed that there is a work which must be done. Christ’s “knock” (Revelation 3:20) must be delivered to the Laodicean Church.

“And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 2:4). This is a *specific* prophecy about *Malachi’s Message*. GOD SAID *I SENT THIS MESSAGE TO YOU*, AND *YOU SHALL KNOW* THAT GOD SENT IT! They will know before or during the Great Tribulation that *Malachi’s Message* is from God.

The book of Malachi has a commandment for the Laodicean Church and its ministers to “remember” what Christ taught and repent (Malachi 4:4). It is a commandment to get back to the law of God. “[Y]e have caused many to stumble at the law,” it says (Malachi 2:8). This is what *Malachi’s Message* is all about.

God is primarily condemning the ministry! THE MINISTERS WHO REFUSE TO HEAR *Malachi’s Message* are under a curse! (verse 2). “If ye will not HEAR” means that *Malachi’s Message* will be preached! The WCG ministry will have an opportunity to “hear”—and then accept or reject the message. This is that message. You are holding it in your hands! It is a prophecy being fulfilled this very minute!

“Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have

been partial in the law” (verse 9). The Revised Standard Version states that these ministers show “partiality” in the law. It means they are RESPECTERS OF PERSONS rather than of the truth. The expression *partial in the law* literally means, “you have accepted or exalted faces or persons.”

They show *partiality* or favor to those who move *away* from the instructions God gave through Mr. Armstrong. This causes people to “stumble at the law” (verse 8). They don’t stop keeping the law, they just STUMBLE. It leads them into a “lukewarm” attitude.

Many of the Laodiceans keep the law (Revelation 12:17). They also *stumble* at the law. (The Laodiceans are comprised of the WCG and other groups that have left the WCG—*except* the PCG.)

God says the ministry should “keep knowledge” (Malachi 2:7-8). The Hebrew word for “keep” means “watch, to guard, to fasten with nails.” Some ministers in the WCG today are failing to guard the knowledge of the past. They have failed to “remember” (Malachi 4:4). They have failed to cling to what was previously taught about God’s law.

This is why they show *partiality*. Many members who are very loyal to what God taught through Mr. Armstrong are being pushed more and more into the background, just as they were in the 1970s. Malachi 2:9 tells us *why*. The leaders show partiality in the law. Over 2,000 years ago, it was all prophesied to happen!

Malachi was a reformer trying to lead the ministers and the people back to the *law*. The priests were the usual expounders of the law. The prophets only appeared on special occasions—as in the case of Malachi, who came chiefly because the priests were leading God’s people astray. THE MEN AT THE TOP were rejecting God’s law—God’s GOVERNMENT. The ministers have “profaned the holiness [*sanctuary*; RSV] of the LORD” (Malachi 2:11). They profaned God’s sanctuary, or temple (the Church today). Again, this is *not* about some bad physical marriages, as we thought in the past (verses 14-16). It’s about the Church, the wife of Christ, being corrupted! Where did Malachi begin? Like Ezekiel’s executioners (Ezekiel 9:6), Malachi began at God’s sanctuary—the ministry.

THREE

LAODICEAN ERA

WE OFTEN TALK ABOUT A LAODICEAN ATTITUDE. THE truth is, many people are confused about what this is.

The Philadelphia era's example and its works (led by Mr. Armstrong) set a *standard* for us TO FOLLOW UNTIL CHRIST RETURNS. We'll see this demonstrated more and more as we continue. Major prophecies in Malachi 4, Zechariah 3 and 4, 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 3 all discuss this Philadelphia *standard*.

The WCG strayed from the Philadelphia standard in the 1970s. Mr. Armstrong publicly repented of his part and changed. Today, the WCG is repeating what was done in the 1970s—moving away from the Philadelphia standard (Malachi 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; Revelation 3:7-20). While Mr. Armstrong lived, the works of the WCG were a strong standard. After he died, that standard began to be compromised.

In the *Pastor General's Report* of January 3, 1989, Mr. Tkach made a strange statement, CONTRARY to what Mr. Armstrong ALWAYS TAUGHT: "It is simply not biblical to say that the best spiritual state is the state of being Philadelphian, and that we should all strive to be Philadelphian above others."

Why not? With a Philadelphian attitude a person will be taken to the place of safety (Revelation 3:10; 12:14) and given rule in God's headquarters temple FOREVER (Revelation 3:12). The Philadelphia and Smyrna eras are the only Church eras God doesn't criticize directly.

Why would Mr. Tkach even make such a statement? It is just another attempt to move the Church away from Mr. Armstrong and the Philadelphia standard. It is another example of being "treacherous to the wife of your youth"!

The Laodiceans don't want to follow the Philadelphia standard. THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT A LAODICEAN IS! A person revolting against the Philadelphia understanding. That is because *THEY WANT TO BE THE STANDARD!* They are too often SETTING THEIR OWN STANDARD. A Laodicean is nothing more than a person who strives to get the focus off the Philadelphia attitude. That is what makes a person Laodicean. And that is precisely and specifically what Revelation 3:14-20 are all about.

Mr. Tkach stated at the 1989 Feast of Tabernacles, "A Philadelphian spirit is one excited about the work ... and filled with energy. The Laodicean is the opposite—no drive and no energy."

Sounds good. But is it biblical? God says a person can "have a zeal ... but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2). A Laodicean may have an abundance of zeal. EVEN SATAN IS FILLED WITH ENERGY AND DRIVE! That doesn't make Satan or a Laodicean righteous.

The Laodiceans "have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). This means they have a horrible SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS problem. They have deep spiritual problems but don't see them. That's because they are self-righteous. They think self is right. This is a lot more than lacking "drive and energy." A self-righteous person often has *more* "drive and energy" than others. But it can be very deceptive—witness Job.

Which one of us can measure up to the deeds of Job? Yet Job had to suffer horribly before he could see his problem of self-righteousness. People like Elihu couldn't convince him of his sins. It took God *personally* to do it. And so it is with the

Laodiceans. When they find themselves in the worst suffering ever on this planet, they will know God has made a judgment against them (verses 16-20). Christ is *knocking* at their door NOW through this message.

The Philadelphians who let no man take their crown become *pillars* (verse 12). In verses 11 and 12 it reads this way: “[H]old that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out” The last specific *warning* to the Philadelphians is followed by a mention of the last specific *reward* they will receive. The two are connected because the reward is given if they *don’t* allow a man to take their reward.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (verse 13). This is the last general warning to the Philadelphians.

Do you hear what the Spirit is saying?

‘I KNOW YOUR WORKS’

Here is another quote from Dr. Herman Hoeh’s 1982 sermon on Church eras: “The last stage of the Church is Laodicea, and *logically* in history we should expect that an outgrowth and ultimately a SEPARATE CANDLESTICK, a SEPARATE GOVERNMENT, is the outcome of this” (emphasis mine throughout).

If we look at the *history* of Church eras, Dr. Hoeh says, we should expect a “SEPARATE GOVERNMENT” for the Laodicean Church. Yet if the Laodiceans are in control, it is the PHILADELPHIANS who must start a new organization, or pull away and continue the “old” organization, by REESTABLISHING THE PHILADELPHIA STANDARD.

God’s people today, just like those from the Ephesus era and other eras, *MUST* LEAVE THE LAODICEAN CHURCH OR SUFFER WITH THE LAODICEANS IN THE TRIBULATION!

Do the Laodiceans have works as a Church era? If the Laodicean Church begins when the Tribulation begins, as the

Church has believed in the past, the very elect couldn't deliver this message to the people. Under the prevailing conditions, it would be impossible. The Laodicean Church must have era "works" *before* the Tribulation begins.

"And unto the angel [*aggelos*: 'messenger'] of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know THY WORKS, that thou art NEITHER COLD NOR HOT: I would thou wert cold or hot" (Revelation 3:14-15).

If you look at every other era, each one had works as a group. God says to each era, "I know thy works" (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). Each era had time to produce works as a collective body.

By saying, "I know thy works," God is addressing the collective body—the era. Could the Laodiceans as a group have "works" in the Tribulation? The Laodiceans will be in the worst captivity ever known to man. What kind of works could they perform as a collective body during the Tribulation? None. Therefore the works must be *prior* to the Tribulation—the time period we are in NOW.

'RICH AND INCREASED WITH GOODS'

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:16-17). "Rich, and increased with goods" in the Greek literally means they "have BECOME enriched" or "are rich and have GOTTEN riches." Don't the Laodiceans say they are rich and increased with goods (physically) because they are?

The word "goods" has an interesting meaning. The first definition in *Thayer's Lexicon* is "to be rich, to have abundance," meaning "OUTWARD POSSESSIONS." This means physical wealth! Remember, these are carnal-minded people with their minds naturally on physical things. They are spiritually "blind."



RICH AND INCREASED WITH GOODS Perhaps no building symbolizes the wealth of the wcg better than Ambassador Auditorium, dedicated to the great God by Mr. Armstrong.

There is strong indication that the Laodicean era has abundant “outward possessions.” The income of the wcg was about \$200 million a year before Mr. Armstrong died. There is property valued in the multiple millions of dollars. Certainly, the present administration of the wcg inherited great wealth when Mr. Armstrong died.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ...” (verse 17). Don’t they “have need of nothing” *because* they are “rich, and increased” with physical goods? Is that why the ministers who have real concerns about the direction of the wcg are not heard? Don’t the wcg leaders think they can always rely on their physical wealth, and therefore they don’t have to be concerned about dissenting voices?

As you continue to read, you will see that end-time prophecies answer all of these questions.

The Laodicean Church may be growing in membership until Christ returns, but does that always mean it is doing God’s will? No! We can’t use that criterion to judge. Other churches have millions

of members and are not God's churches. Actually, the Work of God could be *declining* in numbers and still do a wonderful job for God. So we have to look deeper than a growing membership.

God's Church has doctrinal beliefs which are easily proved from the Bible. A watered-down version of the truth is more appealing to people in the world and thus could swell the WCG membership ranks. (However, at the present time, membership is *declining*.)

Anciently, the city of Laodicea was distinguished for its riches. As a people, they prided themselves on their wealth. The city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 62 and rebuilt by its wealthy citizens.

Laodicea had frequent earthquakes. A large part of the city was demolished, destroying many of its inhabitants. The place was finally abandoned and now lies in ruins. It is a deserted place, called by the Turks "Eski-hissor," or "Old Castle." This is a powerfully prophetic picture of the Laodiceans. A huge "earthquake" (the Great Tribulation) will strike them. Many of the members are going to lose their salvation. Matthew 25:1-10 indicate 50 percent. Their church and its Laodicean works are going to end in ruins—just like the ancient city.

God commands them to be zealous (from the Greek word *zeo*, "TO BOIL") and repent. They have lost their heat and zeal.

Historian Edward Gibbon wrote, "Among the Greek colonies and the churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins" God has given us an exalted *standard*. The Philadelphia spirit will never be destroyed. The Philadelphians are to be pillars in God's temple forever.

The Philadelphia era under Mr. Armstrong was a strong Church era. You would expect a peaceful transition of power and a smooth transfer of the "goods" to the Laodiceans. This is how Laodicea becomes "rich, and increased with goods" and has "need of nothing." Then, if we look at Malachi, Zechariah 3 and 4, and 2 Thessalonians 2, we see a great falling away. The Laodiceans "fall away" from the truth, and many Philadelphians are cast out or leave.

SHARING GOD'S THRONE

I was puzzled by a Bible verse for years. But now the understanding is clear to me. Here is the verse: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21). Why is this awesome reward mentioned *after* the Laodicean section of Revelation 3? The saints mentioned in this verse are going to share Christ’s own throne, *if* they overcome “as” Christ did (which the Laodiceans *fail* to do). Read Revelation 4, which gives a description of this glorious throne. This reward is not offered to the Laodiceans. Then why did God include it immediately after the Laodicean story?

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ...” (Revelation 3:12). This is the reward of the Philadelphians. They also escape the Great Tribulation (verses 10-11). The fate of the Laodiceans is to go into the Tribulation. “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (verses 18-19). THE LAODICEANS WILL *NOT* BE IN GOD’S FUTURE HEADQUARTERS TEMPLE, where God’s throne is. God does NOT promise them that reward anywhere in the Bible.

So who receives the reward mentioned in verse 21? “Behold, I stand at the door, and KNOCK: if ANY MAN hear my voice, and OPEN THE DOOR, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (verse 20). It says “if *any* man,” or ANY INDIVIDUAL, hears the KNOCK and RESPONDS, he or she will be led out of the Laodicean Church. Salvation is not a *group* affair. Each one of us has the *individual* responsibility to *respond*—or not respond! Following Christ is an INDIVIDUAL matter. Being in a church can be meaningless without this understanding. Christ is knocking on YOUR *spiritual* door. How will YOU respond to Christ? The one who responds positively receives the awesome reward of verse 21! That means he or she *remains* a Philadelphian—by LEAVING THE LAODICEAN CHURCH.

Both verses 12 and 21 of Revelation 3 are Philadelphian rewards. But those who hear the “knock” must COME OUT of the Laodicean Church to receive the reward of verse 21.

When the words “pillar,” “temple” (verse 12) or “throne” (verse 21) are used, they apply to the Philadelphian reward.

God is KNOCKING—to a great extent through *Malachi's Message*. We must overcome *as* Christ overcame (verse 21). That means we must have the faith *of* Christ in us (Galatians 2:20). If we have that kind of faith, then we will FOLLOW GOD OUT of the “lukewarm” church. It is the *only* way to receive the reward of Revelation 3:21.

There is no way verse 21 can apply to the Laodiceans.

Those who hear the “knock” know how to FOLLOW CHRIST—our true Leader. These saints don't follow a *man*, or men. That is why they hear the “knock” of Christ. Hearing that “knock” and opening the door also saves them from the Tribulation.

THESE VERSES ALONE imply that there *must* be a SPLIT in God's Church. In these two eras of Revelation 3, there are three phases discussed (verses 12, 18-19, 21). First, there was the Philadelphia Church in the Philadelphian era (Herbert Armstrong was the leader). Second, there is the Laodicean Church in the Laodicean era (which began when Herbert Armstrong died). And third, there is the Philadelphia Church that comes out of the Laodicean Church—*during* the Laodicean era.

These verses tell us that the Philadelphia Church remains alive and well in the Laodicean era, and the Philadelphians ensure that by hearing Christ's KNOCK. They respond by COMING OUT of the lukewarm church.

THE PHILADELPHIANS WALK BY FAITH—that's why they hear the KNOCK. They hear what the Spirit says (verse 22).

THE MEANING OF 'SEALED'

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this SEAL, The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Timothy 2:19). We become begotten sons of God at baptism. God “seals” us. He won't

withdraw His calling. We “are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). We are *sealed* at baptism FOR THAT DAY. However, the seal can be “broken” or left in doubt—by our actions. It’s not guaranteed—yet. We are “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). There is “promise” (not certainty) when our calling is sealed. God’s part of the sealing is secure, but the final outcome is not known until we are *born* sons—not just *begotten* sons. We are sealed at baptism, and *if* we use the Spirit properly, we are as good as saved because that is how God views it (John 6:47, “*hath* eternal life”; also see Romans 4:17, last part).

The *New Bible Dictionary* says “sealing” is an “eternal guarantee.” God looks upon our salvation as completed. This dictionary gives it three meanings—*ownership*, *authenticity* and *security*. As far as God is concerned, these three words apply to the sealing at baptism. However, we are not totally *secure* until we are *born* sons of God. The *sealing* IS NOT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN UNTIL THAT TIME. Then God *owns* us, it is *authentic* and we are *secure* in eternal glory. That is the ULTIMATE SEALING—when the covenant is kept by *both* parties.

WHO ARE THE 144,000?

Revelation 6:9-16 discuss the martyrdom of the saints and the heavenly signs. The martyrdom of the saints occurs during the Great Tribulation. The heavenly signs happen immediately after the Tribulation (Matthew 24:29) and just *before* the great and terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:31; Revelation 6:12-17). Also, just *after* the Tribulation and *before* the Day of the Lord, the 144,000 are permanently *sealed* (Revelation 7:1-4).

The Tribulation ends after 2½ years (Hosea 6:1-2). The “Day of the Lord” lasts one year (Isaiah 34:8; 61:2; 63:4; see also Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, a day for a year in prophecy fulfilled). This makes a total of 3½ years. The Philadelphians are in a place of safety for 3½ years.

Both the Tribulation and Day of the Lord are included in that

3½-year period the Bible calls “time, and times, and half a time” (Revelation 12:14; Daniel 12:7).

Again, let me repeat the precise time frame: The 144,000 are permanently *sealed* IMMEDIATELY AFTER the Tribulation and IMMEDIATELY BEFORE the Day of the Lord.

Mr. Armstrong’s booklets *The Key to the Book of Revelation* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!* (now out of print) explain this 3½-year period in great detail.

Here is what the *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course* taught about the 144,000: “Who will comprise the 144,000? Revelation 7:4. Note the word ‘Israel.’ COMMENT: They will be some of the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel who will have HEEDED GOD’S WARNINGS WHILE IN CAPTIVITY” (Lesson 8, 1966).

Even though it doesn’t mention the Laodiceans here, it plainly states that the 144,000 GO INTO CAPTIVITY. That agrees with what the PCG teaches today.

The 144,000 could be only one of three possible groups: the great multitude, the Philadelphians or the Laodiceans.

The *great multitude* of Revelation 7:9, 13-14 includes all those who repent as a result of the Tribulation—people who were previously unconverted. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (verse 14). The great multitude consists of people who were never in the Church prior to the Tribulation. They are innumerable, probably far more than 144,000. *First*, they come out of the Tribulation, and *second*, they wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They become converted and accept the blood of Christ to pay for their sins.

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD” (Revelation 1:5). This happened to the great multitude. Christ “WASHED US”—past tense—“FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD.” When? All New Testament converts, including those to be called and converted in the seven eras (Revelation 2 and 3)—whom John

is addressing—have been or shall be washed from their sins by the blood of the Lamb at conversion. That is why there is no mention of this happening to the Laodiceans or the Philadelphians. They have already been converted *before* the Tribulation. But the great multitude repents only *after* the Tribulation *arrives*—they are not included in the seven Church eras. This multitude of people had undoubtedly heard God's message *before* the Tribulation, but didn't repent. Then, when they *experience* the Tribulation which was prophesied to them *before* it occurred, they will repent.

The great multitude "CAME OUT" of the Great Tribulation. The Philadelphians did *not* come out of the Tribulation because they *were never in it*. They were in a place of safety. The Laodiceans did *not* COME OUT of the Tribulation because every indication is that they all DIED IN THE TRIBULATION (Revelation 6:9-11; 12:11-12). These martyrs and the 144,000 are both *in* the Tribulation because they are the same group.

There are clearly three separate and distinct groups.

The Philadelphians will be in a place of safety for 3½ years (Revelation 12:14). So it isn't logical that they would be sealed *after* 2½ years in the place of safety. They too were sealed at baptism, but they didn't break their seal as the Laodiceans did by rebelling against God. Therefore, the Philadelphians couldn't be the 144,000.

However, it is very logical that the Laodiceans are sealed after spending 2½ years in the Tribulation. Here's why. We know the Laodiceans are going into the Tribulation (Revelation 3:14-19). Revelation 12 discusses the Philadelphians going to a place of safety (verses 13-14), and the Laodiceans going into the Tribulation (verse 17). It says that one group "loved not their lives unto the death" (verse 11). That could not be the Philadelphians, because they are in the place of safety. They do not have to die to prove their faithfulness to God. The great multitude is being protected from the Day of the Lord (Revelation 7:14). That leaves only the Laodiceans. God tells us they are going into the Tribulation. THE LAODICEANS WILL DIE AND BE OFFICIALLY

AND PERMANENTLY SEALED AFTER THE 2½-YEAR TRIBULATION. Therefore we can see that 144,000 of God's people receive their salvation through the Tribulation experience—and death.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Malachi 4:5). Now here is a VERY IMPORTANT POINT. Note it *carefully*. After 2½ years of the Tribulation, and just prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord, all of the 144,000 will have been sealed by God's Holy Spirit at the time of their death (Revelation 7:3-4).

Why doesn't it say the Elijah type (Mr. Armstrong) comes before the Great Tribulation—instead of “the great and dreadful day of the LORD”? BECAUSE THERE IS STILL MUCH THAT IS LEFT UNFINISHED ABOUT THE ELIJAH WORK. *ALL* of the Laodicean churches reject Mr. Armstrong as being the end-time Elijah! WHEN WE REACH “THE GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD,” ALL REBELLION FROM GOD'S CHURCH AGAINST THE ELIJAH WORK IS REMOVED. At that point, all firstfruits support what Christ has *restored* through Mr. Armstrong, or they are *dead* SPIRITUALLY! Even though Mr. Armstrong died before “the great and dreadful day of the LORD,” there are many who still don't support what Christ restored through him. Today many of God's own people reject what “Elijah” taught. In the future, they must be willing to die for what Christ taught through Mr. Armstrong if they are to be in God's Kingdom. When that day arrives, ALL CHURCH MEMBERS WHO STILL REBEL AGAINST GOD'S GOVERNMENT WILL BE CUT OFF FOREVER!

It says by strong implication that many of the Laodiceans repent of their rebellion toward the Elijah-type (Mr. Armstrong) work. All of the Laodiceans presently reject the government God taught through Mr. Armstrong! (For more information, request our free booklet *God's Family Government*.) They have a serious GOVERNMENT PROBLEM. THEY WILL BE IN THE TRIBULATION FOR THAT VERY REASON!

Though the Laodiceans probably die at different times in the Tribulation, the cut-off point is immediately *before* the Day of the Lord. Then the sealing is complete and official. That is the

precise point when God will *know* absolutely WHICH LAODICEANS ARE TO BE SAVED AND WHICH LAODICEANS ARE TO BE LOST FOREVER. The Philadelphians will have already proved themselves. God will then *know* who will be in the FIRSTFRUITS HARVEST from the Laodicean Church.

THOSE WHO ARE LOYAL TO CHRIST AND WHAT HE TAUGHT THROUGH MR. ARMSTRONG ARE CALLED PHILADELPHIANS. Those who are *not* loyal to these teachings ARE CALLED LAODICEANS. The Laodiceans must admit that they have *rebelled* against what God taught through Mr. Armstrong and repent—and then DIE to prove their conviction to God!

If we look closely at Revelation 7:3-4, and relate it to Malachi 4:5-6, we can begin to see what happens to fill the *prophetic gap*—between the death of “Elijah” and “the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” God demonstrated for many years through Christ and Mr. Armstrong how His GOVERNMENT works. Then He *removed* Mr. Armstrong to see if we would *individually* follow Christ’s GOVERNMENT without that SPIRITUALLY STRONG, PHYSICAL LEADER. IT WAS A CAREFULLY PLANNED TEST FOR GOD’S PEOPLE.

If you want to read the story in detail, then read the book of Malachi (also 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 3:14-20). It tells you what happened after Mr. Armstrong died. Revelation 7:3-4 tell exactly when the Laodicean Church ends.

Again, the Bible indicates that during the Tribulation *all* the Laodiceans who will enter God’s Kingdom must DIE for God (Revelation 6:9-11; 12:11-12). These martyrs of Revelation 6:9-11 include the Laodiceans. You should read every word. This is why the Laodiceans are *sealed* just *after* the Tribulation and before the Day of the Lord. Their *sealing* has been in *doubt* until the Tribulation. The Laodiceans have to PROVE THEMSELVES BY DYING FOR GOD. Then they are permanently *sealed*. According to *Thayer’s Lexicon*, one of the definitions of this word “sealed” is to “place beyond doubt”! At the time of their death is when their commitment to God is finally known and “placed beyond doubt.” At this point, there is a question mark hanging over the heads of the Laodiceans!

THE SEALING AT THIS TIME COULD APPLY *ONLY* TO THE LAODICEANS.

ONLY in the book of Revelation do we find Bible prophecies placed in order of *time sequence*. This is very important to understand.

Notice that Revelation 12 is about the Great Tribulation (see verses 11-14, 17). Revelation 13 is also about the Great Tribulation (verses 7, 17). God's people who go into the Tribulation must reject the mark of the beast to qualify for God's Kingdom. These people are martyred because they reject the mark of the beast (Revelation 6:9, 11; 13:15, 17). Then we move into chapter 14.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion [Zion], and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (verses 1-4). These are the same people who rejected the mark of the beast. They die for God, then God reveals their future job with Christ in the World Tomorrow. These Laodiceans repent and make it into the Kingdom. However, the 144,000 Laodiceans will not be in God's temple, or at headquarters, forever, as the Philadelphians will be (Revelation 3:12). The Laodiceans will assist Christ for all eternity. God included these verses in Revelation 14 to be an encouragement to the Laodiceans who will read them during their trials in the Tribulation.

Revelation 14 discusses the end of the Tribulation and Day of the Lord, when Babylon falls (verse 8). Those who worship the beast receive God's wrath.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD** from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (verses 12-13). Here we have saints who have the very faith of Christ. They demonstrated that faith by *dying* for God.

There are two groups discussed in Revelation 14. Those who reject the mark of the beast (“martyrs,” or the 144,000) and those who accept the mark of the beast. The *context* reveals who the 144,000 are and the *time sequence* in which they died. The 144,000 are the martyrs who reject the mark of the beast. They are “blessed” by dying for their faith in Christ. God also reveals their future job (verses 1-4).

The Laodiceans are people whom many of us know and love. The Laodicean tragedy is not a fantasy—it is a horrifying reality! If this isn’t enough to make each one of us deeply examine ourselves, then surely **THAT ATTITUDE IS LAODICEAN**.

God has given His Church so **MUCH** spiritual knowledge. He says we are being judged by what **WE DO** with all that knowledge (Romans 2:13; James 4:17). So God holds back the Day of the Lord until all the Laodiceans are permanently sealed.

The great multitude repented and “**CAME OUT**” of the Tribulation (Revelation 7:14). The Bible doesn’t say this about the Laodiceans. **THAT IS BECAUSE THE LAODICEANS DIE *IN* THE TRIBULATION AND CONSEQUENTLY ARE *SEALED***. Then they are assured of being in God’s Kingdom, but they won’t receive a Philadelphian reward.

