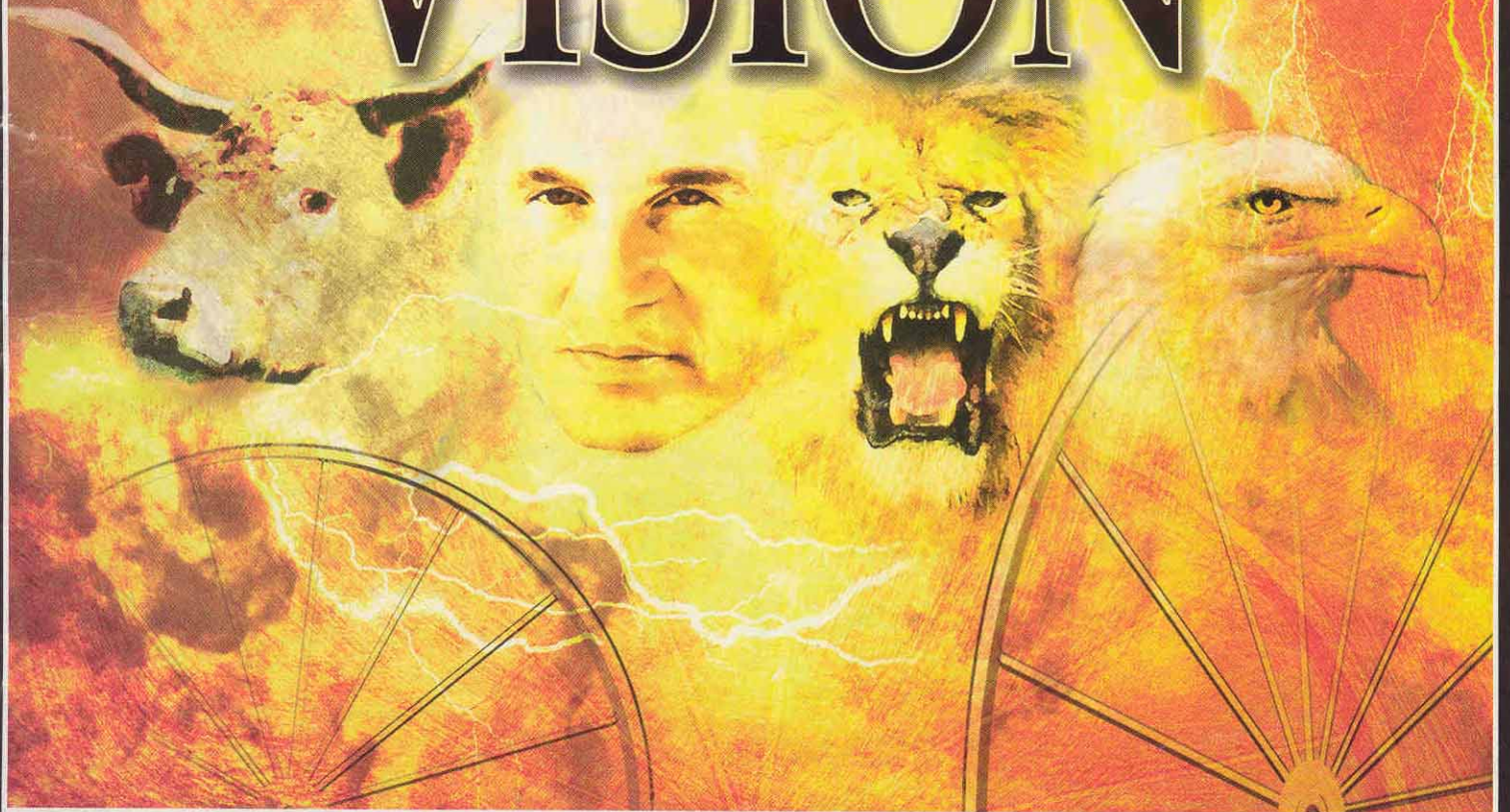


SPECIAL ISSUE

Royal Vision

July-August 2001

EZEKIEL'S VISION



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THE SONS OF ZADOK**
BY GERALD FLURRY

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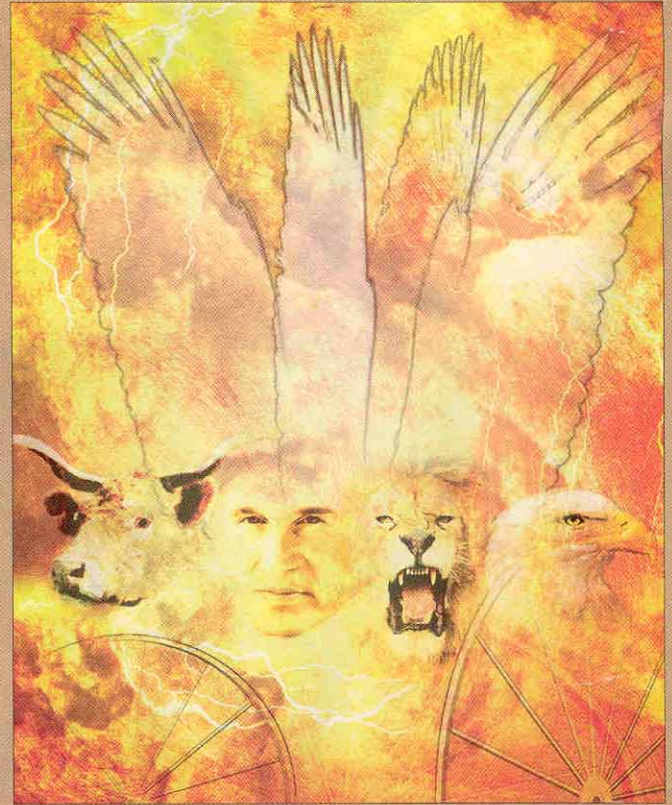
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About our cover The book of Ezekiel opens with a powerful vision of an angelic vehicle upon which the majestic God rides. Here, a representation of some of the elements Ezekiel describes. (Joel Hilliker)

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Greetings, Brethren and Co-Workers! ...

Let me share with you an excerpt of a letter that Herbert W. Armstrong wrote to the members and co-workers of the Worldwide Church of God, May 21, 1978: "God's great work—to the whole world—is, truly, going ahead now as never before, with A NEW START!

