**THE ONLY GUARANTEED WAY TO ESCAPE**

**END-TIME CATASTROPHES**

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*[Unless otherwise stated, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has been for reference, but common modern words such as you for ‘thou’, ‘thee’ and ‘ye’ have been used, so that readers not familiar with the KJV Bible may find it easier to read. Mostly the New King James Version (NKJV) translation has been used as an alternate]*

Bible prophecies indicate that incredible catastrophic events are about to explode on the world scene. The very first event is the Third World War and its aftermath in which one fourth of mankind (more than 1.8 billion people) will lose their lives (Revelation 6:8). It will followed by the Great Tribulation described by Jesus in these terms: “21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.” (Matthew 24:21-22).

When all these catastrophic events are over perhaps only about a 100 million people might survive. But there is a guaranteed way to come out alive through these events. This booklet describes the actions a person must take to obtain God’s help in coming out alive through the great end time catastrophes.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Approximately one third of the Bible is instruction in living God’s way of life, one third of it is past history, and nearly one third of it is prophecy, which is future history foretold in advance. And 90% of prophecy pertains to our days called the end times and beyond.

God’s purpose in revealing mankind’s future through prophecy is to encourage the righteous to persevere in their righteousness in order to receive the awesome reward that God offers them, and to warn each and every human being that those who persist in doing evil will not escape the prophesied end-time catastrophic events.

What would be God’s point in warning each and every human being if there was no way of escape? Warning the world of approaching catastrophes makes sense only if God promises a way of escape for those who heed the warning.

If the chance of surviving these end time catastrophes was purely random, then it would make no difference whether one heeded the warning issued by God’s Church or not. But the truth is that God has promised a guaranteed way of escape. To receive protection for escaping these catastrophes, He requires some action from the individual. That is why it is vital to pay heed to the messages and diligently act on them. God has promised in the Bible that based on our own actions we can receive protection from Him throughout the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation and come out alive.

The Great Tribulation will be followed by 1,000 years of a real utopian world in God’s Kingdom where mankind will live in unprecedented abundance, prosperity, peace, harmony, happiness and joy throughout the world. It is worth it to survive the end time catastrophic events and experience that world. Daniel the prophet calls such people truly ‘blessed’ (Daniel 12:12) who survive.

The question for each of us is: Since such an event has not happened before, will I pay heed to the warning and take the required action to receive God’s help in coming out alive through all these catastrophic events?

**CHAPTER 1**

**HUMAN BIAS AGAINST TAKING ACTION**

Humans do not like to give it much thought. Even if a thought flashes into their minds, they put it away almost immediately as it may be too painful to contemplate. People don’t like to think they will be affected by a disaster. If someone was to tell them that they could be affected by a global disaster, many just won’t believe it. They have never experienced anything like it in their lives before, and do not want to believe they ever will.

In psychology, this is known as the “normalcy bias.”

In its simplest terms it refers to the natural human reaction of denial, and/or grossly underestimating the effects when faced with a disaster or crisis. All humans, including the most intelligent ones are subject to the normalcy bias, particularly if a disaster or crisis has never happened before. They tend to believe that if a disaster has never happened before, it never will. It leads to a mindset in which people are unable to prepare ahead of time to deal with the crisis before it strikes or take action to avoid it. Then when the crisis actually engulfs them, they have to suffer its full effects.

Here are two examples of the normalcy bias at work. This is a quotation from a write-up by Porter Stanberry of Stanberry & Associates Investment Research, sent to many in 2012 to sell his investment services:

“The normalcy bias often results in unnecessary deaths in disaster situations. For example, think about the Jewish populations of World War II...

“As Barton Biggs reports in his book, *Wealth, War, and Wisdom*:

"By the end of 1935, 100,000 Jews had left Germany, but 450,000 still [remained]. Wealthy Jewish families...kept thinking and hoping that the worst was over...

“Many of the German Jews, brilliant, cultured, and cosmopolitan as they were, were too complacent. They had been in Germany so long and were so well established, they simply couldn't believe there was going to be a crisis that would endanger them. They were too comfortable. They believed the Nazi's anti-Semitism was an episodic event and that Hitler's bark was worse than his bite. [They] reacted sluggishly to the rise of Hitler for completely understandable but tragically erroneous reasons. Events moved much faster than they could imagine."

“This is one of the most tragic examples of the devastating effects of the "normalcy bias" the world has ever seen.

“Just think about what was going on at the time. Jews were arrested, beaten, taxed, robbed, and jailed for no reason other than the fact that they practiced a particular religion. As a result, they were shipped off to concentration camps. Their houses and businesses were seized.

“Yet most Jews STILL didn't leave Nazi Germany, because they simply couldn't believe that things would get as bad as they did. That's the normalcy bias...with devastating results.

“We saw the same thing happen during Hurricane Katrina...

“Even as it became clear that the levee system was not going to work, tens of thousands of people stayed in their homes, directly in the line of the oncoming waves of water. People had never seen things get this bad before...so they simply didn't believe it could happen. As a result, nearly 2,000 residents died.

“Again... it's the "normalcy bias." We simply refuse to see the evidence that's right in front of our face, because it is unlike anything we have experienced before. The normalcy bias kicks in...and we continue to go about our lives as if nothing is unusual or out of the ordinary.”

The most devastating example of the normalcy bias in the history of mankind occurred more than 4,300 years ago, in the days of Noah! Because of interracial marriages and complete lawlessness, the entire world had become saturated with violence. The Bible describes the conditions in these words in Genesis 6:1-13 (KJV):

“1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth [meaning the world population began to explode], and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God [The correct translation here should be ‘sons of gods’ because the gods mentioned here were the non-white descendants of Cain and Lamech who had deified themselves, calling themselves ‘gods’] saw the daughters of men that they were fair [meaning racially white, of the line of Seth the son of Adam]; and they took them wives of all which they chose [meaning married or took as many as they liked. These were interracial, polygamous and mainly forced marriages.] 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God [‘sons of gods’] came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

“5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repents me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations [actually refers to racially pure, meaning he resisted forced interracial marriages], and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

God used Noah to warn the world to repent or He would destroy all mankind in a worldwide flood. Noah was informed by God that He is going to reduce man’s life span to 120 years from the nearly 1,000 years. Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) and may already have been warning the world to repent of sins. This brought persecution on him from Lamech and his descendants. Noah had to flee to Egypt for his life with his family. It seems it is from Egypt that God commissioned him to warn the world about the Flood. Then when Lamech died of old age, Noah left Egypt to go to Mesopotamia (land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers) to begin building the ark. Noah was probably building the ark for more than 8 decades.

Can you imagine the attention this huge project would have garnered around the world? The news of a middle aged man (age of 500 years was middle aged for people who lived more than 900 years) building a huge vessel on dry ground, stating that God is going to destroy all mankind in a worldwide Flood if they did not repent of their sins was a powerful witness to the world. But it subjected Noah and his three youngest sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth who worked on the project with him to decades of jeers and ridicule. Nobody even remotely believed that there could be a worldwide Flood in which all of humanity and all land creatures would be destroyed. It had never happened before. They could not imagine it could ever happen. The ‘normalcy bias’ was strongly at work in Noah’s days as well.

Jesus Christ referred to this event when describing the time of His return to earth the second time. He stated in Matthew 24:37 (NKJV) and Luke 17:26: “37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

In the days of Noah a few decades before the Flood, the descendants of Lamech ruled the entire world. And they had begun persecuting and killing those who remained loyal to God. The result of their threats and murders was that all of humanity had left worship of the true God and followed the satanic worship system of Lamech’s descendants. Only Noah of all of humanity remained loyal to God. It is quite certain that Noah had many sons and daughters besides Shem, Ham and Japheth. They all gave in to the threats of the descendants of Lamech and followed the false religion. But God through Noah warned that world for about 100 years to repent of following the false religion and its evil ways or He will drown them all. The world laughed Noah to scorn and did not pay heed. God did carry out His warning and drowned them all except Noah and the 7 with him in the ark. Even Noah’s descendants who gave in to the false worship system perished in the Flood.

God through His true Church has been warning about the great false Church, and the rotten Holy Roman Empire and that those who give in to its worship system will all be destroyed by God. But just as in the days of Noah, not many will pay heed. God will carry out His threat this time also and destroy all of them. But there is better news this time than in the days of Noah. Noah’s preaching did not cause any to repent. The preaching of God’s Church, however, will cause tens of millions to repent. And that is the only way to guarantee coming out alive through the Great Tribulation for anyone in the world.

**The Most Important Question of Our Day**

The most important question for every human being in our day is exactly the same as that faced by every human in Noah’s day: If the world were to be warned of global catastrophes because of its sins that could destroy all life on earth, will you repent in order to receive protection from God, as Noah received in his day? Or will you let the normalcy bias leave you unable to act to protect yourself and your family?

The destruction of the earth and mankind in it is prophesied in the Bible by God through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 24:1, 4-6 (NKJV): “1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants… 4 The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. 5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.”

God says that because humanity has transgressed His laws, the earth is going to be burned with the fire of nuclear and conventional weapons with only a few men left alive. Jesus Christ also described this global catastrophe in these terms in Matthew 24:21-22 (NKJV): “21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.”

About 97 years ago, in August-September 1917, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, through whom God founded the modern era of His Church, was commissioned by God to preach the good news of the soon coming Kingdom of God to all the world for a witness, in fulfillment of the prophecy in Matthew 24:14 (“14 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.) The call was initiated by God through a dream to his wife Mrs. Loma Armstrong as described by Mr. Armstrong in Volume 1, pages 203-205 of his autobiography.

In the dream Mrs. Armstrong was with Mr. Armstrong and saw a solid mass of brilliant stars filling the sky and then vanishing. Then 3 angels appeared and one of them put his arm around both of them. The angel told them that Christ was really coming in a very short time.

Mr. Armstrong writes: “At that time, we had been going quite regularly to motion-picture theatres. She asked the angel if this were wrong. He replied Christ had important work for us to do, preparing for His coming – there would be no time for “movies.”

When Mrs. Armstrong told the dream to Mr. Armstrong, he was embarrassed, and suggested that she tell the dream to the minister of the Church up on the corner and ask him if it means anything. Then Mr. Armstrong writes:

“Let me say here that in about 99,999 times out of 100,000, when people think God is speaking to them in a dream or vision in this day and age, it is pure imagination, or some form of self-hypnotism or self-deception. I have only come to believe that this dream was a bonafide call from God in the light of subsequent events.”

If Noah warned the world for about 100 years since receiving his call, and the world has been receiving warning for 97 years since Mr. Armstrong’s call, this means that the beginning of the end of the end time events is nearer than we may think.

The author has been giving his weekly messages (which every human being can hear in his or her own language every week at 9.00 a.m. USA Eastern Standard Time every Saturday by just focusing his or her mind on listening to them), delivered by Satan and the demons from December 2, 2006 to July 14, 2007 and by God’s angels since July 21, 2007. These messages fulfill a specific prophecy.

Revelation 10:5-6 states (NKJV): “5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer…”

After the world entered the time of “delay no longer’ in fulfillment of end of the end time prophecies, the first event prophesied to occur is stated in verse 11: “11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues [meaning languages], and kings."

The main thrust of the author’s messages delivered in all languages of the world has been soon coming prophesied events and the role various nations, peoples and kings will play in them. Since this prophecy has been so dramatically fulfilled, it means that end of the end time catastrophic events can begin at any time now. All these events and the sequence of fulfillment are described in the author’s booklet titled “World in Bible Prophecy,” available on this web site www.ChurchofGodMessage.com for free download.

God always warns the world through His prophets when He is about to let catastrophic events take place. He says through Amos the prophet in Amos 3:7 (NKJV): “7 Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” God warned the world about the Flood through Noah. He has been warning our present world through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and then God’s Church even till today. Author’s messages are a continuation of the same commission from God to His Church.

The question is: Will you pay heed to the warning or will you let yourself be the victim of the normalcy bias and be overwhelmed by the coming catastrophes? The choice is yours.

Jesus Christ has prophesied that humanity will react in the same way as those in Noah’s days. He said in Luke 17:26-29 (NKJV): “26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

Matthew states the same thing in Matthew 24:37-39 (KJV): “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking , marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Again, each and every human being has to make his or her own choice whether to heed the warning, or let the normalcy bias dictate their actions (or inaction really) and do nothing.

**There is a Sure Way of Escape**

What would be God’s point in warning each and every human being if there was no way of escape? Warning the world of approaching catastrophes makes sense only if God promises a way of escape for those who heed the warning.

If the chance of surviving these end time catastrophes was based purely on chance, then it would make no difference whether one heeded the warning issued by God’s Church or not. But the truth is that God has promised a surest way of escape. To receive protection for escaping these catastrophes, He requires some action from the individual. That is why it is vital to pay heed to the messages and diligently act on them. God has promised in the Bible that based on our own actions we can receive protection from Him throughout the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation and come out alive.

In fact, as the Great Tribulation progresses in time, if by chance a person remains alive till that time, he or she can still repent and change and receive God’s protection for the remainder of the Great Tribulation. But obviously, the longer one delays one’s response to God’s warning to repent and change one’s ways, the less the chance of survival because without God’s protection, one could perish in any of the preceding catastrophic events.

There is another danger in delaying one’s response to God’s warning to repent and change. Repentance is not merely switching one’s attitude in an instant and expecting God to protect the person from then on. Repentance has to be demonstrated by actions. Delaying one’s response may mean there is not enough time to demonstrate one’s repentance. By delaying one’s response to God’s warnings one may have reached the point of no return when it is too late to demonstrate one’s repentance to God by one’s actions.

Where does God promise sure protection to people during the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation?

You can search the Bible from cover to cover and you will find only one place where only one specific group is promised protection for the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. And that place is Revelation 3:7-13.

In Revelation 3:7-13 Jesus Christ describes an era of His Church called the **Philadelphian Church**. “7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true [this means that this is absolutely true testimony from God which we can completely believe and rely on]… 8 **I know your works**. See, I have set before you an open door [of the Internet and broadcasting, and in the author’s case God’s angels broadcasting his messages every week], and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, **have kept My word, and have not denied My name.** 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan [infiltrators implanted by Satan in God’s Church in the Philadelphia era], who say they are Jews [spiritually] and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.10 **Because you have kept My command to persevere,** **I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth**. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! **Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more…”

The characteristics of the members of the Philadelphian Church that God praises are that they keep God’s word, meaning all His commandments and doctrines and live by every word in the Bible; have not and will not deny to the very end that they worship the true Jesus Christ of the Bible and that He is their Savior; persevere in doing God’s work of warning the world of the coming catastrophes and proclaiming the most wonderful news of the return of Jesus Christ to earth to save mankind from annihilating all life on earth and to establish the Kingdom of God; hold fast to the very end the doctrines and understanding of prophecy God restored to the Church through the end-time Elijah the prophete sen, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong; and work diligently to overcome their sins. Those members of God’s Church who demonstrate that attitude to God can rely on His promise that He will “keep them from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

Members of God’s Church with this attitude are the only people in the entire world who are promised protection in a place of safety for the entire ‘hour’ of trial, which is the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. This is the only sure way of escape. REMEMBER, THIS IS GOD’S PROMISE. AND HE ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISES. Those members of God’s Church who continue to examine their conduct daily to see that it meets the requirements described above have God’s own sure promise of protection in a place of safety. You can completely and totally depend on this promise from God, without any reservations.

Here is how Moses describes God in Deuteronomy 32:3-4: “3 For I proclaim the name of the Lord: ascribe greatness to our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, **A God of truth** and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.” Yes, God is a God of truth. That’s why we can depend on His promise of safety throughout the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

Besides members of God’s Church with the Philadelphian attitude, of those who survive the horrifying events of the first two and a half years of the Great Tribulation, another group is then guaranteed protection during the last one year of the Great Tribulation called the ‘day of the Lord’ when God pours out His wrath on the nations of the world. These people see the catastrophic events taking place during the first two and a half years of the Great Tribulation exactly as proclaimed by God’s Church which they can verify from the pages of the Bible, repent of their sins, turn to God and beseech Him for protection. God then responds. God’s response is described in Revelation 7 (NKJV):

“1 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed…”

Then verses 5-8 list the 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes that were sealed. The modern descendants of these twelve tribes are America (which is Manasseh), America and British Commonwealth nations (Joseph); Jews (Judah) and the rest of the tribes live in France, Ireland, Switzerland, Scandinavian and Benelux countries. Only the tribe of Dan (whose descendants live in Denmark and partly in Ireland) are excluded from those sealed.

Then verse 9 onwards describe another multitude:

“9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." 13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb [meaning repented of their sins, accepted the blood of the Lamb (another name for Jesus Christ) as payment of the death penalty on their behalf for their sins, and made a commitment to live God’s way of life]."

This great multitude perhaps numbering in the tens of millions are peoples from all nations of the world and languages, including from the tribes of Israel. All these came out of two and a half years of the Great Tribulation and have washed their sins in the blood of Jesus Christ, meaning acknowledged their sins, repented of them and accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment of the death penalty for their sins so that they can be forgiven and qualify to receive eternal life.

These three groups will be described in detail later to explain how one can become a part of them and receive God’s protection to come out alive at the end of the Great Tribulation.

**CHAPTER 2**

**SUMMARY OF PROPHESIED END-TIME CATASTROPHES**

As mentioned earlier, the world has reached the point when there is “no longer delay” in the beginning of the end of the end time events. But what are these catastrophic events? These are described in great detail in the author’s larger booklet titled “World in Bible Prophecy” and in summary form in the shorter booklet titled “Summary of Sequence of End-Time Events.” Here is a listing of these catastrophes as pictured in the messages of the seven seals.

1. The very next event is the Third World War that can begin at any time now. One fourth of humanity will lose their lives in this war and its aftermath of famines and diseases. This is pictured by the FIRST FOUR SEALS (Revelation 6:1-8).

2. Military defeat of the American/British/Jewish Alliance (ABJA) by a German led European and Roman Catholic Church alliance (identified in Bible prophecy as the seventh resurrection of the so-called ‘Holy Roman Empire’), itself allied with the Islamists and other nations of the world, and their slavery for three and a half years, known as the Great Tribulation. This is pictured by the FIFTH SEAL (Revelation 6:9-11). In this war two-thirds of the population of the ABJA is destroyed, one-third is enslaved of which only one tenth will ultimately come out alive through the Great Tribulation when Jesus Christ returns to earth and rescues them.

3. Just before the military defeat of the ABJA, members of God’s Church with a demonstrated Philadelphian attitude will be taken to a place of safety. THESE ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE GUARANTEED TO COME OUT ALIVE THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION. The remnant with a Laodicean attitude will unfortunately have to go through the Great Tribulation to demonstrate their loyalty and total commitment to God’s way of life by being martyred for it. Only 50% will remain loyal to God’s way of life till the very end. Virtually each and every one of this loyal remnant will be persecuted and martyred. The other 50% will compromise with the religion of the European dictator (known as the Beast, or King of the North) and the pope of the Roman Church (known variously as the false prophet, beast and little horn in prophecy). They may survive the first two and a half years of the Great Tribulation by this compromise, but they will all lose their lives in the events of the last one year of the Great Tribulation known as the “Day of the Lord.”

4. After the defeat of the American/British/Jewish alliance, the Islamists supported by the German dictator turn their sights on other nations descended from the biblical patriarch Jacob, also known as Israel. These nations are France, Ireland, Switzerland, Scandinavian and Benelux countries. However in this ongoing war, the Northwest Europeans are not defeated and enslaved, but they will likely lose 90% of their populations in all the catastrophes.

5. After two years of the defeat of the ABJA and beginning of the Great Tribulation, the alliance between the King of the North and the Islamists begins to break down. This provides some relief to the American, British and Jewish slaves.

6. Close to the end of the two and a half years of the Great Tribulation a great worldwide earthquake and frightening meteor showers signal the imminent start of the terrible events of the “Day of the Lord,” the one year of God’s wrath on the nations as pictured by the SIXTH SEAL (Revelation 6:12-17).

7. Near the end of two and a half years of the Great Tribulation, when the “Day of the Lord” is about to begin, God sends angels to seal 144,000 of the physical tribes of Israel (The American, the British, Jews worldwide – including those held captive - Scandinavian countries minus the Danes, Switzerland, Ireland and the Benelux countries) who were engaged in warning the world that the religion of the Beast and the False Prophet is a false religion of the devil and warning the world not to take part in it by worshipping the image or idol of the beast or they will be destroyed (Revelation 7:1-8). These 144,000 will later be changed to immortal beings (which will include some of the slaves) in the first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. Besides these, millions who did not give in to the false religion, did not worship the image of the beast or take his mark will be guaranteed protection during the events of the next year, known as the Day of the Lord (Revelation 7:9-17). GOD WILL GUARANTEE THAT THEY WILL COME OUT ALIVE THROUGH THE EVENTS OF THE LAST ONE YEAR OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION and serve in His temple when Jesus Christ sets up God’s kingdom.

8. The 'Day of the Lord' which is the last one year of the three-and-a-half year long Great Tribulation begins.  The first event in the 'Day of the Lord' is the attack of the King of the North on the leader of the Islamic Alliance, or the King of the South for "pushing at" him, leading to the defeat of the King of the South, pictured by the FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (Revelation 8:1-12).

9. Next, the King of the North makes a pre-emptive strike on the nations of the east with biological weapons, as pictured by the FIFTH TRUMPET OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (Revelation 9:1-11) in which all of humanity is tortured with incredible pain and suffering for 5 months, but do not die from it.

10. At the end of the five months, the Eastern Alliance countries counterattack the Beast and his global allies with a 200 million man army.  In this war, one-third of the world's population is destroyed, as pictured by the SIXTH TRUMPET OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (Revelation 9:13-18).

11. At the blast of the SEVENTH TRUMPET OF THE SEVENTH SEAL, Jesus Christ returns to earth like lightening flashing from the east to the west (Revelation 11:13-18; Matthew 24:26-27). All the saints of God who remained faithful to the end of their lives during the 6,000 years of man’s history, including the 144,000 who were sealed, will be resurrected to eternal life and will accompany Jesus Christ. This is the first resurrection.

12. Jesus Christ then preaches the gospel of the Kingdom of God through three mighty angels, and demands that the nations free their American, British and Jewish slaves. Nations refuse. Then Jesus Christ pours out His plagues on the nations.  These 5 plagues (picturing the FIRST FIVE BOWLS OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET) include a loathsome, foul smelling sore upon those who had the mark of the beast; the Mediterranean Sea and then rivers and springs of water around the world turned to blood; mankind scorched with great heat; and the throne of the Beast and his kingdom become full of darkness (Revelation 16:1-11).

These plagues make the nations hopping mad, and Satan and his demons also arouse them to war with Jesus Christ (Revelation 16:13-14).

13.  Nations gather at Armageddon with a massive army and then move to Jerusalem to attack Jesus Christ, as pictured by the SIXTH BOWL OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (Revelation 16:12-16). World’s armies are annihilated and their blood forms a more than 180 miles long about 4 feet deep river (Zechariah 14:12 and Revelation 14:19-20).

14. God then punishes the nations for sending their armies against Jesus Christ with the greatest earthquake ever in the history of mankind and a great hail with huge hailstones weighing as much as 100 pounds each, as pictured by the SEVENTH BOWL OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (Revelation 16:17-21). All the cities and mountains are leveled; ocean floors rise so that there are no more islands left.  There is a massive loss of human life.  The population of the earth left alive as a result of the earthquake and the hail perhaps could be less than 100 million.

With the greatest earthquake ever and the plague of great hail, the 1,260 days of the Great Tribulation will end. The 1,260 day count started after the 30 days of the war that defeated the American, British and Jewish alliance and ends when the plague of great hail from heaven is poured out.

15. After the nations are subdued, Jesus Christ rescues the American, British and Jewish slaves within 45 days. That is the meaning of the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days mentioned in Daniel 12:7, 11-12. These days mean 30 days of the war that defeats the ABJ Alliance, 1260 days of the Great Tribulation and 45 days to get to all the slaves and rescue them.

16. Jesus Christ brings the guilty leaders to justice. The King of the North and the pope will be caught most likely by the survivors of the American, British and Jewish slaves and thrown into a lake of fire like trash to be burnt alive. Jesus Christ will then use the former slaves to destroy each and every one of those of the European Alliance and the Islamist alliance who have survived in the holy land. As a result of all these catastrophes so few Germans will be left alive that a little child will be able to write their number. And the entire world will clap their hands with joy at their destruction (Nahum 3:19).

Again, Jesus Christ described this time of trouble in these terms in Matthew 24:21-22: “21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”

Everyone should let this sink in his or her mind. This is going to be the worst time of trouble in the history of mankind.

Lord Acton wrote in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Early in Christianity’s history, Roman emperors inflicted torture and death on Christians, but then in early fourth century A.D. after the Roman Church gained ascendancy over other Churches by virtue of being located in the capital of the greatest empire of its time, it committed similar horrors on members of God’s Church and others whose views differed from its own views of Christianity. It seems, whichever party gained absolute power, exercised it to force everyone else to believe what it believed and worship the way it taught to worship either emperor, idols, images or even a false Jesus and God.

In our time, for the seventh and last time, the combination of a military/civil power based in Europe led by the Germans and the great false Church based in Rome is soon going to revive the old ‘Holy Roman Empire’ and gain absolute power. And absolute power will corrupt the pope of the Roman Church and the German dictator absolutely. They are going to set up a false worship system (an actual image or idol may be set up), and force the world to worship that image of the beast and receive his mark. It will put to death those who refuse to obey. There are likely to be horrendous tortures involved, and people are likely to be burnt alive as in the Middle Ages and during the Protestant Reformation.

The main target of this Great Tribulation will be members of God’s Church and the Israelite nations of America, the British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel. But the last one year of the Great Tribulation, called the Lord’s Day, is one year of God’s punishment on all nations. NONE of the torturers or murderers will escape God’s wrath and all of them will die in excruciating pain and suffering during this one year.

**Final Resurrection of the ‘Holy Roman Empire’**

Let’s understand the prophecies related to the Roman Empire and its various resurrections in history.

The original Roman Empire and its revivals were prophesied by Daniel, and in the book of Revelation.  Daniel 7:7-8 NKJV) describes the Roman Empire as the fourth beast:

"After this I [Daniel] saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong.  It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet.  It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.  I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots.  And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."

In Daniel 7:23-25 the angel explains the fourth beast: "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth...The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom.  And another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.  He shall speak pompous words against the Most High [God], shall persecute the saints of the Most High [God's true Church], and shall intend to change times and law."

Students of prophecy recognize the fourth beast as the Roman Empire. The original Roman Empire was destroyed in 476 A.D. The ten horns of the fourth beast are ten resurrections of the Roman Empire after its collapse in 476 A.D.  But the first three resurrections did not have approval of the pope of the Church of Rome (he is the little horn on the beast's head that came up among the ten horns), because they did not belong to the Catholic Church.  So he engineered their uprooting.  These three resurrections were the kingdoms of the Vandals, the Heruli (under Odoacer) and the Ostrogoths.  Thus the popes fulfilled the prophecy about the first three kings being plucked by their roots.  After these first three resurrections of the Roman Empire, seven more were to come.  Six of these that have come so far have come with the approval of the Church of Rome and its popes.  Most of the emperors were in fact crowned by the popes as 'Holy Roman Emperors'.  That is why these last six resurrections were called the 'Holy Roman Empire', which was neither holy nor Roman.  It has largely been German in its ethnic and political base. The seventh is yet to come.

The nine resurrections of the Roman Empire so far include those of the Vandals, the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, the 3 that were uprooted at the instigation of the pope; then the 4th under Justinian (554 A.D.); 5th under Charlemagne (crowned 'Holy Roman Emperor' in 800 A.D.); 6th that of Otto the Great (crowned in 962 A.D.); 7th of the Hapsburg Dynasty (Charles V crowned in 1530 A.D.); 8th that of Napoleon's Empire (1804-1814 A.D.); and the 9th was Italy’s and Germany’s empire ending in the Hitler-Mussolini Axis (1870-1945 A.D.)  The last and final revival is yet to take place.  This seventh resurrection of the 'Holy Roman Empire,' most likely headed by Germany, will defeat the Israelite (America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel) countries in war and sell their people around the world as slaves. But Germany will not be acting alone to fulfill this prophecy.  It will have formed alliances with many other nations.

More details, specifically about the last seven resurrections, are provided in the book of Revelation.  The 'Holy Roman Empire is described as a beast in Revelation 13:1(NKJV) "Then I stood on the sand of the sea.  And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name."  These seven heads and ten horns are explained in Revelation 17:9-10, 12: "...The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman [in Bible prophecy woman is a symbol for a church] sits.  There are also seven kings...And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast."

The seven heads of this beast represent the seven resurrections of the Roman Empire on which the woman [the Church of Rome] sits.  But the ten horns on the seventh head of this beast [differs in slight detail from the fourth beast of Daniel 7] represent ten kings or rulers who will be allied with the beast in the last resurrection of the 'Holy Roman Empire'.  This agrees with other prophecies in Daniel, such as the ten toes of the great image of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream.  This is the alliance that will finally defeat the Israelite alliance militarily and take its people captives as slaves.

**What the Holy Roman Empire will Demand**

God has allowed the Holy Roman Empire, also known as the Babylonian system, to prevail in the past and get away with persecuting, torturing and burning human beings alive. But not this time! This time God guarantees that He will bring this system to justice, by utterly destroying it so that it will never rise again.

In the past human beings living under this system could take the passive approach of joining the system, but not participating actively in its persecutions and tortures. That way they could avoid persecution themselves and yet not participate in persecuting others. But this time the situation will be different. The Babylonian system will demand that acceptance of its system be demonstrated by receiving the mark of the beast (whatever it may be) either on the right hand or the forehead, and also worship the image of the Beast (whatever it might be). It will seek to kill those who refuse to do so. But attempting to kill those who don’t obey is one thing, and succeeding in doing so is quite another. The Babylonian system will succeed in murdering many, but many will still escape alive though they refuse to accept the mark of the beast or worship his image. God on the other hand guarantees that He will destroy those who receive the mark of the beast or worship his image. When the choices are considered, the better choice by far is to put one’s faith and trust in God and receive His protection.

The satanic worship system the Holy Roman Empire will set up is described in Revelation 13:11-18: “11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.”

Horn is a symbol of rulership; lamb is another name for Jesus Christ and the dragon is none other than Satan the devil (Revelation 12:9). This verse identifies this beast as having two horns, or crowns. One crown is worn to represent political/civil authority and the other to represent religious authority. There is only one ruler on earth who rules as a political and religious ruler: The head of the Roman Church. So this beast stands unambiguously identified in prophecyas the head of the Roman Catholic Church. He masquerades around as a representative of Jesus Christ, but speaks like the dragon or the devil himself. Can you imagine a religious leader who preaches love, then orders people to be burnt alive who don’t believe what he believes? The head of the Roman Church has done this in the past and will do it again very soon. Continue in verse 12:

“12 And he [the pope] exercises all the authority of the first beast [which earlier verses had identified as the political and military head of the ten nation or ten ruler union in Europe, most likely a German dictator] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [The deadly wound referred to here is the Roman Empire being destroyed by the barbarians in 476 A.D and then the wound being healed refers to its imperial restoration by Justinian in 554 A.D.].

Continuing: “13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

There you have it. Those who do not worship as ordered by this Babylonian System will be ordered to be put to death. Verse 16 continues: “16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.”

These verses describe how those who do not receive the mark of the beast (which may be a physical mark or sign, or it could simply refer to worshipping on Sunday instead of God’s Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) will not be allowed to conduct business or hold down a job and will be boycotted. The number 666 is identified with the Roman Empire. [All these prophecies and symbols are explained in great detail in the booklet titled “World in Bible Prophecy.”]

Thus remaining passive will not be allowed. The Babylonian system will demand that the image of the beast be worshipped, most likely on Sunday, the day of the Sun, and everyone must receive the mark of the beast, whatever it might be. Those who refuse will be ordered to be put to death. Of course, being ordered to be put to death is one thing, but getting everybody on earth to obey is quite another. However, many many will be willing to carry out these orders due to fear and intimidation. As a result, possibly many who refuse to obey this false system will be martyred.

Now see what God Almighty will do to those who worship the image of the beast and receive his mark. Their fate is described in Revelation 14:6-13 (NKJV): “6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-- 7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." 8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." 9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." 12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' “Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

Out of the 3 angels who preach the gospel of the kingdom two are sent to proclaim the destruction of the Babylonian system forever. It shall never rise again. This may be the last chance for any person to repent of worshipping the image of the beast and carrying his mark. But it is generally not easy for people to switch course suddenly. Those who have been cowed down by the beast and the false prophet and did not repent despite the prophesying and preaching of God’s two witnesses of Revelation 11 are unlikely to repent at the preaching of the three angels.

However, the preaching of the 3 angels is still the last chance to repent for those who have survived the horrors that just preceded the return of Jesus Christ. If people wait this long to make their decision to reject the worship system of the beast and the false prophet, they may simply wind up dead in the catastrophes that precede this event. They will have waited too long. But if they have been undergoing the process of repentance and the preaching of the two angels finally convinces them, God in His mercy will likely spare them.

In contrast to the threats of the beast and the false prophet which millions will resist and survive, those who do not repent at the preaching of the two witnesses and the three angels and continue to worship the image of the beast and carry its mark will wind up dead WITHOUT EXCEPTION. God guarantees that, and He has the power to ensure that.

One event that will ensure this result finally is the greatest earthquake ever that will strike the earth and the hailstorm of 100 lb. hailstones that follows, which is prophesied in Revelation 16:18-21 (NKJV): “18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city [meaning Jerusalem] was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away [meaning there will be no islands left], and the mountains were not found [meaning all mountain ranges will be flattened]. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent [which is about 100 lbs]. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”

Let this be a warning to everyone in the world. In the past many may have actively or passively joined the side of the so-called Holy Roman Empire and its previous six resurrections and avoided all its persecutions, but this time it will be different. That option will no longer be available. Those who actively or passively join the side of the beast and the false prophet and participate in its worship system are guaranteed to be destroyed by God’s intervention. And they will suffer tortures and many other plagues before they die. This is the worst option one can choose, and yet because of fear vast majority of humanity will join their side and wind up tortured and dead.

All these prophecies are explained in detail in the booklet titled “World in Bible Prophecy.”

**Why God Allows Humanity to go through Suffering**

The great question on everyone’s mind is: “Why will God allow humanity to inflict all these horrors on one another?” The answer is that God is not bringing these horrors on humanity. Humanity under Satan’s influence is. Don’t blame God, blame Satan. You may say “God is in charge. Why then does He allow it, or does not stop it by getting rid of the tyrants?” The answer: “He will. He will put an end to all tyrants and stop humans from inflicting pain and suffering on each other. But since we of our own volition have chosen Satan’s ways rather than God’s way of life, God simply wants us and all angels to first learn the lesson for eternity that our own ways and Satan’s way, and our own rule that is different from God’s laws and rule (with God ruling) will always result in pain and suffering, and ultimately death. God is simply allowing us to go our own way since the days of Adam and Eve till we bring ourselves to the brink of annihilation before Jesus Christ is sent by God the Father to put an end to man’s misrule.” *And even all those who die in these catastrophes will be made alive by God in the second resurrection to receive their one and only chance for salvation.*

After 6,000 years of human history of pain and suffering for all humanity when Jesus Christ rescues humanity from the brink of annihilation, Jesus Christ will set up God’s Kingdom in which all of humanity will be taught God’s way of life. And that way of life will be enforced on the entire world. It will usher in an era of unprecedented peace, harmony, accomplishment, happiness and joy for all humanity. No human being will have to face the issues of stark survival. Thus humanity will be able to compare what its own rule and ways for 6,000 years had resulted in and what results living 1,000 years of God’s way produced. God is allowing humanity to write this lesson for eternity in pain, suffering and death. That is why God is allowing humanity to go through suffering, brought on by itself under Satan’s influence.

But there is only one sure way to escape all the catastrophic events and increase one’s chances of coming out alive through the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

**CHAPTER 3**

**WAY OF ESCAPE FOR INFILTRATORS IN GOD’S CHURCH**

Prophecies concerning how God will protect people through the soon-coming Great Tribulation deal with 4 groups:

1) Members of God’s Church;

2) Israelite nations of America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel;

3) Other Israelite nations – France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavian and Benelux countries, and

4) Rest of the World.

We will look at end of the end time prophecies concerning each group from the pages of the Bible and see how people in each group can maximize their chances of coming out alive through the Great Tribulation.

**Way of Escape for Members of God’s Church**

Let’s now look at prophecies concerning God’s Church in the end time and how its members can escape the Great Tribulation alive. In the very end of the end-time, mainly two eras of God’s Church exist simultaneously: The Philadelphian Era and the Laodicean Era. The Philadelphian era began with the preaching and ministry of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in 1928 and ended with his death on January 16, 1986. The Laodicean era began with his death. All those who have come into God’s Church since Mr. Armstrong’s death belong to the Laodicean Era.

It is possible that some tiny remnants of the Thyatira and Sardis eras might also exist because Jesus Christ in His messages to the Churches tells these two Churches in addition to Philadelphia and Laodicea to “hold fast what you have till I come” (Revelation 2:25 and 3:3).

The seven Churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 - Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea - which were ancient cities in the Roman Empire along a mail route - represent distinct eras in the history of God’s Church in time sequence. But each Church located in these cities also had its distinct characteristics in terms of spiritual attitudes mentioned by Jesus Christ. These seven attitudes have prevailed to some degree or another in each Church era, but the special characteristics mentioned for each Church era have been predominant in that era. What this means is that in the end of the end time, which is the time we now live in, the Laodicean attitude is the predominant one. Those who came into the Church during the Philadelphian era during Mr. Armstrong’s ministry retain most of the Philadelphian attitude. However, those who became members of God’s Church in the Laodicean era can work diligently to develop a Philadelphian attitude and receive protection in a place of safety throughout the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. How to develop a Philadelphian attitude is not a mystery and will be explained shortly.

Even though the Church is now in the Laodicean era (with a lukewarm attitude), it does not mean that most of those who become members of the Church after Mr. Armstrong’s death will have to go through the Great Tribulation. The good news is that members of God’s Church who go through the tribulation are described as a remnant (Revelation 12:17: “And the dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman [God’s Church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [after those with the Philadelphian attitude had fled to the place of safety], which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”).

Though the Greek word for remnant can also be translated as ‘other’ and ‘rest,’ the sense seems to be that the remnant here is not a majority but a minority. However, the key to remember here is that whether one goes to the place of safety or left in the world to go through the Great Tribulation depends entirely on the attitude of the individual. God has put no limit at all on the number of those who will be taken to the place of safety. Those who diligently maintain a Philadelphian attitude will be taken to the place of safety whereas those who are lukewarm in their attitude will have to prove their loyalty to God’s way of life by going through the Great Tribulation and being martyred for it.

Members of God’s Church fall into 3 categories; a) Tares or infiltrators in God’s Church; b) Members with a Philadelphian attitude, and c) Members with a Laodicean or lukewarm attitude. Let’s look at the way of escape for each of these categories of members.

**Way of Escape for Tares or Infiltrators in God’s Church**

Warning to infiltrators in God’s Church is contained in the parable of the tares.

Matthew 13:24-30 (NKJV) states: “Another parable He (Jesus Christ) put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat in my barn.”

Then in verses 36-43 Jesus explains the meaning of the parable of the tares: "...And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the seed is the Son of Man (that is, Jesus Christ Himself). The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one [Satan]. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

This parable makes it quite plain that those who join God's true Church, but have been planted by Satan will end up in the Lake of Fire that will burn up all the wicked. They will lose their salvation and chance for eternal life in the kingdom of God.

These infiltrators are influenced by Satan and are engaged in leading God's true people astray. Their purpose is to deprive genuine members of God's Church of their opportunity for eternal life. Satan uses them to try every possible means to lead the Church collectively as well as individual members astray. For infiltrators to be highly effective, they have to be very well versed in the doctrines of the Church and God's way of life. So they understand God's way of life very well. They know it is good for those who practice it and order their lives by it. But they use Satan's cunning and craftiness to try to deceive the true members into believing that some doctrine is in error and needs modification, or some way of life does not work, or they can compromise with it based on their circumstances. Any compromise with or violation of God’s laws and way of life is sin. The infiltrators try to cause divisions in the Church, or rebellion against authority. All these are contrary to God's way of life. Some genuine members are actually deceived by them, leave the Church and will lose their eternal life.

But God holds people accountable who know His way of life, and reject it. The infiltrators themselves know God's way of life very well, but deliberately reject it. They may reject it because they lack the faith that it works, or are deceived by Satan into believing that the way of cunning craftiness will get them ahead, or because they are thrilled at the prospect of depriving others of eternal life, and must craftily violate God’s laws to lead others astray.

Satan may also have convinced those of German origin among them of another way of life and salvation for them. All Germans perhaps believe Satan’s lie which the Gnostics believed. One such lying tale can be found in a book titled “The Gospel of Judas”, edited by Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer and Gregor Wurst with Commentary by Bart Ehrman.

Ehrman makes this statement on pages 84-85: “Traditional Christianity has taught, of course, that our world is the good creation of the one true God. But this was not the view of the Gnostics. According to a wide range of Gnostic groups, the god who created this world is not the only god and in fact is not even the most powerful or all-knowing god. He is a much lesser, inferior, and often ignorant deity. How can anyone look at this world and call it good? Gnostics saw the disasters around them – the earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, famines, droughts, epidemics, misery, suffering – and they declared that the world is not good…

“Some Gnostic thinkers explained this evil, material world by expounding complicated myths of creation. According to these myths, the ultimate divine being is completely removed from this world, in that he is absolutely spirit – with no material aspects or qualities. This divine being generated lots of offspring known as aeons who, like him, were spiritual entities. Originally this divine realm, inhabited by God and his aeons, was all that existed. But a cosmic catastrophe occurred in which one of these aeons somehow fell from the divine realm, leading to the creation of other divine beings who therefore came into existence outside of the divine sphere. These lesser divine beings created our material world. They made the world as a place of entrapment for sparks of divinity that they had captured, to be placed within human bodies. Some humans, in other words, have an element of the divine within them, at their core. These people don’t have mortal souls, but immortal souls, temporarily imprisoned in this capricious and miserable realm of matter. And those souls need to escape, to return to the divine realm whence they came.

“The myths narrated by the various Gnostic groups differed widely from one another in many of their details…But their overriding point is clear: This world is not the creation of the one true God. The god who made this world – the God of the Old Testament – is a secondary, inferior deity. He is not the God above all who is to be worshipped. Rather, he is to be avoided, by learning the truth about the ultimate divine realm, this evil material world, our entrapment here, and how we can escape.

“I should stress that not everyone has the means to escape. That is because not everyone has a spark of the divine within them: only some of us do. The other people are the creations of the inferior god of this world. They, like other creatures here (dogs, turtles, mosquitoes, and so on), will die and that will be the end of their story. But some of us are trapped divinities. And we need to learn how to return to our heavenly home.”

Most likely the German infiltrators who have infiltrated the Church as *tares* believe this lie, which all Germans seem to believe. They believe that they only are divine (or ‘gods’) and the rest of humanity is no better than animals or insects. Whatever the motivation of any kind of tares for violating God’s laws, from the parable of the tares it seems clear that God holds them accountable for knowing His truth. They will lose their chance for salvation for violating God’s laws. Because they understand God’s way very well, have been baptized into God’s Church, they are receiving their chance for salvation right now. Every human being will receive only one chance for salvation. The tares are receiving their one and only chance at this time. When humanity at large, which has not known God's way of life is given its chance for salvation by being resurrected to physical life in the second resurrection, these infiltrators will likely not be resurrected. They will already have had their chance by learning about God's way of life, but rejecting it under Satan's influence.

Jesus further warned those who would cause one of those who believe in Him to sin or stumble. The warning was recorded by 3 of the 4 gospel writers. If a warning is written 3 times in scripture, it constitutes the strongest warning.

Matthew 18:6: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Mark 9:42: "And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea."

Luke 17:1-2: "Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

From these warnings it is quite clear that God does not take it lightly when some infiltrate God's Church in order to cause true members to stumble or sin. The parable of the tares and these scriptures make it plain that the infiltrators who try to deprive members of God's true Church of their chance for salvation and eternal life by leading them to sin or stumble, will in fact lose their own salvation and eternal life. The parable shows that the tares are harvested at the same time as the wheat. Genuine members of God’s Church are being harvested for God’s kingdom all the time. So the tares are being harvested at all those same times, but to be burned in the furnace or Lake of Fire in the third resurrection. These are the incorrigibly wicked who will not be in the first or second resurrection, but in the third resurrection (Revelation 20:14-15) to be burned up when the earth is set on fire to cleanse it.

This is fitting justice. Those who try to deprive others of their chance for eternal life deserve to lose their eternal life as well. This is in keeping with God’s perfect standard of justice as stated by Obadiah the prophet in verse 15: “For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.”

*Condemning their Children*

Many infiltrators have been in God's Church probably for decades. They have taught and raised their children in God's way of life. But when the children grew out of their teens, they were probably told the truth that they had infiltrated the Church on Satan’s guidance in order to destroy it from the inside. Many of the children too then rejected God's way of life under parents’ influence and joined in activities to destroy God's Church. Parents use this tactic because they want to keep their activities secret. If they tell their children the truth when they are young, the children may blurt it out in the company of true members thus exposing them. In order to avoid this potential problem, they raise their children in God's way, but tell them the truth only when they are out of their teens and are mature enough to be able to keep a secret. But in doing so, not only have they deprived themselves of a chance for salvation and eternal life, they have also deprived their children of a chance for eternal life. Their children also knew God's truth but rejected it. They too will be held accountable for their knowledge.

However, some children of infiltrators who were brought up in God's way of life in His Church must have made their own decisions, when their parents told them the truth. They probably rejected their parents' way of life and have continued in God's way of life. They chose to believe in the incredible promises of God of eternal life in His everlasting Kingdom and rulership of the entire earth. They chose not to lose their chance for salvation. If they have endured to the end, or will endure to the end if they are currently in the Church, they will be sons of God in His everlasting kingdom.

The infiltrators and their adult children who learnt about God's way of life, but chose to reject it, will not be resurrected like the rest of the world when it gets its first chance for salvation. When they wake up in the resurrection of the wicked to be burnt alive in the lake of fire, they may complain to God that they really did not have a chance at salvation. But as evidence God will likely give them the examples of those children who chose to reject their parents' way of life of infiltrating the true Church in order to destroy it, and continued to follow God's way of life and attained eternal life.

This scenario has probably been playing out throughout the history of God’s Church since its founding by Jesus Christ in June of 31 A.D. when the apostles first received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Satan has planted tares or infiltrators in all eras of God’s Church. Probably in all eras some children have not followed their parents’ ways and accepted God’s way of life instead.

*Deeper Meaning in the Parable of Tares*

The parable of the tares has much deeper meaning, and the nature of the tare weed explains God’s response to the actions of tares. The web site www.keyway.ca explains the tare weed this way:

“In Bible History, tares generally refers to the bearded darnel, a species of noxious grass (lolium temulentum) that, until it matured, was very similar in appearance to the wheat that it commonly infested. The difficulty in controlling it was that, while small enough to be weeded, it could not easily be discerned from the wheat, hence much wheat would be unintentionally pulled up in the process, whereas by the time it became recognizable, it could not be pulled up without pulling up the wheat as well because of their by-then closely-growing root systems. The only economical response was to wait and then separate the wheat from the tares as both were harvested.”

Infiltrators in God’s Church respond exactly like tares in a wheat field. When they join the Church, and grow in it spiritually, they are indistinguishable from genuine members. They build friendships with genuine members and their lives become intertwined. Then they begin to question some beliefs and begin to raise doubts in the minds of genuine members about some aspects of God’s way of life in order to lead them astray. They keep sowing further doubts over time. The infiltrators’ leaders engage in leading the whole Church astray, or at least cause divisions, and separate from the Church, taking some members with them. Even to this day, when leaders in God’s Church talk to the leaders of descendants of the members who were in the Church about similarity of their beliefs with God’s Church, they will always single out some belief or the other and say we don’t agree with that.

