

**MALACHI'S**

**MESSAGE**

**TO**

**GOD'S CHURCH**

**TODAY**

**BY GERALD FLURRY**



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Vast changes have been made in the Worldwide Church of God since Mr. Herbert Armstrong died. Did you know that many of those changes were propheesied? Much of what has happened since Mr. Armstrong's death is revealed in the book of Malachi.

If you will prayerfully study Malachi's Message, you will see that there are many urgent issues confronting all of God's people today. Please search the scriptures as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11), and prove all things (I Thes. 5:21). Then BELIEVE YOUR BIBLE - NOT MEN!



## "A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE"

"Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and they that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3:16). Why a book of remembrance? This is not the book of life. It is a special book which concerns a unique group of people who fear the Eternal and fellowship a lot.

These are the Philadelphians who remembered. We are warned to remember what we were taught (Mal. 4:4-6). Many prophecies about the end time discuss a turning away from past instructions (II Thes. 2:1-3, 15; Rev. 3:7-21).

IT IS A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE BECAUSE THEY REMEMBERED WHAT THEY WERE TAUGHT! That is why God spares them from the Great Tribulation (Mal. 3:17), and gives them a headquarter's position in His Kingdom forever (Rev. 3:12).

The Laodiceans fail to escape because they forget - and turn to a lukewarm message.

God remembers the Philadelphian group because they remembered Him.

"Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:18).

If we are going to be able to discern between those who serve God and those who serve him not - it will be because we REMEMBER what we were taught. Without that precious, God-inspired knowledge Satan is going to deceive us! That is a very serious statement - but it's biblically based.

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

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

The entire book of Malachi revolves around two groups - those who forget (the majority) and those who remember (the minority). Are you in that book of remembrance? Anyone who is not, is destined to go into the Great Tribulation. We must take this warning seriously.



## THE TEMPLE PROPHETS

Judah came back from the Babylonian captivity to build the restoration temple. It was completed and dedicated in 515 B.C. It took only 40 or 50 years for them to turn away from God's word. The book of Malachi was written around 450 B.C.

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

Haggai mentions Zerubbabel seven times - God's number of completion. Zerubbabel completed or finished the temple (Zech. 4:9). These prophetic books are precisely structured - just as all of the Bible is. They weren't haphazardly thrown together.

Haggai and Zechariah prophesied while the temple was being built, to correct physical Israel. It is interesting that Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA, hereafter) had to return twice (1974 and 1978) to get this Work "back on track".

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

Several commentaries say that Zerubbabel died an old man. So did HWA. Anciently, Zerubbabel's assistant, Joshua, must have taken over after Zerubbabel finished "this house" (Zech. 4:9). Afterward, the Jews began to get off track. God sent Malachi first of all to correct the ministry, and then the people secondarily. That was the very purpose of his coming.

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

Malachi had nothing to say about the judgment of nations. Notice: His main concern - major work - was to keep the fear of God alive in the ministry (Mal. 2:1-8). There was a crisis in the ministry.

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

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

"And now, I pray you, beseech God that He will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will He regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 1:9, Oxford



edition of the King James Version used throughout, unless otherwise stated.) "This has been by your means" would be better translated, "This has been your doing" (Soncino Commentary).

God labels the ministry as guilty. They are the main cause of the Church's end-time crisis. "You have caused many to stumble at the law" (Mal. 2:8). God then purges the ministry (Mal. 3:3; 4:6). And remember, this is all to be fulfilled in the end time - just before Christ's return.

The attitude of some ministers toward God is scornful. "You have snuffed at it" (Mal. 1:13). Literally: "You snort at Me". Soncino says the change of the pronoun from "me" to "it" is due to a deliberate alteration by the Scribes in order to remove the harshness of the expression.

There is no greater honor than being in the ministry. Also there is no greater responsibility. The minister must always be spiritually alert. History of the Church of God is filled with disasters when the ministry failed to do its job.

### CHURCH ERAS

A sermon given by Dr. Herman Hoeh in 1982, was typed and sent to the hard-of-hearing members. The title was "Church Eras" (Rev. 2 and 3). Here is a quote from that message (emphasis mine):

The congregation of Ephesus had a great responsibility. It was told they must acquire the love that pertains to the love of God; the love that is reflected in brotherly love. This type of love is so important that even though they did the rest of the work, but did not have love, God said, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. It ultimately meant that instead of those congregations as a whole carrying on the work, people had to leave those congregations and a whole new organization developed. Those congregations that had no love when the light went out, became the basis of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Greek world.

He said "...people had to leave those congregations and a whole new organization developed". What if they had stayed with the leadership and the Church in that era? Then they would have ultimately become the basis of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Greek world!

A similar scenario happened in other eras.

Undoubtedly the leadership and people of the Ephesus era condemned those who left as being disloyal to Christ. Undoubtedly, the Ephesian Church sincerely believed they were right, but they were tragically wrong. Christ somehow led a group of His deeply converted people to start a new organization which ADHERED TO THE TRUTH CHRIST HAD ESTABLISHED in the Ephesus Church. Then God stopped using the Ephesus era.



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

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

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

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

John spoke out in faith! One of Herbert W. Armstrong's main complaints in the 1970's was against ministers who knew what was going on but failed to speak out! Paul openly challenged Peter (Gal. 2:11). Sometimes it has to be done to keep the spirit of God's word!

We often ask the question, "Is he out of the Church?" But that isn't the most important question. That isn't the question the Apostle John was most concerned about. His followers were "cast out" of the Ephesus Church - but it was because they were actually FOLLOWING CHRIST! Following Christ has gotten many people kicked out of God's Churches - when those Churches were going astray. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO FOLLOWS CHRIST - not a man or a church organization.

Of course, it is a monumental decision to take such a stand. Not one to be taken casually, because the consequences are so serious.

Gerald Flurry and John Amos have been cast out of the Worldwide Church of God (hereafter, WCG) - we have not and never did stop following Christ. But a statement like that must be backed by ample Bible proof. Following Christ is exactly what Malachi's Message is all about.

We were disfellowshipped for one reason - for talking about some of the material contained in Malachi's Message. If you will read this material, then at least you will know why we were disfellowshipped.

Let's begin by understanding an important fact about the seven church eras of Revelation 2 and 3. It is quite revealing. Apparently, five of the seven eras were LED into oblivion and disaster! Every church era except the Philadelphia era had leaders, at least in



the end, who led them astray. That is WHY, in most cases, new eras were raised up by God.

The Sardis era did God's work until it died spiritually. Then Herbert W. Armstrong was raised up to start a new era. A few of the Sardis people have qualified to be in God's Kingdom in spite of their spiritually dead leaders (Rev. 3:1-4). They made it BECAUSE they didn't follow their leaders! God commanded the leaders to repent. They didn't. Herbert W. Armstrong even gave us a few of the Sardis leaders' names. Later, some of the Sardis members came into the Philadelphia Church.

When six out of seven eras were prophesied to be led away from Christ, do we think it can't happen to us? Even when a Laodicean era is prophesied to appear?

### GOD COMMANDS - TEST YOUR LEADERS

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you can not bear them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars" (Rev. 2:1-2, emphasis mine). Some men were saying they were apostles and they were not. God then PRAISED the Ephesus Church for detecting this error. Those men were not apostles in a worldly Church. God wouldn't have praised them for detecting worldly apostles. These false apostles were in God's Church - or somehow affiliated with it.

God said "you have tried them". Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines the word "tried" this way: "to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality". Does that sound like we should just go along with the Church leadership? God says you either put them to the test or you can easily be deceived.

Our focus must NOT be on an organization or an era, but on the great Christ who is in the midst of those eras. "And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle" (Rev. 1:12-13). The emphasis is not on the seven candlesticks or eras - the emphasis is on Christ who is in the midst of all seven eras - Christ is right in the middle. But He will allow us to push Him aside. Then He usually has to start a new era - or work with those who are loyal to Him. Let's continue the story. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shines in his strength" (Rev. 1:14-16). This great



Being is described to introduce the seven eras of Revelation 2 and 3. If we let Christ and His Work slide from the middle of the picture, all we have left are deceived Churches. So the emphasis is not on being "in the Church", but following this great God. When John saw Christ in this vision, "...he fell at his feet as dead..." (verse 17). Unless this same God leads the Church, we are in serious trouble and if Christ isn't leading the Church, we shouldn't follow.

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

I WOULD NEVER SUGGEST ANYONE TRY TO OVERTHROW MR. TKACH. As David said, we can't lift our hand against the Lord's anointed. I wouldn't dare try to do that. But neither would I follow Mr. Tkach or any other leader into the Tribulation or the lake of fire!

Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). Paul said the leader is to follow Christ. Follow a man only as he follows Christ. We can't do that unless we are testing and proving all things. It's very biblical to do so. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1, emphasis mine). John pleaded with God's "beloved" people to "try the spirits". Why? Because there are "many" false prophets and false leaders. Often these deceivers were in God's Church. We must always test our leaders with God's word. That certainly includes me. You MUST PROVE what I say in this message!

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

Anybody who has been loyal to God's Church for very long is used to change. But all change is not good. The Laodicean Church is going to change. But that change is AWAY FROM THE PHILADELPHIA STANDARD - not a good change. The Laodiceans are prophesied to turn away from the trunk of the tree. God warns us to be vigilant.

"These Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11, emphasis mine). Do you realize brethren, that your approach to Bible study helps reveal to God how noble you are? Do you search the scriptures daily



"with all readiness of mind"? Eager to see what the Bible says, so you can follow Christ more perfectly? God's elect are very noble people when it comes to their Bible study.

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

Luke said these people had greater nobility because of this attitude. That means a higher reward in God's Kingdom.

The noble elect have fallen in love with God's truth. They love God so much they will stand alone or even die for Him. They are not deceived by "hugs and kisses" without real substance. And they are not deceived by endless talk of "love"! They know what the true love of God is. They judge by "fruits" (Matt. 7:16), not outward appearance.

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (II Thes. 2:10-11). GOD WILL PERSONALLY SEND STRONG DELUSION! But why? Why would God send strong delusion to His own people? Does He want us to fail? Of course not. This is God's way of testing who "received not the love of the truth" (verse 10). God wants to know how much you love Him and His word. It's not possible to deceive God's elect (Matt. 24:24).

Paul is not talking about normal delusion being sent to God's people - it is "strong delusion". You're going to see multiple thousands of people deceived because they are "blind" (Rev. 3:17) to their own spiritual condition. They assume there is safety in numbers, and they assume they are God's elect who cannot be deceived. If they are not careful, those assumptions will lead them into the Tribulation or the lake of fire!

We all think we love God. God requires that we have the depth of love necessary to withstand strong delusion. God sends "strong delusion" to His Church members to determine who will be His true and loyal elect. God wants to know who loves the truth - and who just has it. With a wrong attitude we are going to die for all eternity! (II Thes. 2:10). God is deadly serious about our calling.

We have been flooded with God's precious truth. Now God is going to see if we just talk about faith - or really live by faith - by His word. Do we remember what we were taught and live by it?

God sends strong delusion to see if we are Philadelphian or Laodicean. God is recreating Himself. We're either going to be God - or we're going to be nothing! God wants to know who is going to qualify for His Kingdom. That is the whole purpose for our existence.



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

Let's examine two vastly different views of Herbert Armstrong and Mr. Tkach.

### DON'T ASSIGN SCRIPTURES TO LEADERS?

Mr. Armstrong applied scriptures to individuals like himself. Today, we are told "it is inappropriate". WHICH VIEW IS BIBLICAL? (I hope you will answer that question throughout Malachi's message!)

Mr. Tkach said, "It is not appropriate... to assign various scriptures to Mr. Armstrong or me personally as though our leadership were specifically prophesied about in the Bible. Besides being erroneous and spiritually presumptuous, this kind of thinking only serves to falsely brand God's Church as a cultish sect that worships its human leaders". This quote was taken from Mr. Tkach's "Personal" in the Worldwide News, January 9, 1989.

Mr. Tkach assisted HWA for 7 years. Mr. Tkach and most of God's people heard HWA say that he fulfilled Matthew 17:10-11, Malachi 4:5-6 (and other scriptures). Mr. Tkach agreed - even after HWA was dead!

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

Just as one John the Baptist prepared Christ's way the first time, so one messenger (HWA) has prepared the way for Christ's Second Coming.

Christ puts a personality in numerous scriptures. What could be plainer?

These are some of the most pivotal prophecies of the Bible. No longer assigning scriptures to leaders is not some small change in our beliefs. This is a colossal change!

Was HWA "erroneous" and "spiritually presumptuous" for assigning scriptures to himself?



## ASSIGN A NAME TO MATTHEW 17?

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias [Elijah] is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spoke unto them of John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:11-13, emphasis mine).

Dr. Donald Ward, President of Ambassador College, said, "Let's not put a personality in these prophecies - let God do it". The "disciples" had the faith to assign John the Baptist (a type of Elijah) as the man who prepared the way for Christ. The disciples did it - God approved and canonized it - and disciples (Church members) can do it today!

How shamefully tragic if the Worldwide Church of God doesn't recognize that Herbert Armstrong came in the spirit and power of Elijah and "restored all things". Yet scripture says, "and they knew him not" (Matt. 17:11).

The Worldwide News, August 25, 1986, enumerated 18 truths restored by HWA. Mr. Tkach introduced the article. Here are his words (emphasis mine throughout):

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

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

Then followed a listing of those 18 truths. Mr. Tkach, at that time, said this referred to Herbert Armstrong.

Then, on January 3, 1989, in the Pastor General's Report, Mr. Tkach said, "It is not appropriate to assign various scriptures to Mr. Armstrong or me personally as though our leadership were specifically prophesied in the Bible".

He simply said "it is not appropriate". No scriptures were given to support such a massive restructuring of his thinking.

This is a crucial, earth-shaking issue! He is changing foundational beliefs!

"Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom" (Matt. 16:28). Its about a vision of Christ's Second Coming (Matt. 17:9). "And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things" (verses 10-11). An Elijah (HWA) DID come - a major event which occurred in this end time.

Do God's disciples today know Christ is talking about an end-time Elijah, who fulfilled the role of John the Baptist in preparing for the Second Coming of Christ? Do we



know this by faith based on God's words? God's people must walk by the faith of Christ!

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

Mr. Armstrong said he fulfilled the Elijah role. Most all of us heard him say that. Mr. Tkach heard and agreed - when HWA was alive and after his death. But not now.

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

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

This is no tiny issue to be casually pushed aside while we act like we are not changing foundational beliefs!

Christ says we must apply a personality to Matthew 17.

### "WIFE OF YOUR YOUTH"

God gives a serious warning to some end-time ministers. "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart" (Mal. 2:1-2, emphasis mine). We need to heed this warning, because it's about ministers who keep God's law, but still cause people to stumble at the law (verse 8).

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

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

"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously." (Mal. 2:14-16, emphasis mine). Malachi discusses marriage, immediately after discussing the ministry. Is this a sudden turn in thought - or is it the same story flow? The context here is very important.



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

Notice that God says she is "the wife of your youth" (King James Version), not "your wife of your youth". This wife is "your companion", not "your wife". She is "the wife of your covenant: - not "your wife of your covenant". The King James Version is an accurate translation and it never says she is "your wife". That is because this is Christ's wife! (The New King James translation is inaccurate here.)

The Church became the "wife of your covenant" when you became a baptized member. When we entered God's Church, we entered into a covenant with God. We became a part of Christ's wife (Rev. 19:7).

Even some commentaries say "wife" applies to God's Church. The International Critical Commentary on the subject of Malachi, mentions that the term "wife of your youth" designates the Yahweh religion.

This second chapter of Malachi is addressed to the priests - plural (or ministers) (Mal. 2:1). Verse 13 discusses the altar where the priests serve. Then verse 14 begins discussing a wife - ONE wife. If this verse is discussing physical marriage, the words "priests" and "wives" (both plural) would be used instead of the plural word "priests" and singular word "wife", which is referring to the Church. Christ has only one wife, and that is the subject of this whole book of Malachi. SOME VERY EVIL THINGS ARE HAPPENING TO CHRIST'S WIFE!

God is discussing His wife - and our companion. The Church becomes our loving companion, family and life.

The whole book, and this chapter in particular, tells us the ministry is dealing treacherously with Christ's wife. This is directly referring to Elijah's, or HWA's, teaching from the beginning - from the early days of the Worldwide Church of God when HWA was "restoring all things". The Church in which many of us grew up spiritually (the wife of our youth).

Some leading ministers may think they are only pushing aside what HWA taught. BUT CHRIST IS TAKING IT PERSONALLY! Christ is saying that He established truth through "Elijah" and some ministers are now dealing treacherously with those instructions.

The whole 2nd chapter of Malachi is directed to God's ministers and their conduct in the Church. Some leading ministers are treacherous to the Church (Mal. 2:14) and to their fellow ministers (verse 10). Both of which are a part of Christ's wife, the Church. The primary focus is spiritual marriage - NOT physical marriage.



Paul discussed marriage between physical people in Ephesians 5:21-33. Still he says, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church". The main subject is Christ and the Church, even here where he discusses the spiritual relationship in a physical marriage. Let's look at an example - "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (verse 21). All of us in the Body of Christ (the Church) must submit to one another in the fear of God - not just in a physical marriage relationship. That way Jesus Christ leads every one of us - He is the Boss - NOT any man. Every family member submits to our Leader, Jesus Christ - Who submits to God the Father.

Every other verse in Ephesians 5 applies to Christ and the Church, in that way.

If Ephesians 5 - where the subject is marriage between physical people - applies to Christ and the Church - certainly Malachi chapter 2 does.

### ONE JOHN, ONE ELIJAH

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isa. 40:3-4). These verses apply to John the Baptist, but this was never fulfilled by John before Christ's First Coming. This is for an END-TIME WORK (vs. 9-10).

There was one John who prepared the way for Christ's First Coming. There was one "John" (HWA) who prepared the way for Christ's Second Coming. Nothing could be plainer.

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

John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah, but he never turned the hearts of the fathers to the children. Without the Holy Spirit this would have been spiritually impossible. It says "he" (end-time John) would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and prepare the way for Christ's Second Coming.