"Soon you will hear NEW PROGRAMS from me, on both radio and television. Just as Moses, the man of God, had not abated in his strength of mind and spirit, in leading the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage into the Promised Land, after 80 years of age, so the SAME GOD has sustained my mind, energy and power for the completion of His work in this world.

"On July 4 there will be a big '4th of July celebration' in Jerusalem, hosted jointly by the mayor of Jerusalem, Mr. Teddy Kollek, and myself. The city of Philadelphia had an exact duplicate made of the Liberty Bell—crack and all—and gave it to the city of Jerusalem. In the spring of 1976—Passover time—the mayor came to me privately, and asked my help in building an important downtown park in Jerusalem, to be named the 'Liberty Bell Park.' Through the AICF [Ambassador International Cultural Foundation], I was able to agree to supply the children's playground area, at the very opening of the park. The park is now completed, and Mayor Kollek has asked me to be present on July 4 for the opening and dedication of the Liberty Bell Park."

In January 1997, the Philadelphia Foundation contacted the Jerusalem Foundation to inquire about the Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Plaque that once rested in Liberty Bell Park. Several members had visited the park and were unable to locate the marker.

Alan Freeman of the Jerusalem Foundation informed us that the park was being restored and the marker would be replaced upon completion.

In November 2000, after additional contacts, we were told that a new plaque would need to be produced. The Philadelphia Foundation agreed to provide the funds for the new plaque and to help support the maintenance and refurbishment of Liberty Bell Park in memory of Mr. Armstrong.

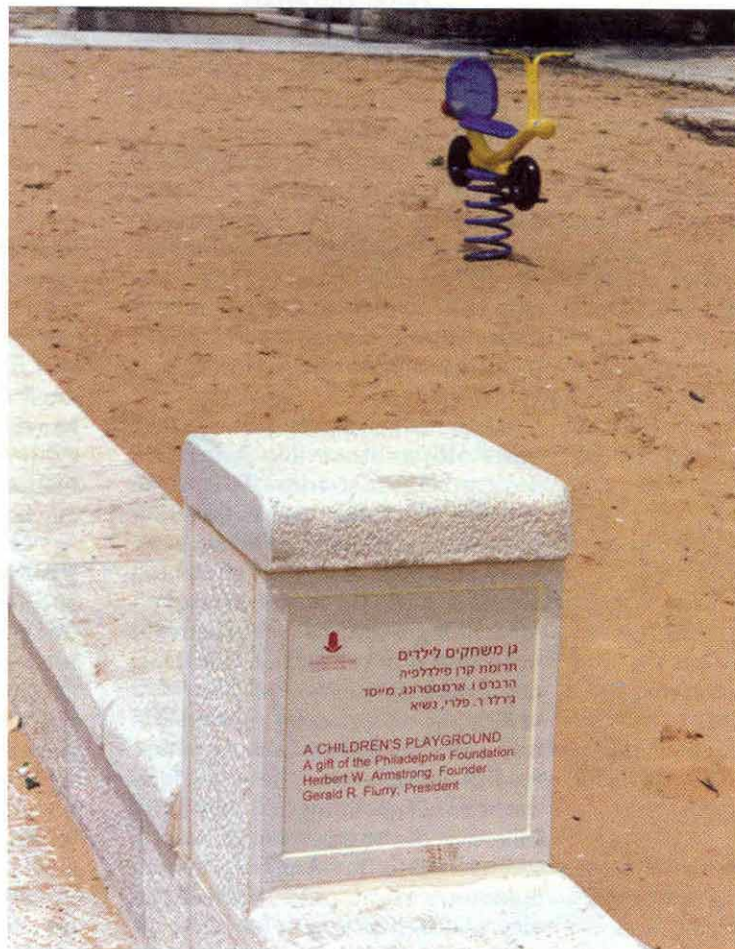
The photograph shown is the newly replaced Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Plaque. The inscription, in Hebrew and English, reads as follows:

A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND
A gift of the Philadelphia Foundation
Herbert W. Armstrong, Founder
Gerald R. Flurry, President

If you happen to be visiting Jerusalem, please stop by and see the park.

Gerald Flurry

Gerald Flurry
Editor in Chief



SONS OF ZADOK

BY GERALD FLURRY

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL discusses a lot about a physical temple that will be set up in the World Tomorrow, when Jesus Christ will establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. But there is also a lot about a *spiritual* temple. That is what God is most concerned about.

If you are going to build a spiritual temple, where do you start? We can know where *God* would start just by looking in Ezra 3; the Jews rebuilt the temple by starting *with the altar*. That may seem strange, looking at it physically. But it is a type of the firstfruits: Today God is building His altar for the World Tomorrow—FOR THE TEMPLE THAT WILL ONE DAY BE THE ENTIRE MULTITUDE OF HUMANITY! God's Philadelphians will be part of that altar.

Zadok the Priest

The Philadelphians are labeled as sons of Zadok in the book of Ezekiel. Who was Zadok? What does it mean to be considered his sons?

Two of the most loyal priests under King David were Abiathar and Zadok, Abiathar being the chief priest and Zadok serving under him. A rebellion rose up under the leadership of David's son, Absalom, and many in Israel turned against David to follow Absalom. Abiathar and Zadok did not.

Later, when David was getting quite old, another son, Adonijah, rose up against him. This time Abiathar made the mistake of siding with the rebellion. Perhaps he believed David really had gotten too old for his job. The *high priest* turned on the king! For David, that betrayal must have been one of the most depressing moments of his life.

But Zadok remained faithful. He was made chief priest because of that loyalty. Shortly after, he was given the honor of anointing Solomon king. Like *none* of the other priests, Zadok stayed loyal to David all the way into Solomon's reign, until he died. His sons followed his example.

That is why God calls us sons of Zadok today: We are loyal to the throne of David from beginning to end. Even if we faltered for a time, we repented. *Sons of Zadok* is a perfectly fitting name for the loyal Philadelphian remnant in this end time. He is talking about the ministry first of all, but that label also includes all of God's faithful people, because they all will be kings and priests—God's royalty. This is a special honor.

God is addressing those people who are called and converted in the end time. Of that end-time calling, *only* the Philadelphians are, and will be forever, called sons of Zadok. *Only* they were loyal to David's throne to the very end. *Only* they will rule from God's headquarters temple forever! They will be honored with that position, because they remained loyal when *most* of God's people rebelled against Him.