The genuine members who allow themselves to be deceived become disqualified from receiving eternal life. If God responded by removing the tares from the Church, because of the friendships they have built in the Church, they would surely take some members out of the Church with them. In order to prevent that from happening, as much as possible, God lets the infiltrators stay in the Church with genuine members, i.e. lets the tares grow with the wheat. In the process, genuine members also gain experience in dealing with Satan’s devices. They learn how to avoid being deceived if another being like Satan should ever arise in God’s kingdom in the future, rebel against God’s rule, and try to lead others astray like Satan led one-third of all angels astray.

In the end, after all true members of God’s Church have been resurrected as God’s immortal sons, the tares will all be burned up in the Lake of Fire and destroyed forever. What a horrendous tragedy that will be! Current infiltrators and future infiltrators in God's true Church should take warning now. Once a person learns God's way of life, he is held accountable for the knowledge. Such a person should repent while he still has time left. Children of infiltrators don’t have to follow their parents into the Lake of Fire. They can repent and receive eternal life. God has warned them amply. They have read the parable of the tares many times over. Responsibility for their choices and actions is entirely theirs. God’s Church has done its job in warning them.

The tares should not deceive themselves with faulty reasoning. They work so hard to deprive members of God’s Church of eternal life by deceiving them. They believe that genuine members will lose their eternal life if they can lead them astray. If the tares believe that because the Bible says so, then they ought to believe the Bible when it says that they themselves will lose their eternal life as well.

There are many so-called Sabbatarian churches which are remnants of the Sardis era of God’s Church that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong came into contact with. There were many in leadership positions in that era of the Church who were *tares*. They destroyed that era of the Church. If any genuine members among them still love God and the truth, they should come out of those Churches and join God’s true Church to qualify for the free gift of salvation. The synagogue of Satan was also very active in the Philadelphia era of God’s Church. Many of these tares were leaders in the Church and some were at headquarters. They now constitute most of the top leadership in the Worldwide Church of God. This is their last chance to repent of their wickedness. Perhaps God will be merciful to them and forgive them. But once the end-time events in the form of world wars begin, they may not have any more chance to repent.

*Why God Allows His Church to be Infiltrated*

An important question to ask is: “Why does God allow His Church to be infiltrated by Satan’s agents? Why does He not expose them quickly so that they can be immediately put out of the Church before they do any harm to genuine members by deceiving some of them in order to deprive them of eternal life?”

The answer lies in the lessons God learnt during Satan’s rebellion against His rule. God saw all the tactics and arguments Satan used to deceive and convince one-third of all the angels under his authority on earth to join him in rebellion against Him. What better way to test members in His Church to prove that they will always remain loyal to His government for eternity under all circumstances, than to let Satan try to deceive them through his human agents planted in the Church? What better way to test the firstfruits of humanity with all the tricks that Satan used against angels and that he and the demons have been able to devise since then to deceive members of God’s Church?

God can test members to see if they will rely on him totally to deliver them from deception at the hands of Satan and his agents. Members must always be praying to God to deliver them out of the hands of Satan and his human agents by enabling them to see through their deceptions. To impress upon His people how important this is, Jesus Christ in His example on how His disciples should pray said in the so-called Lord’s prayer in Matthew 6:13, “13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one…” [meaning Satan]. The model prayer is also repeated in Luke 11:4, “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

It is Satan’s nature to oppose God in every project. In order to destroy the Church and members within it he uses his human agents to infiltrate the Church. Members of God’s Church who successfully resist all tests and trials, all the cunning craftiness that Satan can use against them, and learn how to resist his temptations and attempts at deception to turn away from God, will have proved themselves capable of resisting all such temptations for eternity. God will be pleased to grant eternal life to such overcomers and make them His sons in His own family. He can rely on them to never rebel against His rule like Satan and the demons did and brought pain and suffering in the universe for the first time. That is why God allows infiltrators to enter His Church. It is to provide training for future sons and rulers in His everlasting kingdom in avoiding deception.

The Philadelphian era has probably suffered the worst attempts at deception by Satan’s agents. They will have dealt with all the tests that Satan and the demons could devise in their cunning craftiness, and that he has recycled from all his past dealings with God’s true Church.

*Way of Escape for Tares*

For the tares this warning is another chance to repent of their wickedness, and turn to living God’s way of life wholeheartedly. God will require wholehearted repentance from them, as with any sinner. Even a remote desire to hang on to some of Satan’s way would not be wholehearted repentance.

Satan and his human agents tightly control all those who serve him. He will not let the tares go away from his control. His agents will threaten or actually murder those who try to slip away. Just like God, Satan too wants 100% of an individual in his camp. If the tares think they can outwardly show to Satan that they are in his camp, but expect that the true saints should understand the danger they would be in if they were to indicate a clean break with Satan’s camp, then spiritually they are in quicksand. You cannot sit on the fence all your life and expect God to grant you eternal life. The only way to demonstrate wholehearted repentance is to openly walk away completely from Satan’s camp, and have nothing to do with that way. It is guaranteed to make Satan and his human agents your enemies. It may even require you to sacrifice your life to demonstrate your commitment to God’s way of life. But that is the only way to demonstrate that you have completely repented of the previous evil of deceiving true members in order to deprive them of eternal life. God requires nothing less. After all, God wants to be able to rely on you for eternity that you will never forsake His way, or compromise with it, or rebel against Him and His rule. Your very eternal life is at stake. This is your only chance.

Tares will without doubt be persecuted by Satan if they try to leave his camp. God will likely allow them to go through these tests and trials to give them an opportunity to demonstrate their genuine repentance and complete faith and trust in Him. God may even allow some of them to be martyred. In the case of others, after they have demonstrated their faith in God, He could very well intervene on their behalf and even take them to the place of safety for protection during the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation, or just during the last one year of the Great Tribulation. That determination will ultimately be made by Jesus Christ for God the Father has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22 [NKJV]: “22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”)

Just as other members have to put their faith and trust in God to take them to the place of safety, tares will also have to trust God for His decision whether to take them to the place of safety, or like the Laodiceans to allow them to go through the Tribulation to demonstrate their total repentance and commitment to God’s way of life, before He can grant them eternal life.

The fulfillment of end-time prophecies is at hand. A world war could begin at any time. There is not much time left for the tares to make their choice to repent. And the choices they face are very clear. Either they obey God 100% and follow His way, or with any other half-hearted measures they will lose their chance for salvation and eternal life. They cannot play games with God, and cannot deceive Him. God hopes that they will make the wise choice to wholeheartedly repent.

**CHAPTER 4**

**WAY OF ESCAPE FOR THE PHILADELPHIANS**

Let’s again look at how God describes the Church in Philadelphia.

The problem with issuing a separate warning to the Philadelphian members and the Laodicean members is that all genuine members tend to believe they have a Philadelphian attitude. We all have a tendency to believe that God understands that our faith is genuine, and if we sin then He is merciful to forgive us and protect us during the Great Tribulation. Many of us condone our sins due to being physically weak, and we believe God will understand and forgive us and protect us. But God’s standard is zero sin. That is what all members of God’s Church must strive for with their whole being. And yet we know that we live in the Laodicean era and some will have a Laodicean attitude and will have to go through the Great Tribulation.

So what are the dangers that Philadelphians face that they must guard against? We need to look at the cautionary warning that Jesus gave to the Philadelphians. Let’s look at the message to the Philadelphians again in Revelation 3:7-13 (NKJV):

“7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": 8 **I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.** 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 **Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.** 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! **Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.** And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Jesus Christ commends the Philadelphians for:

1) Doing God’s work

2) Having kept His word.

3) Not denied His name.

4) Endure all trials patiently.

They are commended for keeping God’s command to endure all trials patiently and persevere in doing all things, meaning with enthusiasm and fiery zeal.

Then Jesus cautions the Philadelphians to:

5) Hold fast to what they have that no one may take their crown;

6) They must overcome sin.

Since some of the Philadelphians and Laodiceans are most likely attending the same Churches, the Philadelphians also need to know what they should avoid so that they do not become Laodiceans. The actions and conduct of individual members thus determine whether Jesus Christ judges them to be Philadelphians or Laodiceans. So we need to look at Jesus’ warning to the Laodiceans as well in Revelation 3:14-22 (NKJV):

“14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because **you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot**, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because **you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'**--and **do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked**-- 18 I counsel you to **buy from Me gold refined in the fire**, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and **anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see**. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

From the warning to the Laodiceans we learn the characteristics and attitudes the Laodiceans should avoid:

1) They should not be lukewarm in their attitude and actions in doing God’s work of warning the world or overcoming sin.

2) They should avoid the attitude of thinking they are rich (in material wealth, or in spiritual knowledge or in their righteousness) and have need of nothing. They are smug in their belief that they are basically good and their crown is assured. This is a caution particularly to those who are materially well off and feel that spiritually they are just fine because God is blessing them materially.

3) In reality the Laodiceans are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked spiritually, but they are unable to discern and recognize their true spiritual condition. They have deceived themselves into believing that their attitude with God is just fine and that they don’t need to overcome.

The Laodiceans are then cautioned to:

4) Buy gold refined in the fire, meaning that they will have to go through the Great Tribulation to demonstrate their righteousness.

5) They are also admonished to anoint their eyes with eye salve so that their blindness is removed and they can see their true spiritual condition.

When we look at the descriptions of the two churches, we can understand the attitudes and actions each of us should hold on to and which ones to avoid. These are the characteristics also by which God separates the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans.

1) The most important characteristic that distinguishes the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans is that they are persevering in doing the works, meaning God’s work of warning the world of the coming global catastrophes followed by the good news of the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This means that we are to avoid becoming lukewarm in doing God’s work.

2) We have to keep and hold on to God’s word. This means we are to hold on to the truth in the form of doctrines and judgments God restored to His Church through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. This admonition is also contained in the caution to hold fast to what we have.

3) We are to never deny God’s name. This means that we are to never deny that we are members of God’s Church and that we obey God the Father and Jesus Christ. Before the Great Tribulation actually comes on the world, the faith of all members of God’s Church will be tried. Conditions will be terrible and there will be tremendous pressure to deny that we are members of God’s Church in order to save ourselves from physical death. That is why there will be a need to flee to the place of safety. But we are required to never deny God’s name and that we belong to Him, which we demonstrate by admitting that we are members of His true Church and keeping God’s identifying sign the Sabbath as well as all of God’s annual holy days. We are to put our entire faith and trust in God to protect us physically in the place of safety and then resurrect us to eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ.

4) In addition we are also commanded to endure all trials patiently and persevere in overcoming sin, and not become lukewarm. This means that we are not to rationalize and accept any form of sin in ourselves believing that God understands our weakness in flesh and is merciful and will forgive us. God’s standard is zero sin or perfection.

5) We are cautioned to let no man take our crown by holding fast to what the Philadelphians have been given. What the Philadelphian era has been given is restoration of all of God’s truth in the form of doctrines and judgments through Mr. Herbert Armstrong through whom God founded the Philadelphian era of His Church. Philadelphians are warned not to allow anyone to take their crown by deceiving them into believing or compromising with what God restored through Mr. Armstrong, or by causing them some offense, or by being persecuted for their beliefs that lead them to become bitter and leave God’s Church.

6) We are to never develop an attitude of smugness of the rich, believing that our spiritual condition is excellent and we have need of nothing, and finally

7) We are to anoint our eyes with the eye salve of God’s holy spirit so that we can see, meaning that we need to develop the ability, and devote the time and effort necessary to examine ourselves and discern our true spiritual condition and take immediate corrective action. In fact, the ability to discern one’s true spiritual condition and overcome any shortcomings with fiery zeal, and doing God’s work with fiery zeal are the critical factors that separate those with a Philadelphian attitude from those with a Laodicean attitude.

Again, in many cases since those with the Philadelphian or Laodicean attitude are attending the same Churches (whereas in other cases some Churches that have splintered off from the main body and have modified some of their beliefs from what Mr. Armstrong taught are entirely Laodicean), all members should evaluate their actions and conduct to discern whether they are Philadelphian or Laodicean. One of the problems of the Laodiceans is that they are unable to evaluate their conduct correctly and believe that they are Philadelphians in their attitudes and actions whereas they are Laodiceas in the whole range from being cold to tepid. This is where the importance of beseeching God for His eye salve, His holy spirit, and the ability to discern one’s attitude and conduct correctly comes in.

Every member has to evaluate his conduct in terms of these seven characteristics Jesus mentions about the two eras of His Church. Let’s see what each of these characteristics means and how we should evaluate whether we are personally doing all these things with fiery zeal and enthusiasm that lead Jesus to commend us, or doing them in a lukewarm attitude or not doing them at all that leads Jesus to test us further and be refined as gold in the fire of the Great Tribulation.

**CHAPTER 5**

**PHILADELPHIANS PERSEVERE IN DOING GOD’S WORK**

Jesus Christ describes the Philadelphians as perpetually having an enthusiastic fiery zeal for doing God’s work while the Laodiceans are lukewarm. But what is God’s work in the end time?

Jesus Christ gave His Church a commission: to preach the gospel. The word gospel means good news. The central message of the gospel has been the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Wherever a description is attached to the word gospel, it is about the Kingdom of God. For example, Mark 1:14-15 (NKJV) shows that the gospel is about the Kingdom of God: “14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."  Matthew mentions the Kingdom when discussing Jesus or the disciples preaching such as in Matthew 4:35: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom…” and Matthew 9:35: “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom…”

When discussing Jesus’ preaching Luke also mentions the Kingdom of God such as in Luke 4:43, “And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” and in Luke 8:1: “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.”

Thus the works God requires His Church to do is to preach the gospel or the good news of the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The apostles preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God. They expected Jesus Christ to return soon and establish the Kingdom of God. They felt an urgency to preach the gospel message as far and wide as they could. But Jesus did not return in their lifetimes. Gradually the focus on preaching the gospel of the establishment of the Kingdom of God was lost.

Preaching the gospel included preaching about the forgiveness of humanity’s sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which would have resulted in conversions to Christianity. This was also a part of the commission Jesus had charged His Church with as stated in Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV): “19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark states Jesus’ command slightly differently in Mark 16:15-16: “15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Luke 24:46-47 words the command differently: “46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Mark says Jesus’ command was to preach the gospel to every creature, and he had stated in Mark 1:14-15 that the gospel was about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Luke says that the disciples were commanded to preach about repentance and remission of sins which is the beginning point of conversion. When we put these scriptures together, it seems clear that Jesus’ command to His disciples was to preach the gospel which is about the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and that humans could enter that Kingdom by repenting and forgiveness of their sins, becoming disciples of Jesus Christ and observing all things that He had commanded the disciples.

When Jesus Christ did not return in the life time of the apostles to establish the Kingdom of God, eventually the Church no longer emphasized the Kingdom of God and the preaching focused mainly on repentance and remission of sins, and observing all that Jesus had commanded the disciples. But Jesus prophesied that the gospel of the Kingdom of God would again be preached in all the world before the end of man’s age and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This prophecy is recorded by Matthew and Mark.

Matthew 24:14: “14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Mark 13: 10: “And the gospel must first be published among all nations.”

This is essentially the work God has charged His Church with in the end time that we now live in. This work was started by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and must continue till the very return of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God. And when Jesus Christ returns, the task will be completed by a powerful angel (Revelation 14:6).

Question is, why does God want us to demonstrate fiery zeal and enthusiasm for doing His work, that of preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God on earth, and for His way of life?

The answer is: If you have not been enthusiastic about doing God’s work on earth in this end time with the promised reward of becoming immortal sons and daughters of God and ruling the universe with Him, then you are demonstrating to God that you may not even be enthusiastic about life in His kingdom. If you have no joy in being alive, then what use is it to be in God’s kingdom for eternity? That is why God will not grant eternal life to those of us who are not enthusiastic about His way of life and not diligent to live it and do His work while they are in His Church. You have to want to be alive because you enjoy living.

King Solomon had summed up the attitude about life and work in Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NKJV), “10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” That is the attitude God wants in members of His Church of the Philadelphian era because He has promised them rulership of the entire universe with permanent positions at His headquarters (Revelation 3:12).

So what does doing God’s work with fiery zeal and enthusiasm mean?

Actually if a person wants to enthusiastically live God’s way, he will be so busy that he simply cannot be bored. There are so many interesting and exciting things to do and not enough time to do them all. Here is how God expects us to persevere in doing His work with fiery zeal.

1. *God Works Through Righteous People* – The most important thing to remember is that God does not work through sinners. He works through righteous people. A Christian has a life-long battle to overcome sin. So overcoming sin must remain our top priority so that God can bless our efforts in doing His work, which will encourage us to do it with greater enthusiasm and fiery zeal.

Overcoming sin requires diligently studying God’s word (a never ending exciting quest), regularly fasting, praying and meditating to stay close to God and staying focused on continually examining ourselves as well as asking God to reveal our hidden sins so that we can work to overcome them. More will be discussed on overcoming sin later.

In addition to overcoming sin, we are also required to improve ourselves to become better human beings. This means improving the ways in which we relate to others, and even personal habits to become more disciplined or efficient or in improving in whatever good trait we may be lacking.

Thus becoming righteous persons should remain our top priority so that God can use us effectively in His work and bless our efforts

2. *Remember God’s Work is our Family Work* – Our motivation to do God’s work should come from the understanding that God’s ultimate purpose is to make all human beings His immortal sons and daughters, and members of God’s Church till the return of Jesus Christ are the firstfruits or pioneers in God’s plan to accomplish this. Literally, God’s business will be our family business for eternity. His business right now should be our own family business so that we can convince Him that His business will remain our family business for eternity. God will then be pleased to grant eternal life to such individuals as His literal spirit born sons and daughters.

Would a multi-billionaire’s sons and daughters not be enthusiastic about the family business in order to maintain their wealth and enhance it? In the same way we should own God’s work of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14). The eternal reward God is offering us should be our greatest motivator to do God’s work right now.

3. *Performing our Roles in God’s Work with Fiery Zeal* – All of us in God’s Church have collective roles to perform as a Church in God’s work and then individual roles. Individually only a few are required to do the preaching. These would be presenters in the TV, radio and Internet based programs. They must give their best, backing up what they say with the latest research available.

Then individual roles that each of us need to perform with fiery zeal include:

i) PRAYING FOR GOD’S WORK – The Bible tells us in James 5:16-17 (NKJV): “16…The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.” God wants us to pray for each other which develops the habit of loving and caring for our brethren. In the same way how much we pray fervently for success of God’s work is an indicator of how much zeal we have for God’s work. To break down our prayers in fine detail, we need to be in touch with what is going on in God’s work. Then we need to give thought to what will make the work more successful. Then ask God in deeply felt prayer in detail to give the work success in that particular area as well as overall success.

ii) OFFERING SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT – Diligently praying for God’s work requires keeping in touch with the details of God’s work. We will be motivated to think about God’s work when we recognize that we own it in partnership with God, which will lead us to continuously think about the ways in which it can be improved and offering suggestions to do so.

iii) PHYSICAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORK – God’s work also involves physical distribution of literature, particularly the monthly magazine of the Church, through various retail outlets and waiting rooms of various professional practices. Each of us should get involved in these programs as our individual time allows.

iv) PROVIDE FOR THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE WORK – God’s work needs to be financed without any advertising revenue, or public solicitation for donations. Therefore, these needs have to be met mainly by the tithes and offerings of members and prospective members who attend services. Each of us needs to be faithful in paying our tithes and offerings for doing God’s work.

v) BE A LIGHT TO THE WORLD - Members of God’s Church are to be a light to the world. Our lives should be examples of the gospel in action. Many conversions to the Church take place by the living example of members. A light does not make noise, but is seen. So people in the world should be able to learn God’s way of life by seeing how we live our lives as an example. Many people have joined God’s Church after seeing the godly life led by a member they came in contact with. This means constantly evaluating our conduct to make sure that it reflects God’s way of life at all times. And our example should be a shining example, visible for all the world to see, as a candle on a candle stick (Matthew 5:15, Mark 4:21, Luke 8:16). We let our light shine when we share our neighbors’ burdens by helping then in times of need.

vi) PROVIDE FOR AND RAISE GODLY FAMILIES - A Christian has an obligation to provide well for his family and raise godly children. This means working hard at one’s job or profession to earn a decent living, developing a close relationship with one’s mate that should last for eternity, and diligently raising children in God’s way of life.

vii) CARING FOR THE BRETHREN - This includes getting to know fellow members more intimately through regular fellowship, praying for them for help they might need, praying for the sick. showing loving concern with uplifting encouraging conversation and providing physical help as needed. Remember our reward: For Philadelphians it is eternity together as pillars (meaning positions of rulership) at God’s headquarters, and for all other eras of the Church as firstfruits ruling the universe. We will be working together for eternity. That’s why it is important to develop a caring and loving attitude towards all members of God’s Church.

viii) WATCH - Jesus Christ admonished us in Luke 21:36: “Watch therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Make your calling and election sure. The Great Tribulation is almost upon us. We have been told to watch world events so that we are not caught unawares. We can watch and understand world events only if we thoroughly understand prophecy. God’s Church does understand very well the sequence of world events. But do each of us as members understand it individually? One’s life may depend upon it. The meaning of the 1,260, 1,290 and 1,335 days mentioned in Daniel 12 give us the precise time God’s Church will have to flee to the place of safety. We will have only a limited time to flee. If someone is not keeping up with world events, he or she may miss the signal to flee. This means that person will have to go through the Great Tribulation. It will be the most horrible experience in the history of man. That is how important it is to watch.

Collectively the works the Church needs to perform with fiery zeal include the following:

i) PREACH THE GOSPEL – The most important work the Church has to perform is to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to every nation on earth. This means God’s Church must allocate largest percentage of its resources for this purpose. The Church also has a unique message. It is a two-fold message: a warning to the world of the coming prophesied catastrophes, and announcing the good news of the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth. For the Church’s message to remain credible it must be sound on prophecy. Only when the prophesied events come true as prophesied will the Church continue to gain more credibility leading to conversion of millions during the Great Tribulation due to the hope preached by the Church that the world’s nightmare will soon end and Jesus Christ will return, save man from Satan and himself and establish God’s Kingdom.

ii) EXHIBIT GODLY (AGAPE) LOVE – Jesus Christ told His disciples that the way the world will recognize us as His disciples is by the godly love with which we love one another. He said in John 13:34-35: “34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." This means showing care and concern for each member in words and deeds with no one being neglected, visiting one another and dealing peaceably with each other.

iii) LIGHT TO THE WORLD – Besides each of us being a light to the world, the Church collectively should be a light to the world. When the Church gathers for weekly or holy day church services or meets for the Feast of Tabernacles, the world deals with us as a Church. We should let our light shine in the way we conduct ourselves, how we do all things decently and in order, how we make the work of the service staff of the facilities we meet in easier, how our children behave in an orderly manner, how we enjoy ourselves without disorderly, rowdy or drunken behavior, how we travel on the road and obey all of man’s and God’s laws, and in how we deal patiently with the waiting staff at restaurants and hotels. Though as a Church, our main focus has to be preaching the gospel, we should make charitable contributions to the communities in which we hold the Feast of Tabernacles as our individual budgets allow. In short, every aspect of our dealings with the public should be an opportunity for the Church to let its light shine in exemplifying God’s way of life.

iv) UPHOLD GOD’S STANDARDS IN EVERYTHING WE DO – Mr. Armstrong set the highest standards in how we as a Church and individual members should behave and deal with the world. Jesus Christ’s command to the Church is to make the gospel to the world available free of cost as we have received it freely (Matthew 10:7-8: “7 And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”) In addition, our publications should remain free of advertising.

v) SOUND IN DOCTRINE AND ABLE TO GIVE AN ANSWER – God’s Church and each member should be sound in doctrine in keeping with the admonition through Peter the apostle in 1 Peter 3:15-16: “15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.” Other Christian denominations may label us anything they like, but God’s Church should always be ready to soundly defend its doctrines from the scriptures. We should continue to answer all the criticism leveled at our beliefs through our publications so that anybody who wants to seek after the truth can find the answer there.

These are the various ways we individually and collectively as a Church can do our part in doing God’s work with fiery zeal.

**CHAPTER 6**

**PHILADELPHIANS KEEP GOD’S WORD AND HOLD FAST TO WHAT THEY HAVE**

After Jesus Christ commends the Philadelphians for doing God’s work through the open door of mass media with perseverance, enthusiasm and fiery zeal, they are commended for keeping God’s word and counseled to hold fast to what they have. Revelation 3:8, 11: “8…**for you have…kept My word…**11 Behold, I am coming quickly! **Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”**

This admonition also contains a warning. If the Philadelphians do not keep God’s word and hold fast to what they have they could lose their crown, meaning their one and only chance for salvation.

The same lesson can be learnt from Jesus Christ’s admonition to the Sardis era of His Church contained in Revelation 3:2-4: “2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent…4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”

In His message to the Sardis era of His Church that just preceded the Philadelphia era which started with the preaching of Mr. Armstrong, Jesus Christ admonished that Church also to strengthen the things which remain, meaning the truths in terms of the doctrines they had. That era was also told to hold fast to what truth they had and repent.

## The author has read a fairly detailed history of that era of God’s Church. Just like the Philadelphia era, that era was also heavily infiltrated by Satan’s agents. Because of their method of governance through voting, many of these infiltrators were in positions of power. They simply would keep some controversy or the other about doctrines and fundamental beliefs constantly stirred up. Eventually Satan’s agents gained power through voting and began changing doctrines. Those who wanted to keep ‘the things that remained’ had to separate themselves from the main body as it happened in the Philadelphia era of God’s Church after Mr. Armstrong was taken away by death. Jesus Christ says there are “a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” Ultimately only a few scattered families stayed loyal to the truth they had. The main body of that Church was completely taken over by Satan’s agents. That remnant still masquerades around as God’s Church in name, but is run by tares.

## The lesson for all members of God’s Church from the Sardis and Philadelphia eras is that each and every member’s ultimate responsibility is to the truth God restored through Mr. Armstrong and not to any leader, or organization. They follow a leader or be part of an organization as it follows the truth God restored through Mr. Armstrong. When persecution through the seventh resurrection of the so-called “Holy Roman Empire” of the German beast and the false prophet of the Roman Church starts, each of us may have to give an answer for our beliefs as possibly isolated individuals and stand loyal to the truth. A Church leader may not be able to collectively answer for your beliefs. You as an individual will have to answer for your own beliefs. So you must thoroughly understand the fundamental beliefs or doctrines of God’s Church as restored by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong.

The question then is, what does keeping God’s word mean, and what do the Philadelphians have that they are to hold fast to?

Keeping God’s word simply means living according to every word of God (Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4 – “…man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God) in the Bible, because the Bible is God’s complete word in print.

This raises another issue. All those in mainstream Christian Churches who profess to be devout Christians and live according to their faith with their utmost sincerity say they live their lives according to every word in the Bible. And yet they radically differ in their beliefs from God’s Church. So how are Christians in God’s Church different from devout Christians in mainstream Churches, and what are they required to hold fast to?

The answer is that something extremely important happened in the Philadelphian era of God’s Church. God sent a prophet, and much more than a prophet, an apostle, to start the Philadelphian era. And that prophet and apostle was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. God’s sending of that prophet and apostle was prophesied more than 2,400 years ago by Malachi the prophet and then by Jesus Christ Himself more than 1,900 years ago.

**Doctrine can be established only by an apostle**

Members of God’s Church need to understand that doctrine can only be established by an apostle and not by a prophet or any doctrinal committee of ministers or scholars. How then does God’s Church receive its doctrines, beliefs and teachings? As the Church began in 31 A.D., all doctrines were laid down by the apostles who learnt them from Jesus Christ. So God’s Church gets its doctrines direct from God, through Jesus Christ as the head of God’s Church, and from Him through the apostles. Never by scholars, or a doctrinal committee of ministers or any others! This is how the original Church got its doctrines, and that is how the Philadelphia era of God’s Church received them, from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong understood that and taught it to the Church.

God commands His Church in 1 Corinthians 1:10 that we all ‘speak the same thing.’ That ‘same thing’ is what Jesus Christ established in His Church through His apostle.

*Proof that Herbert W. Armstrong was the Apostle Jesus Sent*

How do we prove that Herbert W. Armstrong was the chosen apostle Jesus Christ sent?

Sending of an end-time prophet and apostle was prophesied. Malachi the prophet prophesied that God would send one in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet. He wrote in Malachi 4:5-6: “5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 6 And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Malachi also wrote in 3:1-2: “***1*** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me...”

The Day of the Lord is the last one year of the Great Tribulation. This means that one in the spirit and power of Elijah would come in the end time to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth.

Then Jesus Christ Himself clarified in Matthew 17:11: “10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. 12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed [wished]…13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”

Because this prophet was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, he would fulfill the role that Elijah the prophet fulfilled in ancient Israel. In Elijah’s time Israel had departed from the true God and had started worshipping Baal and other pagan gods. In the entire nation only 7,000 were left who had not worshipped Baal. Elijah came and restored worship of the true God in ancient Israel. So the modern Elijah would fulfill a similar role. He would restore correct worship of the true God in spiritual Israel, which is God’s true Church.

John the Baptist came and prepared the way for the first coming of Jesus Christ. But when Jesus discussed this prophecy with the disciples, John the Baptist had already come and been beheaded by Herod. He could not have restored anything after his death. This means that the prophecy Jesus gave was about an end-time Elijah that would come and prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus Christ by restoring all things, meaning the truths concerning the true God, all the true doctrines and the right way to worship God. Malachi also prophesied that the Elijah would come just before the Day of the Lord. And the Day of the Lord is in the end time. It is the last one year of the three and a half year long Great Tribulation.

What are the “all things” Jesus referred to that one coming in the spirit and power of Elijah would restore? Just as the original Elijah restored worship of the true God in ancient Israel, and one in the spirit and power of Elijah before the first coming of Jesus Christ, meaning John the Baptist restored the worship of the true God in the correct way, another prophet in the spirit and power of Elijah would be sent before the second coming of Jesus Christ to restore the worship of the true God in the right way.

There was no New Testament Church when the original Elijah and John the Baptist came. So they could restore the worship of the true God only based on the understanding provided by the prophets before them. But for the end-time Elijah, the restoration of all things would also additionally require restoring all the doctrines laid down by Jesus Christ and established by the apostles in the original Church, the knowledge of which had been lost over the centuries.

And the Elijah to be sent in the end time is twice mentioned by Jesus Christ as more than a prophet in Matthew 11:9 and Luke 7:26: “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.”

In Church rankings only an apostle ranks higher than a prophet as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28: “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.” Mr. Armstrong thus was more than a prophet in Jesus’ words because he was an apostle as well.

Since only an apostle can establish doctrine, that is why it is absolutely critical to understand what truths Mr. Armstrong restored to His Church and hold fast to them as Jesus counsels His Church to do in His message to the Philadelphian era.

This end-time commission of an Elijah-like prophet was so important that in August-September 1917, Mr. Armstrong was appointed to fulfill this commission through a dream to his wife Mrs. Loma Armstrong which he described in Volume 1 of his autobiography, pages 203-205.

In the dream Mrs. Armstrong was with Mr. Armstrong and saw a solid mass of brilliant stars filling the sky and then vanishing. She realized these were angels. Then 3 angels appeared and one of them then put his arm around both of them. The angel told them that Christ was really coming in a very short time.

Mr. Armstrong writes: “At that time, we had been going quite regularly to motion-picture theatres. She asked the angel if this were wrong. He replied Christ had important work for us to do, preparing for His coming – there would be no time for “movies.”

Yes, Mr. Armstrong was specifically commissioned to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth. He restored all things as Jesus prophesied about the end-time Elijah who was also an apostle. That is why it is absolutely crucial for our salvation and eternal life to adhere to what God restored through Mr. Armstrong in the end-time.

James describes in James 5:10 the mark of a true prophet of God: “10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.”

The mark of a true prophet of God is suffering and patience. Here then is what suffering Mr. Armstrong endured patiently to found the Philadelphian era of God’s Church, as described in his two volume autobiography, available free of charge from the Philadelphia Church of God at its web site www.pcog.org.

Mr. Armstrong mentioned several times that he spent 28 years in grinding poverty. In his autobiography he described how many times there was no food in the house with little children, housing was always a problem, much of the time he usually had only one threadbare suit to wear and the family was clothed with mended used clothing, how he had to battle ministers and wolves in sheep’s clothing who had entered the Church and tried to destroy it in its infancy.

He had to struggle to start Ambassador College. After that effort was successful and God’s Church started growing Satan was implanting tares in the Church regularly. Then these infiltrators led rebellions in the early 1970s and late 1970s when leading evangelists and ministers caused splits in the Church and led away thousands of members from the Church. At one time they induced the state of California to put the Church in receivership, impound all its assets and take over the Church. But Mr. Armstrong’s explanation through advertisements in the Wall Street Journal of what the Attorney General of California was doing was illegal led to the lawsuit being withdrawn and the receivership proceedings ending. This was another attempt by Satan that could have destroyed the Church.

God built the Philadelphia era of His Church through the blood, sweat and total selfless sacrifice of Herbert W. Armstrong. Surely no man with his own intelligence and strength could have overcome all the obstacles that Mr. Armstrong overcame to establish the Philadelphian era of God’s Church. We hope the reader can see that Jesus Christ Himself was leading His end-time work through Mr. Armstrong. His lifelong suffering for the sake of God’s work proves that he was a true prophet of God.

*Prophecies Fulfilled by Herbert W. Armstrong’s Life*

Further proof that Herbert W. Armstrong was the one sent in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet and an apostle by Jesus Christ is provided by the fulfillment of many prophecies in his life that the end-time Elijah and apostle was to fulfill.

1) *Elijah the Prophet*

We have already seen that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi the prophet as coming before the dreadful day of the Lord which is the last one year of the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. He also fulfilled Jesus Christ’s prophecy that he would restore all the doctrines and truths to God’s true Church before His return to earth. He restored more than 20 major doctrines or truths to God’s Church which will be listed shortly.

2) *Preaching the Gospel as a Witness Unto All Nations*

One of the major prophecies fulfilled in our time, of course, is Matthew 24:14, which states: “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.” It all started with Mr. Armstrong. He first of all restored the knowledge that the gospel is about the reestablishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and started preaching it. It went global beginning in 1953 when it began to be preached in Europe after having been preached only in the North American continent.

Since Mr. Armstrong’s death, though the Church has divided into different organizations, all those that adhere to what was restored through Mr. Armstrong still continue to preach the same gospel around the world. Though the funds available to all the Church of God groups are a fraction of what was available to Mr. Armstrong, because of the Internet, the reach of the gospel message has increased manifold. The gospel message is accessible to more people than ever before at even lower cost. It has truly gone global because at least some people on earth in every country understand English and can read the gospel message. In addition it is available in all other major languages of the world.

The author since December 2, 2006 has been preaching the same gospel of the Kingdom of God that we learnt from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. There can be no more dramatic fulfillment of this prophecy than every human being on earth being able to hear these messages every Saturday or Sabbath Day at 9 a.m. (USA Eastern Standard Time) in his or her own language.

3) *Fulfilling the Prophecy that One Man Would Start and End an Era of the Church*

God actually founded the modern era of His Church through Mr. Armstrong. The modern era which we identify as the Philadelphian era began with the preaching of Mr. Armstrong around the fall of 1928 and ended with his death on January 16, 1986. Then began the Laodicean era of God’s Church! This is indicated by certain prophecies.

Zechariah 4:9 states: “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it.”

Mr. Armstrong told all the Church members that he fulfilled this Zerubbabel office. His entire ministry is testimony to the fact that Mr. Armstrong built the house, which is a symbol for an era of the Church, by restoring all things. Mr. Gerald Flurry, pastor general of the Philadelphia Church of God explains this prophecy in his booklet *Malachi’s Message* (available free of charge at www.pcog.org) on p. 59:

“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 wrote a letter to the Church on March 19, 1981. Here is an excerpt from that letter: “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?”

“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!

“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’s 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’s 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…**Primarily, we just need to maintain the “house” and do God’s Work.”**

So Mr. Armstrong did lay the foundation of this house, the Philadelphia era of God’s Church, and also finished it.

The Philadelphia era ended when he passed away on January 16, 1986. But he had completed building the ‘house.’ His task was to ‘restore all things’ to God’s Church, meaning the doctrines and other truths about God’s way of life Jesus Christ taught to the original apostles. So no more doctrines would need to be added. There were many controversies raised by tares or infiltrators in the Church about doctrines along the way. But when Mr. Armstrong died all doctrines had been settled so that the Church now knows that we have all the truths concerning doctrines for God’s Church. The house has been completed. And since all doctrines have been restored, there is no need for another apostle to be sent in the end time to restore what has already been completely restored, and none is prophesied to come.

4) *Mr. Armstrong’s Coming and Passing Away Were Prophesied*

Some current Worldwide Church of God leaders have argued that since Mr. Armstrong believed that most of the end-time prophecies (one of them being that Mr. Armstrong would likely be one of the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11) would be fulfilled in his own life time, and he died without them being fulfilled, all these prophecies have failed. Hence the Bible is not reliable and is thus not God’s word, or that we should get our eyes off prophecy. It is true that Mr. Armstrong believed at one time that most of the prophecies would be fulfilled in his life time. And most of us in God’s Church believed that too. So when Mr. Armstrong died, it was a shock for all of us. It shook the faith of some in what they believed. And many left God’s Church because of that.

But does this mean that all prophecies have failed now that Mr. Armstrong is dead? No, not at all! All this means is that prophecies have not been fulfilled as we understood and interpreted them at that time, because we did not understand them perfectly AT THAT TIME.

The author too was jolted when Mr. Armstrong died. However, he never stopped believing that what Mr. Armstrong taught was the truth, because he had proved to himself that every doctrine and truth taught was backed up by the Bible. But for many in God’s Church, Mr. Armstrong’s death was a turning point. Their faith was shaken. If you are one of them and have stopped believing in what Mr. Armstrong taught, then here is proof that Mr. Armstrong’s death was not a failure of prophecy, but was in fact its fulfillment. What we mean to say is that Mr. Armstrong’s death was actually prophesied in the Bible. It’s just that we did not understand this prophecy when Mr. Armstrong died.

Actually there are two prophecies, explained in great detail by Mr. Gerald R. Flurry, in his book “*Malachi’s Message*,” that pointed to Mr. Armstrong’s death, but the Church misunderstood them.

The first prophecy is Zechariah 4:9, which has already been explained. It states, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you.”

When the task of finishing the house, or restoring all the doctrines to the Church had been completed, Mr. Armstrong died. So actual events have proved that this prophecy did not mean that Mr. Armstrong would not die till almost the return of Jesus Christ to earth, but that he would not die till he had finished the task of “restoring all things” to the Church. But he would die after completing the job.

We can actually further prove that Mr. Armstrong’s death much before the return of Jesus Christ was not a failing of prophecy, but its fulfillment. That proof is provided by another prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (NKJV): “1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness [or iniquity] is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Mr. Flurry has explained this prophecy in great detail in “Malachi’s Message.” Here is how this prophecy was also about Mr. Armstrong’s death.

In these verses Paul was explaining to the Thessalonians to not give up their normal lives and just wait for the return of Jesus Christ. He explained that Jesus Christ will not return to earth until there will be a falling away from the faith, meaning God’s Church, for only God’s Church has the true faith. In addition, Jesus Christ will not return until the ‘man of sin’ who causes the falling away is revealed.

As most prophecies in the Bible are dual, this prophecy is also dual. Usually duality means that there has been a former fulfillment of prophecy in ancient times, and there will be another greater fulfillment in the time of the end. But there is also another duality that characterizes many prophecies. There is one fulfillment of such prophecies in the world at large, and another fulfillment in God’s Church. This prophecy in 2 Thessalonians is one such prophecy with a fulfillment in the world and the Church.

The “man of sin to be revealed” mentioned here sits in the temple. Temple in prophecy means God’s Church, as well as the physical temple at Jerusalem. This means that ‘the man of sin’ in the end time will be in God’s Church, as well as another one in the world whom Jesus Christ will destroy at His coming. Revelation 19:20 describes this ‘man of sin’ in the world as the false prophet, whom Jesus Christ will destroy by having him thrown alive in the lake of fire.

This prophecy shows that “the man of sin” in the Church will actually cause the ‘falling away’ from the Church. And the ‘man of sin’ had to be revealed in the end-time. We have already seen the dramatic fulfillment of this prophecy in the Church. If Mr. Armstrong knew the beliefs Joseph W. Tkach Sr. held in secret, he would have never appointed him pastor general. But the “mystery of iniquity” that was working with Joseph Tkach Sr., meaning those helping him, was so well hidden that most Church members and Mr. Armstrong had no clue about it. If he knew, he would not have appointed Joseph Tkach Sr. as pastor general and his successor in the Church.

But now read verses 7-8 again: “7 For the mystery of lawlessness [or iniquity] is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed…”

Verse 7 says “only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” This means that the “mystery of iniquity” (or the synagogue of Satan – Revelation 3:9) that was at work in the Church during Mr. Armstrong’s time was actually restrained by Mr. Armstrong. He had to put down 2-3 major rebellions in the Church, and would not allow these tares or infiltrators to change any doctrines. He restrained their influence. Then verse 7 says that “he [meaning Mr. Armstrong] who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” Mr. Armstrong restrained the working of this “mystery of Lawlessness.” But then he was taken out of the way by death. Then the “mystery of iniquity” perpetrated by the synagogue of Satan within God’s Church under Joseph Tkach Sr’s stewardship began to work openly. Thus the ‘man of sin’ in the Church was revealed.

This is the second prophecy about the death of Mr. Armstrong well before the return of Jesus Christ. Those of us who have kept the faith were rewarded with this understanding of the fulfillment of prophecy, even further strengthening our faith.

No man in his life and death can fulfill so many Bible prophecies and not be the man these prophecies mention. It is simply impossible for a man to fulfill all these prophecies by mere coincidence. So we can be certain that Mr. Armstrong was the prophesied Elijah and apostle to come who came and restored all truths to God’s Church in the form of major doctrines and prepared the way for Jesus Christ’s second coming. That’s why members of God’s Church need to hold fast to what God restored to His Church through Mr. Armstrong. We just need to maintain the house God built through him.

## Doctrines of the Church

## So what are the doctrines and fundamental beliefs God restored to His Church through Mr. Armstrong? Among all of God’s Churches that adhere to what Mr. Armstrong taught, the best statement of the doctrines and beliefs that Mr. Armstrong taught is stated in the United Church of God (UCG) booklet titled “Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God.” I counsel every member of God’s true Church and all those who want to learn the beliefs of God’s Church to obtain their free copy from the UCG at its web site www.ucg.org. All these beliefs are proven with detailed scriptural references in the booklet. Some of these doctrines may seem too fantastic, or too good to be true to those brought up in the world’s mainstream churches and may not believe them. That is why it is absolutely critical to read all the scriptures stated therein which provide the basis for each doctrine. These doctrines are based on the Bible and are not a figment of anyone’s imagination.

## Here are the twenty major doctrines restored by Mr. Armstrong as stated in the UCG booklet:

## *1. God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit*

## We believe in one God, the Father, eternally existing, who is a Spirit, a personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge, love, justice, power and authority. He, through Jesus Christ, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. He is the Source of life and the One for whom human life exists. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the Word and who has eternally existed. We believe that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of the living God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born in human flesh of the virgin Mary. We believe that it is by Him that God created all things, and that without Him was not anything made that was made. We believe in the holy spirit as the Spirit of God and of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and the Spirit of life eternal. The holy spirit is not an individual entity like God the Father and Jesus Christ as part of a Trinity, but is the spirit energy of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

## *2. The Word of God*

## We believe that Scripture, both the Old and New Testament, is God's revelation and His complete expressed will to humanity. Scripture is inspired in thought and word, infallible in the original writings; is the supreme and final authority in faith and in life; and is the foundation of all truth.

## *3. Satan the Devil*

## We believe that Satan is a spirit being who is the adversary of God and the children of God; Satan has been given dominion over the world for a specific time; Satan has deceived humanity into rejecting God and His law; Satan has ruled by deception with the aid of a host of demons who are rebellious angels, spirit beings who followed Satan in his rebellion.

## *4. Humanity*

## We believe that humanity was created in the image of God with the potential to become literal children of God, partakers of the divine nature. God formed humanity of flesh, which is material substance. Human beings live by the breath of life, are mortal, subject to corruption and decay, without eternal life, except as the gift of God under God's terms and conditions as expressed in the Bible. We believe that God placed before Adam and Eve the choice of eternal life through obedience to God or death through sin. Adam and Eve yielded to temptation and disobeyed God. As a result, sin entered the world and, through sin, death. Death now reigns over all humanity because all have sinned.

## *5. God’s Law and Sin*

## We believe that sin is the transgression of the law. The law is spiritual, perfect, holy, just and good. The law defines God's love and is based upon the two great principles of love toward God and love toward neighbor. It is immutable and binding. The Ten Commandments are the 10 points of God's law of love. We believe that breaking any one point of the law brings upon a person the penalty of sin. We believe that this fundamental spiritual law reveals the only way to true life and the only possible way of happiness, peace and joy. All unhappiness, misery, anguish and woe have come from transgressing God's law.

## *6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ*

## We believe God so loved the world of helpless sinners that He gave His only begotten Son, who, though in all points tempted as we are, lived without sin in the human flesh. That Son, Jesus Christ, died as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. His life, because He is the creator of all humanity, is of greater value than the sum total of all human life. His death is, therefore, sufficient to pay the penalty for every human being's sins. In paying this penalty He has made it possible, according to God's plan for each person and for humanity as a whole, for us to have our sins forgiven and to be released from the death penalty.

## *7. Resurrection of Jesus Christ after Three Days and Tree Nights in the Tomb*

## We believe that the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead after His body lay three days and three nights in the grave, thus making immortality possible for mortal man. This was the sign that Jesus gave as proof that He was the Messiah or Savior and fulfilled it. He thereafter ascended into heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

## *8. Repentance and Faith*

## We believe that all who truly repent of their sins in full surrender and willing obedience to God, and who by faith accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, have their sins forgiven by an act of divine grace. Such individuals are justified, pardoned from the penalty of sin and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which literally abides within them and supplies the divine love that alone can fulfill the law and produce righteousness. They are baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which is the true Church of God. We believe in a true change in life and attitude. Only those who have the indwelling presence of, and are being led by, the Holy Spirit are Christ's.

## *9. Water Baptism and Laying on of Hands*

## We believe in the ordinance of water baptism by immersion after repentance. Through the laying on of hands, with prayer, the believer receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a part of the spiritual Body of Jesus Christ.

## *10. The Sabbath Day*

## We believe that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord our God. On this day we are commanded to rest from our labors and worship God, following the teachings and example of Jesus, the apostles and the New Testament Church.

## *11. The Passover*

## We believe in observing the New Testament Passover on the night of the 14th of Abib, the anniversary of the death of our Savior.

## *12. The Festivals or Holy Days of God*

## We believe in the commanded observance of the seven annual festivals that were given to ancient Israel by God; were kept by Jesus Christ, the apostles and the New Testament Church; and will be observed by all mankind during Christ's millennial reign. These festivals reveal God's plan of salvation. All seven of the festivals are stated in Leviticus 23.

## *13. God’s Food Laws*

## We believe that those meats that are designated unclean by God in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are not to be eaten.

## *14. Military Service and War*

## We believe that Christians are forbidden by the commandments of God from taking human life directly or indirectly and that bearing arms is contrary to this fundamental belief. Therefore, we believe that Christians should not voluntarily become engaged in military service. If they are involuntarily engaged in military service, we believe they should refuse conscientiously to bear arms and, to the extent possible, refuse to come under military authority.