In a January 1984 Good News article, HWA wrote about Revelation 10:

So Revelation 10 shows that when our work appeared to be close to finished more than a decade ago, God held up world events, and I was commissioned to now go with the kingdom message to many kings, or many nations, speaking different languages (Rev. 10:11). That is what as I now look back, I have been doing, especially since 1972.

Mr. Armstrong clearly was doing the work of John the Baptist and thereafter applied these scriptures to himself. That work began at the end of the Church's second



19-year cycle. Now Pasadena says to never apply a scripture to Mr. Armstrong or Mr. Tkach. They didn't learn that from HWA. They are rejecting much of what HWA taught all his life - and those teachings are very biblical. In such a short time after his death, we have seen major shifts in how the Church views prophecy. There are major changes in other areas also.

### MYSTERY OF THE AGES

The following is a quote from Mr. Tkach about Mystery of the Ages - it is taken from the Nov./Dec. 1986 Plain Truth "Personal From The Publisher" (emphasis mine):

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

But he also wanted to make it available to a much wider audience. He decided Mystery of the Ages should be published by installments in The Plain Truth - a parting gift to the millions he had served through radio, television and the printed word during his long life.

Herbert W. Armstrong often likened understanding the Bible to putting together a jigsaw puzzle. At first there is a jumble of unrelated pieces. But as you fit them together a clear picture begins to emerge. Over the years, God gave him more pieces of the puzzle, and he never stopped learning. Shortly before he died, he said he had understood more in the last 10 years of his long life than in all the previous decades.

Mystery of the Ages is the product of that understanding. Mr. Armstrong did not underestimate the importance of this last work, for it contained vital keys to understanding the plan of God as revealed in the Bible. Mystery of the Ages in a very real sense was a last will and testament, to be passed on to those who would value it. As we come to the last installment of this remarkable book, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Herbert W. Armstrong, and his dogged search for the truth. He freely shared his understanding with us, and we have been privileged to make it available to you. He loved and respected his readers and, in a figurative sense, he remembered you in his will.

On January 16, 1986 - the day HWA died - Mr. Tkach wrote members and co-workers the following comment (emphasis mine): "Even in the last year of his life, with declining strength, he completed with God's help, HIS MOST POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE BOOK, Mystery of the Ages."

Mr. Tkach wrote the members and co-workers on January 19, 1986, after he returned from HWA's funeral. Here is an excerpt from that letter (emphasis mine): "I hope none of you will miss the January 26 telecast, which will be a special tribute to Mr. Armstrong, and will offer to the viewers a softbound copy of Mr. Armstrong's FINAL AND MOST IMPORTANT BOOK, Mystery of the Ages."



Mystery of the Ages has now been removed from print. Mr. Tkach admits the book contains "fundamental truths of God's word", but "peripheral or incidental points...give occasion to critics to fault the whole book". Do we fear the critics and the world more than we fear God? (Mal. 2:4-8).

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

Read HWA's own words when he introduced Mystery of the Ages to God's people in a letter dated September 23, 1985 (emphasis mine):

Dear Brethren and Co-Workers with Christ:

Since last December I have been working diligently on the largest and most important book in my life. In real fact I feel I myself did not write it. Rather, I believe God used me in writing it. I candidly feel it may be the most important book since the Bible.

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

This new book Mystery of the Ages unveils all these mysteries. It puts the many different parts of the "jigsaw puzzle" together. It is, in fact, a synopsis of the entire Bible. It is my prayer that you will read it along with your Bible - that it will make your Bible come alive and understandable. And with God's Holy Spirit dwelling in you, I feel sure that it will. I am now in my 94th year and I feel that this book is the most valuable gift I could possibly give you. This book is a partial expression of my thanks and gratitude to you for being a co-laborer with me and with Jesus Christ. With all my heart, I do appreciate and thank God for your part with me in the wonderful work in these closing days.

Mr. Armstrong was sick during the 1985 Feast of Tabernacles. A tape was played of his sermon the previous year. It was preceded by a videotaped segment about Mystery of the Ages in which this book was called HWA's "most important and significant work"! I repeat: it was his "MOST IMPORTANT AND SIGNIFICANT WORK"! (This was said about 3 months before his death.) Less than 3 years after his death, THE LEADERS IN PASADENA HAVE DISCONTINUED THE VERY HEART OF CHRIST'S WORK THROUGH HWA! How soon some forget - less than 3 years!

This video was of HWA presenting Mystery of the Ages to the sophomore Fundamentals of Theology Class. It was probably his last time to speak publicly.

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

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



Mr. Armstrong suggested it be read and studied a second and a third time. (That is still very good advice for us today.)

It was stated that this book "may prove to be one of the most important books of our day". No chance for that now.

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

All new people coming into the Worldwide Church can't receive these recently discontinued books. Here are the instructions from Pasadena: "...it is inappropriate to photocopy and distribute obsolete articles. If the literature is not on our current literature index, then it should not be used" (emphasis mine). A strong decision with a ring of finality.

Mr. Armstrong instructed the ministers to insist that every baptismal candidate read Mystery of the Ages. That has been stopped "forever". The book is out of print. There is little, if any, indication it will ever be in print again. If these top men had made this suggestion 3 years previously, all of them would have been fired!

The first reason that Larry Salzer gave in the Pastor General's Report for discontinuing the book was cost. Mystery of the Ages is the cornerstone of all the Church's literature and he said they can't afford to print it! God reveals such powerful truths - and the Church can't afford to print them!

What a drastic change in Mr. Tkach's thinking!

What are God's people going to think about this book now? Will they cast it aside as "flawed"? Lacking credibility?

Should we chop down the whole tree because of a few small, incorrect points or "twigs"?

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

There is a vast difference between being concerned about discontinuing this book, and viewing every word of HWA as "sacred".

Mystery of the Ages was like the magnificent summary of all HWA's work - THE ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE OF HIS ENTIRE MINISTRY. This book, more than any other piece of literature, was what HWA and God's Work were about in the Philadelphia era.



When HWA said, "...I feel I myself did not write it. I believe God used me in writing it" (emphasis mine), what does that mean? It means, IF HWA WAS RIGHT, THESE MEN HAVE A DANGEROUS DISAGREEMENT WITH JESUS CHRIST! Still, in less than 3 years after HWA's death, it was discontinued.

In my and Mr. John Amos' final meeting with two of the top leaders at Pasadena, one of them said HWA put this book together by "just combining many different articles". HWA's letter of September 23, 1985 (quoted above), refutes that statement. Mr. Joe Tkach, Jr. had said earlier that Mystery of the Ages "was riddled with error" - a statement we challenged. He later changed that remark to "many significant errors". He also talked about "racist statements" in the book. We strongly disagreed with what they both said and told them so.

Mr. Armstrong had served God in this Work for over 20 years before these two men were born! HWA was in the Work full time for over 50 years. Mr. Joe Tkach, Jr. has been in the Work full time for 3 years.

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

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume I, softcover book has also been discontinued. The softcover edition is the one sent to almost everybody who orders this book. It's apparently being phased out also. This is perhaps the second most important book HWA wrote. It tells the history of the Philadelphia era better than any other book. Volume II was not written entirely by HWA due to his failing health and is not nearly as important as Volume I.

Removing Volume I of the Autobiography is another move away from "traditions" or history of God's Church (II Thes. 2:15).

Never was a better book written on how to be a minister. All of us are called to that office in the World Tomorrow. This is the story of how God prepared the end-time "Elijah". It is a big part of the history of our modern-day "John the Baptist" preparing the way for Christ's return.

Luke wrote the whole book of Acts about the history of God's Church. God considers Church history very important.

The Autobiography (Vol. 1) is the best history book we have of this Work. It's not just history of HWA. This is vital history of the beginning and growth of the Philadelphia era of God's Church.



## THE BOOK OF REVELATION UNVEILED AT LAST

Here is a quote from the Nov./Dec. 1986 Plain Truth article, Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, by David Hulme (emphasis mine):

When we put this [6th] chapter in Revelation alongside Matthew 24 and let the Bible interpret its own symbols, we can see that these horsemen represent the signs that Jesus said were to be the "beginning of sorrows" - the time leading up to his Second Coming.

You need to face it, and then you need to know how to escape. Jesus did say it was possible to qualify to escape what is coming.

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

Here's a warning to stay alert, to watch world events and to start making right choices. We have a booklet, The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last, that will help you get started. This age of man's course is almost run out and you need to escape these awful times ahead. Christ promised a time of protection for those who will heed a way to escape. You need to find out how.

The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last will help you grasp the meaning of these prophecies that at first seem so hard to understand.

This quote was made almost a whole year after HWA died. Now this booklet also is discontinued. It is desperately needed right now. Read it and judge for yourself. HWA didn't live to see the end of this age as he thought he would. (So correct that little error in the booklet.) Never was a booklet's message more urgently needed. Christ has not revealed exactly when the end will be, but He still said it is the wicked who can "not discern the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:1-3).

In this booklet, HWA shows how Christ is personally warning this world of an impending holocaust, an ingredient sadly lacking in the Work today. HWA knew we were called to warn this world. Today, the Church is moving away from that responsibility! And their message is not a strong warning! The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last IS a warning. That is why this booklet was canceled!

## THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL

A taped sermon was sent out from Pasadena about the book The Incredible Human Potential shortly before HWA's death. The speaker told how this book should be "dog-eared" from use by Church members. HWA had the sermon sent to all of God's Churches. Now the WCG has also discontinued this book a short while after HWA is dead, and nobody explained why it was discontinued.



Why do these men at Pasadena think so differently in such a short while?

This is a unique publication! Only a small portion of this book was used in Mystery of the Ages.

The Incredible Human Potential is one of the most inspiring books this Work ever produced. It contains powerful inspiration from Christ. If you doubt its value, read and study it two or three times. This is the acid test. Then learn again or more deeply how glorious this truth is.

### WHO WAS JESUS? BOOKLET

As Pasadena discontinued Mystery of the Ages, they introduced Who Was Jesus?. HWA said the big problem of the Protestants was their preaching about the person of Christ and rejecting His message. Mystery of the Ages is about Christ's message. The book Who Was Jesus? is mostly about the person of Christ. It's the direction we need to be concerned about.

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

I fail to see such importance in this book. I do see a disturbing direction.

It's the focus that should disturb us. We are moving away from the message of Christ and focusing more and more on the Messenger. Just like the Protestants do.

When they discontinue Mystery of the Ages with criticism and then introduce Who Was Jesus? with great plaudits, it reveals a dangerous direction - away from what God taught us through HWA. Please, read the two books and compare them. That should be proof enough to a spiritually discerning person.

This is exactly the direction we were going in the 1970's. HWA wrote about those trying times in the Worldwide News, June 24, 1985. Here is what he said (emphasis mine):

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

It thrived and grew amazingly, but soon opposition and persecution set in. By A.D. 51, much of the Church in Galatia had turned to another gospel (Galatians 1:6-7). A violent controversy arose over whether the Gospel to be preached was the Gospel OF Christ or a gospel ABOUT Christ. The latter won out. There ensued a "lost century" in the history of the Church, from about A.D. 70 to 170. The original true Church survived, but gradually lost much of Jesus' teaching and biblical truth. By the early part of the 20th century much of God's purpose and truth had been lost - but the struggling true Church still had the name Church of God, the Ten Commandments including the Sabbath, and also tithing.



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

So God's people are warned to beware of deception, aimed mainly at the end time. How would this deception occur? How could some man deceive God's people? "For MANY shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; AND SHALL DECEIVE MANY" (verse 5, emphasis mine). Many shall come saying Jesus is Christ "and shall deceive MANY". Or, many shall come teaching about the person of Christ - not about His message. That is what is going to happen in the very end time to God's people.

The Church is not apt to be deceived by people outside God's Church. God's Church is mostly deceived from within.

As we move away from Mystery of the Ages (and Christ's message) to Who Was Jesus? (and the person of Christ) - it is time to start asking some hard questions about the direction of the Worldwide Church of God.

One approach is focused on Christ - the other on Christ's message.

Are members of the Church being deceived as Christ said many would be?

The same mistake was made in the 1970's. That is why HWA was warning us not to let history repeat itself! Where is this all leading?

## HOREB

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4:4). Horeb is another name for Mt. Sinai. There is something about this word that we need to "remember".

Horeb is where it all began with physical Israel. It is where the Israelites began their spiritual lives (by the letter of the law). At Horeb, they received God's Ten Commandments. God told them to REMEMBER where it all began.

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



Most of us have HWA's books and booklets. Hang on to them! Don't forget what you were taught spiritually from the beginning. This time, there is no HWA to get us "back on track". Those of us in the ministry today must take the lead this time. It's through this struggle that God makes up His "jewels" (Mal. 3:17), and decides who will be taken to a place of safety.

This is the test God has hurled at His spiritual leaders today!

We must remember where it all began. Malachi repeats this over and over. He does it for a powerful reason. This is where the Church fails at the very end and becomes the Laodicean era. We are told to "hold fast" our crown (Rev. 3:11). It is through remembering that the Philadelphians qualify for a place of safety and to be pillars in God's temple after Christ returns.

### "PARTIAL IN THE LAW"

"Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law" (Mal. 2:9). The Revised Standard Version states that they show "partiality in the law". It means they are respecters of persons, rather than the truth - as they should be. The expression "partial in the law" literally means, "you have accepted or exalted faces or persons".

They show partiality or favor to those who move away from the instructions God gave us through HWA. This causes people to "stumble at the law" (verse 8). They don't stop keeping the law, they just stumble. It leads them into a "lukewarm" attitude.

The Laodiceans keep the law (Rev. 12:17). They also stumble at the law.

God says the ministry should "keep knowledge" (Mal. 2:7-8). The Hebrew word for "keep" means "watch, to guard, to fasten with nails". Some ministers in the Church today are failing to guard the knowledge of the past. They have failed to "remember" (Mal. 3:16), and cling to what was taught about God's law.

This is why they show partiality. Many of those most loyal to what God taught us through HWA are being pushed more and more into the background, just as they were in the 1970's. Malachi 2:9 tells us why: the leaders show partiality in the law. It was all prophesied to happen over 2,000 years ago!

Malachi was a reformer trying to lead the ministers and the people back to the law. The priests were the usual expounders of the law. The prophets only appeared on special occasions - as in the case of Malachi who came chiefly because the priests were leading God's people astray. The men at the top were rejecting God's law - God's GOVERNMENT. The ministers have "profaned the holiness [sanctuary, RSV] of the Lord..." (Mal. 2:11). They profaned God's sanctuary or temple (Church today). Again, this



is not about some bad physical marriages as has been thought in the past (verse 14-16). It's about the Church, the wife of Christ, being corrupted!

Where did Malachi begin? Like Ezekiel's executioners, he began at God's sanctuary - the ministry (Ezek. 9:6).

### WHAT IS A LAODICEAN?

We often talk about a Laodicean attitude. The truth is, there is much confusion about what it is.

The Philadelphia era's example and its works (led by HWA) set a standard for us to follow until Christ returns. We'll see this demonstrated more and more as we continue. Major prophecies in Malachi 4, Zechariah 3 and 4, II Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 3 - all discuss this Philadelphia standard.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sounds good. But is it biblical? God says a person can "have a zeal, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:1-4). A Laodicean may have an abundance of zeal. EVEN SATAN IS FILLED WITH "ENERGY AND DRIVE"! That doesn't make Satan or a Laodicean righteous.

The Laodiceans "have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:16-17). This means they have a horrible self-righteousness problem. They have deep spiritual problems, but don't see them. That's because they are self-righteous. They think self is right. This is a lot more than lacking "drive and energy". The self-righteous person often has more "drive and energy" than others. But it can be very deceptive - witness Job.

Which one of us can measure up to the deeds of Job? Yet Job had to suffer horribly before he could see his problem of self-righteousness. People, like Elihu, couldn't convince him of his sins. It took God personally to do it. And so it is with the Laodiceans. When they find themselves in the worst suffering ever on this planet, they will know God has made a judgment against them (Rev. 3:16-20). Christ is "knocking" at their door now through this message.

### WHO IS THE MESSENGER?

Each Church era in Revelation 2 and 3 records a "messenger" - which can apply to a man or an angel (see Rev. 3:7-8). The word "messenger" is the Greek word "aggelos". The same word is used to refer to John the Baptist (Matt. 11:10-11; Mark 1:1-3) "Aggelos" or messenger is also used to refer to angels (Rev. 1:20).

Logic tells us the messenger to the Church eras are men - here's why. Does an angel "faint" as in Revelation 2:1-3? John wrote to these Church-era messengers. Do you write to angels? There is an angel assigned over each era and its messenger (Rev. 1:20). Do angels deliver messages to other angels in this context? God says people are going to "worship" the Philadelphia messenger (Rev. 3:9). God commands us to worship only God. So this messenger has to be a man who enters the God family in the future.

If there is a Philadelphia-era messenger, then there is one for the Laodicean era also.

Isn't the Laodicean story really about one Laodicean messenger rejecting the Philadelphia messenger? The last specific warning to the Philadelphia Church era was to let "...no man take your crown..." (Rev. 3:12). Why would that be God's last specific warning to the Philadelphians unless it is about a specific man who would be the "messenger" of the next era (Laodicean)? Is he the man who would try to take their crown? The Philadelphians are too spiritually perceptive to allow this to happen - but the Laodiceans do lose their reward - and some of them even lose their crown!



Those Philadelphians who let no man take their crown become pillars (Rev. 3:12). In verses 11 and 12 it reads this way: "...hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out..." The last specific warning to the Philadelphians is followed by mentioning the last specific reward that they receive. The two are connected because the reward is given if they don't allow a man (or Laodicean messenger) to take their reward.

As we continue this story, you will see other major prophecies that point to a human messenger in both the Philadelphian and Laodicean eras.

"He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches" (Rev. 3:13). This is the last general warning to the Philadelphians.

Do we hear what the Spirit is saying?

### "I KNOW YOUR WORKS"

Here is another quote from Dr. Herman Hoeh's 1982 sermon on Church eras: "The last stage of the Church is Laodicea, and logically in history we should expect that an outgrowth and ultimately a separate candlestick, a separate government is the outcome of this" (emphasis mine).

God's people today, just like those from the Ephesus era and other eras, must leave the Laodicean Church or SUFFER WITH THE LAODICEANS IN THE TRIBULATION!