They will be a part of God's very elect headquarters altar, or priests in the World Tomorrow. Sons of Zadok will be added to their royal title. Most of God's end-time saints will *not* be honored with that title—sons of Zadok.

Who was Ezekiel? We really don't know much about him, except for one interesting fact. He was the son of Buzi (Ezek. 1:3), and a part of the priestly family of Zadok. Ezekiel, even though he was in captivity, was *still* loyal to David's throne all the way through. That's why God can use him as an example. He was a son of Zadok in two ways—of that physical genealogy *and* of the *SPIRITUAL* genealogy!

A Watershed Event

"But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary *when the children of Israel went astray from me*, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 44:15). God is talking here about something we have lived through: when the children of Israel—the *spiritual* Israelites, virtually the whole Church—went astray from God. We know exactly what this is referring to; it is very real to us. It is probably the most traumatic experience any of us have ever endured.

"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" (II Thes. 2:3). A great apostasy was prophesied to occur in God's own Church—one that would deceive many people. A son of *destruction* would gain control and begin *destroying* God's truth in the name of God! This is something terribly perverted.

These verses show that God's own people will be forced into a head-to-head combat against satanic forces within the Church. They point to a fierce *BATTLE* over God's truth!

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] will [restrain], until he be taken

* HWA Tape on 9-22-83 1st day of 7. of Tab = ① States when Christ returns he will sit on 2 thrones 1-David's throne over Israel ② Satan's throne to rule Rest of world

out of the way" (v. 7). Herbert W. Armstrong was taken out of the way, and 95 percent of the people succumbed to Satan in this spiritual war. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that [are perishing]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (v. 10). Why are they dying spiritually? Because they don't love the truth. They don't believe they need to look to David's throne. They don't believe they need the government of God!

But let's focus on the 5 percent—those who truly *do* LOVE the truth! Who LOVE the government! Let's focus on the people who remain loyal to God, who *fight* for God.

Through that treachery, a noble group, the sons of Zadok, were loyal to God's throne. Ezekiel 44:15 is talking specifically about the ministers, but it applies to all of us as we *follow* God's loyal ministers. It began through me, strongly supported by John Amos. We weren't men of stature in that church, but we clung to what Mr. Armstrong had taught! Now many others have followed. God says His sons of Zadok kept the charge of His sanctuary when everybody else was turning away. That *impresses* God! That makes those sons of Zadok very *special* to God. What a noble title. Even though it means nothing to the people of this world, there is *no other title I would rather have!*

We became sons of Zadok in the midst of that watershed event. THAT WAS A SPECIAL MOMENT IN OUR HISTORY, ONE THAT WILL ENNOBLE US FOR ALL ETERNITY—the greatest moment in our spiritual lives! Developing and displaying loyalty in the midst of that betrayal was really an act of *qualifying* for very prestigious positions.

We must QUALIFY to become an eternal son of Zadok! What a vision that is! This is a job that God will give us for all eternity because we remained Philadelphian in the midst of the Laodicean rebellion. God is *challenging* us with this vision. Our eternal reward depends on the choices we make NOW, on a daily basis!

Why won't the Laodiceans be at headquarters in God's Kingdom—even if they repent in the Great Tribulation? Because THEY'RE NOT QUALIFIED! THEY DON'T HAVE A HEADQUARTERS MENTALITY TODAY! The people who will be at headquarters in God's Kingdom are the people who have a strong headquarters focus *now*.

Think about this in practical terms. *Government is everything*, as Mr. Armstrong often said. Government is the first of the Ten Commandments: You shall have no gods before the true God. When Laodiceans say they are experimenting with another government, that means *they are turning to another god!* How could God rely on them in positions of great responsibility in His Kingdom?

"Where there is no *vision*, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). It doesn't say, where there is no *government*, the people perish. The reason is that in order to follow God's government, *you must have great vision!* The reason why that fundamental doctrine trips up so many people is because they lack VISION! They can't see, as the sons of Zadok do, how everything today is preparing us in very specific ways for being a part of God's royal family government in the Kingdom. They have lost this vision.

WHY DOES GOD HAVE US LOOK TO HEADQUARTERS TODAY? BECAUSE HE'S PREPARING US TO TEACH THE WHOLE WORLD TO LOOK TO HEADQUARTERS IN THE FUTURE! How else could we prepare for such a job? No wonder God places such importance on being a son of Zadok.

The Key of David

Each time a monarch is crowned in England, a song titled "Zadok the Priest," by G.F. Handel, is sung. Why would this song be used?

Queen Elizabeth was crowned Queen of the British Commonwealth on June 2, 1953. As you read what the *Chronicle-Telegram* of Elyria, Ohio, wrote at the time of her coronation, imagine yourself in a much higher position someday: "The communion service after the opening 'recognition' ceremony changes the atmosphere of the coronation to one of devotion and deep religious significance. It is from this point that the sovereign, having dedicated herself to the service of her peoples, is solemnly consecrated, like a bishop, for her task.... MEANWHILE THE CHOIR SINGS, as they have sung at this point in the ceremony since the *earliest known English coronation service*, the anthem, 'Zadok the Priest'" (May 21, 1953; emphasis mine). A song about Zadok the priest has been sung every time a king or queen has been crowned since "the earliest known English coronation service."

Why would this song about Zadok be so bound together with the coronation ceremony for THE THRONE OF DAVID? I believe God inspired that to help God's people understand *who they are!* What we are part of is worth giving up *anything, anywhere, anytime on this Earth!*

What makes us sons of Zadok? Consider, as an example, the fact that we printed Mr. Armstrong's 1945 version of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. That was the most successful booklet Mr. Armstrong ever produced, in terms of people reached: over 5 million! I believe God reserved that for us because it was absolutely essential for doing His work. The copyright had expired, and the fact is, *anyone* could have reprinted it. But NO ONE ELSE did. We wanted that book passionately, and no one else was interested.

Only the SONS OF ZADOK wanted the version that God inspired Mr. Armstrong to write! Why? That book is about *David's throne!* The Laodiceans are turning away from it just as surely as Abiathar turned from David. I *could* stake my life on the fact that God inspired that book. Can we casually push aside such revelation from God?