## *15. Promises to the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*

## We believe in God's enduring righteousness. That righteousness is demonstrated by God's faithfulness in fulfilling all the promises He made to the father of the faithful, Abraham. As promised, God multiplied Abraham's lineal descendants so that Abraham literally became the "father" of many nations. We believe that God, as promised, materially prospered Abraham's lineal descendants Isaac and Jacob (whose name He later changed to Israel). We believe that God, through Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ, is making salvation available to all humanity regardless of physical lineage. Salvation is not, therefore, a right of birth. It is freely open to all whom God calls, and those who are regarded as descendants of Abraham are those of the faith, heirs according to the promises. We believe that the knowledge that God has fulfilled and continues to fulfill the physical promises made to Abraham and his children, and that He is fulfilling the spiritual promise through Jesus Christ, is critical to understanding the message of the prophets and its application to the world.

## *16. God’s Purpose for Mankind*

## We believe God's purpose for mankind is to prepare those whom He calls—and who elect through a life of overcoming sin, developing righteous character and growing in grace and knowledge—to possess God's Kingdom and become kings and priests reigning with Christ at His return. We believe that the reason for mankind's existence is literally to be born as spirit beings into the family of God.

## *17. The Church*

## We believe that the Church is that body of believers who have received and are being led by the Holy Spirit. The true Church of God is a spiritual organism. Its biblical name is "the Church of God." We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the gospel (good news) of the coming Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness and to help reconcile to God such people as are now being called. We believe that it is also the mission of the Church of God to strengthen, edify and nurture the children of God in the love and admonition of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## *18. Tithing*

## We believe in tithing as a way of honoring God with our substance and as a means of serving Him in the preaching of the gospel, the care of the Church, attending the festivals and helping the needy. Tithing means a tenth of our income.

## *19. The Resurrections and Eternal Judgment*

## We believe that the only hope of eternal life for mortal humans lies in the resurrection through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We believe that at the return of Jesus Christ a resurrection to spirit life will take place for all who have been God's faithful servants. We believe that after Jesus Christ has ruled on earth for 1,000 years there will be a resurrection to physical life of the vast majority of all people who have ever lived. We believe that, after these people have had an opportunity to live a physical life if they become converted they, too, will receive eternal life. We also believe that those who reject God's offer of salvation will reap eternal death.

## *20. Jesus Christ’s Return and Coming Reign in His Kingdom on Earth*

## We believe in the personal, visible, premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule the nations on earth as King of Kings and to continue His priestly office as Lord of Lords. At that time, He will sit upon the throne of David. During His 1,000-year reign on the earth, He will restore all things and establish the Kingdom of God forever.

## Those are the doctrines and fundamental beliefs that God restored to His end time Church through one in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet and an apostle He sent. That prophet and apostle was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. These are the doctrines and fundamental beliefs Jesus Christ admonishes members of His Church to hold fast to till the very end of their lives. Holding on to these beliefs is what is meant by ‘keeping God’s word.” Holding on to these beliefs is one aspect of maintaining a Philadelphian attitude that is the only sure way of escaping the Great Tribulation by being taken to a place of safety by God.

MR. ARMSTRONG’S IMPACT ON THE WORLD

In addition to restoring all things, Mr. Armstrong also had other major impacts on the world with his teachings. Briefly here are the major influences he had on the world:

## 1) The world perhaps does not know how much of an impact Mr. Armstrong had on debunking the theory of evolution.

## Theory of evolution was taking hold of the minds of humanity when Mr. Armstrong was born in 1892. Humanity was being led to believe that all life evolved by itself out of nothing and that there is no God who created anything. Hence belief in an awesome Creator God was being undermined.

## The theory of evolution had built up great momentum and its Satan guided proponents were labeling those who did not believe in it as ‘ignorant’ ‘unlearned fools.’ Honest scientists who saw evidence that disproved the theory were being hounded out of academia by being labeled as unscientific idiots. Thus any opposition to the theory of evolution had been effectively silenced.

## Mr. Armstrong was forced to prove whether the theory of evolution was correct or a Creator God indeed created everything. He did prove that the theory of evolution is a hoax perpetrated on mankind and indeed a Creator God created everything. If God created everything, then we owe our very being and everything else to Him. He should be the center of our world.

## It was through Mr. Armstrong’s writings that all of us became members of God’s true Church.

## It’s not that some scientists and religionists had not questioned the theory of evolution before Mr. Armstrong. He read their writings and proved to himself that the theory of evolution is a hoax. But their voice was bludgeoned into silence. They were afraid of losing their teaching and research jobs and their livelihoods. Many religionists did not want to open their mouths for fear of being labeled as ‘unscientific idiots’ and many had tried to develop agreements between the Bible and the theory of evolution. This was undermining the veracity of the Bible and the world was beginning to believe that stories in the Bible were myths. It was undermining belief in the existence of God and thus God’s law. Those were the beginnings of lawlessness in society that we see today.

## But Mr. Armstrong forcefully debunked the theory of evolution and it is through his writings that we in God’s Church came to disprove the theory of evolution and came to know the true God as our awesome Creator. That was the beginning point of restoring us to the true worship of the true God.

2) He proved that God makes incredible promises to human beings and keeps them.

He did this by proving that God kept all His promises to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and King David in blessing their descendants the British, American, Jews and people of the northwestern European democracies materially above all peoples on earth. Promises of everlasting kingship to David have been fulfilled in the British royal family. On that basis, humans can believe that God will also keep His promises to all of humanity to grant eternal life and make them rulers of the universe. That is quite clearly stated in Deuteronomy 4:19 (NIV) : 19 And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars--all the heavenly array--do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.” Thus all the stars and their planets in the universe have already been apportioned to nations of the world to colonize.

3) He proved and taught that God requires us to keep His Laws. That means keeping God’s commandments is absolutely essential to loving God and is critical to worshipping the true God in the right way. It is an essential requirement for salvation.

4) Mr. Armstrong taught us that the true gospel is the good news of the reestablishment of the Kingdom of God on earth after Jesus Christ returns and stops man from annihilating all life on earth. It is not only about forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and salvation.

5) God restored the true knowledge of what is salvation and God’s plan of salvation for mankind only to His Church through Mr. Armstrong, and that salvation is not going to heaven and gazing at God’s face for eternity but qualifying to receive the free gift of eternal life as God’s literal sons and daughters and ruling first the earth and then the entire universe.

6) Besides Jesus Christ, before Mr. Armstrong came on the scene, no other human being had much of an understanding of prophecy? The prophets certainly did not understand the prophecies they wrote because prophecies were sealed till the time of the end. Understanding of prophecies was unlocked and revealed to Mr. Armstrong. He unlocked the mysteries of the various beasts of the books of Daniel and Revelation.

7) Mr. Armstrong also exemplified God’s way of life, showing that it is a way of the highest quality and beauty. That was demonstrated in Ambassador College winning the award for the most beautiful campus three times.

The quality of the campus and the lives of the students made the college world famous among world leaders which led to Mr. Armstrong being invited to meet with them, thus providing an incredible opportunity to preach the gospel to them.

8) Another major impact Mr. Armstrong had on the entire world was by explaining God’s purpose in creating sex through his book “The Missing Dimension in Sex.” (You can obtain a free copy at www.pcog.org). The book has had a great liberating influence on the world, freeing humanity from the taboos and feelings of guilt that had become associated with sex, including the pain some may cause due to ignorance.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong truly was a prophet in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet and an apostle who restored true worship of the Creator God, preparing the world for the second coming of Jesus Christ in great power to take over the kingdoms of the world and establish God’s Kingdom on earth.

**CHAPTER 7**

**PHILADELPHIANS “HAVE NOT DENIED GOD’S NAME”**

## Jesus Christ’s third commendation of the Philadelphians in Revelation 3:8 is that they have not denied His name. What does this mean?

## This simply means that we are to never deny that God the Father and Jesus Christ exist and are alive today; that we are members of God’s Church and that above all we obey God the Father and Jesus Christ and keep their commandments, statutes and judgments in the letter and the spirit as described in the pages of the Bible.

## Before the Great Tribulation actually comes on the world, the faith of all members of God’s Church will be tried. Conditions will be terrible and there will be tremendous pressure to deny that we are members of God’s Church in order to remain hidden. That is why there will be a need to flee to the place of safety. But we are required to never deny God’s name and that we belong to Him, which we demonstrate by admitting that we are members of His true Church and by keeping God’s identifying sign the Sabbath as well as all of God’s annual holy days, and not worshipping any idols or images and bowing down to them. Keeping the Sabbath and not worshipping idols or images are the two test commandments among the Ten Commandments.

## Peter the apostle warned all members of God’s Church in 1 Peter 4:12: “12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you…”

## Paul the apostle in his travels is described in Acts 14:22 as: “22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*.”

## Jesus Christ Himself warned the disciples in John 16:33: “33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. *In the world you shall have tribulation*: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

## Thus tribulation and fiery trial is sure to come on all members of God’s Church in the end time, including both Philadelphians as well as Laodiceans. But the Philadelphians are commended for not denying the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ no matter when they are called upon to answer for their faith. That is why they are GUARANTEED protection in a place of safety.

## In contrast to the Philadelphians, the Laodiceans are not commended for doing so. Perhaps some of them do deny that they are members of God’s Church to try to remain hidden in order to escape the Great Tribulation. As a result, instead of being taken to the place of safety they are left in the world to face the horrors of the Great Tribulation. Then when they are called on to answer for their faith, as the parable of the ten virgins shows (Matthew 25:1-12), half of them wake up to the reality that this is their last chance to repent and still qualify to receive eternal life as God’s literal sons and daughters and finally admit that they are genuine members of God’s Church. They will be martyred for it, but will receive eternal life. And when they are resurrected in a few months to eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ they will see their revenge on those who murdered them by seeing them all die horrible deaths in the last one year of the Great Tribulation. They will be with Jesus Christ when God’s wrath is poured out on all their murderers, and when the German dictator called the beast and the pope are caught alive and thrown in the Lake of Fire in Jerusalem most likely by their former American, British and Jewish slaves.

## The other half of the Laodiceans under threats of torture and murder by the Beast and the False prophet or their representatives will end up denying God and Jesus Christ by denying that they are members of God’s true Church and denying that they keep God’s commandments as stated in the Bible. Some of them may also admit they were members of God’s Church in the past but had given up their faith. They will then betray their brethren in God’s Church to the authorities and have them murdered, or become their torturers and murderers themselves when they might be asked to do so to prove that they are not members of God’s Church any longer. They may survive the first two and half years of the Great Tribulation, but then God guarantees that they will without exception die in the last one year of the Great Tribulation when Jesus Christ’s wrath is poured out on all nations for their evil.

## One Vision of End Time Scenario

## God’s Church has an understanding of end time prophesied events. Here is one vision of a scenario that could play out in the world affecting all members of God’s Church.

## The sequence of end-time events as laid out in the messages of the seven seals in the book of Revelation tells us that the first catastrophic event will be a true world war when nations will rise against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms along with civil and ethnic wars within nations. These wars and their aftermath of famines and diseases and wild animals attacking human beings will kill one fourth of mankind.

## After the war the pope will begin performing miracles and in league with the German dictator or the beast demand that the entire world worship the image of the beast. A literal image possibly like the one King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon set up may be set up. The world will also be required to take on the mark of the beast on their right hand or their foreheads as prophesied in Revelation 13:11-18 (NKJV).

## “11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. [we understand that this is talking about the pope of the Roman Church] 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [this is talking about the German dictator] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed [deadly wound is a reference to the ancient Roman Empire which was destroyed, but that deadly wound was healed when it has been resurrected through the ages]. 13 He [meaning the pope] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast [the German dictator], telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived [this obviously is talking about an image of the Holy Roman Empire]. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak [probably refers to an actual idol or image of the German dictator] and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.”

## We understand this is talking about the seventh and last resurrection of the so-called ‘Holy Roman Empire’. The mark of the Beast could be a literal mark of some sort. But since the mark could be received on the right hand [with which we work] or on the forehead [which is the seat of the intellect], it could very well refer merely to accepting the religion of the false Roman Church refraining from work and worshipping on Sunday, the day of sun worship and not on Saturday which is God’s Sabbath day. Instead the false Church will demand that all work on Saturday.

## This is when the faith of all members of God’s Church, the Philadelphians and Laodiceans will be tried. The beast will have demonstrated that he has deadly weapons to enforce his will on the world. Under these circumstances only God can offer guaranteed protection. But some members will not have the faith to believe that. They believe they have to do what they think would work out best for them. They may deny that they are members of God’s Church in order to remain hidden, thinking God would surely understand their situation and take them to the place of safety when the time comes.

## They may also look to human leaders of their own nations of America, British Commonwealth countries nation and Jewish leaders in the state of Israel for guidance, who will counsel them to just remain hidden and keep their faith privately. But that in the eyes of God the Father and Jesus Christ is denying their name and not qualifying for being taken to the place of safety.

## The pope and the beast will demand that the nations give up members of God’s true Church who live among them. The national leaders will tell members of God’s Church that they have the option of admitting that they are members of God’s Church and then be handed over to the Beast and the False Prophet; or they can deny that they are members of God’s Church and be allowed to live in the nation. This is one way the Philadelphians and Laodiceans could be separated.

## Either the nations will expel the Philadelphians among them, who admit that they are members of God’s Church, or God will supernaturally take them to the place of safety when the nations decide to hand them over to the Beast and the False prophet. The meaning of the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days of Daniel 12 seems to indicate that the nations will expel the Philadelphians, who will be accepted by the state of Israel because they are Sabbath keepers. So they will choose to depart to Jerusalem with God helping them get there. And then when the signal comes, they will flee to the place of safety. But God could also supernaturally take them to Jerusalem and then they flee to the place of safety.

## In contrast, some of the Laodiceans would have chosen to remain hidden by outwardly denying that they are members. But then the beast and the false prophet demand that all peoples worship the image of the beast and take on the mark of the beast. Then the Laodiceans remember there is no escape for them if they succumb to these demands because in Revelation 14:9-11 God guarantees that those who do so will not survive His wrath to be poured out by Jesus Christ. They will not physically survive, and they will also lose their one and only chance for eternal life.

## Revelation 14:9-11 states: “9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

## The beast and the false prophet will demand that the Laodiceans who remain in the world violate God’s laws to prove that they are not members of God’s Church or have given up their faith and accepted the satanic religion of the beast and the false prophet. Half of the Laodiceans will wake up to the truth and then not deny God’s name by refusing to worship the image of the beast or accepting his mark and choosing instead to accept martyrdom. The remaining half of the Laodiceans will compromise and lose their physical as well as eternal lives. They will turn on their loyal brethren, betray them by exposing them as genuine members of God’s Church, and then most likely be asked to torture and murder them to prove their loyalty to the religion of the beast and the false prophet.

## Matthew 24:9-13 describes this betrayal: “9 Then they [meaning nations as well as Laodicean members who choose to compromise] will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you [meaning compromising Laodicean members likely participating in these murders], and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

## This is a likely scenario that could play out and the consequences of the choices the individual members make. Those who have determined in their minds that they will never deny God’s name, no matter what the pressures or circumstances will be supernaturally guided to make it to the place of safety. They will have to rely totally on God for protection during the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. Only they are GUARANTEED such protection (Revelation 3:10: “10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.) But they will have gone through tremendous pressure or circumstances that visibly seem hopeless but still resisted denying God’s name. They will be the Philadelphians and will receive God’s protection. Others will seek to hide their faith or possibly outwardly deny that they are members of God’s Church in order to protect themselves. But they will be found out when they are required to worship the image of the beast and take on the mark of the beast. Those among these Laodiceans who do so will have denied God’s name. Those who refuse to worship the image of the beast and take on the mark of the beast will have exposed themselves as members of God’s Church and will be martyred, but will be resurrected as glorious immortal sons and daughters of God only a few months later, to then see with their own eyes vengeance being poured out on their murderers.

## How Would you Choose?

## When faced with these choices, what would you as a member of God’s Church choose? Perhaps we can answer the great conundrum of how the teenager should have answered Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the two high school seniors at Columbine High School, Colorado, USA who massacred 13 and injured 24 students at their high school, when asked “Do you believe in God?” knowing that she would be shot dead if she said “yes” and probably let go free if she said “no.” The one who answered ‘yes’ was actually shot dead.

## This question has physical and eternal life and death significance for members of God’s Church. Jesus Christ actually warns that those who deny His name and God the Father will not be counted as Philadelphians but as Laodiceans and will have to go through the Great Tribulation. So the answer for members of God’s Church is that if they are ever faced with a situation like Columbine High School teenagers were faced with when confronted by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, there should be no other thought in their minds than the requirement to “never deny God’s name’, no matter what the circumstances. They should have a fixed determination in their minds, with no other thought than that they will never deny the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ, that they are members of God’s true Church and worship God in truth and believe and follow all the fundamental doctrines and beliefs God restored to His Church through His end-time apostle Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and that they will never worship any image of the beast or take on his mark, and will keep the Sabbath and God’s seven annual holy days.

## We do not compromise with God’s way of life, no matter what the circumstances. We trust God for our protection and do not try to hide our true faith and beliefs by denying them outwardly in order to escape persecution. So when confronted by Eric Harrises and Dylan Klebolds of the world, we never deny God’s name even if our heads are blown off. We have the faith to believe that we will be resurrected to eternal life as God’s literal sons and daughters. Eric Harrises and Dylan Klebolds will also be resurrected to physical life and then given their one and only chance for eternal life. If they do not repent of their wickedness with tears and choose God’s way of life, they will finally wind up burnt alive in the Lake of Fire and their lives permanently extinguished. The world will learn that they did not have an immortal soul.

## Examples Of How God’s People Chose

## When confronted by Eric Harrises and Dylan Klebolds of the world, if we do not deny God’s name, God could actually intervene to protect us physically as well. We would not know unless we leave matters entirely in God’s hands and demonstrate unwavering determination to never deny His name.

## Now consider examples of God’s people who never denied God’s name and some who did.

## First Paul the apostle writes 2 Timothy 4:16: “16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.” This should tell us that forsaking God’s people in order to protect oneself is not looked at kindly by God. Paul had to pray for forgiveness for the brethren who forsook him.

## Then we have the example of John Mark in Acts 16:36-39 who departed from Paul and Barnabas for fear of persecution and went not with them to preach the gospel. But later he found forgiveness from Paul and God when he lost his fear of persecution and started preaching the gospel again as Paul states in 2 Timothy 4:11: “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”

## Next consider the example of the 12 apostles when Jesus was crucified. Eleven had fled and only John witnessed the entire crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. The consequences from history tell us that all the eleven apostles were martyred and only John the apostle died a natural death. John escaped attempts to kill him by God supernaturally intervening on his behalf. For example, when thrown alive into a boiling cauldron of oil he simply climbed out of it unhurt.

## Next consider the example of Daniel (Daniel 6) when King Darius signed a decree that for 30 days if any man should ask a petition of any God or man except King Darius he would be thrown in the den of lions. Daniel could have let the 30 days pass without praying to God and then resumed his worship of God. But he did not deny God’s due worship and thanks for even a single day and was thrown into the den of lions. He was rescued and those who persecuted him because of jealousy perished at the mouths of those very lions.

## Then we also have the example of Daniel’s 3 friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When people were asked to worship the image King Nebuchadnezzar had made, all fell down and worshipped except those three. They could have compromised thinking what does it matter? They could have reasoned, “By falling down to a dumb idol we are not really worshipping the idol for truly in our hearts we worship the true God of our fathers.” But they chose not to deny the true God by refusing to fall down to the image. When threatened by King Nebuchadnezzar and given another chance to fall down and worship the image, they flatly refused and told the king “we won’t.” If they had not left their protection in God’s hands, they and we would not have found out that God does intervene to protect those who don’t deny His name. But now their deed is a sterling example for all of humanity to emulate.

## Next consider the example of Noah!

## In Noah’s days before the Flood there really was a family that ruled almost the entire world; that of Lamech. The activities of Lamech and the material progress and accomplishments of a small part of his family are described in Genesis 4:19-24: 19 Then Lamech took for himself two wives [probably the first polygamist in the world]: the name of one was Adah [who was racially white], and the name of the second was Zillah [who was a negro, making Lamech possibly the first also to marry interracially]. 20 And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock [huge herds of cattle]. 21 His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute [the greatest musician and inventor of musical instruments of his day]. 22 And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron [inventor and developer of the science of metallurgy, extracting metals and developing alloys, and inventor of deadly weapons such as metal tipped arrows and spears]. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah [inventor of textiles]. 23 Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me [Lamech was also the leading man of violence in the world who murdered people who offended him or got in his way.] 24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold [indicating Lamech murdered Cain], then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

## Before the Flood, Lamech and his family had deified themselves, following the example of their ancestor Cain. Lamech was worshipped as the god Zeus, Jabal was the ancient Hercules, Jubal was worshipped as Apollo, Tubal-cain as Vulcan or the Greek god Hephaestus, and Naamah as the goddess Athena. Because of the incredible material progress of the family all of humanity looked up to them, and because no one dared oppose them as they had superior weapons, the family had built temples to themselves and set up their own idols for the people to worship. They stamped out any opposition to their religion and worship. This means they were persecuting and seeking to murder those who worshipped the true God. That is how Noah, the worshipper of the one and only true God was their target.

## Because of their ungodly deeds God had sent a prophet, Enoch (Genesis 5:18-24; Jude 1:14-16) to warn them to repent. Lamech was the leading man of violence at that time, and probably killed Enoch because of the message of warning he preached. That may partly be the reason for Lamech’s boast in Genesis 4:23 quoted above.

## By the time Noah was 450 years old and Lamech approximately 830 years old, due to the activities of Lamech’s descendants who held sway over the entire world, the earth was beginning to become saturated with violence. The activities of Lamech and his descendants and God’s reaction to them are summarized in Genesis 6:1-13:

## 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth [meaning the world population began to explode], and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God [the correct translation here should be ‘sons of gods,’ the gods mentioned here being Lamech and his descendants who had deified themselves and demanded that all the world worship them as gods] saw the daughters of men that they were fair [these being daughters of the line of Seth the son of Adam who were racially white, whereas Lamech and his descendants were non-white, mainly of dark color]; and they took them wives of all which they chose [they married these white women either through consent because of the material progress of Lamech and his family, or forcibly married white women which was one of the leading causes of violence in the world]. 3 And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years [meaning God shortened man’s life span from above 900 years to 120 years which in the days of Moses onwards was further reduced to 70 years (Psalm 90:10)]. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; [this was another race of men who were giants in strength because of their built, being 50% heavier in weight than other men of the same height, who did not survive the Flood] and also after that, when the sons of God [‘sons of gods’] came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repents me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations [meaning pure white in his genealogy from Adam], and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

## The lawless deeds of Lamech and his descendants included:

## 1) Rampant polygamy.

## 2) Forced interracial marriages.

## 3) Building temples and setting up their own idols in the temples and demanding that all the common people worship them as gods.

## 4) Threatening or murdering those who worshipped the true God instead of worshipping them.

## 5) Forcing everyone to pay them tribute.

## 6) Warring with those who refused to submit to them to bring them under their rule; and

## 7) Killing people on whim with no threat of being brought to justice or any other consequences. Might was really right in those days.

## Noah is the only one who resisted all the pressure brought on him and refused to submit to Lamech and his descendants. He refused to marry interracially, or worship Lamech and his family as gods but worshipped only the true God.

## After Enoch God sent another prophet, Noah, to warn men to repent and change their ways. He preached to the world that the deeds of Lamech and his descendants were evil and against God’s Law. Then just as Lamech had killed Enoch, he tried to kill Noah because of his preaching. Noah fled to Egypt and began to warn the world to repent or God would drown everyone in a worldwide Flood. Then Lamech died of old age of around 920 years. Noah then returned to the Mesopotamia area and began building the ark.

## Lamech had truly ruled the world. But after his death many of his descendants then vied with each other as well as many others in wars or challenging one another in individual combat to the death in order to rule the world as Lamech did. This was another major contributor to the world becoming saturated with violence.

## When humanity did not repent after about 100 years of warning by Noah, God carried out His threat and drowned that entire world, saving only Noah and a small part of his family in the ark Noah built. Noah most probably had many other children than Shem, Ham and Japheth. But the three youngest ones (Shem, Ham and Japheth) were born and grew up when Noah started preaching his warning message to the world and lived with him and worked with him on building the ark till the Flood came and drowned that world. Other children caved in to the threats of Lamech and his descendants, worshipped their idols, married interracially and gave up the worship of the true God in order to avoid persecution from Lamech and his descendants and ‘save’ themselves alive. Only Noah resisted. We know the result. Those who tried to save themselves by departing from the true God died, and those who did not deny the true God were miraculously preserved through the Flood.

## Jesus Christ has issued a prophecy and a warning to the world of our time in Matthew 24:35-42 (NKJV): “35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. 36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be [meaning the return of Jesus Christ to earth to establish God’s kingdom]. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

## Luke 17:26-30, 33 (NKJV): “26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed…33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

## Jesus Christ has warned that the end time is going to be like the days of Noah. The Beast and the false prophet of the ‘Holy Roman Empire’ based in Europe are going to impose their religion on the world as described earlier. Those who refuse to worship the image of the beast, or take his mark on their right hands or on their foreheads will be threatened with death, and some in the world will be put to death for resisting. Most of the world will cave in and give in to the threats in order to avoid persecution and save themselves alive as the world in Noah’s day did. The result will be the same as in Noah’s day. Those who try to save themselves by giving in to the threats of the beast and the false prophet are guaranteed to die as prophesied in Revelation 14: 9-10.

## Those who resist all the threats of the beast and the false prophet, refuse to follow their religion, never deny God’s name and continue to worship Him, maintain an attitude of fiery zeal in doing God’s work and overcoming sin just as Noah did, put their faith in Him like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and John the apostle did are GUARANTEED supernatural protection throughout the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. They will be taken to a place of safety.

## Those members of God’s Church who do not these things will be counted as Laodiceans and will have to prove their loyalty to God by being martyred in the Great Tribulation.

## Prophecies concerning the Philadelphians being taken to the place of safety include:

## Revelation 3:10, “10 Because you hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world…”

## Psalm 83:3 (NJKV), “3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.” Here the Islamic alliance in league with the Germans seeks to destroy physical and spiritual Israel. ‘Your people’ here refers to physical Israelites - the Americans, British and the Jews, and ‘Your sheltered ones’ refers to spiritual Israel or God’s true Church sheltered in a place of safety.

## Revelation 12:14 (NKJV), “14 But the woman [woman in prophecy refers to a Church] was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place [referring to the place of safety where it is sheltered or protected], where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [1260 days of the Great Tribulation], from the presence of the serpent [another name for the devil].”

## Isaiah 16:1-4 (NKJV), “1 Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness, to the mount of the daughter of Zion. 2 For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; so shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. 3 "Take counsel, execute judgment; make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; *hide the outcasts, do not betray him who escapes. 4 Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler*.”

## Zion in prophecy refers to God’s true Church. Isaiah 16 actually seems to identify the place of safety as being either ruled by a descendant of Moab or in the land of Moab. Sela refers to Petra in Jordan.

## Jesus in Matthew 24:15 (and Luke 21:21) indicated that the Church will flee to the place of safety from Jerusalem: “15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place [which is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem], (whoso reads, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” This means that the place of safety will be near Jerusalem to which the Church can flee in 30 days.

## These examples should make it absolutely clear that God wants members of His Church to make a firm determination in their minds to never deny His name to try to escape persecution or martyrdom, no matter what the circumstances. If they do so, they will find ourselves in the very situation that they were hoping to escape: being left in the world to face the Great Tribulation to prove their loyalty to God by martyrdom.

**CHAPTER 8**

**PHILADELPHIANS KEEP GOD’S COMMAND TO ENDURE PATIENTLY**

The fourth characteristic that God uses to distinguish the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans is that Philadelphians have kept Jesus’ command to endure patiently or persevere (Revelation 3:10 NKJV: “10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.) NIV translates this verse this way: “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”

The Greek word translated ‘persevere’ in the NKJV and ‘endure patiently’ in the NIV is the Greek noun *hupomone* which means cheerful or hopeful endurance, constancy; enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting). It is derived from the Greek verb *hupomeno* which means to remain, or figuratively to bear trials, have fortitude, persevere; abide, endure or take patiently.

The sense of these words seems to be enduring all trials patiently, remaining steadfast and persevering in pursuit of our faith. Jesus is commending the Philadelphians for enduring all tests and trials due to their faith or otherwise with patience to the very end.

Jesus Christ uses the same Greek word to commend 2 other Churches beside the Philadelphian Church. These are the Churches at Ephesus and Thyatira.

Revelation 2:1-3 (NKJV): “1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.”

The account of the activities of the Ephesus era is found in the book of acts and what may be gleaned from the epistles (letters) of the various apostles. As the history of that era of God’s Church shows, that Church labored and persevered for the name of Jesus to spread His message of forgiveness of sins on repentance and the gospel of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. They also endured all trials and persecution with patience.

Similarly the Thyatira era of God’s Church is commended for its works and patience in Revelation 2:18-19 (NKJV): “18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God…19 I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.”

Besides the Greek word *hupomone*, another Greek word which would be called a synonym to *hupomone* is *makrothumia* which means forbearance, fortitude, longsuffering and patience. This is the word translated as ‘longsuffering’ in Galatians 5:22 as one of the fruits of the holy spirit of God. So the patience that Jesus Christ commends the members of His Church with a Philadelphian attitude is one of the fruits of God’s holy spirit that all members possess. This is one of the fruits that Philadelphian members of God’s Church bear to perfection in abundance.

Merriam-Webster online defines patience as the capacity, habit, or fact of being patient. Definition of patient: able to remain calm and not become annoyed when waiting for a long time or when dealing with problems or difficult people…

1: bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint

2: manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain

3: not hasty or impetuous

4: steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity

Some synonyms will also bring out the traits that Jesus Christ is commending in the Philadelphia Church: forbearing, long-suffering, stoic (or stoical), tolerant, uncomplaining.

Other places where the Greek word for patience is used illustrate various aspects of patience:

Luke 8:15, “15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” This verse from the parable of the sower teaches us that those who bring much fruit of righteousness do it with an honest and good heart with patience.

Luke 21:17-19: “17 And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. 18 But there shall not a hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess your souls.”

Here Jesus was discussing with the disciples the conditions before His return to earth and the persecutions that God’s Church will face. He counseled all members to patiently endure all the trials and persecutions to keep possession of their souls by qualifying to receive eternal life.

And how do we develop the patience in the face of trials that Jesus Christ commends the Philadelphians for? Romans 5:3-4 provides the answer: “3 …we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope makes not ashamed…” It is through tests, trials and persecution that we develop the patience which then gives us the experience to deal with future trials with patience. So facing trials and tribulations with patience is a self-reinforcing cycle. Each time we face a new trial or tribulation, we must endure it with greater degree of patience and self-control.

Paul the apostle tells us in Hebrews 6:11-15 that we can inherit God’s promises only through patient endurance: “11 And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying , surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

He continues in Hebrews 12:1 after relating the examples of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11: “1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us…”

Jesus’ half-brother James has a lot to say about patiently enduring all trials.

James 1:2-4: “2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

James here says that trials test our faith which produces patience. But we must produce patience to perfection, lacking nothing. Then James gives examples of patience in the scriptures that we must emulate.

James 5: 7-8, 10-11: “7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman [God the Father, John 15:1] waits for the precious fruit of the earth, [members of God’s Church to be perfected to qualify to be born as His literal immortal sons and daughters are the precious fruit God the Father is looking for] and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be you also patient; establish your hearts [meaning fix your hearts that you will never violate God’s law or deny His name]: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh [near]…10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

The best example of patient endurance, however, is Jesus Christ as described by Peter the apostle in 1 Peter 2:18-23 (NKJV). This is the example we must all follow when we are faced with persecution and tribulation. Peter writes: “18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously…”

The Greek word used by Jesus Christ for patience to commend the Philadelphians also implies ‘perseverance’ in developing this attribute. The Philadelphians never give up in the face of tests and trials and persevere in living by every word of God through all tribulations.

In Revelation 3:12 Jesus says: “Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” This reward of being pillars in God’s temple, meaning having a permanent position of authority for eternity at God’s headquarters is being offered to those with a Philadelphian attitude because they overcome sin. Perseverance in overcoming sin is thus also a trait of those with a Philadelphian attitude.

Thus the essence of the patience Jesus Christ commends the members of His Church with a Philadelphian attitude is that they do not rail, revile or hurl threats and insults at their persecutors, but face all trials with perfect equanimity. This attribute cannot be developed overnight if one is given to anger. Members must persevere through trials to develop it. Trials will continue to try our faith and we must ultimately produce a perfect work in terms of perfect patience. And sooner the better or trials will keep coming.

Equanimity comes from the quiet assurance of knowing how it all ends if we do our part. The resurrection energized the disciples who from being cowards became bold men, willing to die for their faith. They knew that physical death was not the end of life and that they would be resurrected to a glorious life and future for eternity. They had seen Jesus after He was resurrected and understood the reality of it. Many Church members have been martyred over the past more than 19 centuries. Their persecutors have always commented on the remarkable calmness with which they faced persecution even if it led to torture and death. They also persevere in overcoming sin. These are the traits Jesus Christ wants in members of His Church, commends those who have them and GUARANTEES them protection in a place of safety during the entire three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

**CHAPTER 9**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

**Through Deceptive Teaching**

The fifth admonition Jesus gave to those with the Philadelphian attitude is stated in Revelation 3:11, “11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. 12 Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

What God’s Church has is what God restored in terms of doctrines and knowledge of God’s way of life through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. The crown of kingship for the Philadelphians is tied to holding fast to what has been restored to them. In addition to the crown of kingship, they also qualify for a special reward of being given positions of authority at God’s throne for eternity [pillars in God’s Temple]. They shall go out no more means that they shall not be replaced from these positions of authority.

Under what conditions can one with a Philadelphian attitude allow a man to deprive him of his crown?

Becoming a Laodicean does not automatically lead to a person losing his or her crown. But it does put the individual on very dangerous ground. The Great Tribulation is almost upon us. If a person has become Laodicean in attitude, then he will have to prove his loyalty to God by going through the Great Tribulation and the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) tells us that the chance of successfully resisting all the pressure and persecution from the beast and the false prophet and qualifying to receive one’s crown is about 50%. Fifty percent chance of making it into God’s kingdom is poor odds. There is also the possibility of dying before one actually goes through the Great Tribulation. Most likely Jesus Christ will allow the Laodicean to go through tests and trials to shake him up from his Laodicean attitude before his death. But if the person dies before going through the Great Tribulation, then the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:5-15) tells us that those whose hearts were like stony ground lacking depth of character, and those who let the cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches occupy their time and efforts to the detriment of spiritual development will most likely lose their chance for salvation as they did not produce fruit (i.e. God’s holy righteous character) to perfection. So becoming a Laodicean in attitude does not automatically lead to a person losing his crown, but the chances of losing it are high.

In order for a person to not let any man take his crown, the person must avoid becoming a Laodicean in attitude, or leaving God’s Church altogether. Leaving God’s Church altogether will without fail deprive the person of his crown and his chance for eternal life.

What are some of the ways in which Philadelphians can lose their crown?

The main causes for the attitude of many members becoming lukewarm or leading them to leave God’s Church altogether include:

1. Those who have been deceived by the diabolically false teaching of the leaders among the infiltrators or tares.

2. Because of the splits and what has happened to the Church, many have doubts about what Mr. Armstrong taught. They no longer believe all that Mr. Armstrong taught. So they are no longer fired up about doing God’s work.

3. Others have followed the tares out of the Church because of the friendships they had developed, not realizing that that was the very reason the tares had been planted in the Church by Satan. Their roots had become intertwined. So when the tares went out, they pulled the true members also out with them.

4. Those who have turned bitter against the Church and God because of bitter experiences with some members, ministers, evangelists or other leaders in the Church, who were mainly tares or infiltrators.

5. Others had problems with authority, wanted to be free to follow their own way and some among them wanted to be in charge.

6. Still others had joined because they wanted to be on God’s side and expected blessings from Him and trouble-free life. When they did not receive blessings, they were simply disappointed and left. These did not endure to the end. Some let the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches allow the word to be choked in them (parable of the sower, seed that fell among thorns).

7. Others are simply plain lazy and not excited about doing God’s work, even though they were initially thrilled when they heard what reward God was offering them along with eternal life (parable of the sower, the seed that fell on stony ground).

Let’s address each of these causes one by one.

**DECEPTIVE TEACHINGS OF CURRENT LEADERS OF THE WCG**

Current and former leaders of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) use many deceptive and false arguments to try to throw the faith of some. God has cautioned the Philadelphian era of His Church that such teachers would be present in large numbers, constituting a parallel Church called the ‘Synagogue of Satan’ in Revelation 3:9, and the ‘Mystery of Iniquity (or lawlessness) in 2 Thessalonians 2:7. After Mr. Armstrong was taken out of the way by death, this ‘mystery of iniquity’ began working openly. So what we see pour forth out of these leaders of the WCG has been prophesied more than 1,920 years ago and should not surprise us at all any longer. One has to deliberately close one’s eyes to not recognize these leaders as belonging to the ‘Synagogue of Satan’ engaged in trying to deceive genuine members of God’s Church as much as they can.

Over the years the main arguments used by the infiltrators to deceive true members are:

a) Mr. Armstrong taught that Britain and America are the descendants of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. This is sometimes referred to the doctrine of British-Israelism. They say there is no truth to that because there is no evidence for it. So if Britain and America are not the descendants of Israel, then all of God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have not been kept. Hence the Bible and God’s promises cannot be relied upon. This argument has probably caused many members to lose faith in the Bible and God as it has done for millennia before our time.

b) They claim that all the prophecies that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong preached about have failed.

c) They also say that the fulfillment of prophecies is far into the future. This implies that we are not in the very end of the end time. This can cause many to become lukewarm to do God’s work.

d) Mr. Armstrong understood that he fulfilled the role of the prophesied Elijah to come in the end time, as well as an apostle. The infiltrators say that he wasn’t, and that the work of the entire Church was an Elijah type work. They thus imply that Mr. Armstrong took titles to himself and that he was not a prophet or apostle of God

e) Church of God is not the only true Church. There are many other Churches that have righteous people to whom God will not deny eternal life.

f) They also try to attack the doctrines restored to God’s Church, by recycling more than 1, 900 year old arguments, or using a scripture here and there that seemingly contradicts the Church’s doctrine, but leaving out many other scriptures on the subject that prove the doctrine.

Let’s look at each of these arguments used by the ‘Synagogue of Satan’ to refute the truth God restored to His Church through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

***a) Americans and the British are not Descendants of the Patriarch Joseph***

I will not discuss this lie at any length because much has been published by the Churches of God proving that white Americans are mainly descendants of Manasseh the son of the patriarch Joseph, the son of Jacob or Israel, and the British are the descendants of Manasseh’s brother Ephraim. I recommend that the reader read the following five booklets for comprehensive proof:

1. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; by Herbert W. Armstrong, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

2. *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*; published by the United Church of God, available at www.ucg.org.

3. “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future,*” eBook published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

4. *America and Britain in Prophecy*, by David C. Pack; published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

5. *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*; published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

The proofs provided in these booklets that the American and the British people are in fact the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim respectively, the two sons of Joseph, are as follows.

We can look at the evidence for British Israelism in two ways: 1) From the point of view of Bible prophecy, and 2) From secular history and archaeology. First let’s look at the evidence from the point of view of Bible prophecy. Again you can get the details in the books and booklets already mentioned.

PROOFS FROM BIBLE PROPHECY

a) First evidence that the Americans and the British are the descendants of Jacob is the fulfillment of the promises of incredible material blessings to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David.

First, God promised Jacob in Genesis 35:11, “…a nation and a company of nations shall be from you.” In the history of mankind there has never been a great nation like America and a company (or Commonwealth) of nations like the British Commonwealth nations of Britain, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand which have come out of the same roots and have been so closely linked together. Fulfillment of this prophecy in the British and American peoples is not just a mere coincidence.

Secondly, notice the blessings Jacob pronounced on the descendants of Joseph for the last days (Genesis 49:22-26, *New Century Version*): “Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall [meaning a colonizing people]. Archers attack him violently and shoot at him angrily, but he aims his bow well. His arms are made strong. He gets his power from the mighty God of Jacob and his strength from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

“Your father’s God helps you. God Almighty blesses you. He blesses you with rain from above, with water from springs below, with many babies born to your wives, and many young ones born to your animals. The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of the oldest mountains, greater than the good things of the long-lasting hills. May these blessings rest on the head of Joseph…”

These verses tell us that “in the last days” [we are now living in the last days] Joseph’s descendants will live in a productive, fruitful and well-watered land. They will be rich in cattle and flocks of animals. They will have greatly expanded their territory and influence around the world, and will be a colonizing people.

In the nearly 3,700 years since these promises were made, we have little evidence that any nations have received blessings anywhere near those promised. No other nation can claim the national prominence and superpower status that was promised to the descendants of Joseph in “the last days.” However, two candidates fulfill all aspects of these prophecies in our time: The United States of America, the promised and prophesied single great nation on earth, and the British Commonwealth of Nations, the promised and prophesied company of nations.

In their two centuries of national prominence and superpower status in the world [the 19th and 20th centuries], they have controlled more than two-thirds, nearly three-fourths of the agricultural, mineral and natural resources of the world. Can you imagine that? Only two peoples with a world population of around 4% controlling around 70% of the world’s wealth! And there have never been a colonizing people like the British in man’s history.

b) The second fulfillment of Bible prophecy in the descendants of Jacob is the additional incredible promised blessing that they would possess the gates of their enemies. The correct translation of the verses is the plural “gates” and not the singular “gate.” This is stated in Genesis 22:17; “17…and your descendants shall possess the gate [gates] of their enemies.” The promise was repeated by Rebekah’s father and brother when she left the family to become Isaac’s wife in Genesis 24:60: “60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them."

There have never been any peoples like the British and the American peoples in the entire history of mankind who have possessed nearly every major strategic gate, or narrow sea or land passage, or strategic island or area around the world, except for the Strait of Bosporus [which has been possessed by the Turks who are descendants of Esau, the son of Rebekah and grandson of Abraham]. Outcome of the Second World War hinged on the possession of these strategic gates. Most of the world’s commerce also passes through these gates. The gates in their possession included the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Rock of Gibraltar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Malta, the Khyber Pass, the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, the Falkland Islands and many other strategic islands around the world.

Can the American and British people be the possessors of every major sea and land gate around the world and not be the people to whom this blessing was promised? There is no other nation on earth in the history of mankind which has fulfilled this prophecy? How can then the American and the British people not be the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim who received this promised blessing?

c) Third fulfillment of prophecy is God’s promise that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham and Jacob’s descendants. This is stated in Genesis 22:18. This verse that reads: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” has a dual meaning. God was promising that through Christ as the seed of Abraham He would make salvation available to all of humanity. Secondly, the entire world would also benefit materially from the abundant material blessings God would bestow on Abraham’s descendants. They have been the engines that have driven the world’s economy for the 19th and 20th centuries through the industrial revolution. Thus the promises to be a blessing to all nations were both material and spiritual.

Besides all of humanity being saved through Abraham’s descendent Jesus Christ, descendants of Abraham and Jacob brought spiritual blessings to humanity in another major way. The British and Foreign Bible Society, headquartered in London, was responsible for the Bible being translated into virtually every language and making it available for the first time to all peoples on earth. Thus God’s word and knowledge of the truth was made available to all of humanity through the descendants of Israel and Joseph, the British and American peoples. No other people come even close to making the knowledge of God’s word available to humanity as do the British and American peoples. Can they be the only ones to fulfill this major Bible prophecy, and not be the descendants of Abraham and Jacob who were prophesied to fulfill the prophecy?

d) Fourth fulfillment of prophecy was that not all aspects of the promises were to go to Joseph’s descendants. Judah received the scepter [ruler’s staff] promise, as stated in Genesis 49:10: “the scepter shall not depart from Judah.” This promise and prophecy pointed both to the dynasty of King David of the tribe of Judah and to Jesus Christ as the Messiah, also of the tribe of Judah and a descendent of David.

Did God fulfill this promise to Judah?

King David of ancient Israel was a descendent of Judah. When he wanted to build a house for God, God sent a message to him through the prophet Nathan, containing an astounding promise in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (NKJV): “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ***And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever***.”

Did God establish David’s throne forever? If God kept His promise, then a ruler of the House of David should be ruling on a throne even today.

For the astounding evidence that God has kept His promise, as He keeps all His promises, for Titus 1:2 tells us:”…God…cannot lie…” you can read in Mr. Armstrong’s book “*The United States and Britain in Prophecy*” how incredibly intricate prophecies were fulfilled when the kingdom of Judah was taken over by the Babylonians and David’s throne was planted by the prophet Jeremiah first in Ireland through the marriage of a daughter of Zedekiah the king of Judah to the son of the king in Ireland. The throne was then overturned and set up in Scotland and then finally in England. Yes, Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain is a descendent of King David. God has kept His scepter promise to Judah and King David in unbroken dynasty throughout the centuries to our day.

Until recently the world believed that only the world’s Jews are the descendants of Israel. But now the world knows that the Jews are descendants of only the tribe of Judah, with some from the tribes of Benjamin and Levi mixed in. They were part of the southern Kingdom or ‘House of Judah.’ Descendants of the other ten tribes live in America, Britain, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavian and Benelux countries. They all were part of the northern Kingdom or ‘House of Israel.’

Here is a brief description of only some of the incredible prophecies fulfilled about the British and American peoples:

1) *The Northern Kingdom would be lost from world view was prophesied*. The reason was that in Exodus 31:12-17 God instructed Moses that His Sabbaths were to be a sign between Him and Israel forever. A sign is something that identifies. The Sabbath is a perpetual reminder of God as the Creator and who His people are. As long as Israel kept the Sabbath, they maintained their identity. That is why the Jews have maintained their identity as “God’s people” throughout their history. But king Jeroboam of the northern Kingdom of Israel abandoned God’s Sabbaths. When they lost the identifying sign, they became lost to history as God’s people.

In addition, in Deuteronomy 32:26, God warned Israelites through Moses: “…I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men.”

Isaiah 8:17 says: “And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides His face from the House of Jacob [whose other name was Israel].”

2) *House of Israel would lose its language, which was Hebrew*. This was prophesied in Isaiah 28:11 where God says He will speak to this people of Israel “11 …with… another tongue.” They now speak English, French, Dutch and the other north European languages.

3) *House of Israel would lose its national name*. Isaiah 62:2 states: “2…You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.” While this prophecy will apply also when Jesus Christ returns, it has a dual fulfillment as most prophecies do; with an earlier and a latter fulfillment. It has been fulfilled already in that Israelites are known by different names today such as the British, Americans, French, Swiss, Dutch, Scandinavians, Belgians etc. The Jews are still known as Jews today.

4) *Birthright blessings of national prosperity would be withheld 2,520 Years*. After Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, the blessings on his descendants had become unconditional promises from God. But when ancient Israel was set up as a nation, the nation refused to keep God’s laws. As a result ancient Israel did not receive the promise of great material wealth.

God had warned Israel in Leviticus 26:18 that He will punish them seven times for their sins if they did not keep His commandments. In prophecy, a time refers to one year. So seven times would be seven years. With 360 days in a year, seven years then would equal 2,520 days. But another principle of prophecy is a day being equivalent to one year in fulfillment of prophecy, as given in Numbers 13 and 14 when ancient Israelites were punished for forty years from entering the Promised Land, for the forty days they went and spied it out, but refused to go in and possess it. Therefore, seven years or 2,520 days of withholding the birthright blessings would in prophecy equal 2,520 years of withholding the birthright.

The ten-tribed kingdom of Israel was carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 722-721 B.C. Then 2,520 years after that would bring us to the year 1800-1801 A.D. When the seven times duration or 2,520 years of punishment of withholding the birthright ended in 1800-1801 A.D., God began to confer the unconditionally promised blessings on the descendants of Joseph, USA and British Commonwealth nations as well as the nations of northwestern Europe.

5) *Prophecies concerning David’s Throne*

The story of how God kept His promise to David that his dynasty will continue unbroken till the return of the Messiah is an incredibly fascinating one. These prophecies are explained in detail in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “*United States and Britain in Prophecy*.”

i) *Descendants of David to rule over the House of Israel not Judah* - After the reign of David’s son Solomon over Israel, David’s descendants ruled over only the House of Judah (the Jews) and not the House of Israel till King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried Judah captive. But God prophesied in Jeremiah 33:14: "…thus says the Eternal: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."