Dr. Hoeh says if we look at the history of church eras, we should expect a separate government for the Laodicean Church. Yet, if the Laodiceans are in control, it is the Philadelphians who must start a new organization - or pull away and continue the "old" organization, by RE-ESTABLISHING THE PHILADELPHIA STANDARD.

Do the Laodiceans have works as a church era? If the Laodicean Church begins when the Tribulation begins, as we have believed in the past, the Laodicean messenger couldn't deliver his message to the people. Under the prevailing conditions, it would be impossible. The Laodicean Church must have era "works" before the Tribulation begins.

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things saith the Amen, the faithful and the true witness, and the beginning of the creation of God; I know THY WORKS, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot" (Rev. 3:14-15, emphasis mine).

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



"I know thy works." God is addressing the collective body - the era. Could the Laodiceans as a group have "works" in the Tribulation? No, only the two witnesses perform their work during the Tribulation. The Laodiceans will be in the worst captivity ever known to man. What kind of works would be possible as a collective body during the Tribulation? None, therefore the works must be prior to the Tribulation - the time period we are in NOW.

### "RICH AND INCREASED WITH GOODS"

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

The word "goods" has an interesting meaning. The first definition in Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon is "to be rich, to have abundance..." meaning "...OUTWARD POSSESSIONS". This means physical wealth! The other definition, "to be richly supplied" can be used of physical or spiritual wealth.

There is strong indication that the Laodicean era has abundant "outward possessions". Remember, God is primarily addressing the messenger of the Laodicean Church - not the members. It is a Church-era label.

The income of the Worldwide Church of God is about \$200 million a year. There is property value in the multiple millions of dollars. Certainly the present administration of the Church inherited great wealth when HWA died.

"Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing..." (verse 17). Don't they "have need of nothing" because they are "rich and increased with physical goods"? Is that why the ministers who have real concerns about the direction of the WCG are not heard? Doesn't Pasadena think it can always rely on the physical wealth, and therefore doesn't have to be concerned about dissenting voices?

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

The WCG may be growing in membership until Christ returns, but does that always mean it is doing God's will? No. We can't use that criterion to judge. Other churches have millions of members and are not God's churches. Actually, the Work of God could be declining in numbers and still do a wonderful job for God. So we have to look deeper than a growing membership.



God's Church has doctrinal beliefs that are easily proven. A watered-down version of the truth will be more appealing to people in the world and thus could swell the membership ranks.

It is a well-known fact that the city of Laodicea anciently was distinguished for its riches. As a people they prided themselves on their wealth. The city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 62 and rebuilt by its wealthy citizens.

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

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

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

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

### INSPIRING NEW TRUTH REVEALED

I have been puzzled by a Bible verse for years. But now the understanding is clear to me. Here is the verse: "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" (Rev. 3:21). Why is this awesome reward mentioned after the Laodicean section of Revelation 3? The saints mentioned in this verse are going to share Christ's own throne, if they overcome "as" Christ did (which the Laodiceans fail to do). Read Revelation 4, which is a description of this glorious throne. This reward is not offered to the Laodiceans. Then why did God include it immediately after the Laodicean story?



"Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out..." (Rev. 3:12). This is the reward of the Philadelphians. They also escape the Great Tribulation (verses 10-11). The fate of the Laodiceans is to go into the Tribulation. "I counsel 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 eyesalve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:18-19). The Laodiceans are NOT going to be in God's future Headquarter's Temple, where God's throne is. God does NOT promise them that reward anywhere in the Bible.

So who receives the reward mentioned in verse 21? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20, emphasis mine). It says "if any man" or any individual hears the KNOCK and responds, he or she will be led out of the Laodicean Church. Salvation is not a group affair. Each one of us has the individual responsibility to respond - or not respond! Following Christ is an individual matter. Being in a Church can be meaningless, without this understanding. Christ is going to knock on YOUR spiritual door. How are YOU going to respond to Christ? The one who responds positively, receives the awesome reward of verse 21! That means he or she remains a Philadelphian - by repenting of being a Laodicean.

Both verses 12 and 21 of Revelation 3 are Philadelphian rewards. But those who hear the "knock" must come out of the Worldwide Church of God (the Laodicean Church), to receive that reward.

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

God is knocking - to a great extent through Malachi's Message.

We must overcome as Christ overcame (verse 21). That means we must have the faith of Christ in us (Gal. 2:20). If we have that kind of faith, then we will follow God out of the "lukewarm" Church. It is the ONLY way for us to receive the reward of verse 21.

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

Those who hear the "knock" know how to follow Christ - our true leader. Those saints don't follow a man - or men. That is why they hear the "knock" of Christ. Hearing that "knock" also saves them from the Tribulation.

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



These verses tell us the Philadelphia Church remains alive and well in the Laodicean era, and the Philadelphians do it by hearing Christ's knock. They respond by coming out of the lukewarm Church.

THE PHILADELPHIANS WALK BY FAITH - that's why they hear the knock. They hear what the Spirit says (Rev. 3:22).

### THE MEANING OF "SEALED"

"Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his..." (II Tim 2:19, emphasis mine). We become begotten sons of God at baptism. God "seals" us. He won't withdraw His calling. "We are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). We are sealed at baptism for that day. However, the seal can be "broken" or left in doubt - by our actions. It's not guaranteed - yet. We are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). There is "promise" when our calling is sealed. God's part of the sealing is secure, but the final outcome is not known until we are born sons - not just begotten sons. We are sealed at baptism and if we use the Spirit properly, we are as good as saved because that is how God views it (John 6:47, "has eternal life", also see Rom. 4:17, last part).

The New Dictionary says "sealing" is an "eternal guarantee". God looks upon our salvation as completed. This dictionary gives it three meanings - ownership, authenticity and security. As far as God is concerned, these three words apply to the sealing at baptism. We are not totally secure until we are born sons of God. The sealing is not absolutely certain until that time. Then God owns us. It is then authentic, we are secure in eternal glory. That is the ultimate sealing - when the covenant is kept by both parties.

### WHO ARE THE 144,000?

Revelation 6:9-16 discusses the martyrdom of the saints and the heavenly signs. Both are included in the Great Tribulation - or the 2-1/2 years (Hos. 6:1-2). Then comes the Day of the Lord (verse 17). But before the Day of the Lord, and just after the Tribulation (Rev. 7:1), the 144,000 are sealed (Rev. 7:2-4).

The Tribulation ends after 2-1/2 years (Hos. 6:1-2). The "day of the Lord" lasts 1 year (Ezk. 4:6; Num. 14:34, a day for a year in prophecy fulfilled). This makes a total of 3-1/2 years. The Philadelphians are in a place of safety for 3-1/2 years.

Both the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord are included in that 3-1/2 year period the Bible calls "...time, and times, and a half a time..." (Rev. 12:14; Dan. 12:7).



The 144,000 are sealed immediately after the Tribulation and immediately before the Day of the Lord.

The booklets The Key to the Book of Revelation and Revelation Unveiled at Last (now out of print) explain this 3-1/2 year period in great detail.

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

The great multitude of Revelation 7:9, 13-14 includes all those who repent as a result of the Tribulation - who were previously unconverted. "These are they which came out of great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). The great multitude consists of people who were never in the Church prior to the Tribulation. They are innumerable, probably far more than 144,000.

First, they came out of the Tribulation, and second, they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They become converted and accept the blood of Christ to pay for their sins.

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5). Christ "washed us" - past tense - "from our sins in his own blood". When? All New Testament conversions, including those to be called and converted in the seven eras (Rev. 2 and 3) - whom John is addressing - have been or shall be washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb at conversion. That is why there is no mention of this happening to the Laodiceans or the Philadelphians. They have already been converted before the Tribulation. But the great multitude repents only after the Tribulation arrives - they are not included in the seven eras. This multitude of people has undoubtedly heard God's message before the Tribulation but didn't repent. Then, when they experience the Tribulation that was prophesied to them before it occurred, they repent.

The Bible doesn't say the great multitude are sealed - that sealing happens to the Laodicean group before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord".

The great multitude "came out" of great tribulation" (KJV). The Philadelphians did NOT come out of the Tribulation because they were never in it. They were in a place of safety. The Laodiceans did NOT come out of the Tribulation because every indication is that they all DIED in the Tribulation (Rev. 6:9-11; 12:11-12).

There are clearly 3 separate and distinct groups.

The Philadelphians are going to be in a place of safety for 3-1/2 years (Rev. 12:14). So it isn't logical that they would be sealed after 2-1/2 years in the place of safety. Therefore, they couldn't be the 144,000.

However, it is very logical that the Laodiceans are sealed after spending 2-1/2 years in the Tribulation. Here's why.



We know the Laodiceans are going into the Tribulation (Rev. 3:14-19). Revelation 12 discusses the Philadelphians going to a place of safety (verses 13-14), and the Laodiceans into the Tribulation (verse 17). It says that one group "loved not their lives unto the death" (verse 11). That could not be the Philadelphians because they are in the place of safety. They do not have to die to prove their faithfulness to God. The great multitude is being protected from the Day of the Lord (Rev. 7:14). That leaves only the Laodiceans. God tells us they are going into the Tribulation. The Laodiceans will die and be sealed during the 2-1/2 year Tribulation. Therefore, we can see that 144,000 of God's people receive their salvation through the Tribulation experience - and death.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). Now here is a very important point. Note it carefully. After 2-1/2 years of the Tribulation, and just prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord, all of the 144,000 will have been sealed by death (Rev. 7:3-4).

Why doesn't it say Elijah (HWA) comes before the Great Tribulation - instead of "the great and dreadful day of the Lord"? Because there is still much that is left unfinished about the Elijah Work. When we reach "the great and dreadful day of the Lord", all rebellion from the Church against the Elijah Work is removed. At that point, all Firstfruits support what Christ has restored through HWA or they are dead spiritually! Even though HWA died before "the great and dreadful Day of the Lord", there are many who still don't support what Christ restored through him. When that Day arrives ALL CHURCH MEMBERS WHO STILL REBEL AGAINST GOD'S GOVERNMENT WILL BE CUT OFF FOREVER!

It says by strong implication that the Laodiceans repent of their rebellion toward the Elijah (HWA) work. They have a serious GOVERNMENT PROBLEM. They are in the Tribulation for that very reason!

Though the Laodiceans probably die at different times in the Tribulation, the cut-off point is immediately before the Day of the Lord. Then the sealing is complete and official. This is the precise point when God will know absolutely which Laodiceans are to be saved and which Laodiceans are to be lost. It's all ultimately sealed at this time. The Philadelphians have already proven themselves. God will now know who is going to be in the Firstfruits calling from the Laodicean Church.

Those who are loyal to Christ and what He taught through HWA are called Philadelphians. Those who are NOT loyal to those teachings are called Laodiceans. The Laodiceans must admit that they have rebelled against what God taught through HWA and repent - and then DIE to prove their conviction to God!

If we look closely at Revelation 7:3-4 and relate it to Malachi 4:5-6, we can see what happens to fill the prophetic gap - between the death of "Elijah" (HWA) and "the great and dreadful day of the Lord". God demonstrated for many years through Christ and HWA



how His GOVERNMENT works. Then He removed HWA to see if we would individually follow Christ's GOVERNMENT without this spiritually strong, physical leader. It is a carefully planned test for God's people.

If you want to read the story in detail, then read the book of Malachi. It tells you what happened after HWA died. Revelation 7:3-4 tells exactly when the Laodicean Church era ends. Later, we shall discuss precisely when the Laodicean era began.

Again, the Bible indicates that all the Laodiceans who enter God's Kingdom must DIE for God (Rev. 6:9-11; 12:11-12). You should read every word. This is why the Laodiceans are sealed during the 2-1/2 years. Their sealing has been in doubt until the Tribulation. The Laodiceans have to prove themselves by dying for God. That is when they are sealed. According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, one of the definitions of this word "sealed" is to "place beyond doubt"! At the time of their death is when their commitment to God is finally known and "placed beyond doubt".

The sealing at this time could apply ONLY to the Laodiceans.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion [Zion], and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb where ever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:1-4). These Laodiceans make it into the Kingdom. However, the 144,000 Laodiceans will not be in God's temple, or at Headquarters forever, as the Philadelphians will be (Rev. 3:12). The 144,000 Laodiceans won't qualify for assignment to God's Headquarters, but they will enter God's Kingdom and assist Christ for all eternity.

There is no quantity mentioned to number the Philadelphians. It would seem (according to Malachi) that there are considerably less than 144,000. Romans 11:2-13 discusses the Elijah work and 7,000 men. If this verse is any real indication, with family members, it could be around 30,000 people. Also, Matthew 25:1-10 could mean half of God's people will be Philadelphians in the very end time. God says He will spare his "jewels" (Mal. 3:17). You don't normally think of precious jewels in large numbers - nor of many pillars in the Headquarters temple (Rev. 3:12).

Many people have been interested in God's Church for years, but have never attended, so it's conceivable that a crisis in the world could swell the WCG membership very rapidly. The doors of the WCG are being opened to the world. Their ministers are now told by Pasadena to invite anyone who requests to attend Church (unless there is a



good reason to do otherwise). This is yet another drastic departure from what HWA taught us. He said they should be about 6 months from baptism before they are invited to attend services.

The Laodiceans are people whom many of us know and love. This is not a fantasy - it is a horrifying reality! If this isn't enough to make each one of us deeply examine ourselves, then surely that attitude IS Laodicean.

God has given us so much spiritual knowledge. God says we are being judged by what WE DO with all that knowledge (Rom. 2:12; James 4:17). So God holds back the Day of the Lord until all the Laodiceans are forced to choose between God's way or Satan's, and then those who repent must die and be sealed.

The great multitude repented and "came out" of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:14). The Bible doesn't say this about the Laodiceans. That is because the Laodiceans die IN the Tribulation and consequently are SEALED. Then they are assured of being in God's Kingdom, but they won't receive a Philadelphian's reward.

Study the chronology of Revelation 6 and 7. It clearly reveals that the 144,000 are the Laodiceans. Revelation 6 discusses the Tribulation and the martyrdom of the saints (or the Laodiceans). Then in Revelation 7, God marks the time many Laodicean Firstfruits are officially sealed for admittance into the Kingdom - and many others are lost forever.

The bad news is MANY OF GOD'S PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO A PLACE OF SAFETY. And even worse, SOME WON'T EVEN BE IN GOD'S GLORIOUS KINGDOM!

The good news is, at this point when the Laodiceans have been sealed, God begins to intervene directly in this world's affairs so He can rule and give us the Wonderful World Tomorrow.

### WHO IS LEVI?

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

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

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

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



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

God is working with us spiritually today (Zech. 4:6). And Levi is a code word to help us understand, if we apply these verses spiritually. HWA often talked about the Bible being a coded book.

When Malachi delivered his message, Levi was dead. So it is today. This message is mainly for God's Church after HWA died. Anyone who knew Mr. Armstrong knows he would not tolerate priests who "caused people to stumble at the law" (Mal. 2:6-9) - at least not for long. Now God wants to see if His other ministers have the same zeal. Do they fear God as HWA and Levi did?

If the priests or ministers don't heed Malachi's message - God is going to curse them (Mal. 2:2), and make them "contemptible and base before all the people" (verse 9).

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

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

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

Levi turned many from iniquity (Mal. 2:6). The Laodicean ministry causes many to stumble at the law (Mal. 2:8). Such are the possibilities for good or evil, in God's noble ministry.

### SEVEN LAMPS

There is a significant key to understanding Zechariah chapters 3 and 4. "For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes..." (Zech. 3:9, emphasis mine). "...They shall rejoice and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10, emphasis mine).

Dr. Ward taught at the Ministerial Refreshing Program in September 1988, that the "seven eyes" refers to the seven Church eras. That is the only interpretation I ever heard at Ambassador College. I think most ministers agree on that subject.

"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven



golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20). The seven candlesticks (or lamps) are also the seven Church eras (see Rev. 2-3).

"And said to me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof" (Zech. 4:2). The word "candlestick" would better be translated "lampstand" (see Anchor Bible Commentary). The lampstand has seven lamps, which is again referring to the seven Church eras of Revelation 2 and 3.

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

The seven eyes are listed in the Joshua section (Zech. 3:9) and in the Zerubbabel section (Zech. 4:10). The seven lamps (or seven eyes) are also mentioned in Zechariah 4:2. God is emphasizing the subject of Church eras. That is because Joshua and Zerubbabel both are in this end-time prophecy. That is just another indication that this is a prophecy for NOW. The seven eras start at Christ's First Coming and end at His Second Coming. God wants us to think in terms of Church eras. That is crucial to understanding Zechariah 3 and 4. Then the chapters are easy to grasp.

After Zerubbabel's death, came the Joshua work - which turned away from the Zerubbabel work (just as it happened in Revelation 3).

Zechariah 3 talks about a Joshua who had authority. A modern Joshua rules an era, too. So when God talks about Joshua and Zerubbabel (in the context of Church eras), two eras and two leaders are discussed. Therefore, they must each head an era.

Joshua is presented first in Zechariah 3, however, he was Zerubbabel's assistant (Hag. 1:1). Zerubbabel was a leader before Joshua, so let's start with Zerubbabel.

### "THE HANDS OF ZERUBBABEL"

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

"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it" (Zech. 4:9, emphasis mine). It 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 expressed participation in temple building (page 251, book of Zechariah). That is, it was built by a human being with "hands", not built "without hands" - as Christ does it.



Mr. Armstrong started and finished an era that "restored all things". He started it and finished it before he died, with the power of God's Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:6). His hands laid the foundation and his hands finished the temple - the Philadelphia era.

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

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

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

Brethren, HAS THAT BEEN DONE BY THIS CHURCH?

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

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

HAS ANYONE ELSE DONE IT?

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

Why are some leaders in the Church today, without proper biblical support and proof, so intent on changing major prophecies HWA taught us?

Mr. Armstrong continues: "God has never removed a man called to a specific leadership assignment or commission until his commission is COMPLETED."

Did Mr. Armstrong complete his mission? Did he finish "this house", "restore all things" and "turn the hearts of the fathers"? He most certainly did.



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

"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house: his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you" (Zech. 4:9, emphasis mine). "House" is a very common word. In the Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, other scriptures where "house" is used covers 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" (Gen. 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 7 Church eras. It also applies to eternal life.