Why would we call our television program *The Key of David*? Because we are the sons of Zadok. In truth, we don't make those decisions. The great God is preparing us to sit on the throne of David as He uses us to do His work today.

Look again at that newspaper clipping: It says that Queen Elizabeth "dedicated herself to the service of her peoples." That is a noble cause, and I do not mean to belittle it. But when you look at it from our perspective, it is actually somewhat shortsighted. The sons of Zadok are to dedicate themselves to the service of the WHOLE WORLD! When we sit upon that throne of David with our Husband, Jesus Christ, it is the world we will be serving! What a tremendous honor!

David's throne is the only throne from which this world will be served. Can you imagine it being served by the Jews or Palestinians in the Middle East? By the govern-

We became sons of Zadok in the midst of that watershed event. That was a special moment in our history, one that will ennoble us for all eternity.

ments of the United States or Britain or anywhere else? The politics of this world have become so corrupt. There must be a massive change to bring this world the rest and the peace that it cries out for. Only God, supported by His faithful people, can accomplish that.

"And to the angel of the church in *Philadelphia* write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the *key of David*, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Rev. 3:7). Revelation 3 really gives us the big overview of who we are. The *Philadelphia* name goes with the *key of David*, and both are associated with a powerful work that walks through the doors God opens. This is all one package—*Philadelphians*, *key of David*, open door to the whole world—because that's what we'll be teaching in the *World Tomorrow*. We must reach the world today to be ready for that future. We must be **WORLD-ORIENTED!**

Don't ever let this vision slip—this is what makes you what you are. We must know who we are and how much Jesus Christ loves each one of us. Even in times of trial, we must recognize God's love for us. Every trial will pay off in the long run. God is working in terms of preparing us for *eternity!* Don't ever let Satan make you believe otherwise. God has a love we can't even fathom.

Pillars in the Temple

"Him that overcometh will I make a *pillar* in the *temple of my God*, and he shall go no more out..." (v. 12). What a glorious honor for the sons of *Zadok*! They will forever be headquarters personnel, because they learned to look to headquarters today, from where Christ is leading the 5 percent of His people who have remained loyal. How beloved they are for their loyalty.

Hannah said this of her son Samuel: "The pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and *he hath set the world upon them*" (1 Sam. 2:8). She saw that vision! God wants strong people—people who can have *the world* set upon them and who will remain **STABLE** in difficult times. Realize that such pillars must be built over time. They will be in God's Kingdom because they were *built* before Christ's return. It takes time, and God must put those pillars through some tests. But that is exactly how the *Philadelphians* are proving themselves today. They won't be intimidated by a son of perdition or a whole church going astray! They will stay with God even if it gets them **KILLED!**

Think for a moment of the flip side of this picture: those who turned away as if this is a casual religion or a game. How could God possibly use those people at headquarters? "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). God is *sickened* by their treachery!

Ministers and members in far-flung areas must keep their headquarters focus. Losing that focus is their biggest danger. Christ leads His Church from Edmond, which is His prerogative as the Head of the Church.

Can we clearly see how having a headquarters mentality today leads right into being part of the headquarters temple in the *World Tomorrow*? Everyone on Earth will be looking to the place Christ is ruling from. This vision goes beyond Jerusalem in the Millennium—it goes out to new Jerusalem, out into the universe and on and on forever! It all revolves around the First Commandment. All people must first look to God—which

means having no other gods and no other *government!* We can't experiment with another government. Once we understand this basic truth, God can do so much with us.

Preparing to Build

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). This verse is about the sons of *Zadok* being loyal to David's throne. **This happens before the Tribulation.** The *tabernacle of David* is a *temporary structure*, and it has fallen in this end time. Ninety-five percent of God's people have been toppled by the devil in their spiritual lives.

But there are some pillars still standing, surviving in the midst of spiritual ruins all around. **These pillars, these sons of Zadok, are the only people on Earth who can raise up these ruins.**

Look at the work God is now raising up! God has given us 160 acres because He wants us to **BUILD!** Christ is preparing us to **BUILD** throughout the *World Tomorrow*—and we will one day **FINISH BUILDING** the universe! **We can raise up these ruins because we are empowered by the great God.** This is a prophecy about us! We're raising up the tabernacle of David like it was in the days of old, the days of Herbert W. Armstrong. We keep on raising up those "ruins" even if we have to fight in court to do so! If we have to go so far as to face death, I hope and pray that we remain loyal to this cause!

What a beautiful prophecy this is. The sons of *Zadok* simply won't let go of the tabernacle of David, which is attached to a monumental vision of God. These are our fruits. As long as we have God in us, strengthening us for this work, I know that we can't be defeated. When Christ returns, His wife will be ready. She will know how to **BUILD**, because she's been doing it all along. He will marry her and then direct her, and she will go out and do it.

"For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; *Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me* to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.... If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with *the Levites the priests, my ministers*" (Jer. 33:17-21).

God will always have ministers teaching about the throne of David! He will always have a number of loyal, *Zadok-like* ministers. **And as you follow those ministers, you also become sons of Zadok.** God says if you walk outside and see that it is either day or night, this covenant is still binding—you can be absolutely *sure* that there still are sons-of-*Zadok* ministers to lead you to God and prepare you to rule on that throne of David forever! **Follow those men**, and at the end you will be kings and priests for God—kings and priests who know how to solve the problems of this world, who know how to implement the government of God. Who point people to Christ and to the Father, and know how to build the **FAMILY OF GOD!** That is the **TRUE GOSPEL.**

There are simply no people on this Earth more noble than those sons of *Zadok*!

KNOWING THE GOD OF EZEKIEL

BY GERALD FLURRY

IF YOU DON'T HAVE GOD'S GUIDANCE, TWO BOOKS OF the Bible that will drive you crazy when you study them are Ezekiel and Revelation. They are full of *amazing* prophecies and visions, but they make no sense unless God reveals their meaning. And God can *only* reveal them to people who have a childlike attitude. You must come to God ready to be instructed, willing to be measured. "Then," God says, "ye shall know that I am the Eternal."

As we will see, coming to know the true God is a dominant theme in the book of Ezekiel. This world has so many different ideas of who God is and what He is like. Their words and actions *prove* they don't know God! If you know the true God, you don't hate and kill others. But one day, as Ezekiel prophesied, the *whole world* shall come to know God! That is where everything is leading. Note such verses as Ezekiel 6:7, 10, 13; 7:4, 9, 27; 12:15; 16:62; 20:38; 23:49; 25:7; 34:27; 37:13.