Descendants of David were prophesied to rule over the House of Israel and not the Jews. After Judah’s captivity, David’s descendants have never ruled as kings over the Jews, but have ruled over descendants of the House of Israel, in Britain.

ii) *Prophet Jeremiah transplants David’s Throne* – Jeremiah’s commission from God is stated in Jeremiah 1:10 (NKJV), “10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To ROOT OUT and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To BUILD AND TO PLANT."

Jeremiah prophesied about the end of Judah’s kingdom during the reign of the last kings of Judah. He was thus used to “root out” David’s throne from Judah and to BUILD and to PLANT it in the Kingdom of Israel. And that throne had to be planted within a generation according to God’s promise to David, or in Jeremiah’s lifetime.

After most of Judah was carried captive to Babylon, the remnant of Judah decided to go to Egypt for protection even though Jeremiah warned them not to do so. This is recorded in Jeremiah 43:5-7 “ [And so Johanan] “took all the remnant of Judah…even men, and women, and children, **and the king’s daughters**…and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah [Jeremiah’s scribe, or secretary]. So they came to the land of Egypt.”

Here we see that the only “remnant” left for Jeremiah’s mission of transplanting the throne of David was the king’s daughters. The fascinating story of how Jeremiah did this is told in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “*United States and Britain in Prophecy*” and an electronic booklet titled “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future*” published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

Briefly the story is this. King David was a descendant of Judah’s son Pharez. But Pharez had a twin brother Zarah. When King Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Judah, a son of the king of the Zarah line of Judah who reigned in Ireland was visiting Jerusalem. This prince was acquainted with Tea-Tephi, one of King Zedekiah’s daughters. Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem he married her. From Egypt, Jeremiah took this royal party to Ireland where the prince ascended the throne of Ireland over a part of the descendants of Israel. Thus a daughter of the Pharez line of Judah was grafted into the Zarah line of Judah in Ireland. This is how Jeremiah fulfilled the second part of his commission about David’s throne: TO BUILD AND TO PLANT.

iii) *Daughter to be used to transplant David’s Throne was prophesied*

The fact that a daughter would be used to transplant David’s throne was also prophesied, in addition to many other detailed prophecies.

The truth of PLANTING and the REBUILDING of David’s throne was revealed in prophecy given in a “riddle and a parable” through the prophet Ezekiel.

First Ezekiel is told to speak a riddle, and then a parable. The riddle is found in Ezekiel 17 verses 3 to 10. Then beginning in verse 11, the Eternal explains its meaning. A great eagle came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar. This is explained to represent King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who came to Jerusalem and took captive the king of Judah. The cropping off of the cedar’s young twigs and carrying them to a land of traffic is explained to picture the captivity of the king’s sons. “He took also of the seed of the land” means Nebuchadnezzar took also of the people, and the mighty of the land of Judah. He “set it as a willow tree. And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature” means the Jews were given a covenant whereby, although they were ruled over by the Chaldeans, they might live in peace and grow. The other “great eagle” is explained to represent Pharaoh of Egypt.

Thus the riddle covers the first half of Jeremiah’s commission. Now notice what is revealed concerning the second part – the PLANTING of David’s throne! It comes in the parable, verses 22-24: “Thus says the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar.” From God’s own explanation we have learned that the cedar tree represents the nation of Judah; its highest branch is Judah’s king. The riddle told us Nebuchadnezzar took the highest branch – the king. The parable now tells us God – not Nebuchadnezzar, but God – will take of the highest branch. Not the branch, but of the branch – of Zedekiah’s children. But Nebuchadnezzar took, and killed, all his sons.

God, through his prophet Jeremiah, is now going to take of this highest branch and “SET IT (verse 22). “I will crop off from the top of his young twigs A TENDER ONE, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent,” continues the Almighty. The twigs of this highest branch represent the children of King Zedekiah! Certainly a young tender twig, then, represents a DAUGHTER!”…and will PLANT it.” Symbolic language could not be more plainer in saying that this young Jewish princess is to become the royal seed for PLANTING again of David’s throne? Where? “…upon an high mountain and eminent,” says the Eternal! A “mountain” in symbol always represents a NATION.

“In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it,” answers the Eternal. David’s throne now is to be planted in Israel, after being thrown down from Judah. After this Hebrew princess is “planted” on the throne, now in Israel, lost from view – that throne is to BEAR FRUIT. She is to marry, have children, and her sons are to continue David’s dynasty!

Israel had already been independent in Ireland for four centuries. Israel in Ireland already had a kingly line onto which Zedekiah’s daughter was grafted. The Irish Israelites were an ancient colony and had not gone into Assyrian captivity.

iv) *Healing of ‘breach’ between the Pharez and Zarah lines prophesied*

The Bible mentions a mysterious ‘breach’ that occurred in the days of Judah (Genesis 38:28-30).

Judah was the father of twin sons. The firstborn was royal seed, for through him the scepter promise was to be carried down. It seems the midwife knew twins were about to be born. It is recorded that just before birth one of the twins ‘put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, ‘This came out first’. But the child drew back his hand and the other was actually born first.”

The midwife exclaimed, “How have you broken forth? This breach be upon you: therefore his name was called Pharez,” meaning “breach”. The other twin was named Zarah.

This strange occurrence was recorded in Bible history because this breach was to be healed between the sons or their descendants at some future time?

History shows the descendants of Zarah became wanderers, later migrating to Ireland. But meanwhile, the Pharez-David-Zedekiah line possessed the scepter (rulership) – was HIGH – exalted. The Zarah line, feeling it rightfully should possess the scepter, and some day would, was low, abased – so far as royal power was concerned.

Now consider another prophecy given in Ezekiel 21:25-26 (KJV) “And you, profane wicked prince of Israel [Zedekiah], whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus says the Lord God; remove the diadem, and take off the crown [from Judah, as did happen, through the first half of Jeremiah’s commission]; this [the crown] shall not be the same: ***exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high***.”

“Remove the diadem, and take off the crown,” means that the crown was removed from king Zedekiah of David’s dynasty. “This shall not be the same,” means that the diadem is not to cease, but a change is to take place. “Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high,” means that King Zedekiah of Judah, who is high is to be abased. He is to lose that crown. House of Judah has been “high” while the House of Israel has been “low” – these many years without a king (Hosea 3:4). The Pharez line has been “high”; the Zarah line “low.”

This prophecy thus points to the breach between the Pharez and Zarah lines of the Jews (descendants of Judah) being healed with the Zarah line possessing the scepter over the House of Israel through marriage with the Pharez line.

v) *David’s throne was prophesied to be overturned three times*

Ezekiel the prophet continues his prophecy of Ezekiel 21 in verse 27: “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more [overturned], until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” The diadem and the throne were to be overturned. Not once, but three times. It was to be overturned by abasing Zedekiah, the house of Judah and the Pharez line, and exalting the house of Israel, and one of the Zarah line! The first of the three overturns was performed as the first half of Jeremiah’s commission, by rooting out the throne of David from Jerusalem.

“And it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him,” means that the throne would be no more overturned after the third overturn, and will be given to Jesus Christ, whose it is by right.

The prince and husband of the Jewish princess Tea-tephi ascended the throne of his father. The son of this king and the Jewish Princess continued on the throne of Ireland and this same dynasty continued unbroken through all the kings of Ireland. It was then overturned the second time and transplanted in Scotland, from where it was overturned the third time and moved to London, England, where this same dynasty continues today in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Thus the three overturns of the throne prophesied in Ezekiel 21:25-27 have been fulfilled.

vi) *Ephraim settled exactly where prophesied to settle*

If God kept His promise to David, the throne of David was to be planted ‘in the mountain of the height of Israel’ (Ezekiel 17:22-23: “I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: 23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it). We should find it in the leading nation of the descendants of Ephraim, the birthright holders.

The precise location where Ephraim was to settle was also prophesied in the Bible.

The prophet Amos wrote in Amos 9:8-9 “Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom [house of Israel – Judah had not yet sinned], and I will destroy it [the kingdom, or government, not the people] from off the face of the earth…For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

This prophecy says that the ten-tribed house of Israel (not Judah) was to be sifted among the nations, losing their identity. It was during this time that the children of the house of Israel were to “abide many days without a king” (Hosea 3:4). Although many of them were still scattered among various nations in the first century A.D., a portion of them had become established in a definite location of their own by Jeremiah’s time – 140 years after their original captivity.

In prophecy, the holders of the birthright are distinguished from Judah (the Jews) by various names: “Ephraim,” “Joseph,” “Jacob,” “Rachel” (Joseph’s mother), “Samaria” (their former capital), “Israel.”

According to Hosea 12:1: “Ephraim…follows after the east wind.” An “east wind” travels west. Ephraim must have gone west from ancient Assyria. When the Eternal swore to David that He would perpetuate his throne, He said: “I will set his hand [scepter] also in the sea” (Psalm 89:25). The throne is to be “set” or planted “in the sea.”

Through Jeremiah the Eternal said: “Backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return you backsliding Israel, says the Lord (Jeremiah 3:11-12). So in these last days, messengers are to go “toward the NORTH (of Jerusalem where Jeremiah prophesied) in order to locate lost Israel and proclaim the warning message. So the location, we now find, is toward the north, also west, and in the sea.

In Jeremiah 31:10, the message is to be declared “in the isles afar off” and is to be shouted in “the CHIEF OF THE NATIONS” (verse 7). So, finally, today, as in Jeremiah’s day, the house of Israel is in the isles, which are “in the sea,” the chief of the nations, northwest of Jerusalem, a coast-dwelling, and, therefore sea-dominant people. Certainly there can be no mistaking that identity.

Take a map of Europe. Draw a line due NORTHWEST of Jerusalem across the continent of Europe, until you come to the sea, and then to the islands in the sea! This line takes you directly to the British Isles! So prophecy shows us where the prominent nation from the northern ten tribes can be located in our days.

For fascinating and much more thrilling than fiction details on Jeremiah’s “planting” and the present location of “lost” Israel and David’s throne, please read the United Church of God eBooklet titled “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future*” and Mr. Armstrong book *"The United States and Britain in Prophecy"*.

*6) Prophecies concerning wanderings of the House of Israel*

i) *Tribe of Dan prophesied to leave clues about wanderings of the House of Israel*

The Israelites were prophesied to leave highway signs or waymarks along the trail they traveled from the land of ancient Israel after being deported by the Assyrians. Speaking to Ephraim, the ancestor of the British people, God through the prophet Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 31:20-21: “20 Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord. 21 "Set up signposts, make landmarks; set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went.”

In Genesis 49:17, the patriarch Jacob blessing his sons prophesied what would befall them. He said about his son Dan: “Dan shall be a servant by the way.” Another translation of the original Hebrew can also be “Dan shall be a serpent’s trail.” It is a very significant fact that the tribe of Dan named every place they went after their father Dan. It started way back when they had just settled in their land. Joshua 19:47 records: “…the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it…and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.”

Judges 18:11-12 records that the Danites took Kirjath-jearim and “called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day.” Then the same company of 600 armed Danites captured Laish and “called the name of the city DAN, after the name of Dan their father (verse 29). This shows how the Danites left their “serpent’s trail” by the way as signposts by which they can be traced.

Remember that in the Hebrew the vowels are not preserved. So for Dan, if we leave the vowel a out, the Danites could be identified with names that could be spelled as “Dn”, meaning Den, Din, Don, or Dun in addition to Dan.

During the time of ancient Israel, the tribe of Dan occupied two different areas in the Holy Land. One part lived on the seacoast, and the other colony occupied the northernmost area. That is why Israel’s boundary is listed in the Bible as from Dan to Beersheba.

When the Assyrians defeated Israel, the seacoast Danites sailed away in their ships to Ireland. Irish history shows that the new settlers in Ireland were the “Tuatha de Dananns”, which translates to “Tribe of Dan.” They left their sign posts in names such as Dans-Laugh, Dan-Sower, Dun-dalk, Dun-drum, Don-egal Bay, Don-egal City, Dun-gloe, Din-gle and Dunsmor.

The northern colony of Danites, however, was captured by the Assyrians along with the other nine tribes. They settled and later traveled from the land just west of the Black Sea and northwest of the Caspian Sea. They left their “serpent’s trail” in names of rivers such as the Danube, Dneiper, Dniester and the Don in Europe. From there they migrated further west, finally settling in Denmark, which means “Dan’s mark.” So the tribe of Dan has left a “serpent’s trail” as prophesied by Dan’s father Jacob, in his blessing of Dan. This enables us to piece together the wanderings of the northern ten tribes of Israel after their captivity and deportation at the hands of the Assyrians.

ii) *Part of Israel were to take their name from Isaac, the father of Israel*

God promised that Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, would leave the track of his name on history. Genesis 21:12 states: "In Isaac your seed shall be called." Ancient written Hebrew didn't include vowels, so the written letters for Isaac were the SC or SK sound.

After the Assyrian captivity, those Israelites migrating north around the Black Sea to Europe were called Scythians. Initially, the eastern branch between Persia and China were called the Sakka or Saka. Later in Europe they became Sacesones (sons of Saka) and finally Saxons —settling in England and later America. The SK/SC sound is found yet today among descendant nations of some of the tribes: Scotland, Scotia, Scandinavia, etc.

PROOFS OF IDENTITY OF ISRAEL FROM SECULAR HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Besides Bible prophecy, we can also prove from secular history, archaeology and other means that the British and American peoples are in fact the descendants of Israel and Joseph. Let us look at this evidence.

*Name Tracks*

King Omri ruled the house of Israel in the early 800s B.C., about 160 years before the fall of the northern kingdom (1 Kings 16). The Assyrians used his name to refer to the whole nation. In the Assyrian language Omri was called Ghomri or Khumri, and in London we find a historical record of the house of Israel under subjugation to Assyria. The famous Black Obelisk, prominently displayed in the British Museum [the author has seen this Black Obelisk with his own eyes], includes a pictorial record of King Jehu of Israel paying homage to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser. The inscription translates as: "The tribute of Jehu son of Khumri." And the Assyrians referred to the land of Israel as mat bit-Khumri —"land of the house of Omri."

Variations of Omri as a national name can be tracked initially as Ghomri or Khumri in Assyrian clay tablets, then Gamir, Gamera or Gamira, Cimmeri or Kimmeroi, as Cimmerians across Europe, and finally as the Cymry or people of Wales in Britain today. The Cimmerians were later called Celts and Gauls in northwestern Europe by the Greeks and Romans. Remember, these linguistic transformations took place over hundreds of years and hundreds of miles.

Anne Kristensen, a respected Danish linguistic scholar, reached the conclusion that the Cimmerians (who later became known as the Celts) can positively be identified as the deported Israelites.

Dr. Kristensen writes: "There is scarcely reason, any longer, to doubt the exciting and verily astonishing assertion propounded by the students of the Ten Tribes that the Israelites deported from Bit Humria, of the House of 'Omri, are identical with the Gimirraja of the Assyrian sources. Everything indicates that Israelite deportees did not vanish from the picture but that, abroad, under new conditions, they continued to leave their mark on history" (*Who Were the Cimmerians, and Where Did They Come From?: Sargon II, the Cimmerians, and Rusa I*, translated from the Danish by Jorgen Laessoe, *The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters*, No. 57, 1988, pp. 126-127).

It is also not a coincidence that those of Britain call themselves “British.” This name comes from the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word b’rith means “covenant” and the Hebrew word ish means “man.” Combine the two words (“British”) and the meaning would appear to be obvious—“Covenant man.” It is through the British people—colonizing around the world—that God fulfilled His covenant promise to Abraham.

*Emblem or Ensign Tracks*

For our second key, let’s look at emblem or ensign trail. Throughout history, ensigns have differentiated between families, clans, tribes, countries and nations. These identifying emblems or symbols, often displayed on flags, heraldry shields or clothing, generally featured animals, humans, weapons and other items. They identified friend from foe during battle or routine interactions. Scripture and historical accounts record the emblems used by each of the tribes of Israel, and evidence additional proofs of the identity of their descendants.

Genesis 49:22-24 records: “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob…”

In this scripture, Joseph—the father of Ephraim and Manasseh—is likened to a fruitful bough or branch, most likely an olive branch. Joseph is also described as being shot by archers. Later, Joseph’s descendants are further described in Deuteronomy 33:17: “His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (Deuteronomy 33:17).

With these descriptions divided between both sons, Manasseh’s primary emblem was that of an olive branch, and his secondary emblem a cache of arrows. Also attached to Manasseh’s ensign was the number 13, since he was the thirteenth tribe. Ephraim’s primary emblem was an ox, with his secondary emblem being a unicorn (*Symbols of Our Celto-Saxon Heritage*, Bennet, 1976).

It is interesting that one major identifying sign, showing the correlation between the royal family of Britain and Judah’s royal line, is found in Britain’s emblem.

Ephraim’s coat of arms was the unicorn and Judah’s was a lion. In addition to this, the ensign for David’s royal lineage was a lion wearing a crown, as well as the Star of David. After the kingdoms divided, the kingdom of Israel, led by Jeroboam (an Ephraimite), selected the unicorn as their national seal. The kingdom of Judah selected the kingly lion. In modern times, these emblems have carried over into Britain’s coat of arms—which features a lion wearing a crown—and a unicorn! The union of the national emblems of Israel and Judah represents the connection of the royal Pharez line, the bloodline of King David, to the Zarah line of kings in Britain.

Recall that Manasseh’s two emblems incorporated an olive branch and a cache of arrows. Another fascinating insight into the identity of the British and American peoples is that the American seal has an eagle carrying an olive branch and arrows. While the American seal depicts thirteen stars to reflect the original thirteen colonies, Manasseh was in fact the thirteenth tribe of Israel. This is clear evidence linking America with the symbols described in the Bible for Manasseh.

All these significant, yet little known facts evidence additional proofs of the identity of the British and American peoples today.

*Archaeological tracks*

For our third key to the identity of the British and American peoples, let’s look at the archaeological evidence. The Behistun Rock inscriptions comprise one of the great archaeological breakthroughs that unlocked many of the other finds. They are found on a cliff face over 100 meters above the valley floor in the Zargos Mountains of modern Iran along the road from Baghdad to Tehran. A massive inscription and bas relief carving of King Darius I of the Persian Empire (586-521 B.C.), this find shows images of the peoples Darius I had conquered. It describes his victories in parallel accounts in three languages: Old Persian, Susian (Elamite) and Akkadian (Assyrian or Babylonian). It is still there today.

In 1835, Sir Henry Rawlinson investigated the parallel inscription. It provided missing keys, unlocking the ancient languages of Assyria and Babylon, never before understood. One of the provinces listed in the inscription was “Scythia,” or “Saka,” as it was pronounced in the Persian language. The Babylonian version of this term was Cimmerians and written as “Gimiri,” meaning “the tribes.” Israel was often referred to as the “lost tribes.”

Sir Henry's younger brother and eminent scholar George Rawlinson clarified how important the inscriptions were to reading the Assyrian tablets excavated from Nineveh in the mid-1800s, thus connecting the lost 10 tribes to the Scythians or Sacae and Cimmerians: "We have reasonable grounds for regarding the Gimirri, or Cimmerians, who first appeared on the confines of Assyria and Media in the seventh century B.C., and the Sacae of the Behistun Rock, nearly two centuries later, as identical with the Beth-Khumree of Samaria, or the Ten Tribes of the House of Israel" (George Rawlinson, note in his translation of *History of Herodotus, Book VII*, p. 378).

Thus, the Behistun Rock inscriptions are a vital clue on the trail of the wandering tribes of Israel.

*Language tracks*

For our fourth key let’s look at the language tracks the tribes of Israel have left in history. Randy Stiver, a Church pastor of the United Church of God wrote in the *Vertical Thought* magazine for youth dated January-March 2007:

“All 12 of the ancient tribes of Israel spoke Hebrew, and many of the Middle Eastern languages were closely related to it.

“Linguistic studies from the late 1700s through the late 1900s have found clear and direct connections between Hebrew and the Celtic or Gaelic languages still maintained in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man. Going a dramatic step further, many of those studies focused on the remarkable and fundamental commonalities between Anglo-Saxon English and Hebrew. The same connection can be seen in the core words for most of the northwest European languages as well. This is not surprising since those languages were fundamentally the same until about A.D. 500 when the modern nation-states first began to form.

“An interesting recent study in 1981 by Professor Terry Blodgett from the University of Utah titled "Phonological Similarities in Germanic and Hebrew" can be downloaded from http://www.originofnations.org/. This is but one of the many studies that link modern northwest European, English and Gaelic languages to the parent Hebrew language that leave a tribe tracker an imprint to follow.”

*Art History Tracks*

Other evidence that the Scythians – Cimmerians who migrated to Britain, Scandinavia and other countries of northwestern Europe had a common culture is provided by art history. Randy Stiver writes:

“The Scythian-Cimmerian art forms clearly reveal a common culture. Hard art pieces (gold, silver, bronze, stone, pottery, etc.) survive for modern archaeologists to find. Ditto with many Scythian-type artifacts. One of the great collections of Scythian-Sacae art resides in the Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg, Russia. These pieces define the characteristic Scythian animal style…

“Scythian and Celtic art was fundamentally the same from the borders of China (where certain of the Sacae harassed the Chinese frontiers for several centuries) to the British Isles. The animal style links wandering Israelites together.

“Celtic art styles assumed the Scythian influence in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. as the Cimmerians migrated across Asia Minor into Europe to link with their early Celtic relatives. Thus art history, when you know what to look for, provides another trail for the tribe tracker.”

Thus we see that besides Bible prophecy, the descendants of Israel can be traced from the name tracks, emblem or ensign tracks, archaeological tracks, language tracks and art history tracks they left around the world till they finally settled in Britain, northwestern Europe and finally in North America.

Satan’s agents sometimes argue that white Americans cannot be the descendants of one man Manasseh as they have migrated from all nations of Europe. The author himself faced this doubt before becoming a member of God’s Church and again when the infiltrators in God’s Church raised this argument. But what finally convinced him is that it is probabilistically impossible for all of God’s promises and prophecies about Jacob’s descendants to have been fulfilled in one people by mere coincidence.

The reasons we believe that white Americans are the descendants of Manasseh was the prophecy by Amos the prophet when God said in Amos 9:9: “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel [which refers to the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh in prophecy] among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

According to this prophecy, God was to bring the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh as well as the other ten tribes through many nations to the lands they finally settled. He would further bring the descendants of Manasseh later through many nations to their land in America.

It is also a fact that many Americans belonged to whole communities in their various countries indicating they had a common relationship in their countries of origin. Whole communities left England, Germany (the ancient Assyrians who had carried the House of Israel captive) and other nations and migrated to America. This means many of Manasseh lived together in the nations they settled before finally moving to America.

As Amos’ prophecy says, God commanded the House of Israel to sift through the nations. He says it is His doing. He herded the descendants of Manasseh from various nations and they were stirred up to leave their nations to come to America. An example of how God stirs up the spirit of people to do certain things is provided in Ezra 1:1-3:” 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled , the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying , 2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he has charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.”

Just as God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to send the Jews back to build the Temple in Jerusalem, through the centuries He stirred up the descendants of Manasseh to leave their countries and migrate to America. That is how most Americans are descendants of Manasseh. Besides their modern emblems match those of the ancient tribe of Manasseh.

Can such incredible and intricate prophecies for the end time stand fulfilled in the British and American peoples, and they not be the people about whom these prophecies and promises were made? And all these prophecies have not been fulfilled in any other people on earth in the history of mankind. Only the blind, the diabolical liars or the insincere fail to acknowledge these events that provide overwhelming, probability-defying evidence that they are the descendants of the patriarchs Jacob and Joseph.

Probabilistically it is impossible for all these incredible and intricate prophecies to be fulfilled in one people. Jesus Christ fulfilled all the numerous prophecies related to the Messiah so that there would be no doubt in anyone’s mind that He was the Messiah. Probabilistically it is impossible for one man to fulfill all the prophecies. A fake Messiah would fail to fulfill many of the prophecies even if he were to fulfill one or two or a few by mere coincidence. But for one man to fulfill all the prophecies was impossible. In Jesus Christ fulfilling all of them God left no doubt in humanity’s mind who the real Messiah (Savior) was. In the same way it is impossible for one people to fulfill all the prophecies and promises of God to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David by mere coincidence. But the fact that the American, British and Jewish people fulfilled them all means that we can be absolutely certain that they are the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim the sons of Joseph, and Judah respectively. Genuine members of God’s Church have known all this in the past. They should not let the diabolical wickedness of Satan and the infiltrators he has planted in God’s Church deceive them into disbelieving all this evidence and deprive them of eternal life. It is impossible for such astoundingly intricate prophecies to be fulfilled in one people by mere coincidence. Don’t let stupidly foolish statements of the infiltrators make you believe otherwise.

**b) Prophecies have failed**

Next let’s look at another deceptive arguments used by the tares to deceive true members of God’s Church in order to overthrow their faith.

Except for Jesus Christ, no man has understood prophecy in the history of mankind better than Mr. Armstrong. The prophets who wrote the prophecies certainly did not understand them because they were sealed and to be understood only in the end time. When we entered the time of the end, understanding of prophecies was opened to Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong’s preaching was much about prophecy and the soon coming kingdom of God. The expectation that the kingdom of God is very near made the members of the Church very fervent about preaching the gospel and diligent in overcoming sin. But the infiltrators have put forward two major arguments concerning prophecy to dampen the fervency of the members. They have said that all the prophecies Mr. Armstrong preached about have not come true. Hence they have failed. But in the same breath they say that the fulfillment of prophecies is far away since they were not fulfilled during Mr. Armstrong life. They say that the fulfillment of prophecies could be 50 or even 100 years away. So we are not really in the very end of the end time. Let us look at both of these issues.

Let’s first debunk the argument that we are not living in the end of the end times. Here are 15 signs that we are living in the end times.

*Fifteen Signs of the End Times*

1) The first sign that we are living in the end times is that Daniel’s prophecy in 12:4 (4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.") says that in the end time ‘many would run to and fro’, implying a time of incredible global travel and communications. With the age of jet travel we are living in such a time and this prophecy is being fulfilled.

2) The second sign in Daniel 12:4 was that in the end time ‘knowledge would increase.’ We are already living in a time when knowledge is exploding and doubling every 18 months.

3) The third sign in Daniel 12:4 was that all prophecies were ‘sealed till the time of the end’. But when the end time was near, these prophecies would be revealed. God’s true Church now understands all these prophecies, which were first revealed to Mr. Armstrong. All the symbols of various beasts in the books of Daniel and Revelation are now understood.

4) The fourth sign was given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:22 that unless the time of trouble was shortened, no life would be saved alive on earth. This means that man would have the capability to destroy all life on earth. Man now has the capability to destroy all life from the earth many times over, which he has never before possessed in his history.

5) The fifth sign in Matthew 24:14 was that before the end of man’s age, the good news of the Kingdom of God would be preached to all the world as a witness and warning. This message has been preached for the past 96 years beginning with Mr. Armstrong. God is delivering that good news through the author’s weekly messages at 9.00 a.m. USA Eastern Standard Time, which every human being on earth can hear in his or her own language. Thus we are in fact living in the very end of the end time.

6) The sixth sign is mentioned in Malachi 4:5-6 which states that before the Day of the Lord (which is the last one year of the three and a half year Great Tribulation) God would send a person in the power and spirit of Elijah the prophet to restore the true doctrines in His Church. Herbert W. Armstrong has already fulfilled that prophecy, and he died in January 1986.

7) For the seventh sign, Jesus said in Matthew 24:18 that the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet would be set up in Jerusalem just before the beginning of the great tribulation. For this purpose Jews would have to control Jerusalem. The Jews do control Jerusalem today. Before modern times, for over 1939 years they have never controlled Jerusalem. So we are living in the end times.

8) For the eighth sign Jesus said in Matthew 24:37-39 that conditions in the end time would be similar to conditions in the days of Noah. In Noah’s day people scoffed at the warning message preached by Noah that most of humanity would die in a catastrophic worldwide Flood. They thought their spiritual condition was just fine. People today react the same way to God’s warning message that their wars will lead to destruction of much of the world’s population. That’s the ‘normalcy bias’ at wrok.

9) Noah’s day was characterized by population explosion ((Genesis 6:1). We are adding 1 billion people to the population of the earth every 11-13 years. So for our ninth sign of the end time, the world has been experiencing a population explosion.

10) Other condition that characterized Noah’s day was widespread violence. This tenth sign in terms of murders, terrorism and general violence prevails in the world today. The thoughts of most of humanity are only evil continually. These evils are described in Revelation 9:20-21: “And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” Many nations today openly acknowledge that they prefer to work with Satan and the demons than the true God.

11) The global alliances that are prophesied to participate in the soon coming world wars are already forming. For our eleventh sign, an alliance of nations in Europe headed by a German leader called the Beast (Revelation 13, 17) and King of the North (Daniel 11:40-45) which will war with the United States, Britain and the state of Israel is ready to emerge out of the European Union any time.

12) Islam is resurging. They will be taking part in the world wars to be fought soon. Later an Islamic leader called the King of the South (Daniel 11:40) will emerge. Resurgent Islam is the twelfth sign that we are in the end times.

13) The alliance that will be defeated militarily by the German led European alliance consists of the USA, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel. They are going to be punished by God for their sins. Their societies are full of prophesied sins such as dishonoring parents, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, pornography, lying, cheating, stealing, murder, bloodshed and strangers (foreigners living among them) devouring their strength. They are keeping none of God’s Ten Commandments as societies. These disgusting and sinful conditions did not exist before the Hippie Generation of the 1960s. This is the thirteenth sign of the end time.

14) An alliance of nations in the East is prophesied to fight the European alliance in the last but one world war, and be capable of fielding a 200 million man army globally. To be able to field this huge army and supply it for months demands tremendous capability in producing machines and transportation systems. Only China and India have the huge manpower to be able to field the men for the huge army. And they have developed the technology, along with Russia, Japan and Korea to produce the vehicles and other machinery necessary to move and supply the army. This alliance will actually form only during the 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation itself. But all the elements for it to emerge at any time are already in place.

15) Finally, for the fifteenth sign, the pope of the Roman Catholic Church will emerge after the Third World War who will enforce his religion on the world in league with the German leader called the Beast. The Roman Church is already pursuing a policy of uniting Europe and bringing other Churches into its fold.

All these fifteen signs (which are fulfillment of specific prophecies) show that the end of man’s age is very near. But one can argue that these signs have been present for the past 50 years. And the very end time prophecies concerning global wars and disasters have not been fulfilled all these 50 years. So all the prophecies Mr. Armstrong preached about have either failed or their fulfillment could be far in the future as the infiltrators have argued. We had believed that Mr. Armstrong would still be alive when the fulfillment of the end time events would begin, and he would be one of the Two Witnesses during the Great Tribulation mentioned in Revelation 11. When he died, the tares cited this as evidence that prophecies had failed. So there was no point in believing the prophecies that Mr. Armstrong preached about.

But look at these prophecies closely. Some of these key signs were not present 40 years ago. Many of these developments have taken place after Mr. Armstrong’s death. So we had not reached the end of the end time when Mr. Armstrong was still alive. He died on January 16, 1986. Germany was a divided nation at that time. We had believed that the gospel had been preached in all the world as a witness. But the gospel had not become accessible to every human being on earth in their own language. Only the author’s weekly messages have made that possible for the first time in man’s history. And since his messages began being broadcast beginning on December 2, 2006, the gospel has been fully preached to every human being on earth as prophesied in Matthew 24:14. This has never been done before.

Some key Bible prophecies have been understood only after Mr. Armstrong’s death. These prophecies were actually about Mr. Armstrong himself as well as the Church. So not all prophecies were understood when Mr. Armstrong died. Hence Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 12:4 that in the end time all prophecies would be understand had not been completely fulfilled. But it has been fulfilled since Mr. Armstrong’s death, signifying that we are indeed in the very end of the end times.

In Mr. Armstrong’s time people did not openly acknowledge or even know that they were worshipping Satan and the demons in their religious practices as prophesied in Revelation 9:20-21. But today the world openly knows that the Germans take their guidance from Satan and many nations are willingly allied with them. They feel that they are doing what is in their best interests.

Only in the past decade or so have China and India developed the technological capabilities to produce vehicles and other machines to be able to supply the massive number of soldiers and technical personnel needed to field and supply a 200 million man army globally as prophesied. Hence conditions were not present to truly fulfill this prophecy 40 years ago. But now they are present indicating that we have truly entered the end of the end time.

Thus many things have happened since Mr. Armstrong’s death which indicate that we have indeed entered the end of the end times. In addition, there are other end time prophecies which show that we have indeed reached the very end of the end time so that horrifying events are now actually on the verge of exploding on the world scene.

END TIME PROPHECIES ALREADY FULFILLED OR BEING FULFILLED

1) *Warning to God’s Church*

Revelation 10:1-4 states, “And I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven…and he had a little book open in his hand…and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. And when he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

Like other prophecies, this prophecy was also sealed till the time of the end. But in the end time all these prophecies have been understood by God’s true Church.

Since the book of Revelation is mainly about the Day of the Lord, which is the last one year of the Great Tribulation, this prophecy is for the end times as well. Since the Great Tribulation is a time of trouble for physical Israel (primarily America and British Commonwealth nations and the Jews) as well as spiritual Israel, the prophecies in the book of Revelation would have to deal with both of them. John wrote the prophecies concerning physical nations of Israel and the world as the messages contained in the seven seals. But John was told not to write the message the seven thunders uttered. These messages could pertain only to spiritual Israel, the true Church of God. John did not write these messages because they were to be sealed till the time of the end. But these messages to God’s Church would then be revealed in the time of the end.

This prophecy thus is about members of God’s Church being led astray by Satan’s agents who had infiltrated the Church. The seven thunders uttering their voice was a prophecy to warn the members of God’s Church to repent, get back on track, and put their hearts and souls into doing God’s work. Mr. Gerald Flurry, pastor general of the Philadelphia Church of God understood this prophecy first and has been delivering that thundering message to God’s Church since December 1989. He continues to do that job even today. Thus this prophecy since the death of Mr. Armstrong has already been fulfilled.

2) *Prophecy to prophesy again already fulfilled*

Now notice the next part of the message that the mighty angel delivered to John in Revelation 10:5-6, “And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer.”

The mighty angel said that after the message of the seven thunders was revealed and preached, there should be delay no longer. This means that after the warning to members of God’s Church to get back on track has been delivered, there is no delay any longer in the fulfillment of the first end time event, which is world war between the German led global alliance against the USA/Britain/Israel alliance in which one fourth of mankind or nearly 1.8 billion people will die. The mighty angel swore that by God. So there is indeed no delay any longer. We are without doubt in the very end of the end time.

Then just after giving the message to John that ‘there should be delay no longer’, the angel further told through John what the first event would be. He said, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues [or languages], and kings” (Revelation 10:11).

John was not the one to deliver those messages on prophecy about many peoples, nations and kings in all languages of the world. They were to be delivered near the very end of the end time. So John did not deliver that message. But the author has been delivering that message since December 2, 2006 every Saturday morning at 9.00 a.m. USA Eastern Standard Time which is broadcast to every human being on earth in the language he or she understands.

God’s Church does not have the resources to preach the messages to all the world in all languages. Most nations would not even allow the message to be preached. But Satan leads the global alliance led by Germany. They are impatient to get the third world war started because ultimately it means control of the world’s nations and their wealth for them. Initially to fulfill this prophecy, Satan and the demons chose to broadcast the author’s messages to every human being in his or her own language.

The author completed delivering his messages on July 14, 2007 in fulfillment of the commission in Revelation 10:11. Then Satan and the demons stopped delivering his messages because their purpose in fulfilling that prophecy was served. After that God’s angels have been delivering his messages on a weekly basis. God says now there is no delay any longer in the fulfillment of the end time events. Satan, the demons, the Germans and their allies are now free to begin the third world war, pictured by the first four seals of Revelation 6, without any further delay. So we really are living in the very end of the end time. And the prophecy to prophesy again to the world in all languages of the world has already been dramatically fulfilled.

Therefore, contrary to the arguments of the infiltrators, prophecies have not failed. In fact, they are being fulfilled and we also know precisely where we are in prophecy and the sequence of events ahead. The fulfillment of end-time prophecies is not 50 or 100 years away. We are actually witnessing the fulfillment of the very end of the end time events right now.

3. *Prophecies fulfilled after Mr. Armstrong’s death*

Many other prophecies continue to be fulfilled after Mr. Armstrong’s death.

i) *Gospel preached with greater power* - In fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, the good news of the soon coming kingdom of God continues to be preached in ever greater power. Since Mr. Armstrong’s death, the Church has become divided. For some years, the gospel was not preached in the same power as during Mr. Armstrong’s life. But then because of the development of the Internet, the reach of the gospel message has increased manifold. The gospel message is accessible to more people than ever before at even lower cost. It has truly gone global because at least some people on earth in every country understand English and can read the gospel message. And now with the author’s weekly messages, it is available to every human being on earth in his or her own language.

ii) *Mystery of Iniquity and Man of Sin revealed* - Since Mr. Armstrong’s death, the existence of the Synagogue of Satan (Revelation 3:9) within God’s Church has been revealed, and with it the “Mystery of Iniquity” (or lawlessness) and the “man of sin” in (Joseph W. Tkach sr and Joseph Tkach jr after him) (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7) the Church has started working openly. As already explained, we now understand that these things were prophesied to come to light only after Mr. Armstrong’s death. So these prophecies have been fulfilled after his death.

iii) *Prophecy concerning great falling away from the Church fulfilled* – A great falling away from the Church was prophesied before the return of Jesus Christ to earth, and the ‘man of sin’ was to cause that falling away. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7-8 states: “3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day (the Day of the Lord) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition… 7 For the mystery of lawlessness [or iniquity] is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed…

One (Mr. Armstrong) was restraining the ‘mystery of iniquity’ (infiltrators in God’s Church) from causing the falling away. During his life the “Synagogue of Satan” (also infiltrators in God’s Church being a parallel Church within the Church) was able to cause some to fall away. But when Mr. Armstrong was taken out of the way by death, the synagogue of Satan began to work opening and caused a massive falling away. At its peak in 1990, approximately 150,000 men, women and children attended weekly Sabbath services in God’s Church worldwide. Among these were more than 90,000 baptized members. Since that time about 80% of the members and prospective members have fallen away from the Church. This prophecy could only be fulfilled after Mr. Armstrong’s death and has been fulfilled. So do not let any from the ‘Synagogue of Satan’ deceive you into believing that prophecies have failed. Many prophecies have been fulfilled after Mr. Armstrong’s death and continue to be fulfilled. No prophecies have failed and prophecies will not fail till the return of Jesus Christ.

iv) *Mr. Armstrong’s coming and passing away was prophesied* – As already explained, prophecies concerning Mr. Armstrong’s coming as a prophet and apostle and his passing away have been fulfilled. His passing away was not failing of prophecy, but fulfillment of it.

**c) Fulfillment of Prophecies is 50-100 years away**

With all that has already been discussed, this lie can be easily nailed. The 15 signs of the end time clearly show that we are in the very end of the end times. In fact we have already entered the time when there is ‘delay no longer’ in the fulfillment of end of the end time prophecies pictured by the 7 seals of the book of Revelation. The powerful angel of God who delivered this message swore by God that we have already entered the time of ‘delay no longer.’

The very first event after we entered the time of ‘delay no longer’ mentioned in Revelation 10:11 (“…you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues and kings) has already been fulfilled by the author’s weekly messages. So we even know precisely where we are in the prophesied sequence of end of the end time events. The beginning of the fulfillment of the events mentioned in the seven seals is at our door. Fulfillment of prophecies is not far into the future. Do not let yourself be deceived into believing the lie from the infiltrators in God’s Church despite all this clear evidence. If you do so, you are setting yourself up to be labeled a Laodicean and your faith tried in the Great Tribulation.

**d) Work of the entire Church is an Elijah type of work**

After Mr. Armstrong’s passing away, infiltrators (‘Synagogue of Satan’ or ‘Mystery of Lawlessness’) in God’s Church began to argue that Mr. Armstrong was not the prophesied Elijah to come but that God’s end-time work done by the entire Church of God is an Elijah type of work.

Towards the end of his life, when Mr. Armstrong began to realize that he is likely to die before the return of Jesus Christ, he started taking steps to appoint his successor and chose Joseph W. Tkach Sr for the position. The title of Pastor General was conferred on him which title Mr. Armstrong held. Joseph Tkach sr and those around him urged Mr. Armstrong many times to add the title of apostle in addition to Pastor General to the appointment of Joseph Tkach Sr. Mr. Armstrong refused to do so by saying that God had not guided him to add the title of Apostle to the appointment.

Joseph Tkach Sr wanted the title Apostle added to his appointment because then he could claim that he had God’s authority to change all the doctrines that God had restored through Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong knew and had preached that only apostles can determine doctrine, and that only one man was prophesied to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and that he only would have the title of apostle conferred upon him by Jesus Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 11:9 and Luke 7:26.

When Jesus Christ in Matthew 17:10-13 (NKJV) was asked by His disciples why the scribes said that Elijah must come first, He replied “11 Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. 12 But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”

These verses with Matthew 11:9 indicate that the role of the prophet Elijah was to be fulfilled three times: once by the original Elijah, second time by John the Baptist to prepare the way before the first coming of Jesus Christ, and then the third time before the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Elijah to come before the second coming of Jesus Christ would ‘restore all things’ which role Mr. Armstrong fulfilled.

When John the Baptist was asked by the Pharisees who he was if he was not the Christ, he said (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23) “23 I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord," ' as the prophet Isaiah said (Isaiah 40:3)."

This indicates that one single man would fulfill the role of the prophet Elijah and not the entire Church. Mr. Armstrong also understood and said many times that he was the singular voice crying in the wilderness of modern day spiritual confusion. The Old Testament prophecies of Malachi 4:5-6, Malachi 3:1-2 also state that one man would come in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet.

These scriptures thus easily nail the lie of the ‘Synagogue of Satan’ that the work of the entire Church fulfills the role of the prophet Elijah and thus Mr. Armstrong was not the single man prophesied to come in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet. I hope no genuine member of God’s Church will be deceived by such lies.

**e) Church of God is not the only true Church**

## Another deceptive argument used by the infiltrators to lead members of God’s Church astray is that the Church of God is not the only true Church. There are many other Churches that have members who are righteous to whom God will not deny eternal life. This argument can serve many nefarious purposes for the infiltrators.

## They want members of God’s Church to believe that they can freely fellowship with other Churches hoping that they will accept some of the teachings of the other Churches which may vary slightly from what God restored to His Church through Mr. Armstrong. They hope that some in God’s Church may then be induced to leave the Church and join other Churches. Let there be no doubt in anyone’s mind: Such compromises with thinking and living God’s way of life will lead to loss of salvation.

## We can examine this question whether God’s Church is the only true Church or not in two ways from the Bible. First, we can show from the Bible that God’s Church has all the identifying signs for God’s true Church. Secondly, we can show from the Bible that some beliefs of the other Churches are in error. So we cannot obtain salvation through them at this time. This is a hard saying for mainstream Christianity to bear. It will be offensive to them. Our purpose is not to offend anyone. But these messages are directed at members of God’s Church to protect them from the wolves. This is not the time for being politically correct. It is time for the straight, plain, unvarnished truth, meant for former and current members of God’s Church only. No member of God’s Church should have any doubt about what is being said and meant.

## If you leave God’s true Church and join other churches, you have allowed yourselves to be deceived by Satan and his agents, and you will lose your only chance for salvation. Remember, members in all other Churches and the world are not being judged at this time. They will get their chance for salvation later. But you are getting your one and only chance for salvation at this time. Your very eternal life is on the line. Don’t throw it away by allowing yourselves to be deceived by Satan and his agents.

## IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF GOD’S TRUE CHURCH

## So let us first look at the identifying signs for the true Church from the pages of the Bible.

## 1. *God’s Church believes what God says, fears and obeys Him* – The most important characteristic that distinguishes God’s Church from the other Churches is that it believes what God says, obeys Him and fears to disobey Him.

## Jesus Christ told the Jews of His day that the Scripture cannot be broken. That means the Bible is the infallible word of God. God’s Church thus simply believes that every word in the Bible is the truth. Hence the Church gets its beliefs and doctrines only from the Bible.

## The Bible says that human beings shall become literal sons of God. The apostle John wrote in 1John 3:2: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” How many other Churches believe that human beings will become God’s literal sons through the resurrection and will have a body like Jesus Christ? But God’s Church simply believes this statement and all other statements in the Bible.

## The Christian way of life can be summarized in two laws in Luke 10:27: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind [as elaborated in the first four of the Ten Commandments]; and thy neighbor as thyself [as described in the last six of the Ten Commandments].”

## Usually many in the other Churches may do as well as God’s Church in the part of the law that involves loving our neighbor as ourselves. But almost all fall short in the first part of the Law that involves loving God with all our hearts, soul, strength and mind.

## Jesus Christ described in very simple terms how we love God. He said in John 14:15: “If you love Me keep My commandments.” The commandments mean the Ten Commandments. Then Jesus also said in Luke 4:4: “And Jesus answered him, [that is, Satan] saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

## The reason why other Churches fall short regarding the commandment to love God with all our hearts, soul, strength and minds is that they don’t keep all the first four Commandments. Many fall short by disobeying the second commandment to not make idols, or images to worship them. They don’t realize that making and kissing crosses, putting them on Church buildings, falling down on one’s knees in front of stained glass images of Jesus and Mary in Churches and paintings are all idols. Almost all Churches are guilty of this violation of God’s commandments. And hardly any obey the fourth commandment to remember to keep the Sabbath holy.

## In contrast, God’s Church keeps these commandments, simply because God commands them. Sabbath days don’t appear to be any different from Sunday or any other days to a casual observer. So most Churches believe they can worship God any day they choose. But God’s word says that we should worship on the Sabbath. God’s Church simply obeys God and worships Him on the Sabbath day. God says the Sabbath is holy, and only God can make time holy by His presence. Sunday is not a holy day because God does not say it is a holy day in the Bible. That is why He commands that we worship Him on the Sabbath day and not on Sunday. God’s Church simply believes that the commandments are given for our benefit, and obeys them because God commands us to keep them. And over time every commandment keeper realizes the tremendous benefits of keeping them. That is how Jesus Christ defined love. That is how God’s Church loves God; just as He asks us to love Him, not how we think we should love Him. In addition, God’s Church fears to disobey God. This is a healthy fear of God.

## We live by every word of God and search the scriptures for our beliefs and answers for all of life’s questions. If we find anything in the Bible that we should believe or obey, we fear God enough to add that to our beliefs immediately or change our beliefs accordingly. But we also believe God when He said He would send Elijah the prophet to restore all things. So we believe that Mr. Armstrong restored all the true doctrines to the Church, as described earlier in the 20 doctrines of the Church. The Church’s beliefs are quite different from the beliefs of the other Churches, and it has obtained all these beliefs from the pages of the Bible and not from vain human philosophy, paganism or tradition. Because of our fear of God we dare not change them.

## This is how God’s Church differs from other Churches in the world. It simply believes what God says, obeys all His commandments and fears to disobey Him. That’s how God’s Church demonstrates its love for God. This kind of childlike belief in what God says; obedience to God without question, just as Abraham obeyed God when he was asked to leave Mesopotamia to go the land of Canaan; and healthy fear to disobey God, as Abraham feared to disobey Him when he was asked to sacrifice his only son Isaac, demonstrate to God that individual members of the Church will never rebel against His rule like Satan and the demons did. God will not give eternal life to any who demonstrate by their actions and attitudes that they will not wholeheartedly believe and obey Him and fear to disobey Him. He cannot rule rebellious people. God’s Church by its actions demonstrates to God that it loves Him, can be easily ruled by Him and will never rebel against Him. In short, God’s Church is totally and completely surrendered to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

## 2. *The Identifying Sign* – Secondly, God’s Church has the identifying sign that identifies the people of God. God commanded the ancient Israelites to remember to keep His Sabbath day. This is stated in Exodus 31:13-17, and is also the fourth of the Ten Commandments. It states: “13 Speak also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the LORD that does sanctify you. 14 You shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defiles it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever does any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

## This scripture clearly states how and why the Sabbath should be kept. It is kept holy by not working on the day and worshipping God. It is to be kept as a perpetual covenant, meaning that it is to be kept forever. The reason it is commanded is that it sanctifies the Sabbath keepers; meaning sets them apart from other people as holy and God’s own people. It is an identifying sign between God as their Creator who created all things in six days, and they as God’s people. God commanded the Sabbath day as a memorial of creation. By keeping the Sabbath God’s people acknowledge that they worship the God who created everything.