The subject is "this house". And in the context of the 7 Church eras (Zech. 3:8; 4:2, 10; Rev. 1:20). If we put all the scriptures together - it could just as well be called "this era". And Zerubbabel did finish it. HWA 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" (Matt. 17:10-11). No more needs to be added to the house. All we need to do is walk in HWA's footsteps, which is what Mr. Tkach SAID he would do. We just need to maintain the "house".

Mr. Armstrong said to Mr. Tkach just before his death, "I have gone to world leaders, now its time to bring the Church together". It seems more was finished by HWA than we have realized. Dr. Ward said, "Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of Zerubbabel". But that is spiritualizing away God's truth. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of everything - if He lives in us (Phil. 2:5). Still, there was a man named Zerubbabel who built the restoration temple. And there was a specific man who built the Philadelphia era of God's Church. HWA was a type of Zerubbabel. He believed it and said so himself, many times!

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

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

God fits the last two eras of His Church into the seven eras in Zechariah 3:4. This gives us the overview. Then it all becomes very clear.



## "THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS"

On October 9, 1933, the first radio program by the Philadelphian era of God's Church began on a 100-watt station in Eugene, Oregon. The Plain Truth began February 1934, with 234 copies - mimeographed by hand. Ambassador College began in 1947, with four students and eight professors. It all seems so small and insignificant. (Just as the work of Malachi's Message may appear to some now.) But from its small beginning, the Church grew into the great and powerful Work we see today.

Do some "despise the day of small things"? This is another way of saying, some are "treacherous to the wife of your youth".

The Anchor Bible Commentary uses the word "scorned" instead of the word "despised" (KJV). This Commentary says that the word "scorned" "...indicates rejection..." (Zech. page 252). What is being rejected today? Some leaders especially, (Zech. 3), are rejecting what Christ built through HWA. Some leaders have an attitude problem toward what Christ restored through HWA - which means they are rejecting the very GOVERNMENT of God. It wasn't the work of HWA - it was the work of Christ. These scorners fail to see God's Spirit (Zech. 4:6) in Christ's Work, which was accomplished through HWA. It's God Spirit and God's GOVERNMENT they reject!

Perhaps the Church's biggest problem today is despising "the day of small things". Change doesn't always mean growing in Godly character. The Church changes from a Philadelphian standard to a Laodicean standard in Revelation 3. So change is not always good.

## THE ZERUBBABEL INSET

The story flow of Zechariah 3 and 4 is about Joshua, and the two witnesses who prophesy in the Great Tribulation. Zerubbabel is not an active part of this story flow. As you read the story, the flow would be much better if you skipped the inset in verses 6, 7, 8, 9 and two-thirds of verse 10 (Zech. 4).

An inset is an insertion that is added later by the editors after the original story was written.

The Critical International Commentary (and a few others) even put this inset in another section of Zechariah.

Why an inset? It was put there after the Joshua story was recorded by those who canonized the Bible. Remove it and you have Joshua and the two witnesses just before and during the Tribulation - which is concluded by Christ's return (Zech. 3:8). That is the time setting. The two olive trees (Zech. 4:11-12) are the two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-4).



Joshua and "his fellows" are repeating the 1970's sin. They are relying too much on their own power - not the power of God's Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:6). Verse six is a part of the Zerubbabel inset. God says Zerubbabel (HWA) built with God's Holy Spirit, but the Laodiceans refuse to follow. They have a great example to follow, but they refuse. God considers this a rejection of His authority and government!

Even though HWA is dead - he left us a finished house. Our job is to refine and maintain it (i.e., walk in his footsteps) - not tear down what was built. HWA restored all things (Matt. 17:10-11) - he finished the house and then he died. But he didn't die until he finished the house.

What does it all mean? It's the same warning Malachi gave - "remember" what Elijah taught (Mal. 3:16; 4:4-6). We also must remember what and how Zerubbabel (HWA) built.

The Anchor Bible Commentary says that the Zerubbabel inset "...is not extraneous to understanding the whole" (Zech. page 241). The inset is called a "glaring interruption". That means it interrupts for an essential reason: When you include the inset, you can understand what it takes to continue being a Philadelphian after HWA died. YOU MUST FOLLOW WHAT CHRIST ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE PHILADELPHIA MESSENGER! If you follow the wrong messenger, you will be led into the Tribulation - which is a part of the story of Zechariah 3 and 4.

HWA said people in the 1970's wanted him out of the way - some even wanted him to die. And look at the disaster that resulted. The WCG leaders today remove many of HWA's instructions that are biblically based. We must prove any changes from the Bible. Their "fruits" reveal a wrong attitude.

Mr. John Amos and I are not leaving God's Philadelphia standard. The WCG leaders today are doing the leaving! They are taking a Laodicean turn away from Christ - because they ignore what Christ established through Zerubbabel (HWA).

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

The Laodiceans "despise the day of small things" - or the example set by Zerubbabel (HWA). This expression is a part of the inset. Why? It reveals their problem and tells them how they could be a smashing success, but they turn away from this history. It's just another way of saying they were "treacherous to the wife of your youth" - and showing them how they must look to Zerubbabel to succeed. The "fruits" show he knew how to build spiritually. Several major prophecies are telling us that our salvation has everything to do with FOLLOWING CHRIST'S INSTRUCTIONS THROUGH HWA. You'll see more of these prophecies as we continue.

The inset is there for one main reason - to reveal Joshua's sin and tell us how to avoid it. He didn't follow Zerubbabel's example. That is getting to the very heart of what a



Laodicean is. They turn away from what Christ established through Zerubbabel (HWA).

The Laodicean sin revolves around that concept!

The inset was added by editors, inspired by Christ, as a warning for us today!

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

The Zerubbabel inset is another way of indicating that HWA is dead. It's as if God is giving all of us the same instructions that Paul gave the Philippians, when he was in jail and no longer able to be with them. "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). "Those things, which you have both learned and received and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9). God is giving us the same instructions today. What you "have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me" - or HWA - "DO"! Paul is telling them to USE GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT - and "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling". That "fear and trembling" is what the ministers in Malachi 2:4-9, lack. So we must not follow their example. FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL AND HWA!

HWA is dead, but we must remember what we learned from him and his example, that was inspired by Christ. We must "remember" and "DO"!

That is the major failure of Joshua and "his fellows". HWA's "traditions" are too often pushed aside now as they were in the 1970's.

Mr. Tkach has said that he won't "rule from the grave" - meaning he won't let HWA's words dictate his every move. And he shouldn't. But God's leaders must "rule from the grave" to some extent. Mr. Tkach must heed what Jesus Christ established through dead men - like Paul and HWA, and "DO"! If Mr. Tkach doesn't follow what Christ previously established, then his followers are just following a man.

Zerubbabel had the "plummet" or "plumb bob" - a measuring device which is used to test any vertical structure for deviation from a true line. This symbolized Zerubbabel testing the accuracy of truth or departure from previously revealed truth. If we aren't testing our truth very precisely and carefully, we can easily depart into a Laodicean attitude. If we don't look to HWA's method of building, we face disaster in the future.

Again, God is discussing Church eras here (Zech. 3:8; 4:2, 10). The time setting is just before Christ returns. The Philadelphian and Laodicean eras are the subject.



## WHO IS JOSHUA?

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech. 3:1-2).

Just as HWA was a type of Zerubbabel, so there must be an end-time type of Joshua.

At the September 1988 ministerial refresher, Dr. Ward said Israel was referred to as a "brand plucked out of the fire" (Amos 4:11-13; 5:1-3). And that's right. The context shows that Israel is plunged into the Great Tribulation - and plucked out. They are again going to be "a brand plucked out of the fire".

And so is a modern-day Joshua unless he repents before that time (Zech. 3:1-2).

Some of God's people are going to be in the Tribulation - and plucked out - or not plucked out! Nobody who survives the Tribulation could fulfill this scripture more than a Laodicean. Perhaps as many as 50 percent of the Laodiceans will lose their eternal life (Matt. 25:1-10). A repentant Laodicean would indeed be a "brand plucked out of the fire". It appears that this modern-day Joshua won't wake up until he is in the Tribulation. That will be his last chance to repent and be crowned a ruler in God's Kingdom.

Dr. Ward also said that "Joshua was a type of physical Israel". However, the subject in Zechariah 3 and 4 is about spiritual Israel (Zech. 4:6). It's about building a spiritual temple just before Christ comes.

So there is to be a spiritual type of Joshua and that couldn't apply to physical Israel. They didn't even have God's Holy Spirit. This prophecy refers to an end-time, specific man - not a physical nation.

Dr. Ward also said that Joshua is a type of Christ. Since Joshua is characterized by "filthy garments" - I don't see how he can make such a statement.

The context of Zechariah 3 and 4 includes the two witnesses (Zech. 4:14). Their work is during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 11:1-4). Their work concludes the work of God's seven church eras - which is the subject of Zechariah 3:9; 4:2, 10.

If we put all the pieces together, we can see that Joshua and Zerubbabel represent two of those Church eras! Zechariah 3 and 4 are about the Joshua era. The Zerubbabel inset is there to emphasize to Joshua where he got off track - how his garments became filthy, spiritually. And it's all to occur just before Christ's return (Zech. 3:8). It has to be the Laodicean era! Many people follow a Joshua into the Great Tribulation - a Joshua who has filthy garments. Other major prophecies of the Bible say virtually the same thing. More on that later.



"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel" (Zech. 3:3). The Hebrew word for "filthy" designates an extreme condition of filth. The word can even be used as "excrement". The high priest, Joshua, didn't begin with filthy garments. The Companion Bible says "was" means "had come to be" (Satan got to him). Joshua had to receive a new mitre or turban - which symbolizes rule or government. That means he was in charge, reigned before Christ came, and then went astray while he reigned - in God's Church.

Joshua didn't begin with filthy garments and a corrupt mitre. He became that way as he ruled. He was given a fair mitre or pure turban (a symbol of governmental authority) because he had an impure turban. He had a government problem.

The central act is positioning a pure turban. His big problem was how he ruled - and failed to follow Zerubbabel's example! This prophecy says there is going to be a leader in God's Church who has a serious GOVERNMENT problem! He refuses to submit to what Christ established through Zerubbabel (HWA)! God is calling for repentance from the TOP! That is where the major government problem is.

The leaders today are saying that John Amos and I have a government problem. The truth is not what men say - but what God says. And God says THE WCG LEADERS AT HEADQUARTERS HAVE THE GOVERNMENT PROBLEM!

Joshua's salvation is conditional (Zech. 3:6-7). "If you will walk in my ways". "If you will keep my charge". A specific individual in a specific setting. "Then you shall judge my house". "And I will give you places to walk..." The promises are all conditional. He gets a pure turban only if he repents. This is addressing a definite person with a specific priestly item that is filthy - a turban - which symbolizes GOVERNMENT. He has A SERIOUS GOVERNMENT PROBLEM! He has rejected the AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST!

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH [or Christ]" (Zech. 3:8).

This refers to a leader who has serious spiritual problems just before the return of Christ. There are also other leaders with him - "his fellows" - which means there had to be followers - namely the Laodicean Church. These other leaders also have a serious government problem.

The sin of Joshua and his fellows was turning away from what Zerubbabel taught. This is why Malachi had to come to the restoration temple - after it was built. And that is why the message of Malachi must be delivered today - AFTER the Philadelphia era has ended!



## "THY FELLOWS"

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for behold I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH" (Zech. 3:8). The Anchor Bible says the word "sit" could mean "rule, exercise authority". But Joshua is not alone. It is Joshua and "thy fellows". "Thy" (or your) is a personal possessive pronoun which shows possession of something (the car's engine, the baby's toy, etc.). They BELONG to Joshua - they are "HIS fellows". They don't BELONG to Christ. That's the big problem! They are not spiritually motivated as they should be (Zech. 4:6) - and remember this is a part of the Zerubbabel inset. If they were properly motivated, they wouldn't be following Joshua who has filthy garments. That is why they "despise the day of small things". They have contempt for Zerubbabel (HWA) and what he taught. So they move away from the Philadelphia standard.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my charge, then you shall also judge my house and shall also keep my courts, and I will give you places to walk among these that stand by" (Zech. 3:7). "Keep my charge", means the act of GUARDING. It means "a place where guards are set" or the "watchmen themselves". The biggest SIN of Joshua and his fellows was a failure to guard what they had - what Zerubbabel (HWA) left behind. (Mal. 2:7 has the same meaning for the word "keep".) Their job is to tenaciously guard what Christ established through HWA and gave to the Church. Today, the WCG headquarters is rejecting so much of the knowledge revealed by God.

It is also the same problem as in II Thessalonians 2:15 - they reject the "traditions" or "instructions" of the past.

There is also good news. Joshua's fellows are a SIGN that Christ's coming is very near (Zech. 3:8). The Soncino Commentary says, "for they are men that are a sign" (emphasis mine). The JFB Commentary also translates it "sign". It could also read a "wondrous sign", because of what follows - Christ's coming (verses 8-10)!

It is the same SIGN in II Thessalonians 2:1-3 of a falling away, which also shows that Christ's coming is very near. This is almost the same language. It's also the same story of Revelation 3 - about the Laodicean Church.

Signs are to be read and understood - or we get lost.

Joshua worked with Zerubbabel. "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest..." (Hag. 1:1). Apparently this relationship continued until Zerubbabel died. HWA, by his own admission, was a type of Zerubbabel. Then there must be a modern-day Joshua who worked closely with HWA and also rules an era



(Zech. 3:8; 4:2, 10). This Joshua must also depart from HWA's example just as Zerubbabel's Joshua departed from Zerubbabel's example. This view sharpens the focus tremendously.

There is another Joshua mentioned in the Bible who we also need to study.

### THE OTHER JOSHUA

We need to remember that the books Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings are the former prophets. They contain some prophecy, but focus more on leadership. Generally the people of a church or nation follow the leaders. The former prophets reveal the kind of leadership needed for God's people to succeed. The books of I and II Samuel, I and II Kings tell us how to, or how not to be king-priests. The Joshua story tells us how to lead when a great man like Moses dies. By studying this example the leaders would know how to lead (or not lead) when HWA dies - and the consequences of each. That makes it very prophetic!

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

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

We need to compare the Joshua who worked with Zerubbabel with the Joshua who worked with Moses.

"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God has given you rest, and has given you this land" (Josh. 1:13). This Joshua told the Israelites to "remember" the word which Moses commanded them. This was after Moses was dead. So we must remember the word HWA commanded us! That is exactly what God tells us about what HWA taught - "remember" (Mal. 4:4-6).

"For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua..." (Josh. 4:10). God commanded Joshua to speak according to all that Moses commanded him. And so we must be very careful today to follow HWA's instructions. Shortly after HWA's death, Pasadena even sent out a tape comparing this Joshua to Mr. Tkach.

"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel..." (Josh. 8:35, emphasis mine). Joshua didn't omit one word



of all that Moses commanded - NOT ONE WORD! And Moses was dead! Why don't we see this attitude in Pasadena today?

"As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua..." Moses followed God's commands and passed them on to Joshua [who] obeyed, and "...he [Joshua] left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses" (Josh. 11:15). Joshua still obeyed the commands of Moses - long after Moses was dead. He built just like Moses did!

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

"Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left" (Josh. 23:6). Israel continued to be loyal until after Joshua and all those elders under him died - showing the fruits of Joshua's great leadership. Moses was dead, but Joshua kept him very much ALIVE in the eyes of Israel. HE TOLD THEM NOT TO TURN TO THE RIGHT HAND OR THE LEFT FROM WHAT MOSES TAUGHT. We see no such attitude in the WCG leaders today. They are often teaching us to turn away from what "Elijah" taught us! That is why the administration in Pasadena is Laodicean!

We have two prominent Joshuas in the Bible. A comparison between the two can easily be made. That comparison reveals why one succeeded and why one is failing today. The Joshua who assisted Zerubbabel didn't build the way his boss did!

Remember, the book of Joshua is one of the former prophets. It has a message of prophecy for us today. It says that the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God and all of those who follow them are headed for disaster! You can stake your life on that - in fact, you will stake your eternal life on that!

"And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God" (Exo. 24:13). Joshua went with Moses, at least part of the way up into the mount - to receive God's commandments! It was a meeting with the majestic God. A very privileged opportunity. Mr. Tkach received very special training from HWA as well. God is going to hold Mr. Tkach accountable as no other man on this earth! He is dealing with the glorified God (Verses 15-16; Exo. 19:16-21). God help the man who forgets this!



## WHERE IS JOSHUA'S COURAGE?

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

In God's Work, spiritual courage may be the greatest need. Without it the other virtues are of little value. We can't cower in fear and grow in God's love. God says, "the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1).

We are commanded to WARN this world. Mr. Tkach has said the world was in a Philadelphia stage when HWA lived. Now he says the world is in a Laodicean stage. Therefore, he says, we can't warn them as HWA did. People just wouldn't accept the message - we are told.

How would Paul respond to such a strategy? He was cursed, beaten, stoned and left for dead - and finally beheaded for preaching the same message HWA later preached! The message must be preached whether the people receive it or not. God says to WARN them!

Christ and all of God's messengers were brutally treated for preaching the Gospel to a people who wouldn't accept God's warning message.

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

The leaders in Pasadena have absorbed the spirit of this age. That is the disease of the Laodiceans. Today, they lack the understanding and courage to deliver God's powerful message!

"Inside the New Europe", a recent "prophecy" program, quoted four or five authorities of this world. The Bible was not quoted even one time. God's authority was almost ignored. Of course one program tells us very little. But such programs are now typical. It is the direction we must be concerned about.

I have read many articles in the Wall Street Journal and other news sources that are much stronger than the WCG TV program, articles and booklets! And the Church is commissioned by God to WARN the world! Probably the best booklet we had to do that job was Revelation Unveiled at Last. Pasadena discontinued it. Unbelievable!

God speaks of the "power of the holy people" (emphasis mine), that it is going to be "shattered" (Dan. 12:7, RSV). The Church does have real power to communicate. God has given it to us. Pasadena just isn't using that power.

The famine of God's word is fast approaching. Then the two witnesses, who will die for God's truth, shall preach the Gospel. This is what we need in God's Work now - LEADERS WILLING TO DIE FOR GOD. Many of those who lack this attitude shall die in the Tribulation!