Study the chronology of Revelation 6 and 7. It clearly reveals that the 144,000 are the Laodiceans. Revelation 6 discusses the Tribulation and the **MARTYRDOM OF THE SAINTS** (or the Laodiceans). Then, in Revelation 7, God marks the time when many Laodicean firstfruits are officially martyred and sealed in the Tribulation for admittance into the Kingdom—and many others are lost forever.

Some may wonder about the following verse: “And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth,

neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the *seal* of God in their foreheads” (Revelation 9:4). Who are the people with the seal? They are the Philadelphians, the great multitude and those people who repent as the Day of the Lord intensifies.

God doesn’t promise physical protection to everyone He seals. God promises to protect the Philadelphians from the Tribulation (Revelation 12:14), and He promises to protect the innumerable multitude from the Day of the Lord (Revelation 9:4). All of God’s saints are protected, *unless they break their seal* by rebelling.

This is another sign that the Laodiceans broke their seal given at baptism. They are not *protected* during the Tribulation. They are spewed out of God’s mouth (Revelation 3:14-16). Our faith can fail us. Covenants and seals can be broken by men. But God’s Word cannot be broken. This is the character we must build to become members of God’s Family.

‘ANOTHER GOSPEL’

Paul marveled that the Galatians so quickly turned to “another gospel” (Galatians 1:6). Today, the Laodiceans have committed the same sin. God even indicates this in Revelation 14:1. The 144,000 reject the mark of the beast, and then it appears they learn their first and most important lesson. THE FATHER’S NAME IS *THEN* WRITTEN IN THEIR FOREHEADS (verse 1). Their cardinal sin revolves around that issue. Here is why.

God’s first criticism of the Laodiceans in the book of Malachi concerns the sin of not honoring the Father. In Malachi 1:6 the Father asks, through the Spokesman, “[I]f then I be a father, where is mine honor? ...” This is where the Laodiceans began to get off track. They started preaching another gospel. Remember, the book of Malachi is primarily for the end time. The true gospel is the good news of the coming Kingdom, or Family, of God. GOD’S GOVERNMENT IS ADMINISTERED BY THE FAMILY OF GOD. Mr. Armstrong taught that in the WCG for many years.

That doctrine was changed after Mr. Armstrong died. Now the wcg teaches that “Christ is the central figure of the gospel.” That is tragically unbiblical!

Gospel means “good news.” It is the “good news” of the coming Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is the FAMILY of God. And who is the Head of the Family? Christ? Of course not! The Father is the Head of the Family. God the Father is the central figure of the gospel!

No man can come to Christ “except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44). The Father begets His own children. Not even Christ can do that! So we can see why the Father asks, “WHERE IS MINE HONOR?” This is the heart of the gospel! The Father is the central figure, but the wcg has relegated Him to a lower status. The wcg has moved away from God’s true gospel and now preaches “another gospel.”

When the Great Tribulation comes, everyone will know who is Laodicean and who is Philadelphian. The Laodiceans will be in the Tribulation. The Philadelphians will be in a place of safety. *Then* there will be no more “SCHOLARLY” *reasoning* around God’s plain truth!

The bad news is MANY OF GOD’S PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO A PLACE OF SAFETY. Even worse, MANY WON’T BE IN GOD’S GLORIOUS KINGDOM!

The gospel, or “good news,” reveals that God is about to intervene directly in this world’s affairs so He can rule and usher in the wonderful World Tomorrow.

FOUR

FOLLOWING ELIJAH

THE ONE PREDOMINANT ISSUE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE END time revolves around a modern-day Elijah. He restored all things (Matthew 17:10-11). If we know God, the Bible and where God's Church is, then it is easy to find this Elijah.

He was prophesied to appear just before Christ's Second Coming. God would use him to build the physical and spiritual family (Malachi 4:5-6). He would appear before the "great and dreadful day of the LORD." God's true saints should be able to easily discern such a MAJOR LEADER for God in this short end-time period.

Failure to recognize this powerful man of God condemns a person's religion. This Elijah would be doing a great Work for God, and God's people would be helping him get the Work accomplished.

Have you seen this man of God? Have you recognized this Work of God? Nothing is more important to your physical and spiritual salvation!

WHO IS LEVI?

There is very little in the Bible about Levi. Still, the Bible says he had a great fear of God (Malachi 2:4-5). God used Levi to symbolize godly fear in the Levitical priesthood.

God is working with us *spiritually* today. The Bible talks about “Jews” (Revelation 3:9), and the Church applies it spiritually. The Sardis Church is “dead” *spiritually* (verse 1), not physically. The Laodiceans are “blind” and “naked” (verse 17) *spiritually*. We have always applied these words spiritually.

And so it is with Levi, who was the father of the physical Levites (or ministers). The priests and the Levites ministered in the tabernacle and the temple.

We know that most prophecy is dual. And we know the main fulfillment of the book of Malachi is in the end time (Malachi 4:5-6).

What is the meaning of Levi that God is trying to tell us today? The temple today is *spiritual*—God’s Church (John 2:21; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). So who is the spiritual father of the ministers today? Mr. Armstrong said repeatedly that *spiritually* he was the father of all of us—either directly or indirectly. Just as Paul was the spiritual father of those he brought into the Church (1 Corinthians 4:15).

God is working with us spiritually today (Zechariah 4:6). “Levi” is a *code* word to help us understand—if we apply these verses spiritually. Mr. Armstrong often talked about the Bible being a coded book.

When Malachi delivered his message, Levi was dead. So it is today. This message is mainly for GOD’S CHURCH *after* Mr. Armstrong’s death. Anyone who knew Mr. Armstrong knows he would not tolerate priests who “caused” people to “stumble at the law” (Malachi 2:8)—at least not for long. Now God wants to see if His other ministers have the same zeal. DO THEY FEAR GOD AS MR. ARMSTRONG AND LEVI DID?

If the priests, or ministers, don’t heed the message of Malachi, God will curse them (verse 2) and make them “contemptible and base before all the people” (verse 9).

And that is only the beginning. They will have to face the Great Tribulation and potentially the lake of fire. It's a terrible way to learn godly *fear*—*if* they finally do learn it.

The spiritual sons of Levi are to be purified (Malachi 3:3). The Levites of old were not offered salvation. But the Levites, or ministers, of Malachi are offered salvation—OR ASHES! (Malachi 4:1).

God says dung is to be spread on the faces of the guilty (Malachi 2:3). Severe humiliation—if they don't repent.

Levi turned *many* from iniquity (verse 6). The Laodicean ministry causes *many* to stumble at the law (verse 8).

SEVEN LAMPS

There is a significant *key* to understanding Zechariah 3 and 4. “For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be *seven eyes* [T]hey shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those *seven*; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth” (Zechariah 3:9; 4:10).

At the Ministerial Refreshing Program in September 1988, Dr. Ward taught that the “seven eyes” refer to the seven Church eras. That is the *only* interpretation I ever heard at Ambassador College. I think most of God's ministers agree on that subject.

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20). The seven candlesticks (or lamps) are also the seven Church eras (see Revelation 2 and 3).

“And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof” (Zechariah 4:2). The word “candlestick” in this verse would better be translated “lampstand” (see *Anchor Bible Commentary*). The lampstand has

SEVEN LAMPS, which is again referring to the seven Church eras of Revelation 2 and 3.

Lamps give light. Eyes are used to see. These seven Church eras are given spiritual light and spiritual sight by God. They see and understand God's plan and world events if they use God's Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). No other group is given this understanding by God.

The seven eyes are listed in the Joshua section (Zechariah 3:9) and in the Zerubbabel section (Zechariah 4:10). The seven lamps (or seven eyes) are also mentioned in Zechariah 4:2. GOD IS EMPHASIZING THE SUBJECT OF CHURCH ERAS because the unlawful Joshua and the righteous Zerubbabel both are in this end-time prophecy. That is just another indication that this is a prophecy for NOW. The seven eras *start* at Christ's first coming and *end* at His Second Coming. God wants us to think in terms of CHURCH ERAS. This is crucial to understanding Zechariah 3 and 4. Then the chapters are easy to grasp.

After Zerubbabel's death came the Laodicean era—which turned away from the Zerubbabel work (just as it happened in Revelation 3).

Zechariah 3 talks about a Joshua who had a *mitre*, or was the leader. It is a prophecy of a modern Joshua who was given rule over God's Church. So when God talks about Joshua and Zerubbabel (in the context of Church eras), two eras and two leaders are discussed. Therefore, in modern times they must each lead a Church era. Zerubbabel was a leader before Joshua, so let's start with Zerubbabel.

'THE HANDS OF ZERUBBABEL'

When the Bible refers directly to Christ doing the building, it is usually stated as "not made with hands" (2 Corinthians 5:1), or something is accomplished "without hands" (Daniel 2:45), or "a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands" (Hebrews 9:11).

“The *hands* of Zerubbabel have laid the *foundation* of this house; his *hands* shall also *finish* it ...” (Zechariah 4:9). This verse is clearly talking about a “hands-on” operation.

It twice mentions *hands*, designating a starting and finishing of a project. The *Anchor Bible Commentary* says “hands” is *literal* and expresses *participation* in temple building. That is, it was built through a human being with “hands,” not built “without hands”—as Christ does it without the use of a human instrument.

Mr. Armstrong STARTED AND FINISHED AN ERA that “restored all things.” HE STARTED IT AND FINISHED IT before he died, with the power of God’s Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). His *hands* laid the foundation, and *his hands* FINISHED THE HOUSE—the Philadelphia era.

Mr. Armstrong wrote a letter to the Church on March 19, 1981. Here is an excerpt from that letter (emphasis his):

Zerubbabel built the second temple to which Jesus came the first time. John the Baptist prepared the way before the FIRST coming. But WHO was to build the SPIRITUAL temple to which Christ shall soon come the second time? Who was to prepare the way before His Second Coming?

Remember, God does things in DUAL stages. As Zerubbabel built the first temple of MATERIAL stone, wood and other materials, he was a forerunner or type of one through whom Christ would raise up or build the SPIRITUAL TEMPLE—His Church of our time, prior to the Day of the Lord and Christ’s Second Coming. As John the Baptist prepared the way in the PHYSICAL wilderness of the Jordan River for the first coming of the HUMAN Jesus (both man and God), then coming to His MATERIAL temple, and to His PHYSICAL people Judah, ANNOUNCING the Kingdom of God to be set up more than 1,900 years later, so God would use a human messenger in the SPIRITUAL wilderness of 20th-century religious confusion, to be a voice

CRYING OUT the gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD, about the SPIRITUAL CHRIST, coming in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY to His SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, to actually ESTABLISH that spiritual KINGDOM OF GOD.

Brethren, HAS THAT BEEN DONE BY THIS CHURCH?

Did God raise up a one-man LEADERSHIP to be used by Him in building this spiritual TEMPLE and in proclaiming after 1,900 years the true GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ALL THE WORLD—to even go to kings and heads of nations (Revelation 10:11)—in bringing the Church back to the FAITH ONCE DELIVERED? (Jude 3).

HAS THIS HAPPENED IN YOUR DAYS, AND HAS GOD BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT AS A PART OF IT?

HAS ANYONE ELSE DONE IT?

Did Mr. Armstrong think *one* man would and did fulfill this prophecy? Absolutely! He speaks of “*one*,” “*a human messenger*,” “*a voice*,” “*a one-man leadership*”—and then ends by asking, “HAS ANYONE ELSE DONE IT?”

Why are Laodicean leaders today, without proper biblical support and proof, so intent on changing *major* prophecies Mr. Armstrong taught us?

Mr. Armstrong continued: “God has never removed a man called to a specific leadership or assignment or commission *until* his mission is COMPLETED.” Did Mr. Armstrong complete his mission? Did he finish “this house,” “restore all things” and “turn the hearts of the fathers”? He most certainly did!

We shouldn't be too quick to say we can't understand Zechariah. God's angel chided the Prophet Zechariah for having this attitude (Zechariah 4:4-5).

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of THIS HOUSE; his hands shall also FINISH it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you” (Zechariah 4:9). “House” is a very common word in the Bible. In the *Englishman's Hebrew*

and *Chaldee Concordance*, where “house” is used, the scriptures cover 13 PAGES. The word “temple” in the same book covers only ONE FOURTH OF A PAGE. “Temple” is not used here—and “temple” is not nearly as common in the Bible as the word “house.”

The word “house” can mean an “inner part”—or only a part of something greater. It is a name given to human bodies as being frail and transitory (Job 4:19). The word is used as “tent” (Genesis 27:15; 33:17). It is used as the “house of the spider” (Job 8:14). It is applied to wealth, property and all that belongs to a family. All uses of this word are very *temporary* (like a Church era). The word *temple* is used in a more permanent way or to indicate a very long period of time. For example, the word “temple” often applies to ALL SEVEN CHURCH ERAS. It also applies to ETERNAL LIFE.

The subject is “this house” and IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SEVEN CHURCH ERAS (Zechariah 3:7-8; 4:2, 10; Revelation 1:20). If we put all the scriptures together, it could just as well be called “this era.” And Zerubbabel did *finish it*. Mr. Armstrong not only laid the *foundation*, as we often say today—HE BUILT THE WHOLE HOUSE. When he died, the PHILADELPHIA ERA WAS COMPLETED. He *restored all things* (Matthew 17:10-11). No more foundational doctrines need to be added to the house. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS WALK IN Mr. Armstrong’s FOOTSTEPS, WHICH IS WHAT MR. TKACH SAID HE WOULD DO. Primarily, we just need to *maintain* the “house” and do God’s Work.

Mr. Armstrong said to Mr. Tkach just before his death, “I have gone to world leaders. Now it’s time to bring the Church together.” It seems that more was finished by Mr. Armstrong than we have realized.

Dr. Ward said, “Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of Zerubbabel.” But that is spiritualizing away God’s truth. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of everything—if He lives in us (Philippians 2:5). Still, there was *a man* named Zerubbabel who built the restoration temple. And there was a specific man who built the Philadelphia era of God’s Church. Mr. Armstrong was a type of Zerubbabel. He believed it and said so himself, MANY TIMES!

The word of the LORD IS TO ZERUBBABEL (Zechariah 4:6). It doesn't make sense if Christ is talking to Himself. Christ is talking to a *man* who fulfilled that office in this end time. Also, Zechariah 4:9 is not referring to *Christ* finishing the house, but to a man—*Zerubbabel*—finishing the house.

It's illogical to say Zerubbabel is Christ. Is the Elijah Christ? How about John the Baptist? Haggai? Zechariah? Malachi? Of course not. God works through MEN!

God fits the last two eras of His Church into the seven eras in Zechariah 3 and 4. These chapters give us the *overview*. If we understand the big picture, then it all becomes very clear.

'THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS'

On January 7, 1934, the first radio program in the Philadelphian era of God's Church aired on a 100-watt station in Eugene, Oregon. The *Plain Truth* magazine, mimeographed by hand, began in February 1934 with 234 copies. Ambassador College began in 1947 with four students and eight professors. It all seemed so *small* and *insignificant*. (Just as the work of the PCG began very small.) But from its small beginning, the WCG grew into a great and powerful worldwide organization.

"For who hath despised the day of small things? ..." (Zechariah 4:10). Do some today despise "the day of small things"? This is another way of saying, some are "TREACHEROUS TO THE WIFE OF YOUR YOUTH."

The *Anchor Bible Commentary* uses the word "scorned" instead of the word "despised." This commentary says the word *scorned* "indicates rejection." What is being *rejected* today? The WCG leaders are *rejecting* what CHRIST built through Mr. Armstrong. These leaders have an *attitude* problem toward what Christ restored through Mr. Armstrong—which means they are rejecting the very GOVERNMENT of God. It wasn't the work of Mr. Armstrong—IT WAS THE WORK OF CHRIST. These scorners fail to see God's Spirit (verse 6) in CHRIST'S WORK,

which was accomplished through Mr. Armstrong. It is God's Spirit and God's GOVERNMENT they reject!

Perhaps the Church's biggest problem today is despising "the day of small things." Change doesn't always mean growing in godly character. THE CHURCH HAS CHANGED FROM A PHILADELPHIAN STANDARD TO A LAODICEAN STANDARD, as shown in Revelation 3. So change is NOT *always* good.

THE ZERUBBABEL INSET

The story flow of Zechariah 3 and 4 is about Joshua and the last two eras of God's own Church. Zerubbabel is not an active part of this story flow. The story flow would be much better if you skipped the inset, which includes verses 6-9 and two thirds of verse 10 of Zechariah 4. An inset is an insertion that is added *later* by the editors *after* the original story was written. The *International Critical Commentary* (and a few others) even put this inset in another section of Zechariah.

Why an inset? Those who canonized the Bible put it there *after* the Joshua story was recorded. Remove it and you primarily have a rebellious Joshua and the last era of God's Church just before Christ's return (Zechariah 3:8). That is the *time* setting.

Joshua and "his fellows" are repeating the sins of the 1970s. They are relying too much on their own power—not the power of God's Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). VERSE 6 IS A PART OF THE ZERUBBABEL INSET. God says Zerubbabel (Mr. Armstrong) built the house through the power of God's Holy Spirit, but the Laodiceans REFUSE TO FOLLOW. They have a great example to follow, but they REFUSE. God considers this a rejection of HIS AUTHORITY AND GOVERNMENT!

When referring to *Mystery of the Ages*, Mr. Armstrong said, "I feel I myself did not write it." He felt God's Holy Spirit moved and stirred him, as God has always led His great leaders. Mr. Armstrong understood how to let God rule and guide him. HE DIDN'T EVEN TAKE THE CREDIT FOR WRITING THAT BOOK! We'll see as we continue that Joshua *failed* to let Christ rule him with



the Holy Spirit. He rejected Zerubbabel's example; that is what Zechariah 3 and 4 are all about.

Even though Mr. Armstrong is dead, he left us a FINISHED HOUSE. Our job is to refine and maintain it (i.e., walk in his footsteps), NOT TEAR DOWN WHAT WAS BUILT. Mr. Armstrong restored all things (Matthew 17:10-11)—he finished the work of the Philadelphia era and then he died. But he didn't die until he FINISHED GOD'S WORK. What does it all mean? It's the same warning Malachi gave: "Remember" what Elijah taught (Malachi 3:16; 4:4-6). WE MUST ALSO REMEMBER what and how Zerubbabel (Mr. Armstrong) built.

The *Anchor Bible Commentary* says that the Zerubbabel inset "is not extraneous to understanding the whole." In other words, while the Zerubbabel inset is an entirely separate thought from the surrounding scriptures, understanding it is critical to comprehending these two chapters. THE INSET IS CALLED A "GLARING INTERRUPTION." That means it interrupts for an essential reason: When you include the inset, you can understand what it takes to *continue* being a Philadelphian *after* Mr. Armstrong died. YOU MUST FOLLOW WHAT CHRIST ESTABLISHED THROUGH HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG!

Mr. Armstrong said people in the 1970s wanted him out of the way; some even wanted him to die. And when it happened, look at the disaster that resulted. The WCG leaders today have removed most of Mr. Armstrong's biblically based instructions. They too want him out of the way. Their "fruits" reveal a wrong attitude. We must *prove* any changes from the Bible.

THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD IS *NOT* LEAVING GOD'S PHILADELPHIA STANDARD. The Laodicean leaders today ARE DOING THE LEAVING! They are taking a Laodicean *turn* AWAY from Christ—because they ignore what CHRIST ESTABLISHED through Zerubbabel (Mr. Armstrong).

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG The founder of the Worldwide Church of God died on January 16, 1986, at the age of 93.

This inset describes the same problem discussed in Revelation 3:7-21, which is changing from a Philadelphian to a Laodicean attitude.

The Laodiceans “despise the day of small things”—or the example set by “Zerubbabel.” This expression is a part of the inset. Why? It reveals their problem and tells them how they could be a smashing success, but THEY TURN AWAY from this history. It’s just another way of saying they were “treacherous to the wife of your youth”—and showing them how they must look to Zerubbabel to succeed. THE “FRUITS” SHOW HE KNEW HOW TO BUILD SPIRITUALLY! Several major prophecies are telling us that our salvation has everything to do with FOLLOWING CHRIST’S INSTRUCTIONS THROUGH MR. ARMSTRONG. You’ll see more of these prophecies as we continue.

The inset is there for one main reason—to reveal Joshua’s sin and tell us how to avoid it. HE DOESN’T FOLLOW ZERUBBABEL’S EXAMPLE. That is getting to the very heart of what a Laodicean is. They turn away from what Christ established through Mr. Armstrong. The Laodicean sin revolves around this REBELLION! The inset was added by editors, inspired by Christ, as a *warning* for the Church today!

Satan’s greatest attack on the Church in the end time is *from within*. Our greatest test is to resist his deceit and seduction. Joshua failed—Zerubbabel succeeded. The inset tells us *how* and *why*. Remember, it’s not possible to deceive the “very elect” (Matthew 24:24). Those who are God’s “very elect” will discern Satan’s deception today by *using* God’s Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). Only by using God’s Spirit can we be saved from deception.

The Zerubbabel inset is another way of indicating that Mr. Armstrong is dead. It’s as if God is giving all of us the same instructions that Paul gave the Philippians when he was in jail and no longer able to be with them. “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and

to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:9). God is giving us the same instructions today. WHAT YOU “HAVE BOTH LEARNED, AND RECEIVED, AND HEARD, AND SEEN IN ME”—OR Mr. Armstrong—“DO”! Paul is telling them to USE GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT—and “WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.” That “fear and trembling” is what the ministers in Malachi 2:4-9 lack. So we must not follow their example. FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL AND MR. ARMSTRONG!

Mr. Armstrong is dead, but we must *remember* what we learned from him and his example, which was INSPIRED BY CHRIST. We *must* “remember” and “DO”!

That is the MAJOR FAILURE of Joshua and “his fellows.” Mr. Armstrong’s “traditions” are pushed aside now, as they were in the 1970s.

Mr. Tkach has said that Mr. Armstrong won’t “rule from the grave”—meaning he won’t let Mr. Armstrong’s words dictate his every move. And he shouldn’t. But God’s leaders must “rule from the grave” to some extent. MR. TKACH MUST HEED WHAT JESUS CHRIST ESTABLISHED THROUGH DEAD MEN—LIKE PAUL AND MR. ARMSTRONG—and “DO”! IF MR. TKACH DOESN’T FOLLOW WHAT CHRIST PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED, THEN MR. TKACH’S FOLLOWERS ARE JUST FOLLOWING A *MAN*!

God is discussing Church eras here. The time setting is just before Christ returns. The Philadelphian and Laodicean eras are the subject.

Zerubbabel had the “plummet,” or “plumb bob”—a measuring device used to test any vertical structure for deviation from a true line. This symbolized Zerubbabel testing the accuracy of truth or departure from previously revealed truth. IF WE AREN’T TESTING OUR TRUTH VERY PRECISELY AND CAREFULLY, we can easily depart into a Laodicean attitude. If we don’t look to Mr. Armstrong’s method of building, we face disaster in the future.

TWO SONS OF OIL

We must always keep the overview in mind. Again, there are seven lamps, or Church eras, which are the eyes of God mentioned in Zechariah 3 and 4 (Zechariah 3:9; 4:2, 10). These seven eras extend from Christ's first coming to His Second Coming. IF WE DON'T KEEP THIS OVERVIEW, SATAN WILL DECEIVE US.

Christ is the Stone, or Head of all seven Church eras. This is all God's doing. It is not a human project. WE MUST SEE IT THROUGH GOD'S EYES.

"And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon ... And *two olive trees* by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. ... Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?" (Zechariah 4:2-3, 11). One olive tree is on the right side of the lampstand with seven lamps; the other is on the left. These two olive trees are symbols of the Father and the Son, where we get the olive oil, a *type* of God's Holy Spirit. God opens our minds and reveals His truth through the Spirit.

"And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these *two olive branches* which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (verses 12-14). These two *olive branches* are the two *anointed ones*—or, in Hebrew, *sons of oil*. Only through them does God give His Church new revelation in the last two eras. The golden oil flows from the two olive trees into the two olive branches.

The Holy Spirit is given to all of God's Church members. That Spirit empowers them. Through the Holy Spirit, each member must discern who has been given God's new revelation for the collective Body of the true Church. The members must know the two men through whom flowed the golden revelation from God. Their salvation is at stake.

The last two eras of God's Church are discussed in Zechariah chapters 3 and 4. But the time frame is the last era, or the Laodicean era.

The first anointed one was Herbert W. Armstrong. He was inspired to produce some 50 books and booklets of new revelation for the sixth era. *Only* he was given new revelation for the true Church in the Philadelphia era. Only he restored all things (Matthew 17:10-11). That statement is proved in his book *Mystery of the Ages*.

Even though the seventh and last era went astray, God still sent His golden oil through the branch (an anointed one), into the golden pipes. The golden oil is still flowing into God's very elect. All of that new seventh-era revelation revolves around the book you have in your hands! Without this book, we would not know what happened to God's Church in the last era.

An unlawful Joshua led 95 percent of God's people astray. But God used an anointed one, supported by a small remnant, to deliver God's golden oil! (For more proof, request my free book *Who Is 'That Prophet'?*)

In addition to *Malachi's Message*, God has given us new revelation that I have written about in more than 30 other booklets in this Laodicean era.

The Holy Spirit opens our minds to know that the new revelation for the true Church came from God. God is trying to emphasize how important the Holy Spirit which brings the revelation is—IT IS GOLDEN OIL FLOWING THROUGH GOLDEN PIPES.

ALL OF THIS PRECIOUS REVELATION IS PURE SPIRITUAL GOLD! I hope and pray each one of you will beseech God to reveal to you how priceless it truly is!

FIVE

END-TIME JOSHUA IN BONDAGE

MR. ARMSTRONG TAUGHT US THAT HE WAS THE END-TIME fulfillment of Zerubbabel. He also believed there would be an end-time fulfillment of Joshua. This means the message about an end-time Joshua urgently needs to be understood by all of us.

That message is a prophecy about a modern-day Joshua and “his fellows” who are failing to build the way Zerubbabel did. They adopt the world’s scholarly approach to the Bible, which LEADS TO ONE OF THE GREATEST DISASTERS EVER IN GOD’S CHURCH! Let’s examine these prophecies concerning Joshua and “his fellows.”