## Since the Sabbath was to be kept as a perpetual covenant or agreement, it is to be kept forever by God’s people. Jesus Christ kept it “as His custom was” as stated in Luke 4:16. So did the apostle Paul as stated in Acts 17:2. In following the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles, God’s Church also keeps the Sabbath. Sunday worship has come from ancient paganism, which was instituted by the great false Church to be different from the Jews. The Roman Church admits that there is no authority in the scriptures for Sunday worship, but it changed the worship day of its own authority. That is rebellion against God. In contrast God’s true Church loves and obeys God.

## So God’s Church keeps the Sabbath day holy which identifies it as God’s own people.

## 3. *God’s Church has God’s name* - For the third identifying sign, God’s Church has the name God has given it and not what human beings have named their churches. Names are very important to God, and He names people, places and things as they are. For example, the name of the patriarch Jacob meant “usurper” or one who “supplants” another. But after Jacob wrestled with God’s Angel and began to ask God to help and bless him, God changed his name to Israel, which means “overcomer” or “prevailer” with God. Thus names are very important to God.

## Since names are very important to God, He surely would not leave His Church unnamed, or leave human beings to choose the name for His Church. In fact God has given His Church a name. It is mentioned twelve times in the Bible as the “Church of God” or its plural form “Churches of God.” Twelve is God’s number for organized beginnings. So God’s true Church bears the name God has given to it, and not what human beings have given to themselves. That is honoring God as children honor their parents by bearing the name they have been given by them. So as another identifying sign of the true Church of God, in honor and love for God, the true Church does bear the name God has given it: the Church of God.”

## 4. *God’s Church understands what salvation is and what is God’s purpose for man* – For the fourth identifying sign, God’s true Church understands God’s true purpose for creating man. God’s Church understands that God’s purpose in creating man is to enlarge His own family, the God family. Man’s purpose is to qualify to be born as a literal son of God and brother of Jesus Christ. That means God’s purpose for each and every man is to become like Jesus Christ in composition and holy righteous character as a spirit being as 1John 3:2 said: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” No one else believes God when He says that. Only God’s true Church believes that. Only God’s Church believes that God is reproducing Himself through man, as Mr. Armstrong taught us.

## 5. *God’s Church understands God plan of salvation* - For the fifth identifying sign, God’s Church is the only religious organization on earth that understands God’s plan of salvation. This plan of salvation is pictured by the seven annual holy days of God. The Passover pictures the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of humanity, making forgiveness of sins possible. The seven Days of Unleavened Bread picture the need for individual members to overcome sin and put it out of their lives in order to qualify to receive the free gift of eternal life. The Feast of Pentecost pictures the firstfruits of God’s harvest of humans for His kingdom. The firstfruits are the saints during the first 6,000 years of man’s history who will have qualified to receive eternal life in the first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ to earth, and to rule with Him in His kingdom.

## The 4th festival, the Feast of Trumpets pictures the return of Jesus Christ to set up God’s kingdom on earth and the resurrection of the firstfruits. The 5th holy day, the Day of Atonement pictures the putting away of Satan and the demons from the rulership of the earth. The 6th festival, the Feast of Tabernacles pictures the 1,000 – year reign of Jesus Christ and the saints with Him on earth. And the seventh festival, the Last Great Day pictures the resurrection of all of humanity that has ever lived to a physical life for their first and only chance for salvation.

## Only God’s true Church understands this Plan of salvation. Only God’s Church understands that salvation is not being offered only during the first 6,000 years of man’s history. In fact, only a tiny fraction of humanity, a very “small flock” are being called at this time and offered their first and only chance for salvation. Only God’s Church understands that vast majority of humanity will get their chance for salvation later. That is why God’s Church does not go around the world to pester people to accept Christ now and become Christians. And only God’s Church understands that God’s plan offers a chance for salvation for each and every human being, and that almost all of humanity will qualify to receive eternal life. This understanding is unique to God’s true Church, and one of the greatest truths restored through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

## 6. *God’s Church is a small flock* – For the sixth identifying sign, in Luke 12:32 Jesus Christ called His Church a little flock. He said: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Here Jesus Christ described the size of His Church throughout its first 6,000 year history. It would never be a large organization with millions and millions of members. Throughout its history since its founding in 31 A.D., the Church has always been a small flock. Therefore, when the infiltrators in God’s Church say that we members can join any of the large Churches in the world, you can be sure from this description of Jesus for His Church that they are trying to deceive us into losing our salvation. We hope you believe what Jesus Christ said about His true Church than paying heed to infiltrators in the Church.

## 7. *God’s Church does God’s work* - For the seventh identifying sign of God’s Church, the true Church always does God’s work. Jesus charged His Church with a two-fold commission. One part of the commission is stated in Matthew 28:19-20: “19 Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

## This is the part of the commission that many churches participate in. They preach about Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for the forgiveness of humanity’s sins, thus making salvation possible. They make disciples this way. But even in this most churches go overboard, preaching about and honoring Jesus Christ to almost the exclusion of preaching about God the Father who is the originator of everything and deserves much greater honor. But at least other Churches participate in this part of the commission, though imperfectly, not knowing God’s purpose for man and God’s plan of salvation for all of humanity.

## But no other churches know what the second part of the gospel or good news is, which will in fact make the first part possible which is salvation for all of humanity. They don’t understand that the greatest good news or the gospel is the return of Jesus Christ to earth to establish God’s kingdom forever. Only God’s true Church has been preaching that message.

## This is the great commission that God’s Church was charged with by Jesus Christ. This is the message Jesus Christ preached as stated in Mark 1:14: “14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying , The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

## Which Church believes that message except God’s true Church? They don’t believe that Jesus Christ is literally going to return to earth and set up His earth ruling Kingdom. If they don’t believe it, how can they preach about it with passion? But God’s Church believes Jesus Christ’s words and preaches the same message that Jesus and the apostles preached about His kingdom.

## Since the time for the fulfillment of these events is right at the door, Jesus Christ in the end time had focused the message even further on the same gospel or good news. This commission is stated in Matthew 24:14: “14 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.”

## Only God’s true Church has been preaching this message since Mr. Armstrong began to preach it around 1927. Only God’s true Church believes that it has been charged with this commission and is fulfilling it with a passion. No other religious organization is doing this work. How then can current or former members allow themselves to be deceived by infiltrators that they are not the only true Church? How can you deceive yourselves into believing that you will receive salvation by leaving God’s true Church and joining other Churches. God has called us at this particular time to do His work. If you leave God’s Church, you will not be doing God’s work and will lose your salvation.

## Also only God’s Church understands that it has been charged with the watchman commission described in Ezekiel 33:3-4; that is to be a watchman to Israelite nations and the world and warn them of the impending horrendous disasters that our ways will bring on ourselves. Our ways will destroy much of the population of the earth in the coming Great Tribulation. Only God’s Church understands this commission and has been warning the world. No other religious organization is warning the world. How then can members allow themselves to be deceived into believing that they are not the only true Church, and that other Churches can also be the true churches of God and salvation can also be obtained by leaving God’s Church and joining them?

## Now we are in the very end of the end time. God has focused His message to the world even further. That focus is stated in Revelation 10:11: “11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” That commission has already been fulfilled by the author’s weekly messages and He is a member of God’s true Church.

## To fulfill this part of God’s commission, God’s Church must have a thorough understanding of prophecy. Only God’s Church has that understanding. Others talk about prophecy, but they don’t know the head or tail of it. They talk about prophecy because for them it is simply another slice of the religious market that they hope to capture and rake in more members, hence more revenues and profits. God’s true Church on the other hand does this work without any charge to the world. God’s true Church does this work for free. How then can current and former members allow themselves to be deceived into believing that they are not part of the one and only true Church of God?

## This may be a very offensive message for other Churches of the world. But offending them cannot be our main concern if it means saving genuine members, because this is their one and only chance for salvation. We know that members of other churches will get their chance for salvation later. But members of God’s Church will not get another chance.

## FALSE BELIEFS OF OTHER CHURCHES

## There is only one true Church of God that obeys God the Father and Jesus Christ in everything. One cannot obtain salvation through any other Church. That is the blunt truth according to the Bible.

## Besides differing in beliefs and doctrines from the beliefs of the true Church of God, other Churches have other false beliefs. We will not detail all their false beliefs. But here is a sampling of some others. They believe God is a Trinity: that is three beings in one, or one in three beings, or whatever other confused concept they can devise. The holy spirit of God is God’s spirit essence and not an individual entity, somehow also merged into one with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. God’s Church knows that God is a family, consisting of two Beings at present: God the Father and Jesus Christ. And the potential of human beings is to become part of that family.

## Other churches believe that human beings have an immortal soul. They simply don’t believe God when He says in Ezekiel 18:4, 20: “The soul that sins, it shall die.” They still believe Satan’s original lie told to Eve that surely she won’t die if she ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, implying that God lied to her.

## Other Churches believe that on death they will go to heaven if they qualify and spend eternity there. They simply don’t believe God when He says in Revelation 5:10: “10 And [you, that is God] has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

## Others believe in a hell where sinners roast forever. The Bible nowhere states that. The Bible does state that sinners will have their lives extinguished permanently in the Lake of Fire, as stated in Revelation 20:15: “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life [meaning did not qualify to receive eternal life] was cast into the lake of fire.” They will not be tortured for eternity, never actually dying, but their lives will be extinguished permanently.

## Other churches keep festivals such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, New Year’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Halloween and the like which have clear roots in paganism that originated more than 2,000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ and keep none of God’s seven annual holy days commanded in the Bible.

## Yes, other Churches don’t believe everything that God says, but God’s true Church believes every word of God. And other churches believe and practice what the Bible condemns as paganism that is abominable to Him, which the Church of God discards as rubbish.

## OTHER CHURCHES HOLD SOME OF THE SAME BELIEFS AS GOD’S CHURCH

## Some will argue that there are other churches out there that hold each and every one of our beliefs. There are some who call themselves the Church of God. Some interpret and preach about prophecy. Others believe in the return of Jesus Christ to set up God’s kingdom on earth. Some believe in not eating unclean meats just as God’s Church does. Some keep the Sabbath. Some even have started keeping some of the holy days. So they say that they also have the truth and salvation is possible through them as well.

## Those current and former members of God’s Church who accept this argument should discard such foolishly simple reasoning? Having one or a few correct beliefs does not make all the other beliefs of those churches right, or make those churches the true Church of God? Some may have a few correct beliefs, but then all their other beliefs are wrong. The true Church of God believes every word of God and has all the right beliefs restored through Mr. Armstrong, obtained from the Holy Bible and the Holy Bible only. It discards all beliefs that are not found in the pages of the Bible.

## Most of these other Churches started preaching one or two beliefs similar to the Church of God after Mr. Armstrong had started preaching them? They simply picked one or two of the doctrines restored through Mr. Armstrong and added them to their creeds. They don’t even believe these doctrines to be the truth. For them it is just another ploy to capture a slice of the religious market. It is probably even more diabolical than that. It is another one of Satan’s deceptions to make some of these churches look deceptively similar to God’s true Church so that some members may be induced to leave God’s true Church and join them, thus losing their chance for eternal life.

## Some members who may have encountered some cause of bitterness in God’s true Church because of their dealing with other members or ministers may have become susceptible to this deception. But those are not true Churches of God. One who leaves God’s Church and joins them will lose his or her only chance for eternal life. No one should make such a choice.

## *f) Claims that doctrines restored through Mr. Armstrong are false doctrines*

The author will not try to answer every argument that the former and current leaders of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) put forward to say that the doctrines that God restored through Mr. Armstrong are flawed or false doctrines. There are many reasons for this.

1) There is nothing new in the arguments they put forward. These arguments were put forward by dissidents in the very early Church more than 1,900 years ago and continue to be recycled.

2) The very same arguments are used by mainstream Christianity in support of its own beliefs and doctrines that are contrary to what God restored through Mr. Armstrong. The world’s encyclopedias on religion and millions of books exist expounding these arguments. There is no point in repeating those arguments which any one research on his own.

3) These arguments are being used by people we know to be the ‘synagogue of Satan’ and ‘mystery of lawlessness or iniquity’ and the man described as the ‘man of sin’. They are Satan’s Church which has infiltrated God’s Church. Their sole aim is to contradict the truth to lead people astray. From God’s description of these people their arguments are guaranteed to be diabolical deliberate lies. In case one is wondering why God’s Church allows these people to continue to fellowship with genuine members, the answer is provided by the parable of the tares in Matthew 13:24-30. We are to allow them to remain and grow in the Church, but God will finally burn them up. The only cause for which they can be put out is if they are openly causing divisions or speaking contrary to what the Church believes.

4) Raising arguments contradicting the doctrines of God’s Church is their only endless game. Answer their arguments and they will just invent more. It would be foolish to waste time trying to follow up with their arguments to answer them.

Paul the apostle provided the best approach to dealing with this problem in the course of his ministry. He acted quickly by simply separating himself and the genuine followers and seekers after the truth from such people. The story is told in Acts 19:8-9: “8 And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.”

5) Doctrines restored by an Elijah-like prophet and apostle. God knew that all religions, including Christianity would have become removed from His truth by the time the return of Jesus Christ to earth was near. That’s why God prophesied about 2,400 years ago and later by Jesus Christ that He would send one in the power of Elijah the prophet to restore all things. What has been restored is the truth. Infiltrators are simply trying to discredit the truth. Their arguments can only be cunningly devised lies.

6) Infiltrators use scriptures selectively to argue for their point of view. When one is researching an issue or determining doctrine from the Bible, all scriptures on the subject must be studied. If only some scriptures are taken into consideration, one can reach a lop-sided conclusion on God’s will on the subject. The favorite tactic of the infiltrators is to quote only certain scriptures to try to discredit a doctrine established by Mr. Armstrong. We will not try to examine all the arguments put forward by the infiltrators on all doctrines as this can be a never ending exercise in futility. But just one doctrine, “Is keeping of the Ten Commandments required?” will be used to illustrate the selective use of scriptures by the infiltrators to establish their arguments.

*Infiltrators main arguments for not keeping the Ten Commandments*

Here are some of the arguments about the validity of the Ten Commandments from the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) web site www.wcg.org from the book *Sabbath, Circumcision and Tithing*, chapter 10 and 17:

“Many Christians teach that the Ten Commandments were spoken by God himself, written in stone, and are the major expression of God’s moral law, based on the unchanging character of God and therefore permanent. But many of those same Christians say that the Fourth Commandment (that is, the Sabbath command) has been changed. However, it makes no sense to have an unchanging moral law that has a change in it.”

WCG is citing mainstream Christianity as authority to state that the Sabbath command has been changed. So the Ten Commandments cannot be an unchanging moral law because it has a change in it. But God’s true Church since it was founded in 31 A.D. has never believed that the Sabbath command was changed by God and has always kept it and has been persecuted for keeping it.

The WCG writer continues: “Paul refers to the Ten Commandments not by name, nor by the fact that God spoke them, but by the fact that they were written on stone tablets (2 Corinthians 3:7-8). He contrasts this old covenant with the new covenant, saying that the old was glorious, but the new is so much better that in comparison, the old is no longer glorious. He’s talking about the Ten Commandments! In comparison to Christ, they have no glory (verse 10).

“Further, Paul says that the Ten are "fading away" (verse 11). So we must ask, if all Ten are still in force in exactly the same way or in a stronger way, why would Paul say that they were fading away? We must reckon with the possibility that the Ten are not an eternally valid package. Something must have changed!”

Hold it right there! In quoting 2 Corinthians 3:7-10, the WCG writer emphasizes that the Ten Commandments were written on stone tablets and that the new covenant is more glorious than the old covenant. But the key part of the verses that explain what was glorious is conveniently left out of the discussion.

Here is what this scripture says in 2 Corinthians 3:6-8: “6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?” The key part of the scripture is verses 6 and 8 “6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life; and “8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit [meaning the holy spirit] be rather glorious.”

Paul was stating here that he was a minister of the New Covenant, which was not a covenant of the letter, that is keeping the letter of the law given in the Ten Commandments as written and engraven in stones, but keeping the Ten Commandments in the spirit. He was saying that the Old Covenant required keeping the Ten Commandments in the letter of the law, but it brought death because all have sinned as stated in Romans 3:23, and the wages of sin is death as stated in Romans 6:23. He said that the keeping the letter of the law brought death, but keeping it in the spirit gives life. And what kind of life: eternal life.

But Paul also says that keeping the Old Covenant, that is keeping the law in the letter was glorious. And why was it glorious? Just read the incredible physical blessings God promised the Israelites in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 for keeping the Law: His Ten Commandments, statutes and judgments. And we have seen the extent of those promised incredible physical blessings as showered on America and the British Commonwealth nations. But then Paul says in verse 8 “How shall not the ministration of the holy spirit be rather glorious.” So the New Covenant is about ministration of the holy spirit, that is giving of the holy spirit to enable spiritual Israelites or Christians to keep the law in the spirit rather than merely in the letter of the law. Keeping the law in the spirit means keeping it in the letter and intent of the law. And why would it be more glorious? Because it gives eternal life, for he said, “the spirit gives life.”

What Paul was really stating here is that the Old Covenant was about keeping the Ten Commandments as written and engraved in stones in the letter of the law. But it brought death because not one human being could keep it perfectly in the letter of the law. However, the New Covenant was about giving of the Holy Spirit to enable Christians to keep the law not only in the letter, but also in the spirit of the law, meaning in its full intent and attitude.

So what we see here is that the current leaders of the WCG and mainstream Christianity take isolated scriptures, often out of context to form their doctrines. They completely leave out other verses that would contradict their ideas. The correct way to form doctrine is to take all scriptures on a subject and study them together.

But let’s continue with more quotes from the same writer. He states:

“Hebrews 8:6 tells us that the new covenant has been established, and verse 13 tells us that the old covenant is obsolete. There has been a change of covenants. We should therefore expect a difference between the Sinai covenant and the Christian covenant. Most of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament, but the Sabbath is not. The New Testament doesn’t criticize anyone for breaking the Sabbath.

Hold it there again. The WCG writer references verses 6 and 13. Verse 6 states: “6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” So the WCG writer cites this verse to say that the new covenant is a better covenant. No quarrel with that. But he does not state why it is a better covenant. But Paul said it is a better covenant because it was established on better promises. And those better promises as compared to physical blessings of the Old Covenant were eternal life and promise of being heirs of the universe as stated in Revelation 21:7 and be rulers, that is kings and priest with Jesus Christ on earth as stated in Revelation 1:6 and 5:10.

Then the writer cited verse 13 of Hebrews 8 to prove that the Old Covenant is obsolete. The verse states: “13 In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” The conclusion drawn by the WCG is that the Old Covenant which included the Ten Commandments is obsolete. And how do they say the Old Covenant is obsolete? The writer continues: “…there is a fundamental change in the way people relate to God. The old way is a written law that condemns people to death. The new way is the Holy Spirit, and this new way brings forgiveness and life. The Spirit leads us to obey God, but this is a fundamentally different relationship, a different basis of relating to God.

“There is some basic continuity between the old covenant and the new. Most of the Ten Commandments are quoted with approval in the New Testament. Those commands reflect aspects of God’s law that were in effect long before Sinai — from the beginning. One commandment, however, is not repeated in the New — the Sabbath command. It was a ceremonial law, instituted for a temporary time period. This is where the Ten have faded.

“In other words, we do not look to the stone tablets as the standard of Christian living. Every moral law within the Ten Commandments is also found outside of the Ten Commandments, and one of the Ten has been set aside in the New Testament. The Ten Commandments are neither sufficient nor necessary for Christian behavior.”

What then is the ethical standard suggested by the WCG? The writer concludes: “Christians have a better ethical standard in the New Testament — a bigger body of literature with better ethical balance. We have the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.”

This is the same conclusion reached by mainstream Christianity. They say that Christians are not required to keep the Ten Commandments because they are the Ten Commandments. They are instead required to live by what Jesus Christ and the apostles taught, that is only the writings of the New Testament. That to them is the New Covenant.

But now read what Paul wrote between verses 6 and 13 of Hebrews which the WCG writer conveniently leave out: “7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

So what does Paul say the New Covenant is? Verse 10 says: “…this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” The New Covenant was not about doing away with the Law, including the Ten Commandments, but putting the laws (including the Ten Commandments) into their mind, and writing them in their hearts.” In the New Covenant, the Law is not done away as mainstream Christianity, and now the current leadership of the WCG teaches, but the Law is put into the hearts and minds of the converts or Christians. Paul here was quoting Jeremiah 31:33.

Ezekiel the prophet expanded more on the New Covenant in Ezekiel 36:26-27: “26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

God through the prophet Ezekiel said that He would give the people a new spirit, His holy spirit, which would mean giving them a heart of flesh in place of their stony hard heart. The addition of the holy spirit will enable God’s law to be written in their hearts and minds, enabling them to walk in God’s statutes and judgments. In addition, Paul said, God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will He remember no more.

Mainstream Christianity thus misunderstands what the New Covenant is all about. And the current WCG leadership is engaged in diabolic attempts to deceive members of God’s true Church with the same arguments. The New Covenant is definitely not about making the Law of God, including the Ten Commandments (which include the Sabbath command) as contained in the Old Covenant, obsolete. The New Covenant is about ministration of the Holy Spirit as stated in 2 Corinthians 3:8. It means God putting His holy spirit within human beings to change their hard stony hearts into hearts of flesh, enabling God’s Law (the same Ten Commandments written on tablets of stone) to be written into their hearts and minds. Writing God’s laws into hearts and minds means internalizing them. This is also implied by Hebrews 8:11: “11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” In addition, the power of God’s holy spirit will enable them to keep God’s commandments, and walk in His statutes and judgments. And the New Covenant is about God being merciful to their unrighteousness, and forgiving their sins and their iniquities as stated in 2 Corinthians 3:12, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Because the New Covenant is in effect, it means there was a weakness in the Sinai or Old Covenant. UCG booklet titled *The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God’s Law*? P. 34 states:

“What was the problem with the Sinai Covenant? Most people assume that the problem was in the laws God gave to Israel, that they were flawed and that Jesus Christ came to abolish or annul them. But does this square with the Scriptures?

“Hebrews 8:7 tells us that yes, there was a flaw with that covenant: "For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another" (NIV).

“So where was the problem? The next verse tells us: "But God found fault with the people and said: 'The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah'" (verse 8, NIV).

“The primary weakness of the Sinai Covenant was not in its laws but in the people's lack of a willing heart to obey them. Because they were not given the Holy Spirit, Israel's citizens were incapable of understanding and performing the full intent and purpose of God's teachings.

Here is how Paul summarizes that fault: "But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

The people of ancient Israel, like most people today, simply could not grasp the full spiritual value of the teachings God gave through Moses. The reason is plain: "Man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned [meaning discerned with the help of God’s holy spirit]" (1 Corinthians 2:14, NIV).

So under the terms of the New Covenant, God gives us a new spirit, His holy spirit, that enables us to obey His laws, as He promised in Ezekiel 11:19-20: "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God."

Mainstream Christianity and infiltrators in God’s Church argue that Jesus did away with the Law. They say that He brought a new teaching differing considerably from the instructions of the Old Testament. The common view is that the teachings of Christ in the New Testament annulled and replaced the teachings of the Old Testament. But Jesus plainly explained His views on the Law in the sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:17-28 (NKJV): “17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets ["The Law and the Prophets" was a term commonly used for the Old Testament Scriptures; compare Matthew 7:12]. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

What did Jesus mean when He talked about fulfilling the law?

Many have twisted the meaning of the term “fulfilling the law.” Some say that since Jesus said He would fulfill the law, we no longer need to keep it. Another view of "fulfilling the law" is that Jesus "filled full" what was lacking in the law—that is, He completed it, partly canceling it and partly adding to it, forming what is sometimes referred to as "Christ's law" or "New Testament teaching." They imply that the New Testament brought a change in the requirements for salvation and that the laws given in the Old Testament are obsolete. Is this what Jesus meant by “fulfilling the Law?”

The Greek word *pleroo*, translated "fulfill" in Matthew 5:17, means "to make full, to fill, to fill up . . . to fill to the full" or "to render full, i.e. to complete" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 2002, Strong's number 4137).

In other words, Jesus said He came to complete the law and make it perfect by showing the spiritual intent and application of God's law.

Jesus continued in Matthew 5:18-19: “18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus clearly said that we should not even think that He came to destroy the Law, but rather to fulfill it. Then Jesus proceeded to clarify what He meant by fulfilling the law by showing the spiritual intent of some of the Ten Commandments.

“21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. 27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

We hope you can now see how infiltrators in God’s Church use cunningly devised lies to try to deceive genuine members into not believing the truths God restored to His Church through Mr. Armstrong and will reject their false arguments.

**CHAPTER 10**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

***Due to Splits in God’s Church***

One of the more difficult problems members have faced since Mr. Armstrong passed away is the splits in the Church. They were forced into making a decision about whether to stay with the Worldwide Church of God, or join one of the Churches that had split off from the WCG. Each and every one, including ministers was forced to make that choice. The author had to make that choice himself.

Presently a large number of members still continue to fellowship with the WCG, even though its current leadership has changed almost every doctrine that was restored through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Among the churches that have split off from the WCG there are five relatively large ones: The United Church of God (UCG), Church of God, a Worldwide Association (COGWA) which split off from the UCG, the Living Church of God (LCG), the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) and the Restored Church of God (RCG). Then there are many smaller groups following a pastor or two and may number only a little above one or two hundred members or well below a hundred members.

Some may have made their choice based on where their friends went. Others followed their favorite pastor. Others may have done their own analysis and joined one of the Churches based on their own criteria. Still others chose to continue fellowshipping with the WCG despite all the changes. Some of them, particularly the tares gladly accepted the changes. Many others were unable to decide and chose to stop attending Church altogether. Some of them may still be sitting on the fence, waiting for God to show them the way, even 28 years after Mr. Armstrong’s death, while others simply became disillusioned, gave up all their beliefs and went out into the world. They joined mainstream Christianity’s Churches or stopped attending Church altogether.

The author, being a lay member went through the gut-wrenching decision-making process himself, with plenty of pleading with God to take care of the leadership problem at the WCG or guide him to make the right decision. If you are still undecided, or are not sure about your decision, you may find his experiences useful in helping you make a decision.

Mr. Armstrong passed away on January 16, 1986. Around March-April of 2001 the author stopped attending services with WCG altogether and had completely come out of it. He has wondered why it took him 15 long years to come out of the WCG. Here are the reasons:

1) He felt he did not have the necessary background to conduct thorough research into Church doctrines on his own like ministers could and was afraid of making errors in interpretation of the scriptures which could lead to making the wrong decision. So even for a life and death question such as “Should I leave the Church that God put me in because it has strayed from the path, or should I wait for God to intervene and correct the Church?” he did not try to diligently find the answers on his own. Later he decided to put his hand to the plough and start conducting his own research and realized how easy it was with various Bible research helps such as concordances, dictionaries and commentaries freely available on the Internet. Lesson learnt was that there is no substitute for conducting one’s own Bible research. That decision cannot be left to a minister, evangelist or even the Pastor General of the Church. And it is quite easy with all the helps available on the Internet.

2) The second important reason why it took him so long to leave the WCG was that we all believe that Jesus Christ is the true head of the Church. He is always in charge and is capable of protecting His Church from Satan’s attacks. The author believed that if anything went wrong with the Church, Jesus Christ would set it right in His own way and in His own time. Our past experiences had borne this out. In Mr. Armstrong’s time dissidents on two or three occasions (in the early and late 1970s) tried to divide and destroy the Church. In 1979 the State of California put the Church in receivership. But Jesus Christ protected the Church under Mr. Armstrong’s able leadership and it weathered all the storms. So he felt that he had to do nothing, have faith, simply stay put in the WCG and God would take care of everything. So he stayed despite all the disturbing changes.

3) Third reason why the author remained with WCG was that Joseph W. Tkach Sr. had been appointed head of the Church by Mr. Armstrong himself. Surely he thought Jesus Christ had personally chosen him carefully to be the head of the Church. There was no reason for him to suspect Tkach Sr of having any malicious hidden agenda against the Church. He did not even dream that he could be Satan’s agent who had infiltrated the Church. The author believed that if Jesus Christ found fault with his leadership, He would take care of it by correcting him, or even removing him as head of the Church. Only later did he learn that the appointment of Satan’s agent as head of the Church fulfilled an important prophecy in order to try the faith of Church members and their ability to see through deception with prayer to God for help.

4) The fourth important reason he was deceived for so long was that the Tkaches and their helpers did a masterful job of deceiving lay members in the Church. The deception was so well executed that many members woke up late to what had really happened. All the Church doctrines and practices had been dismantled brick by brick, and till April 2,000, many lay members still did not believe that the changes had genuinely taken place.

After discussions with other UCG members and analyzing the situation for many years, the author has discovered how the Tkaches (Tkach Sr and Tkach Jr) carried out their hidden agenda to dismantle all the doctrines and practices of the Church and destroy its work of preaching the gospel (the good news of the soon coming Kingdom of God) to the whole world as a witness (Matthew 24:14). The author was deceived for so long because he did not know the full facts about what was really going on in different WCG congregations around the United States and Canada, with the ministry, and at different levels of the Church. The full facts were kept carefully hidden from large numbers of lay members. Only recently have we learnt that Satan and the demons micromanage the whole process, and their agents obey them without question. That is why they are able to carry out their diabolical schemes in great secrecy, before their victims realize what is happening. Satan is a master of surprises. That is also the reason the German nation is always able to spring surprises on their enemies in times of war.

In the Church’s case, the Tkaches started the process of changing the doctrines of the Church by first slightly compromising with judgments made by Mr. Armstrong on some aspects of Christian conduct. Then they started tampering with some explanations that Mr. Armstrong had provided for some doctrines without changing the doctrines. It was explained as new revelation or understanding the Church had been given by God.

Then they stopped offering the booklets Mr. Armstrong had authored to the public stating that there were errors in them, hence they were obsolete and needed to be updated. Then in early 1988, in just two years after Mr. Armstrong’s death, the most important book Mr. Armstrong had authored, *Mystery of the Ages* was discontinued. They said that the book contained some errors.

While all these changes were being made, some Church members who realized early what was happening and where this might lead to started accusing the Tkaches of making changes to the Church’s doctrines. The Tkaches simply denied that these were changes with words such as “Changes? What changes? There are no changes.” The Church was still keeping the Sabbath and God’s seven annual holy days. So lay members like the author continued to give Tkach Sr the benefit of doubt thinking that if there was something wrong with the leadership of Joseph Tkach Sr, Jesus Christ would take care of it,. He was not unduly alarmed. He also believed that the pastor general of the Church had the authority to change doctrines as long as the changes were based on the Bible. Only later did he learn that only an apostle can establish doctrine and Tkach sr was not appointed an apostle though he had repeatedly requested Mr. Armstrong to add that title to his appointment. Mr. Armstrong had refused by saying God had not showed him that he should appoint him as an apostle. At that time the author had also not understood the deep meaning of the scripture that the Elijah to come would “restore all things.” If all things have been restored by him then they should not be changed. In addition, he had not had the depth of experience till that time to understand how diabolically cunning Satan and the demons are to use scriptures to deceive and to justify changes to true doctrines or beliefs. This is the kind of satanic craftiness that was at work in the hands of the Tkaches.

By December 1994, all the important teachings of the Church had been done away with. These included teachings on clean and unclean meats, tithing, observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, observance of the biblical holy days and keeping God’s law. On December 17, 1994, Joseph Tkach Sr. gave a landmark sermon in which he openly acknowledged that the changes introduced were new Church doctrine, leaving no doubt in the minds of members that the changes were real. Most of the time before this, the Tkaches and those with them had been denying before the congregations that there were any changes. But after changing all the doctrines, they told everyone that the changes were new doctrine.

Some ministers and members left WCG in 1990 and formed the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG). Another large group left in 1993 and formed the Global Church of God, out of which the present Living Church of God (LCG) emerged. Then finally, as a result of the sermon given by Joseph Tkach Sr., a very large group of ministers and members left the WCG in early 1995 to form the United Church of God (UCG).

By 1995, the changes were very disturbing to the author because they involved changing the Church’s fundamental beliefs that had answered all his questions about life to his entire satisfaction in his original research. But he still remained a loyal member of the WCG, because we could still practice our religion exactly the way we had done it when Mr. Armstrong was the head of the Church. His congregation still met and worshipped on the Sabbath and kept all the holy days. Sermons were still preached on the meaning of the holy days which picture God’s plan of salvation for mankind. In his Church members were told that they could still continue practicing and living the way Mr. Armstrong taught, because they were important traditions. But all these doctrines and practices were no longer mandatory.

The author continued to practice everything taught by Mr. Armstrong without any hindrance. During all this time he was totally unaware that ministers of the Church had been forced to resign or were disfellowshipped for not accepting the changes. They still remained loyal to what Mr. Armstrong taught. WCG leadership deceived lay members by telling them that the leaders of the groups that had separated were “disgruntled dissidents” who left because of personal ambitions. They wanted to be leaders of their own organizations. They said a few had inherited money and wanted to form their own Church. Mr. Gerald R. Flurry, pastor general of the Philadelphia Church of God was one of those named. These were bold faced lies. But lay members had no reason to believe they were lies.

The Tkaches strategy was to tell different levels of the Church different things. They were forcing ministers to accept, practice and teach all the changed doctrines. But lay members could practice whatever they liked: either practice the way taught by Mr. Armstrong, or live by the new doctrines. The hoped benefit of this strategy was to force ministers to teach the new way so that more and more lay members would eventually accept the changes.

But over the years it was getting more and more difficult to sit at church services each week, because the messages no longer contained strong spiritual food. Then on April 22, 2000, the pastor of the author’s congregation preached a sermon that proverbially ‘broke the camel’s back.’ It was an outrageous sermon. He said that the congregation might be in a quandary and has a challenge in believing all the things written about Jesus Christ in the gospels, because we are more than 1,900 years removed from the events. A person who doubts whether Jesus was a real person, should not even call himself a Christian. This sermon finally convinced him that there indeed had been a hidden agenda to lead the Church astray. Before this he was reluctant to believe that there was a hidden agenda. He had no reason to believe that the Tkaches could be Germans masquerading around as Americans of Russian descent. He decided that he had to explore other avenues than continue attending the WCG.

Now he faced the question: “Which one of the different organization that had split off from the WCG should he start attending. He first started attending holy day services with the UCG. It was refreshing to hear the meaning of the holy days explained again in depth. But he continued attending regular weekly services with the WCG. He still thought that God had put him in the WCG and it was His Church and He would correct it in His own time. But he was finding the situation becoming hopeless in the WCG day by day. So he started attending regular Sabbath services with the UCG in the morning, but attended WCG in the afternoon. However, the situation in the WCG got only worse and he gave up attending the WCG altogether. He also attended a few weeks with the Living Church of God. Then he attended a few months with the Philadelphia Church of God. He found that the UCG, the LCG and the PCG all adhered to almost everything that Mr. Armstrong taught. After about a year and a half of this trial and error he finally settled down in the UCG around October 2001.

*Lessons Learned*

Since leaving the WCG, the author has shared his experiences with other lay members in the WCG, the LCG, the PCG and the UCG. He has read and reread the writings of Mr. Gerald R. Flurry, the pastor general of the PCG and a book published by his son Stephen Flurry about the split of the PCG from the WCG. He has also gained a much better understanding of Bible prophecy related to the Church. From this research and his experiences he has learnt some valuable lessons which can help members of God’s Church avoid deception in the future and provide guidance in making decisions. These include:

a) *Doctrines Settled*

God prophesied and in fulfillment of that prophecy sent an Elijah-like prophet and an apostle to restore doctrines to His Church. No pastor general of God’s Church (like the Tkaches) or any other leader has the authority to change them. This is the greatest safeguard God has provided to members of His Church in the end time to spot attempts at deception.

A word of caution is needed though. The fact that doctrines cannot be changed does not mean nothing can ever be changed in administering the Church. Members need to understand the difference between changes in doctrines and changes in administrative decision based on different circumstances. Doctrines are beliefs based on what is revealed in the Bible and do not change because of circumstances. For example, who or what God is, God’s purpose for man, God’s plan of salvation for mankind, the three resurrections, the tithing law, keeping the Sabbath day holy and the seven annual holy days, who Satan is, the purpose of Jesus’ sacrifice, water baptism, God’s food laws are all doctrines that do not change due to man’s circumstances. These are doctrines that cannot be changed.

But here are some examples that may require judgments based on circumstances. Different countries have different tax rates. Mr. Armstrong had to make judgments regarding payment of tithes. For example, in some countries, the tax rates on the rich were as high as above 90%. It would be impossible for such a person to pay the first, second and third tithes on the gross income, because he would not be able to pay even his taxes and would be put in prison. Clearly tithing is a doctrine that cannot be changed. But different tax laws in different countries would necessitate making judgments about how the tithing laws would be administered.

In a similar way, third tithe is a doctrine, but it has to be administered differently in different countries. In countries like the USA and other European countries with high level of welfare programs, governments already tax citizens to provide services and programs for the poor which should be covered by the third tithe. In such situations, a full third tithe should not be required. But if such a judgment is made, some may interpret it as the Church getting off track and leave the Church. They will cause the “restoration of all doctrines” in the Church to become a stumbling block for them.

Other issues that require similar judgments may include keeping the 2nd tithe by ministers in the Church. These are not changes in doctrines, but changes in judgments based on different circumstances. Judgments different from those made by Mr. Armstrong may be required due to different circumstances.

The Bible does record an example of such changes. In the Church conference mentioned in Acts 15, in verse 29 the apostles wrote to the Gentile churches that they should “abstain from meats offered to idols.” But in 1 Corinthians 10:25 Paul made a slightly different judgment stating: “25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake…” Paul said that the Christian did not need to make inquiries whether the meat had been sacrificed to idols or not before buying it.

Those Church members who interpret such changes as changes in doctrines and use that as a reason for leaving the Church will find that they have jumped off the ship that was taking them to their destination: the Kingdom of God. Please don’t allow yourselves to stumble at this stumbling block though Satan and the demons will do their utmost to use it to cause some to stumble.

How then does one decide if the changes made by the leader are acceptable or not? First, if these are changes to basic doctrines that God restored through Mr. Armstrong, then the leader is leading the Church astray. Second, if the leader is allowing messages about compromises with the doctrines to be preached, even though members may be allowed to practice the old way, then he is allowing Satan to enter in and is leading the Church astray. Thirdly, if different judgments about certain issues need to be made based on circumstances, these must be very few and far in between. With these safeguards, members of the Church should be able to avoid any issue or change becoming a stumbling block.

*b) Do we stay in the parent Church if it has gone astray?*

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons the author stayed so long in the WCG was that he believed God had put him in His Church; He was the head of it and would take care of everything as it went astray. That belief was difficult to shake because God had protected His Church from Satan’s attacks in the past through dissidents when Mr. Armstrong was in-charge. Many lay members relied on that precedent.

Where they made the mistake, and probably many still in the WCG still do, was that in addition to experiences during our own times, God has had the Church’s experiences written down in the scriptures. The author should have conducted research from the Bible to find the answer. He did not conduct his own research, but found the answers from the writings of Mr. Gerald R. Flurry, pastor general of the PCG.

Here then is what the author discovered about making these decisions. In the early Church, leaders from within the Church were arising and taking over the Churches and disfellowshipping members who remained loyal to what the apostles taught. John records one such example in his third epistle, 3 John 9-10: “9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.”

Here Diotrephes had taken over at least one Church area and had started to put genuine members out of the Church. John’s response was not to let the members try to fellowship with the Churches Satan’s agents had taken over, but to separate from them. In our modern case, the Tkaches and their fellows have taken over our former Church organization, the Worldwide Church of God. Following John’s example, it is right and a duty in God’s sight to separate from those who are no longer obeying Him and following His way of life. Hence a true Christian should separate himself from the organization that is no longer obeying God.

Then there is the prophecy about the seven Churches in Revelation. John explains in John 1:20 that the seven Churches are represented by seven lampstands or candlesticks. Verse 13 states: “13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.” This means that Jesus Christ is in the midst of all eras of His Church. God also says in Revelation 2:5 about the Ephesus era of the Church: “…repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. “

God here said that if the Church does not repent, He removes the lampstand from that Church, meaning Jesus Christ removes Himself from the midst of that Church. So if the WCG has gone astray and has not repented, Jesus Christ is no longer in the midst of that Church. This means that genuine members who still follow and seek to follow God need to come out of the original Church in the midst of which Jesus Christ no longer dwells.

Thus when the Church is going astray, it is the duty of the loyal members to separate themselves from the organization and set up a Church wholly dedicated to following and serving God by doing His work of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God and keeping all the truths restored through Mr. Armstrong.

*c) Partial failure of genuine ministers to warn members*

The way ministers in God’s Church conducted themselves led to some genuine members being left out of the loop about the warning that the Tkaches and their fellows were leading the Church astray, and showing from the Bible what the right course of action for members should be.

One major reason they did not talk to all members was job safety. They already knew how the Tkaches dealt with Mr. Gerald Flurry. When Mr. Flurry came to the conclusion that the Church was turning Laodicean, he shared his ideas only with three local elders and deacons in his congregations. The Tkaches were informed within a day and it led to Mr. Flurry and his assistant John Amos being summoned to headquarters and fired. So genuine ministers knew that they would be fired immediately if they spoke to many members against what the Tkaches were doing, because many were loyal to the Tkaches and their fellows.

The author can only imagine how the process would have worked in different congregations. Some ministers felt that it was probably too risky to discuss the matter with any member and say anything against the Tkaches. So they simply kept quiet. Some did not want to compromise with God’s way. So they had no choice but to leave the WCG. They left quietly. Some of them were close to retirement and simply retired. Others went on to other professions. Some genuine ministers who did not accept the changes, decided to stay with the WCG nevertheless to keep their jobs, leaving much of the preaching to those of their junior ministers or local elders more enthusiastic about the changes. But on occasion they had to teach the changes sometimes. Most are probably still with the WCG.

A few genuine ministers who were not tares may actually have compromised with the changes, accepted them and begun teaching them. These ministers should still be in the WCG. Hundreds who argued against the changes and refused to accept and teach them were summarily dismissed.

Ministers had personal friendships with other fellow ministers as well as lay members. They must have been holding discussions about the changes among themselves. Then lay members may also have been asking questions about the changes from their ministers. Thus there must have been communications at many levels in the WCG about the changes being foisted. All these discussions were taking place under the ever present threat of being fired for ministers and being disfellowshipped from the WCG for lay members. Just the threat of being disfellowshipped is a very traumatic experience for members of God’s Church because it indicates an inability to be ruled. And that could lead to loss of eternal life because God will not have anyone in His kingdom who He cannot rule. The author is speaking from experience in this regard. He was temporarily disfellowshipped three times from the Church.

Because of this ever present danger of being fired or disfellowshipped, ministers and lay members were reluctant to discuss the issues openly and deeply with everyone. They discussed matters only with those they could trust completely. As a result many people were left out of the loop, the author being one of them.

This caution on the part of the ministers and lay members to not share their thoughts on the changes with every one was probably a wise choice. Despite all these cautions, Satan has been able to still plant many tares in the ministry and lay membership in the Churches that have separated from the WCG. They still fellowship with us.

The result of all this caution and being left out of the loop has been that many were left to sort out the issues themselves. And many were unable to do so. They were disappointed with the splits, probably lost their faith in God and came to believe that all that Mr. Armstrong taught about the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the setting up of God’s kingdom and their being rulers in it was unreal. To them it seemed that Jesus Christ was not in charge of their Church. So they gave up their faith and stopped attending Church altogether. Some of them felt they could join any Church and did so, since all that seems to matter was being good to fellow man. That has been the biggest tragedy resulting from many members being left out of the loop.

Question then is: Could the Church as a whole have done a better job, and looked out for all other members? The author believes the answer is yes. The way we could have done a much better job is by taking action after genuine ministers and members had split off from the WCG. They should have pursued the members still attending WCG and those who stopped attending Church altogether.

After various Churches such as the PCG, the LCG and the UCG had been organized, and while he was still attending the WCG, the author was sounded out a few times. But nobody invited him to discuss the issues in depth, and most important, to explain from the Bible why it was the right thing to do and a duty to leave the WCG and fellowship with a Church that had come out of it. Showing from the scriptures that leaving the WCG was what God expected of us would have convinced him more than anything else.

Among all the Churches that came out of the WCG, only one made a serious attempt to reach out to most lay members: the PCG. But because of its limited membership it was unable to reach out to all members. The PCG sent out Mr. Flurry’s book, *Malachi’s Message* that explained the biblical reasons why we should leave the WCG, to as many WCG members as it could. But it did not reach all former WCG members.

The author was sent a copy of *Malachi’s Message* and a couple of other booklets on the major prophets in late 1996 and early 1997. But at that time he was still favorably disposed towards the WCG. Though most of the changes had taken place, in his congregation members were still told that the changes were not mandatory and we had important traditions such as the Sabbath, and the holy days that we should and could keep if we wanted to. And we did keep them all at that time.

There were other very important reasons why he did not respond to *Malachi’s Message* at that time. The infiltrator ministers in the WCG had done a masterly job of making the author unfavorably disposed towards Mr. Gerald Flurry with lies. When Mr. Flurry started the PCG, we were told that he had inherited some money and now wanted to run the show. So he had started his own organization to satisfy his lust for power. Later the author learnt that was a complete fabrication. We were told that the right thing for him to do would be to build his own membership from the world rather than to pry away members from the WCG. At that time the author had no idea from Bible prophecy that the main purpose of Mr. Flurry’s ministry was to get the Church back on track. So the main purpose of his ministry was to reach WCG members and ministers and not the world. He had to urge the members and ministers to leave the WCG.

At the time when the author was still favorably disposed towards the WCG, Mr. Flurry’s message in *Malachi’s Message* was too strong to accept for it was very very critical of the WCG leadership and the ministry. He saw it as a mere attempt to build his own membership as charged by the WCG leadership, and not to lead the Church to repentance. After reading Mr. Flurry’s booklets he literally threw them in the trash bin. He felt that the warning given by WCG ministers to not read dissident literature had been correct. But the message was backed up by the scriptures and shook him. He retrieved the booklets from the trash bin and kept them in case he ever needed to read them later. And he did read the retrieved copies again later.

This experience has taught the author how incredible the power of Satan and the demons to deceive is. He was reached with the right message, but through lies he had been unfavorably predisposed towards the message and the messenger Mr. Flurry. So he rejected the message initially. This should convince us the absolutely critical need to rely upon God to see through Satan’s deceptions. We know that Satan and the demons are no match for God. So we should not be trembling at Satan’s ability to deceive. We should live our lives with confidence in the belief that if we ask God in sincere prayer prayer to help us sort out such issues, God will without fail guide us and provide us the answers. And God may have had a purpose in allowing the author to be deceived for 15 long years and remain in the WCG. He has allowed him to become acquainted with many of Satan’s tactics in deceiving us. However, he still remains aware that Satan and the demons can spring stunning surprises on us. So we always need to be on guard and watch, and remain close to God and continually seek His help to sort through things when our faith is tried. It has been an important experience for the Church to fulfill the watchman’s role (Ezekiel 3, 33).

We are facing very powerful enemies in Satan, the demons and their human agents. But the powers with us are infinitely greater. And we need to always keep in mind the safeguards God has given us.