Mr. Tkach recently said at Big Sandy, "We have put too much emphasis on prophecy in the past". That is just another put down of HWA and the commission of the Church! We hear so many these days. We ought to be putting more emphasis on prophecy now - not less. There has probably been ten times more prophecy fulfilled this last year than in the past 15 years combined, and the Church is putting less emphasis on prophecy now than ever before!

It takes courage to warn the world.

### "THE SCHOLAR IN THE TABERNACLE"

God also says He is going to cut off the scholar (Mal. 2:12, KJV). The word scholar means "one who has the answer" - but not necessarily the right answer.

Malachi is trying to correct a FAITH CRISIS, in which the ministry is relying more and more on human, scholarly reasoning. If these scholars are being relied on too much it's because the leaders give them too much authority. The leaders have the authority to invite the scholars into the tabernacle. That means those in charge are "off track". That is the same direction many leaders went in the 1970's, when HWA had to abolish the research committee.

According to Dr. Ward, they are now removing the "anti-educational bias in the Church and College". That happened in the 1970's, too. Doesn't that mean the leaders are rejecting much of what HWA taught us about today's education? Didn't HWA create much of that "bias" Dr. Ward is talking about? Of course. HWA had to be the one! And they know it - but just won't come out and directly say so.

Again it's the direction we must be concerned about - moving away from the Philadelphia standard.

HWA taught us to generally avoid educational areas such as psychology, sociology, the world's theology and much of man's law.

We don't hear the same caution coming from Pasadena that HWA taught us for years.

Dr. Ward also said this "anti-educational bias" "has been in the Church and College for years". Sounds like HWA made a serious mistake for years that Church scholars must correct! Not so! Actually, Pasadena is being "treacherous to the wife of your youth" and is moving away from "traditions" or "instructions" mentioned in II Thessalonians 2:15!

Read what HWA said in a letter dated June 24, 1985 (emphasis mine):

It was then [late 1970's] that the matter of obtaining accreditation from the organized accreditation societies of secular education became a problem. The liberals at Pasadena wanted accreditation. They did not want to be accredited as a Bible college, but as a full competing college or



university. As such the college would fall under rules of the secular accrediting society, which would more or less determine policy and curricula.

Finally this effort on the part of the liberals increased the enrollment of the college from the approximate 500 limit that I had set to about 1,400 and going up. [It's up to 975 right now.] It was no longer God's college. I had realized the danger of a student body in excess of 500 students, in residence on campus, and had set that as a definite college policy. But during those years when I was absent from Pasadena headquarters most of the time, changes were being gradually made in college policies as well as Church doctrines.

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

Here is another comment by HWA in a letter dated March 9, 1981:

We could now qualify for accreditation both at Pasadena and Big Sandy - but we shall not, because the GOVERNMENT of the colleges would have to be according to that which is in force in this world's educational institutions - GOD's government would have to go. WE ALREADY HAVE THE HIGHEST ACCREDITATION OF ALL - THAT OF ALMIGHTY GOD! (emphasis his)

We all know that accreditation could help many of the Church's young people get jobs. But no amount of benefits received could ever justify removing God's government. Accreditation is not my main concern. Primarily, I am concerned about the change from what God established through HWA and the prophecy about the Laodicean Church.

Watch and listen to news about Ambassador College. They are repeating the mistakes of the past. Has the decision already been made to accept accreditation on the world's terms instead of God's?

In August of 1979, HWA wrote a Good News article entitled "How Satan Injects False Doctrines":

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

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

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

God warns us not to put our trust in scholars who are going to be cut off!



## "THE MAN OF SIN"

II Thessalonians 2 is a chapter the Church has applied to the world for the most part. But it doesn't apply to the world. There is tremendous biblical support to show it applies to God's Church.

The "man of sin" is not a religious figure in the world. He sits "in the temple of God" (II Thes. 2:4, emphasis mine). Even some commentaries, like The Interpreter's Bible Commentary, say this all happens within God's church: "The rebellion is, strictly speaking, within God's Church". If people in the world understand this, certainly God's people should!

We have known for years that the temple of God is the Church. Paul meant exactly what he said. If he had meant the "synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 3:9), he, like John, would have said so! We must be consistent.

If we look at II Thessalonians 2 carefully, we shall see that the whole focus is on God's Church - not the world. The subject is about the return of Christ and the end of this age. It is "at hand" or "imminent". It could be very imminent!

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by [or concerning] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (II Thes. 2:1-4, emphasis mine).

"That day" is the time of God's intervention in human affairs when Jesus Christ will return to rule the nations.

First, let's take a look at what this does not say. It is not addressed to a worldly religious figure in a Jerusalem temple. Many of God's ministers already believe the Arabs will never let a temple be built in Jerusalem. Even if a temple is built in Jerusalem, it will not be the temple of God. The Jews have not been commissioned to build God's temple - as Zerubbabel was. If they built a temple, it would be the Jew's temple. Just as it was "the Jew's feast of tabernacles" (John 7:2) - NOT God's feast of tabernacles.

There are two subjects discussed in this chapter: the return of Christ, and "a falling away".

What is being fallen away from? GOD'S TRUTH (II Thes. 2:10, 15). It's a whole Church era falling away from God's truth! It applies to God's people - the Laodiceans. They had the truth but didn't love it. Some are perishing spiritually because they don't discern this evil.



What does the "falling away" have to do with a false spiritual leader in Jerusalem? Nothing directly. (We have already revealed the great end-time false religious system to the world, anyhow.)

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

The "man of sin" is a part of that falling away. If not, verse 3 would read something like this: "there is a falling away first, and a 'man of sin' second..." But it doesn't read that way. The subject of verse 3 is a falling away first, then what follows, the revealing of "that man of sin", is a part of the falling away. This chronology is given to help us understand what happens within God's Church just before Christ returns. "It [the day of the Lord and Christ's return] will not come till the rebellion takes place first of all, WITH the revealing of the Lawless One... (II Thes. 2:3 Moffatt trans., emphasis mine). It is a "rebellion" or "falling away" from God's truth which must occur with the revealing of "that man of sin". It is a gigantic rebellion against God's government!

This chapter doesn't have one verse that discusses a false prophet in Jerusalem. It's all within God's Church.

A false religious leader in Jerusalem would not fit with the rest of the chapter. Read the whole chapter carefully. It covers the falling away primarily - aimed precisely at God's people all the way through.

The "man of sin" is revealed IN the falling away from God's truth.

God's people could be "shaken in mind" and "troubled" (II Thes. 2:2) - implying a violent unsettling. (In Acts 16:26, the word "shaken" is used to mean a shaking of the foundation of the prison by an earthquake.) "Troubled" is an even stronger word like "terrified". The Church is entering into such times.

It's a time when people are deceived WITHIN the Church (verse 3). The word translated "deceive" (King James Version) would better be translated "beguile". The word means not only making a false impression but actually leading astray. Also, the word often carries the idea of willful deception. Are some of these changes made when Church leaders know better?

The last warning to the Philadelphia era was to "let no man take your crown" (Rev. 3:11). These instructions were given just before Christ began to warn the Laodicean Church (verses 14-19). The Philadelphians heed that warning. Many Laodiceans are going to allow a man to take their reward - and some even lose their crown, or eternal life.

It's a powerful warning to all of us. There is going to be a deliberate attempt by "a man of sin" to deceive us (of course, as with Joshua and "his fellows", the man of sin has helpers). False teaching will be spread among God's people by their leaders. All of this



happens just before Christ returns - WITHIN GOD'S CHURCH! Most commentaries call it a "great falling away". As the story unfolds you will see this has to be true. It involves many people. Please remember that many people are involved - probably tens of thousands!

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

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

Other translations of II Thessalonians 2:3 read (emphasis mine): "...for it [Christ's return] cannot come unless the apostasy comes first" (Weymouth trans.), "...for that cannot take place until the great revolt occurs" (Williams trans.), "That day cannot come before the final rebellion against God" (New English Bible). "That day" - the return of Christ - cannot come until this falling away from God's truth has occurred IN THE CHURCH OF GOD!

The expression "at hand" also means "has set in" (see the Interpreter's Bible). The point is, an event "has set in" that connects directly with the return of Jesus Christ! This "falling away" reveals that the return of Christ is imminent. In other words, when you see this "falling away" from the truth God taught us mostly through HWA, it's time to think very seriously about Christ returning soon - VERY SOON.

Again, it is not some little insignificant sign. It is a SIGN everybody in God's Church will see - whether they understand it or not. Such a revolt from God's truth is not something that can be hidden in God's Church. It is gigantic. It's a whole Church era going astray - consoling themselves by their numbers! They are rebelling against the government of God!

And it is all led by one man. "Let no man take your crown."

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

What we have overlooked in the past is that this "man of sin" is revealed IN that falling away from God's truth. This is when and how he is "revealed" or "uncovered". The leader of God's people is either leading this falling away or he is giving someone else great power to do so. The man of sin sits in God's temple or Church (II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21;



I Cor. 3:16-17; Rev. 3:12). He is sitting in God's Church using God's government to achieve his own goals. And those goals are contrary to "past instructions" (II Thes. 2:15, the word "traditions" in the King James Version is better translated "instructions" of the past).

If he is "showing himself that he is God", the man of sin must be a very prominent leader. He is showing himself that he is God - not saying he is God. He has great power. He is using this power not necessarily to tyrannize God's people - but to deceive them! He is getting people to look to HIM instead of God and the past instructions God gave us. He is leading God's people toward the lake of fire (verse 10)! Nothing could be more serious.

### "THE SON OF PERDITION"

The "man of sin" is called "the son of perdition". The same label Christ gave to Judas Iscariot - and only to Judas (John 17:12) - until the "man of sin".

Mr. Armstrong often talked about the Bible being a coded book. The correlation between Judas and the "man of sin" is a good example. Christ is telling us that "the man of sin" is going to commit a monstrous betrayal - just like Judas Iscariot did! And that betrayal is what the "falling away" is all about. Betrayal and falling away from God's truth is also what the Laodicean Church is all about.

It is not a minor betrayal. It is a major betrayal - like Judas betraying Christ! An entire Church era will be betrayed and led astray.

The disciples didn't know about Judas Iscariot's betrayal until the last night. Will we be in our "last night" when the "man of sin" is revealed?

How could this happen?

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth [Greek, "katecho" meaning "restrains" or "holds back"] that he [the man of sin] might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [again, "katecho" meaning to "restrain"] will let ["restrain" or "hold back"], until he be taken out of the way" (II Thes. 2:5-7, emphasis mine).

The Phillips translation has verse 6 as, "You will probably also remember how I used to talk about a 'restraining power' which would operate until the time should come for the emergence of this man". Phillips renders verse 7, "...but its activities are restricted until what I have called the 'restraining power' is removed".

The "restrainer" in verse 6 is spoken of in the neuter gender ("what withholdeth") - referring to God's Spirit. In verse 7, the "restrainer" is spoken of in the masculine gender ("he who now letteth", or "restrains", not "what" as in verse 6). Thus, in verse 7, the "restrainer" is personified, indicating a man "who" restrains. God's Spirit is behind it all and is referred to in verse 6. The Holy Spirit is not a person, therefore the neuter gender. But



God does use a man to do his work (hence the masculine gender in verse 7). Clearly, we see a man being used by the Spirit of God.

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

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

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

HWA wrote in the Worldwide News, June 24, 1985 (emphasis mine):

A final personal word. In a few days I will be 93 years of age. For some years now, there have been some, like vultures, waiting for me to die. They would like to come back and take over the leadership of the Church in my stead. I have been deeply concerned about this, but in no sense worried. This is the Church of God, not of any man. Jesus Christ is the living Head of this Church. I am not.

He continued, "Brethren, put your faith in Christ and the living God and not in me. If Christ should remove me..." (emphasis mine). Christ did remove HWA - he was "taken out of the way".

It is a "mystery of iniquity" (verse 7) because it was hidden. It dared not show itself because of "he" who restrained it. He was a man that was seen and feared - Herbert W. Armstrong.

The JFB commentary translates verses 7 and 8 this way: "...the continuance of the mystery of iniquity working IS ONLY until he who now withholdeth [verse 6] be taken out of the way. Then it will work no longer in mystery, but in open manifestation" (emphasis mine). WHEN HWA WAS "TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY; - THEN THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY BEGAN TO WORK OPENLY!!

The Spirit of God doesn't hold this "man of sin" back. That is his problem. What held him back was someone who was taken out of the way - someone that restrained him and others for years!! It was God's Spirit working through HWA that held back the man of sin.

Christ is going to consume this Work with the Spirit of His mouth - DESTROY THIS WORK (II Thes. 2:8). It's a two-fold plan as always in God's word. First, the man of sin is revealed. Second, the warning from God's word is sent. Then, if there is no repentance, God is going to destroy the Work by the Tribulation and Christ's



Second Coming. Those who don't repent will be destroyed with it. The word "destroy" means to render powerless, to cause every vestige of this Work to disappear, to make without effect.

Unless changes are made to get back on track, THIS WORK OF REBELLION IS DESTINED TO BE SMASHED. It can end no other way, because God is against it.

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

Also, the man of sin sits in God's Church. It's a major event within God's Church that has never occurred before - only at the very end time. As indicated by the story of Joshua (Zech. 3), this event also occurs just before Christ returns. And there is every indication these two men of II Thessalonians 2, "the one who restrained" and the "man of sin", worked together just as Joshua and Zerubbabel did (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 3 and 4).

Both of these stories happen just prior to Christ's Second Coming. Both Joshua and the man of sin are influenced by Satan (Zech. 3:1; II Thes. 2:9).

We see from Malachi 2:14-16 that someone treacherously leads the Church away from its "traditions" (II Thes. 2:15), from the traditions and instructions of "Elijah" (HWA).

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

All of these scriptures refer to the Laodiceans who turn away from the "trunk of the tree", much of which was established by Christ - through HWA. If you examine these scriptures closely, they all reveal a "betrayal" - just like the one in II Thessalonians 2.

This is the big overview we must remember.

### GOD SENDS "STRONG DELUSION"

"Even him [the "son of perdition"], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thes. 2:9). This "son of perdition" is heavily influenced by Satan. Satan also had a grip on Zerubbabel's Joshua (Zech. 3:1).

According to Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, "Signs and wonders of a lie" is the literal translation. "Of a lie" characterizes the three words "power", "signs" and "wonders". All bear the stamp of "fraud".

It's all a monstrous fraud that is spiritually deceiving MANY of God's people - it would seem at least 144,000, eventually! They are all victims of a satanic fraud occurring within God's Church.



Many of God's people are going to be captured by Satan's deceit if they don't WAKE UP! God is allowing and sending "the full force of evil's delusion" (II Thes. 2:11, Phillips trans.), and "powerful heresies among them" (Norlie trans.).

Can you understand "the full force of evil's delusion"? The next few months and years in God's Church are going to be very revealing - to us and to God.

Please analyze the following words by Mr. Tkach in the October 10, 1989, Worldwide News (emphasis mine):

Whom did Jesus call children of the devil? Those who thought they had a corner on the spiritual market. Those who thought they were the only ones who could have a relationship with God. Their attitude of pompous spiritual superiority made them partakers of the attitude of the devil.

If we think we have "a corner on the spiritual market", are we "children of the devil"? You have never heard HWA make such a statement! That's because he knew that we DO have a "corner on the spiritual market". Does that make HWA a "child of the devil"? Jesus Christ agreed with HWA. Only those begotten sons of our heavenly Father have God's Holy Spirit and God's calling (John 6:44). God has called a "little flock" today to receive His Spirit. Baptized members of God's Church are the only ones who can have a truly spiritual relationship with God - the rest of the world doesn't have God's Holy Spirit. **THAT'S NOT THE "ATTITUDE OF THE DEVIL" - THAT IS REALITY!** That is the TRUTH OF GOD!

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

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come (Matt. 12:31-32). Who says we have "a corner on the spiritual market"? **GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT DOES!** The Holy Spirit is what makes us begotten sons of God - and such a rare people on this earth. The Holy Spirit established a great Work through HWA. The Holy Spirit was used to "restore all things" and give us a "corner on the spiritual market". To deny that is getting dangerously close to blasphemy!

Have some of us forgotten who we are? How unique the Firstfruits are?

Mr. Tkach's statement is in the category of "strong delusion". God is sending strong delusion NOW - AT THIS VERY MOMENT FROM THE WCG HEADQUARTERS! Watch closely what you read, because that kind of statement is commonly seen today in the WCG's literature.

Brethren, I hope we realize the dangerous direction of this Laodicean Church. Some people are going to be lost forever. **THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD MUST AWAKEN!**



Throughout the Bible, God says that only a tiny group of Firstfruits are called in this age. In light of Mr. Tkach's quote, remember that Zerubbabel (HWA) used the Spirit to do God's Work (Zech. 4:6). That verse is a part of the Zerubbabel inset. No such statement is made in the Joshua section of the book of Zechariah. Is that because Joshua lacks a proper understanding about God's Holy Spirit? Is that because he truly doesn't have "a corner on the spiritual market" - which he should have?

Let's consider what HWA thought about the Church having a unique relationship with God and "a corner on the spiritual market". Here is a quote from Mystery of the Ages, page 33, hardback edition, chapter 1, "Who and What is God?" (emphasis mine):

The billions now living on earth not only are ignorant of the most important knowledge - WHO and WHAT God is - they seem NOT TO WANT TO KNOW! They are willingly in ignorance of this most important knowledge and relationship possible in human life!

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

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

Please read the entire chapter entitled "Who and What is God" in Mystery of the Ages. THE WHOLE CHAPTER SAYS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF THE QUOTE BY MR. TKACH.

Was that chapter one of the "many significant errors" Pasadena saw in Mystery of the Ages? Is that chapter one of the main reasons that book was canceled?

God says He is sending "strong delusion". God's people are going to have to decide who has the attitude of the devil! And what a mountainous decision it is. So much is determined by that choice.

Dr. Ward gave a sermon on December 2, 1989, in Big Sandy. This scripture was used: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me..." (Mal. 3:1). He said John the Baptist was the messenger who prepared the way for Christ's First Coming. He made no mention of HWA being the man who was the modern-day John the Baptist. He said that we are all "sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:3) - that we are ALL messengers. Sounds good, but THAT IS NOT BIBLICALLY CORRECT. The prophecies point to one messenger, whom we all support. This is just more "strong delusion" to deceive us about God's end-time Elijah and John the Baptist; Herbert W. Armstrong.