WHO IS JOSHUA?

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist

him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zechariah 3:1-2).

Just as Mr. Armstrong was an end-time type of Zerubbabel, so there must be an end-time type of this Joshua who was responsible for leading the Laodiceans astray. Joshua symbolizes the Laodicean rebellion.

The context shows that spiritual Israel is plunged into the Great Tribulation—and plucked out. It is going to be “a brand plucked out of the fire.”

Most of God’s people will be in the Tribulation—and then plucked out—or not plucked out! Nobody who survives the Tribulation could fulfill this scripture more than a Laodicean. Fifty percent of the Laodiceans will lose their eternal life (Matthew 25:1-10). A *repentant* Laodicean would indeed be a “brand plucked out of the fire.”

If we put all the pieces together, we can see that Joshua and Zerubbabel represent the last two Church eras! Zechariah 3 and 4 are about the Joshua era. The Zerubbabel inset is there to emphasize to Joshua where he got off track—how his garments became filthy, spiritually. And it’s all to occur just before Christ returns (Zechariah 3:8). IT HAS TO BE THE LAODICEAN ERA! Many people will follow Joshua’s teachings into the Great Tribulation—a Joshua who had *filthy garments*. Other major prophecies of the Bible say virtually the same thing. More on that later.

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel” (verse 3). The Hebrew word for “filthy” designates an extreme condition of filth. The word can even be used as “excrement.” THE HIGH PRIEST, JOSHUA, DIDN’T BEGIN WITH FILTHY GARMENTS. The *Companion Bible* says “was” means “had come to be.” Clearly, Satan got to him.

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from

him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by” (verses 3-5). Joshua had filthy garments. Then there must have been some measure of repentance around the time he was put in charge. God took the filthy garments away and even gave Joshua a fair mitre, or pure turban, which symbolizes rule, or government. That means he was in charge and reigned over the last era of God’s Church. God gave him a majestic opportunity. But his rule over God’s Church ended badly.

Joshua’s salvation was *conditional* (verse 7). “*If thou wilt walk in my ways.*” “*If thou wilt keep my charge.*” A *specific* individual in a *specific* setting. “*Then thou shalt also judge my house.*” “*And I will give thee places to walk.*” The promises are all *conditional*. This is addressing a definite person with a specific priestly item—a turban—which symbolizes GOVERNMENT. Joshua’s downfall revolved around government.

The central act is positioning a pure turban. His big problem WAS HOW HE RULED—AND FAILED TO FOLLOW ZERUBBABEL’S EXAMPLE! This prophecy says there will be a leader in God’s Church who has a serious GOVERNMENT problem! He refuses to submit to what Christ established through Mr. Armstrong! God is calling for REPENTANCE FROM THE TOP! THAT IS WHERE THE MAJOR GOVERNMENT PROBLEM IS.

The WCG leaders today are saying that the Philadelphia Church of God members have a government problem. The truth is not what men say—but what God says. And God says THE LAODICEAN LEADERS HAVE THE GOVERNMENT PROBLEM!

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and *thy fellows* that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH [Christ]” (verse 8).

This refers to a leader who has SERIOUS SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS just before the return of Christ. There are also other leaders

with him—“his fellows”—which means there must be followers, namely the Laodicean Church. These other leaders also have a serious *government* problem.

‘THY FELLOWS’

The *Anchor Bible* says the word “sit” in Zechariah 3:8 could mean “rule, exercise authority.” But Joshua is not alone. It is Joshua and “thy fellows.” *Strong’s Concordance* says this expression could be rendered “your pastors.” “Thy” (or your) is a personal possessive pronoun which shows possession of something (the car’s engine, the baby’s toy, etc). They BELONG to Joshua—they are “*HIS* fellows.” They don’t BELONG to Christ. THEY FOLLOW A MAN! *THAT’S THE BIG PROBLEM!* They are not spiritually motivated as they should be (e.g. Zechariah 4:6, which, remember, is part of the Zerubbabel inset). If they were properly motivated, they wouldn’t be following Joshua in his rebellion. They have contempt for Zerubbabel (Mr. Armstrong) and what he taught. So they move away from the Philadelphia standard.

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by” (Zechariah 3:7). “KEEP MY CHARGE” means the act of *guarding*. It means “a place where guards are set.” THE BIGGEST SIN OF JOSHUA AND HIS FELLOWS IS A FAILURE TO GUARD WHAT THEY HAD—WHAT MR. ARMSTRONG LEFT BEHIND. (Malachi 2:7 has the same meaning for the word “keep.”) Their job is to tenaciously guard what Christ established through Mr. Armstrong and gave to the Church. TODAY, THE LAODICEAN LEADERS ARE REJECTING SO MUCH OF THE KNOWLEDGE REVEALED BY GOD.

It is also the same problem as in 2 Thessalonians 2:15. They reject the “traditions,” or “instructions,” of the past.

There is also good news. Joshua’s fellows are a SIGN that Christ’s return is very near (Zechariah 3:8). The *Soncino* commentary says, “for they are men that are a *sign*.” The

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary also translates it “sign.” It could also read “WONDERFUL SIGN,” *because of what follows*—CHRIST’S RETURN! (verses 8-10).

It is the *same* SIGN we see in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 of a FALLING AWAY, which also shows that Christ’s return is very near! This is almost the same language as in Zechariah 3. It’s also the same story as Revelation 3—about the Laodicean Church. SIGNS ARE TO BE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND HEEDED, OR WE GET LOST.

There is another Joshua mentioned in the former prophets whom we also need to study.

THE JOSHUA WHO SUCCEEDED MOSES

The books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings are called the *former prophets*. They contain some prophecy, but focus more on *leadership*. Generally, the people of a church or nation follow the leaders. The former prophets reveal the kind of leadership necessary for God’s people to succeed. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings tell us *how* or *how not* to be *king-priests*. The Joshua story tells us how to lead when a great man like Moses dies. By studying this example, the leaders in Pasadena would have known how to lead—and how not to lead—when Mr. Armstrong died, and the consequences of each. That MAKES THESE BOOKS VERY PROPHETIC!

The purpose of these books was to tell the PROPHETIC HISTORY of God’s people. We know that history repeats itself. So we can *foretell* what will happen to God’s people *today* if they repeat their HISTORY. If they follow a leader like *this* Joshua who followed Moses, the results will be wonderful. There will be a catastrophe if the reverse is true. That gives these books a heavy *prophetic* flavor.

Since they are former *prophets*, it means they have very important messages for us TODAY.

“Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land” (Joshua 1:13). This Joshua told the

Israelites to “remember” the word which Moses commanded them. THIS WAS AFTER MOSES WAS DEAD. So we must REMEMBER THE WORD MR. ARMSTRONG COMMANDED US! That is exactly what God tells us about what Mr. Armstrong taught—“remember” (Malachi 4:4-6).

“For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to ALL THAT MOSES COMMANDED JOSHUA ...” (Joshua 4:10). God commanded Joshua to speak “according to all that Moses commanded” him. And so we must be very careful today to follow Mr. Armstrong’s instructions. Shortly after Mr. Armstrong’s death, the WCG even sent out a tape comparing this Joshua to Mr. Tkach.

“THERE WAS NOT A WORD OF ALL THAT MOSES COMMANDED, WHICH JOSHUA READ NOT BEFORE ALL THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL ...” (Joshua 8:35). JOSHUA DIDN’T OMIT ONE WORD of all that Moses commanded—NOT ONE WORD! And Moses was dead! Why don’t we see this attitude in the Laodicean leaders today?

“As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua ...” (Joshua 11:15). Moses followed God’s commands and passed them on to Joshua, who obeyed, and “... he [Joshua] left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.” JOSHUA STILL OBEYED THE COMMANDS OF MOSES—LONG AFTER MOSES WAS DEAD. He built just as Moses did!

“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Joshua 22:5). At the end of his life, Joshua was still telling them to take *diligent* heed to what Moses said! He always kept before the eyes of the people WHAT MOSES TAUGHT! Joshua *knew* he wasn’t on Moses’s level and *never* tried to exalt himself to that stature.

“Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside

therefrom to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 23:6). Israel continued to be loyal until after Joshua and all those elders under him died—showing the fruits of Joshua’s great leadership. Moses was dead, BUT JOSHUA KEPT HIM VERY MUCH *ALIVE* IN THE EYES OF ISRAEL. HE TOLD THEM NOT TO TURN TO THE RIGHT HAND OR THE LEFT FROM WHAT MOSES TAUGHT. We see no such attitude in the Laodicean leaders today. They are often teaching members to turn away from what “Elijah” taught us! That is *why* the administration of the WCG and other Laodicean groups are rebelling against God!

Remember, the book of Joshua is one of the former *prophets*. It has a MESSAGE OF PROPHECY FOR US TODAY. It says that the leaders of the WCG and all of those who follow them are headed for disaster! You can stake your life on that—in fact, you *will* stake your ETERNAL LIFE on that!

“And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God” (Exodus 24:13). It was a meeting with the majestic God. Joshua went with Moses, at least part of the way up into the mount—to receive God’s commandments! A very privileged opportunity.

Mr. Tkach received very special training from Mr. Armstrong as well. God holds Mr. Tkach ACCOUNTABLE AS NO OTHER MAN ON THIS EARTH! That man is dealing with the glorified God (Exodus 24:15-16; 19:16-21). God help the man who forgets this!

WHERE IS JOSHUA’S COURAGE?

It appears that the Joshua of Moses’s time had one outstanding strength—spiritual *courage* (Joshua 1:5-7). God was instructing him to use this quality and showing him how much he would need it.

In the Laodicean churches, *spiritual courage* MAY BE THE GREATEST NEED. Without it, THE OTHER VIRTUES ARE OF LITTLE VALUE! God’s people can’t cower in fear and still grow in God’s love. God says “the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1).

The Church is commanded to WARN this world. Mr. Tkach has said the *world* was in a Philadelphian stage when Mr. Armstrong

was alive. Now, he said, the world is in a Laodicean stage. Therefore the Church can't warn the world as Mr. Armstrong did because people just won't accept the message, he said.

How would Paul respond to such a strategy? He was cursed, beaten, stoned and left for dead—and finally beheaded for preaching the SAME MESSAGE Mr. Armstrong later preached! The message must be preached whether the people receive it or not. God says to WARN them! Christ and all of God's messengers were brutally treated for preaching the gospel to a people who wouldn't accept God's warning message.

This nation has the greatest power ever of any nation on Earth. It also lacks the will to use it (Leviticus 26:19). The WCG today has the greatest power to communicate God's truth that any Church era has ever had—but IT ALSO LACKS THE WILL TO USE IT!

The leaders of the WCG have absorbed the spirit of this age. THAT IS THE DISEASE OF THE LAODICEANS. Today they lack the understanding and *courage* to deliver GOD'S POWERFUL MESSAGE!

The *World Tomorrow* program used to be a POWERFUL MESSAGE. But after Mr. Armstrong died, the new format on the program quoted the Bible far less frequently and often referred to the authorities of this world. The result? The program received a drastically lower response. That prompted this unbelievable decision in early 1994: "After the current television season, we will begin using television in a new, more effective way. INSTEAD OF THE HALF-HOUR PROGRAM, we will begin airing special television ads for the *Plain Truth* and other literature on local stations in areas where we have congregations" (member letter, Feb. 24, 1994). Mr. Tkach blamed the drastic decision on the "exorbitantly high and continually rising cost of television" and doubted whether television was even "an appropriate medium for preaching the gospel"! (*Worldwide News*, Feb. 15, 1994). Mr. Armstrong would surely have disagreed. Before he died, the HUGELY SUCCESSFUL television program was on close to 400 television stations worldwide!

I have read many articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and other news sources that are much stronger than the WCG's articles and

booklets! And now it no longer has a television program. The Church is commissioned by God to WARN the world! Probably the best booklet the WCG had to do that job was *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*. The WCG discontinued it. Unbelievable!

God speaks of the “*power of the holy people*,” that it will be shattered (Daniel 12:7; RSV). The WCG has the *power* to communicate. God has given it to them. They just aren’t using that power God’s way.

The famine of God’s Word is fast approaching. Then the two witnesses, who will die for God’s truth, will preach the final warning to the world before Christ’s return. We need LEADERS in God’s Church who are WILLING TO DIE FOR GOD! Many of those who lack this willingness will die in the Tribulation!

Several years ago in Big Sandy, Mr. Tkach said, “We have put too much emphasis on prophecy in the past.” That is just another put-down of Mr. Armstrong and the commission of the Church! The WCG ought to be putting *more* emphasis on prophecy now—NOT LESS. There has probably been 10 times more prophecy fulfilled since late 1989 than in the previous 15 years combined, and the WCG is putting less emphasis on prophecy now than EVER BEFORE!

IT TAKES COURAGE TO WARN THE WORLD.

‘THE SCHOLAR IN THE TABERNACLE’

More and more frequently Joshua’s “fellows” are using the world’s scholarly approach to understanding the Bible.

God says He will cut off the scholar (Malachi 2:12). The word “scholar” means “one who has the answer”—BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE RIGHT ANSWER.

The Prophet Malachi was trying to correct a FAITH CRISIS caused by a priesthood that was relying more and more on human, *scholarly* reasoning. We see the same condition in the WCG today. If these scholars are being relied on too much, it’s because the WCG is giving them too much authority. The leaders have the authority to invite the scholars into the tabernacle. This

means those in charge are “off track.” This is the same direction many WCG leaders went in the 1970s, when Mr. Armstrong had to ABOLISH THE DOCTRINAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE.

According to Dr. Donald Ward, they are now removing the “anti-educational bias in the Church and college.” That happened in the 1970s too. Doesn’t that mean the WCG leaders are rejecting much of what Mr. Armstrong taught about today’s education? Didn’t Mr. Armstrong create much of that “bias” Dr. Ward is talking about? Of course he did! Mr. Armstrong HAD TO BE THE ONE! And they know it—but just won’t come out and directly say so.

Again, it’s the *direction* we must be concerned about—moving away from the Philadelphia standard.

Mr. Armstrong taught us to avoid educational areas such as psychology, sociology, the world’s theology and much of man’s law. We don’t hear the same caution coming from the present WCG leaders.

Dr. Ward also said this *anti-educational bias* “HAS BEEN IN THE CHURCH AND COLLEGE FOR YEARS.” Sounds like Mr. Armstrong made a serious mistake for years that Church scholars must now correct! Not so! Actually, they are being “treacherous to the wife of your youth” and are moving away from “traditions,” or “instructions,” mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:15!

Read what Mr. Armstrong said in a special edition of the *Worldwide News* dated June 24, 1985 (emphasis mine):

IT WAS THEN [LATE 1970S] THAT THE MATTER OF OBTAINING ACCREDITATION FROM THE ORGANIZED ACCREDITATION SOCIETIES OF SECULAR EDUCATION BECAME A PROBLEM. THE LIBERALS AT PASADENA WANTED ACCREDITATION. They did not want to be accredited as a Bible college, but as a full competing college or university. As such the college would fall under rules of the secular accrediting society, which would more or less determine policy and curricula.

Finally this effort on the part of the liberals INCREASED THE ENROLLMENT OF THE COLLEGE from



AFTER MR. ARMSTRONG'S DEATH the WCC reopened Big Sandy, closed Pasadena, and massively expanded the Big Sandy campus with new buildings. In 1994, the college became accredited. These are all changes Mr. Armstrong did not want to make.

the approximate 500 limit that I had set to about 1,400 and going up. [In early 1992, it was 1,500!] IT WAS NO LONGER GOD'S COLLEGE. I had realized the danger of a student body in excess of 500 students in residence on campus, and had set that as a definite college policy. But during those years when I was absent from Pasadena headquarters most of the time, CHANGES WERE BEING GRADUALLY MADE IN COLLEGE POLICIES AS WELL AS CHURCH DOCTRINES.

Jesus Christ had founded this college through me as God's college. I had realized the state into which HIGHER EDUCATION HAD DRIFTED INTO MATERIALISM. Moral and spiritual values were being overlooked almost entirely in colleges and universities. I had realized the tremendous responsibility to avoid neglecting this missing dimension in education at the time of founding Ambassador College.

Here is another comment by Mr. Armstrong in a letter dated March 19, 1981: “We could now qualify for accreditation both at Pasadena and Big Sandy—but we shall not, because the GOVERNMENT of the colleges would have to be according to that which is in force in this world’s educational institutions—GOD’S government would have to go. WE ALREADY HAVE THE HIGHEST ACCREDITATION OF ALL—THAT OF ALMIGHTY GOD!” (emphasis his).

As you know, the college has now been accredited. That *could* help some Ambassador graduates get *jobs*. But NO AMOUNT OF BENEFITS RECEIVED COULD EVER JUSTIFY REMOVING GOD’S GOVERNMENT! And we must not forget that God would give far greater benefits to those who obey Him!

Watch and listen to news about Ambassador University. It is repeating the mistakes of the past. It has already accepted accreditation on the world’s terms instead of *God’s*! [Ambassador University closed in 1997.] In August of 1979, Mr. Armstrong wrote a *Good News* article titled “How Satan Injects False Doctrines” (emphasis his):

In God’s Church in our day, self-appointed “scholars” rose up in what they called a doctrinal committee, devoting themselves, NOT to discovering any NEW TRUTH—but trying to DISPROVE the TRUE DOCTRINES Jesus Christ put into His Church through His apostle, and inject false doctrines into the Church of God.

This very thing happened in the days of the Apostle Paul and the original apostles. And Satan DID BLIND AND DECEIVE THOSE WHO, WITH HONEST HEARTS, HAD ACCEPTED GOD’S TRUTH!

Brethren, do we think we are so superior to those of the first, second and third centuries that Satan could not have tried to pervert God’s TRUTH today?

Too many people today have drifted into a state of believing that God’s Church cannot be deceived. Mr. Armstrong warned against that attitude. God warns us not to put our trust in scholars who are going to be cut off!

SIX

‘MAN OF SIN’

GOD’S CHURCH HAS APPLIED 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4 TO the world for the most part. But it doesn’t apply to the world. There is tremendous biblical support to show it applies to God’s Church.

The “man of sin” is not a religious figure in the world. He sits “IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD.” Even some commentaries, such as the *Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*, say: “The rebellion is, strictly speaking, within God’s Church.” If PEOPLE IN THE WORLD understand this, certainly GOD’S PEOPLE SHOULD!

WE HAVE KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS THE CHURCH.

If we look at 2 Thessalonians 2 carefully, we can see that the ENTIRE FOCUS IS ON GOD’S CHURCH—not the world. The subject is the return of Christ and the end of this age. It is *at hand*, or IMMINENT. It could be *very* imminent!

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by [or concerning] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of

Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: FOR THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME, EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST, *and* THAT MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God SITTETH IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, shewing himself that he is God” (verses 1-4).

“That day” is the time of God’s intervention in human affairs when Jesus Christ will return to *rule* the nations.

First, take a look at what this does *not* say. It is *not* addressed to a worldly religious figure in a Jerusalem temple. Many of God’s ministers already believe the Arabs will never let a temple be built in Jerusalem. EVEN IF A TEMPLE IS BUILT IN JERUSALEM, IT WILL NOT BE THE TEMPLE OF GOD! The Jews have not been commissioned to build God’s temple as Zerubbabel and Solomon were anciently. If they build a temple, it will be the *Jews’* temple, NOT God’s temple—just as it was “the Jews’ feast of tabernacles” (John 7:2), NOT God’s Feast of Tabernacles.

The first verse of 2 Thessalonians 2 addresses the “brethren”—or God’s people. Verse 3 says, “Let no man deceive *you*” Mr. Armstrong always taught that *you* means God’s saints. In Matthew 24, verses 4 and 9, Christ says *you* when referring to His disciples. This is done repeatedly throughout the Bible.

There are two subjects discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2: the return of Christ and “a falling away.” What is being fallen away from? GOD’S TRUTH (verses 10, 15). IT’S AN ENTIRE CHURCH ERA FALLING AWAY FROM GOD’S TRUTH! It applies to God’s people—the Laodiceans. They had the truth but didn’t love it. Some are *perishing spiritually* because they don’t discern this evil. They don’t totally reject God’s truth, but they do greatly corrupt the faith.

What does the “falling away” have to do with a false spiritual leader in Jerusalem? Nothing directly.

There is a “falling away FIRST” (verse 3). “First” is a key word (and it reads that way in the original Greek). The falling away is *first*—the return of Christ *second*. These are the two main subjects discussed in this chapter. Most of the emphasis is on the “falling away.”

The “man of sin” is a part of that falling away. If not, verse 3 would read something like this: “there is a falling away *first*, and a ‘man of sin’ *second*” But it doesn’t read that way. The subject of verse 3 is a falling away *first*; then what follows, the revealing of “that man of sin,” IS A PART OF THE FALLING AWAY. God gives us this chronology to help us understand what happens WITHIN HIS CHURCH just before Christ returns. “It [the Day of the Lord and Christ’s return] will not come till the Rebellion takes place first of all, *with* the revealing of the Lawless One ...” (verse 3; Moffatt). It is a “rebellion” or “falling away” from God’s truth which must occur *with* the revealing of “that man of sin.” It is a GIGANTIC REBELLION AGAINST GOD’S GOVERNMENT!

This chapter doesn’t have *one* verse that discusses a false prophet in Jerusalem. It’s all WITHIN GOD’S CHURCH.

A false religious leader in Jerusalem would not fit with the rest of the chapter. Read the whole chapter carefully. It covers the falling away *primarily*—aimed precisely at God’s people throughout. THE “MAN OF SIN” IS REVEALED *IN* THE FALLING AWAY FROM GOD’S TRUTH.

Paul says that God’s people could be “shaken in mind” and “troubled” (verse 2)—implying a violent unsettling. (In Acts 16:26, the word “shaken” is used to mean a shaking of the foundation of the prison by an earthquake.) “Troubled” is an even stronger word, like “terrified.” God’s people are entering into such times. Some could say that God has forsaken His Church. The truth is, God warned us almost 2,000 years ago of this tragic event, and He gave us some startling *specifics*.

This is a time when people are *deceived* WITHIN the Church (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The word translated “deceive” would be better translated “beguile.” The word means not only making a false impression but actually *leading astray*. Also, the word often carries the idea of *willful deception*. Are some of these doctrinal changes made when Laodicean leaders know better?

The last warning to the Philadelphia era was to let “no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:11). These instructions were

given just before Christ began to warn the Laodicean Church (verses 14-19). The Philadelphians heed that warning. Many Laodiceans are going to allow a man to take their reward—and some will even lose their crown, or eternal life.

It's a powerful *warning* to all of us. A “man of sin” deliberately attempts to deceive God's own people. (Of course, as with Joshua and “his fellows,” the man of sin has helpers.) False teaching will be spread among God's own people by their leaders. All of this happens just before Christ returns—**WITHIN GOD'S CHURCH!** Most commentaries call it a “great falling away.” As the story unfolds, you will see that this has to be true. It involves *many* people. Please remember that *many* people are involved—probably tens of thousands!

Some translations, including the Williams translation, call the “falling away” a “great revolt.” The rebellion is so large, God uses it as a *sign*. It is not some little, insignificant event. God gives one *sign* to the world that the end of this age is near (Matthew 24:14), and He gives an even more urgent *sign* to His people! Those members with the Philadelphia spirit will see and heed the sign. They will see who are the real rebels against God's **GOVERNMENT!**

The falling away from truth is a **SIGN** that all of God's people can see—just before Christ returns! It ushers in the Great Tribulation and Christ's Second Coming. Unfortunately, many will not *heed* this sign.

Other translations of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 read: “... for it [Christ's return] cannot come unless the **APOSTASY** comes first” (Weymouth); “... for that cannot take place until the **GREAT REVOLT** occurs” (Williams); “That day cannot come before the **FINAL REBELLION** against God” (New English Bible). “That day”—the return of Christ—*cannot* come until this falling away from God's truth has occurred **IN THE CHURCH OF GOD!**

The expression “at hand” also means “has set in” (see the *Interpreter's Bible*). The point is, **AN EVENT “HAS SET IN” THAT CONNECTS DIRECTLY WITH THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST!** This “falling away” reveals that the return of Christ is imminent. In

other words, when you see this “falling away” from the truth God taught us mostly through Mr. Armstrong, it’s time to think very seriously about Christ returning soon—VERY SOON!

Again, it is not some little, insignificant event. It is a *sign* everybody in God’s Church will see—whether they understand it or not. Such a revolt from God’s truth is not something that can be hidden from members of God’s Church. It is *gigantic*. It’s A WHOLE LAODICEAN CHURCH ERA GOING ASTRAY—CONSOLING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR NUMBERS! They are rebelling against the *government* of God! And it is all started by *one man*. Let “no man take thy crown.”

This “falling away” makes the problems of the 1970s hardly worth mentioning. At that time, some WCG leaders thought Mr. Armstrong was going to die. Consequently, we saw people change to a staggering degree. Their real character surfaced. But that was only a small *type* of what the Church is facing now.

What the Church has overlooked in the past is that this “man of sin” is revealed IN that falling away from God’s truth. This is when and how he is “revealed,” or “uncovered.” The leader of the Laodicean Church is either leading this falling away or he is giving someone else great power to do so. The “man of sin” sits in GOD’S TEMPLE, OR CHURCH (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; Revelation 3:12). He is sitting in God’s Church, using government to achieve *his own* goals, which are contrary to “past instructions” (2 Thessalonians 2:15; the word “traditions” in the King James Version is better translated “instructions” of the past).

If he is “showing himself that he is God,” the “man of sin” must be a VERY PROMINENT LEADER. He is *showing himself* that he is God—not *saying* he is God. He has great power. He is using this power, not necessarily to tyrannize God’s people, but to *deceive* them!

However, those who oppose this “man of sin” by taking a stand for what Christ and Mr. Armstrong taught will be GRIEVOUSLY OPPRESSED—as long as they remain in the WCG! Remember, this

power causes some of God's people to be "shaken" or "troubled."

This "man of sin" is getting people to look to HIM instead of God and the past instructions God gave us. He is leading many of God's people toward the lake of fire! (verse 10). NOTHING could be more serious!