The first safeguard is that God has not allowed His top leaders in the Church that He has appointed by prophecy to go astray. The Church will have two genuine leaders close to the Great Tribulation who will be prophets, and are called His two witnesses in Revelation 11. They will begin their three and a half year long witness a few months before the Tribulation begins. The Church will be able to look to them for guidance.

The second safeguard is that the true doctrines have already been restored to the Church through Mr. Armstrong. If we find some leaders or ministers preaching the forsaking of them, we should be able to recognize them as deceivers. But here we must understand the critical difference between doctrines and judgments made on Christian living issues. Doctrines do not need to be changed, but changes in administrative judgments may become necessary due to changed living conditions and circumstances.

The third safeguard is that from prophecy we know that deception and another falling away just before and during the Great Tribulation is coming due to the miracles worked by the false prophet, the pope of the Roman Church. So we should always be on guard against it. Forewarned is forearmed.

The fourth safeguard is that from Bible prophecy, we know the precise sequence of key end time events. We should always keep up to date with our understanding of prophecy. In this regard one should have a clear understanding of the sequence of end time events as pictured by the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days mentioned in Daniel 12.

For Israel (that is America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel) and the world these days mean that after the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet is set up (probably an idol or altar on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem), Jewish sacrifices stopped and the pope offers some sort of sacrifice of his own, the so-called “Holy Roman Empire” headed by Germany and the pope declares war on the American/British/Jewish (ABJ) alliance. The ABJ Alliance is defeated within 30 days and the 1,260 days of the Great Tribulation begins. When the Tribulation ends at the intervention of Jesus Christ, we come to the end of 1290 days. Then within 45 days all the ABJ slaves will be found and rescued, bringing us to the end of 1335 days.

For God’s Church, these days begin with the signal to flee from the world and be gathered in one place. The Philadelphians in the Church will have 45 days to gather at one place from around the world, probably in Jerusalem. When the Holy Roman Empire begins its attack on the ABJ alliance, the Church will have 30 days to flee to the place of safety, bringing us to the end of 75 days. Then the Church will be in the place of safety for 1260 days for a total of 1335 days.

In hindsight the author feels that loyal ministers and leaders should have made attempts to contact members to warn them of the dangerous path that the Tkaches were leading the Church to. But there is also the possibility that many ministers had not sorted out all the issues themselves. The author hopes that we have learnt from this experience and sorted out all such issues for future guidance when the Church is faced with similar issues. This book is an attempt to document this perspective of Church history for everyone to learn from.

*d) Lessons from the Sardis era of God’s Church* – As already mentioned, the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 are a prophecy about the history of God’s Church from its inception in 31 A.D. in seven successive eras till the return of Jesus Christ. The seven Churches mentioned are not historical accounts of the seven Churches. The book of Revelation is a prophecy about the future and not a book of past history. The last two eras are pictured passing through the end time Tribulation. That at the time of John was prophecy for the future and not past history. Prophecies about the Philadelphia era starting with and ending with Mr. Armstrong's ministry, and his passing away before the return of Jesus Christ indicates another era would follow. This indicates that these seven Churches are history of the Church foretold in seven successive eras.

Some very important lessons can be learned from the Sardis era that just preceded the Philadelphia era which was founded by the preaching of Mr. Armstrong. The author has researched the history of that Church in some detail, particularly from the time Mr. Armstrong started fellowshipping with them, and after he separated from them and founded the Philadelphia era of God’s Church. Remnants of that Church still exist. They are mainly the descendants of tares in that era of the Church and not genuine members. A very few still could be genuine members. Jesus Christ’s message to that Church in Revelation 3:1-6 is very instructive.

As with all eras of God’s Church, the Sardis era was also heavily infiltrated by Satan’s agents at all levels. Many were in leadership positions. Infiltration into an era of God’s Church starts early to try and destroy it in its infancy. But a dedicated leader is able to build the era. Later after a generation or so as God’s Church grows, and the children of the original converts begin to take their religion for granted and are not fervent, Satan’s agents gain strength, sow discord by questioning the correctness of some beliefs or doctrines.

History of the Sardis era of God’s Church shows that for centuries the children continued in their parents’ faith. But falling away from that Church began with the change of name from the Church of God to Seventh day Baptists in Britain and later in America the Sabbath keeping churches adopted the same name. However, few small Sabbath keeping congregations rejected this change and eventually organized themselves into a general conference and adopted the name Church of God (Seventh Day).In so doing they adopted the governance structure of a General Conference that prevailed in the Protestant churches of their day and still prevails today. The next 70 year history of that Church proved that is not God’s governance structure.

Their governance structure is mentioned briefly in Volume 1 of Mr. Armstrong’s autobiography (copy can be obtained free of charge from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org). Mr. Armstrong states on p.411: “The concept of church government seemed to be that lay members should be in the offices of authority. Ministers were to be employed, and under orders from the lay members. This is essentially the concept of what we call democracy: government from the bottom up. Those being governed dictate who shall be their rulers and how their rulers shall rule them.”

The Church was organized as a General Conference whose leaders were elected. Tithes were paid into the General Conference which were used to pay ministers and meet the expenses for evangelistic efforts and to support the publishing of the Church’s magazine, Bible study program and other programs of instruction for children. But some regions that did not like how the leaders at the General Conference were running the Church had organized themselves into State Conferences and kept their tithes and offerings locally for their own evangelistic efforts. Mr. Armstrong mentions this when he participated in the business meeting as a guest for the purpose of organizing the Oregon State Conference. He mentions on p. 414: “These brethren realized that the Stanberry [headquarters] church was not getting the Gospel to the world with power. In this area the church was virtually impotent. The Oregon brethren were anxious to “get the work going.”

This obviously reduced the funds at the disposal of the central General Conference and diluted its efforts at evangelization in order to make more converts. The state conferences essentially governed themselves, even having the authority to appoint their own ministers, but still continued to be loosely affiliated with the headquarters General Conference. In effect, however, different state conferences constituted splits from the headquarters Church. But they could tap headquarters for ministers if needed by agreeing to pay the minister’s salary.

The Church did not have strong central authority with one man in charge. Because the headquarters leaders of the General Conference were elected there was a great deal of politicking involved. This made the task of the infiltrators easier to cause divisions within the Church. Their age-old tactics have been to cause divisions by constantly arguing against some Church doctrine or another or established practices. They always want to keep the pot roiling. If one issue is settled, they will soon raise other issues to debate and use to try to divide the Church. They want to force the Church to accept doctrines contrary to the truth of the scriptures. Their ultimate goal is always to take over the leadership of the Church and then force the Church to adopt false doctrines, force the ministers to preach those doctrines and the members to live by them. Thus the Church would cease to be God’s Church as it would no longer be obeying Him. It would in effect be taken over by Satan, and those members who accept the changes in effect would reject Christ and lose their only chance for eternal life. To remain faithful to God and endure to the end, members must remain loyal to the truth and would have to come out of the original Church and form a different organization.

Jesus’s description of the Sardis era of God’s Church is given in Revelation 3:1-6: “1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Jesus’s description of the Sardis era aptly fits what was going on in God’s Church before the Philadelphia era was founded by the preaching of Mr. Armstrong. The Church was more dead than alive in terms of doing God’s work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Even the truth in terms of the true doctrines was ready to die and the Church was admonished to repent and strengthen them. Those who did not do so would be caught unawares as by a thief in the night and would lose their chance to be written in the Book of Life and receive eternal life. Jesus Christ catching the members as a thief in the night may also refer to some genuine members still existing at the return of Jesus Christ.

The author has read a history of the Sardis era of the Church after the Philadelphia era had already been in existence for nearly 4 decades. There was constant infighting and arguing over one doctrine or another and attempts by infiltrators to take over the Church through the election process. Finally they succeeded in doing so. Few members who still wanted to retain the true doctrines and not compromise with the changes had to ultimately form smaller organizations. In some cases, presumably just single families kept the true faith to the end by themselves, not having or knowing a Church congregation to fellowship with. All others that they worshipped with had departed from the faith. These older members died in the faith, but children of most apparently drifted into the world. Only a tiny few have remained faithful still. These are the ones Jesus Christ commends in Revelation 3:4: “4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” They never compromised with the truth and lived by it to the end of their lives, even if all others around them had compromised. They continued in the truth by themselves as individuals or only in their own family. There are still congregations as well as a central organization that claim to be continuation of that Church. But the author believes it consists almost entirely of descendants of the infiltrators who had taken over the Church.

When the author still fellowshipped with the WCG around 1998, attempts were being made by its pastor general Joseph Tkach Jr and others to possibly combine with the Church of God (Seventh Day) congregations. As usual, the leader of that Church said that they agreed with all the doctrines of the WCG but not this one or that one. That left no doubt in his mind that the present Church of God (Seventh Day) is made almost entirely of descendants of infiltrators in the Church.

So the *first lesson* from the Sardis era is that in the end time God wants an individual to remain loyal to the truth that he or she has received, no matter what the circumstances and no matter if all others in just his or her congregation or the entire Church have drifted away or gone astray. And in our times, that truth has been entirely restored by God through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. An individual must remain loyal to that truth even if he has to keep it alone, or only with his own family even if he is put out of the Church like Diotrephes in the time of the apostle John was doing and as in our time the Tkaches have done

The *second lesson* to be learnt from the Sardis era and the Philadelphia era is that the Church in which governance structure is such that one man clearly is not in charge cannot do God’s work effectively and that does not please Jesus Christ and God the Father. Mr. Armstrong had to tackle this issue for most of his life; in the beginning when he had to deal with the ministers of the Sardis era of God’s Church and then with the infiltrators in the Philadelphia era. He reached the conclusion that God’s method of governance is one man clearly in charge with total authority.

Church history in various eras of the Church shows that God’s work always revived through the efforts of one man and thrived when he was solely in charge, but it flagged when one man was not clearly in charge. Various eras of the Church were raised by the preaching of one man God appointed to build that era. These examples include Polycarp in the 2nd century, Constantine of Mananali of the 7th century, Peter de Bruys of the 11th century, Peter Waldo in the 13th century, and finally Mr. Armstrong in our time. For details, one may refer to the booklet titled “*Where is the True Church: and Its Incredible History*” by David C. Pack, available free of charge from the Restored Church of God at www.rcg.org.

God the Father has actually dealt with that issue once before and has indicated how He will deal with it in the near future. In the beginning all government was centered at God’s throne in heaven where God the Father was in charge. Then government outside of heaven was first established on earth. When God sent a pioneering party of angels to establish that government, He put one being clearly in charge: Lucifer the archangel who later became Satan the devil because of his rebellion. Among the one third of the former angels with him, we don’t even know the name of any one of them. So there is no doubt that Satan is clearly solely and totally in charge of his government on earth.

Next time God’s government is established on earth, the same pattern will be repeated. When Jesus Christ returns to establish God’s government on earth, He will clearly be solely in charge of that government with total authority, and all others in authority under Him appointed by Him. Government in God’s Church should mirror the pattern of governance God Himself establishes.

God’s pattern for governing the universe seems to be to prepare a leader for government, and then send him in charge of a pioneering party to govern a planet. As others are trained under that leader, they can then be sent as sole leaders with others under their rule to colonize other planets. This pattern will continue for eternity with everyone ultimately having the potential of becoming sole leader over a planet or territory. That is the pattern of governance God seems to have set in motion.

The fact that this pattern of governance is the most effective is also borne out from examples in the world. No successful corporation is run by a committee, but has one Chief Executive Officer in charge.

A *third lesson* to be learnt from the Philadelphian and Laodicean eras is about the evils of one man rule. The Philadelphia era ended with the death of Mr. Armstrong. God’s Church did not go astray during the time of Mr. Armstrong. But the man he appointed to lead the Church, Joseph W. Tkach Sr, led the Church astray. Because of what he and his associates did, more than 80% of those who fellowshipped with us no longer adhere to what Mr. Armstrong taught and have likely lost their chance for eternal life unless they repent. This clearly shows how one man skillfully and diabolically led by Satan with a dedicated band of helpers equally skillfully led by Satan and the demons can lead many astray.

The question for us to consider is: What kind of leader in Church history has proved to be safest to follow for members of God’s Church? In the history of Israel and God’s Church, two kinds of leaders have proved to be safe to follow: Those God directly appointed as prophets, and those appointed as apostles. God ensures that they do not go astray.

In the history of Israel, God has never allowed His prophets to go astray. None of the prophets who recorded their prophecies in the Bible ever went astray. They were willing to give up their lives rather than retract the words God charged them to deliver. There are two examples of prophets who got killed. One is the dramatic example of the “man of God” mentioned in 1 Kings 13 who came from Judah and prophesied against the altar king Jeroboam had set up in Bethel for pagan worship. His instructions from God as stated in verse 9 were: “9 For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that you came.” But the man of God listened to a prophet in Israel and violated those instructions from God and was killed by a lion.

The man of God did not go astray. He faithfully delivered his message. But he violated direct instructions given to him by God. That example may have served as a warning to all prophets since then. As a result since then no one who held the office of a prophet of God ever went astray or violated God’s instructions.

Then there is the example of Urijah the prophet mentioned in Jeremiah 26 who was killed by Jehoiakim the king. This Urijah prophesied according to all the words of Jeremiah the prophet. This is an indication that Urijah was not sent by God. He probably was just a man who repeated the prophecies given by Jeremiah the prophet to get glory for himself.

So history of Israel shows that God has not allowed His genuine prophets to go astray. It was safest to follow prophets like Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the others.

But there are always problems at critical national crises when people or rulers must immediately act on the words of a prophet. The reason is that inevitably false prophets also make their appearance speaking contrary to the true prophet sent by God. And if the true prophet is prophesying catastrophe for the nation, the false prophets invariably prophesy of divine deliverance from the crisis. One example is the confrontation between God’s prophet Micaiah the son of Imla and the false prophet Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah in 2 Chronicles 18. In this situation all of Ahab’s prophets told Ahab to go to war against the Syrians and prosper, but Micaiah told him that he would die in that battle. The false prophet was very bold as verse 10 says: “10 Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the Lord: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'” And verse 23 says: “23 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the Lord go from me to speak to you?" Micaiah’s answer to that in verse 24 was, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!" King Ahab disregarded the words of Micaiah and went to war and died as a result.

The second example is given in Jeremiah 28. Jeremiah had been prophesying for many years that the Kingdom of Judah would be destroyed by king Nebuchadnezzar and the Jews carried as captive slaves to Babylon. To demonstrate that, at God’s instructions Jeremiah made a yoke of wood and put it around his neck. But Hananiah the prophet began to prophesy that the Lord will break off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar within two years and to dramatize it verse 10 states, “10 Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.” But then God told Jeremiah that He had not sent Hananiah. Jeremiah confronted Hananiah and verses 15-18 (NKJV) record, “15 Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. 16 Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the Lord.' " 17 So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.”

How then can we distinguish between a true prophet of God and false prophets? God’s answer is provided in Deuteronomy 18 on how to recognize false prophets:

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NKJV): “21 And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

God’s answer on how to recognize a true prophet is given in Ezekiel 32:33 (NKJV): “33 And when this comes to pass--surely it will come--then they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

So the way to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet of God is that what the true prophet prophesies comes to pass whereas what the false prophet prophesies does not come to pass.

In practical terms one has to wait to see the words of a prophet being fulfilled. So the problem of distinguishing the false from the true prophet before the catastrophic events take place still remains.

God establishes the credibility of a true prophet by bringing the words of the true prophet to pass or performing some miracles at the words of His true prophet, whereas the false prophets had performed no miracle of any kind. Micaiah’s credibility was finally established after the outcome of the war with Syria. But for Ahab and Jehoshaphat it was difficult to choose whether to trust Micaiah or Chenaanah. Jeremiah had been prophesying of a catastrophe for Judah for a long time. People did not know whether to believe Jeremiah or Hananiah. But when Hananiah died, Jeremiah’s credibility was established. But later events show that even after the downfall of Judah, the leaders did not trust Jeremiah’s words from God and accused him of lying to them when they were bent on going to Egypt, but Jeremiah had told them not to do so.

Sometimes however, Satan has also performed miracles in confrontations with God’s prophets. In Moses’ time, the priests of Egypt Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8) withstood Moses and Aaron with their own miracles till Moses’ miracles continued and superseded the miracles from Jannes and Jambres.

Though none of the false prophets in the Old Testament have been recorded as performing miracles when confronting God’s true prophets, the story is going to be drastically different in our end of the end time. A great false prophet (the pope of the Roman Church) will rise and perform incredible miracles through the power of Satan to deceive most of the world (Revelation 13:11-15) to try to counter the credibility of God’s prophets (Revelation 11:3-12). In addition, many other miracle working false prophets and even some claiming to be the returned Christ will arise to deceive many (Matthew 24:11, 24). This is all prophesied and will come to pass.

So how does one distinguish God’s true prophets from these false prophets in our time despite both sides working miracles? The answer is God’s true prophets have a true understanding of prophecy and have been proclaiming it to the world for nearly 97 years now, beginning with the call of Mr. Armstrong. The popes are not into prophecy. That could change when the great false prophet comes on the scene. But even now there are many many false prophets who are interpreting Bible prophecies. Who does one believe?

The answer again is to watch closely the prophecies given by the prophets. The prophecies given by the true prophets will come to pass exactly as prophesied. And when the confrontation between the Beast (the German dictator heading the “Holy Roman Empire”) and the great false prophet and God’s two witnesses who are also prophets (Revelation 11:3-12) takes place, both sides will be working miracles. But the prophecies given by God’s prophets will come true whereas those given by false prophets will fail.

Even though the prophecies given by God’s prophets will come true, but while people are living through them, the vast majority will not pay heed. Ezekiel the prophet describes in Ezekiel 32:33 (NKJV): “32 Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them. 33 And when this comes to pass--surely it will come--then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

But the good news is that perhaps many millions will eventually pay heed when they see all the prophesied events coming true during the first two years of the Great Tribulation, when God’s two witnesses are confronting the Beast and the false prophet. This is prophesied in Revelation 7:9-17.

The history of God’s Church through its various eras shows that God has never allowed leaders chosen and appointed directly by Him to build an era or fulfill prophecy to go astray. Jesus Christ chose the twelve apostles. None of them went astray. Paul the apostle appointed by Jesus Christ did not go astray. Then various eras of the Church were raised by the preaching of men God appointed to build that era. These examples include Constantine of Mananali of the 7th century A.D., Peter de Bruys of the 11th century, Peter Waldo in the 13th century and Mr. Armstrong. None of these great leaders whom God had directly appointed in the history of God’s Church ever went astray.

As already described, proofs that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was a prophet of God have already been provided. No one understood prophecy better than him. All those following in his footsteps use the framework of prophecy that he described and prophecies have been coming true. He also led an incredibly miraculous life in God’s service. Incredible miracles have been described in his autobiography and those who assisted him in God’s work witnessed many of them with him. So there is no doubt that he was a leader appointed by God and He did not let him go astray.

Thus the conclusion is that God prevents the leaders He directly appoints in His Church, and those He appoints as prophets from ever going astray. Tthe Church is much safer when one man appointed by God is in charge who has been well tried and tested by Him, can be relied upon to be faithful to Him, and by his fruits has proved that he is led by God.

In this regard, the author must now simply state the office he has been appointed to by God. The fact that he has been appointed to the office of a prophet was not revealed to him first, but to others from whom he learnt about it more than a decade later.

The office he has been appointed to was described by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (NKJV): “15 The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall hearken ; 16 According to all that you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

The office of the prophet described by Moses was certainly fulfilled by Jesus Christ Himself as described by Peter in Acts 3:19-23 and by Stephen in Acts 7:37. What we did not realize was that just as the role of Elijah was fulfilled by three prophets, there would be a triple fulfillment of the role of Moses as well. The role of Elijah was fulfilled by the original Elijah, then John the Baptist and then by Mr. Armstrong. The role of Moses was fulfilled by the original Moses, and then Jesus Christ Himself, and finally now there has been its third fulfillment.

Here then are the special events that parallel the life of Moses that prove that the author has been appointed to the role of the prophet mentioned by Moses.

1. Moses’ life was miraculously preserved. The author’s life too has been miraculously preserved over the past more than 50 years. Attempts have been continuously made on his life since the age of ten. By now perhaps hundreds if not thousands of attempts have been made in almost every possible way, including attempts at poisoning, beating to death, burying alive, inflicting him with HIV and shooting to death. But God has continued to miraculously preserve him all these decades.

2. God made Moses’ face to shine among the Israelites. God has made the author’s face to shine about a dozen or so times in public places to indicate the role of the prophet he was being called upon to fulfill.

3. As God used ancient prophets as an example to the Israelites to dramatically demonstrate certain key elements of prophecies such as Isaiah going barefoot and naked (Isaiah 20:2-4), God has used the author to demonstrate the true diabolically deceiving and lying nature of Satan and the demons by allowing his thoughts and what they palm off as his thoughts to be broadcast 24 hours a day. This is an event unique in the history of mankind. That is proof that he holds the office of a prophet.

What Satan broadcasts as the author’s thoughts are sometimes his thoughts but many times they are what Satan and the demons inject into his mind. These thoughts are diabolically designed to make the objects of the thoughts hate him with their whole being. Invariably these are thoughts designed to be the most damaging to the author and make people want to destroy him. Sometimes when the author knows that a horribly damaging thought is about to be injected into his mind, he is able to block it out. But Satan or the demon broadcasts such thought anyway as his thoughts to destroy normal good relations of the object of the thoughts with the author. Such damaging thoughts can part virtually the very best of friends if one is not aware that these are Satan’s thoughts and not the individual’s own.

God has allowed Satan and the demons to do so to illustrate to human beings how Satan and the demons are the source of much of our thoughts which lead us to follow ways that are contrary to God’s ways. All the filth and evil that Satan and the demons broadcast as the author’s thoughts are slander and lies which indicate who the real source of such evil is. Many people act on such thoughts that pop into their minds and hurt themselves and others by their actions. Many act on such thought and commit evil.

The only way for us to discern whether the thoughts injected into our minds are our own injected by Satan is to know God’s law and ways from the Bible. If the thoughts are contrary to God’s ways, we can be certain that Satan or a demon is the author of them. God has allowed this experience as a warning to the world that dealing with Satan will part the very best of friends and allies. It will lead to destruction. We will see that happen in the very near future when allies will part and war with each other to virtually destroy themselves.

All the unusual experiences of prophets of God are designed to teach humanity some lessons or issue warnings. If the author was so evil in his thoughts as Satan and the demons try to project him to be by broadcasting his supposed thoughts, it would serve no purpose for humanity. The author himself would suffer because no one would want to associate with him. But it would not benefit humanity at large. But if these thoughts demonstrate the true diabolically evil nature of Satan and the demons because they are broadcasting lies to divide human beings and turn friends into enemies, then humanity is being warned not to deal with Satan and the demons. That indeed is the warning God is giving to humanity through this experience. But humanity will not pay heed as prophesied events will soon prove. Therefore, Satan and the demons broadcasting the author’s thoughts is a prophetic warning to the world.

The author is issuing God’s warning to the world. But by broadcasting lies as his thoughts, Satan and the demons try to destroy his credibility so that people will not pay heed to his warning. Satan and the demons want humanity to annihilate itself. So they don’t want the world to believe what the author is saying about the way individuals can come out alive through the Great Tribulation. Billions will not pay heed to the warning. But Revelation 7 assures us tens of millions will and save themselves.

4. God has used the author for another unique event in the history of mankind. Every week God’s angels broadcast his weekly prophetic messages to every human being in his or her own language currently delivered at 9.00 a.m. USA Eastern Standard Time. That is also proof that he holds the office of a prophet.

5. James 5:10 tells us: “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” God here points out the marks of a prophet. They suffer affliction and have to endure it patiently for a long time. Mr. Armstrong often pointed to his 28 years of enduring poverty. He certainly fulfilled this identifying mark of a prophet. The author too has endured poverty for nearly the entire 40 years of his working life. So as there were certain parallels between the lives of the ancient Moses and Elijah, such as fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, there have been parallels between the lives of those fulfilling their roles in our time.

6. Mr. Armstrong battled forces outside and inside the Church and endured suffering and poverty to build and protect God’s Church. The author has battled forces of German masqueraders inside and outside and those allied with them for the protection of Israelite nations of America and British Commonwealth nations for all his life since the age of ten when they began making attempts on his life, first in India and then in the USA. Being a member of the small Sikh religious minority in India, but which contributed disproportionately to the British Indian Army which battled the Germans in both world wars, he was targeted by German allies in India. They began making attempts on his life because he showed much academic promise. Then in about a year of coming to the USA in 1981 he had diagnosed that the real cause of the economic problems of the USA and British Commonwealth nations at that time was the “so called free-trade” in which every one was free to export their goods and services to the USA while barring access to American and British goods and services as much as possible. That was an immediate threat to the party and fun the hostile nation within our nations, consisting of Americans of German descent and their allies, was having within our nations, and making it possible for the Germans and their global allies to loot American and British wealth. The hostile nation was able to get him kicked out of his Ph.D. program in Marketing so that he was left without the means to get a secure teaching job. Then they prevented him from getting a decent job all his life in the USA. They destroyed all his attempts at succeeding in self-employment. His business ideas have been stolen and others have become billionaires using those ideas while he has lived most of his life in poverty, having to depend on the kindness of family and friends quite often to sustain him. So he has suffered for more than 33 years for the sake of our Israelite peoples while in the USA and more than 50 years in total. As Mr. Armstrong suffered much of his life for the “Church”, the author has suffered most his life for the sake of our “State,” meaning America and the British Commonwealth nations.

7. There have been other parallels between the lives of the ancient Elijah and Moses and those fulfilling their roles in our time. Elijah restored the worship of the true God in ancient Israel and protected the nation from the worshippers of Baal wiping out all knowledge and worship of the true God. The end-time Elijah restored the worship of the true God in His true Church by restoring all the true doctrines, and the knowledge of the true gospel of the Kingdom of God. He prevented the ‘Synagogue of Satan” from watering down the doctrines all his life.

God used Moses to deliver ancient Israel from economic and physical slavery in Egypt. God has used the author to deliver modern Israel (America and British Commonwealth nations) from a form of economic slavery and also a form of physical slavery from being forced with threats to life or other harm to do things against their will and interests. Here is how God used him to accomplish this:

a) His constant preaching, teaching and battling so-called free trade single-handedly for 14 years finally focused the attention of the U.S. Federal government to look into the merits of what he was saying. It led to the discovery of the hostile nation within our nation and discovery of the conspiracy to destroy our Israelite nations from within. His preaching against free trade and the U.S. auto industry for not competing effectively had earlier forced the hostile nation to slow down its decline as too fast a decline could have led to the discovery of its existence within our borders. But when the hostile nation was discovered, corrective action was taken based on the solutions proposed in the author’s model of economic development and international trade. It saved our nations from economic collapse at that time.

b) Discovery of the hostile nation within our nations also led to the discovery of how this hostile nation had taken over all the leading positions in most sectors of the economy, government and academia. Our people of true Israelite descent had been relegated to lower positions of serving those in higher positions occupied by people from the hostile nation. This was a form of economic slavery. And then our Israelite people could be threatened to do things against their will and interests, making them *de facto* slaves. The discovery of the hostile nation freed us from this economic slavery. It also led to our economic recovery at that time.

c) Discovery of the hostile nation also led to the discovery of its activities and how it was engaged in murdering and destroying true Israelites. It led to the discovery of medical murders, population control through abortion, the solving of the mystery of so many missing children and adults, denial of justice to Israelites because the hostile nation had infiltrated law enforcement and the judicial system. All these types of clandestine murders in the future were halted.

d) When the author realized that it was so easy to murder people by poisoning them by giving wrong prescriptions or in restaurants, he saw a potential disaster for our nations. So he prayed to God to intervene and save Israelite nations from this potential catastrophe. After his prayer, apparently the hostile nation sent out a call to murder as many Israelites as possible by poisoning them or by other means. The main targets were IT professionals, scientists, serving and retired top military officers, statesmen, business and political leaders. The order also went out for spouses who had married Israelite spouses to murder them and their own children. These orders were carried out. But God answered the author’s prayers and intervened to prevent these attempts from succeeding. This intervention probably saved tens of millions of lives in America alone, and probably additional millions in British Commonwealth nations.

If God had not heard these prayers, the U.S. economy could possibly have been destroyed with the murder of most IT professionals. It would also have led to an immediate attack on our nations and certain defeat in war and national slavery.

8. There have also been other parallels between what God used Moses to accomplish, and what the author’s contributions have been. Moses was used by God to reveal His strong nation building commandments, statutes and judgments to Israel. The author’s major contributions have also been in areas that contribute to nation building. These have included a model of economic development and beneficial international trade that is now generally accepted by all nations, and significant contributions to natural healing, preventing sickness and maintaining general good health. Contributions in both areas have had a very high impact on the prosperity and general well-being of our nations.

9. The mark of a prophet is prophesying future events or understanding and giving a correct interpretation of prophecy. Besides Jesus Christ no man has understood prophecy better than Mr. Armstrong. Daniel the prophet and John the apostle who wrote prophecies did not understand them because they were sealed till the time of the end. But when the end time came, understanding of prophecies was given to Mr. Armstrong. He explained what the various beasts in the books of Daniel and Revelation meant. After Mr. Armstrong, an understanding of the sequence of end time events has been revealed to the author. A key element of the sequence of end-time events was revealed to him by an angel in 1998 during the Feast of Tabernacles in Vail Colorado. Since then the author has written his detailed booklet titled “World in Bible Prophecy.” He did not consult any one or rely on others’ writings to do so. His main commission in the end time is stated in Revelation 10:11, “…"You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." He has written his booklets on prophecy in fulfillment of that commission.

10. Mr. Armstrong used to complain about not being able to get sufficient sleep. He also talked about contact with demons. Perhaps he realized that demons were buffeting him to keep him humble just as the apostle Paul had been buffeted by a messenger of Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7). Peter may also have had a similar experience. That seems to be implied by Jesus’ statement in Luke 22:31: “…Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” The author too battled a demonic messenger of Satan intensely for about 19 years. He still buffets him, but he is no longer physically troubled as he was before. It may simply be the mark of a prophet or leading apostle of God in the case of Mr. Armstrong.

11. Moses and Elijah communicated with the Lord. In our time prophets have not had the privilege of communicating with God face to face. But angels have communicated many messages to the author. That perhaps is also unique in our time within God’s Church. He has not seen any of the angels, but they have communicated with him unambiguously. We know the most treacherous time for God’s true Church still lies ahead. Perhaps God will use angels to convey lifesaving messages to His Church during these times. He also has had the privilege of seeing Jesus Christ in a dream in which He was angry with him and corrected him before he could make a drastically wrong decision. Perhaps not unlike the way the Lord was angry with Moses on a couple of occasions.

12. And finally just as God revealed to the world that the author had been called to fulfill the role of a prophet, it was revealed to the world that he had been given the status of a king. The author does not know exactly how this was revealed to people, but his guess is that they perhaps saw him crowned as a king in a dream, or in a vision.

Perhaps the prophecy in Micah 2:13 applies here. It states: “The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them.” The breaker and the king mentioned here could be two different individuals. The author believes the prophecy about the ‘breaker’ applies to Mr. Gerald R. Flurry, pastor general of the Philadelphia Church of God who was the first one forced to break away from the Worldwide Church of God to set up another Church of God organization.

WHY ONE-MAN RULE IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR TIME

Treacherous times lie just ahead. These are not the times God’s Church should navigate through, divided into many different organizations.

There is a great reason why God speaks through only one man in critical times. And there is no doubt that the time of the events leading to and through the Great Tribulation is going to be the most critical time in the history of mankind. At such a time, it is safest for God’s Church and God’s people Israel to look to one man for answers from God. Can you imagine members of God’s Church having to rely on the words of 4 or 5 leaders to make decisions about their safety during these treacherous times? We have already demonstrated through our different organizations that differences can develop even among God’s own people despite everything having been restored by God sending a special prophet and apostle to do so. And we have also demonstrated differences in understanding of prophecy. Such differences so close to the Great Tribulation can prove fatal, if members were to look to 4 or 5 different leaders for answers from God. In these critical times God wants His people to be sure through whom He will give His commands. That is why the author believes He will have only one man in charge of His Church.

SATAN’S ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY THE AUTHOR’S CREDIBILITY

It should be a given that Satan would try to attack the credibility of persons delivering God’s message. Satan’s agents tried to undermine Mr. Armstrong’s authority by setting up their own ‘Systematic Theology Project’ behind his back to reevaluate all Church doctrines when Mr. Armstrong was spending most of his time traveling preaching the gospel to world leaders. Since Mr. Armstrong’s passing away, the synagogue of Satan that took over the Church repudiated all the doctrines God restored through Mr. Armstrong. They justify their discarding all that Mr. Armstrong taught by attacking his ‘lack of training.’

From the Grace Communion International (GCI) (this is what the Worldwide Church of God now calls itself) website under “Our History”, this is their justification for rejecting all of Mr. Armstrong’s teachings: “Armstrong felt that he had to choose between Bible and tradition, and he chose the Bible. However, he had no seminary training, nor any disciplined study of church history, biblical interpretation, or the original languages of Scripture.”

These are bold faced lies. If the truth needed restoring, Mr. Armstrong would not have learnt it from a seminary because they are the source of current lack of truth in mainstream Christianity. GCI is now recycling what the seminaries of mainstream churches teach. By rejecting the correct name for God’s Church, which is Church of God, GCI is no longer God’s true Church.

Mr. Armstrong conducted thorough biblical research to support the Church’s beliefs. A Bible scholar does not have to know the original languages to conduct research. Many fine dictionaries of the original languages and commentaries are available to aid research. Besides, Mr. Armstrong encouraged all members to prove the doctrines themselves from their own bibles rather than blindly believe what he said. And we did prove the doctrines ourselves from our own bibles.

Satan has tried very hard to attack the author’s credibility and will continue to do so as long as he continues to deliver God’s messages. His agents attack his intelligence despite having a very good academic record, and having made numerous contributions to business and economic development at the very highest levels. They accuse him of copying what others teach. But the simple fact is that he like all others who deliver God’s message have to teach what was restored by God through Mr. Armstrong. But after Mr. Armstrong passed away the author has been given an understanding of prophecy that no one else has. His primary commission in this end of the end time is to preach about prophecy as mentioned earlier. He consulted no one in writing his booklets on prophecy. No one else has written anything comparable about prophecy. So accusations of Satan’s agents that the author does not preach anything original stand exposed as a canard.

Finally, Satan now has a great tool available to assassinate the author’s character. Since he has been broadcasting his thoughts for the past more than 13 years, he can palm off any lies as the author’s thoughts thus painting him as a pervert, a dim wit, someone utterly lacking in confidence, not sure of himself, malevolent, envious of everyone, or anything else he can come up with.

God’s testimony about Satan is that he is the father of lies (John 8:44) and one who deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9). A liar to be effective must mix his lies with truth. If he were to lie all the time, it would be easy to discern the truth because it would be contrary to whatever he says. He has told the truth many times in whatever he palms off as the author thoughts. But because of his inherent nature as a liar and a deceiver, he would certainly palm of many half-truths, distortions of the truth and outright lies as the author’s thoughts. This is a mechanism Satan has used to cast doubts about the inspiration behind the author’s messages. People wonder whether the author is doing God’s work and genuinely holds the office attributed to him.

Another reason for this doubt is that Satan and the demons began to broadcast the author’s messages in the very beginning on December 2, 2006 till July 14, 2007 when he had completed all his messages once in fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation 10:11. Then they stopped broadcasting his messages and God’s angels then started broadcasting them. But the source of this information is Satan through the Germans. Since Satan is a liar, then it’s possible that they could still be broadcasting his messages but lying about it by saying that they are not broadcasting them but that God’s angels are doing so. If so, then it can be argued that the author’s messages are not God inspired but Satan inspired and are possibly being used by Satan to deceive God’s Church and mankind.

That is why the author has provided details of all that God has worked through him over the past more than 50 years to counter this logic. Satan’s agents still continue to make attempts on his life. Only God could have protected him. Perhaps tens of millions of Israelite lives have been saved at his prayers. Only God could have worked that intervention. Satan’s aim is to destroy the nations of physical Israel as well as God’s Church which is spiritual Israel. Only God and His people are interested in intervening on behalf of both. No one can dispute that all the author’s actions have been designed to benefit physical and spiritual Israel. He hopes that no one will be deceived by the twisted logic that his messages are not in fulfillment of the warning to be issued according to the prophecy in Revelation 10:11.

There are many German masqueraders in American and within God’s Church. Their actions have all been designed to hurt physical and spiritual Israel as much as possible. That is the nature of Satan’s agents. None of Satan agents will work to benefits physical or spiritual Israel. In contrast all of the author’s actions have been designed to benefit physical and spiritual Israel. That should prove to everyone that his messages are God inspired and not Satan inspired.

In conclusion, the history of the Sardis, Philadelphia and the Laodicean era which started after Mr. Armstrong’s death shows the evils as well as the advantages of one man rule. An evil man can destroy much good as the Tkaches have proved. The advantages of one man rule show that it is safest to follow one man whom God has chosen, and no true prophet of God has ever gone astray. They have always faithfully delivered God’s messages which can be relied upon.

**Which Church of God group to Join?**

Because of splits in God’s Church since Mr. Armstrong passed away, between 70-80% of the former attendees no longer follow what Mr. Armstrong taught. But God requires that each and every member to receive the gift of eternal life must remain loyal to the truth God restored to His Church through Mr. Armstrong. And an additional requirement is to remain attached to the ‘vine’ to receive ongoing spiritual nourishment from Jesus Christ. This means attending the true Church of God.

Since genuine members of God’s Church who adhere to everything God restored through Mr. Armstrong now attend different Church organizations, which one should a new, prospective or even existing members who need to decide, should attend?

One thing is clear! Continuing to fellowship in the former WCG (now GCI) congregations means one is being fed garbage and not spiritual nourishment. The author reads literature published by the larger of the Churches that came out of the WCG. Based on his understanding of what these Churches believe, he recommends joining any of the 4 larger groups: the United (UCG), Philadelphia (PCG), Living (LCG)or the Restored (RCG) Church of God. He believes they adhere to everything in terms of doctrines that God restored through Mr. Armstrong.

**CHAPTER 11**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

**By Following Tares Out of the Church due to Friendship**

The third reason Church members may lose their crown is by leaving God’s Church by following tares or infiltrators out of the Church.

Since Jesus Christ Himself gave the analogy of the tare weed in the wheat field to describe Satan’s agents as infiltrators in God’s Church, it is very important to understand the nature of the tare weed. The tare weed when it grows out of the ground in a wheat field is indistinguishable from the wheat. So if we try to pull it out when the wheat is sprouting in the field, some wheat sprouts will also be pulled up. But later as the tare weed grows in the wheat field, the root system of the tare weed becomes thoroughly intertwined with the wheat roots. If at this stage we try to pull the tare weed out, when it can be distinguished from the wheat, because of the closely intertwined root system, some wheat will also be uprooted with the tare weed. So the best strategy to deal with the problem is to let both the wheat and the tare weed grow together till harvest when both can be easily distinguished. Then the tare weed is harvested first to be bound and burnt in the fire and then the wheat can be harvested. This is exactly how Jesus Christ described the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30).

This is also how it works in practice. Tares or infiltrators planted by Satan in the Church grow together in faith with true members. The tares can be ministers as well as lay members. Over time the tares and genuine members develop close relationships and their family lives become deeply intertwined. Members begin to discuss issues with the tares, rely on them for counsel and begin to consider the tares as their best friends whom they can trust and rely upon. They can then never believe that their best friends would ever be engaged in deceiving them.

These tares are totally obedient to Satan and the demons. They literally listen to and obey their every word and command. Satan and the demons then begin to use the tares to raise some doubts about God’s way of life, doctrines or other issues. They use every possible diabolically cunning argument to deceive. When they have convinced genuine members that the Church is in error, or is not the true Church, they then suggest and convince genuine members into leaving the Church. Some members who do not distrust their best friends may then follow the tares out of the Church, thus losing their chance for eternal life.

The deception is carried out by ministers as well who are infiltrators. The lay members who are tares may get their arguments and teachings to deceive from such ministers and use them to plant seeds of doubt in the minds of genuine members. These infiltrator ministers then lead the tares lay members out of the Church, who because of their friendships (intertwined roots) built over decades take genuine members out with them.

Now see how this tactic has worked for Satan in the history of God’s Church since the Philadelphia era was founded through Mr. Armstrong. The author’s first contact with the Church occurred in 1972 when he became a coworker. So he received Mr. Armstrong’s coworker letters around 1973-1974 when men like Charles Hunting, Richard Plache, Albert Portune and others left the Church. These men were Satan’s agents who went out of the Church at Satan’s signal. They were leading evangelists and ministers who were followed out of the Church by members who were also tares, who took some genuine members out of the Church because of their friendships. The same happened in 1978-1979 when about 35 ministers left the Church and took a few thousand members, including some genuine members out with them. Most of these ministers were Satan’s agents who were acting on the express orders of Satan. Then after Mr. Armstrong’s death, the Church was completely taken over by Satan’s agents to fulfill Bible prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:2-4, and many followed their tare friends out of the Church without joining any Church of God organization that had split off, or have remained in the WCG which is no longer God’s true Church.

These have been the main three times that tares have led genuine members out of the Church. But there have been single or a couple of ministers who have been regularly leaving the Church almost every year, followed by their tare lay members who would have taken some genuine members out of the Church along with them. Satan has been following this strategy ever since the beginnings of God’s Church in 31 A.D. In fact, Satan had developed this strategy even before man was created. He used this strategy first with the angels under his rule on earth and led the entire one third of them into rebellion against God. And he will continue to use this strategy in the Church right till the return of Jesus Christ to earth and setting up of God’s Kingdom.

If you were one of those in God’s Church in this situation and were led out of it because of your friendship with someone else, or you followed a particular minister or evangelist out of the Church, you can still repent, join God’s Church again and renew your chance for eternal life. With his messages and in this book the author has provided sufficient guidance to make the right decision.

A person has to be in God’s Church to receive his gift of eternal life. Such a person can still join any of the Church of God organizations among the larger four groups: the UCG (of which the author is a member), the LCG, the PCG or the RCG.

This is what current members in God’s Church need to pay heed to. While Paul admonished ministers in Acts 20:28 that they were to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, he told all Christians in Philippians 2:12: “…work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” So our salvation is our own individual responsibility. We cannot blame a minister or another member for leading us astray. That excuse cannot get any one of us into God’s kingdom. We must seek answers for all decisions individually from God. While ministers’ duties are to guide the members in all spiritual matters, individual members cannot solely rely on ministers to get them into God’s kingdom. Their very minister on whom they have relied upon could be Satan’s agent as a tare in God’s Church. Therefore, our ultimate reliance has to be upon God for answers to all questions and issues. But God has provided us the safeguards already mentioned in making decisions in the critical end time when Satan and the demons will pull out all the stops in order to deceive.

Again, if you are a former member of God’s Church who left the Church because of the advice or discussion with a friend, or because you followed a particular minister out of the Church, you can still repent and join God’s Church. You must take responsibility for your own eternal life. You have to make the decision yourself to break with your friends or stop following a particular minister.

**CHAPTER 12**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

**Due to Bitterness Against God or Man**

Another reason members may become lukewarm or be offended and leave God’s Church is that they have turned bitter against God and the Church because of bitter experiences with some members, ministers, evangelists or other leaders in the Church.

After bitter experiences these members, some of who may have left the Church already, felt that this could not be God’s Church because many people were so carnal, who were hurting them and others. These former and current members may not have realized that most of those hurting them were mainly tares or infiltrators, which would have included ministers and evangelists as well. But these members also need to examine themselves to see if they were offended at right advice which was bluntly given, but sounded very offensive. They should realize that such friends who give correct advice which may not be palatable but is essential for their long term well-being are rare to find.

What are some of the ways in which members in the Church may have been offended by others?

One way would have been to be belittled, isolated and looked down upon. This was done by the tares in the Church and not genuine members. One tactic that hurts absolutely the most is always jerking one’s face away whenever looking at the target person. The person feels as if something is drastically wrong with him or her, or has done something horribly wrong to offend someone. Imagine the impact on the person’s mind who is subjected to this behavior every time he comes to Church, not from one person but many in the Church. The person soon begins to feel isolated, inadequate, worthless, unloved, uncared for and very discouraged in the Church. Even suicidal thoughts may begin to come into the person’s mind. Do you know that this is a tactic used by the infiltrators in the Church and in American society to drive the person mad?

There were many tares in the Church engaged in this tactic. Many Americans were subjected to the same tactic by German infiltrators in America. This tactic is very effective and painful to bear. The author knows this from firsthand experience because he has been a constant victim of this tactic for 33 years that he has been in the USA. He was so isolated that he felt he was literally left alone in the world and no one cared for him. He had suicidal thoughts constantly and felt worthless. He is still subjected to the same treatment, but is inured to it because he now knows where such people are coming from.

Many people in the Church have been hurt in the process of seeking a mate. One of the purposes of the infiltrators in America has been to limit the population of Americans of Israelite descent so that they could overtake the country. One of their tactics for accomplishing this was to prevent Americans of Israelite descent from marrying. They used every trick that Satan could devise to do this. They led men and women along for years in relationships which they thought would blossom into marriage. But then they suddenly went away and married someone else. For many, such breakup of relationships occurred more than once, which left them embittered, leading them to give up seeking to get married. Many simply got too old trying to find a mate, but met with heartaches many times in their lives. Then in other cases infiltrator men married women and after one or two children divorced them, leaving them and the kids to fend for themselves. This happened in America at large, and people in the Church were subjected to the same tactics by the tares. Many in the Church have become old and have never married. Those in God’s Church who have experienced this bitterness should remember that they were not alone. The whole nation went through this pain and suffering along with us. The author too has shared in this suffering for more than three decades.

In other cases, some have deliberately misguided genuine members to literally destroy them with their advice. There have been examples when a member was seriously sick but had health insurance coverage. Such members were chided for lacking faith in God to heal them by continuing to have health insurance. They were urged to demonstrate their complete faith and trust in God to heal by getting rid of their insurance. As a result those with terminal illness canceled their health insurance without obtaining counsel and advice from more people, including their minister. They trusted the words of their tare friend more than their minister. One can only imagine the hard life they had after losing their insurance coverage because no insurance company would ever cover them again because of the pre-existing condition.

Some may have been misguided by their minister, including in dating and marriage issues. It can be a bitter experience. In most of these cases, the minister was a tare in the Church. Such ministers were preying on the flock, trying to drive the members out of the Church. The author has dealt with one such minister who was engaged in literally driving him mad. So he is speaking about this from first-hand experience.

Others have been subjected to harassment that only Satan and the demons could devise. Most Americans of Israelite descent were being discriminated against and denied decent employment and promotion opportunities. This added to their feelings of inadequacy. They have been ridiculed with snide remarks, smirked at, looked down upon, or worn down with constant advice, implying that they were lazy and not working hard enough to improve themselves, or trying to get a better job or were talked about constantly behind their back. Satan’s agents have myriads of ways of making a person feel worthless. Such an experience would embitter most people. The author again is writing from first-hand experience.

Most Americans have experienced another terrible problem. That problem is being broadcast the most vicious and vile threats and ordered to do or to not do things such as marry someone or not marry someone, eat too much and become obese, or resign from jobs or give up businesses. With such threats countless tens of millions of lives of Americans of Israelite descent were ruined over four decades. The author does not know how it worked because God shielded him from all such threats. *That is another miracle that God works in his life on a daily continuing basis.* These threats were broadcast to him but God has prevented them from being heard by him. But he can imagine the lifelong horrors and terror other people have experienced.

During all these experiences many in the Church may have lost faith in God. When Mr. Armstrong was alive, he kept the faith of most strong because God’s work was being done and was producing results. But after his death, specially knowing that Satan’s agents had taken over the Church, many simply gave up and separated themselves from the Church altogether. Such members had put their faith and trust in God and His ability to deliver from all problems. But when they were not delivered from problems and threats, they began to doubt if God really miraculously intervenes in the lives of people like they read in the Bible. Their belief in God’s promises was not strong enough to overcome such thoughts.