Dr. Ward told how the Church is changing its views about giving to hurricane and other disaster victims. This goes deeper than just giving to disaster victims - who do need help. But this is a changing of the Church's commission established by CHRIST - through HWA. Instead of spending money to WARN the people why it's happening, we help them



financially. Soon the world is going to be literally flooded with disasters! God is going to bring it to pass as punishment. Tithes and offerings are going to be spent in vain if they continue this approach.

Dr. Ward said we have had a self-righteous attitude in the past. He says the Church members have "boasted" of our knowledge of prophecy. I disagree, it really was not boasting about prophecy, it was fulfilling our God-given commission.

Dr. Ward said HWA established the law, but today the Church "emphasizes the spiritual application on an individual basis". As if HWA didn't! Brethren, I hope you see how that statement condemns what Christ did through HWA. God calls it "strong delusion"!

Then Dr. Ward spent the usual time on how much "love" we are building today. Ezekiel says, "...with their mouth they show much love..." (Ezk. 33:31, emphasis mine). **THEY DON'T SHOW LOVE TO HWA AND WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT THROUGH HIM!** They don't love the truth of God as they should (II Thes. 2:10).

Why don't some of you challenge them to play the tape of Dr. Ward's sermon given in Big Sandy on December 2, 1989? Many will be shocked at what is being taught at Ambassador College now.

These leaders "...have need of nothing..." (Rev. 3:17). They are the self-righteous ones - arrogantly pushing aside truth that God has established in the Church - just the way God prophesied it would be!

God is sending "strong delusion"! Each one of us is being tested right now.

How can Satan get to God's people? Because some don't love the truth. It looks as though they do - that is why it is called a mystery. Anybody who has this wrong attitude is going to be deceived by Satan!

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

### HOW TO STAND FAST

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions, which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thes. 2:15, King James Version, emphasis mine). Thayer's Lexicon of the New Testament says the word "traditions" can be rendered "instructions" or "the substance of the teaching". "Traditions" is also rendered "teaching" and "the rules" in other translations.

It's all in the context of the true Gospel (verse 14), which is about the return of Christ. Paul said we should be concerned about keeping the Gospel pure.

"Traditions" are truths that were given both verbally and in writing.



The concern here is about "traditions" or "instructions" - passed from one era to another. The leader's job is to pass God's instructions to the people - not his own.

The SDA Commentary says of the word "traditions": "The word means things delivered, handed over, or transmitted by way of teaching or doctrine." Clarke's Commentary says the Greek "signifies anything delivered in the way of teaching". The point is, we are talking about revelations from God that are being rejected by the "man of sin". That is precisely what the Laodicean Church does. God is telling us to STAND FAST by holding on to past instructions. That is how we hold fast. That is our SPIRITUAL ANCHOR. These are instructions given by JESUS CHRIST - not HWA.

The Revised Standard Version says "stand firm". If we fail to cling to our past instructions, we can't stand firm! It is precious knowledge God has given us to withstand Satan's attack. With this knowledge we are God's elect who cannot be deceived (Matt. 24:24). Without this knowledge we can't avoid being deceived! Satan is too subtle for us without this spiritual armor (Eph. 6:11-19).

This is what the "falling away" is all about. Either we hang on to what we learned or we lose our eternal life! The betrayal revolves around rejecting "traditions" or "past instructions" of one who was "taken out of the way". It's the same story as Zechariah 3 and 4, Revelation 3 and the whole book of Malachi! These scriptures all tell of one colossal event within God's Church - THE FALLING AWAY FROM TRUTH! A GREAT REBELLION AGAINST GOD'S GOVERNMENT!

The "man of sin" and the "son of perdition" are horrendous titles. God gave these titles because no sin is greater than leading God's people astray! "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6). That leader is a son of perdition or destruction. He destroys what God has created and is creating.

This prominent person, the "man of sin", will be revealed by Christ before He returns.

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish ["are perishing" spiritually is the correct translation]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thes. 2:10). God is talking about people who "are perishing" spiritually! PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING "SAVED" OR NOT BEING "SAVED"! They have a chance to be saved but fail to achieve it. They are perishing. Why? Because they "received not the love of the truth". They received the truth - but they didn't love it enough to hold on to it. "The love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). Only God's people have true love. The world has never had God's truth or love. Only God's people can fall away from God's truth.



We are talking about a Judas-type betrayal that is one of the worst in the history of God's Church!! God removed most of the resistance to this deceit when HWA died, making the betrayal and leading astray of the brethren much easier.

### THE BETRAYAL

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

God promised to reveal the "man of sin" - "in his time" or "in his season" (II Thes. 2:6). Has that time come? A time which was set by God; not man. Without a special revelation by God this truth cannot be known!

The Church isn't drifting into a Laodicean attitude - it is being forcefully and deceitfully led! All the restraints have been removed. No strong spiritual leader is on the scene to stop it. That's why the changes are coming so fast - in spite of protests from many of God's ministers.

Mr. Tkach sat at Mr. Armstrong's feet for 7 years before HWA's death. He watched HWA get the Church "back on track". He was right there by HWA's side helping him do it. Is there any man in the Worldwide Church of God more accountable for what is happening? He was considered HWA's closest confidante, and most loving and loyal friend. So much so that HWA entrusted Mr. Tkach with control of God's great Work. HWA trusted Mr. Tkach more than any other man in the Work. Like Judas, Mr. Tkach was an innermost disciple - more so than other Church leaders that last 7 years of HWA's life.

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

Mr. Armstrong's greatest fear was what would happen to the Church after he died. Some of his worst fears have been realized. Still, we know it's all done according to God's Master Plan. Christ is still very much in control. Soon we shall see that demonstrated forcefully!

Only one major figure is exalted by God in the end time (Matt. 17:10-11; Mal. 4:5-6; Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3, 6; and probably Rev. 3:8). These roles were fulfilled by HWA. Much of our love for the truth revolves around HWA and his work - inspired by God.

Paul prophesied a great deception would occur in the end just as it did in his own



ministry. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31, emphasis mine).

Pasadena is going to say these verses refer to me, but they are the ones doing the leading away. They are the ones leading the Church away from the truth which Christ restored through HWA. They are the ones "drawing away disciples" after themselves and their deceitful changes. Brethren, you must prove from your Bible who is right - and you can do so!

Those same verses show that Paul recognized his own ministry and physical presence as a restraining influence. The same was true for HWA. All God had to do was take HWA out of the way, and the submerged "mystery of iniquity" would surface again and flourish because the restraints had been removed. We saw that demonstrated in the 1970's, too. Now it's even worse. We should have learned from history! If we fail to learn from the past, we are destined to repeat the mistakes of the past.

God has chosen not to know the outcome of His Church members being tested before it happens. He tested Abraham to see if he would kill his only son. After God saw that Abraham would obey, He said, "...NOW I KNOW that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me" (Gen 22:12, emphasis mine). It was the hardest test of Abraham's life. And God didn't know until after the test, what Abraham would do. After this test of II Thessalonians 2, God is going to know a lot more about all of us.

When HWA was in charge, there was iniquity present in some people that was kept under the surface where it could not be seen and evaluated by others. So God removed HWA and that iniquity has surfaced and now is becoming obvious to God's elect - who cannot be deceived (Matt. 24:24). The rest of God's people are going to be deceived. This trial revolving around the "man of sin" is all a part of God's Master Plan to separate His Philadelphian elect from the Laodiceans. The elect must reject this satanic deception to receive a Philadelphia reward. This separation of the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans is not going to be as easy as many of us imagined!

The "man of sin" is called "the son of perdition" - a title which was applied to Judas. The Greek word for "perdition" means "destruction, damnation, perishing, waste, utter ruin". It is often used in the New Testament to refer to individuals who have fallen away from the truth (Matt. 7:13; Phil. 3:19; I Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:39; II Pet 2:1; 3:7).

The word "deceive" in II Thessalonians 2:3 means "to lead astray". Don't forget that. It clearly indicates a leader is spreading or allowing false teachings among God's people!



The Interpreters Bible says of the word "deceive": it "...carries the idea of WILLFUL DECEPTION..." THIS IS A JUDAS-TYPE BETRAYAL. Did Judas know what he was doing? He had to understand much of what he did!

God says "let no man deceive you by any means" (II Thes. 2:3). "By any means"! All kinds of means will be used to deceive, but let "no man take your crown" (Rev. 3:11).

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

The context of the Judas betrayal indicates it revolves around the "man of sin" and "he" who is "taken out of the way". Paul warned us to hang on to the "traditions" or "past instructions". Many of those instructions were obviously received from HWA - then "he" was "taken out of the way".

It doesn't say "a man of sin" - but "the man of sin". That is because he took the Work of God and gave it over to the influence of Satan (II Thes. 2:9; Zech. 3:1-2). We are told in II Thessalonians 2 how the change occurs from the Philadelphian era to the Laodicean era.

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

Two of God's very end-time leaders are discussed in II Thessalonians 2. One of them, the "man of sin" is either the leader of God's Church, or he is someone who is given great power by the leader.

That is one big reason why II Thessalonians 2 couldn't have applied in the 1970's. The LIBERALS weren't in charge then.

I beseech you brethren - seek God as you never have before! "Cursed be the man that trusts in a man" (Jer. 17:5) - ANY man, and that certainly includes me.

In the near future you are going to see events that will shake this world as never before. Because time is running out! The signs all point to the catastrophic end - which will come very soon! The same God who is sending you this message is already moving dramatically to bring this world to its knees.

Mr. Armstrong led the Church and was "taken out of the way". HWA obviously gave control to the next leader. Otherwise, how did the leader get that position? We don't vote in God's Church. This is why there is such a heinous betrayal of Christ and those who were supposed to follow HWA's instructions. This is how that leader becomes the "man of sin" - by rebelling against what Christ taught through HWA (II Thes. 2:15). Everything looked great until HWA was removed by death. That's when the betrayal was to occur - not before.



Pasadena calls all the recent changes "growing in love". God calls it a "falling away" - or "a great rebellion" (New International Version). It is of great magnitude - many thousands of people! The "love of MANY shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12, emphasis mine). That is a prophecy aimed most of all at God's Church today. Only God's people have true love.

Satan entered into Judas the last night of Christ's life on earth (Luke 22:3; John 13:27), but there were other indications of Satan's influence. "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (John 12:4-6). Judas was the treasurer. He wanted to appear as though he had boundless love. But his motives were evil. He had twisted priorities when it came to money spent in the Work. He and Christ didn't agree, and Christ doesn't agree today with the manner in which much of the money is being spent by Pasadena. The attitude of Judas is in the Church's leadership today. God says so!! That is why Christ uses the title - "son of perdition"!!

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

God's people must be WARNED!

Christ chose Judas and he became a thief, a liar and a traitor (John 6:70-71). That is also the message of II Thessalonians 2!

Could such a great rebellion occur without God warning His Church? Never. The greatest warning in the end is given to God's people - not the world. "A mystery...signifies a truth once hidden but now revealed or to be revealed; a truth which, without special revelation, would be unknown" (Vincent Word Studies in the N.T., emphasis mine). This test is revealing truth about all of us. God is going to know exactly what we believe and where we stand spiritually. This test is how He does it.

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

If this is revealed knowledge - it must be from God! If you see it as such - God also must reveal that to you. Appeal to God for understanding! These truths are too momentous to neglect!

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



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

Judas betrayed Jesus Christ. Leaders today are not just rejecting the work of HWA - THEY ARE BETRAYING JESUS CHRIST! HWA was a human being who made mistakes like all of us - and now he is dead. BUT JESUS CHRIST IS NOT DEAD - HE IS VERY MUCH ALIVE!! He is still the Ruler of God's Church. And He is going to correct us all for our sins. He is going to CORRECT those who are rebelling against His government!

This is a serious warning to all of us. God is going to force us to choose between Himself and "strong delusion". Are you close enough to God to make the right choice?

### ALL TELL THE SAME STORY

Joshua was Zerubbabel's chief assistant. They are both end-time types of two men who work together just before Christ's return. Joshua rebelled and "despised the day of small things". He turned away from the way Zerubbabel built. That is how Satan got to him (Zech. 3:1).

The "man of sin" rules in God's temple (or Church) and rejects the past instructions of "he" who was "taken out of the way" (II Thes. 2). There is to be a Judas-like betrayal today, just as there was with Joshua.

An end-time Joshua and the "man of sin" reign in God's Church just before Christ's return (Zech. 3:8; II Thes. 2:1-3). Are they one and the same? Both turn away from past instructions. Both have filthy garments. Failing to submit to Christ's government is the major problem of both men.

True ministers of God are discussed in Malachi 2 as being "treacherous" to the Church of our youth - the one Church Christ built through "Elijah". This subject is also one of betrayal. God's ministers move away from "Elijah" and what he restored (Mal. 4:4-6; Matt. 17:10-11) - just like the story in Zechariah 3 and 4, and II Thessalonians 2. The time setting for this treacherous betrayal in each story is just before Christ's return.

Revelation 3 discusses two eras - as Zechariah 4 does. The last era moves away from the Philadelphia standard - away from the Elijah who "restored all things" (Matt. 17:10-11) and the Elijah who built the family of God (Mal. 4:5-6). Just as Joshua's era moved away from the Zerubbabel standard.

All of these major prophecies tell the same story. God will now use them to test our faith.

HWA talked repeatedly of sticking to the "trunk of the tree". In all of these major end-time prophecies, we see a Laodicean Church moving away from the "trunk of the tree".



## WHAT IS THE "CURSE"?

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Mal. 4:5-6, emphasis mine).

Who is cursed? This is a curse that means "utter destruction". In the past this has been applied to the "utter destruction" of all the earth's inhabitants. That is not what it means! The book of Malachi was not sent to the nation of Israel or the world. Primarily, the subject is God's ministry (Mal. 1:6; Mal. 2:1; Mal. 3:3). God praises some ministers (and people) in this book and says other ministers (and people) are cursed.

The word "earth" here also means the "inhabitants of a region" (see Isa. 26:18 and Isa. 11:4 where the same word "earth" is used). The context reveals that the inhabitants discussed here are in the Church. And they are scattered over all the earth.

Malachi is discussing the fate of true ministers (and their followers) who fail to repent of their falling away from God's previously revealed truth. It's these inhabitants who are cursed. The ultimate curse is to lose your eternal life (Mal. 4:5-6) - "utter destruction". A loss of eternal life!

Malachi 4:6 is discussing God's people who turn to God and build a Godly family of converted people. And He says those who don't do this - also converted people - are the inhabitants who will be cursed!

GOD IS PRIMARILY TALKING ABOUT DESTROYING THE INHABITANTS OF HIS CHURCH WHO REFUSE TO BUILD A FAMILY AROUND GOD'S "ELIJAH" AND GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS! HWA was directed in this Work by the Great God, for 57 years. Either we build our lives around the "Elijah" family or we lose everything.

Now we see leaders in Pasadena moving away from God and heading toward the Great Tribulation. God is not going to accept their turning away from so much of what they were taught for years. They can't be treacherous to the "wife of your youth" and expect to escape God's severe correction.

Two separate churches are discussed. The Philadelphians go to a place of safety. It appears 50 percent of the Laodiceans repent in the Tribulation (Matt. 25:1-10). The Laodiceans must repent BEFORE "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" or their salvation is lost!

God is going to force each of us to make weighty decisions about what we have learned! Our eternal life hangs in the balance!



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

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

THE WCG HEADQUARTERS TODAY IS LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE TO THEIR ETERNAL DEATH!! God says if we are going to be in His Kingdom we must repent - either NOW or in the Tribulation. There is no "Elijah" alive today to get us "back on track" this time. He has come and gone. So God is sending His people - or - those who turn their backs on the Elijah work - this terrible warning of how perilously close they are to losing their eternal glory!

Those who are turning away from the "Elijah" example and his instructions are going to pay a mind-splitting cost! We possess dangerous knowledge. Even more so if we are in the ministry (James 3:1).

"Remember" (Mal. 4:4) is a WARNING - a frightful warning! This is exactly what II Thessalonians 2:10 is about - some are being saved while others are losing their eternal lives!

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

If it seems harsh to the Jews, how much more so to the Church? - the very people to whom this warning is directed. Only we can understand the chilling terror of that ending!

This is not a game. OUR BOSS IS JESUS CHRIST, AND HE STILL LEADS WITH GREAT AUTHORITY.

Remember, the book of Malachi, first and foremost, is directed to the MINISTRY (Mal. 2:1). When ministers begin compromising with God's truth, their messages impact less and less. They probably don't even notice it. Yet it's a very dangerous direction in which they are headed. The ministers are more apt to lose their salvation, if they turn away from "Elijah's" instruction and fail to repent. They should know better - especially after what happened in the 1970's.

Jesus Christ is giving us a frighteningly harsh warning. Probably the harshest warning in the Bible! What could be more serious?

Lets look at another coded message that tells the same story.



## FAMILY DIVISION

"I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein has thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness" (Mal. 1:2-3). Why Jacob and Esau? They were brothers who had a long history of war. If we apply this to the Church today, we can see God is telling us that the main problem is family division. This is the main problem Malachi is attacking. His message is not for the world. It's for God's divided Church today which is becoming more divided.

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

It should frighten us to even think of making some of the decisions the WCG leaders have recently made. To discontinue major books by HWA was not an act of humility. These leaders are deceived by pride.

"And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever" (Obadiah 9-10, emphasis mine). Esau's name is to be "cut off for ever". This is given as a stern and harsh warning to God's ministry and people. (It's the same warning as Mal. 4:5-6.)

Esau did violence against his brother Jacob. Ministers today do the same to their spiritual brothers, as they move away from what HWA taught (Mal. 2:10).

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

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

"Remember" there are three books directly referring to the temple - Haggai and Zechariah came while the temple was being built - and Malachi came after it was built. The book of Malachi is about the modern counterpart period we are in right NOW!

That is why the message of Malachi must be delivered now! It's all according to God's great Master Plan. God is going to make His people CHOOSE!

Malachi recorded what was to occur after "Elijah" (HWA) died. After that "house" or era was finished (Zech. 4:9).