THE SON OF PERDITION

The Bible calls the "man of sin" the "son of perdition," THE SAME LABEL CHRIST GAVE TO JUDAS ISCARIOT—AND ONLY TO JUDAS (John 17:12) until the "man of sin" spoken of in 2 Thessalonians.

Mr. Armstrong often talked about the Bible being a coded book. The correlation between Judas and the modern "man of sin" is a good example. Christ is telling us that the "man of sin" will COMMIT A MONSTROUS BETRAYAL—JUST AS JUDAS ISCARIOT DID! And that betrayal is what the "falling away" is all about. Betrayal and falling away from God's truth is also what the Laodicean Church is all about.

It is not a minor betrayal. IT IS A MAJOR BETRAYAL—LIKE JUDAS BETRAYING CHRIST! An entire Church era will be betrayed and led astray. The disciples didn't know about Judas Iscariot's betrayal until the last night. Will the Church be in its "last night" when the "man of sin" is revealed?

How could this betrayal happen? "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth [Greek, *katecho* meaning "restrains" or "holds back"] that he [the man of sin] might be REVEALED IN HIS TIME. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [again, *katecho* meaning to "restrain"] WILL LET ["restrain" or "hold back"], UNTIL HE BE TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY" (2 Thessalonians 2:5-7).

The Phillips translation has verse 6 as, "You will probably also remember how I [Paul] used to talk about a 'restraining power' which would operate until the time should come for the emergence of this man." Phillips renders verse 7, "... but its

activities are restricted until what I have called the ‘restraining power’ is removed.”

The “restrainer” in verse 6 is spoken of in the *neuter* gender (“*what* withholdeth”)—referring to God’s Spirit. In verse 7, the “restrainer” is spoken of in the *masculine* gender (“*he*” who now lets, or restrains, not “what,” as in verse 6). Thus, in verse 7, the “restrainer” is personified, indicating *a man* “who” restrains. God’s Spirit is behind it all and is referred to in verse 6. The Holy Spirit is not a person, therefore the *neuter* gender. But God does use a *man* to do His Work, hence the *masculine* gender in verse 7. Clearly, we see *a man* being used by the Spirit of God.

There have always been people in God’s Church whom Satan can use unless they are controlled. God has now removed that control to show all of us who is who. No more MYSTERY!

Who is the “*he*” to be “taken out of the way”? We know Christ is the main power here. But Christ is not taken out of the way. Christ used Paul to hold back this satanic force in his day, which is also shown in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Was there a *conspicuous* man, or “*he*,” in this end time who held back evil influences as Paul did? Of course, it was Herbert W. Armstrong who restrained the liberal forces, especially in the 1970s, and really during his entire spiritual life. Then on January 16, 1986, “*he*” was “taken out of the way.” Mr. Armstrong died—even though his doctor said he could have lived another 20 years.

Mr. Armstrong wrote in the *Worldwide News*, June 24, 1985: “A final personal word. In a few days I will be 93 years of age. FOR SOME YEARS NOW, there have been some, like vultures, WAITING FOR ME TO DIE. They would like to come back and take over the leadership of the Church in my stead. I have been deeply concerned about this, but in no sense worried. This is the Church of God, not of any man. Jesus Christ is the living Head of this Church. I am not” (emphasis mine throughout).

He continued, “Brethren, put your faith in Christ and the living God and not in me. IF CHRIST SHOULD REMOVE ME” Christ DID remove Mr. Armstrong—he was “taken out of the way” by death.

It is a “mystery of iniquity” (verse 7) because it was hidden. It dared not show itself because of “he” who restrained it. He was a *man* who was seen and whose authority was feared—Herbert W. Armstrong.

The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary* translates verse 7 this way: “... the continuance of the mystery of iniquity working IS ONLY until he who now withholdeth be taken out of the way. THEN IT WILL WORK NO LONGER IN MYSTERY, BUT IN OPEN MANIFESTATION.” When Mr. Armstrong was “taken out of the way,” THEN THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY BEGAN TO WORK OPENLY!

The mystery “doth already work.” It was at work before Mr. Armstrong died—but not openly. For example, the Work of God in Australia never got “back on track” after the 1970s rebellion, as most other areas did. That is because the real problems were concealed from Mr. Armstrong. The Philadelphia Church has received numerous letters from Australians detailing this deception that took place before Mr. Armstrong died. This is an example of what God means when He says the mystery “doth already work.”

The Spirit of God doesn’t hold this “man of sin” back. That is his problem. What held him back was someone who was taken out of the way—someone who restrained him and others for years! IT WAS GOD’S SPIRIT WORKING THROUGH Mr. Armstrong that held back the “man of sin.”

GOD WILL DESTROY THE WORK OF THE LAODICEANS! (verse 8). It is a three-fold plan of God. First, the “man of sin” is *revealed*. How? “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25). God has revealed His truth unto babes. Truth is *revealed* from God. God’s truth is not something men can understand apart from God. It must be *revealed*.

But God will only reveal it to “babes”—saints with a childlike attitude. So first of all, God must reveal the “man of sin.” God has done that through *Malachi’s Message*. This is why WCG leaders

fear *Malachi's Message*. God's revealed truth will destroy their evil deceptions. Many wCG members are studying *Malachi's Message* and seeing that the wCG is off track. This message is causing a disturbance in the lives of many who have stayed in the Worldwide Church and has caused many wCG members to leave the Laodicean Church and attend the Philadelphia Church of God.

In the *second* stage, "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). So the wicked plot is revealed and *consumed* with God's mouth—His truth. This is done by the teaching and preaching of God's revealed truth (much of it through *Malachi's Message*). In Hosea 6:5, God says, "... I have slain them by the words of my mouth ..." (see also Isaiah 11:4). First God reveals the error, then He begins to consume it. At first it is a gradual process. Many will see what is happening. However, it appears that the majority won't accept God's truth about the "man of sin" until the Tribulation (Ezekiel 33:31-33).

Then in the *third* stage, God "shall destroy [the evil work] with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The word "destroy" could be translated "render ineffectual" or "render powerless." All that remains of the wCG's evil work will be replaced or destroyed when Christ returns. Those who fail to repent in the Tribulation will lose their salvation. Even God does not *yet* know who will repent and who won't, because He has chosen not to know.

The Laodicean work of rebellion IS DESTINED TO BE SMASHED. It can end no other way, because God is against it.

A "falling away" happened in Paul's day too—but only as a *type* of what is happening today. Could these verses in 2 Thessalonians 2 apply only to Paul's time? No, this "falling away" is a *sign* to alert God's people that Christ's return is very near (verses 1-3). It's the same "wondrous sign" (*Soncino*) mentioned in Zechariah 3:8—Joshua's falling away—which points to Christ's imminent return. This "falling away" is to happen in the very end time, *after* Mr. Armstrong's death.

Also, the "man of sin" sits in GOD'S CHURCH. IT'S A MAJOR

EVENT WITHIN GOD'S CHURCH THAT HAS NEVER OCCURRED BEFORE—ONLY AT THE VERY END TIME! As indicated by the story of Joshua (Zechariah 3), this event also occurs just before Christ returns. Both Joshua and the “man of sin” are influenced by Satan (Zechariah 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:9).

We see from Malachi 2:14-16 that someone treacherously leads the Church away from its “traditions” (2 Thessalonians 2:15), from the traditions and instructions God taught us by “Elijah” (Mr. Armstrong).

We also see how Revelation 3 shows the Laodicean Church turning away from the Philadelphia standard.

All of these scriptures refer to the Laodiceans who turn away from the “trunk of the tree,” which was established by Christ—through Mr. Armstrong. If you examine these scriptures closely, they all reveal a “betrayal”—just like the betrayal in 2 Thessalonians 2.

This is the big overview we must remember.

SIGNS AND LYING WONDERS

“Even him [the ‘son of perdition’], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). The word “signs” is rendered “pretended signs” in the Revised Standard Version. This “son of perdition” is heavily influenced by Satan. Satan also had a grip on Zechariah’s Joshua (Zechariah 3:1).

According to *Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament*, “signs and wonders of a lie” is the literal translation. “Of a lie” characterizes the two words “signs” and “wonders.” Both bear the stamp of “fraud.”

Paul uses the SAME TWO WORDS, “signs” and “wonders,” in some of his other books. For example, in 2 Corinthians 12:12 it says, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in *signs*, and *wonders*, and mighty deeds.” Here Paul discussed SIGNS AND WONDERS OF AN APOSTLE. Generally, the

world didn't accept Paul as an apostle who performed SIGNS AND WONDERS. But God's people did.

Did the Apostle Herbert W. Armstrong perform signs and wonders? Of course he did. His whole work was a *miracle* from God! There were many *signs* and *wonders*.

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty *signs* and *wonders*, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:18-19).

Here Paul used the same two Greek words, *signs* and *wonders*—manifested by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with *signs* and *wonders*, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy [Spirit], according to his own will?" (Hebrews 2:3-4).

Again we see the same two Greek words—*signs* and *wonders*. God's Work is always accomplished through His Holy Spirit. It is a miracle with signs and wonders. However, the world generally doesn't see it that way.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul discusses *signs* and *lying wonders* of a false leader, or lying apostle (Revelation 2:2). This leader is in charge of God's Church, but his *signs* and *lying wonders* are *not* of God's Holy Spirit. His deeds are deceitful, inspired by Satan the devil.

If we let the Bible interpret itself, it is clear what the meaning is. Many people *assume* these two words must mean spectacular *signs* and *wonders* in heaven or something like that. The Bible reveals that is not so. If you would like to study these words more, see *Strong's Concordance*, number 4592 (*signs*) and 5059 (*wonders*).

It's all a monstrous *fraud* that is spiritually deceiving MANY of God's people—it would seem at least 144,000 eventually! They are all victims of a satanic fraud occurring WITHIN GOD'S CHURCH.

The Joshua of Zechariah chapter 3 and the “man of sin” are *not* the same person. The “man of sin” is leading a *wholesale* REBELLION against God, just before Christ returns, and he does it through a leadership role *in* God’s Church. So does Joshua. But the man of sin appears to be here when Christ returns.

“Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth [His truth] and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8; New American Standard Bible). This “man of sin” does not have to be doomed to eternal death, but he and his work are going to come “to an end” when Christ returns. He could possibly even repent of this terrible sin of leading God’s people astray. He is a type of Judas. The Bible doesn’t say that Judas lost his eternal life.

It is even conceivable that this man was never converted. (Mr. Armstrong said he believed that one of the leading evangelists who left in the 1970s was never converted.) So the “man of sin” could possibly be destroyed physically (and not spiritually) when Christ returns—just as many others will be. However, we know that, generally, these sinners of 2 Thessalonians 2 are being destroyed *spiritually*. They must repent to avoid the lake of fire. We know that many will repent in the Tribulation.

Primarily, God is saying in 2 Thessalonians 2 that He will destroy the *work* of the “man of sin.” That would certainly include *the man*—*if* he fails to repent.

The Moffatt translation gives a slightly different view: “... the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his lips [or His words] and quell by his appearing and arrival” (verse 8). “[T]hat all may be doomed WHO REFUSE FAITH IN THE TRUTH ...” (verse 12). So all of these sinners of 2 Thessalonians 2 are doomed—but only if they refuse to repent. They are being warned and GIVEN A CHOICE by God through the Philadelphia Church of God.

Several translations call 2 Thessalonians 2 the “GREAT AND FINAL REBELLION.” Revelation 3, Zechariah 3 and the book of Malachi reveal that this has to be the Laodicean Church. To understand 2 Thessalonians 2, our main focus needs to be on the Laodiceans.

GOD SENDS 'STRONG DELUSION'

Many of God's people will be captured by Satan's deceit, if they don't WAKE UP! GOD IS ALLOWING AND SENDING "THE FULL FORCE OF EVIL'S DELUSION" (2 Thessalonians 2:11; Phillips) and "powerful heresies among them" (Norlie).

Can you understand "the FULL FORCE of evil's delusion"? The next few months and years will be very revealing—to God's people *and* to God.

Please analyze the following words by Mr. Tkach in the October 10, 1989, *Worldwide News*: "Whom did Jesus call children of the devil? THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY HAD A CORNER ON THE SPIRITUAL MARKET. THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO COULD HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. Their attitude of POMPOUS SPIRITUAL SUPERIORITY made them partakers of the attitude of the devil."

If we think we have "a corner on the spiritual market," are we "children of the devil"? YOU NEVER HEARD MR. ARMSTRONG MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT! That's because he knew that we DO have a "corner on the spiritual market." Does that make Mr. Armstrong a "CHILD OF THE DEVIL"? Jesus Christ agreed with Mr. Armstrong. Only those begotten sons of our heavenly Father have God's Holy Spirit and God's calling (John 6:44). God has called a "little flock" today to receive His Spirit. Baptized members of God's Church are the *ONLY ONES* WHO CAN HAVE A TRULY SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD—the rest of the world doesn't have God's Holy Spirit. That's not the "attitude of the devil"—THAT IS REALITY! That is the TRUTH OF GOD!

We all had better watch such confusing and misleading statements coming from the WCG. They are leading some to a frightening end!

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy [Spirit] shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy [Spirit], it shall

not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32). Who says we have "a corner on the spiritual market"? GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT DOES! The Holy Spirit is what makes us begotten sons of God—and such a rare people on this Earth. The Holy Spirit established a great work through Mr. Armstrong. The Holy Spirit was used to "restore all things" and give us a "corner on the spiritual market." To deny that is getting DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO BLASPHEMY!

Have some in the Church forgotten *who* they are? How UNIQUE the firstfruits are?

Mr. Tkach's statement is in the category of "STRONG DELUSION." God is sending strong delusion NOW—at *this very moment*—FROM THE WCG LEADERS! Watch closely what you read, because that kind of statement made by Mr. Tkach is commonly seen today in the WCG's literature.

A WCG minister spoke out against *Malachi's Message*. The taped message was sent to several WCG congregations. It involved 2 Thessalonians 2. He said, "God doesn't send strong delusion to His people—not the merciful God. Mr. Flurry's God must be a harsh God that the Protestants talk about—NOT MY GOD. There is no evidence of this."

Yet the Apostle Paul said, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish [are perishing]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause GOD *SHALL* SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).

No evidence? Please read verse 11 again. It says "GOD *SHALL* SEND them strong delusion"! And verse 10 says that people *ARE PERISHING* spiritually—present tense! (New International Version). They have the truth but don't love it. This could *never* apply to the world. The world has *never* had God's truth. This is talking about God's Church! And many WCG members are being deluded—failing a TEST given by God.

What could be more plain? God is sending "strong delusion" to PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE TRUTH! His very own people! And most

of them are perishing spiritually. Why? Because they don't *love* God's truth! It's God's way of testing how much we love His truth. Soon, many will understand that the Laodicean leaders are going in the wrong direction.

So it's a "falling away" (verse 3) from the truth—mainly truth given by Christ through Mr. Armstrong. The "very elect" who love God's truth cannot be deceived (Matthew 24:24). Why does this deceived minister say it would be wrong for WCG members to even read what I write? Why are Laodicean leaders so fearful? Isn't it the truth they fear? They don't condemn other churches' literature that way.

The WCG is asking its people to follow a *minister*—not God's Word.

This misleading minister also said, "Well, God is really weak. I thought God could keep control of His Church better than that." He said, "You don't have to worry about God deserting the Church. If God doesn't want a leader, He will take him out of the way."

Now please read your Bible and see what it says. In Revelation 2 and 3, God discusses five Church eras that went astray. GOD DIDN'T DESERT THEM—BUT THEY DESERTED GOD! And God DID NOT remove the leader—He removed the *lamp*. Christ quit leading them because *they* deserted *Him*. Then He raised up another Church or another era.

God says He will send "strong delusion" to TEST His people. God wants to know if they *love* Him and His truth more than a man, a church or even their own lives (Luke 14:26). That is what 2 Thessalonians 2 is all about!

Brethren, I hope you realize the *dangerous* direction of the Laodicean Church. Some people are going to be lost forever. THOSE OF THE LAODICEAN CHURCH OF GOD MUST AWAKEN! Or they will slumber right into the Great Tribulation.

Throughout the Bible, God says that only a tiny group of *first-fruits* are called in this age. In light of Mr. Tkach's quote above, remember that Zerubbabel (Mr. Armstrong) used the "Spirit" to do God's Work (Zechariah 4:6). This verse is a part of the Zerubbabel

inset. No such statement is made in the Joshua section of the book of Zechariah. Is that because Joshua lacks a proper understanding about God's Holy Spirit? Is that because he truly *doesn't* have "a corner on the spiritual market"—which he should have?

Let's consider what Mr. Armstrong thought about the Church having a unique relationship with God and "a corner on the spiritual market." He wrote this in *Mystery of the Ages*, in the chapter titled "Who and What Is God?":

The billions now living on Earth not only are ignorant of the most important knowledge—WHO and WHAT God is—they seem *NOT TO WANT TO KNOW!* THEY ARE WILLINGLY IN IGNORANCE OF THIS MOST IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE AND RELATIONSHIP POSSIBLE IN HUMAN LIFE!

Astonishing—but TRUE!

And why have humans been *WILLINGLY* ignorant of man's most important relationship? One explanation, only, is possible! All nations have been *DECEIVED* (Revelation 12:9). And the *FACT* of this universal deception makes certain the fact of a super *DECEIVER*!

Isn't it clear that only God's Church can have a spiritual *relationship* with God? The whole world is deceived. Mr. Armstrong was God's end-time Elijah. The name *Elijah* means "my God is God." The rest of the world worships a false god or no god at all.

Please read the entire chapter in *Mystery of the Ages* titled "Who and What Is God." Throughout that whole chapter, MR. ARMSTRONG SAID EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF THE QUOTE BY MR. TKACH!

Was that chapter part of the "many significant errors" the WCG leaders saw in *Mystery of the Ages*? Is that chapter the main reason that book was canceled?

God says He is sending "strong delusion." God's people have to decide WHO HAS THE ATTITUDE OF THE DEVIL! And what a monumental decision it is. So much is determined by that choice.

Dr. Ward gave a sermon on December 2, 1989, in Big Sandy.

This scripture was used: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ...” (Malachi 3:1). He said John the Baptist was the messenger who prepared the way for Christ’s first coming. He made no mention of Mr. Armstrong being *the man* who was the modern-day John the Baptist. He said that we are *all* “sons of Levi” (verse 3)—that we are *all* MESSENGERS. Sounds good, but THAT IS NOT BIBLICALLY CORRECT. The prophecies POINT TO ONE MESSENGER, *whom we all support*. Dr. Ward’s statement is just more “strong delusion” to deceive Laodicean members about God’s end-time Elijah and John the Baptist—Herbert W. Armstrong.

Dr. Ward explained how the WCG is *changing* its views about giving to hurricane and other disaster funds. This goes deeper than just giving to disaster victims—who do need help. This is a *changing* of the Church’s *commission* established by CHRIST—through Mr. Armstrong. Instead of spending money to WARN the people *why* disasters are happening, the WCG helps them financially. Soon the WORLD WILL BE LITERALLY FLOODED WITH DISASTERS! God will bring it to pass as punishment. Tithes and offerings will be spent *in vain* if they continue this approach.

Dr. Ward said the Church has had a *self-righteous* attitude in the past. He said that Church members have “boasted” of our knowledge of prophecy. I disagree. It really was not *boasting* about prophecy; it was fulfilling our God-given commission.

Dr. Ward said Mr. Armstrong established the law, but today the Church “emphasizes the spiritual application on an individual basis.” AS IF Mr. Armstrong DIDN’T! Brethren, I hope you see how that statement condemns what Christ did through Mr. Armstrong. God calls it “strong delusion”!

Then Dr. Ward spent the usual time on how much “love” the WCG is building today. Ezekiel says, “[W]ITH THEIR MOUTH THEY SHOW MUCH LOVE ...” (Ezekiel 33:31). THEY DON’T SHOW LOVE TO MR. ARMSTRONG AND WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT THROUGH HIM! They don’t love the truth of God as they should (2 Thessalonians 2:10). “They have *refused* to love the truth” (Phillips).

The Laodicean leaders “have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17). *They* are the self-righteous ones—arrogantly pushing aside truth that God has established in the Church—just the way God prophesied it would occur!

God is sending “strong delusion”! God’s people are being tested right now.

Why can Satan get to God’s people? Because some don’t *love* the truth. It looks as though they do—that is why it is called a *mystery*. Anyone who has this wrong *attitude* will be deceived by Satan!

No amount of wishful thinking will change these mighty prophecies of God!

HOW TO STAND FAST

“Therefore, brethren, STAND FAST, AND HOLD THE TRADITIONS WHICH YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). *Thayer’s Lexicon* says the word “traditions” can be rendered “instructions” or “the substance of the teaching.” “Traditions” is also rendered “teaching” and “the rules” in other translations.

It’s all in the *context* of the true gospel (verse 14), which is about the return of Christ. Paul said WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED about keeping the gospel pure.

“Traditions” are truths that were given both verbally and in writing. The concern here is about “traditions” or “instructions”—passed from one era to another. The leader’s job is to pass *God’s* instructions—not his own—to the people.

The *SDA Commentary* says this of the word “traditions”: “The word means things delivered, handed over, or transmitted by way of teaching or doctrine.” *Clarke’s Commentary* says the Greek “signifies anything delivered in the way of teaching.” The point is, we are talking about REVELATIONS FROM GOD that are being rejected by the “man of sin.” This is precisely what the Laodicean Church does. God is telling us to STAND FAST by HOLDING ON TO PAST INSTRUCTIONS. This is how we hold fast.

This is our SPIRITUAL ANCHOR. These are instructions given by JESUS CHRIST—not Herbert Armstrong.

The Revised Standard Version says “stand firm.” If we fail to cling to our past instructions, WE CAN’T STAND FIRM! It is precious knowledge God has given us to withstand Satan’s attack. *With* this knowledge, we are God’s very elect who *cannot* be deceived (Matthew 24:24). *Without* this knowledge, we *can’t avoid* being deceived! Satan is too subtle for us without this spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:11-19).

This is what the “falling away” is all about. EITHER WE HANG ON TO WHAT WE LEARNED, OR WE LOSE OUR ETERNAL LIFE! THE BETRAYAL REVOLVES AROUND REJECTING “TRADITIONS,” OR “PAST INSTRUCTIONS,” OF ONE WHO WAS “TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY.” It’s the same story as Zechariah 3 and 4, Revelation 3 and the entire book of Malachi! All these scriptures tell of ONE COLOSSAL EVENT within God’s Church—THE FALLING AWAY FROM TRUTH! A GREAT REBELLION AGAINST GOD’S GOVERNMENT!

“Man of sin” and “son of perdition” are horrendous titles. God gave these titles because no sin is greater than leading God’s people astray! “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). The leader who is willing to lead God’s people astray is appropriately named a son of *perdition*, or *destruction*. He destroys what God has created and is creating.

This prominent person, the “man of sin,” must be revealed by Christ before He returns.

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish [‘are perishing’ spiritually is the correct translation]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). God is talking about people who “are perishing” spiritually! People who ARE BEING “SAVED” OR NOT BEING “SAVED”! They have a chance to be saved, but *fail* to achieve it. They are perishing. Why? Because they “received not the love of the truth.” They received the truth—but they do not

love it enough to hold on to it. “[T]he love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). Only God’s people have true love. The world has never had God’s truth or love. ONLY GOD’S PEOPLE CAN FALL AWAY FROM GOD’S TRUTH.

We are talking about a Judas-type betrayal that is one of the WORST IN THE HISTORY OF GOD’S CHURCH! God removed most of the resistance to this deceit when Mr. Armstrong died, making the betrayal and leading astray of the brethren much easier.

THE BETRAYAL

“There is no man who can fill his shoes, but, Father, we aim to follow his example.” Mr. Tkach made this statement at Mr. Armstrong’s funeral. What happened to that attitude? Many today wonder how two leaders of the same organization can think so differently. Today, the story of Mr. Armstrong’s life is used mainly for history of the Work—not as an *example* to follow. Yet Mr. Tkach ought to know more than anyone else on Earth how to walk in Mr. Armstrong’s footsteps.

God promised to *reveal* the “man of sin”—“in his time,” or “in his season” (2 Thessalonians 2:6). Has that time come? That time was set by God, not man. WITHOUT A SPECIAL REVELATION BY GOD THIS TRUTH CANNOT BE KNOWN!

The WCG isn’t *drifting* into a Laodicean attitude—it is being forcefully and deceitfully “driven away” from God with cruelty! (Jeremiah 23:2; Ezekiel 34:5). (Request our free book *Ezekiel: The End-Time Prophet*.) All the restraints have been removed. No strong spiritual leader is on the scene to stop it. That’s why the changes are coming so fast—in spite of protests from many ministers.

Mr. Tkach sat at Mr. Armstrong’s feet for seven years before Mr. Armstrong’s death. He watched Mr. Armstrong get the WCG “back on track.” He was right there by Mr. Armstrong’s side helping him do it. Is there any man in the WCG more accountable for what is happening? He was considered Mr. Armstrong’s closest confidante and most loving and loyal friend, so much so

that Mr. Armstrong entrusted Mr. Tkach with control of God's great Work. Mr. Armstrong *trusted* Mr. Tkach more than any other man in the Work. Like Judas, Mr. Tkach was an *innermost disciple*—more so than other Church leaders—in those last seven years of Mr. Armstrong's life.

The leadership discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2 *must* be in Pasadena today. It all began to surface once Christ took Mr. Armstrong out of the way by death.

Mr. Armstrong's GREATEST FEAR was what would happen to the WCG after he died. Some of his worst fears have been realized. Still, we know it's all done according to God's master plan. Christ is still very much in control. We shall soon see this demonstrated forcefully! Christ raised up the Philadelphia Church to TRUMPET the warning to the WCG.

Much of our love for the truth revolves around Mr. Armstrong and his work—inspired by God.

Paul prophesied that a great deception would occur in the end just as it did in the first century. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM. Therefore *watch*, and *remember*, that by the space of three years I ceased not to WARN EVERY ONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS" (Acts 20:29-31).