The author suffered all this in the fullest measure, except any threats being broadcast to him, though he was subjected to it verbally. He was told about the Mafia and the possibility of ending up in a river or the ocean bottom with a cement block around his neck. So he is speaking from personal experience when he mentions these troubles that the members were subjected to.

*Life of Tribulation Promised*

If you as a member of God’s Church experienced any of these horrors which embittered you against particular members or ministers, you may have felt that God was not in charge of the Church that calls itself His Church, or may even have begun to doubt if God really exists, as you did not feel His powerful intervention in your life like Daniel and his three friends and Joseph did.

If you analyzed the situation this way, then you failed to consider the kind of life God has promised the members in his Church in the pages of the Bible. You may have expected a trouble free life on a bed of roses in the Church and always expected God to intervene very quickly on your behalf whenever you were in trouble. But that is not the kind of life God promised to members. Remember that the trouble we as members have experienced in the world is not any different from the troubles people in the world experience. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church in 1 Corinthians 10:13: “There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Now consider the kind of life God promised us when we became members of His Church.

Our goal is the kingdom of God. Paul told us in Acts 14:22: “21 And when they [that is Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city [Lystra], and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” So God has promised all members much tribulation rather than a trouble free life. This much tribulation can take many forms, and can seem never-ending.

But in 1 Corinthians 10:13, God has promised us that the kind of tribulation we suffer is common to man, and will allow us to go through trouble only such as we can bear. However, to test us and build our character, He may allow us to go through seemingly unbearable trouble, but is then faithful to make a way of escape for us. Such experiences in endurance build sterling character.

All of us hope that God will dramatically intervene in our lives as He did in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel and his three friends. All of us hope that God will simply pluck us out of the midst of trouble each and every time we find ourselves in it. If such has been your expectation, then you have missed reading some key verses in the heroes of faith chapter, Hebrews 11.

After discussing the examples of faith demonstrated in the lives of the patriarchs, Paul says in Hebrews 11:32-34: “32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **out of weakness were made strong**, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again…” These were more examples of faith.

Then Paul continues in verses 35-39: “35…and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.”

Here are examples of men who because of their faith suffered hardships and troubles all their lives, and even lost their lives after being tortured. They never received deliverance from their tribulations. God did not intervene in their lives. They all died in faith, not accepting deliverance by compromising with God’s way of life, or forsaking God and His way. They did all this to receive a better resurrection. We too should expect this in our lives. God may choose not to intervene in our lives to test and try our faith. So if because of troubles in their lives any have become lukewarm, they need to repent and renew their faith. Otherwise they are in very serious danger of losing their eternal life. They may also have to prove their faith in the Great Tribulation through death. If any have stopped attending Church because troubles in their life offended them, they need to seriously repent, get back on track and start attending God’s Church again.

We have been commanded to follow the example of Jesus Christ our Savior. Peter the apostle stated it clearly in 1 Peter 2:21-24: “21 For even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled , reviled not again ; when he suffered , he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:12: ‘Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Paul’s life was an example of suffering for ministers and members. He said in 1 Timothy 3:10-11:” 10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra--what persecutions I endured.”

In 2 Corinthians 6:4-5 Paul described the sufferings of ministers who served with him : “4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings…”

Then Paul described the troubles and tribulations he went through in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28: “23 Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”

James also tells us that we should follow the example of the prophets in James 5:10-11: “10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”

James here tells us why we should follow the example of suffering, patience and endurance of the prophets: because of the end intended by the Lord. And that end is to give us His Kingdom with Jesus Christ as rulers over the entire universe for eternity. The reward is incredible and unimaginable. What can be a few years of tribulation compared to that?

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:3: “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:3-4 also tells us why we must endure tribulation: “3…we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

Yes, the purpose of tests, trials and tribulation is to build character in us, to qualify us to gain eternal life as God’s literal sons and enable us to become worthy rulers with Jesus Christ. Romans 8:17-18 also reveals that destiny: “17…if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” And what is that glory? Verse 19 tells us: “19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.” We shall be glorified as literal sons of God.

We should follow the advice of Paul the apostle after he described the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. He writes in Hebrews 12:1: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

If you as a member of God’s Church have become lukewarm because of the troubles you have been subjected to in the Church due to the actions of tares among us, you need to repent of your attitude. You need to lay aside every weight, every negative thought because of the troubles you have gone through and run with patience the race set before us to the Kingdom of God. The glory that shall be revealed in us and the reward are beyond imagination. Revelation 21:7 tells us: “He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” “Inherit all things”, literally means the universe.

*We Should Brace Ourselves for More Bitterness and Tribulation*

If a member has become offended and lukewarm because of the bitterness and troubles he has experienced in the Church at the hands of tares, and God allowed him to go through it all, then he has not understood prophecy well. He has not understood that God’s Church needs to brace itself for more bitterness and troubles in the very near future, for the Great Tribulation is almost upon us.

No one in the world will be immune from trouble in these times of greatest trouble in the history of mankind. This is what prophecy indicates. The Philadelphians in God’s Church will also experience troubles or threats before the Great Tribulation actually begins, but after the beginning of sorrows with the Third World War. That is why there will be a need for them to flee to the place of safety.

The condition that will cause this is mentioned by Jesus in John 16:2-4 (NKJV): “2 They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, *the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service*. 3 And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. 4 But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.”

Throughout the history of persecution of God’s Church, their persecutors have believed that they are doing God’s service in killing people they consider as ‘heretics.’ The Roman Church has been deceived by Satan into believing this. After the third world war when the pope starts working miracles, he will convince the world that he is doing God a service by murdering members of God’s true Church. The persecution he unleashes against God’s Church will cause the Church to flee to the place of safety.

Jesus also stated in Matthew 24:9-13: “9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

While this applies mainly to the Laodiceans in God’s Church during the Great Tribulation itself, it is possible that some genuine Philadelphians, particularly ministers may even be martyred.

The Church is probably already hated by almost all nations because of its message of impending disaster and destruction of the greatest part of humanity. When the Philadelphians flee to the place of safety and the Great Tribulation begins, a great split will occur among the Laodiceans. This will be another great falling away from the Church. About half of them will compromise with the beast and the false prophet and will begin to persecute those who remain loyal to God. The compromisers will begin to betray the loyal Laodiceans, deliver them up to be afflicted and causing them to be martyred. That is the time when the compromisers will be offended against God and loyal members, will betray one another and hate one another. That is the time when the love of many in the Church will grow cold.

Only the Philadelphians, or zealous and loyal members, will be in the place of safety. The compromising Laodiceans will have betrayed the loyal Laodiceans and had them put to death. But compromise will not save the compromising Laodiceans either. None of them will survive the events of the year-long Day of the Lord. They will all die physically, and then their lives later will be forever extinguished in the Lake of Fire. And when this happens, the loyal Laodiceans will have been resurrected already and will watch the betraying Laodiceans be destroyed in the events of the Day of the Lord.

Therefore, for members who have become lukewarm due to bitterness and troubles inflicted on them in the Church by infiltrators, the time to sincerely repent is now. When the tribulation is at the door, it will be too late. The door to the wedding supper will be shut on them as the parable of the ten virgins shows. They need to begin renewing and building their faith right now so that when the time comes to flee, their faith will be strong enough to answer the call.

We are all responsible for our own salvation individually, as Paul said in Philippians 2:12: “…work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. “ Remember the commitment we made with God at baptism. We made a commitment to surrender our lives to Him unconditionally.

Jesus told us to count the cost in Luke 14:27-33: “27 And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and count the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying , This man began to build , and was not able to finish . 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sits not down first, and consults whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassage, and desires conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.”

To obtain the incredible reward offered to every human being, particularly us who are the firstfruits, we are required to forsake all, meaning surrender ourselves to God unconditionally, to become Jesus Christ’s disciples. If any have been embittered or become lukewarm because of trials and troubles because of infiltrators in our midst or otherwise, they need to sincerely repent and renew and build their faith once again.

*What kept the Author from Losing Faith and Becoming Lukewarm*

As mentioned earlier, the author has experienced almost all possible troubles from infiltrators in the Church, including ministers, evangelists and lay members. He too lost his health insurance. He did not have health insurance for about 16 years. When he was subjected to troubles in the Church, he spoke against it. As a result he was asked by a minister to see a psychologist and a psychiatrist since he was accusing some of troubling him. The psychologist and the psychiatrist pronounced him crazy saying his judgment is compromised. You can imagine the difficulty he experienced in selling his consulting and accounting services in order to make a living. And it also got his health insurance canceled. He has always been harassed about dating and marriage issues, probably worse than most. But he kept his faith. Satan has used his agents in the Church and the world to paint him as mentally retarded despite his very good academic record and all the advice and suggestions he has given about economic development which the world follows. He has had long periods of unemployment and his attempts at self-employment have been destroyed. Before his present employment the longest time he had continuously held a job was less than one year. Many times in his life he has had to borrow money just to pay his living expenses and to buy food. He was constantly harassed by people around him. When he had some respite from this harassment, demons troubled him for about 19 years. Numerous times he cried himself to sleep. Because of never-ending troubles, many times he contemplated suicide but put such thoughts away quickly. The Tkaches had the gall to label him a tare. A minister who was Satan’s agent temporarily disfellowshipped him twice. Perhaps how he thought through all the troubles may be of help to some.

First of all he was thoroughly convinced that God exists and that he was in His true Church. God is also the Creator of everything and is, therefore greater than all His creation put together. All power (Psalm 62:11), knowledge, understanding and wisdom belong to Him. So any resistance against God’s will and plan is foolishness.

The author was buffeted by a demon messenger of Satan for 19 years. The demon constantly tortured him physically as well as mentally. He prayed to God to free him from this trouble and was also anointed for the problem. But the demon did not depart from him. The author then many times thought that God was not considering him worthy of eternal life. But knowing that God has created everything and has all power, rebelling against or becoming offended at God would not get the author anywhere but guaranteed eternal death. So he made up his mind that the decision whether to grant him eternal life or not was God’s to make, but he would never rebel against God or be offended at Him. He would accept God’s decision, whatever it was and rely on His mercy.

God’s plan of salvation for mankind is the only plan that makes sense. Above all he could not be shaken from his belief that God makes promises and has the power to keep them. His proof that would never shake his faith was the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David and kept them in their incredibly intricate details through nearly 4,000 years. If God makes promises, keeps them and has the power to do so, then His promises of eternal life and rulership of the universe will also be kept.

With such an incredible reward awaiting all of us, he kept his eyes always on the prize. Whenever he was beset with problems and persecutions, he kept his eyes on the future hope. Before he converted from Sikhism to Christianity, with thorough research he had all his life’s questions answered to his entire satisfaction. That is why the hope of the reward has always been real to him. It will always be real to him because God’s fulfillment of promises to the patriarchs is a reality. When in extreme periods of depression and hopelessness he was forced to reevaluate his beliefs, he always reached the conclusion that his beliefs were sound and he would continue to trust in God till the very end and hope in His mercy.

We also know that our real fight is against Satan and the demons and not human beings. Our destiny is to replace Satan and the demons as rulers of the earth. How then can we demonstrate weakness by wilting under pressure and threats from Satan and his agents? God requires us to overcome Satan and the demons with His help. That will involve enduring hardship and troubles as soldiers. As soldiers in this great war, we should never ever think of surrender. Many demons willingly went along with Satan in his rebellion against God. Others were deceived into joining him in rebellion. God requires better of us. Whenever the author was burdened with unbearable troubles, these thoughts kept him from surrendering to Satan and becoming offended against God or becoming lukewarm. He was determined not to let any lay member, a minister [including one who tried to drive him mad], an evangelist or even pastor generals named Tkach [who called him a tare] to take his crown away from him.

The author hopes that this sharing of his thoughts during all the troubles he experienced in the Church will help members who have turned bitter against God to realize the need for repentance and renewing and growing their faith in God once again.

**CHAPTER 13**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

**Because of Problems with Authority**

In the Church we are required to live by God’s laws. Following rules builds harmony in the Church and keeps members from causing harm to others or being harmed by others. Ministers’ job in the Church is to ensure that rules of righteous and decent behavior are followed for the benefit of the entire Church. But some members may have simply resented being told what to do. They do not like authority in general.

When such members saw the Church splitting after Mr. Armstrong’s death, they saw an opportunity to be free from the authority of ministers and the pastor general. They felt they were finally free and since they now knew about God’s plan of salvation, believed in it and believed in God, they would not be denied eternal life. Such people formed their own groups, calling themselves by various names where no one was in charge. They felt they could govern themselves by consensus. Some thought they could be governed by the scriptures alone by searching the scriptures daily like the Bereans. Some in fact even called their group The Bereans.

But anyone who knows real life and something about functioning of organizations knows how silly such notions are. Could such a group agree on anything? Christianity has over 2000 major denominations, precisely because they cannot agree on the interpretation of the Bible, and among themselves. Could a group of a 100 people who are free to interpret the Bible as they wish agree on all the major doctrines? Could a group of 100 people who are engaged on a daily basis in earning a living have the time to research all doctrines, points of disputes all on their own, discuss them and reach a consensus?

The whole idea that members could accomplish all this individually is fantasy. And the idea that members will be able to reach consensus on all doctrines and issues is ridiculous. A group of 100 people will never be able to reach consensus on all doctrines of Christianity with no one in charge. The result inevitably will be that such a group will split up into many tiny cells because of disagreement over one doctrinal issue or another. And that is precisely what has happened to people who separated from God’s Church and formed their own groups with no one in clear authority, because they have a problem with authority and being told what to do.

Such members need to wake up, open their eyes wide and look at the universe. There is no one who is not under authority in the universe except God the Father who originated everything. Even Jesus Christ, the second greatest Being in the universe, is in total submission to God the Father. He demonstrated His total submission to God the Father as an example for all of us by giving up all His glory, being born as a human being and dying for humanity. And even God the Father does not arbitrarily govern the universe. He has set in motion His laws and lives and governs the universe by those laws of love. So He has totally subjected Himself to His law of love.

Mr. Armstrong said it many times: two cannot dwell together in harmony unless one is in charge. So authority is necessary even in a group of two people. That is God’s method of government. The truth of this principle is demonstrated in family life. For a family to function harmoniously, the wife must be subject to her own husband, and the children to their parents’ authority. God created the human family to teach and enable them to experience His love for His creation, and to understand and learn to live under His authority.

But members who wanted freedom from authority should be aware that theirs is not a new experiment tried in governing with freedom from authority. Another creation of God tried to govern itself with freedom from God’s authority before humanity was created. Lucifer was put in charge of the earth with possibly one third of all angels under his authority. After working perhaps billions of years on earth, Satan decided it would be a greater pleasure for him to rule without God’s authority. So he probably deceived and convinced all the angels under his authority to believe that it would be a great glorious future for them all if they rebelled against God and lived free from His rule and authority. They would do as they pleased, create whatever they desired, and would not be answerable to God or anyone.

But after the unsuccessful rebellion, when Satan and all the demons were cast back to earth, possibly living in darkness they had created for themselves by destroying the surface of the earth, the demons found out that there is no such thing as freedom from authority. They found that on earth they had merely traded God’s authority for Satan’s authority. And there was no such thing as freedom to do entirely as one pleased. Pure self-interest would bring them into conflict with one another. To be able to get along with one another, they needed rules. Rules had to be enforced. To enforce rules, authority was required. One had to be in charge with that authority if that kingdom on earth was not to be divided. And Satan was that authority on earth. So the demons now had Satan in authority over them instead of God. They were free from following God’s way of life, but were now subject to Satan’s way of life. They either followed that way of life willingly, or were forced to follow it. There was no freedom from that way of life. Satan enforced his way on all the demons. The glorious future, with freedom to do as they pleased, free from God’s rules and authority turned out to be an illusion. Their lives turned out to be more repressed under Satan’s rule.

Thus, those who left God’s Church after Mr. Armstrong’s death because they wanted to be free from authority need to sincerely repent. If you can’t be ruled by God, then He will not have you in His kingdom. He will not grant you eternal life. Being able to live in God’s Church in subjection to authority God has established, is a test God has devised to test every human being to see if they will be able to live in subjection to His authority for eternity. It is much harder to live under authority of imperfect human beings. But those who demonstrate their ability to accept and live under the authority of human beings will convince God that they would be able to live under His authority for eternity. God will be pleased to grant them eternal life. Those who demonstrate their inability or unwillingness to submit to authority in God’s Church will lose their chance for eternal life. So those who left God’s Church because they had problems with authority need to repent and come back to God’s Church before it is too late.

**CHAPTER 14**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

**Because of Expectation of a Trouble-Free Blessed Life**

The sixth category of members who became lukewarm and could lose their crown were those who when they had the truth revealed to them that there is an Almighty God who exists, makes promises to human beings such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David and keeps them, wanted to be on God’s side. As God had blessed the patriarchs, they expected to be miraculously blessed the same way with material wealth and a happy, abundant, full life. But instead of blessings, when they experienced a life full of trials and troubles with barely being able to make ends meet, they were disillusioned with God’s promises in the Bible. Many such members began to fall by the way side even when Mr. Armstrong was alive. Then after Mr. Armstrong’s death on seeing the Church going astray from the way he taught, they were completely disillusioned and simply withdrew from the Church.

Many of us in reading the Bible mainly focus on and are inspired by God’s miraculous intervention in the lives of the patriarchs. We tend to expect the same kind of miracles and blessings in our lives as well. But we fail to realize that each of the patriarchs also suffered much tribulation, persecution and hardship in their lives that built character in them, after which God was pleased to bless them. And they were mighty men who were blessed for their diligence in work. Blessings were not just showered at them by just sitting at home and praying to God.

The truth is that God can make whatever promises He wants to whomever He wills. He has not made the same promises to every human being who joins His Church in this human life. Therefore we have no right to expect the same type of miracles and blessings from God that the patriarchs experienced in their lives. So the expectation of a blessed, happy, abundant full life for every member in God’s Church was not based on any promises from God but on our own thinking.

Though God has not promised each of us riches like the patriarchs in our physical lives, He has promised to take care of our needs. Jesus said in Matthew 6:25-34 (NKJV): “25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Peter the apostle wrote in 1 Peter 5:6-7(NKJV): “6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

In addition to promising to take care of our needs, God did specifically promise us tests, trials and tribulations in our physical lives. Jesus said in John 16:33: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation…”

Paul stated in Acts 14:22: “…we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Paul also stated in 1 Thessalonians 3:4: “For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass…” Our goal is the kingdom of God. These scriptures tell us that we must enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation.

We are also promised in 1 Timothy 3:12 that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Peter told us in 1 Peter 2:21 that we are to follow in Jesus Christ’s steps. He wrote: “21 For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps.” These scriptures show that our calling is to suffer as Jesus Christ suffered.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:3: “You therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” We members in God’s Church are Christ’s soldiers and the lot of soldiers is to endure hardship in battle. Romans 5:3-4 tells us why we must endure tribulation: “3…we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

The purpose of tests, trials and tribulation is to build character in us, to qualify to obtain eternal life as God’s literal sons and enable us to become worthy rulers with Jesus Christ. Romans 8:17-18 also reveals that destiny: “17…if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” And what is that glory? Verse 19 tells us: “19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.” We shall be glorified as literal sons of God.

Revelation 21:7 tells us: “He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” “Inherit all things”, literally means the universe.

Thus we see, the Bible clearly reveals that though God can materially bless members in His Church, He has not made any promises of a materially blessed, abundant life like the blessings received by the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. On the contrary, the specific promises made to all members are a life of much tribulation, tests, trials and persecutions, and at the end of this life, if we endure to the end in faith, the entire universe as our inheritance. So the ultimate promises to us are far greater than the physical blessings of the patriarchs.

Members of God’s Church who drifted away from the Church or left it because they were not within a few years materially and physically blessed after they began following God’s way of life, need to seriously repent of their attitude. By leaving God’s Church they have not endured to the end in the faith. If they do not repent now and renew their faith, they will lose their one and only chance for eternal life, because Jesus said in Matthew 24:13: “13…he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

Some may have expected to be materially blessed with little effort on their part, while others may have been very diligent in their work and expected to be rewarded with riches. But they may have neglected their spiritual growth in pursuit of wealth. Jesus describes such members of His Church who have fallen into this trap in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:22: “22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.” A person who becomes unfruitful because of the pursuit of riches will lose his or her chance for eternal life. Members of God’s Church need to guard against becoming unfruitful in spiritual and character development.

**CHAPTER 15**

**PHILADELPHIANS DO NOT LET ANY MAN TAKE THEIR CROWN**

**Due to Sheer Laziness in Doing *God’s Work***

The seventh and final category into which lukewarm or Laodicean members may fall is those who are plain lazy or not excited about doing God’s work, even though they were initially thrilled when they heard about the reward of rulership of the earth along with eternal life.

Members or former members need to seriously examine themselves if their attitude in God’s Church and in doing God’s work can be described in these terms. Jesus Christ left no doubt about the end result of such members’ lives.

Jesus said in the parable of the sower in Luke 8:6, 13: “6 And some [seed] fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture [water is a symbol for God’s Holy Spirit which because of laziness is not renewed regularly]…13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”

Lazy attitude of some is also described in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, and in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19. In Matthew 25 (NKJV), after the man traveling into a far country who had given his servants 5, 2 and 1 talents came back from his journey, Jesus describes what happened then in verses 19-31: “19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22 He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

“24 Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and **lazy** servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The end result of the lives of members who have become lukewarm or Laodicean in their attitudes towards God’s work and living God’s way of life because of laziness will be loss of all they have, including cessation of their lives.

Possibly there may have been an example of laziness and lack of enthusiasm for God’s work even before humanity was created? It seems human beings and their environment have been created with certain attributes to teach them eternal lessons. The need for learning these eternal lessons arose because of the way the angels under Lucifer on earth behaved. They were put on earth to beautify it and most likely create their own creation. The dinosaur world was likely their creation. Over perhaps hundreds of millions or billions of years of learning about the substance of the earth and creating life on it, some angels must have developed a lazy attitude and lack of enthusiasm for doing anything. They simply were not excited about work at all, though they had been joyfully excited about the opportunity when the material universe was created (Job 38:7).

To inculcate the habit of work in human beings, God made their lives dependent on food, which requires work to procure or produce. Man cannot get away from work to sustain himself. Necessity thus inculcates the habit of work in human beings. Those who work harder can enjoy more material blessings. So work pays off in many ways.

If members of God’s Church have not developed the habit of diligent work to provide for themselves and their families, they will have failed like some angels under Lucifer’s rule to learn the necessary lesson of working with zeal and enthusiasm with what God has provided for them: the earth, other planets and galaxies. And how does God want us to demonstrate our zeal and enthusiasm for what God has in store for us for eternity? By demonstrating enthusiasm for God’s way of life and His work on earth of preaching the good news of the soon coming Kingdom of God!

If a member has not been enthusiastic about doing God’s work right now, then he is demonstrating to God that he will not be enthusiastic about life in His kingdom. If a member has no joy in being alive, then what use is it to have eternal life in God’s kingdom? That is why God will not grant eternal life to those who are not enthusiastic about His way of life and not diligent in living it and doing His work while they are in His Church. One must want to be live for eternity because he or she enjoys living.

BEING PART OF AND DOING GOD’S WORK IS AN INCREDIBLE PRIVILEGE WHICH WE SHOULD BE THRILLED TO UNDERTAKE WITHOUT ANY PRE-CONDITIONS SUCH AS A TROUBLE-FREE LIFE WITH BLESSINGS AND PROSPERITY. THE TESTS AND TRIALS ARE DESIGNED TO DEVELOP THE NECESSARY GODLY, RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY CHARACTER IN US TO QUALIFY US FOR PROMOTIONS TO BECOME KINGS AND PRIESTS WITH JESUS CHRIST. THAT IS KINGS AND PRIESTS. GOD IS LITERALLY HOLDING BACK NO PART OF PROMOTION FROM US. HE WILL NOT PROMOTE LAZY PEOPLE, OR THOSE WHO SET PRE-CONDITIONS TO SUCH POSITIONS. NO HUMAN KING OR CEO OF A MAJOR CORPORATION WOULD EITHER.

These are the ways members in God’s Church can allow someone to take their crown, or they can lose it by their own attitudes and actions.

**CHAPTER 16**

**LAODICEANS HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF SMUGNESS OF THE RICH**

Part of Jesus Christ’s admonition to the Laodiceans is stated in Revelation 3:17-18 (NKJV): “17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”

Those with a Laodicean attitude seem to think they are spiritually rich, meaning they feel that they have great understanding of God’s plan of salvation and way of life. They seem to have pride in that knowledge and feel that is sufficient for their salvation and have need of nothing else. They seem to be equating knowledge with righteousness. However Jesus Christ describes their true spiritual condition as being wretched, miserable and poor instead of being rich and they are blind, unable to see their true condition.

Laodiceans being naked has two implications. First nakedness can mean lacking in righteousness! Jesus Christ’s bride is to be arrayed in fine linen at its marriage to the Lamb.

Revelation 19:7-8 says: ‘7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

Laodiceans being naked means that they are not arrayed in fine linen which is righteous acts. This means that the Laodiceans are lacking in righteousness. Righteousness is obeying God’s commandments (Psalm 119:172). They are self-satisfied with their knowledge of God’s plan and way of life, but are not living that way with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Actually, the condition of the Laodiceans is worse than just not obeying God’s commandments wholeheartedly.

In Ephesians 6:10-14 Paul counsels Christians to put on the whole armor of God to fight and defend themselves against the arch enemy, Satan the devil. He writes: “10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins [private parts] girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness…”

A person is considered naked if his or her loins or private parts are uncovered. Paul says Christians should gird their loins with truth to defend themselves against the wiles of the devil. Thus when Jesus describes the Laodiceans as being naked, He means that they have lost knowledge of some of the truth. All members of God’s Church should be thoroughly grounded in the doctrines and other truths God restored through Mr. Armstrong. But the Laodiceans have lost knowledge of some of the doctrines and other truths, or have compromised with them in their thinking and attitudes.

We should not be surprised at Jesus’ strong rebuke of the Laodicean era of His Church. In the previous six eras of His Church, Jesus had nothing critical to say about the Smyrna and Philadelphia eras. For the other four Jesus had something positive to say before he criticized and admonished them for some negative traits. But He had nothing positive to say about the Laodicean era.

Human beings, including members of God’s Church with God’s holy spirit, seem to have an incredible tendency to be deceived despite receiving warnings for decades to be on guard about a deceiving event. Mr. Armstrong warned God’s Church about the “falling away” from the truth and lukewarm Laodicean attitude many times with warnings such as “You don’t get it brethren!” Despite these warnings 80% in God’s own Church have fallen away after Mr. Armstrong died.

Even in a future event, multitudes with God’s holy spirit will be deceived. After 1000 years of Jesus Christ’s reign, Satan will be released from solitary confinement for a season (Revelation 20:7-9: “7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”). First he will go to the demons separately imprisoned (Revelation 18:2) and many will likely be willing to follow him. Then they go out to deceive the nations once more and in a very short time, perhaps months only, great multitudes, who have God’s holy spirit (because holy spirit will be given to all in the millennium) from the four corners of the earth will march through the breadth of the earth and attack the saints gathered at Jerusalem, perhaps for the Feast of Tabernacles.

The entire world will have been warned for perhaps a century and will also know precisely when Satan will be released from his prison. They will also know which nations will be deceived by him. Despite these warnings these people will still be deceived into attacking the camp of the saints.

Even in the imminent future, we have God’s repeated warning through the parable of the ten virgins that Laodicean members of God’s Church will have to go through the Great Tribulation and 50% will compromise with the truth and give in to the threats of the Beast and the False Prophet and lose their only chance for eternal life. They may give in because of fear or deception.

It seems a kind of blindness will take over even some genuine members of God’s Church possessing God’s holy spirit despite Jesus Christ’s warning to the Laodiceans to guard against it.

REASONS FOR LAODICEANS’ BLINDNESS

Here are some of the major reasons that this blindness can occur.

1) One of the major tactics used by deceivers is to pitch their change or modification of doctrine, or heresies as “new revelation” from God. They claim that changes mean that they are growing in “grace and knowledge.” Many people want to be known for the character trait of being meek and teachable like Moses. They don’t want to be labeled as inflexible, resistant to growth and they believe they prove that to themselves by accepting changes. This was one of the mistakes the author himself made which caused him to stay in the Worldwide Church of God for 15 years even when the Tkaches had changed or watered down virtually all doctrines.

Such people are forgetting that the truth has been restored to God’s Church in the Philadelphian era through Mr. Armstrong and Jesus Christ counsels this era to “hold fast” to what has been restored to them. But they must realize that any change from the truth is “error.” It is impossible for one to grow in knowledge from what one has proved to be the truth. Those who accept changes probably did not prove all the doctrines from the scriptures for themselves. But God counsels His Church in Titus 1:7, 9 (NKJV), “7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God…9 *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught*, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

2) Another major reason for blindness among the Laodiceans is that they think they are “intellectually enlightened.” They have pride in their intellectual superiority. In apostolic times, the Roman province of Laodicea was known for its wealth and prided itself in its medical skills, particularly in healing diseases of the eye. In the Philadelphian era of Mr. Armstrong’s time, diligent Bible study still required effort, and pouring over books and concordances. But in the Laodicean era of modern times, access to biblical knowledge has exploded because of the Internet. Plethora of sermons and answers to biblical questions from every angle are readily available. And thereby lies part of the danger. Cunning crafty reasoning can lead to doubts about established truth. Pride in knowledge also leads a person to not feel the need for close diligent self-examination so that he is unable to discern his true spiritual condition. Feeling of “intellectual enlightenment” leads to a false feeling of righteousness, when in reality the person is just drifting along in his or her life without spiritual growth. The antidote, of course is ever thirsting for knowledge and seeking after it by diligent Bible study on one’s own. On the other hand, reading articles or books written by others should also keep a person humble by realizing that there is always so much more to learn and one’s knowledge and understanding is just a drop in the bucket of all knowledge of the Bible and the truth.

3) When Jesus admonished the Laodiceans by saying “Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'…” he was actually referring to the material wealth of the Laodiceans. Material wealth and the feeling of security that comes with it can make a person feel self-sufficient and even invincible. But Jesus warned the Laodicean members that spiritually they “…do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.”

There are some things about which members in God’s Church in this era have to be really on guard against. First of all, they must remember that being in the Laodicean era means that it will be the dominant condition among many members. So each member must always do a regular self-examination of his condition by assuming that the chances are that he is included among those with the Laodicean attitude.

Secondly, members of God’s Church probably have never been richer in the history of the Church than at any other time. Government help has never been greater in the USA and British Commonwealth nations than at any other time. Large bank balances and retirement accounts breed a feeling of invincibility and self-sufficiency that the need to pray to God for physical and material help is never urgent. In addition, the author has made available parts of billions of dollars in funds that he has control over for help for anyone who is really in need as part of the tithing system that the Church practices. All this readily available help in time of need can lead to a less than zealous and fervent spiritual attitude. Members must always be on guard against these possible sources of danger that can lead to spiritual lethargy.

4) Another reason that blindness can occur is simply the age we live in. Paul the apostle described the last days in these terms in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, “1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high- minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

We live in an entertainment and pleasure-loving age. Members of God’s Church can get intensely involved in professional and college sports, entertainment on TV, internet, and otherwise, numerous Church activities for families, young adults, singles, teenagers and young children, parties with Church members and friends, movies and the like.

Material wealth makes all this access to entertainment and pleasure possible. But pursuit of pleasure and even wealth itself leaves less and less time for pursuit of spiritual growth, eventually leading to blindness and inability to see one’s true spiritual condition.

The antidote was given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 6:33: “33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” But how does one seek first the Kingdom of God? One does that by making God’s work the top priority in one’s life and exercising all the tools of spiritual growth: daily prayer, daily Bible study, regular fasting (norm or minimum should be once a month) to get close to God and for self-examination, daily meditation on one’s spiritual condition or other godly topics, fellowship with Church members, and exercising God’s holy spirit. These tools of spiritual growth will be covered in greater detail a little later.

**CHAPTER 17**

**LAODICEANS COUNSELED TO ANOINT THEIR EYES WITH EYE SALVE**

Jesus Christ in His admonition provided a cure for the blindness afflicting the Laodicean members of His Church. He stated in Revelation 3:18-19: “ 18 I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Jesus admonishes the Laodiceans to buy of Him gold refined in the fire. God has given members of His Church, particularly the Laodicean era three fires to choose from.

A true Christian’s life itself is a life of trial by fire. Peter says so in 1 Peter 4:12, “12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you…” This is the first fire that a Christian can choose.

Paul tells Christians in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “5 Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?”

Paul uses two Greek words to describe the process of examining ourselves. The Greek word translated ‘examine’ is *peirazo*, which means to test or scrutinize. This is the starting point in the process of thoroughly examining ourselves whether we are in the faith. Then Paul says Christians are then to go on to prove themselves whether they are in the faith. The Greek word translated prove is *dokimazo* which means a more fiery level of intense examination to seek proof that the Christian is indeed converted, pure in doctrine, character and in the truth. A Christian is to thoroughly know himself that Jesus Christ is in him, and that he is not a reprobate, meaning unapproved by God.

How then does a Christian prove to himself whether he is approved by God or not? Paul again provides the answer in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to show yourself APPROVED unto God, a workman that needs not to be ASHAMED, rightly dividing the WORD OF TRUTH.”

The Greek word translated ‘approved’ is dokimos which has the same root word as dokimazo. It means to put (for example a metal such as gold or silver) to the test by trial to prove that one is PURE (without any impurity or alloy) and GENUINE in the TRUTH.

Paul is saying here that a Christian should examine himself through such an intense corrective Bible study to produce purity and truth (such as gold tried in the fire without impurity or alloy) in himself that it is like a trial by fire. Such members of God’s Church will be approved by God. This is the first fire that a member of God’s Church can choose.

However, if a member does not choose this level of trial by fire through intense Bible study, fasting and prayer, then God will be forced to try the member’s faith in the second fire of the soon-coming Great Tribulation. He will not escape the Great Tribulation by being taken to the place of safety. In this fire, the Laodicean member will have to prove his loyalty to God and His way of life by suffering persecution and martyrdom for it.

However, in order to avoid persecution, if the Laodicean member chooses to compromise with the leaders of the so-called ‘Holy Roman Empire’ and forsake God’s way of life by denying Jesus Christ, then he will have chosen the third fire of the Lake of Fire. Such Laodicean member will not survive the Great Tribulation either because he will die in the events of the Day of the Lord, which is the last one year of the three and a half year long Great Tribulation. He will be resurrected back to physical life when God’s plan for salvation of mankind has been completed and will be burnt up alive when the entire earth is set on fire to cleanse it of all sin and sinful people.

Jesus then tells the Laodiceans to buy of Him white raiment that they may be clothed. White raiment is a symbol of righteousness (Revelation 19:7-8), and righteousness is keeping God’s commandments (Psalm 119:172: “172…all Your commandments are righteousness.”)

Jesus is thus telling the Laodiceans that they need to repent and go through the fiery trial of intensive Bible study, and keep God’s commandments. They will then be clothed with white raiment so that their nakedness does not appear to their shame.

As part of His solution to the Laodiceans’ problems Jesus also admonishes them to ‘anoint their eyes with eye-salve;’ because spiritual blindness is the cause of their problems.

Ancient Laodiceans considered themselves to be educated and enlightened, especially perceptive, and had pride in their medical skills in healing problems with eye-sight and hearing. They produced a powder that was famous in its time as a cure for eye problems. Modern information age with free access to so much information (and vast amount of literature published by different Church of God organizations) mirrors the conditions in Laodicea which can lead to pride in their knowledge and a feeling of being enlightened and self-sufficient even in members of God’s Church. The feeling of enlightenment is the cause of their blindness because they don’t think they have a problem with spiritual eye sight. Remember, this is Jesus Christ’s diagnosis of the problem facing the Laodicean era.

So what did Jesus mean when He said “anoint your eyes with eye-salve?”

We must understand that before we were called into God’s Church, we were spiritually blind. After becoming members of the Church we received enlightenment. But how did we receive enlightenment. Paul provides the answer in Ephesians 1:17-18: “17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the [holy] spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.”

Our spiritual eyes were enlightened when we received God’s holy spirit. So if Jesus Christ diagnoses our problem as spiritual blindness, then we can be enlightened in the same way once again as we were originally enlightened from spiritual blindness when we began our Christian walk at baptism and receiving of God’s holy spirit.

Another scripture that sheds light on what Jesus meant when He said “anoint your eyes with eye salve” is 1 John 2:20-29: “20 But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth… 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

The Greek word translated ‘unction’ in verse 20 and ‘anointing’ in verse 27 is *charisma*, (Strong’s Greek Dictionary no. 5545) which means ‘endowment of the holy spirit,’ anointing, unction. John is saying in verses 20-21 that members of God’s Church have an anointing of God’s holy spirit, which is the reason they know all things that are truth, and there is no [doctrinal or judgment] lie of the truth. This means that it is the anointing of the holy spirit that enables members to separate the lies from the truth, keeping them secure in the truth by preventing them from being deceived.

In verse 26 John explains that he was writing to the members concerning those who were trying to seduce them away from the truth. But in verses 24 and 25 he told them that they should abide in what they had heard from the beginning for which God the Father and Jesus Christ have promised us eternal life.

In verse 27 John makes it very clear that *it is the anointing of the holy spirit that had taught them the truth, and no lie with it, and it is the holy spirit that can enable them to abide in the truth.* So the TRUTH is learnt through the holy spirit and also retained through the holy spirit.

John wrote in John 15:26, “26 But when the Comforter [another name for the holy spirit] is come…even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father…” Then in 16:13: “13 Howbeit when it [‘it’ is the correct translation instead of ‘he’], the Spirit of truth, is come, it will guide you into all truth:”

Thus the holy spirit is also known as the Spirit of truth that guides us into all truth.

Then in verse 28 John exhorts the members to abide in Jesus Christ in the TRUTH that they learnt in the beginning so that they can be confident that they will not be found naked at His coming and be ashamed. Then in verse 29 John says that only those who are righteous, those that actually keep the commandments will be born of Him and receive eternal life.

When we put all these scriptures together, the picture that emerges is that originally our spiritual eyes were enlightened through God’s holy spirit that we received on baptism and laying on of hands. It is the holy spirit that guided us into all truth and also enables us to retain it. It keeps us from being deceived by giving us the ability to discern heresy or error from the truth. So if the Laodiceans have now been spiritually blinded, the reason is that they have diminished their supply of God’s Holy spirit or quenched it altogether due to neglect or sin. The only way we can restore our spiritual eye sight is by renewing God’s holy spirit again. Therefore the eye salve that Jesus counsels the Laodiceans to anoint their eyes with is nothing else but God’s holy spirit.

And how does one renew and obtain more of God’s holy spirit?

The answer: By asking God for it in prayer and using the tools of spiritual growth.

**Discerning whether one is a Philadelphian or Laodicean**

Remember, we live in the predominantly Laodicean era. One must always have the very cautious attitude that the chances are that he or she could be a Laodicean. So each and every one must do a thorough self-examination to discern his or her true spiritual condition.

But whether one is a Philadelphian or Laodicean depends entirely on the individual’s efforts. How then does one discern whether he or she is a Philadelphian or Laodicean. Again we just need to look at the characteristics Jesus Christ gave of Philadelphians and Laodiceans in His messages to the two Churches in Revelation 3.

*Characteristics of Philadelphians*

Here again is Jesus Christ’s message to the Philadelphian Church in its entirety:

Revelation 3:7-13: “7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts ; and shuts , and no man opens; 8 I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. 12 Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.”

Here in summary form are the characteristics of the Philadelphians:

1) The name of this era of God’s Church is Philadelphia, which means “brotherly love.” Therefore, genuine brotherly love should characterize dealings of Church members with one another. If one does not feel genuine love for the brethren and treat each one as brother or sister, then one is not a Philadelphian.

Reference to the key of David simply means the key to one becoming a ruler or king in God’s kingdom, which is the potential of every member of God’s Church.

2) Jesus Christ has given the Church an open door to do God’s works, which is preaching the gospel or good news of the soon coming Kingdom of God. Philadelphians are consumed with fiery zeal to support and do God’s work.

3) Jesus’ words “you have a little strength” defined the physical strength [in terms of material resources] of the Philadelphian era that began with the beginning of Mr. Armstrong’s ministry and ended with his death. Members during the Philadelphian era were not rich, but accomplished a great deal by sacrificing much to do God’s work. That attitude of sacrifice should still characterize Philadelphians.

4) Philadelphians are commended for keeping God’s word and counseled to hold fast to what they have. Keeping God’s word simply means living according to every word of God in the Bible. They not only regularly read God’s word, but are also very diligent to live by it and in overcoming sin. The Philadelphian era also had something special that other eras except the very first Ephesian era did not have: knowledge of all the true doctrines of God. All that truth was restored to God’s Church through Mr. Armstrong who fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah the prophet. The Philadelphians hold fast to [meaning preserve] and defend all the doctrines that God restored through Mr. Armstrong.

5) Philadelphians have also fixed it in their minds that they will never deny that they belong to the true Creator God, the God of the Sabbath, and that Jesus Christ is their Savior no matter what persecution they might be faced with. Denying or hiding their faith to avoid persecution is not an option for them. The Sabbath is the identifying sign that they belong to the true God and do not deny that they keep the Sabbath holy and also keep God’s seven annual holy days.

6) Finally, the Philadelphians patiently endure all trials and persecutions till the very end of their lives. Mr. Armstrong and other Church leaders had to patiently endure intense persecution from the parallel Synagogue [Church] of Satan that existed within the Church. And there were many Church ministers belonging to the Church of Satan who persecuted members. The author himself endured persecution from the hands of one such minister.

If all these characteristics abound in you, then you can know that you are a Philadelphian. If you are lacking in any of these characteristics, then chances are that you are a Laodicean and need to repent because there is very little time left. End of the end time catastrophic third World War can begin at any time.

Now Jesus’ message to the Laodicean Church:

Revelation 3:14-22: “14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. 16 So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue you out of my mouth. 17 Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 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. 21 To him that overcomes 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. 22 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.”

Here in summary form are the characteristics of the Laodiceans:

1) The overall attitude of the Laodiceans towards their spiritual life, in doing God’s work and overcoming sin is one of lukewarmness rather than that of fiery zeal and enthusiasm. They are in serious danger of Jesus Christ considering them as not part of God’s Church any longer though they may be attending weekly services.

2) These members seem to have a feeling of self-sufficiency because of their relative material prosperity. They seem to equate material prosperity with blessings as a result of their righteousness.

3) Since they equate material blessings as a reward for their righteousness, they feel there is no need for deep self-examination. Jesus Christ describes this as blindness, which is the inability to discern their true spiritual condition which in reality is wretched, miserable and spiritual poverty.

4) They also feel that they are spiritually rich and are proud of their knowledge of God’s plan of salvation and understanding of the Bible. They feel they have need for nothing as there is not much more to learn. So they no longer hunger and thirst for knowledge of God’s word and His righteousness. And that is being lukewarm.

5) These members are also spiritually naked which means they have either lost knowledge of some truth or compromised with it. Their loins are no longer girded with truth (Ephesians 6:14). They no longer adhere to all the doctrines and truths restored to God’s Church by Mr. Armstrong. The reason is that they feel they have grown in grace and knowledge since the time of Mr. Armstrong. They are blind to the fact that you cannot grow out of truth. Growing out of truth means discarding the truth. Being spiritually naked also means not clothed with white raiment which is righteousness, or keeping of God’s commandments. This means they are also not keeping God’s commandments perfectly with diligence.

If a person sees any of these characteristics in himself, then that person is a Laodicean in need of deep repentance. But since Laodiceans are also blind, they need God’s help in seeing their true spiritual condition. They need more of God’s holy spirit, the eye salve that will heal their spiritual eyes to enable them to recognize that they are Laodiceans. Before discussing how Laodiceans may obtain more of God’s holy spirit to enable them to see, there is another way members can take their temperature to see whether they are spiritually hot, lukewarm of downright cold.

**Taking your spiritual temperature**

Use of daily and weekly time by a Church of God member generally indicates where his priorities lie.

David C. Pack, pastor general of the Restored Church of God in his book *“Anoint Your Eyes” – Christ’s Warning to His People*” describes his experience with his congregations as a minister in God’s Church for 43 years. He states in chapter 8:

“Since entering the ministry, I have worked directly with well over 10,000 brethren. This has given me an enormous exposure to and understanding of the spiritual temperature of God’s people. Let me offer one case study for your consideration.

“In each of my pastorates, beginning in the 1970s, I asked brethren during a sermon to anonymously answer five very simple questions (on a 3 x 5 card) about how often they were praying, studying and fasting.

“The answers were always stunning—more like appalling! Invariably, about 20 percent would not even turn in the card, presumably because their answers were not good. (Some in this category were openly offended that they would even be asked to do this.) Astonishingly, another 20 percent admitted to being virtually zero in all categories. Yet, a third 20 percent prayed and studied only 5-10 minutes a day—on the days that were not zeros! A fourth 20 percent were generally praying enough, but not studying enough, and rarely fasting between Days of Atonement. The last 20 percent (interestingly, about the number surviving the apostasy) were generally praying and studying close to 30 minutes most days. But only about 2 or 3 percent of the total group were reaching or exceeding these numbers every day in both categories, and fasting on a regular basis.

“Is it any wonder that 80 percent of the WCG did not survive the apostasy? I knew as early as the late 70s and early 80s, following the liberal years, that most never fully recovered the zeal they may have once had, and that most in the Church were headed for big trouble! While I certainly did not envision just how big that trouble would be, I saw a disturbing lack of use of the most basic Christian tools—tools necessary for any amount of spiritual growth.”

This survey clearly indicates that members who devoted time to using the tools for spiritual growth remained loyal to the truth. Those who did not, lost knowledge of the truth, or compromised with it and fell away. So a member of God’s Church can also take his temperature by keeping track of the time he devotes daily to exercising the tools for spiritual growth.

**TOOLS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

The Bible mentions tools a Christian needs to use for spiritual growth. All tools must be used. None must be neglected. The tools are:

1) *Prayer*  - Jesus Christ, even though He was God in the flesh prayed to God the Father regularly, sometimes praying all night (Luke 6:12), asking for His help. He knew that God the Father was the key to success in every endeavor we undertake. Prayer to God for His help is that important.

We are told in Matthew 7:7 9 (NKJV), “7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” Therefore, we are to ask God in prayer for whatever we need, including help in overcoming sin, curing our spiritual blindness or other help we might need in spiritual development.

When we pray we communicate with God. We can share our deepest thoughts and concerns with Him and make our requests for His help. If you have had prayers answered, then you know that God can communicate with you while you pray by inspiring answers to your questions. Humanity now has direct access to God the Father after the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Creator. This was symbolized when “38…” the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Mark 15:38 and Ephesians 2:13-14).

Just as a guideline, a person working a regular 8 am to 5 pm job 5 days a week should spend at least 15-30 minutes in prayer daily, and more on the Sabbath and week ends.

The Bible is God’s Word to mankind in print. When we read the Bible, we are hearing God communicate His will and solutions to our problems through the pages of the Bible. So humanity is privileged to have a two-way communication with its Maker. Therefore Bible study is the second tool for spiritual growth. Prayer and Bible study go hand-in-hand for a perfect two-way communication with God.

2) *Intensive Bible Study* – The Bible is the Creator’s instruction manual for mankind. Every reputable manufacturer provides an instruction and maintenance manual with his product. God has provided mankind with the Bible. Paul was inspired to write to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Paul here guided Timothy on the absolute necessity for intensive Bible study for correction. The Bible study itself should be like a fiery trial with deep soul searching to see if any sin still remains as a part of our being. Bible reading should be like a mirror, enabling us to see our true inner self, recognize sins, provide solutions in overcoming them and teach us how God expects us to conduct ourselves in every life situation.

In confronting Satan in Luke 4:4, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” So to make an effective use of God’s instruction manual for mankind, both the Old and New Testaments must be read and diligently studied.