What may be the harshest warning in all the Bible is aimed primarily at God's ministers (and their followers). Those who fail to rally around HWA and his God-family instructions that God inspired him to give, won't be in God's Kingdom! The fact that



HWA is dead makes no difference! WE ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR EVERY WORD THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US (Matt. 4:4). Either we remember what Christ taught or our eternal lives will be blotted out!

The Laodiceans go into the Tribulation because they don't "remember"! They reject so much of what "Elijah" taught that they become "lukewarm" (Rev. 3:15-16).

Malachi's message must be delivered. So much hangs in the balance.

### "THE MASTER"

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

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

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

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

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

Shallow prophetic understanding like that will cause the WCG leaders to think events are "premature" right up to the time they are in the Tribulation experiencing them!!

The WCG's response to the newsman's request was not a "watchman" talking. Those Church leaders didn't learn that approach from HWA. Can you even imagine HWA talking like that? Because HWA wasn't perfect in his prophetic understanding (just like Paul), these leaders go to an alarming extreme. As a result they are not arousing people as the "master" is supposed to do.



I, like the news director, was "disappointed" - no, I was distressed by that response! There are so many more major prophecies being fulfilled now than in recent years - and **THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD IS PROPHESYING LESS AND LESS!**

Here are a few excerpts from a letter written by HWA on November 11, 1985, about 2 months before he died (emphasis his):

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

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

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

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

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

Nobody is speaking like this in the Worldwide Church of God today. Why?

Jesus Christ spoke with authority. And Christ spoke with authority through HWA. Who speaks with authority in this Work today? Where is the authority of Christ in their message? And why this dramatic change?

Our very recent history of the 1970's should answer those questions.

We don't hear a voice of "trembling and of fear" about Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:4-9). As this nation hurtles toward a nuclear holocaust, the message of the Church gets weaker and weaker. God says "Zion (the Church) is at ease" (Amos 6:1). That is a prophecy for the Worldwide Church today! Right NOW!

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



Mr. Tkach said, in the Pastor General's Report, June 27, 1989: "Is this the time of the end? We have every reason to believe it is." He continued, "...yet, it does seem to me that the end must be soon. World events do seem to be moving in that direction" (emphasis mine). Today the WCG is not even sure the end is going to come soon - or that world events are even moving in that direction!

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

Think about that. Mr. Tkach says, a world war (it would surely be a nuclear war) could come and it still may not signal the end of this age. He could be in the Great Tribulation - which is a nuclear holocaust - and presumably still not be certain that Christ was about to come! THOSE ARE NOT THE WORDS OF GOD'S WATCHMAN WHO IS SUPPOSED TO WARN THE WORLD! Any WATCHMAN with views like that is "BLIND"! (Ezk. 33:6-7; Rev. 3:17). And brethren, if you follow him, nuclear holocaust awaits you!

There is a vast difference in the way Mr. Tkach and Mr. Armstrong view prophecy - and many other subjects. We must understand WHY. YOUR future in this world and the world to come is at stake!

Where is the urgency and authority in the WCG's message today? It's as if time is going to go on and on, and Pasadena is no longer certain of anything. They are putting "far away the evil day" (Amos 6:3) and saying, indirectly by their own words and actions, that "Our Lord delays His coming" (II Pet. 3:4; Matt. 24:48). What is happening?

### "PROPHECY NOT"

During the Regional Director's Conference in the Spring of 1988, Dr. Herman Hoeh stated that the Church of God has entered into the Laodicean era. That message was quickly stopped by Church leaders. They didn't think it was time to discuss this subject.

God's prophecy of the Laodicean era is a MAJOR PROPHECY for the end time. Dr. Hoeh's statement would have given urgency to God's people.

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

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



"But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not" (Amos 2:12, emphasis mine). Some of the structured ministry of the WCG has drunk much of the "wine" of this world. Their spiritual vision has become blurred. They can't discern between truth and error. It implies some ministers won't give prophetic warning as they should. They fail to really WARN the world!

Prophets were usually sent when the ministers or priests failed to do their job. Some leading ministers have recently adopted this "prophecy-not" philosophy. One of the WCG's major topics today is how we dwelled too much on prophecy in the past - a "prophecy-not" posture. (It's another way HWA is being put down.)

Remember the primary time for this prophecy is at the very end.

Please go back and read HWA's letters and articles about prophecy and compare them with what Pasadena says today. The contrast is shocking! Then you will see that AMOS' PROPHECY IS BEING FULFILLED BEFORE OUR VERY EYES! This "prophecy not" approach is very much alive in the Laodicean Church today.

They are not fulfilling God's commission to warn the world! Does Amos' prophecy apply to what Dr. Hoeh said about the Worldwide Church of God being Laodicean? Of course it does. Pasadena doesn't want that truth preached.

We ministers must not succumb to the spirit of "prophecy not". If we faithfully do our part, God's message won't be suppressed!

If we succumb to the pressure, we are going to become drunk spiritually by drinking the "wine" of deception and losing our spiritual discernment. After all, this is GOD'S Church - not man's. God has never supported a compromising spirit.

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

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Prophets arise in a time of crisis (in this case, both a Church and a world crisis). "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophecy?" (Amos 3:8). Prophets are going to respond to that frightening, lion-like warning! "Who will not fear?" (See also Mal. 1:6 and Mal. 2:4-6).

Paul said "Woe unto me, if I preach not the gospel". He feared the "Lion"! If we don't preach the truth that God reveals, we show a dangerous lack of Godly fear - fearing man rather than God (I Cor. 9:16). PROPHETS SPEAK OUT WHEN THEY ARE TOLD TO "PROPHECY NOT"! They listen to God - not men.

There are no prophets in the Laodicean Church today, but God can always have prophets in embryo - ready to use when He needs them.

GOD'S SECRETS ARE NO LONGER BEING GIVEN TO THE LAODICEANS. Their leaders are in REBELLION against what Christ taught through HWA. God won't



reveal His secret to those who rebel against His government!

Physical and spiritual Israel are entering into a crisis we can't dream. (Just like the other eras experienced in Rev. 2 and 3.)

God talks about blowing a "trumpet" (Amos 3:6; Ezk. 33:6; Isa. 58:1). That is exactly what the WCG is not doing today! (Amos 2:11-12). Mr. Tkach says the world couldn't accept a message like HWA preached on television.

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

Tradition says Amos was killed by Amaziah, the high priest, or the king. The world wouldn't accept his message either - for very long. Yet Amos still blew the trumpet until they killed him.

This is far removed from the weak kind of message being sent from Pasadena today.

### A COMMISSION TO THE WORLD?

Now read what Mr. Tkach, Jr. wrote in Reviews You Can Use, Sept-Oct. 1989: "God's Church has a job to do, a commission - to preach the gospel and to teach those who believe (Matt. 28:19-20). What is the commission of the members? Members aren't called just for their own salvation. They are called to help support the Work of the Church."

When HWA used a scripture to define the Church's commission he generally referred to Matthew 24:14 - not Matthew 28:19-20. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14).

Why the change today? Which incidentally, no one from Pasadena really explained. And there is no biblical basis for that change.

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

Pasadena canceled The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last. Why? BECAUSE THE WARNING WAS TOO STRONG. That is the only reason. Read it and see for



yourself. The warning must be strong in order to adequately get the message across!

Pasadena gave \$100,000 to the hurricane Hugo fund and \$100,000 to the recent San Francisco earthquake fund, plus other similar contributions. (But they say we can't afford to print Mystery of the Ages.) The Church's real commission from Christ says earthquakes are to increase (Matt. 24:7, 14). God's money would be far better spent telling the world WHY these disasters are happening - the CAUSE. (Yet I hear comments frequently about how much weaker the TV program is getting.) God commands the Church to "give them warning from me" (Ezk. 3:17). God also says if they are not warned, that the ministry is guilty of their blood (Ezk. 33:1-7, 11). That means, the Worldwide Church of God will be plunged into the Tribulation with the world - because the world's blood is on their head.

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

Have we forgotten WHY THE CHURCH EXISTS? A big part of the Church's commission is to WARN (and we do grow in character by giving our lives to God and warning the world). Has Pasadena forgotten that God's Work is A TRUMPET-BLOWING WORK? That is one way they could follow HWA's footsteps. God is going to destroy this nation with disasters - if they don't repent. Disasters are going to multiply and money from Pasadena won't make a dent. And they may find ourselves blunting God's corrective sword! Israel's only hope of escaping the Tribulation is the Church's warning message! Their only hope. Doesn't Pasadena understand that??

The Worldwide Church can't continue these disaster contributions very long. You watch and observe. Disasters are going to OVERWHELM this nation. There is no real hope in giving these contributions - but there is hope in God's warning message!

The cost of the California earthquake runs into the billions. How is the United States (the world's greatest debtor nation) going to finance this disaster? By selling treasury bonds to the Japanese (the world's largest creditor nation). The United States can't even finance its own disasters. Wouldn't the WCG's \$100,000 have been better spent on a special booklet or article revealing why this whole nation is on the verge of a financial earthquake? The worst in the history of man! Are they trying to smooth over the correction and chastisement God is sending to this world?!

So much prophecy is being fulfilled - and Pasadena almost ignores it. It is another way leaders in Pasadena are saying, "My Lord delays His coming" (Matt. 24:48). This verse is also part of the warning of Matthew 24.

Mr. Armstrong served God for 57 years and taught the Church for many years about our commission to the world. Yet these men come along and arrogantly change what God has already taught His Church through HWA. Where is their Godly fear? Read all of Matthew 24 and see what our commission really is.



Look at the history of God's Church eras (Rev. 2 and 3). The fundamental problems of these eras were not doctrinal. Notice that carefully! The big issues were not the Sabbath, baptism, the Holy Days, etc. The primary problems were losing their first love, becoming immoral, compromising with the world. At the same time, they compromised with what the Church taught in the past. Some also lacked the will to **WARN THE WORLD!** That is why the Gospel - and the warning that accompanies it - was not preached around the world until the end time.

We must wake up to the radical and dangerous changes being made in the Worldwide Church of God. Joe Tkach, Jr. says we are to "support the Work of the Church". However, if we support the WRONG Work, the consequences are disastrous!

### "WILL A MAN ROB GOD?"

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

The context in this chapter is purifying the ministry (verse 3).

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

The word "rob" is a rare word, used only here and in Proverbs 22:22-23. The Companion Bible says, "have robbed" means "are defrauding". Defraud means to misrepresent - God, in this case. They are not doing what God commands - at least not totally.

Why is this subject so emphasized for us today?

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



Fraud indicates misuse rather than not receiving money. And remember, the ministry gives "polluted bread" (Mal. 1:12). How? GOD'S TITHES AND OFFERINGS ARE BEING MISDIRECTED AND MISSPENT.

Here is a quote by David Hulme, from the Worldwide News, August 14, 1989 (emphasis mine):

The Ambassador Foundation, through the presentation of a grant by Chairman Joseph W. Tkach, took a significant step forward in promoting international understanding here (London) July 18.

Mr. Tkach established the foundation's involvement in rebuilding the Globe Theatre, where many of William Shakespeare's plays were first presented.

Far from being merely a performing arts facility, the new Globe Theatre complex will include a cultural center and facilities for literary scholars to study Shakespeare's works.

Pasadena says the WCG can't afford to print Mystery of the Ages, but they can afford to PAY "literary scholars to study Shakespeare's works"?! The decision to help fund the Globe Theatre was made shortly after it was decided the WCG couldn't afford to continue THE MAJOR WORK OF GOD'S "ELIJAH"! GOD HOLDS THEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR SUCH TWISTED PRIORITIES!

I believe we can begin to get a feel for why God spews the Laodiceans out of His mouth with extreme disgust! He has not one good thing to say about the Laodicean Church! And He says, "I know your works..." The Laodiceans do have Church era works. The problem is, they are not good works.

We must remember the context of the book of Malachi. It's message is about a ministry which "despises God's name" (Mal. 1:6). It is about a ministry giving "polluted bread" spiritually (verse 12), and being "treacherous" to those loyal to God's truth (Mal. 2:14-16).

And don't forget God says He is going to "purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver" (Mal. 3:3). This is speaking of the ministry and those who follow them. It's a VERY SERIOUS WARNING! Gold and silver are refined in a fiery furnace - a type of the Great Tribulation!

We, in the ministry, face a very weighty responsibility. Malachi is a book about the ministry - those who fear God and those who don't.

How could there possibly be such serious ministerial problems like these described in Malachi 1, 2 and 3, and not have problems with tithes and offerings being unwisely spent?

God is going to spew their sacrifices out of His mouth (Mal. 1:8).



## STOP THE MESSAGE

"Will no one close the temple doors, to keep you from kindling useless fires upon my altar?" (Mal. 1:10). Or as the New American Standard translation renders it: "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates"!

God is pleading with His temple servants - the ministers - to TAKE A STAND! It's a strong plea from God to STOP what is happening! The message of the Worldwide Church of God is becoming so watered down, God says it is "polluted bread" - that means polluted spiritual food (John 6:48).

Fellow ministers, what is God going to think of us if we fail to act? Look what Christ did, when they were defiling the physical temple. "And Jesus went into the temple of God, cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:12-13). Those who bought and sold, He kicked out of the temple! He overthrew the moneychangers' tables!

If Christ took this strong action in the physical temple, what would He do today in the spiritual temple when they offer "polluted bread"?

Trying to develop unity by allowing people to pollute the temple or Church is satanic!

The big "falling away" could have occurred in the 1970's. But the Gospel had not been adequately preached around the world (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 10:11). So God held back the "mystery of iniquity" by keeping HWA alive until the job was done.

The major work now is getting the message of Malachi to the Church of God. The Gospel has been preached and the world has been warned. IT IS THE CHURCH THAT MUST NOW BE WARNED!

That is what the book of Malachi is all about. It is not a message about going to the world. Malachi's message is sent to a corrupt Church. It is time to close the doors of the Worldwide Church of God, unless they repent. Pasadena can no longer discern between good and evil (Mal. 3:18). God no longer accepts their offerings (Mal. 2:13).

The Laodiceans are "blind" to what is happening in the world and in the Church (Rev. 3:17).

## PREPARING JEWELS

Three commentaries call the Philadelphians (mentioned in Malachi 3:16-17) the "remnant that feared God", the "few godly in the land", and the "faithful minority". Even



secular commentaries say those in the Church who fear God are not in power.

The Companion Bible gives a better translation for "make up my jewels" in verse 17. Instead, it reads, "I am preparing my jewels" (emphasis mine). This group retains their Godly fear throughout this Church conflict. God uses the end-time Church crisis to prepare His jewels! God uses the Laodicean condition of the Church to qualify His jewels to escape the Great Tribulation (verse 16). Those "jewels" are the Philadelphians who refuse to be led astray by the Laodiceans.

The process is going on right now! God is testing each one of us to see what we will do. This is all a carefully laid plan to reveal the quality of our character.

The only thing the world learns from history, is that they never learn from history. When we refuse to learn from history, we are destined to repeat its mistakes. Sadly, this also applies to many in God's Church. There is no excuse if we fail to learn from the 1970's.

Those "jewels" of Malachi 3:17 are the future "pillars" in God's temple (Rev. 3:12). They are being prepared this very moment! No other group will reach that level of reward.

God's "jewels" can discern between the righteous and the wicked (Mal. 3:18). They know the difference between a Philadelphian and a Laodicean attitude.

What does it mean for God to "spare" those who fear Him? (Mal. 3:17). The word "spare" means "to pity, have compassion on". Why does God need to have "pity" and "compassion"? BECAUSE THE TRIBULATION AND "THE DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD" ARE COMING! (Mal. 4:5-6).

One group receives God's pity and compassion. The other group goes into the Great Tribulation. Laodiceans are saved from the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" and the second death, if they repent!

The context shows God shall save those who fear Him - from suffering and death (Rev. 12:14). The Philadelphians will be taken to a place of safety.

There are some "he will spare (same Hebrew word) in the day of vengeance" (Prov. 6:34). The same Hebrew word is also used in I Samuel 15:9, "But Saul and the people spared Agag". Spared Agag from what? From death. We desperately need to be spared. We all have the potential to fail horribly (Mal. 4:5-6). Those who understand and support the message of Malachi are "spared". That is how they qualify to go to a place of safety.

That is God's "open door" now (Rev. 3:8).

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son, that serveth him. Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:17-18, emphasis mine). How will you show God that you know who serves Him today? "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17). We must have works to back our faith or it is a dead faith. We must act on our faith!



God is not going to take us to a place of safety unless we support those who serve God! We must determine who they are and actively support them. God is going to force us to choose (Deut. 30:19-20). That is how He makes up His "jewels".

God says He will spare them from the Tribulation "as a man spares his own son". But they must be able to discern between those who serve God - and those who serve Him not (Mal. 3:18). If they are able to discern the difference, can you imagine God rewarding them for sitting on the fence? If they can't discern, then they are going to be deceived and sent into the Tribulation.

There is one big difference between now and the 1970's: HWA was alive to get the Church "back on track". Today, Christ must solve our problems another way. We must discern how Christ is doing it today. Our depth of conversion is being tested very severely! If we understand the Bible, we should already know God will test us this way.

These are serious prophecies. Please study them hard and prayerfully. Your future is determined by what you do NOW!

### THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI

Mr. Armstrong's last instructions to Mr. Tkach were, "I have reached world leaders" (Rev. 10:11), "your job is to get the Church ready". HWA also told an evangelist a couple of days before he died that "the Gospel has been preached".

Recently, Pasadena said the commission is, first, to get the Church ready, and second, to preach the Gospel.

It isn't that God doesn't want the Gospel - and a warning message preached today. The world needs to be warned NOW more than ever before! But God knew the Laodicean Church would not do the job. The prophecies tell us that. They offer "polluted bread" and the Church is becoming divided. So the commission to the world was mostly finished when HWA died. There still could be some limited work to be done in that area. If there is, the Philadelphia Church will have to do it. THE LAODICEAN WORK IS FAILING IN ITS COMMISSION - TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE WORLD! Therefore, the Malachi message becomes necessary. God is warning the Laodicean Church to repent.

Just as God sent a warning message to a sinning world - He also sends a warning message to a sinning, Laodicean Church.

What is left for us to do? The message of Malachi must be delivered. This is probably the main way God is knocking on the Laodicean's door (Rev. 3:20). This statement is made to an era. The Laodiceans are going to hear that knock - if we do our



job. They will either hear and respond NOW - or repentance in the Great Tribulation is their only hope of salvation.