Laodicean leaders will say these verses refer to the Philadelphia Church of God ministry, but *they* are the ones doing the drawing away. *They* are the ones leading God's people away from the truth which Christ restored through Mr. Armstrong. *They* are the ones "drawing away disciples" after themselves and their deceitful changes. You MUST PROVE FROM YOUR BIBLE who is right—and you *can* do so!

These same verses show that Paul recognized his own ministry and physical presence as a restraining influence. The same was true for Mr. Armstrong. All God had to do was take Mr. Armstrong out of the way, and the submerged "mystery of iniquity" surfaced again and began to flourish because the

restraints had been removed. We saw this demonstrated in the 1970s also. Now it's even worse. We should have learned from history! If we fail to learn from the past, we are destined to repeat the mistakes of the past.

God has chosen not to know the outcome of the Laodicean members who are being tested. He tested Abraham to see if he would kill his only son. After God saw that Abraham *would obey*, He said, "[N]OW I KNOW that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, THINE ONLY SON from me" (Genesis 22:12). It was the hardest test of Abraham's life. And God didn't *know* until *after* the test what Abraham would do. *After* this test of 2 Thessalonians 2, GOD WILL KNOW A LOT MORE ABOUT ALL OF US!

When Mr. Armstrong was in charge, there was iniquity present in some people that was kept under the surface where it could not be seen and evaluated by others. So God removed Mr. Armstrong, and that iniquity has surfaced and now is becoming obvious to God's very elect—who cannot be deceived (Matthew 24:24). The *rest* of God's people *will* be deceived. This trial revolving around the "man of sin" is all part of GOD'S MASTER PLAN TO SEPARATE HIS PHILADELPHIAN ELECT FROM THE LAODICEANS. The elect must reject this satanic deception in order to receive the Philadelphian reward. This separation of the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans won't be as easy as many in the Church previously imagined!

The "man of sin" is called "the son of perdition" for good reason. The Greek word for "perdition" means "destruction, damnation, perishing, waste, utter ruin." IT IS OFTEN USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO REFER TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY FROM THE TRUTH (Matthew 7:13; Philippians 3:19; 1 Timothy 6:9; Hebrews 10:39; 2 Peter 2:1; 3:7).

The word "deceive" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 means "to *lead* astray." Don't forget that. It clearly indicates that a *leader* is spreading or allowing false teachings among God's people! The *Interpreter's Bible* says the word *deceive* "carries the idea of WILLFUL DECEPTION." THIS IS A JUDAS-TYPE BETRAYAL. Did Judas know what he was doing? He had to understand much of what he did!

God says, “Let no man deceive you by any means ...” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). “By *any* means”! All kinds of means will be used to deceive, but let “no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:11).

This “man of sin” sees the truth and falls away from it. That’s how he becomes the “son of perdition.” ETERNAL LIFE OR ETERNAL DEATH IS AT STAKE FOR MANY OF GOD’S PEOPLE! Many of them will follow him!

The *context* of this Judas-type betrayal indicates that it revolves around the “man of sin” and “he” who is “taken out of the way.” Paul warned us to hang on to the “traditions,” or “past instructions.” Many of these instructions were obviously received from Mr. Armstrong—then “he” was “taken out of the way.” 2 Thessalonians 2:15 says to “stand fast” and “hold” on to the truth. The literal translation from the Greek means “to hold firmly and surely, by the greatest exertion of strength.” Hold on to these *divinely inspired* truths of God. This is how we become established (verse 17) in God’s precious Word so that we shall NEVER fall!

It doesn’t say “*a* man of sin,” but “*the* man of sin.” That is because HE TAKES THE WORK OF GOD AND GIVES IT OVER TO THE CONTROL OF SATAN! (verse 9; Zechariah 3:1-2). We are told in 2 Thessalonians 2 how the change occurs from the Philadelphian era to the Laodicean era.

If we follow Mr. Tkach’s lead in not applying scriptures to personalities, then major prophecies of the very end time will be misunderstood. Many of God’s people will be deceived, and Satan’s supreme goal of deceit will be achieved. Satan is the primary deceiver. He is the real culprit—the super deceiver Mr. Armstrong warned us about.

Two of God’s very end-time leaders are discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2. One of them is removed. The “man of sin” refers to the one who led the great falling away.

That is one big reason why 2 Thessalonians 2 couldn’t have applied in the 1970s. The *liberals* weren’t in charge then. Now they are.

I beseech you, brethren—seek God as you never have before! “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man” (Jeremiah 17:5)—*any* man, AND THAT CERTAINLY INCLUDES ME.

In the near future you are going to see events that will shake this world as never before. TIME IS RUNNING OUT! The signs all point to the catastrophic end—which will come very soon! THE SAME GOD WHO IS SENDING YOU THIS MESSAGE IS ALREADY MOVING DRAMATICALLY TO *BRING THIS WORLD TO ITS KNEES!*

Mr. Armstrong led the WCG and was “taken out of the way.” Mr. Armstrong obviously gave control to the next leader. Otherwise, how would the leader get the position? We don’t vote in God’s Church! That is *why* this is such a HEINOUS BETRAYAL of Christ by those who were *supposed* to follow Mr. Armstrong’s instructions! Everything looked great until Mr. Armstrong was removed by death. That’s when the apostasy was to occur—not before.

THIS “MAN OF SIN” HAS REPLACED CHRIST AS THE HEAD OF THE WCG! He exalts himself above Christ and what He taught through Mr. Armstrong. Like Judas, the “man of sin” proves to be a false apostle (Revelation 2:2).

Leaders of the WCG call all the recent changes “growing in love.” God calls it a “falling away”—or “a great rebellion” (New Living Translation). IT IS OF GREAT MAGNITUDE—many thousands of people! The “love of MANY shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). This is *agape* love, or the love of God—not human love. Only God’s people have this love. This is a prophecy for the WCG and other Laodicean groups today!

Satan entered into Judas the last night of Christ’s life on Earth (Luke 22:3; John 13:27), but there were other indications of Satan’s influence. “Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein” (John 12:4-6). Judas was the treasurer. He wanted to appear as though he had *boundless* love. But his motives were evil. He had *twisted priorities* when

it came to money spent in the Work. He and Christ didn't agree, and Christ doesn't agree today with the manner in which much of the money is being spent by the Laodiceans. The ATTITUDE OF JUDAS is in the leadership of God's own Church today. God says so! That is why Christ uses the title "son of perdition"!

When 2 Thessalonians 2 discusses the "son of perdition" (Judas Iscariot's label), it is for good reason. Study the example of Judas and you will understand a great deal more about what is happening within the Worldwide Church of God and other Laodicean groups today.

God's people must be WARNED!

CHRIST CHOSE JUDAS, WHO BECAME A THIEF, A LIAR AND A TRAITOR (John 6:70-71). That is also the message of 2 Thessalonians 2!

Could such a great rebellion occur without God warning His Church? Never! THE GREATEST WARNING IN THE END IS GIVEN TO GOD'S PEOPLE—not the world. "A mystery ... signifies a truth *once hidden* but now revealed or to be revealed; A TRUTH WHICH, WITHOUT SPECIAL REVELATION, WOULD BE UNKNOWN" (*Vincent Word Studies in the New Testament*). This test is revealing truth about all of us—NOW! God will know *exactly* what we believe and where we stand spiritually. This test is how He does it.

In Paul's letters, a *mystery* is something that has been hidden or unknown—but has now been *revealed* (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:3, 9; 6:19; Colossians 1:26). God has to reveal our spiritual condition to us and to Himself!

If *Malachi's Message* is *revealed* knowledge, it must be from God! If you see it as such, God also must have revealed that to you. Appeal to God for understanding! THESE TRUTHS ARE TOO MOMENTOUS TO NEGLECT!

One minister kept the old *Systematic Theology Project* (STP) manual that was written by the liberals in the 1970s. He said, "We are doing the same thing again." It's the 1970s all over—even worse. It's totally inexcusable! Every Laodicean minister ought to see what is happening—and *act* accordingly. You must *act*! That's what *faith* is all about.

What does it mean to have a “BELIEF OF THE TRUTH”? (2 Thessalonians 2:13). This signifies real faith. It may mean giving up a physical or spiritual family for the truth! It's not just coming out of the Laodicean Church. That could be done in rebellion. But if we have a strong “belief of the truth,” it *will* bring us out of any deceived group! The Laodiceans are making major changes about government, the end-time Elijah, healing, Church eras, the Sabbath, “born again,” salvation by grace alone, marriage, the trinity, the Family of God and prophecy, to name just a few examples. (Request a free copy of our booklet *God's Family Government* for more information.) They are rejecting God's truth and God's leadership! Our “belief of the truth” demands that we REFUSE to follow such changes *away* from God's truth.

God's truth is sometimes very hard to receive. But there is no other choice when you consider the alternative.

Judas betrayed Jesus Christ. LAODICEAN LEADERS TODAY ARE NOT JUST REJECTING THE WORK OF MR. ARMSTRONG—*THEY ARE BETRAYING JESUS CHRIST!* Mr. Armstrong was a human being who made mistakes like all of us. Mr. Armstrong is now dead, BUT JESUS CHRIST IS NOT DEAD—HE IS VERY MUCH ALIVE! He is still the Ruler of the Philadelphia Church of God. And He will correct Laodicean leaders and their followers for their sins. He will CORRECT those who are REBELLING AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT! This is a serious warning to all of us. God will *force* His people to choose between Himself and “strong delusion.” Are you close enough to God to make the right choice?

SEVEN

‘PROPHECY NOT’

DURING THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS’ CONFERENCE IN THE spring of 1988, Dr. Herman Hoeh stated that the Church of God had entered into the Laodicean era. Laodicean leaders quickly stopped that message. They didn’t think it was time to discuss this subject. God’s prophecy of the Laodicean era is a *major* prophecy for the end time. Dr. Hoeh’s statement would have given *urgency* to God’s people.

Prophecy is dual. For example, in the book of Amos, we have prophecy for ancient Israel. However, the main fulfillment is for Israel at the very end time (Amos 9:11-15).

“And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD” (Amos 2:11). God says, *HE RAISED UP* ministers and prophets. This is not some worldly religion. *THESE ARE* MINISTERS GOD RAISED UP—true ministers of God! Please note that carefully. GOD raised them up, but Satan has led many of them astray.

“But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not” (verse 12). Some of the structured ministry of the WCG have drunk much of the “wine” of this world. Their spiritual vision has become blurred. They can’t discern between truth and error. It implies that some ministers won’t give prophetic warning as they should. They fail to really WARN the world!

Prophets were usually sent when the ministers or priests failed to do their job. MOST LEADING WCG MINISTERS HAVE ADOPTED THIS “PROPHECY NOT” PHILOSOPHY. ONE OF THE WCG’S MAJOR TOPICS TODAY IS HOW THE CHURCH DWELLED TOO MUCH ON PROPHECY IN THE PAST. THEY ARE TAKING A “PROPHECY NOT” POSTURE. (It’s another way Mr. Armstrong is being put down.) “Prophecy not” is another way of saying, “DON’T PROPHECY THE WAY MR. ARMSTRONG DID IN THE PAST!” The “prophecy not” attitude means there was a time when the WCG had a strong prophecy message. That is no longer the case. It’s almost the reverse of the way they used to prophecy when Mr. Armstrong was the leader.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). This is speaking of God’s Church in the very end time. God divides their work into two parts: First, they keep the commandments; and second, they have the “testimony of Jesus,” which is the “spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10).

Remember, the Laodiceans are “lukewarm.” They are rebelling against God. They *cause* people to “stumble at the law,” or at keeping the commandments of God (Malachi 2:8). They also “have” the spirit of prophecy because Mr. Armstrong gave it to them. But they don’t preach IN the spirit of prophecy! They just HAVE it! The Laodiceans keep saying “prophecy not,” or “don’t prophecy as we did in the past” (Amos 2:11-12). They have to say “prophecy not” because the WCG had SUCH A STRONG PROPHECY MESSAGE WHEN MR. ARMSTRONG WAS ALIVE! The “prophecy not” attitude is a *very* major change in the WCG teaching!

God considers this prodigious change by the WCG to be a MAJOR SIN! God wants His Church to prophesy of the soon-coming world catastrophe, and also the imminent return of Jesus Christ and the glorious World Tomorrow!

Remember that the primary time for this prophecy about the Laodicean Church not prophesying is AT THE VERY END. Please go back and read Mr. Armstrong's letters and articles about prophecy and compare them with what WCG leaders say today. The contrast is shocking! Then you will see that AMOS'S PROPHECY IS BEING FULFILLED BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES! This "prophecy not" approach is VERY MUCH ALIVE IN THE LAODICEAN CHURCH TODAY.

It is not fulfilling God's commission to warn the world! Does Amos's prophecy apply to what Dr. Hoeh said about the WCG being Laodicean? Of course it does. Leaders of the WCG don't want that truth preached.

WE MINISTERS MUST NOT SUCCUMB TO A SPIRIT OF "PROPHECY NOT." If we faithfully do our part, God's message won't be suppressed!

If we succumb to the pressure, we will become drunk spiritually by drinking the "wine" of deception and will lose our spiritual discernment. After all, we are talking about GOD'S Church—not man's. God has *never* supported a compromising spirit.

When the *structured* ministry fails to repent and do its job, then GOD SAYS PROPHETS SHALL ARISE! (Amos 2:11-12; 3:7-8). GOD'S PEOPLE MUST GET THE TRUTH SO THEY CAN CHOOSE! They must have a choice! (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). That is God's way.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). PROPHETS ARISE IN A TIME OF CRISIS (in this case, both a Church and a world crisis). "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (verse 8). Prophets or submissive leaders are GOING TO RESPOND TO THAT FRIGHTENING, LION-LIKE WARNING! "Who will not fear?" (see also Malachi 1:6; 2:4-6).

Paul said, “[W]oe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16). He feared the “lion”! If we don’t preach the truth that God reveals, we show a dangerous lack of godly fear—fearing man rather than God. **PROPHETS SPEAK OUT WHEN THEY ARE TOLD TO “PROPHESY NOT”!** They listen to God—not men. So must we.

GOD’S SECRETS ARE NO LONGER BEING GIVEN TO THE LAODICEANS. Their leaders are in **REBELLION** against what Christ taught through Mr. Armstrong. God won’t reveal His *secrets* to those who rebel against His *government!*

Physical and spiritual Israel are entering into a crisis they can’t even imagine (just like the other eras experienced in Revelation 2 and 3).

God talks about blowing a “trumpet” (Amos 3:6; Ezekiel 33:6; Isaiah 58:1). That is exactly what the WCG is *not* doing today! (Amos 2:11-12). Mr. Tkach said the world couldn’t accept a message like the one Mr. Armstrong preached on television.

That is not the way Amos viewed his calling. He had a peaceful job as “an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit” (Amos 7:14). He probably didn’t want to leave this peaceful occupation. But God “called him to die” (as one commentary said of all the prophets). He was commanded to blow a **TRUMPET** and warn Israel (a type of our work today, verses 10-17).

Tradition says Amos was killed by Amaziah, the high priest, or by the king. The world wouldn’t accept Amos’s message either—for very long. Yet Amos still blew the trumpet until they killed him. This is far removed from the weak message being sent out from the WCG today.

The Philadelphia Church of God *is* blowing a **TRUMPET** today! If you would like to be added to the mailing list for our monthly magazine, the *Philadelphia Trumpet*, please contact us at the address or phone number shown at the end of this book and request your free subscription. We give God’s prophetic view of current events in the way the *Plain Truth* used to. All inquiries will be kept confidential.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION UNVEILED AT LAST

In the November-December 1986 *Plain Truth* article “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” David Hulme wrote this: “When we put this [sixth] chapter in Revelation alongside Matthew 24 and let the Bible interpret its own symbols, we can see that these horsemen represent the signs that Jesus said were to be the ‘beginning of sorrows’—the time leading up to His Second Coming.

“You need to face it, and then you need to KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE. Jesus did say it was possible to qualify to escape what is coming.

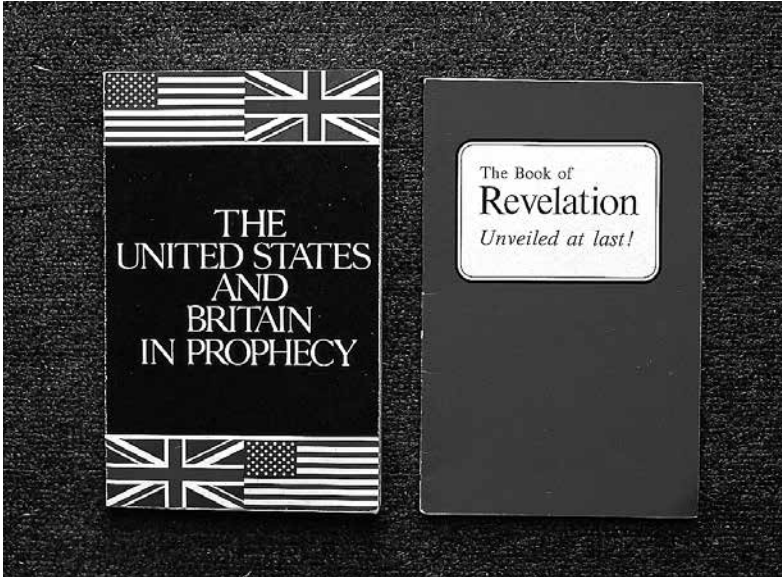
“In Luke 21:36 we read this: ‘Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.’

“Here’s a WARNING to stay alert, to watch world events, and to START MAKING RIGHT CHOICES. We have a booklet, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*, that will help you get started. This age of man’s course is almost run out and you NEED TO ESCAPE THESE AWFUL TIMES AHEAD. Christ promised a time of protection for those who will heed a way to ESCAPE. You need to find out how.

“*The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last* will help you grasp the meaning of these prophecies that at first seem so hard to understand” (emphasis mine throughout).

That quote was made almost one year after Mr. Armstrong died. Now this booklet is also discontinued. IT IS DESPERATELY NEEDED RIGHT NOW. If you still have it, read it again and judge for yourself. Mr. Armstrong didn’t live to see the end of this age as he thought he would. (So correct that little error in the booklet.) NEVER WAS A BOOKLET’S MESSAGE MORE URGENTLY NEEDED. Christ has not revealed *exactly* when the end will be, but He still said it is the wicked who can “not discern the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3).

In that booklet, Mr. Armstrong shows how Christ is personally WARNING THIS WORLD OF AN IMPENDING HOLOCAUST! That warning message is an ingredient sadly lacking in the WCG today. Mr. Armstrong knew the Church was called to WARN this world.



ANOTHER GOSPEL As the wcc's message has become less and less prophetic, books like these have become obsolete to that church.

Today, the WCG is moving away from that responsibility! And its message is NOT a strong warning! *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last IS* a strong warning. That is *why* this booklet was canceled!

ANOTHER MAJOR BOOK DISCONTINUED

The United States and Britain in Prophecy was the most requested book in the WCG. That means it probably did more to build the WCG than any other book it has ever published!

Read what Mr. Armstrong said about this book: “[T]he one central master key to prophecy as a whole is the identity of the United States and the British nations in these prophecies for today! ...

“[T]HE ALL-IMPORTANT MASTER KEY HAS BEEN FOUND!

“That key is knowledge of the astonishing identity of the American and British peoples—as well as the German—in

biblical prophecies. THIS VERY EYE-OPENING, ASTOUNDING IDENTITY IS THE STRONGEST PROOF OF THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY BIBLE! IT IS, AT THE SAME TIME, THE STRONGEST PROOF OF THE VERY ACTIVE EXISTENCE OF THE LIVING GOD!” (*The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, eighth edition).

Please read these quotes by Mr. Armstrong again. They are so very profound. Then you can better see why SATAN is attacking this book!

A few years ago, the WCG sent a survey about *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* to the ministry and then on to many of the members. Here is one of the questions from that survey: “Is this booklet irrelevant in light of the commission given to the Church to go to all nations with the gospel?” In other words, the WCG is asking, “Is this book irrelevant to the gospel?”

A major portion of the book is about David’s throne, which Christ will sit upon when He comes to rule this Earth! (Luke 1:31-32). *Nothing* could be more a part of the gospel! Read the book—it’s filled with the gospel.

THIS IS JUST ANOTHER SIGN THAT THE WCG IS PREACHING “ANOTHER GOSPEL”!

Michael Snyder, former assistant director for Public Affairs for the WCG, said the book could very well be “classed as speculation” and permanently withdrawn. And so it was. The WCG has pulled *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* from circulation—FOREVER! They have indeed classed this book as speculation.

The *Watchman Expositor*, a newspaper produced by Watchman Fellowship, wrote about *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* in 1991: “British-Israelism has always been a theory without credible proof. It is presently under review by the Worldwide Church of God and will probably be modified, if not repudiated. THIS DOCTRINE IS THE LAST VESTIGE OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG’S LEGACY AS A FALSE PROPHET. Will the current president, Joseph Tkach, have the courage to retire it as he has *Mystery of the Ages?*” (Vol. 8).

The WCG leaders have been working with this Protestant group since 1989, trying to remove the WCG’s cult status. The *Expositor*

believes that removing *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* will remove the “LAST VESTIGE OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG’S LEGACY AS A FALSE PROPHET”! How could the WCG leadership work closely with such a group? Do the WCG leaders also think Mr. Armstrong was a false prophet? Their *deeds* show they think Mr. Armstrong was a false prophet! We must look at what they are *doing*.

The *Expositor* group sees that the WCG LEADERS HAVE VIRTUALLY DESTROYED THE FOUNDATION OF ALL THAT MR. ARMSTRONG TAUGHT!

How many of the WCG MEMBERS see that?

Michael Snyder told Watchman Fellowship the following: “I respectfully submit to you that if Watchman Fellowship wants to HELP THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD GROW IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE, then it can do so by printing up-to-date information” (ibid).

Michael Snyder is asking Protestants who believe Mr. Armstrong was a *lying, false prophet* TO “HELP THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD GROW IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE”!

How utterly condemning! NO WONDER GOD SPEWS THEM OUT OF HIS MOUTH!

“Incredibly, in the midst of this doctrinal turmoil, the Worldwide Church of God now considers it to be a ‘misrepresentation’ to quote its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, as a spokesman for beliefs of its current membership” (ibid).

Do you believe those words? WHAT A SHOCKING BETRAYAL! Mr. Armstrong can no longer BE QUOTED AS A SPOKESMAN FOR THE WCG! The *Watchman Expositor* sees that. Do the WCG members see it?

That’s why *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* and other teachings of Mr. Armstrong have been discontinued. The WCG leaders tell the *Watchman Expositor* the truth about their views of Mr. Armstrong, but then have another version for their own members! WHAT DIABOLICAL HYPOCRISY! This is the BETRAYAL of 2 Thessalonians 2. One man is “taken out of the way.” Then he and Christ are betrayed by the “son of perdition”! It’s another Judas Iscariot-type betrayal!

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the KEY OF DAVID, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (Revelation 3:7-8). This “key of David” revolves primarily around the knowledge God gave His Church in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (we will send you a free copy if you do not have one). The “open door” was the gospel going to the world. Neither of these ingredients is present in the Laodicean Church (verses 14-20). The Laodiceans are “blind”—just as God said they would be! NEXT TO THE BIBLE, *THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY* IS PROBABLY THE GREATEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN ON PROPHECY! The WCG leaders are not only attacking a book—they are attacking GOD’S TRUTH taught through Herbert W. Armstrong.

A COMMISSION TO THE WORLD?

Now read what Joe Tkach Jr. wrote in *Reviews You Can Use* (September-October 1989): “God’s Church has a job to do, a commission—to preach the gospel and to teach those who believe (Matthew 28:19-20). What is the commission of the members? Members aren’t called just for their own salvation. They are called to help support the work of the Church.” Notice he refers to Matthew 28:19-20 as being the commission for the Church.

In the *World Tomorrow* program’s special tribute to Mr. Armstrong just after his death, it was said, “This is the commission that Jesus Christ gave to His Church, to preach the gospel of the Kingdom” At that point in the program, “MATTHEW 24:14” was shown on the screen.

When Mr. Armstrong used a scripture to define the Church’s commission, he generally referred to Matthew 24:14—not Matthew 28:19-20. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then

shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). *Why* the change today? Which, incidentally, no one in the WCG really explained. And there is no biblical basis for that change.

You need to understand, as Mr. Armstrong certainly did, that Matthew 28:19-20 does not *totally* define the Church's commission to the world. It does not include a *warning* about the end. Matthew 24:14 discusses the gospel and the "end." The *context* tells us the Church is to **WARN** this world of what is to happen just *before* Christ returns—and just *after*. The whole chapter of Matthew 24 is about God's coming Kingdom—and the terrible nuclear holocaust that precedes it. Without a strong end-time warning, the Church fails to fulfill this commission.

WCG leaders canceled *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*. Why? BECAUSE THE WARNING WAS TOO STRONG. That is the only reason. Read it and see for yourself. The warning **MUST BE STRONG** in order to adequately get the message across!

The WCG gave \$100,000 to the Hurricane Hugo fund and \$100,000 to the San Francisco earthquake fund, plus other similar contributions. (But they say they can't afford to print *Mystery of the Ages*!) The message of the Church's *real commission* from Christ says earthquakes are to increase (Matthew 24:7, 14). God's money would be far better spent telling the world **WHY** these disasters are happening—the *cause*. God commands the Church to "give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3:17). God also says, if they are not warned, the ministry is guilty of their blood (Ezekiel 33:1-7, 11). This means the WCG and other Laodicean groups will be plunged into the Tribulation with the world—because the world's blood is on their head.

The whole book of Ezekiel is about a **WATCHMAN WARNING** Israel of its coming death—unless its people repent. It applies primarily to the end time.

Has the WCG forgotten **WHY THE CHURCH EXISTS**? A big part of the Church's commission is to **WARN** (and we do grow in character by giving our lives to God while warning the world). Has the WCG forgotten that God's Work is a **TRUMPET-BLOWING WORK**?