Before that happens to this world, God says His sons of Zadok will send out a warning message. They will *declare* the book of Ezekiel in its entirety, and lead the world to get to know the true, living God. There is nothing more thrilling than knowing God! God reveals Himself in Ezekiel.

The Spiritual Vehicle

You can't understand Ezekiel unless you understand the most remarkable part of the book: chapter 1.

"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1). God revealed awesome *visions* to a *slave*! I don't believe anyone has ever seen such visions as Ezekiel did!

Ezekiel begins by describing an incredibly fiery spectacle. "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself [a fire inside a fire], and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire" (v. 4). This was some of the most intense brightness you can imagine. EZEKIEL WAS SEEING GOD IN A VISION.

"Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle" (vv. 5-10).

This is a description of the spectacular, resplendent vehicle that God rides in. The creatures transporting God were cherubim, and they each have four faces—one looks like a man; the others look like animals: an ox, a lion, an eagle. The ordinary angels apparently resemble men. But cherubim are not ordinary angels—"every one had four faces."

"As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning" (v. 13). This must have been most impressive—living creatures lit up like fire, and lightning coming out of the fire.

"And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.... And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings" (vv. 14, 24). Ezekiel saw this great, luminous vehicle with wings and revolving wheels moving at lightning speed. It never had to turn; it would move instantly in any direction. Men had never seen anything like this—it looked like torches or lightning darting around. This was quite a vehicle—so awesome Ezekiel had trouble even explaining it.

Has anyone else ever had such a vision?

The God of Ezekiel

Now look more closely at what was on *top* of this amazing machine. "And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings. And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man *above upon it*" (vv. 25-26). Sitting upon this vehicle is the God of

**If you don't know
God, you don't
know *anything*.
And if you don't
know the God of
Ezekiel 1, you
don't know God!**

Ezekiel—the great God whom all the world will one day come to know.

Notice: This great God of Ezekiel 1, riding atop this awesome transportation system, *looks like a man*. Study Genesis 1, and you know that *man* is the only creature in the world that looks like GOD! God created us in *His own likeness*. We look just like Him, because we are created to be part of the God FAMILY! Mankind is truly part of something so splendid and unique it is hard to even

describe. Man is something special. We *look* like God, and He wants us to develop the very *character* of God also.

It's hard to read the amazing description of the living creatures and realize how *far superior* in potential we are to them. We are to become sons of God. Angels never had that potential.

"And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain [a rainbow], so was the appearance of the brightness round about. *This was the appearance of the likeness of the GLORY OF THE LORD*. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake" (vv. 27-28). Compare this description with Revelation 1. How impressive God is to behold!

This is the God of the Bible. This is not little Lord Jesus in a manger, or Christ riding on a donkey. This is the God of Ezekiel and Revelation and the whole Bible! This is what He looks like and how He travels. How many people know *this* God?

Ezekiel fell over when he saw this vision. He could do nothing but prostrate himself before this resplendent Being. And it was *then* that God spoke to him.

If you were Ezekiel, wouldn't you listen? I believe I would, if I saw a vision such as this. Well, *we are, in fact, receiving a vision like this—though not directly as Ezekiel did. God is revealing Himself to us today in powerful, miraculous ways—even in this message you are reading.*

The Point of Ezekiel

In this first chapter, Ezekiel introduces us to God. If you don't know God, you don't know *anything*! And if you don't know the God of Ezekiel 1, you don't know God!

If you gathered all the angels and demons together, and all of the physical creation, you would see just how wonderfully unique we are! How often do we THANK GOD for our POTENTIAL? We should thank Him *every day* for that! Because before we can really understand *anything*, we must understand the *connection* between this *spectacular, fiery God* and *MAN*! This is the *real point* of Ezekiel! When the spiritual creation of man is complete, *man* will be GOD'S MASTERPIECE!

Again, only man has the potential to become like God in character.

There is no other message remotely close in excitement and exhilaration to this one. People who fail to grasp this truth look at Ezekiel and come up with all kinds of wacky interpretations.

Lange's Commentary says, "In the whole of the Old Testament, there is nothing more obscure than the beginning and the end of the book of Ezekiel." I am going to show you that it is *not* obscure. The end is all about the sons of Zadok and God's temple—and *no one understands that except the sons of Zadok*! And that special group also understands Ezekiel 1. The sons of Zadok receive *revelation* from that magnificent God.

Son of Man

Ezekiel frequently mentions that the "word of the Lord came to me." In whatever age, it's important to find the man God is working with. Ezekiel had special visions that God was to reveal to a man in this end time. Then the sons of Zadok would declare that revelation.

It is amazing—and significant—that God always does His work through a man. "And he said unto me, *Son of man*, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee" (Ezek. 2:1). Ezekiel was prostrate before God, and God instructed him to stand. But notice, He called him "son of man." *I'm going to speak to you*, God was saying, *and I want you to be my mouthpiece—but you're not God yet; you're just made of clay*.

God repeats that phrase *son of man* 87 times throughout this book. Some translations render it *you mortal man*. He really hammered Ezekiel with that point! But think about it: If you are going to be receiving such visions, information no one else knows, you're going to have to be humble. Humanly, it would be so easy to become vain.

Ezekiel was in captivity *five years* before God began revealing these prophecies to him. Not only was this very humbling to Ezekiel, I believe God was also demonstrating what He will have to do to humble most men. *Many* will experience war and captivity before turning to God.

So God traveled in His spiritual vehicle to the river Chebar in Babylon and began giving visions to a slave. Most people would believe God speaks to the mighty first, but in fact God usually works with the lowliest of the Earth. If you know how God works, you're going to look for the one man He's using. The whole world ought to be looking to God's man.

Twenty Years

God told Ezekiel to stand and receive His revelation. "And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me" (v. 2).

Again, this first vision happened *five years* after Ezekiel went into captivity. Ezekiel's *last* vision occurred in the *25th year* of his captivity (Ezek. 40:1). So it appears that Ezekiel was receiving revelation for *20 years*. Let's consider that number for a moment.