God has revealed these truths to bring the Laodiceans to repentance.

What happened anciently after Malachi came to the temple? Look at all the confusion Christ encountered about 450 years later. Overall, Malachi's message didn't turn most people to God - and they suffered horribly. We also know that 144,000 Church members probably won't repent until the Tribulation. Others will go into the lake of fire. Still, God's Family is going to expand mightily.

GOD'S MAJOR WORK TODAY IS GETTING THIS MESSAGE OF MALACHI TO HIS PEOPLE AND GETTING THEM READY TO GO TO A PLACE OF SAFETY AND INTO GOD'S KINGDOM (Luke 21:36). Those who don't repent are going to be warned. They will be without excuse.

Anciently, Malachi came to a temple that was in a shambles - after Zerubbabel was dead. The same is true of Malachi's message today. The direction of the Church is in disarray - after HWA's death (our modern Zerubbabel). Some ministers lack Godly fear (Mal. 1:6; 2:4-8), and sacrifices to God are polluted (Mal. 1:8). THE MESSAGE IS SO POLLUTED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO STOP THE MESSAGE AND CLOSE DOWN THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD! (verse 10). Polluted bread is being offered (verse 12), and the ministry causes people to stumble at God's law (Mal. 2:7-8). Some ministers are cruel to fellow ministers (verse 10). In case you don't believe that, just believe God! It is happening. The Worldwide Church is too scholarly - too academic in worldly ways (verse 12), some in the ministry are treacherous to past instructions of the Church (verse 14, 16), and tithes are misused (Mal. 3:8-10).

STAYING WITH THE LAODICEAN CHURCH WILL CAUSE YOU TO SUFFER THEIR FATE! Some people will think it's disloyal to follow Christ out of the Worldwide Church of God. HWA was fired from the Sardis Church for following God and the truth He revealed. And more ministers are going to be "fired" from the WCG if they start teaching this message of Malachi. IT'S NO SIN TO WALK AWAY FROM THE LAODICEAN CHURCH INTO THE PHILADELPHIAN CHURCH. It's a sin if we FAIL to do so! YOU WILL NOT BE LEAVING THE BODY OF CHRIST!

Before this is all over, I believe ANYONE WHO TRULY FOLLOWS CHRIST HAS TO LEAVE OR BE "CAST OUT" OF THIS LAODICEAN CHURCH. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

Either we get off the train or we are destined to crash with it!

The message of Malachi is to be delivered in modern times. That implies and means more than one person will do the Work. "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name"



(Mal. 3:16). This is a group of God's people who do God's Work. It is a prophecy of a SEPARATE Philadelphia group. Perhaps they were "disfellowshipped", "cast out" or just left.

Ministers in God's Church have talked for years about the probability of two end-time Churches being discussed in these verses. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Rev. 12:13-14). Here is one group of God's people (Philadelphians) persecuted by Satan and taken to a place of safety. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [or, "the rest of her offspring..." New King James], which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). Here is a different group (Laodiceans) that Satan persecutes in another way ("wars" against them during the Tribulation).

The Philadelphian group is persecuted before they go to a place of safety (verse 13) - and it's separate from the Laodicean group (verse 17). There is a strong indication here and in Malachi 3:16 that these two groups separate before the Tribulation. Do the Laodiceans inflict part of the pre-Tribulation persecution on the Philadelphians? Malachi 2:10, 14-16 is about the Laodiceans being "treacherous" to the Philadelphians. That treachery probably comes just before and after the two groups split.

Persecution of the Philadelphians by the Laodiceans is also discussed in II Thessalonians 2 and Zechariah 3 and 4 - by strong implication. Some of that persecution comes in the form of casting people out of the Laodicean Church!

Only one of these Churches is righteous enough to go to a place of safety. CHRIST IS LEADING THAT GROUP. CHRISTIANS ARE IN GOD'S CHURCH IF THEY ARE FOLLOWING CHRIST!! (I Pet. 2:21; Luke 18:29-30). That is from God's Word - the Holy Bible! If you follow the scriptures you are in God's Church - in spite of what any man says! Remember, the Bible is full of examples when men and churches have led people astray. That is why every spiritual step we take must be biblically based!

The Worldwide Church of God is destined to split. Those members with the strength to stay with what Elijah taught - the "trunk of the tree" - are going to be God's "jewels" who are taken to a place of safety and given an incredible reward!

We can't escape making this major decision. That is what walking by FAITH is all about. All Philadelphians must follow the group Christ is leading - not just "stay in the Church". Just "staying in the Church" could be a grave mistake leading to the Tribulation - or ETERNAL DEATH!

"Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, says the Lord of hosts.



But you said, "Wherein shall we return?" (Mal. 3:7). God is calling upon them to repent. The Laodiceans don't see a need to "return". They question God. But there is a group that does "return" to what "Elijah" taught.

The prophecy says we either return to what "Elijah" taught or we are destined to go into Gehenna fire! (Mal. 4:1-6).

If the work to the world is basically finished - most of what remains to be done is separating the Laodiceans and the Philadelphians (Mal. 3:17). That should not take very long - but it will be painful! VERY PAINFUL - in some cases it will break up families. God knew it would happen (Luke 14:26-27).

The book of Malachi is not addressed to the nations - as many other books are. His message was to get the temple worship "back on track". The temple today is the Church. This book is about ministers who despise God's name and have profaned the temple worship (Mal. 1:6-13). God directs His command to the ministry (Mal. 2:1). They lack Godly fear (verses 4-6). These ministers CAUSE people to stumble at God's law. This can only apply to God's Church who alone truly keep God's law. And God directly blames the ministry for the end-time crisis in the Church!

God said He would send Elijah the prophet - and He did (Mal. 4:4-6). HWA reluctantly admitted to all of us that he fulfilled this prophecy - and nobody else!

The curse (verse 6) that we have always thought applied to the world - ACTUALLY APPLIES TO THE CHURCH! But it is a change you can PROVE from the Bible. All these changes I discuss with you can be PROVED or DISproved from the BIBLE.

Common sense would tell us the events Malachi prophesied about couldn't happen while HWA was alive. There was a type of it in the 1970's - but he stopped it. He restrained it (II Thes. 2:6-7). Those prophecies in Malachi could only occur fully after HWA was dead. There simply is no other explanation for this end-time book. Not if we are led by God's Holy Spirit.

This matter is all going to be concluded before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord". It is at that point that the Laodiceans either repent and are sealed - or lose their salvation. Between the death of HWA ("Elijah") and the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" is the Laodicean era. Then Christ begins to personally intervene.

As HWA said, the Bible is a coded book. It is indeed!

The book of Malachi is primarily about the Church from the time of HWA's death to "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (the point where the Laodiceans are sealed - Mal. 4:5-6). Malachi reveals what happens during that period.

HWA turned us to the family of God. The Laodicean's sin involves turning away from the family of God and what God did through HWA. Malachi tells us how the Church moves from the Philadelphian era to the Laodicean era. The Laodiceans turn away from the Philadelphia standard. Common sense also tells us that is what happens. The



Laodiceans would have been Philadelphians - if they hadn't turned away. They established their own standard - not Christ's!

The "book of remembrance" and being "treacherous to the wife (Church) of your youth" - are keys to reveal a turning away from what God taught us. The Laodiceans fail to remember. They don't just lack "drive and energy". They are treacherous because they are part of a Judas-like betrayal (II Thes. 2). This is the epitome of what a Laodicean is!

"And now, O you priests, this commandment is for YOU. And you shall KNOW that I have sent this commandment to you..." (Mal. 2:1, 4, emphasis mine). ALL OF GOD'S MINISTERS ARE GOING TO KNOW THIS MESSAGE CAME FROM GOD - WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT NOW OR IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION! They must "know". That is a promise from God. The only remaining question is when.

CHRIST IS GOING TO PURGE HIS MINISTERS! (Mal. 3:3).

Fellow ministers of Jesus Christ, God's people desperately need an example to follow. God has helped me with many miracles since I was disfellowshipped. He shall do the same for you. All we have to do is trust Him. PLEASE STEP OUT ON FAITH!

God says "I will require my flock at your hands" (Ezk. 34:9-10). We are being judged by what we do with God's flock! God is going to judge each one of us - it's beginning right now!

The critics and scholars will howl, but it won't alter God's word one iota! They will only be fighting God.

It is going to take time for God to dislodge wrong concepts from His people. Through prayer, fasting, and study of this message again and again, a clear understanding will come to many of God's people - those with the Philadelphia attitude. Those people who walk by FAITH are going to see that they have been betrayed. God's people have always had to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7). God's Work now faces its greatest crisis!

If we put all the pieces together, it fits like an amazing puzzle. After all, it's been prophesied for thousands of years!

Malachi came originally to rekindle the fires of faith in many discouraged priests. WE MINISTERS MUST LET MALACHI MOVE AND STIR US TO A GREATER EFFORT! God needs you ministers now as NEVER BEFORE!

FAITH is nothing more than ACTING on God's word!

I strongly believe that backing and supporting this message is our only ticket to a place of safety and a magnificent reward. This is how God makes up His jewels!

"He that receives you receives me, and he that receives me receives him that sent me. He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward" (Matt. 10:40-41). Prophets are mentioned again (as in Amos



2:11-12; 3:7-8). Prophets have not played a major role from Christ's First Coming until now. That could change very soon unless leaders in Pasadena repent. Malachi's message is going to be delivered.

The prophets in Amos 2:11-12 and Amos 3:7 were not a part of the structured ministry that was going astray. They prophesied against the Church. Christ was with them - not the structured ministry that He also raised up. Time and time again in the Old Testament, the prophets came to straighten out the priests and the people.

God's people must understand these verses. If they receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man - they get a righteous man's reward. If they receive a prophet in the name of a prophet - they receive a prophet's reward. The SAME reward!

This is how God is going to separate the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans. One group has the faith of Christ and one doesn't. If people don't receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man - they are Laodicean - or worse. They fail to discern their REAL LEADER - JESUS CHRIST. Our reward depends on recognizing the true representatives of God. There is no reward for just being a member - even in God's Church! Today, it is a Church going astray.

Mr. Armstrong had the faith to walk away from a dead Sardis Church. Now we have to possess the faith to walk away from, or be kicked out of, a lukewarm Laodicean Church - or we will receive a Laodicean's reward.

Those who walk away and support this Philadelphia standard in a new organization are going to be rewarded for every contribution - even for giving a cold glass of water! (Matt. 10:42). God rewards every little deed.

Your reward revolves around receiving God's message - regardless of who the messenger is. It takes spiritual discernment to recognize where God's message is being delivered. This is God's major test now.

Herbert Armstrong wrote about the 1970's rebellion in the Worldwide News, June 24, 1985. He warned us about something like this happening again. Here is the quote:

I want you, brethren, to think about and understand what happened to God's Church in the 1970's lest history repeat itself! I want you to see the "fruits" of rebelling against God's way and God's government.

HISTORY HAS REPEATED ITSELF! The "fruits" of rebelling against God's way and God's government are there for all to see.

Are we rebelling against God's government? No, we are not! I am backing God's government by preaching what God has revealed. Leaders in Pasadena are rebelling - by flagrantly turning away from WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT US THROUGH HWA!!

HWA warned us about history repeating itself! Now Christ is going to see if we "remember" the instructions of "Elijah" (Mal. 3:16; 4:4-6).

The minister's responsibility is to preach GOD'S TRUTH - not what men say. God is going to judge each one of us severely on that basis.



## WHO SERVES GOD?

If you look at the circumstances, you couldn't say that Mr. Amos and I are in this for the money. What is our motive? God must reveal the answer to that question. Please seek Him with your whole heart and mind and being. BELIEVE THE BIBLE - NOT ME!

We must be able to discern "who serves God and who serves Him not" (Mal. 3:16-18). There is no reason to discern who serves God unless you plan to support that service. "Faith without works is dead." How else can we be one of God's "jewels" who goes to a place of safety and into God's Headquarter's temple? Those who cannot discern one work from the other are destined to go into the worst time of suffering ever on this planet! And remember when it talks about those who serve God, it is in the same chapter and context as tithes and offerings (Mal. 3:9-10, 18).

I have been in the Church since September 7, 1961. The Church ordained me into God's ministry on Pentecost of 1972. I have pastored Churches since 1975.

The Worldwide Church of God has disfellowshipped me because of the message you have just read. But Christ has not! We are NOT out of God's Church - only out of the Laodicean Church! Therefore, God has led us to establish a new Church organization:

### PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD, INC.

P.O. Box 1787  
Edmond, Oklahoma 73083

Phone: (405) 348-4551

We learned a few days ago that Edmond means Protector of Wealth. Isn't that really what God wants from the Philadelphia Church? Doesn't He want us to protect the precious spiritual wealth that Christ has established in His Church? And can't we see what this Laodicean Church is doing with God's revealed truth?

Mr. Amos and I both live in Edmond, Oklahoma.

We plan on corresponding regularly with interested people.

We are going to produce articles and booklets - especially a booklet on the entire book of Amos, which the Laodicean Church does not understand. Much of this book's prophecy describes what is happening in the Laodicean and Philadelphian Churches right now!

God's new organization has a tax-exempt status. We can receive God's tithes and offerings that are deductible from a person's taxes.

Of course, the Philadelphia Church will be accused of greedily desiring money. Paul was accused of the same attitude. He said, "I seek not your's" - that is, your tithes and offerings - "but you..." (II Cor. 12:14). PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL AND ETERNAL LIVES ARE AT STAKE! Who cares what the critics say! I intend to help God's people all I can.



I MUST DO THAT! Woe be unto me if I don't. Then I've done my part. One person is very limited in what he can do. But I HAVE ABSOLUTE FAITH THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE OTHERS TO HELP, BECAUSE IT IS PROPHESED! (Mal. 3:16-17). Some of that help has already arrived. God has commissioned a group of people to deliver the warning message of Malachi. The word "burden" in Malachi 1:1 means a prophetic oracle - or warning. WE MUST WARN GOD'S PEOPLE! Those who fail to heed are going to face terrible CURSES (Mal. 2:2; 4:5-6).

What a blessing to be a part of God's wonderful Work. And think of the tremendous REWARD God is going to give those who are a part of it.

Ministers who cling to what Christ taught can be quickly fired. When that happens they are going to be almost totally and directly dependent on God. The Laodicean Church has become "rich and increased with goods", but they still give disfellowshipped ministers virtually no support - even when they have served many years. The "fruits" of the WCG's "love" is very clear then. As you help us, we can help those loyal ministers. Still, Philadelphia ministers must expect miracles. God has shown us many miracles since we were disfellowshipped.

Anyone who has questions or comments - or any kind of interest in God's truth, is encouraged to write or call us.

If any of you have names and addresses of Church members whom you feel would benefit from this paper (other than Oklahoma City and Enid, Oklahoma), please send them to us and we will mail this message to them. Everything will be kept confidential.

Any of you ministers who want to discuss this Work, please call or write me. Everything will be kept absolutely confidential. I fully understand that you have to use caution and wisdom in any changes you make.

This message is being received by many people on the very day of the anniversary of HWA's death (January 16, 1986). We didn't plan it, but are we are happy it happened that way.

You are going to see the date of HWA's death take on more significance as time goes on. Mr. John Amos and I were disfellowshipped on December 7, 1989 - 40 days before the anniversary of HWA's death. The number 40 is significant in the Bible. The third 19-year time cycle of the Work of the Worldwide Church of God ends in January of 1991 - the same month as the anniversary of HWA's death. Will we see some dramatic event in the world or within God's Philadelphian and/or Laodicean Churches then?

Gamaliel talked about some people who raised up a work in his time. He had an important message for those in power. "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it; lest haply you be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39). If our Work today is a human effort it will come to nothing. But if God is



behind it, no man can stop it. As Gamaliel said, those who fight this Work are going to be fighting God. And those who support this Church are going to be supporting God.

### WHO HAS A GOVERNMENT PROBLEM?

We are going to be accused of rebelling against God and His authority. WE ARE DOING JUST THE OPPOSITE! Remember Joshua and "his fellows". Joshua had the authority problem. That is the main focus of the story. And "his fellows" follow him - not Jesus Christ! The "man of sin" is also a story of rebellion from the top. The Laodiceans are rebelling against what Christ taught in the Philadelphia era. The leaders mentioned in Malachi are being "treacherous" to what Christ taught through HWA - treacherous to God's Church members.

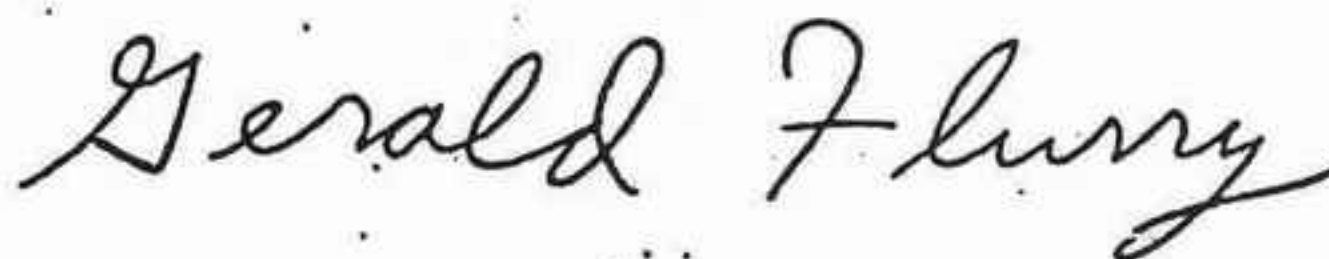
Who has a government problem? The whole battle we face is struggling to cling to Christ's government. The Philadelphia Church of God is not leaving Christ - but many are prophesied to do so. If we step out and obey Christ - OUR LEADER - we are going to have MORE joy and peace - not less!

WE ARE NOT REBELLING - WE ARE TAKING A STAND AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE!

Realize that this is all prophesied to happen. We can rejoice that the end is very near.

Brethren, please study and digest this message, and pray fervently for God to guide you. BELIEVE YOUR BIBLE - NOT MEN! Your eternal life hangs in the balance.

You are in my prayers continually,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Flurry".

Gerald R. Flurry