This is another way Pasadena's leaders should follow Mr. Armstrong's footsteps. God will destroy this nation with disasters—if it doesn't repent. Disasters will multiply, and money from the WCG won't make a dent. And they may find themselves **BLUNTING GOD'S CORRECTIVE SWORD! ISRAEL'S ONLY HOPE OF ESCAPING THE TRIBULATION IS THE CHURCH'S WARNING MESSAGE!** Its *only* hope.

The Worldwide Church can't continue these disaster contributions very long. You watch and observe. Disasters will **OVERWHELM** this nation. Just look at what has happened here in the United States since the San Francisco earthquake: In 1992, Los Angeles experienced some of the deadliest riots in U.S. history. That same year, Hurricane Andrew killed 14 people and caused \$16 billion in damages. In 1993, the Midwestern United States experienced severe flooding while the East Coast was plagued with drought. Later that year, California experienced the worst fires in history. 1994 began with the Northridge earthquake in Southern California. Over 50 people died while 20,000 were left homeless. In 1995, Oklahoma City was struck by the worst domestic terrorist attack in American history. Over 160 people died in the deadly bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

THERE IS NO REAL HOPE IN GIVING THESE CONTRIBUTIONS—BUT THERE IS HOPE IN GOD'S WARNING MESSAGE! The cost of the 1989 San Francisco earthquake ran into the billions. How did the United States (the world's greatest *debtor* nation) finance recovery from that disaster? By selling treasury bonds to the Japanese (the world's largest *creditor* nation). The United States can't even finance its own disasters. Wouldn't the WCG's \$100,000 have been better spent on a special booklet or article *revealing WHY THIS WHOLE NATION IS ON THE VERGE OF A FINANCIAL EARTHQUAKE?* The worst in the history of man! *Is it trying to smooth over the correction and chastisement God is sending to this world?*

So much prophecy is being fulfilled—and WCG leaders almost ignore it. It is another way leaders in Pasadena are saying, "My

Lord delayeth his coming” (Matthew 24:48). This verse is also part of the warning of Matthew 24.

Mr. Armstrong served God for over 50 years and taught the Church for many years about our commission to the world. Yet WCG leaders today come along and *arrogantly* change what God has taught His Church through Mr. Armstrong. Some ministers have even denied there is a change! At least they should admit such a massive restructuring of their commission. Where is their **GODLY FEAR**? Read all of Matthew 24 and see what the Church's commission *really* is.

Look at the history of God's Church eras (Revelation 2 and 3). Their primary problems were losing their first love, becoming immoral and compromising with the world. At the same time, they compromised with what the Church taught in the past. Some also lacked the will to **WARN THE WORLD**! That is why the gospel—and the *warning* that accompanies it—was not preached around the world until Mr. Armstrong came on the scene!

God's people must wake up to the **RADICAL** and **DANGEROUS** changes being made in the WCG. The WCG leaders have said their members are to “support the work of the Church.” However, **IF THEY SUPPORT THE *WRONG* WORK, THE CONSEQUENCES ARE DISASTROUS!**

EIGHT

CHURCH DIVISION

JOSHUA WAS ZERUBBABEL'S CHIEF ASSISTANT. THOSE TWO MEN are end-time types of two men who work together just before Christ's return. The Joshua type of Zechariah 3 rebelled and "despised the day of small things." He turned away from the way "Zerubbabel" (Mr. Armstrong) built. That is how Satan got to him (Zechariah 3:1).

The "man of sin" rules in God's temple (or Church) and rejects the past instructions of "he" who was "taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2). Both Joshua and the "man of sin" lead a Judas-like betrayal in our time today.

An end-time, unlawful Joshua and the "man of sin" reign in God's Church just before Christ's return (Zechariah 3:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3). Both turn away from past instructions. Both have filthy garments. Failing to submit to CHRIST'S GOVERNMENT is the major problem of both men.

True ministers of God are discussed in Malachi 2 as being "treacherous" to the wife, or Church, of our youth—the Church Christ built through "Elijah." This subject is also one of *betrayal*. God's ministers move away from "Elijah" and what he

restored (Malachi 4:4-6; Matthew 17:10-11)—just like the story in Zechariah 3 and 4 and 2 Thessalonians 2. The time setting for this treacherous betrayal in each story is *just before* Christ's return.

Revelation 3:7-22 discuss two eras—as Zechariah 4 does. The last era moves away from the Philadelphia standard—away from the Elijah who *restored all things* (Matthew 17:10-11) and the Elijah who built the Family of God (Malachi 4:5-6), just as Joshua's end-time era moved away from the Zerubbabel standard.

All of these major prophecies tell the same story. God is now using them to test our *faith*. Mr. Armstrong talked repeatedly of sticking to the “trunk of the tree.” In all of these major end-time prophecies, we see a Laodicean Church moving away from the “trunk of the tree.”

WHAT IS THE 'CURSE'?

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a *curse*” (Malachi 4:5-6).

Who is cursed? This is a curse which means “utter destruction.” In the past, this has been applied to the “utter destruction” of all the Earth's inhabitants. THAT IS NOT WHAT IT MEANS! The message of Malachi was not sent to the nation of Israel or the world. Primarily, the subject is God's *ministry* (Malachi 1:6; 2:1; 3:3). God praises some ministers (and people) in this book and says other ministers (and people) are cursed.

The word “earth” in Malachi 4:6 also means the “inhabitants of a region” (see Isaiah 11:4 and 26:18 where the same word “earth” is used). The *context* reveals that the *inhabitants* discussed here are *in* the Church. And they are scattered over all the *Earth*. Malachi is discussing the fate of TRUE MINISTERS (and their followers) who fail to repent of their falling away from God's previously revealed truth. It's these *inhabitants* who are cursed.

THE ULTIMATE CURSE IS TO LOSE YOUR ETERNAL LIFE—"utter destruction." A LOSS OF ETERNAL LIFE! Malachi 4:6 is discussing God's people who turn to God and build a godly Family of converted people. And He says those who fail to do this—also converted people—are the *inhabitants* who will be cursed!

God is primarily talking about DESTROYING THE INHABITANTS OF HIS CHURCH WHO REFUSE TO BUILD A FAMILY AROUND GOD'S "ELIJAH" AND GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS! Mr. Armstrong was directed in the Work by the great God for 57 years. Either we build our lives around the "Elijah" family or we lose everything.

Now we see Laodicean leaders moving away from God and heading toward the Great Tribulation. God will not accept their turning away from so much of what they were taught for years without chastening them for doing so. They can't be treacherous to the "wife of your youth" and expect to escape God's severe correction.

Two separate churches are discussed. The Philadelphians go to a place of safety. It appears 50 percent of the Laodiceans repent in the Tribulation (Matthew 25:1-10). The Laodiceans must repent *before* "THE GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD," or their salvation is lost!

God is going to force each of us to make weighty decisions about what we have learned! OUR ETERNAL LIVES HANG IN THE BALANCE!

This is the curse of "utter destruction" God is talking about. *Thayer's Lexicon* says the curse is "the devoting of anything to utter destruction" (see Zechariah 14:11 and 1 Kings 20:42, where the same expression is used).

Even the *context* of Malachi 4 (verses 1-3) is about those who lose their salvation ("neither root nor branch" is left), and those who enter God's Kingdom (verse 2). Malachi 4 is NOT about people who lose their *physical* lives! And it's NOT about God killing every person on Earth because of problems in His Church.

LEADERS IN THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH TODAY ARE LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE TO THEIR ETERNAL DEATH! God says if we are going

to be in His Kingdom, we must repent—either *now* or IN THE TRIBULATION. There is no “Elijah” alive today to get the WCG “back on track” this time. He has come and gone. So God is sending His people—those who turn their backs on the Elijah work—this terrible WARNING of how perilously close they are to losing their eternal glory!

Those who are turning away from the “Elijah” example and his instructions will pay a mind-splitting cost! God’s people possess dangerous knowledge—even more so if they are in the ministry (James 3:1).

When God says “REMEMBER” in Malachi 4:4, it is a WARNING—a *frightful* warning! This is exactly what 2 Thessalonians 2:10 is about: SOME ARE BEING SAVED WHILE OTHERS ARE *LOSING THEIR ETERNAL LIVES!*

The Jews always read verse 5 of Malachi 4 again after verse 6. Why? Because Malachi has perhaps the most horrendous ending in all the Bible. The Jews don’t like to end the minor prophets on such a harsh note.

If it seems harsh to the Jews, how much more so to the Church—the very people to whom this warning is directed? Only God’s people can understand the chilling terror of this ending! This is not a *game*. Our leader is Jesus Christ, and He STILL LEADS WITH GREAT AUTHORITY.

Remember, the book of Malachi first and foremost, is directed to the MINISTRY (Malachi 2:1). When ministers begin compromising with God’s truth, THEIR MESSAGES HAVE LESS AND LESS IMPACT. They probably don’t even notice it. Yet it’s a very *dangerous* direction they are headed. The ministers are more apt to lose their salvation if they turn away from “Elijah’s” instruction and fail to repent. They should *know* better—especially after what happened in the 1970s.

Jesus Christ is giving His Church a frighteningly *harsh* warning. PROBABLY THE HARSHEST WARNING IN THE BIBLE! What could be more serious? Let’s look at another coded message that tells the same story.

FAMILY DIVISION

“I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness” (Malachi 1:2-3). Why Jacob and Esau? They were brothers who had a long history of war. If we apply this to the Church today, we can see God is telling us that the main problem is FAMILY DIVISION. This is the main problem Malachi is attacking. HIS MESSAGE IS NOT FOR THE WORLD. IT’S FOR GOD’S DIVIDED CHURCH TODAY, which is rapidly becoming more divided.

If we look at another end-time minor prophet who talks about Esau, it reveals an attitude. Esau’s *PRIDE* *deceived* him (Obadiah 3). It is also *pride* that causes ministers to arrogantly push aside Mr. Armstrong’s instructions. Their *pride* is deceiving them as well. So much so that they are rejecting much of God’s precious truth and His *government*.

It should frighten us to even think of making some of the decisions the WCG leaders have made. To discontinue *all* of Mr. Armstrong’s major books was not an act of humility! These leaders are deceived by their own *pride*.

“And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and THOU SHALT BE CUT OFF FOR EVER” (verses 9-10). Esau’s name is to be “cut off for ever.” This is given as a stern and harsh warning to God’s ministry and people. (It’s the same warning as Malachi 4:5-6.) Esau did violence against his brother Jacob. Today, as some WCG ministers move away from what Mr. Armstrong taught, they are doing violence to their spiritual brothers (Malachi 2:10).

Esau’s end (being cut off forever) is a potential end for the ministry. That is why this story is in the book of Malachi! We in the ministry must avoid these mistakes and repent if we commit them—or we will be cut off forever!

Could the Laodiceans have really surfaced if Mr. Armstrong were alive? I mean, so that everybody could see? In time, they will even be able to see themselves—by their *works*.

Remember, there are three books directly referring to the temple—Haggai and Zechariah came *while* the temple was being built, and Malachi came *after* it was built. THE BOOK OF MALACHI IS ABOUT THE MODERN COUNTERPART PERIOD WE ARE IN RIGHT NOW!

That is why the message of Malachi must be delivered NOW! It's all according to God's great master plan. God is making His people CHOOSE!

Malachi recorded what was to occur after “Elijah” died—after that “house,” or era, was finished (Zechariah 4:9). What may be the harshest warning in all the Bible is aimed primarily at God's ministers (and their followers). Those who fail to rally around Mr. Armstrong and his God Family instructions won't be in God's Kingdom! The fact that Mr. Armstrong is dead makes no difference! WE ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR EVERY WORD GOD HAS GIVEN US (Matthew 4:4). Either we *remember* what Christ taught or our eternal lives will be blotted out!

The Laodiceans go into the Tribulation because they don't “remember”! They reject so much of what “Elijah” taught that they become “lukewarm” (Revelation 3:15-16). The message of Malachi must be delivered. So much hangs in the balance.

‘THE MASTER’

God is warning the Laodiceans that they are losing their heat and zeal! “The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the MASTER and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 2:12). The word “master” means “hot, ardent, to be alert, to waken.” The Hebrew word literally means “one who arouses.” They will be cut off because of their failure to arouse God's people.

Read this comment from the WCG's *Pastor General's Report* (Nov. 21, 1989; emphasis mine throughout):

NEWS STATION ASKS CHURCH ABOUT PROPHECY: Following the spectacular news about the opening of the Berlin Wall, we unexpectedly received a call from a news station in Seattle. The news director was well aware of the *World Tomorrow* program and the fact that for more than 40 years the Church had been predicting the reunification of Europe in some form. He asked for on-air comments about whether the Church believed the opening of the Wall was the commencement of end-time prophetic events.

We responded that it was PREMATURE to make statements like that, but that the Bible was very clear about a 10-nation consortium in Europe. We also pointed out that history shows that past episodes of European unification have not proven positive for the rest of the world and that the Church would continue to watch events very closely.

The news director was DISAPPOINTED that we would not proclaim this to be the absolute beginning of end-time events, but it was interesting that he did say that what the Church has predicted from the Bible was remarkably close to what appears to be happening.

SHALLOW PROPHETIC UNDERSTANDING like this will cause the WCG leaders to think events are “premature” RIGHT UP TO THE TIME THEY ARE IN THE TRIBULATION, EXPERIENCING THEM! The WCG’s response to the newsman’s request was not a “watchman” talking. Those Church leaders didn’t learn that approach from Mr. Armstrong. Can you even imagine Mr. Armstrong talking like that? Because Mr. Armstrong WASN’T PERFECT IN HIS PROPHETIC UNDERSTANDING (just like Paul), these leaders go to an alarming extreme. As a result, they are not *arousing* people as the “master” is supposed to do.

I, like the news director, was “disappointed”—no, I was *distressed*—by that response! There are so many more major prophecies being fulfilled now than in the 15 years prior to

Mr. Armstrong's death—and the Worldwide Church of God is PROPHECYING LESS AND LESS!

Here are a few excerpts from a letter written by Mr. Armstrong on November 11, 1985, about two months before he died (emphasis his):

But first, let me give you a brief preview of the world you live in today, and what the next very few years are going to bring into YOUR life and mine. We are living in a time of extreme DANGER! Television commentators broadcast it. All evidence seems to indicate it—pollution, unprecedented crime and violence, family life breaking down, morals in the cesspool, terrorism, local wars in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America. ALL signs point to the fact that we are living in the TIME OF THE END of this present civilization! ...

We are living in the most tremendous days of world history—the very END TIME, the END of this present evil, unhappy, violent world—just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. ...

Our time is now SHORT, and growing daily shorter! World troubles will mount into troubles such as NEVER WERE BEFORE, and never will be again. But then Jesus Christ will come in all His supernatural POWER to bring us PEACE, and a REAL HOPE, at last! ...

We are now rapidly approaching the time of the world's greatest CRISIS, when this whole man-made civilization will crumble and fall—and a NEW WORLD OF PEACE AND ETERNAL SALVATION will dawn at Christ's soon coming in POWER and GLORY! God has decreed that the warning message must now go to the world (Matthew 24:14).

This is the message of the world's ONLY and SURE HOPE! We are definitely NOW at the "TIME OF THE END," when the Prophet Daniel says, "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10).

Nobody is speaking like this in the WCG today. *Why?*

Jesus Christ spoke with *authority*. And Christ spoke with *authority* through Mr. Armstrong. Who speaks with *authority* in the WCG today? Where is the AUTHORITY OF CHRIST in its message? And why this dramatic change? WCG history of the 1970s should answer those questions.

WE DON'T HEAR A VOICE OF "TREMBLING" AND "OF FEAR" ABOUT JACOB'S TROUBLE (Jeremiah 30:4-9). AS THIS NATION HURTLES TOWARD A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST, THE MESSAGE OF THE WCG GETS WEAKER AND WEAKER. God says that many "are at ease in Zion [the Church]" (Amos 6:1). This is a prophecy for the Laodicean Church today! Right now!

Never was there a more urgent need for a stirring message! THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD IS TRYING TO WIN THE WORLD—NOT WARN THEM! It's all happening as Malachi prophesied it would. Nobody would ever accuse Mr. Armstrong of being a master who failed to arouse. Unfortunately, his example is not being followed today.

Mr. Tkach said in the *Pastor General's Report*, June 27, 1989: "Is this the time of the end? We have every reason to believe it is." He continued, "[I]t does *seem* to me that the end must be soon. World events do *seem* to be moving in that direction." Today the WCG is not even sure the end will come soon—or that world events are EVEN MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION!

Mr. Tkach said in his *Worldwide News* "Personal" column, December 11, 1989, "Think about this: What would you do if there were another world war and Jesus still didn't come? Would you give up the faith?"

Think about that. Mr. Tkach says a world war (it would surely be a *nuclear* war) could come, and it still may not signal the end of this age. He could be in the Great Tribulation—which will be a nuclear holocaust—and presumably *still* not be certain that Christ was about to come! THOSE ARE NOT THE WORDS OF GOD'S WATCHMAN WHO IS SUPPOSED TO WARN THE WORLD! Any WATCHMAN with views like this is "BLIND"! (Ezekiel 33:6-7;

Revelation 3:17). And brethren, if you FOLLOW HIM, NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST AWAITS YOU!

There is a VAST DIFFERENCE between the way Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Tkach have taught prophecy—and many other subjects. We must understand *why*. YOUR future in this world and the world to come is at stake! Where is the URGENCY and AUTHORITY in the WCG’s message today? It’s as if WCG leaders think time will go on and on, and they are no longer certain of anything. THEY ARE PUTTING “FAR AWAY THE EVIL DAY” (Amos 6:3) and saying, indirectly by their own words and actions, that our “lord delayeth his coming” (Matthew 24:48; 2 Peter 3:4).

TWISTING SCRIPTURE

In the June 24, 1991, *Worldwide News*, David Hunsberger wrote an article titled “What the Church Teaches About Malachi and His Message.” In the article, Mr. Hunsberger warned WCG members to be “careful to avoid FALSE TEACHERS WHO DEPART FROM THE CHURCH (1 Timothy 4:1-2).”

Does 1 Timothy 4:1-2 say that we should be “CAREFUL TO AVOID FALSE TEACHERS WHO DEPART *FROM THE CHURCH*”? No, IT DOES NOT!

You need to read that again, because it’s a gross misquote of God’s Word. The Bible says “some shall depart from THE FAITH”—NOT THE CHURCH! That is the kind of twisted reasoning that massively afflicts the WCG today.

This scripture was used in referring to 2 Thessalonians 2. The big mistake is not in leaving God’s Church, as they state. The subject is departing “FROM THE FAITH” or the “truth”—NEVER THE CHURCH! There is a definite reason why God didn’t inspire the word “Church.”

As I said before, there are seven Church eras mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3—and five of them went astray. The followers of John were kicked out of God’s Church (3 John 10).

The WCG would like you to believe that 1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 10 are about departing from the

Church—instead of the faith, or the truth. This way they can keep those members who are spiritually asleep and continue to receive their tithes and offerings.

Salvation is an individual matter between *you and God*—NOT YOU AND THE CHURCH! Satan inspires these gross misquotes coming from the WCG (Zechariah 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:9). Members in the WCG must WAKE UP and see that their salvation is “perishing”!

‘WILL A MAN ROB GOD?’

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:8-10). Obviously, God is addressing the whole nation of Israel. However, the Church is *spiritual* Israel. So the message is directed *mainly* to the Church. The *context* in this chapter is PURIFYING THE MINISTRY (verse 3).

“Bring ye ALL the tithes into the storehouse” implies that some of the tithes are being misdirected (see almost any commentary) or that some of the tithes are not being spent wisely. It is discussing the ministers who “bring” the money into the storehouse—or have the authority to direct where it is spent or not spent. It refers today mainly to those Laodicean leaders in charge of tithes and offerings.

The word “rob” is a rare word, used only here and in Proverbs 22:22-23. The *Companion Bible* says “have robbed” means “are defrauding.” Defraud means to MISREPRESENT—GOD, in this case. They are not doing what God commands. WHY IS THIS SUBJECT OF FRAUDULENT USE OF TITHES SO EMPHASIZED FOR US TODAY?

The number one reason listed in the *Pastor General's Report* for discontinuing *Mystery of the Ages* was COST! That's right—COST! Now that is spiritual FRAUD! How can the WCG afford to donate \$200,000 and more to various relief funds *and yet be UNABLE to afford to print God's inspired words?*

Fraud indicates *misuse* rather than not receiving money. And remember, the ministry gives “polluted bread” (Malachi 1:7). How? GOD'S TITHES AND OFFERINGS ARE BEING MISDIRECTED AND MISSPENT.

Here is a quote by David Hulme, from the *Worldwide News*, August 14, 1989: “The Ambassador Foundation, through the PRESENTATION OF A GRANT by Chairman Joseph W. Tkach, took a significant step forward in promoting international understanding here [London] July 18.

“Mr. Tkach established the foundation's involvement in REBUILDING THE GLOBE THEATER, where many of William Shakespeare's plays were first presented.

“Far from being merely a performing arts facility, the new Globe Theater complex will include a cultural center and FACILITIES FOR LITERARY SCHOLARS TO STUDY SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.”

WCG leaders say they *can't afford* to print *Mystery of the Ages*, BUT THEY CAN AFFORD TO PAY FOR “LITERARY SCHOLARS TO STUDY SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS”?! The decision to help fund the Globe Theater was made shortly after it was decided the WCG couldn't afford to continue THE MAJOR WORK OF GOD'S “ELIJAH”! God holds them accountable FOR SUCH TWISTED PRIORITIES!

God says, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be MEAT in mine house” God wants SPIRITUAL MEAT in His Church. The WCG spends thousands of dollars to help rebuild the Globe Theater and to advance Shakespeare's works. At about the same time, it discontinued *Mystery of the Ages*—WHICH IS VERY POWERFUL SPIRITUAL MEAT! It has abolished ALL of Mr. Armstrong's major books—WHICH IS SOME OF THE STRONGEST SPIRITUAL MEAT PRODUCED IN 2,000 YEARS! That includes many smaller booklets as well.

Repeatedly, members coming from the WCG to the PCG have said that the WCG members are not being fed spiritually! God provides tithes so His people can be fed strong spiritual food. The POWERFUL Word of God is no longer being preached from the WCG headquarters. God says that improper use of those tithes is a scandalous crime.

I believe we can begin to get a feel for why God spews the Laodiceans out of His mouth with extreme disgust! HE HAS NOT ONE GOOD THING TO SAY ABOUT THE LAODICEAN CHURCH! And He says, “I know thy works” The Laodiceans *do* have Church era works. The problem is, they are *not* good works.

We must remember the *context* of the book of Malachi. Its message is about a ministry which *despises God’s name* (Malachi 1:6). It is about a ministry giving “polluted bread” spiritually (verse 7), and being *treacherous* to those loyal to God’s truth (Malachi 2:14-16).

And don’t forget, God says He will “purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver” (Malachi 3:3). This is speaking of the ministry and those who follow them. It’s a VERY SERIOUS WARNING! Gold and silver are refined in a fiery furnace—a type of the GREAT TRIBULATION! We in the ministry face a very weighty responsibility. Malachi is a book about the ministry—those who fear God and those who don’t.

How could there possibly be such serious ministerial problems like these described in Malachi 1, 2 and 3, and there not also be problems with tithes and offerings being unwisely spent? God will spew their sacrifices out of His mouth.

TRUE GOSPEL ENDS WITH MR. ARMSTRONG

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you” (Zechariah 4:9). Mr. Armstrong told all of the WCG members that he fulfilled this Zerubbabel office. When we look at his work—his “fruits”—we know that to be true.

God said he would “FINISH” building the house—or the

Philadelphia era work. If Mr. Armstrong finished the building, then those who followed were prophesied to turn away from and even tear down what he built (Zechariah 3).

“And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things” (Matthew 17:10-11). Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Tkach both admitted that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled this Elijah office. He “restored all things.” Then what happened?

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the return of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The chain of events is that Mr. Armstrong was taken out of the way (verses 4-11), the Church entered into a great falling away, and then the gospel was no longer preached. What is being preached around the world by the WCG is no longer God’s true gospel.

After that catastrophe, only the PCG “holds fast” to the traditions, or past teachings—AND THE TRUE GOSPEL (verses 14-15). VERSE 14 INDICATES THAT THE END-TIME FALLING AWAY WOULD BE A REJECTING OF GOD’S TRUE GOSPEL. IF WE WANT TO OBTAIN THE “GLORY,” WE MUST “HOLD FAST” TO THE TRUE GOSPEL!

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (Revelation 3:7-8). This is referring to the Philadelphia era headed by Mr. Armstrong. There was an “open door,” and the gospel was preached around the world (Matthew 24:14).

Then comes the Laodicean era that turns away from much of what the Philadelphia era taught (Revelation 3:14-22). The Laodiceans have no “open door” from God. They are “rich, and increased with goods,” which means “outward possessions.”

Where did they get this physical wealth? God certainly wouldn't bless a Laodicean attitude—just the reverse.

In Malachi 1 and 2, we see the ministers are “cursed” because they offer “polluted bread”—a *polluted* gospel. They are also treacherous to the “wife [or Church] of thy youth,” which is the one Mr. Armstrong headed. This means they twist the true gospel.

Elijah had to come in the end time and build a great work (Malachi 4:4-6). How can the WCG ignore such powerful end-time prophecies that **MANY PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE**? God says those who do so must pay a terrifying penalty.

Now the WCG teaches a “gospel” ABOUT CHRIST—the Messenger—instead of the MESSAGE He preached (Matthew 24:5, 12). No literature sums up Christ's message and the true gospel better than *Mystery of the Ages*, which the WCG has discredited and discontinued.

The whole world is deceived (Revelation 12:9). Only God's Church proclaims the true gospel. The WCG has turned to a false gospel. Now only the PCG proclaims God's true gospel—the same gospel taught by Mr. Armstrong.

The only reason for the Philadelphia Church of God's existence is the failure of the Worldwide Church of God after Mr. Armstrong's death.

Are you holding fast to God's true gospel?

STOP THE MESSAGE

“Will no one close the temple-doors, to keep you from kindling useless fires upon my altar? ...” (Malachi 1:10; Moffatt). The New American Standard translation renders this verse: “OH THAT THERE WERE ONE AMONG YOU WHO WOULD SHUT THE GATES ...”!