The third 19-year time cycle of the Elijah work ended on January 16, 1991. (I explain this on page 149 of *Malachi's Message*.) Ezekiel talks about a lot of specific dates. If you count one more 19-year time cycle in the Elijah work, that will end on January 16, 2010. That will also mark *20 years* for the work of the Philadelphia Church of God—the same amount of time that God allotted Ezekiel to do the work.

Will the Great Tribulation begin in 2010? The Gulf War started on January 16, 1991. Will a much *greater* war begin when the fourth 19-year time cycle ends? Perhaps. I believe we should be aware of these dates. Of

G7 said angel over Laodiceans was holding J.B. if so he was told to write
** The little book is already written see 10 is a different angel*

course, God also prophesied that He would cut time short (Matt. 24:22). **Only He knows the precise day and hour** (Matt. 24:36). But He does expect us to discern the signs of the times (Matt. 16:3).

God Sends a Prophet

The full understanding of Ezekiel's prophecy has been revealed to a man in this end time. It had to happen because God said so! This man must deliver that message just before the Great Tribulation.

What revelation was Ezekiel given? "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation [that should read *nations*—there is more than one nation of Israel in this end time] that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, *Thus saith the Lord God*. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them" (Ezek. 2:3-5). Regrettably, the people won't recognize God's prophet *before* the Great Tribulation strikes. But before it is all over, they will recognize that the God of Ezekiel 1 sent a prophet in the end time to deliver His revelation.

I don't believe there is a single instance in the Bible where God sent a prophet to say, *Hey, you're all doing great!* The fact that there is a prophet on the scene shows correction is necessary. That's why God sends one—to warn. If a prophet has a message from God, you know there must be bad news in the short run—and **WONDERFUL NEWS** in the long run.

Things won't be easy for that prophet; he is bound to run into all sorts of problems. "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house" (v. 6). It is natural for someone to be afraid, but God says, *Don't be afraid! Remember who you have behind you*. The wicked people—the briers, thorns and scorpions—are the ones who should fear! The God of Ezekiel 1 is sending a message, and God help the people who fight against Him. They will lose.

"And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; *Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee*" (vv. 7-8). Sometimes God must get pretty blunt with the person to whom He is revealing prophecy. It can be easy to get a Jonah complex and just want to flee. But God specifically warns us not to turn our backs as the Laodiceans have done.

The Little Book

Let's notice what God instructed Ezekiel to eat and to then speak. "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein...and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.... Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and *go speak unto the house of Israel*.... Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness" (Ezek. 2:9-Ezek. 3:3).

In a November 19, 1976, co-worker letter, Mr. Armstrong made an interesting observation about this passage in Ezekiel. After noting that God instructed Ezekiel to speak to "the house of Israel," Mr. Armstrong said, "NOWHERE in the Bible are JEWS called 'the House of Israel.' This term applies **ONLY** to the TEN-tribed Kingdom of Israel taken into Assyrian captivity more than a hundred years before Ezekiel and the Jews of the House of JUDAH were taken to Babylon.

"Nowhere in the book does Ezekiel record his journey from where he was in Babylon to those of the House of Israel who were then in Britain and Western Europe. [They had already been in and then come out of captivity.] Nowhere does he record his giving of the message to them. He merely **RECEIVED** the message. He merely **RECORDED** IT IN WRITING." In other words, *this prophecy was to be fulfilled in the end time*.

Then Mr. Armstrong turned to the book of Revelation, and honed in on Revelation 10: "But we now come to an **INSET** chapter, as I have called certain ones, such as the 13th and 17th chapters—in a sense, 'flashback' chapters, to bring up-to-date earlier events. The seventh trumpet or **THIRD WOE** is not opened until chapter 11, verse 15"—the first two woes having been opened in Revelation 9.

"Now notice this tenth chapter—an inset chapter, not necessarily at all occurring at the **TIME** sequence of the end of the ninth chapter.... This chapter 10 has been virtually **OVERLOOKED**. I did not comment on it in the earlier days, or expound it when I wrote the **OUTLINE** of the book of Revelation, or the full booklet on the revelation. There was **NO WAY** it could have been understood then—until after subsequent events—just as we could not have understood how Satan sways the entire **WORLD**, as explained in Ephesians 2:1-2, until we had radio and television."

Mr. Armstrong then talked about Revelation 10 and the little book. He concluded, "The Apostle John in his vision is told to take **the little book** which is open in the **✧** hand of the angel, and eat it up.

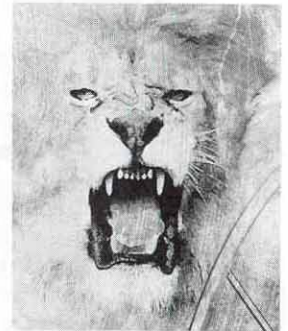
"**HOW LIKE EZEKIEL'S PROPHECY!**"

There is a good reason Mr. Armstrong thought Ezekiel 2 and 3 sounded like the little book of Revelation 10—because it *is* talking about the little book! (Though Mr. Armstrong didn't know it.)

Here is the passage in Revelation 10: "And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, **Give me the little book**. And he said unto me, Take it, and *eat it up*; and it shall make thy belly **BITTER**, but it shall be in thy mouth **SWEET AS HONEY**. **And I took the little book out of the angel's hand**, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter" (vv. 9-10).

Now let's look again at those verses in Ezekiel. "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo,

The Laodiceans have forgotten who they are—that they're sons of the God of Ezekiel 1. They wanted to follow the god of this world and still be in God's Church. The powerful God of Ezekiel 1 will not tolerate that!



of Laodiceans are Sons of God, why Does PCG forbid its members to talk to them ect.

a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe" (Ezek. 2:9-10). The message of this book is also bitter—it is a message of lamentations and mourning and woe. "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel" (Ezek. 3:1). As we know, we must take this message to spiritual Israel first.

"So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to

eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness" (vv. 2-3). As bitter as the message is, it is also just as the little book in Revelation 10—sweet in the mouth, when you know what God is doing in this end time. These two passages use virtually the same language. They are describing the same message!

The Sons in Captivity

"And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (v. 11). God instructed Ezekiel to speak to the Jewish captives who were right there with him. He was personally able to go only to the people in captivity—the Jews. He never delivered his message to Israel. Spiritually, there are people today who say they are spiritual Jews and are not (Rev. 3:9). They were at one time but aren't anymore.