As a guideline, a person working a regular 8 am to 5 pm job should read his Bible at least 15 to 30 minutes daily with much more on the weekends.

3) *Meditation* – The third spiritual tool, meditation, is simply dedicating sufficient time to contemplating, reflecting, pondering a subject deeply. Besides meditating on issues related to our spiritual growth and overcoming sin, we can meditate on a variety of other subjects. These could include:

* How awesome God is as Creator and that He is our Father.
* How awe inspiring is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and what was at stake.
* God’s plan of salvation for mankind pictured in the seven annual holy days.
* God’s promises in the Bible in the past and how God kept them and promises in the future that God will keep.
* What will God’s kingdom be like for eternity and how we would play our part in it!
* How we can emulate Jesus Christ’s perfect example in every aspect of our life.
* How awesome is God’s Law and the wisdom contained in it.
* Contemplating on the lives of Biblical heroes, what challenges they faced and how they overcame them. What we can learn from their experiences.
* Recognizing our sins and developing strategies to overcome them.
* Read specific portions of the Bible and see what lessons we can learn from them.

4) *Fasting* – The reason why we need to fast (totally abstain from food, water or any other drink) was explained by Jesus’ answer to the disciples of John in Matthew 9:14-15 (NKJV) who asked Him why His disciples did not fast: “14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" 15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Jesus said that His disciples did not need to fast when He (the God of the Old Testament) was with them. He was near them. But when He is taken away from them, then THEY WILL FAST (not may fast) to stay close to Him. That is the purpose of fasting: to get close to God. With that purpose in mind, most of the time spent in fasting should be devoted to Bible study, prayer, reflecting and meditation.

Going without food and water humbles a person (Psalm 35:13, “I humbled myself with fasting.” So the basic purpose of fasting is to worship God, draw closer to Him, deny and humble ourselves in order to grow spiritually by using the time for prayer, Bible study and meditation. One may use fasting for asking God in prayer for some special need or help in time of trouble as well. There are many examples of this in the Bible which we should study.

As a guideline one should fast at least once a month.

5) *Attending Church* – Members of God’s Church are admonished to not forsake attending Church services in Hebrews 10:24 – 25 (NKJV), “24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

These verses reveal the necessity of attending Church services and the benefits of doing so.

First of all, we are told not to give up the assembling of ourselves in Church services because God knows that we need each other, and need to interact and communicate with each other. The reasons are stated in Proverbs 27:17, “17 As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend;” [meaning mere interacting with the brethren leads to spiritual growth] and in Galatians 6:1-2, 9-10 (NKJV), “1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ….9 And let us not grow weary in well doing [KJV], for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Secondly, we are told to be the right kind of friends who stir up the other brethren to “love and good works” by encouraging them. Many good works require collective efforts. On his own a person may not consider getting involved in good works. But many get involved if efforts are made collectively. Stirring up love and good works are essential for greater Christian growth.

Thirdly we are told to exhort, meaning encourage and support, one another. Such encouragement and support is often needed during times of severe trials and difficulties. It helps us to “endure to the end” and not get discouraged and give up.

The serious implication of this admonition is clear: attending Church services is crucial to our spiritual growth. Those who don’t put themselves in serious danger of falling away from the truth. And Satan often attacks loners by discouraging them and distracting them from putting the Kingdom of God first in their lives.

The true Church of God is called the mother of us all members the purpose of which is to nourish us so that we can grow spiritually. Galatians 4:26 states, “But JERUSALEM which is ABOVE is free, which is the mother of us all.” Then Hebrews 12:22-23 identifies what heavenly Jerusalem is: ““But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and CHURCH of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Here Heavenly Jerusalem is identified as the Church of the firstborn. Members of God’s Church and all those called in the first 6,000 years of man’s history (before the birth of the Church in 31 A.D. the called ones were primarily the prophets) are called the firstfruits and will be the firstborn by resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ.

As Jerusalem on earth was the capital of ancient physical Israel, Heavenly Jerusalem at present is the headquarters of the spiritual Israel, God’s Church. That’s where the Church’s ruler, Jesus Christ, is presently stationed at the right hand of God the Father.

As in a human family, the primary task of feeding and nourishing the children belongs to the mother. It’s the same with God’s Church. The primary responsibility of the Church of God is to spiritually feed and nourish its members. That’s why attending Church services every week and on God’s annual holy days is so important, and is a critical tool for spiritual growth.

The purpose of using these tools of spiritual growth is to be able to examine ourselves to see whether we are producing the fruits of God’s holy spirit, mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23, “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

If we don’t see these fruits of the spirit overflowing in us, then we may be able to detect whether we are quenching God’s holy spirit if we see these fruits of the flesh present in our lives: “19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before , as I have also told you in time past , that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

**How can we obtain more of God’s Holy Spirit**

Now we can answer the question: How do we obtain more of God’s holy spirit!

Jesus Christ provided the answer in Luke 11:9-13, “9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. 11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

We should ask God to replenish the supply of His holy spirit when we pray to Him daily. God wants to give us more of His holy spirit as a father wants to give good gifts to his children. God’s holy spirit must also be used by us and that is done when we use the tools of spiritual growth.

**Steps in the Repentance Process**

If after taking one’s temperature a person realizes that he is Laodicean in attitude, what steps can he take to change and overcome spiritual blindness to become a Philadelphian again? Jesus Christ provided the formula in His admonition to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:19, “19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

If one sees oneself experiencing troubles, it may be a sign of chastening by Jesus Christ to get the person’s attention. Or if the person through self-examination determines that he is in the danger zone of being a Laodicean, the formula to repent is: Be ZEALOUS and REPENT!

The process of changing from Laodicean to Philadelphian begins with ZEAL to change, and then also carry out the task of repentance with zeal. The steps in the process of repentance were described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:9-11, ““Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance: for you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage from us in nothing. For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world works death. For behold this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what CAREFULNESS it wrought in you…what CLEARING OF YOURSELVES…what INDIGNATION…what FEAR…what VEHEMENT DESIRE…what ZEAL…what REVENGE! In all things you have approved [strengthened, exhibited] yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

The seven steps of repentance mentioned here are sequential in the process of repentance. It is literally a declaration of war against sin and to fight it with zeal and determination.

After one feels deep godly sorrow for having sinned and recognized the specific sin, the person first becomes very CAREFUL to guard against committing that sin, then he works on strategies to CLEAR himself of that sin. As one reflects and works on overcoming the sin, one becomes INDIGNANT at the damaging effects it had. It leads to FEAR to not commit that sin again. That generates a VEHEMENT DESIRE to overcome it. The vehement desire then translates into ZEAL to work to eliminate the sin. Once the person has overcome the sin, he has gotten REVENGE on the sin.

**CHAPTER 18**

**HOW CAN LAODICEANS MAXIMIZE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL**

It must be reiterated, there is very little likelihood that a member will consider himself or herself to be a Laodicean. And yet we are living in the Laodicean era where the predominant attitude is Laodicean or lukewarm.

Jesus Christ will make the ultimate judgment who the Laodiceans are and will not be taken to the place of safety. They will have to go through the Tribulation to prove their loyalty to God and His way of life. The parable of the ten virgins tells us that only about 50% will stay loyal to the truth, choosing to suffer persecution and martyrdom rather than compromising with God’s way of life and denying the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

What should the person who is determined by Jesus Christ to be a Laodicean do during the Great Tribulation to qualify to receive eternal life and ultimately triumph over Satan and all his enemies who will persecute him?

Revelation 12:17 (KJV) says: “17 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.”

This verse describes the part of God’s Church that is left in the world as a remnant. A remnant means a small part and not a major part. Therefore our hope is that only a small portion of God’s Church will have a Laodicean attitude, whereas the majority will be in the place of safety. That should be encouraging for members of God’s Church.

The parable of the ten virgins indicates that about 50% of such members will fail this test, give in to the threats of the beast and the false prophet of the Roman Church, deny the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ, take on the mark of the beast and worship his image, compromise with God’s law and way of life. The other about 50% will pass the test with flying colors, remain loyal to God and His way of life and die for it and will be resurrected as glorious immortal sons of God at the return of Jesus Christ within a few months of their martyrdom.

How does God require such Laodicean members of His Church to conduct themselves in the Great Tribulation? For members of God’s Church who find themselves in the Great Tribulation, they should follow these ten suggestions so that they may minimize their suffering and qualify to receive eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ.

1) PREPARE YOUR MIND TO FACE THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

We know that the Great Tribulation is almost at the door. The Germans, other Europeans and the Roman Church have been and are even now plotting to control the world economically, politically and militarily and impose their religion on all nations. One has to prepare for such catastrophic events to increase one’s Chances of surviving them. The Bible has described in quite great detail what will happen. To prepare your mind, think what your reaction will be if you are faced with the situation. If you have never given thought to what could happen in the Great Tribulation, you may panic if you find yourself in it and surrender to the beast and the false prophet. That is the surest way to lose your chance for eternal life, and also your life physically in the events of the Day of the Lord, the last one year of the Great Tribulation. And your death will be preceded by torture of the many plagues during this one year.

The greatest example of preparing one’s mind for a great confrontation is that of Jesus Christ when He was to be tempted by the devil. As described in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, He fasted 40 days and 40 nights, and prayed to God. If a person finds himself in the Great Tribulation, then it’s time to stay as close to God as possible. While fasting 40 days and 40 nights is not recommended, fasting and praying regularly would be needed to avoid deception by the beast and the false prophet and avoid temptation to give in to them.

Here is an example of the difference in preparing one’s mind to seek God and not seeking God can make in the same individual. The example is that of King Asa of ancient Israel. 2 Chronicles 14:2-4 (NKJV) states: “2 Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God, 3 for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images. 4 He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment.”

The account goes on to describe how Zarah the Ethiopian came and attacked Judah with a million man army. Asa cried to God for help. Then God struck the Ethiopians before Asa’s men. Thus Judah gained victory over the Ethiopians and carried away much spoil to Jerusalem. Asa then prepared his heart to seek the Lord as described in 1 Chronicles 15:12: “12 Then they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.” This happened in the 15th year of Asa’s reign. As a result the nation greatly prospered.

But then 21 years later in the 36th year of his reign, the peace and prosperity had changed Asa. This time when the King of Israel attacked Judah, Asa sent gold and silver to Benhadad the King of Syria to attack the King of Israel and relieve him. This time Asa trusted in his own way to do things rather than trusting in God. The King of Syria helped and the disaster was averted. But God sent a prophet to tell Asa that he had done foolishly in not trusting God for help but relying on his own way. Asa became angry because of God’s judgment and put the prophet in prison and oppressed some of the people. God gave him 3 years to repent of his attitude. But Asa did not. Then Asa was diseased in his feet with a severe disease. However, his heart had been so offended and hardened against God that he did not seek God’s help for healing but relied on physicians. He presumably died two years later without being healed.

Asa’s example shows that when a person is always preparing his heart to continually seek God, he can obtain God’s help. The greatest benefit for members who are preparing their hearts to continually seek God will be that they will probably escape the tribulation by being in the place of safety. But when a person has become lukewarm like Asa in his old age and a test or trial comes, he may not think on relying on God for protection but may devise his own ways of escape that could lead to losing faith and trust in God. Those who have not prepared their hearts to face the Great Tribulation, if they find themselves in it, they will likely trust in their own way to escape by compromising with the beast and the false prophet and turning their backs on God. But those who have prepared their minds in case they find themselves in it will probably make the right decision to endure to the end.

2) ENDURE TO THE END

Jesus Christ described what would happen to the Laodicean members in the Great Tribulation in Matthew 24:9-13, (NKJV) “9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

Those Laodicean members who become offended against God for allowing them to go through the Tribulation and begin to hate God’s Church, especially other Laodicean members who remain loyal to God, and betray them to the persecuting authorities, allow themselves to be deceived by the false prophet of the Roman Church or any other false prophet who may arise even among them, and let their love and concern for other members grow cold will not be saved. They will begin worshipping the image of the beast and take the mark of the beast in order to save themselves physically, but they will lose their only chance for eternal life.

Most members of God’s Church will come from the Israelite countries. Because the beast and the false prophet also want to destroy Israelites, they may promise to save alive those who compromise and worship the image of the beast, but may have lied and may still put them to death by breaking their promise. Even if the beast and the false prophet let them live, they will surely perish physically when Jesus Christ punishes all nations during the events of the last one year of the Great Tribulation, called the day of the Lord, or day of God’s wrath on all nations.

Jesus Christ said that only those who never yield to the forces of darkness, don’t compromise with them, endure to the end in loyalty to God, and are willing to die to prove their loyalty will receive eternal life in the first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ, only a few short months after their martyrdom. Enduring to the very end is the only way any member of God’s Church throughout its history has been saved.

3) BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT PROPHECY AND THE GOSPEL

In Luke 21:12-15 (NKJV) Jesus described another aspect of persecution for members of God’s Church. He said: “12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.”

Many times in the history of God’s true Church, leaders and even lay members of God’s Church have been brought before kings and lesser rulers to answer for themselves. This will certainly happen even during the Great Tribulation. But Jesus says this will turn out to be a testimony to the rulers and the world. This means that you will be preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God to them. Organized preaching of the gospel will have been stopped because the Philadelphian element of the Church will be in the place of safety. But the testimony of loyal Laodicean members is one way the gospel will be preached. So Jesus is calling these members who are being persecuted for a very important part in reaching the world. And it may actually save some of those who hear them.

When one reads “*A History of the True Church*” by Andrew Dugger and Clarence Dodd, one comes across numerous examples of people who were converted when they heard the testimony and witnessed the suffering of true members of God’s Church. Their testimony converted even some of their persecutors. Therefore remember that your testimony will have an extremely important purpose, even to the point of causing many to repent and perhaps come out alive through the Great Tribulation.

Jesus Christ says in verses 14-15: “…settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.” Jesus here means that we are not to meditate in our hearts what kind of questions we might be asked in our testimony and what we would answer. This does not mean that we should not thoroughly understand what the gospel or the good news of the kingdom of God is and the prophecies related to it, and the sequence of events that the world will be going through. All Jesus is saying here is that don’t premeditate on the likely questions and answers.

Being thoroughly knowledgeable about God’s plan of salvation, good news about the kingdom of God and a thorough understanding of end-time prophecies and the sequence of events is required to explain these things when called upon to do so. Peter mentioned this requirement in 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV): “15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

Kings and rulers will not suffer people who are not knowledgeable about their own beliefs. Jesus Christ promises to supply the answer when rulers and kings ask difficult trick questions. But He expects us to thoroughly know our beliefs, doctrines, the prophecies related to end-time events and establishment of the Kingdom of God. Only if we are able to explain these things clearly and in convincing detail will people listen to and respect us. In the process of our testimony we may convert some, and may even move rulers to let individuals live because of gently and meekly explaining such wisdom to them. It is extremely important to answer gently and respectfully and not hurl this knowledge in a condemning, scolding way to belittle the hearers.

4) NEVER THREATEN

As persecuted members of God’s Church, you may be asked why you are in the situation you are in as a slave and persecuted. Explain the reasons, confessing your shortcomings and fulfillment of prophecies related to it, and gently urge your persecutors about the upcoming prophecies and how they can save themselves. Otherwise they too will perish in the events of the day of the Lord. Let them know that your purpose is not to threaten them with God’s wrath, but to let them know that you are simply repeating warning God has already issued to lead people to repentance. By repenting, they too can save themselves. The purpose of all the preaching by God’s Church is to lead people to repentance so that they can receive protection from God.

Never ever threaten anyone with God’s wrath for persecuting you. This cannot be emphasized enough on how important it is. Never ever threaten anyone by saying that God is going to pour out His wrath on them. Let them know that God’s purpose is to let the world know what will happen as a warning so that they can repent. Jesus set the perfect example in this regard and Peter described this example very well in 1 Peter 2:21-23 (NKJV): “21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously…”

The way Stephen the Martyr spoke to the high priest and the Jews in Acts 7:51-54 (NKJV) explains why he was quickly martyred. After giving his defense, he said, “51 "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." 54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.”

In *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* and Dugger and Dodd’s “*A History of the True Church*” are numerous examples where martyrdom was hastened and made crueler when rulers were answered in a rough and accusatory manner, invoking God’s wrath on them. As much as possible, I would counsel everyone to follow the advice of Solomon in Proverbs 15:1: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Study the answers and testimonies of those who were hauled up before rulers and you will find that harsh words against rulers always made the persecution crueler and swifter. Any chance of escaping death is generally lost unless God specially intervenes. So when called upon to answer for our beliefs we should follow the example of Jesus Christ and never threaten.

5) GIVE RESPECT AND HONOR AS A SLAVE

In the Great Tribulation, nearly all citizens of Israelite nations of America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel will be slaves. Most members of God’s Church live in America and the British Commonwealth nations. Those that are not in the place of safety will thus be slaves. One way to come out alive through the Great Tribulation and mitigate some of the harshness of slavery would be to behave like a slave and give due respect and honor to your masters.

The fathers Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and King David set excellent examples in this regard. They were not slaves, but found themselves strangers in lands occupied by others. How they conducted themselves should be taken to heart and their conduct emulated.

When Abraham saw 3 strangers pass by his tent, his reaction is described in Genesis 18:2-5 (NKJV): “2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." Abraham behaved very humbly like a servant and bowed low to the ground.

Then in Genesis 23:7 (NKJV) when Abraham was asking for a cave from the sons of Heth to bury Sarah his wife who had just died, this is how he reacted: “7 Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.” Abraham acted with meekness and humility even after the sons of Heth had acknowledged him as a mighty prince among them.

Now see the example of Jacob who had tricked his brother Esau off his birthright and blessing when he met him after many years serving his uncle Laban. He feared the worst, but his humble manner may have averted a possible disaster. Genesis 33:1-4 (NKJV): “1 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. 2 And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4 But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.”

Even though the patriarchs were not slaves or servants, they behaved with rulers as if they were. How much more should we behave in like manner when we find ourselves as actual slaves? Deep respect and honor for the masters may mitigate the cruelty of the slavery to some extent and may keep a person alive through the Great Tribulation.

6) BE A PROFITABLE SERVANT

Every master loves to own a profitable servant. Joseph was one such servant to Potiphar. Genesis 39:1-6 tells the story (NKJV): “1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. 5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. 6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.”

The surest way to win the favor and even love of a good master is to contribute to his profit and comfort. If you find yourself a slave, use all your brains, talents and skills to profit your master as Joseph did. God has not changed. He can also prosper what you do in the service of your master as He prospered what Joseph did in the service of Potiphar.

Offer your services with the utmost respect and honor even if on occasion your master does not follow your advice. God prophesies about the Great Tribulation concerning Israel through Hosea the prophet in 6:2: “After two days He [that is God] will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.” God says that after two years of the Great Tribulation He will begin to revive the Israelite slaves. This is the time when world alliances begin to fall apart. Then all nations will want to press their slaves into the war effort. Those slaves who have distinguished themselves with their technical and organizations skills in their slavery will be asked to contribute to the war effort and will be kept alive. Even the Nazis kept some Jews alive for the war effort during World War 2. Nations will do the same for their American, British and Jewish slaves, which may include some members of God’s Church. Here members of God’s Church will have to choose between contributing to the war effort or not. They cannot contribute to the war effort in direct military service and must refuse to do so. But they can take up jobs in industry and technology, and continue to work for their masters in other sectors of the economy.

The key point is that the slave should strive to be the most profitable servant he can be to his master to maximize the chances of coming out alive through the Great Tribulation.

But realize the sobering fact that the false prophet and the Beast are going to ask all nations to give up members of God’s Church in their midst to put them to death. Jesus said that members of His Church will be hated of all nations. So when exposed as members of God’s Church, the chances of being spared from death are very small. But as long as you are alive as a slave, be the most profitable servant you can be. And always give testimony and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps your example and gentle and meek preaching will lead your masters to repentance and save themselves alive through the Great Tribulation, and not obey the beast and the false prophet in killing you.

7) ALWAYS SHOW LOVE FOR GOD AND FELLOW MAN

If members of God’s Church find themselves in the Great Tribulation, their first reaction might be to hate God for allowing them to go through it. About 50% of the members will ultimately react in this way. But such anger is misplaced. Only God is capable of rendering perfect judgment. He is offering rulership of the universe as a reward for those who endure to the end. He wants to make sure that no son of His will ever rebel against Him like Satan the devil and millions of demons did. He is going to test the loyalty of each and every one of us. One aspect of loyalty to God is to submit to all His judgments for our lives. So remember to always love God no matter in what circumstances we find ourselves in.

And if you find yourself a slave, always show love for your master or ruler and fellow man, the other great commandment. When called upon to answer for your faith, let the rulers know that you are giving them an answer out of love for them, so that they might come out alive through the Great Tribulation themselves. Let your masters, rulers and persecutors know that you know no other way than to continue to love them and pray for them. This might mitigate the cruelty they would otherwise practice on you and perhaps might save you alive. There are many examples of positive results from this attitude described by the late Richard Wurmbrand in his books ‘*Tortured for Christ’, ‘With God in Solitary Confinement’* and ‘*From Suffering to Triumph’*. It would be a good exercise to learn to frame your conversation and conduct in this manner.

8) KEEP HOPE ALIVE

Another important way to conduct ourselves if we find ourselves in the Great Tribulation is to always keep hope alive. If you are going through the Great Tribulation, you will have seen all the great end-time prophecies fulfilled in exact sequence in precise detail. So you can have faith that the remaining end-time prophecies will also be fulfilled in precise detail. These can be the source of greatest hope during the Great Tribulation.

Remember these specific prophecies about the Great Tribulation. Its duration is fixed at exact 1,260 days. And understand the significance of the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days mentioned in Daniel 12. For members of God’s Church these prophecies mean that when the call to flee to the place of safety goes out, there will be 45 days available to gather together in one place from around the world. We don’t know how God will make this possible, but we can trust Him to accomplish it with His almighty power. Then the world war that enslaves the American, British and Jewish people will start and last 30 days. The Church will have these 30 days to make it to the place of safety and be protected there for the remaining 1260 days.

For those members who find themselves not in the place of safety along with other Israelites, the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days have a slightly different significance. They are left to do nothing during the 45 days the Church has to flee to the place of safety. Their troubles begin with the attack on America, British Commonwealth nations and the state of Israel. The defeat will occur in 30 days. Then the Great Tribulation will last 1260 days, bringing us to 1290 days. Then God promises to find and rescue each and every one from slavery within the next 45 days, bringing us to the end of the 1335 days. Remember the exact significance of these numbers of days to keep hope alive that God will without fail bring an end to the Great Tribulation within this time.

Keep hope alive by focusing on the great reward God has in store for us in a few short months. And that reward is to become co-ruler of the earth with Jesus Christ for eternity and then to rule the universe! And as God’s firstfruits, we will hold top positions in the rule of the universe for eternity because no other creation of God will have endured as much as us. No more fantastic future can God offer to man or angel. And we are being offered eternal life with a body like that of Jesus Christ and God the Father Himself, as His literal son or daughter.

To keep hope alive, also remember that none of your active persecutors and torturers will survive the Great Tribulation themselves. Jesus Christ assures that through the events of the Day of the Lord. Revelation 14:6-11 (NKJV) says: “6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-- 7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." 8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." 9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

God promises that those who worship the image of the beast and receive his mark and have participated in the persecutions, tortures and murders will be completely destroyed and the Babylonian system destroyed forever. The Roman Clergy that will lead the murders of members of God’s Church will be burnt alive by the ten rulers in Europe when they turn on the false Church. This is mentioned in Revelation 17: 16-17 (NKJV): “16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose…”

The Laodicean members of God’s Church will have suffered martyrdom, but will have been resurrected at the return of Jesus Christ. They will witness this punishment on the Roman Church’s clergy, and the entire Babylonian system controlled by the Beast and the false prophet. Thus they will see themselves being avenged by God the Father for all their suffering. They will see with their own eyes that God’s ways are just. This should be another source of great hope for them to keep themselves alive, and endure to the very end in faith, even if their physical lives end in death.

And remember, those who have inflicted tortures, pain and suffering on God’s Church throughout its history will forever be their subjects. They as the firstfruits will rule over them for eternity.

Also remember the words of Mr. Armstrong: “I have read the end of the story in the Book of Revelation. And the end is that, “WE WIN!” Have absolute faith that if we endure to the end, we will have won. God guarantees that.

9) FACE EVERY SITUATION WITH COURAGE, DETERMINATION AND STRENGTH

Solomon says in Proverbs 24:10: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.” Let not that be said about you as you go through the Great Tribulation. Remember to face any prophesied event with courage, determination and mental strength, in whatever situation you find yourself in.

In this regard read the stories of the heroes of the Bible, and those mentioned in the Chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews. The author sums up these examples with these words in verses 32-40 (NKJV): “32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, *out of weakness were made strong*, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. *And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us*.”

To inspire courage in ourselves and emulate as examples, we should read biographical accounts of the lives of great men who endured extraordinary adversity with courage. One such example is that of Jim Stockdale, rear-admiral, one of the most decorated veterans of the U.S. Navy and former vice-presidential candidate with Ross Perot who endured 7 years in Vietnam prisons with 4 of those years spent in solitary confinement (that is 6 months more than the entire duration of the Great Tribulation) and endured beatings and other tortures. You can also read about the endurance, faith and courage of Ernest Shackleton the great British explorer who attempted the first crossing of the Antarctic continent on foot. We should read biographies and autobiographies of such great men who exhibited extraordinary courage and endurance in the face of extreme adversity for inspiring courage and determination in ourselves.

10) LEARN NOT TO FEAR WHAT MAN CAN DO TO YOU

There will be many in God’s Church who will be paralyzed with fear when the Tribulation comes, by just imagining what they may have to go through and even hearing the threats of those who will rule over them. About 50% of members of God’s Church who go through the Tribulation will react in this way.

A person who is paralyzed with fear in adversity is demonstrating that he does not have complete faith and trust in God. In short, such a person has not yet learnt to love God perfectly, for God says in 1 John 4:18 (NKJV): “18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”

Above all, remember the great key to enduring when faced with any trouble or fear that God promised through Paul the apostle in 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV): “13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

Basically, God is promising that He knows our individual bodies and mental makeup. He knows what we can endure. Either He will give us the means to endure it, or make a way for us to escape the trouble or temptation. God can even make it possible for Laodicean members to stay alive till they are resurrected to eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ. God is telling us to simply learn to put our complete faith and trust in Him when face with any fearful event such as the Great Tribulation. He knows what we are made of and will guide us through it just as He guided Jesus Christ and all His other servants through their periods of adversity. He promises to never leave us or forsake us in Hebrews 13:5.

We should study and meditate on these suggestions often so that if we find ourselves in the Great Tribulation, our minds would be made up to be among the 50% who endure to the end and are resurrected as God’s immortal sons and daughters at the return of Jesus Christ.

**CHAPTER 19**

**HOW CAN AMERICANS/BRITISH/JEWS MAXIMIZE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL**

Before and in the war that leads to the defeat of the American, British and Jewish people, about two thirds of their population will be destroyed. The remaining one third will be sold as slaves around the world. Ultimately only about one tenth of those enslaved will survive the Great Tribulation. If you as an American, British or Jewish person find yourself a slave, how can you maximize your chances of surviving the Great Tribulation?

Ezekiel 5 indicates that first of all about 1/3 of the population of these nations is going to die in a nuclear attack. Then another 1/3 will die in the war that immediately follows the nuclear attack. The remaining 1/3 will be carried away captive and sold around the world as slaves. Ultimately only 1/10 of their population will survive. It is not clear whether 1/10 of the original population or 1/10th of the slave population will survive. Those are the chances for Israelites to survive the Great Tribulation. But God gives guidelines for maximizing your chances for surviving.

First of all, remember only one group in the entire world is promised protection throughout the Great Tribulation: members of God’s Church with a zealous Philadelphian attitude. Any one in the world can join God’s Church at any time and avail of this opportunity for protection. But God’s Church is not under any illusion about millions becoming members. God prophesies through Ezekiel the prophet about the attitude of Israelites to the Church’s messages in Ezekiel 33:31-33 (NKJV): “31 So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts go after their covetousness. 32 Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them. 33 And when this comes to pass--surely it will come--then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

This means that vast majority of the Israelite population will have to go through the Tribulation and national slavery. In the Tribulation, the surest way to die in it is to succumb to pressure from the Beast and the false prophet and take on the mark of the Beast and begin worshipping his image. God promises the destruction of all such people in Revelation 14:8-11 quoted earlier.

Moreover, Israelites need to remember that Satan hates Physical Israelites and wants to destroy them. The beast and the false prophet may lie and promise to let them live if they take the mark of the beast and worship his image, but then put them to death anyway. And possibly before that they may be asked to murder many of their fellow Israelites to prove their loyalty to the Beast and the false prophet. They are known liars. They will leave no easy choices for Israelites. Under such circumstances the best choice is always to stay true to God and His way of life.

Thus the way to maximize your chances of survival are not to compromise with God’s way and meekly and humbly refuse to take on the mark of the beast and worship his image. Instead share your beliefs with your masters and tell them that you love them and want them to survive the Great Tribulation themselves. God in fact wants Israelites to witness to all the nations during their slavery by letting them know that they, the Israelites, are being punished for their violation of God’s laws and His Covenant (solemn agreement) with them made at the time of Moses after the Exodus from Egypt. But God is a merciful God and does forgive upon sincere repentance. Humbly tell your masters to repent along with them and seek God’s mercy to keep themselves and their families alive.

The great good news is that millions of Israelite slaves will stay true to their God, and as a result of their testimony will convert millions of other nations to the true God. This is prophesied in Revelation 7:9 (NKJV): “9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Then verse 14 "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” meaning they have repented of their sins.

**Israelites Reward for Service to God**

God has promised all the Israelite nations a great reward for this service during their slavery in the Great Tribulation. Revelation 7 and 14 mention 144,000 of the tribes of Israel that are sealed at the end of two and a half years of the Great Tribulation. They went through the Great Tribulation. Their sealing now assures that they will be protected during the next year, known as the Day of the Lord when God’s wrath and vengeance is poured out on all nations of the world. These 144,000 are also called the firstfruits to God and the Lamb, or Jesus Christ, in Revelation 14:4. And the reward of the firstfruits is to be resurrected to immortal life at the return of Jesus Christ in just a few months, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Noah, Job, Moses, David, the prophets, the apostles and members of God’s true Church throughout its history. These were the laborers called at the eleventh hour but received the same wages as those that labored throughout the day (Matthew 20:1-16, parable of the householder).

After these 144,000, there will be many Israelites among the millions of all nations who are supernaturally protected during the last year of the Great Tribulation. They as slaves will not only have saved themselves alive through the Great Tribulation by remaining loyal to the true God, but will also have changed their masters by their teaching to become believers in the true God and saved them and their families.

**Other Means of Escape**

Prophecies by Ezekiel the prophet show that not all American, British and Jewish people will be enslaved. A few will escape capture as happened in ancient Judah during the Babylonian captivity. A small number will be able to escape capture by fleeing to the mountains. This is prophesied in Ezekiel 7:16-19 (NKJV): “16 'Those who survive will escape and be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, each for his iniquity. 17 Every hand will be feeble, and every knee will be as weak as water. 18 They will also be girded with sackcloth; horror will cover them; shame will be on every face, baldness on all their heads. 19 'They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be like refuse; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them In the day of the wrath of the Lord; they will not satisfy their souls, nor fill their stomachs, because it became their stumbling block of iniquity.”

So some will escape to the mountains and survive; but cold and hungry, they will be barely clinging to life when the tribulation ends. They will be mourning and repentant, and will finally be humbled before God. However, the numbers ultimately surviving the great tribulation this way will be very small.

But mountain in prophecy is also a symbol for a large nation. So escaping to the mountains could also mean escaping to friendly nations, particularly other Israelite nations such as France, Scandinavian nation, Switzerland and Benelux countries, and finding protection there. That will be the cause of the war coming also to these northwestern European nations. This way war will come to the Israelites in these nations also during the Great Tribulation, but some will still survive the Great Tribulation this way.

Some of the top leadership of our nations who help the top leader (president and prime minister) will also escape capture by fleeing to other nations. This is prophesied in Ezekiel 12:13-16: “13 I will also spread My net over him [that is the top leader of our nations], and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans [referring to the end-time Babylonian system]; yet he shall not see it [because most likely his eyes will be put out], though he shall die there. 14 I will scatter to every wind all who are around him to help him, and all his troops; and I will draw out the sword after them. 15 Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. 16 But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go. Then they shall know that I am the Lord."

The few that escape the sword are those who warn the leaders and the people of the nations they find themselves in about what is prophesied and how they too can come out alive during the Great Tribulation.

Besides these small groups of survivors, most of Israelite nations’ population will become captive slaves, and ultimately one-tenth of the population of America and British Commonwealth nations will survive the Great Tribulation. Jesus Christ will rescue these surviving slaves when He returns. They will constitute the largest group among the ultimate survivors.

In summary then, God has provided means of surviving the Great Tribulation at every stage for the Israelite nations of America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jews worldwide.

The surest chance of escape is to not be in the Great Tribulation at all. That is possible only by being truly converted and becoming a member of God’s Church before the Great Tribulation begins and doing God’s work of preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and His warning message to the world and overcome sin with fiery zeal, obey God’s word diligently and not deny Jesus’ name.

Besides joining God’s Church, the best means of surviving the Great Tribulation for the Americans, the British and the Jews who go into slavery is to not compromise with the German dictator and the pope. Those who accept the mark of the beast and worship his image will most likely all perish. But the best chance of survival for the slaves is to teach about the true God to their masters and leaders of the nations in which they will be sold as slaves. Even among those the best chance for survival is for those who are themselves converted and teach God’s way diligently and preach the Good News of the very soon coming Kingdom of God. About 40,000 among the slaves and about 104,000 from the other tribes of Israel (which include the French, the Scandinavians, those from Switzerland, Ireland and the Benelux countries) that is, a total of 144,000 will receive the reward as firstfruits in the Kingdom of God. They will be resurrected to immortal life at the return of Jesus Christ.

Then millions of other Israelites who repent during the first two and a half years of the Great Tribulation will also receive protection from God for the remaining one year of God’s wrath on all nations and will come out alive. Therefore, the best chance for survival during the Great Tribulation for the slaves is to be converted themselves and do God’s work of teaching their masters about the soon coming Kingdom of God so that they too can repent and be converted.

Finally, God in His mercy may keep some Israelites alive through the Great Tribulation, perhaps even some who may have been forced to and reluctantly worship idols, but not those who accepted the mark of the Beast or worshipped his image. In addition, God may save some alive who did not repent to illustrate that even though they survived the Great Tribulation, they will not make it to the holy land because of their still rebellious attitude.

This is indicated in Ezekiel 20:33-44, “33 As I live, says the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: 34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. 36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt [during the first Exodus], so will I plead with you, says the Lord GOD. 37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: 38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and you shall know that I am the LORD. 39 As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD; Go, serve you every one his idols, and hereafter also, if you will not hearken unto me: but pollute you my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols. 40 For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, says the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. 41 I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein you have been scattered; [the second Exodus] and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. 42 And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. 43 And there shall you remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed. 44 And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O you house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.”

So the key to being saved at every stage is to repent and be converted when you see the prophesied events taking place, and to resist Satan’s system that will be propagated by the German dictator and the pope. Remember, the 10 suggestions on how to deal with masters in slavery apply to physical Israelites as well. Following them will mitigate the cruelty to some extent and may keep you alive. Always keep them and rehearse them in your mind.

The 10 suggestions for conducting oneself during slavery are:

1) PREPARE YOUR MIND TO FACE THE GREAT TRIBULATION 2) ENDURE TO THE END; 3) BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT PROPHECY AND THE GOSPEL so that you are always ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about you hope and faith in the gospel; 4) NEVER THREATEN anyone with God’s wrath to further antagonize them against you; 5) GIVE RESPECT AND HONOR AS A SLAVE to your masters and rulers; 6) BE A PROFITABLE SERVANT to your master; 7) ALWAYS SHOW LOVE FOR GOD AND FELLOW MAN despite God allowing you to go through the Tribulation; 8) KEEP HOPE ALIVE because of the prophecies that are soon to be fulfilled ahead; and 9) Determine to FACE EVERY SITUATION WITH COURAGE, DETERMINATION AND STRENGTH, and 10) LEARN NOT TO FEAR WHAT MAN CAN DO TO YOU.

**CHAPTER 20**

**HOW CAN OTHER ISRAELITES MAXIMIZE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL**

The Bible prophesies that only people of America, British Commonwealth nations and the state of Israel will go into slavery. But people of France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavian and Benelux countries are also descendants of the tribes of Israel. Satan hates them as much as the American, British and Jewish peoples, and will seek to destroy them as well.

Ezekiel 5:1-4 describes how the whole House of Israel (which included the northern ten tribes kingdom) will be punished: “1 And you, son of man, take a sharp knife, take a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon your head and upon your beard: then take balances to weigh, and divide the hair. 2 You shall burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and you shall take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part you shall scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. 3 You shall also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in your skirts. 4 Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; *for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel*.”

This prophecy shows that a third part of the American and British peoples will die in the initial nuclear attack. Then a third part will die in the 30 day war. The remainder third will go into national slavery. Some of this remainder will then cause the fire of war to go into the whole House of Israel, meaning the descendants of the other tribes living in non-American and British nations. The reason is that they will provide shelter to some of the American and British escapees and protect them wherever they can. This will cause the Islamists allied with the beast and the false prophet to turn on these European Israelite nations and blockade them by sea and war with them.

These Israelite nations will not be enslaved but will have to fight a war for their very survival. The only difference between them and the American, British and Jewish peoples is that they will not be defeated in the war and will escape slavery. How can they maximize their chances of surviving the Great Tribulation?

They should follow the recommendations given to the American, British and Jewish peoples. They can follow this simple three point program:

1) Never compromise with the beast and the false prophet by accepting their religion despite their threats. It’s one thing for Satan and his agents to issue threats to people and quite another to be able to carry them out specially when God protects them. On the other hand, those who worship the image of the beast and agree to receive his mark are guaranteed by God in Revelation 14:8-11 to be destroyed by the events of the Day of the Lord, the last one year of the Great Tribulation. Whereas Satan may not be able to carry out his threats, God will without fail carry out His prophesied warning.

2) Protect your Israelite brothers and sisters wherever you can. God promises through Obadiah the prophet in Obadiah 1: “15 "For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.” This means all nations will be treated as they treat their Israelite slaves. Those who put them to torture, starvation and death will suffer the same consequences. Those who enable them to survive will likely receive God’s help in surviving the Great Tribulation themselves. Also remember, they will be very beneficial for you in your own war effort with the Islamists aided by the Germans.

3) Just like the Israelite slaves, wherever you have opportunity teach people about the true God and His way of life and Laws diligently and preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God that will be ushered in only a few months with the return of Jesus Christ. Approximately 100,000 of them will be numbered among the 144,000 of Revelation 7:3-8 and receive their reward for preaching God’s message as the firstfruits and will be resurrected to eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ. Millions more will be numbered among the multitudes of all nations mentioned in Revelation 7:9-17 and receive God’s protection during the events of the Day of the Lord for their service during the first two and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

**CHAPTER 21**

**HOW CAN ANY PERSON MAXIMIZE HIS CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL**

The only difference between Israelites – that is the Americans, the British and the Jews – and people of other nations is that Israelites will be slaves whereas citizens of other nations will be free and many will hold Israelites as slaves. But the beast and the false prophet are going to seek to impose their religion on all nations and try to control their economies.

Remember, the beast and the false prophet are going to force the entire world to obey and follow their worship system. All peoples will be forced to worship the image of the beast and accept his mark which may refer to worshipping on Sunday instead of God’s Sabbath, or a literal mark or sign of some kind may be instituted. But those who refuse to bear this mark will not be allowed to buy, or sell, trade, or hold down a job. Economic survival will be made extremely difficult for them. They will also seek to put to death those who refuse to do so. Every human being will be forced to choose. The beast and the false prophet will have to use threats but rely on rulers of various nations to carry out the threats. However, it is one thing to try to force people to comply with your edicts with threats, but quite another to be able to carry out those threats.

On the other hand, God will not rely on human beings to carry out the death sentence He has pronounced on those who worship the image of the beast. He will carry out the death sentence Himself through the plagues of Revelation 16 and the greatest ever earthquake in the history of mankind and a hailstorm of hailstones weighing 100 lb. each. Besides billions will die in the wars that precede these plagues.

So remember, the surest way to not survive the Great Tribulation is to succumb to death threats and pressure from the beast and the false prophet. Once before in human history the world succumbed to pressure from the descendants of Lamech and followed their worship system and persecuted those who obeyed the true God as taught by Noah, and his forefathers, the preachers of righteousness. They all drowned in the Flood. God carried out the death sentence He had pronounced on them through Noah, and He will carry out the death sentence this time as well. Jesus did say that the days of His second coming will be like in the days of Noah.

Another test for people of other nations will be how they treat their Israelite slaves and members of God’s Church. Vast majority will treat them brutally. Under Satan’s influence, human beings can commit heinous crimes. Nations will hate the Americans, the British and the Jews because of their prosperity and will treat them vengefully. God will allow this to be used as a test for all nations.

God has prophesied through Obadiah the prophet in verse Obadiah 1:15: “15 "For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.”

The day of the Lord refers to the last one year of the Great Tribulation. God says as nations treat their Israelite slaves, they will be treated the same way. Those who murder them will themselves die. Those who inflict pain and suffering on them will themselves go through the same torture, pain and suffering from many plagues. And as Isaiah 14:2 indicates Israelites will take them captive whose captives they were. So literally people of other nations will write their own sentence by the way they treat their Israelite slaves.

For many nations there is another advantage in keeping their Israelite slaves alive. War will overtake all nations. They could obtain the help of their Israelite slaves in their war efforts.

There is good news and bad news in this. There is bad news for those who inflict pain, suffering and death on their Israelite slaves. But there is good news for those who treat them with mercy and kindness. Rulers and men of all nations can turn this into a mutually beneficial relationship.

God says Israelites will loathe themselves in their slavery and let their masters know that they are in slavery because they have violated their ancient covenant made at the time of the exodus from Egypt with the true God. But before God made a covenant with Israel, the same covenant was made with all of humanity in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve and all their descendants. This ancient covenant with all of humanity is to obey god’s law and receive His help and protection. Those people of all nations who seek to listen and learn from their Israelite slaves and members of God’s Church, repent of their own sins in violating God’s laws, reject the false satanic worship system of the beast and the false prophet, and refuse to take on the mark of the beast can receive God’s protection. That is the greatest good news for all nations. God says many untold tens of millions will do just that. They will repent of their sins at the preaching of the two witnesses of Revelation 11 and their Israelite slaves(Revelation 7:9-17).

The great good news in all this is that tens of millions of all nations will survive. But remember this requires active repentance, and turning from your previous way of life to the true God and our Lord Jesus Christ and accepting His sacrifice for the payment of the death penalty on our behalf for our sins. The terrible news is that the other billions on earth will not survive because they will have actively or passively joined the side of the beast and the false prophet, or because of envy mistreated their Israelite slaves. These are the billions that will obey their national leaders, participate in the great world war just ahead, then in the war between the beast, the King of the North and the Islamic leader, the King of the South, then the war between the 200 million man army of the east against the armies of the beast. Then hundreds of millions will perish in their attack on Jesus Christ and hundreds of millions more in the greatest ever earthquake and the hailstorm of 100 lb. hailstones.

Perhaps many tens of millions will randomly survive all this because of God’s mercy. But that is not maximizing one’s chance of survival. Maximizing one’s chance of survival for any human being on earth depends on actively rejecting the worship system of the beast and the false prophet, treating all human beings, including your Israelite slaves humanely with mercy and kindness, and actively repenting of your sins and turning to the true God instead with all your heart, mind, soul and strength at any stage of the process. However you have to repent before it’s too late and all these world events overtake you and kill you and your family. The earlier a person repents and turns to God, the greater the chances of his coming out alive through the Great Tribulation.

**Conclusion of the Whole Matter**

So let’s hear the conclusion of the whole matter. What can any individual do to survive the Great Tribulation?

Remember what is at stake for members of God’s Church. They are the firstfruits to God’s kingdom. They will always be closest to God for eternity in ruling the universe with Him. What kind of people would a king choose to be closest to him in his kingdom?

Certainly the king would choose people that he can completely rely on to do his will. This means they have completely embraced his way of life and vision for the future, are convinced that it is the best way to live and will totally obey the king. A king would not want any coward near him. He wants people who are courageous enough to put their life on the line in order to protect the king, maintain his kingdom if called upon to do so, never compromise with the king’s way of life, and even die for their beliefs if they have to. And the king would not want lazy, lukewarm people around him. He would want people who always have fiery zeal to do his work and business. Solomon said in Proverbs 22:29, “29 Do you see a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.” Such people will stand before the King of the universe.

In His messages to the Philadelphian and Laodicean eras of His Church, the two kinds of people that mainly constitute God’s Church today, here is what Jesus Christ told what He requires of them:

1) They must do God’s work of warning the world of approaching catastrophes and then the good news of the establishment of God’s kingdom with fiery zeal.

2) They must always be performing a self-examination and working diligently to overcome sin.

3) They must keep God’s word and hold fast to what they have, which is the truths restored to them by God through the prophesied end-time Elijah, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

4) They must never deny God the Father and Jesus Christ, meaning who they worship as the real Creator and God of the universe.

5) They must endure to the end in God’s way of life.

World conditions soon will be similar to those in the days of Noah. Just as Lamech and his descendants forced all of humanity to accept their satanic religion on pain of torture and death in the days of Noah, the beast and the false prophet are going to force their satanic religion on the whole world on pain of torture and death in our day. Just as Noah preached God’s way of life in his day, God’s Church has been preaching and teaching God’s way of life in our day now for nearly 97 years. Literally each and every human being on earth will be forced to choose one way or another and required to demonstrate his or her loyalty to that way. The beast and the false prophet will try their best not to let people sit on the fence.

There are consequences to the choice each of us makes. Satan and his agents the beast and the false prophet will try to enforce their religion on the world. They will seek to kill those who don’t follow their religion (Revelation 13:13-17). They will certainly succeed in killing many who refuse. But it is one thing for Satan to threaten and quite another to be able to carry out his threats. God is far greater than him and can protect His own from any of Satan’s devices. Tens of millions will successfully resist Satan’s threats (Revelation 7:9-17) and survive the Great Tribulation. But those who give in to Satan’s religion because of free will or succumbing to threats, and worship the image of the beast and take on his mark, are guaranteed to perish when God deals with them (Revelation 14:8-11).

Any one with eyes can see and analyze events around the world. Prophesied alliances are forming. There are numerous military hot spots around the world in which global powers Russia, Germany, China and the USA are deeply involved. In time sequence in Bible prophecy, we are already in the time of ‘delay no longer’ (Revelation 10:6). The first prophesied event after we entered the time of delay no longer (Revelation 10:11, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.") has already been fulfilled with the author’s weekly messages. The prophesied third world war, pictured in the first four seals of Revelation 6 can begin at any time. So the time for every human being to make a choice is right now. Repentance takes time. Those who want God’s protection to come out alive through the Great Tribulation must choose now. As each prophesied catastrophic event unfolds, the chances of survival diminish longer a person delays his choice to repent and accept God’s way of life. Choose wisely and early to maximize your chances of coming out alive through the Great Tribulation.

**SUGGESTED READING**

1. *“Anoint Your Eyes” – Christ’s Warning to His People* – by David C. Pack, available free of change at www.rcg.org.

2. *Tools for Spiritual Growth* – Published by United Church of God, available free of charge at www.ucg.org.

3. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; by Herbert W. Armstrong, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

4. *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*; published by the United Church of God, available at www.ucg.org.

5. “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future,*” eBook published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

6. *America and Britain in Prophecy*, by David C. Pack; published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

7. *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*; published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

8. *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Vol 1* available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

9. *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Vol 2*, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

There is also other vast amount of reading material available for reading and research for answers to all of life's great questions at the web sites of the various Churches of God. The web sites are: ucg.org; pcog.org; rcg.org and lcg.org.