God is pleading with His temple servants—the ministers—to TAKE A STAND! It's a strong plea from God to STOP what is happening! The message of the WCG is becoming so WATERED DOWN, God calls it “polluted bread” (verse 7)—that means polluted spiritual food (John 6:48).

Fellow ministers, what will God think of us if we fail to act? Look what Christ did when the moneychangers were defiling the *physical* temple: “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matthew 21:12-13). He drove out those who bought and sold in the temple! He overthrew the moneychangers’ tables!

If Christ took such strong action in the *physical* temple, what will He do today in the *spiritual* temple when the Laodicean ministers offer “polluted bread”?

TRYING TO DEVELOP “UNITY” BY ALLOWING PEOPLE TO POLLUTE THE TEMPLE, OR CHURCH, IS SATANIC!

Loyal ministers must STAND and FIGHT against spiritual pollution—no matter what the consequences.

The big “falling away” could have occurred in the 1970s. But the gospel had not been adequately preached around the world (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 10:11). So God held back the “mystery of iniquity” by keeping Mr. Armstrong alive until the job was done.

The major work NOW is getting the message of Malachi to the Laodicean Church. The gospel has been preached. THE LAODICEANS MUST NOW BE WARNED!

That is what the book of Malachi is all about. It is not a message for the world. The message of Malachi is sent to a CORRUPT church that is no longer serving God. Unless they repent, it is time to CLOSE THE DOORS.

PREPARING JEWELS

Three commentaries call the Philadelphians (mentioned in Malachi 3:16-17) the “remnant that feared God,” the “few godly in the land” and the “faithful minority.” Even secular commentaries say those in the Church who fear God are a small minority.

The *Companion Bible* gives a better translation for “make up my

jewels” in verse 17. It reads, “I am preparing my jewels.” This group retains their godly fear throughout this Church conflict. GOD USES THE END-TIME CHURCH CRISIS TO PREPARE HIS JEWELS! GOD USES THE LAODICEAN CONDITION OF THE CHURCH TO QUALIFY HIS JEWELS TO ESCAPE THE GREAT TRIBULATION (verse 17). These “jewels” are the Philadelphians who refuse to be led astray by the Laodiceans.

The process is going on right now! God is testing each one of us to see what we will do. This is all a carefully laid plan to reveal the quality of our character.

The only thing the world learns from history is that it never learns from history. When we refuse to learn from history, we are destined to repeat its mistakes. Sadly, this also applies to many Laodiceans. There is no excuse if we fail to learn from the 1970s.

These *jewels* of Malachi 3:17 become eternal “pillars” in God’s temple (Revelation 3:12). They are being prepared this very moment! No other modern group will reach this level of reward.

God’s *jewels* can discern between the righteous and the wicked (Malachi 3:18). They know the difference between a Philadelphian and a Laodicean attitude.

What does it mean for God to *spare* those who fear Him? (verse 17). The word “spare” means “to pity, have compassion on.” Why does God need to have “pity” and “compassion”? BECAUSE THE TRIBULATION AND THE “DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD” ARE COMING! (Malachi 4:5-6).

One group receives God’s compassion and protection. The other group goes into the Great Tribulation. The Laodiceans are saved from the “great and dreadful day of the Lord” and the second death, IF THEY REPENT!

The context shows that God will save those who fear Him *from suffering and death* (Revelation 12:14). The Philadelphians will be taken to a place of safety.

There are some “he will not *spare* [same Hebrew word] in the day of vengeance” (Proverbs 6:34). The same Hebrew word is also used in 1 Samuel 15:9: “But Saul and the people *spared* Agag” Spared Agag from what? From death. We desperately need to

be spared. We all have the potential to fail horribly. Those who understand and support the message of Malachi will be “spared.” That is how they qualify to go to a place of safety.

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I WILL SPARE THEM, AS A MAN SPARETH HIS OWN SON THAT SERVETH HIM. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between HIM THAT SERVETH GOD AND HIM THAT SERVETH HIM NOT” (Malachi 3:17-18). How will you show God that you know who serves Him today? Faith without *works* is dead (James 2:17). We must have works to back our faith or it is a *dead* faith. We must *act* on our faith!

GOD WILL *NOT* TAKE HIS PEOPLE TO A PLACE OF SAFETY UNLESS THEY SUPPORT THOSE WHO SERVE GOD! You must determine who they are and *actively* support them. You must come to see where God’s “open door” is now (Revelation 3:8). God is going to *FORCE* you to choose (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). That is how He makes up His “jewels.”

God says He will spare them from the Tribulation “as a man spareth his own son.” But they must be able to discern between those who serve God and those who serve Him not (Malachi 3:18). If they are able to discern the difference, can you imagine God rewarding them for sitting on the fence? If they can’t discern, then they are deceived and are going to be sent into the Tribulation.

There is one big difference between today and the 1970s: Mr. Armstrong was alive to get the Church “back on track.” Today, Christ must solve this problem another way. God’s people *must* discern how Christ is doing it today. Your depth of conversion is being tested very severely! If you understand the Bible, you should already know that God will test each of us in this way.

These are serious prophecies. Study them thoroughly and prayerfully. *YOUR FUTURE IS DETERMINED BY WHAT YOU DO NOW!*

NINE

MALACHI'S MESSAGE

MR. ARMSTRONG'S LAST INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. TKACH were, "I have reached world leaders. Your job is to get the Church ready." Mr. Armstrong also told an evangelist a couple of days before he died that "the gospel has been preached."

It isn't that God doesn't want the gospel and a warning message preached today. The world needs to be warned NOW more than ever before! But God knew the Laodicean Church would not do the job. The prophecies tell us that. They offer "polluted bread" and the Church is becoming divided. So THE GOSPEL COMMISSION TO THE WORLD WAS FINISHED WHEN MR. ARMSTRONG DIED. But there is still a work of warning the world. Now the Philadelphia Church will *have* to warn the world and the Laodiceans. The Laodicean work is failing in its commission—TO GOD'S CHURCH AND TO THE WORLD! Therefore, the Malachi message has become necessary. Through the Philadelphia Church, GOD IS WARNING THE LAODICEAN CHURCH TO REPENT!

Just as God sends a warning message to a sinning world, HE IS ALSO SENDING A WARNING MESSAGE TO A SINNING LAODICEAN CHURCH.

THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI MUST BE DELIVERED. This is the primary way God is knocking on the door of the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:20). This statement is made to an *era*. The Laodiceans are going to hear this knock—if we Philadelphians do our job. The Laodiceans will either hear and respond now—or repentance in the Great Tribulation is their *only* hope for salvation.

God has revealed these truths to bring the Laodiceans to repentance.

What happened anciently *after* Malachi came to the temple? Look at all the confusion Christ encountered about 450 years later. Overall, the message Malachi brought didn't turn most people to God—and they suffered horribly. We also know that 144,000 Church members won't repent until the Tribulation. Others will go into the lake of fire. Still, God's Family is going to expand mightily.

God's major Work today IS GETTING THIS MESSAGE OF MALACHI TO HIS PEOPLE AND GETTING THEM READY TO GO TO A PLACE OF SAFETY AND INTO GOD'S KINGDOM (Luke 21:36). Those who don't repent *will* be *warned*. They will be without excuse.

Anciently, Malachi came to a temple that was in shambles—after Zerubbabel was dead. The same is true of Malachi's message today. The direction of the Laodiceans is in disarray after the death of Mr. Armstrong, our modern Zerubbabel. Many ministers lack godly fear (Malachi 1:6; 2:4-8) and their sacrifices to God are polluted (Malachi 1:7-8). THE MESSAGE OF THE WCG IS SO POLLUTED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO STOP THE MESSAGE AND CLOSE DOWN THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD! (verse 10). Polluted bread is being offered (verse 7), and the ministry causes people to stumble at God's law (Malachi 2:7-8). Some ministers are cruel to fellow ministers (verse 10). In case you don't believe that, JUST BELIEVE GOD! It is happening. The Worldwide Church is TOO SCHOLARLY—TOO ACADEMIC IN WORLDLY WAYS (verse 12). Many ministers are

treacherous to past instructions of the Church (verses 14, 16), and tithes are being misused (Malachi 3:8-10).

STAYING WITH THE LAODICEAN CHURCH WILL CAUSE YOU TO SUFFER THEIR FATE! Some people will think it's disloyal to follow Christ out of the WCG. Mr. Armstrong WAS FIRED FROM THE SARDIS CHURCH FOR FOLLOWING GOD AND THE TRUTH HE REVEALED. And more ministers will be "fired" from the WCG if they start teaching this message of Malachi. IT'S NOT A SIN TO WALK AWAY FROM THE LAODICEAN CHURCH INTO THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD. It's a sin if we FAIL to do so! YOU WILL NOT BE LEAVING THE BODY OF CHRIST!

Before this is all over, I believe ANYONE WHO TRULY FOLLOWS CHRIST HAS TO LEAVE OR BE "CAST OUT" OF THE LAODICEAN CHURCH. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Either we get off the train, or we are destined to crash with it!

The message of Malachi is to be delivered in MODERN TIMES. This implies and means MORE THAN ONE PERSON WILL DO THE WORK. "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16). This is about a group of God's people who do God's Work. IT IS A PROPHECY OF A SEPARATE PHILADELPHIA GROUP. These people were "disfellowshipped" or "cast out," or they just left the Laodicean Church.

Ministers in God's Church talked for years about the PROBABILITY OF TWO END-TIME CHURCHES being discussed in Revelation 12: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (verses 13-14). Here is one group of God's people (Philadelphians) persecuted by Satan and taken to a place of safety. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [or, "the rest

of her offspring” (New King James)], which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (verse 17). Here is a different group (Laodiceans) that Satan persecutes in another way (he “wars” against them DURING THE TRIBULATION).

The Philadelphian group is persecuted *before* they go to a place of safety (verse 13) and they are *separate* from the Laodicean group (verse 17). Here, and in Malachi 3:16, it reveals that these two groups separate and can’t “walk together” some time *before* the Tribulation. Do the Laodiceans inflict part of the pre-Tribulation persecution on the Philadelphians? Malachi 2:10, 14-16 are about the Laodiceans being “treacherous” to the Philadelphians. That treachery comes just before and after the two groups split.

Persecution of the Philadelphians by the Laodiceans is also discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Zechariah 3 and 4—by strong implication. Some of this persecution comes in the form of CASTING PEOPLE OUT OF THE LAODICEAN CHURCH!

Only one of these churches is righteous enough to go to a place of safety. CHRIST IS LEADING THAT GROUP. CHRISTIANS ARE IN GOD’S CHURCH IF THEY ARE FOLLOWING CHRIST! (1 Peter 2:21; Luke 18:28-30). That is from God’s Word—the Holy Bible! If you follow the Scriptures, you are in God’s Church—in spite of what any man says! Remember, the BIBLE IS FULL OF EXAMPLES WHERE CHURCH LEADERS HAVE LED PEOPLE ASTRAY. This is why *every* spiritual step we take *must* be biblically based!

The WCG was destined to split. Those members with the *strength* to stay with what “Elijah” taught—the “trunk of the tree”—are going to be God’s “jewels” who are taken to a place of safety and given an incredible reward!

You can’t escape making this major decision. This is what walking by *faith* is all about. ALL PHILADELPHIANS MUST FOLLOW THE GROUP CHRIST IS LEADING—NOT JUST “STAY IN THE CHURCH.” Just “staying in the Church” could be a grave mistake, leading to the Tribulation—or ETERNAL DEATH!

“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me,

and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?" (Malachi 3:7). God is calling upon them to repent. The Laodiceans don't see a need to "return." They question God. But there is a group that *does* "return" to what "Elijah" taught. The prophecy says we either return to what "Elijah" taught or we are destined to go into Gehenna fire (Malachi 4:1-6).

A big part of the work of the Philadelphians is helping God separate the Laodiceans from the Philadelphians (Malachi 3:17). This should not take very long—but it *will* be painful! VERY PAINFUL! In some cases it will break up families. God *knew* it would happen (Luke 14:26-27).

Mr. Armstrong preached the gospel to the world. The emphasis of our work to the world now is on WARNING. Amos said, "[T]he land is not able to bear all his words." This is a prophecy that the PCG must fulfill. So there is a work to the world that we must do.

The book of Malachi is not addressed to the nations as many other books are. His message was to get the *temple* worship "back on track." The temple today is God's Church. This book of Malachi is about ministers who despise God's name and have profaned the temple worship (Malachi 1:6-13). Their deeds are very evil while they pretend to be extremely righteous. God directs His command to the *ministry* (Malachi 2:1). They lack godly fear (verses 4-6). These ministers CAUSE people to stumble at God's law. THIS CAN ONLY APPLY TO GOD'S CHURCH, WHICH ALONE TRULY KEEPS GOD'S LAW. And God directly blames the UNFAITHFUL ministry for the end-time crisis in the Church!

God said He would send Elijah the prophet, and He did (Malachi 4:4-6). Mr. Armstrong reluctantly admitted to all of us that *he* fulfilled this prophecy—and nobody else!

The curse (verse 6), which we have always thought applied to the world, ACTUALLY APPLIES TO THE CHURCH! And that is a change you can PROVE from the Bible. All these subjects I have discussed with you can be PROVED or DISPROVED from the BIBLE.

The whole Malachi story revolves around an end-time Elijah, Mr. Armstrong (Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:10-11). These events occur just before Christ returns. Laodicean ministers are treacherous to the wife (Church) of their youth (Malachi 2:14-16). This is the Church Mr. Armstrong, or “Elijah,” founded, the one in which most of us grew up spiritually.

We know by Church history (Revelation 3:1) that God’s Church was spiritually dead when Mr. Armstrong came on the scene. This is one reason he RESTORED “ALL THINGS.” Then came the Philadelphia era (Revelation 3:7-8), which is followed by the Laodicean era (Revelation 3:14-19; 2 Thessalonians 2; Zechariah 3 and 4).

The WCG always taught (when I was a member) that Malachi 3:17 is about God’s loyal people escaping the Great Tribulation. The Tribulation comes AFTER Mr. Armstrong died and BEFORE the Day of the Lord. The Laodiceans go into that same Tribulation to be punished (Revelation 3:19).

“But ye are departed out of the way ...” (Malachi 2:8). They were established in God’s way by Mr. Armstrong and then “DEPARTED” out of it AFTER MR. ARMSTRONG’S DEATH! They rejected much of what Elijah restored. This can only apply to the Laodiceans who reject what Mr. Armstrong restored. The Philadelphians continue in the way of Elijah and come out of the Laodicean Church (Malachi 3:16).

Remember that Malachi is about an end-time messenger, like John the Baptist, who prepares the way for Christ’s Second Coming (verses 1-2). It all occurs just before “the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Common sense would tell us the events Malachi prophesied about couldn’t happen while Mr. Armstrong was alive. There was a type of it in the 1970s—but he stopped it, and as one PCG member said, that was the only time in recorded secular and biblical history that it ever happened! The only time! Mr. Armstrong *restrained* it (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).

These prophecies in Malachi could occur fully only *after* Mr. Armstrong was dead. THERE SIMPLY IS NO OTHER EXPLANATION FOR THIS END-TIME BOOK—if we are led by God’s Holy Spirit.

This matter is all going to be *concluded* before “the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” It is at that point the Laodiceans either repent and are *sealed*—or lose their salvation. BETWEEN THE DEATH OF MR. ARMSTRONG (“ELIJAH”) AND THE “GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD” IS THE LAODICEAN ERA. Then Christ begins to personally intervene.

As Mr. Armstrong said, the Bible is a *coded* book. It is indeed! The book of Malachi is primarily about the Church from the time of Mr. Armstrong’s death to “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (the point where the Laodiceans are sealed—Malachi 4:5-6). Malachi reveals what happens during this period.

Mr. Armstrong *turned* us to the Family of God. The Laodicean sin involves *turning* AWAY from the Family of God and what God did through Mr. Armstrong. Malachi tells us *how* the Church moves from the Philadelphian era to the Laodicean era. THE LAODICEANS TURN AWAY FROM THE PHILADELPHIA STANDARD. Common sense also tells us that is what happens. The Laodiceans would have been Philadelphians—if they hadn’t *turned* away. They established their *own* standard—not Christ’s!

The “book of remembrance” and being “treacherous to the wife [Church] of your youth” are keys to reveal a turning away from what God taught us. The Laodiceans fail to remember. They don’t just lack “drive and energy.” They are TREACHEROUS because they are part of a Judas-like betrayal! (2 Thessalonians 2). This is the epitome of what a Laodicean is!

“And now, O ye priests, THIS COMMANDMENT IS FOR *YOU*. ... And ye shall *know* that I have sent this commandment UNTO YOU ...” (Malachi 2:1, 4). ALL OF GOD’S MINISTERS ARE GOING TO KNOW MALACHI’S MESSAGE CAME FROM GOD—WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT NOW OR IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION! They must “know.” This is a promise from God. The only remaining question is *when* the ministry will recognize it. CHRIST IS GOING TO PURGE HIS MINISTERS! (Malachi 3:3).

Fellow ministers of Jesus Christ, God’s people desperately need an *example* to follow. God has helped me with many

miracles since I was disfellowshipped. He will do the same for you. All we have to do is trust Him. PLEASE STEP OUT ON FAITH!

God says, “I will require my flock at their hand” (Ezekiel 34:10). We are being judged by what we do with God’s flock! God will judge each one of us—it’s beginning right now! The critics and scholars will howl, but it won’t alter God’s Word one iota! They will only be fighting God.

It will take time for God to dislodge wrong concepts from His people. Through prayer, fasting and study of this message *again* and *again*, a clear understanding will come to many of God’s people—those with a Philadelphian attitude. Those people who walk by FAITH will see that THEY HAVE BEEN BETRAYED. God’s people have always had to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). God’s Church NOW FACES ITS GREATEST CRISIS! If we put all the pieces together, it fits like an amazing puzzle. After all, it’s been prophesied for thousands of years!

Malachi came originally to rekindle the fires of faith in many rebellious priests. WE MINISTERS MUST LET MALACHI MOVE AND STIR US TO A GREATER EFFORT! God needs loyal ministers now as NEVER BEFORE!

Faith is nothing more than ACTING on God’s Word!

Backing and supporting this message is your ticket to a place of safety and a magnificent reward. THIS IS HOW GOD MAKES UP HIS JEWELS!

“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward” (Matthew 10:40-41). Prophets are mentioned again (as in Amos 2:11-12; 3:7-8). Malachi’s message *WILL BE DELIVERED*!

The prophets in Amos 2:11-12 and Amos 3:7 were not a part of the structured ministry that was going astray. THEY PROPHESED AGAINST THE CHURCH. CHRIST WAS WITH THE PROPHETS—*not* the structured ministry that He also raised up. Time and again in the

Old Testament, the prophets came to straighten out the priests and the people.

God's people *must* understand these verses. If they receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man—they receive a righteous man's reward. The SAME reward!

This is how God will separate the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans. One group has the faith *of* Christ and one doesn't. If people don't receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, they are Laodicean—or worse. They fail to discern their *real leader*, JESUS CHRIST! YOUR REWARD DEPENDS ON RECOGNIZING THE TRUE REPRESENTATIVES OF GOD. There is no reward for just being a member—EVEN IN GOD'S CHURCH! Today, most of God's people are going astray.

Mr. Armstrong had the faith to walk away from a dead Sardis Church. Now *YOU* have to possess the faith to WALK AWAY FROM, OR BE KICKED OUT OF, A LUKEWARM LAODICEAN CHURCH—OR *YOU* WILL RECEIVE A LAODICEAN REWARD.

THOSE WHO WALK AWAY AND SUPPORT THE PHILADELPHIA STANDARD IN A NEW ORGANIZATION *WILL BE REWARDED* FOR *EVERY* CONTRIBUTION—EVEN FOR GIVING A COLD GLASS OF WATER! (Matthew 10:42). God rewards every little good deed.

Our reward revolves around receiving God's message REGARDLESS OF WHO THE MESSENGER IS. It takes *spiritual discernment* to recognize where God's message is being delivered. This is God's major test now.

Herbert Armstrong wrote about the 1970s rebellion in the *Worldwide News*, June 24, 1985. He *warned* us about something like this happening again. Here is what he said: "I want you, brethren, to think about and UNDERSTAND what happened to God's Church in the 1970s 'LEST HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF'! I want you to see the 'fruits' of rebelling against God's *way* and God's GOVERNMENT" (emphasis mine). HISTORY HAS REPEATED ITSELF! The "fruits" of rebelling against God's *way* and God's *government* are there for all to see.

Are we in the Philadelphia Church rebelling against God's



Philadelphia Church of God headquarters in Edmond, Oklahoma

government? NO, WE ARE NOT! We are backing God's government by preaching what God has revealed. LEADERS OF THE LAODICEAN CHURCH ARE REBELLING—by FLAGRANTLY turning away from what CHRIST TAUGHT US THROUGH MR. ARMSTRONG!

Mr. Armstrong WARNED US ABOUT HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF! Now Christ is going to see if we “remember” the instructions of “Elijah” (Malachi 3:16; 4:4-6).

The minister's responsibility is to preach God's truth—not what men say. God is going to judge each one of us *severely* on that basis.

WHO SERVES GOD?

YOU MUST BE ABLE TO DISCERN *who serves God and who serves him not* (Malachi 3:18). THERE IS NO REASON TO DISCERN WHO SERVES GOD UNLESS YOU SUPPORT THAT SERVICE! “Faith without works is dead.” How else can you be one of God's “jewels” who goes to a place of safety and into God's headquarters temple? Those who cannot discern one work from the other are destined to go into

the worst time of suffering ever on this planet! And remember, when it talks about those who serve God, it is in the same chapter and context as tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:9-10, 18).

I have been in God's Church since September 7, 1961. I was ordained into God's ministry on Pentecost of 1972, and I have pastored churches since 1975. The WCG has disfellowshipped me because of the message you have just read. But Christ has not! We are NOT out of God's Church—only out of the Laodicean Church! Therefore, God has led us to establish a new church organization:

PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD

P.O. Box 3700

Edmond, Oklahoma 73083

Phone: (405) 340-7474

24-hour fax: (405) 359-6280

(Please see the last page in this book for international addresses.) All of the original 12 members of the PCG lived in Edmond, Oklahoma. "Edmond" means "protector of wealth." Isn't that really what God wants from the Philadelphia Church? Doesn't He want us to PROTECT THE PRECIOUS SPIRITUAL WEALTH that Christ has established in His Church? And isn't it clear what the Laodicean Church is doing with God's revealed truth? IF THE PHILADELPHIA MEMBERS DON'T PROTECT GOD'S TRUTH, IT WILL PERISH FROM THIS PLANET!

We are producing many articles and booklets. A booklet on the book of Amos, which the Laodicean Church does not understand, has been produced. Much of this book's prophecy describes what is happening in the Laodicean and Philadelphian churches right now! If you would like a free copy, just call for one.

God's new Church organization has been officially recognized by the Internal Revenue Service and approved for a tax-exempt status in the U.S. This means the Philadelphia Church of God can receive God's tithes and offerings and these contributions are deductible from the contributor's income taxes.

Of course, the Philadelphia Church will be accused of greedily desiring money. Paul was accused of the same attitude, and I respond just as he did: "I seek not yours"—that is, your tithes and offerings—"but *you*" (2 Corinthians 12:14). PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL AND ETERNAL LIVES ARE AT STAKE! Who cares what the critics say! I intend to help God's people all I can. I MUST DO MY PART! WOE BE UNTO ME IF I DON'T. AND I HAVE ABSOLUTE FAITH THAT GOD WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OTHERS TO HELP, BECAUSE IT IS PROPHESED! (Malachi 3:16-17). More of that help is arriving every day. God has commissioned a group of people to deliver the warning message of Malachi. The word "burden" in Malachi 1:1 means a prophetic oracle, or *warning*. WE MUST WARN GOD'S PEOPLE! Those who fail to heed face terrible CURSES (Malachi 2:2; 4:5-6). What a blessing to be a part of God's wonderful Work. And think of the tremendous REWARD God will give those who are part of it.

Ministers in the WCG who cling to what Christ taught can be quickly fired. When that happens, they will be almost totally and directly dependent on God. Still, Philadelphia ministers must expect miracles. God has shown us many miracles since we were disfellowshipped.

Anyone who has questions or comments, or any kind of interest in God's truth, is encouraged to write or call us.

Mr. Armstrong wrote in the September 1980 *Good News*: "The *Plain Truth* magazine made its most humble bow on February 1, 1934. By that time I had obtained a subscription list of around 350, including our own and the Oregon 'Sardis' members."

Mr. Armstrong WROTE MANY OF THE SARDIS MEMBERS and essentially told them their Church was dead! He told them God was now raising up a new work. Mr. Armstrong set a PRECEDENT for what the PCG is doing now!

Any of you ministers who want to discuss this Philadelphia work, please call or write me. Everything will be kept absolutely confidential. I fully understand that you have to use caution and wisdom in any contact that you make.

Many people first received *Malachi's Message* on January 16, 1990, the very day of the anniversary of Mr. Armstrong's death (January 16, 1986). We didn't plan it, but we were happy it happened that way. You are going to see the date of Mr. Armstrong's death take on more significance as time goes on. John Amos and I were disfellowshipped on December 7, 1989—40 days before the anniversary of Mr. Armstrong's death. The number 40 is significant in the Bible. The third 19-year time cycle of the work of the WCG ended in January of 1991—the same month as the fifth anniversary of Mr. Armstrong's death. In the original version of *Malachi's Message* we asked this question: "Will we see some dramatic event in the world or within God's Philadelphian and/or Laodicean churches then?" THE PERSIAN GULF WAR BEGAN ON JANUARY 16, 1991! God considers the date of Mr. Armstrong's death to be very significant.

"Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these THREE YEARS I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone THIS YEAR also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (Luke 13:7-9).

God gave the fig tree *four* years to bear fruit. If it failed to produce, He cut it down. AFTER MR. ARMSTRONG DIED, GOD ALSO GAVE THE WCG FOUR YEARS TO BEAR FRUIT. When the WCG failed, God raised up the Philadelphia Church to do His Work. Mr. Armstrong died in January 1986. The Philadelphia Church made the first mailing of *Malachi's Message* in January 1990—EXACTLY FOUR YEARS LATER! We planned none of this—God did the planning.