In Ezekiel 33, God sets a watchman who is to warn the people of Israel before they go into captivity. But here he is to speak to some who are already in captivity. This is not a watchman message; it is something altogether different.

Where it says "the children of thy people," the Companion Bible says it should read sons. The Hebrew word is *ben*, which is the same word used in such verses as Psalm 2:7—"Thou art my Son [*ben*]; this day have I begotten thee." These are sons of God—God's own family. He is talking about spiritual captives in this end time, people who have been taken captive by Satan the devil: the Laodiceans. Spiritual Israel has gone into captivity. And a message of lamentation, mourning and woe needs to be delivered to them.

The problem with the Laodiceans is they have forgotten who they are! They've forgotten that they're the sons of the God of Ezekiel 1! That's why even Mr. Armstrong would get so upset and say, "Most of you just don't get it." They wanted to follow the god of this world and still be in God's Church. The powerful God of Ezekiel 1 would not tolerate that!

Who was willing to deliver the message of the little book to these captives? Our work did just what God instructed Ezekiel to do. For SEVEN YEARS we went to the Laodiceans with God's message to them. That was our primary focus, and we really were not able to reach out to the world. Only the Laodiceans can really understand *Malachi's Message*. We did a good job of warning those spiritual captives.

"Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place. I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing" (Ezek. 3:12-13). This is all tied in with the little book. That book is elsewhere likened to a lion's roar, and seven thunders. It creates quite a thunderous, tumultuous spiritual noise—like the noise heard here.

"So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me" (v. 14). Here Ezekiel uses the same word that John did. This message was sweet as honey in his mouth, but bitter in his belly once he had digested it. He's talking about a very distressing calamity.

WRITE IT IN THEIR SIGHT

IN ANCIENT ISRAEL'S TEMPLE, GOD HAD THE Israelites build the inner court higher than the outer court. That symbolized the fact that the people in the inner court of God's spiritual temple will have a greater reward. We are qualifying for that reward today.

"Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and WRITE IT IN THEIR SIGHT, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them" (Ezek. 43:10-11). This is referring to the spiritual temple. God says there is a measuring going on, and He wants everything measured.

This is clearly a companion scripture to Revelation 11:1-2. God's spiritual temple—His own people—is being measured. A great part of this occurred with the great falling away of the Laodicean era. When God measured, if any of us saw what was happening, became ashamed, turned ourselves around and gave ourselves to God, He then put us in His inner court with the other sons of Zadok.

Being measured is an intense process. But if we allow God to do it, then we too can measure spiritual things. We can prove all things, and confidently know that we're doing what God wants done. Ezekiel 43:10 in the Soncino Bible, reads "let them measure accurately." If we're measuring correctly, we know where God is today.

Once the measuring is done, God instructs, "Write it in their sight." Put it out where everyone can see it—where they too can measure by it. Write it. Who will do this? There is always a work to be done! There must be loyal people submitted to God's measure who can carry on with these instructions. The sons of Zadok have a job to do. If God gives revelation, as He did here to Ezekiel, He wants the recipients to write it, publish it, so that all Israelites—physical and spiritual—have a chance to measure themselves by it—so they can keep God's laws and ordinances. That includes following God's government and sticking to all the doctrines of the Church.

Seven Years

Ezekiel fulfilled this commission. "Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them *seven days*" (v. 15). He was exiled among these captives, and just astonished—I would presume by their attitude.

Numbers 14:34 reveals God's prophetic principle of *a day for a year*. That passage shows how Israel sent spies for 40 days into the promised land, and when they came back only Caleb and Joshua were excited and full of faith—the rest were negative and fearful. So because the people wouldn't follow the leaders, God punished them for 40 years—a day for a year in fulfilled prophecy. All of the adults in Israel died in the wilderness. Today 95 percent of God's people are dying in the wilderness, but WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SPIRITUAL DEATH—ETERNAL DEATH! THAT IS A MESSAGE OF LAMENTATION, MOURNING AND WOE! THAT IS BITTER!

Ezekiel 4:6 also shows that day-for-a-year principle.

The *seven days* Ezekiel was among these captives represent *seven prophetic years*. Who was ASTONISHED for SEVEN YEARS at what was happening within God's Church in this end time? Who experienced the worst trauma of their lives because of what was happening to God's own people? These are people we *know*, our own family! Nothing could be more distressful.

Throughout those seven years, we were delivering the little book to those former spiritual Jews who had been exiled to the outer court.

Then what happened after the seven years? Notice now how the story proceeds.

A Change in Commission

Something changed at this point in the story. "And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying..." (Ezek. 3:16). God came back and had something to say at the end of those seven days, or the first seven years of the PCG's work. What was it?

"Son of man, I have made thee a WATCHMAN UNTO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (v. 17). NOW comes the WATCHMAN WORK! He wasn't a watchman when he went to the captives, because they were already in captivity. Remember, there are two captivities. The Philadelphian remnant warns God's Church *after* they're in spiritual captivity, and the nations of Israel *before* they're in physical captivity. After seven years God's watchman was to begin to give the *whole House of Israel* WARNING from God!

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (v. 18). If this watchman doesn't deliver the message, the blood of Israel will be on his head. And if the sons of Zadok don't get behind that message, it will be on theirs as well! At this point the primary commission is no longer directed at the Laodiceans—it is to be a watchman to ALL ISRAEL and even, to some degree, THE WHOLE WORLD!

At the seven-year mark of the PCG, this is what I wrote in the February 1997 *Trumpet*: "The first seven years of

our work were concentrated primarily on warning God's own Laodicean churches. There was a massive falling away and Christ directed us to knock on their door with a strong warning message (II Thes. 2:1-11; Rev. 3:20). *Malachi's Message* was the centerpiece of our work. That meant the EMPHASIS was on reaching God's own people.

"Now that emphasis has shifted to the whole world and only secondarily to God's Laodiceans. We have entered a new phase in God's work. We are now printing, and giving away free, Herbert W. Armstrong's book *Mystery of the Ages*. It is difficult for any new convert to come out of the world and be led by God through *Malachi's Message* ONLY. What they urgently need is to read and study *Mystery of the Ages* first. Notice this quote from Mr. Armstrong in a letter to God's Church dated September 23, 1985 (emphasis mine throughout): '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.'...