In Acts 5, Gamaliel had an important message for those in power when they persecuted Peter and the other apostles: "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39). If the PCG

Work today is a human effort, it will come to nothing. But if God is behind it, no man can stop it. As Gamaliel said, those who fight against this Work will be FIGHTING God Himself. And THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD WILL BE SUPPORTING GOD.

WHO HAS A GOVERNMENT PROBLEM?

Members of the Philadelphia Church of God are being accused of rebelling against God and His authority. WE ARE DOING JUST THE OPPOSITE! Remember Joshua and “his fellows.” Joshua had the *authority* problem. That is the main focus of the story. And “his fellows” follow *him*—not Jesus Christ! The “man of sin” is also a story of REBELLION FROM THE TOP. The Laodiceans are rebelling against what Christ taught in the Philadelphia era. The leaders mentioned in Malachi are being *treacherous* to what Christ taught through Mr. Armstrong and treacherous to members of God’s Church.

Who has a *government* problem? The whole battle we face is struggling to CLING to CHRIST’S GOVERNMENT. The Philadelphia Church of God is NOT leaving Christ—but many of God’s people are prophesied to do so. If you step out and *obey* Christ—OUR LEADER—you will have MORE joy and peace—not less!

WE ARE NOT REBELLING—WE ARE TAKING A STAND AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE!

CHURCH UNITY IS COMING

Laodicean leaders in the WCG don’t really understand why the PCG is so successful. They refuse to see that God is behind this Work! They have closed their eyes (Matthew 13:15). The PCG has been commissioned by God to warn the Laodiceans about their sins. The whole book of Malachi is about this commission. *Malachi’s Message* was REVEALED by God. EVERY HUMAN BEING ON THIS EARTH MUST EVENTUALLY COME TO SEE THAT!

Christ said we must “knock” on the Laodicean door (Revelation 3:20). Amos and several other of the prophets discuss the commission of the Philadelphia Church of God.

Jesus Christ is behind this Work. NOBODY CAN STOP IT!

The WCG must accept the message of the Philadelphia Church, or go into the Great Tribulation! It appears that 50 percent of the Laodiceans will lose their salvation (Matthew 25:1-10).

Why can't they take God and His truths more seriously? Why must they suffer so horribly to learn to obey God?

Thank God, Jesus Christ shall return soon to rule His Church and bring it the unity it should have today.

Realize that this is all prophesied to happen. We can rejoice that the end of this age is very near.

Brethren, please study and digest this message, and pray fervently for God to guide you. BELIEVE YOUR BIBLE—NOT MEN! Your eternal life hangs in the balance.

AFTERWORD

JOSEPH TKACH SR. DIED OF CANCER IN SEPTEMBER OF 1995. Prior to his death, he made arrangements for his son to succeed him as pastor general. (Before that, Mr. Tkach Jr. had served as director of Church Administration.)

In 1997, Mr. Tkach Jr. wrote *Transformed by Truth*, condemning Mr. Armstrong and his teachings. By that point, WCG leaders were proud of their “unprecedented” changes, even though they had concealed those changes early on. When they started making changes soon after Mr. Armstrong’s death, they denied it. When the changes became more obvious in the early 1990s, Mr. Tkach Sr. told WCG members that Mr. Armstrong, on his deathbed, said he wanted these many changes made. But by 1997, Mr. Tkach Jr. and WCG officials labeled Mr. Armstrong a heretic and took credit themselves for leading the WCG “out of darkness and into the light.”

Concurrent with these many changes in doctrine and traditions has been the steady decline of the WCG’s work. By 2004, the annual income was down to \$18 million—less than one 10th of what it was in the late 1980s. As mentioned on page 71, the *World Tomorrow* program, once on over 400 stations, has since been

canceled. Both college campuses, in Pasadena and Big Sandy, have now closed and been sold. Church membership figures are far below the more than 100,000 baptized members counted in the 1980s. Many splinter groups have attracted disgruntled members. (Even key WCG figures mentioned in this book, like Donald Ward and Larry Salyer, have gone their separate ways.)

Meanwhile, the Philadelphia Church of God has continued to grow and prosper. In January 1997, we decided to reprint and distribute Mr. Armstrong's final book, *Mystery of the Ages*. Weeks later, the WCG filed a lawsuit trying to stop us. We responded to their lawsuit by filing our own counterclaim—seeking to reprint and distribute 18 *additional* works of Mr. Armstrong that we consider central to our beliefs.

In March of 2003, we obtained the copyrights to *Mystery of the Ages* and the 18 other works of Mr. Armstrong we sought in our counterclaim. In less than a year, we had printed most of them and now offer them to anyone who requests these life-changing works, free of charge.

The Worldwide Church may have disfellowshipped Herbert Armstrong from their own church, postmortem, but they will never do away with his teachings. As this ongoing story unfolds and the Worldwide Church continues to self-destruct, be assured the work of Mr. Armstrong will never die. God's end-time message from Malachi will go out. The Work will continue.

CONTACT INFORMATION

To reach the Philadelphia Church of God to order literature or to request a visit from one of God's ministers:

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CANADA: Philadelphia Church of God
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CARIBBEAN: Philadelphia Church of God
P.O. Box 2237, Chaguanas, Trinidad, W.I.

BRITAIN, EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST:
Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 16945
Henley-in-Arden, B95 8BH, United Kingdom

AFRICA: Philadelphia Church of God
Postnet Box 219, Private Bag X10010, Edenvale, 1610

AUSTRALIA, THE PACIFIC ISLES, INDIA AND SRI LANKA:
Philadelphia Church of God
P.O. Box 293, Archerfield, QLD 4108, Australia

NEW ZEALAND: Philadelphia Church of God
P.O. Box 6088, Glenview, Hamilton 3246

PHILIPPINES: Philadelphia Church of God
P.O. Box 52143, Angeles City Post Office, 2009 Pampanga

LATIN AMERICA: Philadelphia Church of God, Attn: Spanish Department
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PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD: www.pcog.org

THE TRUMPET: theTrumpet.com

ARMSTRONG INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION: ArmstrongAuditorium.org

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG COLLEGE: HWACollege.org

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SUBJECT INDEX

ABRAHAM

tested by God, 97

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

accreditation, 22, 73-75

APOSTLE

false, 8-9, 99

ARMSTRONG, HERBERT W.

autobiography discontinued, 25-26
performed “signs” and “wonders,” 86
restored all things, 13, 49, 53, 55,
59, 63, 115, 127
taken out of the way, 81-83, 94, 98, 99,
109, 114, 127
“waiting for me to die,” 82

ASSIGNING

scriptures to names, 12-14

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HWA

discontinuing of, 25-26

BEREANS

searched the scriptures, xiii, 10

BETRAYAL

Judas-type betrayal, 81, 95-101, 109,
114, 138

BRAND

plucked out of the fire, 64-65

CHANGE

all change not good, 10, 57
coming fast, 95
christian
one who follows Christ, xiii, 6

CHURCH ERAS

Christ in the midst, 7-8
Dr. Hoeh sermon, 4-5, 34, 102, 104
gone astray, 6-7, 9, 63, 81, 90, 123
seven Churches, 51-52, 55

CHURCH OF GOD

Satan attacks from within, 60
those cast out, 5-7, 9, 37, 134, 135

COMMISSION

changed, 92, 110-113
warning message, 72, 104, 111, 121, 132-
133, 143, 145

COURAGE

Joshua's, 70

CROWN

let no man take your, 34, 78-79, 80, 98

CURSE

“smite the earth,” 115-117

DAVID

key of, 110

DAY OF THE LORD

after the Tribulation, 40, 43, 44, 45

DECEPTION

beware of, 28

DELUSION

“signs” and “wonders,” xii, 85-87
strong, xii, 10-11, 88-93, 101

DISCIPLES

drawing away, 96

DIOTREPES

casting saints out of the Church, 5, 9

DONATING

to disaster funds, 111-112

EIGHTEEN TRUTHS

Worldwide News listing, 13

ELECT

noble, 10
very, xii-xiii, 11, 35, 60, 63, 90, 94, 97

ELIJAH

come before the Day of the Lord,
43-44, 115, 138
Herbert Armstrong, 13-14, 43
“my God is God,” 91
one John, one Elijah, 17-18
remembering, 1-2
restore all things, 13-14, 49, 115, 127
restoring the family, 115-116

ESAU

violence against brother Jacob, 118

FALLING AWAY

a sign, 67, 79
from God’s truth, xii, 77-81, 90, 94, 115

FAMILY

division, 118-119
refuse to build, 116

FIRSTFRUITS

unique, 89, 91

GOSPEL

ends with Mr. Armstrong, 126-128, 132
has been preached, 129, 132
preaching another, 27-28, 47-48, 108,
126-128
rejecting the true, 126-127
US&BIP irrelevant to gospel?, 108

GOVERNMENT

rejecting God’s, 31, 43, 56, 57, 66-67,
75, 78-79, 80, 94, 101, 105, 114, 118,
140-141, 145

HOEH, DR. HERMAN

“entered into the Laodicean era,” 102
sermon on Church eras, 4-5, 34

HOREB

where it all began, 29

HOUSE

Zerubbabel finished, 52-56

INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL

discontinuing of, 26

JACOB

division with Esau, 118-119

JEWELS

God makes up His, 30, 129-131, 135, 139

JOHN THE BAPTIST

one John, one Elijah, 17-18

JOSHUA

a “sign,” 67-68
and his “fellows,” 57, 61, 67-68
didn’t begin with filthy garments, 65
turned away from Zerubbabel, 60
where is his courage?, 70-72
who followed Moses, 68-70
who is he?, 64-67

JUDAS

Christ chose him, 100
Satan entered on the last night, 99

KNOCK

hear the knock, 39, 133
stand at the door, 38
work of the PCG, 30

LAMP

Christ removes, 90
seven candlesticks (lamps), 51-52

LAODICEAN

don’t follow Philadelphia standard,
9-10, 32-33, 67, 73, 85, 115, 138
era prophesied, 7, 137
filled with zeal, 33
going into Tribulation, 40-47, 133
persecute the Philadelphians, 134
reward, 38-39, 46
rich and increased with goods, 35-37
some repent in the Tribulation,
43-45, 116
works, 34-35

LEVI

spiritual father, 50-51

LOVE

God’s truth, 10-11, 89-90, 92, 95
shall wax cold, 28, 95, 99

MALACHI

came after temple was built, 2

MALACHI'S MESSAGE

God sent it, 30-31, 138
must be delivered, 119, 133-134, 139
revealed, 84, 100, 145

MAN OF SIN

brought to an end, 87
part of the falling away, 78
rejects revelation, 114
showing himself to be God, 80
sits in God's temple, 76
will be revealed by Christ, 94, 127

MASTER

"and the scholar," 119

MESSAGE

look to, xi-xiii

MINISTRY

must take the lead, 29-30, 117-118, 126
show partiality, 31
to blame, 3-4, 136
under a curse, 30, 50, 115, 128

MULTITUDE

the great, 41-42, 46-47

MYSTERY

of iniquity, 81, 83, 96, 129

MYSTERY OF THE AGES

discontinuing of, 20-25

144,000

who are they?, 40-47

PERDITION

son of, 77, 81-85, 94, 97-98, 100, 109, 127

PILLARS

in the temple, 34, 37, 130

PHILADELPHIAN

come out of Laodicea, 39, 137
era, 7, 24-26, 29, 32, 37, 53, 55, 59, 63,
78, 127, 137, 145
follow Elijah, 116
go to place of safety, 40

must discern, 130-131
reward, 2, 34, 38-39, 46, 97, 130, 135,
139-140
standard, 32-34, 57, 59, 67, 73, 85, 115,
138, 140
will be spared, 130-131

PLACE OF SAFETY

qualify, 30
who will be taken, 30, 40, 42, 48, 116,
130, 131, 133, 133-135, 141

PLUMMET

Zerubbabel's measuring device, 51, 61

PROPHECY

division over, 119-123
master key, 107
news station asks WCG concerning
Berlin Wall, 119-120
"prophecy not," 102-105
"too much emphasis," 72

REMEMBER

failing to, 31, 119, 138
holding fast, 26-28, 54, 56, 62

REMEMBRANCE

book of, 1, 2, 29, 134, 138

RETURN OF CHRIST

after the falling away, 68, 77, 79-80
first coming, 14, 17, 52-53, 62, 92
Second Coming, xi, 12, 14, 17, 18, 49,
52, 53, 62, 79, 106, 121, 137

REVELATION (UNVEILED AT LAST)

discontinuing of, 72, 106

REWARD

higher, 10
losing, 79
headquarters position, 1

SALVATION

not a group affair, 38

SCHOLAR

doctrinal committee, 75
in the tabernacle, 72-73

SCRIPTURE

twisting, 123-124

SEALING

meaning of, 39-47

SMALL THINGS

day of, 56-57, 60, 114

SNYDER, MICHAEL

contact with Watchman Fellowship, 109
US&BIP “classed as speculation,” 108

SONS OF OIL

olive trees, 62
olive branches, 62

STRONG DELUSION

God sends it, xii, 10, 89-93

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY PROJECT

one minister kept his, 100

TEMPLE

prophets, 2-3
refers to the Church, 76
spiritual, 53, 55

TITHES

robbing God, 124-126

TKACH, JOSEPH W.

“another world war,” 122
“corner on the spiritual market,” 88
“there is no man who can fill his
shoes,” 95
“too much emphasis on prophecy,” 72

TRADITIONS

holding fast, 19, 93-95, 98, 127
moving away from, 25, 67, 73, 85

TREE

fig, 144
sticking to the trunk, 115

TRIBULATION

repentance, 133
the Great, 1, 2, 9, 11, 13, 30, 34, 35,
37-48, 51, 65, 72, 79, 84, 87, 90, 111,
112, 116, 117, 119, 120, 122, 126, 130,
131, 133, 135, 137, 138, 146

TRUMPET

blow the, 105, 111

U.S. AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY

discontinuing of, 107-110

WARD, DR. DONALD

“anti-educational bias,” 73
“Christ fulfills Zerubbabel,” 55
“HWA established the law,” 92
“we are all messengers,” 92

WATCHMAN EXPOSITOR

contact with Michael Snyder, 108-109
HWA a false prophet, 108

WHO WAS JESUS? BOOKLET

in place of *Mystery of the Ages*, 26-29

WIFE

of your youth, 14-17, 29, 33, 56, 60,
73, 116

WITNESSES

the two, 72

WORLD TOMORROW

program, 71, 110, 120, 147

ZERUBBABEL

building the temple, 2-3, 48-51,
115-116
inset, 53-56

SCRIPTURE INDEX

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis

22:12 (97)
27:15 (55)
33:17 (55)

Exodus

19:16-21 (70)
24:13 (70)
24:15-16 (70)

Leviticus

26:19 (71)

Numbers

14:34 (40)

Deuteronomy

30:19-20 (104, 131)

Joshua

1:5-7 (70)
1:13 (68)
4:10 (69)
8:35 (69)
11:15 (69)
22:5 (69)
23:6 (70)

1 Samuel

15:9 (130)

1 Kings

20:42 (116)

Job

4:19 (55)
8:14 (55)

Proverbs

6:34 (130)
22:22-23 (124)
28:1 (70)

Isaiah

11:4 (84, 115)
26:18 (115)

34:8 (40)
40:3-4 (17)
40:9-10 (17)
58:1 (105)
61:2 (40)
63:4 (40)

Jeremiah

17:5 (99)
23:2 (95)
30:4-9 (122)

Ezekiel

3:17 (111)
4:6 (40)
9:6 (31)
33:1-7, 11 (111)
33:6 (105)
33:6-7 (122)
33:31 (92)
33:31-33 (84)
34:5 (95)
34:10 (139)

Daniel

2:45 (52)
12:7 (41, 72)
12:10 (121)

Hosea

6:1-2 (40)
6:5 (84)

Joel

2:31 (40)

Amos

2:11 (102)
2:11-12 (103, 104, 105, 139)
2:12 (103)
3:3 (134)
3:6 (105)
3:7 (104, 139)
3:7-8 (104, 139)
3:8 (104)
6:1 (122)
6:3 (123)

7:10-17 (105)
7:14 (105)
9:11-15 (102)

Obadiah

1:3 (118)
1:9-10 (118)

Zechariah

3 (32, 37, 51, 52, 56, 57, 59, 62, 63, 65, 68, 85, 87, 94, 114, 115, 127, 135, 137)
3:1 (85, 114, 124)
3:1-2 (65, 98)
3:3 (65)
3:3-5 (65-66)
3:7 (67)
3:7-8 (55)
3:8 (57, 65, 67, 84, 114)
3:8-10 (67-68)
3:9 (51, 52, 62)
4 (32, 37, 51, 52, 56, 57, 59, 62, 63, 65, 94, 115, 135, 137)
4:2 (51, 52, 55)
4:2, 10 (62)
4:2-3, 11 (62)
4:4-5 (54)
4:6 (52, 57, 60, 67, 90)
4:6-10 (53)
4:9 (3, 119, 126)
4:10 (51, 52)
4:12-14 (62)
14:11 (116)

Malachi

1-2 (128)
1-3 (126)
1:1 (143)
1:2-3 (118)
1:6 (3, 47, 104, 115, 126, 133)
1:6-13 (136)
1:6-3:3 (3)
1:7 (125, 126, 128, 133)
1:7-8 (133)
1:9 (3)
1:10 (128, 133)

1:13 (4)
 2 (16, 17, 114)
 2:1 (16, 115, 117, 136)
 2:1-2 (15)
 2:1-8 (3)
 2:1, 4 (138)
 2:2 (30, 50, 143)
 2:3 (51)
 2:4 (30)
 2:4-5 (50)
 2:4-6 (104, 136)
 2:4-8 (21, 133)
 2:4-9 (61)
 2:6 (51)
 2:7 (67)
 2:7-8 (31, 133)
 2:8 (4, 15, 30, 31, 50, 51, 103, 137)
 2:9 (30-31, 50)
 2:10 (16, 118, 133)
 2:10, 14-16 (135)
 2:11 (31)
 2:12 (72, 119, 133)
 2:13 (15, 16)
 2:14 (16, 32)
 2:14, 16 (133-134)
 2:14-16 (15, 31, 85, 126, 135, 137)
 3:1 (xi, 92)
 3:1-2 (12, 137)
 3:3 (4, 51, 92, 115, 126, 138)
 3:7 (135-136)
 3:8-10 (124, 134)
 3:9-10, 18 (142)
 3:16 (1, 3, 29, 59, 134-135, 137, 141)
 3:16-17 (129, 143)
 3:17 (1, 30, 129-130, 136, 137)
 3:17-18 (131)
 3:18 (2, 130, 131, 141)
 4 (32, 116)
 4:1 (51)
 4:2 (116)
 4:1-3 (116)
 4:1-6 (136)
 4:4 (29, 30, 31, 117)
 4:4-6 (1, 59, 69, 114-115, 128, 136, 141)
 4:5 (43, 117)
 4:5-6 (12, 14, 44, 49, 50, 115, 117, 118, 130, 137, 138, 143)
 4:6 (4, 116, 117, 136)

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew

4:4 (119)
 7:13 (97)
 7:16 (10)
 10:40-41 (139)
 10:42 (140)
 11:25 (83)
 12:31-32 (89)
 13:15 (145)
 16:3 (106)
 16:18 (xiii)
 16:28 (14)
 17 (12, 14)
 17:9 (14)
 17:10-11 (12, 14, 49, 55, 59, 63, 114-115, 127, 137)
 17:11 (13)
 17:11-13 (12-13)
 17:12 (13)
 18:6 (94)
 21:12-13 (129)
 24 (106, 111, 113)
 24:3-4 (28)
 24:4, 9 (77)
 24:5 (28)
 24:5, 12 (128)
 24:7, 14 (111)
 24:12 (28, 95, 99)
 24:14 (79, 110-111, 121, 127, 129)
 24:21-22 (1)
 24:23 (xii)
 24:24 (xiii, 10-11, 60, 90, 94, 97)
 24:29 (40)
 24:48 (113, 123)
 25:1-10 (37, 65, 116, 146)
 28:19-20 (110, 111)

Luke

1:17 (17)
 1:31-32 (108)
 13:7-9 (144)
 14:26 (90)
 14:26-27 (136)
 18:28-30 (135)
 21:36 (106, 133)
 22:3 (99)

John

2:21 (50)
 6:44 (48, 88)

6:47 (40)
 6:48 (128)
 6:70-71 (100)
 7:2 (77)
 12:4-6 (99)
 13:27 (99)
 17:12 (81)

Acts

5:38-39 (144)
 16:26 (78)
 17:11 (xiii, 10)
 20:29-31 (96)

Romans

2:13 (46)
 4:17 (40)
 10:2 (33)
 15:18-19 (86)
 16:25 (100)

1 Corinthians

3:16-17 (50, 80)
 4:15 (50)
 6:19 (50)
 9:16 (105)
 11:1 (9)

2 Corinthians

5:1 (52)
 6:16 (50, 80)
 12:12 (85)
 12:14 (143)

Galatians

1:6 (27-28, 47)
 1:6-7 (28)
 2:11 (5)
 2:20 (39)

Ephesians

1:13 (40)
 2:21 (80)
 3:3, 9 (100)
 4:30 (40)
 5 (17)
 5:21 (17)
 5:21-33 (17)
 5:32 (17)
 6:11-19 (94)
 6:19 (100)

Philippians

2:5 (55)

2:12-13 (61)
3:19 (97)
4:9 (61)

Colossians

1:26 (100)

1 Thessalonians

5:21 (xiii)

2 Thessalonians

2 (32, 37, 44, 76, 77, 82,
85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 96,
97, 98, 100, 109, 114,
135, 138)
2:1-3 (1, 68, 84, 114)
2:1-4 (76-77)
2:2 (78)
2:3 (19, 78, 79, 98, 127)
2:3, 10 (123)
2:3-4 (xii)
2:4-11 (127)
2:5-7 (81)
2:6 (81, 82, 95)
2:6-7 (137)
2:7 (81-82)
2:8 (84, 87)
2:8-9 (xii)
2:9 (85, 98, 124)
2:10 (xii, 10, 11, 89, 92,
94, 117)
2:10-11 (10, 89)
2:10, 15 (77)
2:11 (xii, 88)
2:12 (87)
2:13 (101)
2:14 (93)
2:14-15 (127)
2:15 (1, 19, 25, 32, 67, 73,
80, 85, 93)
2:17 (98)

1 Timothy

4:1 (123)
4:1-2 (123)
6:9 (97)
6:12 (139)

2 Timothy

2:19 (39)

Hebrews

2:3 (19)
2:3-4 (86)

9:11 (52)
10:39 (97)

James

2:17 (131)
3:1 (117)
4:17 (46)

1 Peter

2:21 (135)

2 Peter

2:1 (97)
3:4 (123)
3:7 (97)

1 John

4:1 (9)

3 John

1:9-10 (5, 9)
1:10 (123)

Jude

1:3 (54)

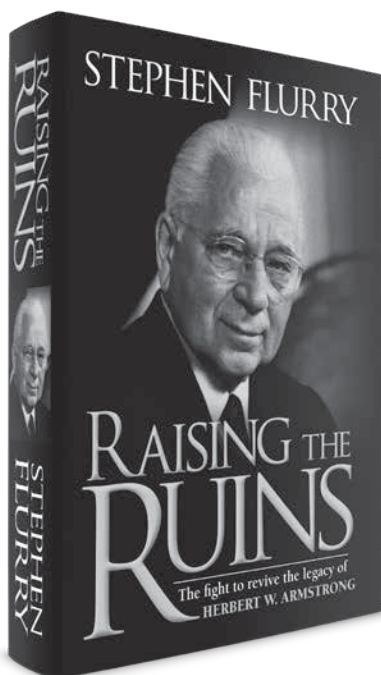
Revelation

1:5 (41)
1:12-13 (8)
1:14-16 (8)
1:17 (9)
1:20 (51, 55)
2 (xiii, 4, 6, 7, 8, 41, 51, 52,
90, 105, 113, 123)
2:1-2 (7-8)
2:2 (86, 99)
2:2, 9, 13, 19 (35)
3 (xiii, 4, 6, 7, 8, 32, 38,
39, 41, 51, 52, 57, 68, 85,
87, 90, 94, 105, 113, 123)
3:1 (35, 50, 137)
3:1-5 (7)
3:1, 8, 15 (35)
3:7-8 (110, 127, 137)
3:7-20 (32)
3:7-21 (1, 60)
3:7-22 (115)
3:8 (131)
3:9 (50)
3:10 (1, 33)
3:10-11 (38)
3:11 (30, 78, 98)
3:12 (1, 33, 34, 38, 45, 80,
130)
3:12, 18-19, 21 (39)
3:13 (34)
3:14-15 (35)
3:14-16 (47)
3:14-19 (42, 78-79, 137)
3:14-20 (33, 44, 110)
3:14-22 (127)
3:15-16 (119)
3:16-17 (34, 35)
3:16-20 (34)
3:17 (11, 33, 36, 50, 93,
122-123)
3:18-19 (38)
3:19 (137)
3:20 (30, 38, 133, 146)
3:21 (38)
3:22 (39)
4 (38)
6 (46, 106)
6:9-11 (42, 44)
6:9, 11 (45)
6:9-16 (40)
6:12-17 (40)
7 (46)
7:1-4 (40)
7:3-4 (43)
7:4 (41)
7:9, 13-14 (41)
7:14 (41, 42, 46)
9:4 (46-47)
10:11 (54, 129)
12 (45, 45)
12:9 (91, 128)
12:11 (42)
12:11-12 (42, 44)
12:11-14, 17 (45)
12:13-14 (42, 134)
12:14 (33, 41, 42, 47, 130)
12:17 (31, 42, 103, 135)
13 (45)
13:7, 17 (45)
13:15, 17 (45)
14 (45)
14:1 (47)
14:1-4 (45)
14:8 (41, 45)
14:12-13 (46)
19:7 (16)
19:10 (103)


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