"Mr. Armstrong wanted it to reach 'the largest audience possible.' If you comprehend the message of that book, THIS HAS TO BE GOD'S DESIRE ALSO. We must let God use us to get this book to 'the largest audience possible.'

"I BELIEVE 'THE LARGEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE' SHOULD BECOME OUR BATTLE CRY TODAY!... Mr. Armstrong asked the ministers to have each prospective member read *Mystery of the Ages* before he or she was baptized. This is the most important book a prospective member could read before baptism. These people can then understand the whole Bible. It will no longer be a mystery....

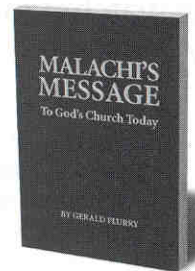
"*Malachi's Message* was mainly revealed for Church members and those familiar with what Mr. Armstrong taught. So you can see how, *suddenly*, WE NOW HAVE A MESSAGE FOR BILLIONS OF PEOPLE, not a message for a few hundred thousand!"

That article clearly revealed our change in commission after *seven years*. At that point the watchman commission started, and we began to warn all Israel, and the rest of the world, to whatever degree we could! That was mainly done through *Mystery of the Ages*. But God also gave us television stations and printed publications to reach most of the world.

The Righteous Man

God always wanted His people to deliver that mystery. "Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness

Today 95 percent of God's people are dying in the wilderness, but we're talking about spiritual death—eternal death! That is a message of lamentation, mourning and woe! That is bitter!





For seven years
Malachi's
Message would
be going to
God's Church.
At the end of
that seven years
we still go to the
Laodiceans, but
the number
one priority is
getting God's
warning, through
the watchman
work out to
the world.



which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezek. 3:20). What a warning to those who were doing righteousness and then turned

away from it! This could only apply to the Laodiceans.

God has some biting criticism for some who were to be keeping charge of His spiritual temple in this end time. Notice briefly a passage in Ezekiel 44: "In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken *my covenant* because of all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of *mine holy things*: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves" (vv. 7-8).

What covenant is God talking about? The marriage covenant that He has made with His Church. Clearly He is speaking to the Laodicean leadership. They have not kept His holy things, like *Mystery of the Ages* and Mr. Armstrong's other books. They have scorned the holy revelation God gave His people!

If we fail to warn them about the consequences of these actions, God will hold us responsible for their blood! "Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 3:21). Who is giving God's warning today? God help me if I don't do it. These verses are talking about *Mystery of the Ages* and *Malachi's Message*, which represent our two commissions.

Thanks to all the sons of Zadok who have been loyal in the midst of all the disloyalty, who support this warning message and make it possible. It simply wouldn't happen without those loyal sons of Zadok.

Because of what the sons of Zadok have done, and *are* doing, 50 percent of the Laodiceans will repent in the Great Tribulation. They will remember the warning. And some of the peoples of Israel will remember the watchman work and also repent in the Tribulation.

Mystery of the Ages

We can see in retrospect what God had prophesied all along: that for seven years the little book, *Malachi's*

Message, would be going to His Church. At the end of that seven years we still go to the Laodiceans, but that is our number-two priority; number one is getting God's warning, through the watchman work, out to the world. And the thrust of that commission is *Mystery of the Ages*.

GOD IS PERSONALLY ENDORSING THE WORK OF THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD BY GIVING US THIS REVELATION!

A court injunction has temporarily stopped our mailing of this book. But I expect that situation to change eventually.

How can people really understand our message without *Mystery of the Ages*? It is incredibly difficult to do the watchman work without that book! How would you approach the world without it? You could only do it in a piecemeal way with little impact. People, all the time, write or call us

and say, "That book changed my life!"

This passage in Ezekiel supports the whole message of Revelation 10. It begins with the little book. But then when you get to verse 7 it begins talking about the *mystery*, and by verse 11 it's talking about *prophesying again*—getting *Mystery of the Ages* out there AGAIN.

I have been criticized for making the decision to reprint that book. But I don't believe it was my idea—it was Christ's! Ezekiel wrote, "And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me...." *That's just what happened to me.* I didn't understand these scriptures at the time. I just tried to go where Christ led. But now, because we stepped out in faith, God has revealed these prophecies with tremendous clarity. These revelations don't come from a man, they come from the God of Ezekiel 1! If people want to fight them, let them do so at their own peril!

Are we childlike enough to let God pour this revelation into our minds? Childlike enough to realize how blessed we are? Look at how much God honors His loyal, very-elect family!

In the midst of this court battle over *Mystery of the Ages*, humanly speaking our chances look bleak. But I believe WE CANNOT LOSE! We may be closer to the end of this age than I realize, but it appears that God wants us to do an even bigger work. I can't fathom how we could do that without *Mystery of the Ages*. It is the heart of our work today.

We are about to enter the spiritual Promised Land—the Kingdom of God. We're standing before the Red Sea, and we need a miracle from God to get us across. He is surely going to test our faith. Remember that Israel was only two weeks' walk from the Promised Land on the other side of the Red Sea. But they failed and ended up dying in the wilderness because they wouldn't trust God. We are going to have to trust God to lead us through the wilderness and continue building our faith!

I BELIEVE THAT OUR REPRINTING *MYSTERY OF THE AGES* WAS THE GREATEST SINGLE ACT OF THE *VERY ELECT* IN THIS END TIME TO SHOW THEIR LOVE FOR GOD. Remember what Mr. Armstrong said about that book, and you know it must be extremely important to God's people! Battling for that book is the greatest demonstration to God ever in this Church that we love His truth and are willing to put everything on the line for it!

EZEKIEL & THE SONS OF ZADOK: PART 3

EZEKIEL'S CALL FOR URGENCY

BY GERALD FLURRY

THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD NOW HAS 160 acres and the potential to make them very, very beautiful. I suspect that God will continue to make this work so dramatically different from any other that even those who are spiritually blind will have no excuse for not recognizing where He is working.

God is helping us to develop things very quickly, with the generous help of His people. When Nehemiah built the wall around Jerusalem, it took 52 days. It takes extremely committed workers to accomplish such a job that quickly. They didn't let opposition stop them: They worked with one hand and held a weapon in the other (Neh. 4:17). That's the way we need to approach our job as well.

Just before Judah went into captivity, Jeremiah bought a plot of land. He didn't buy it to build on; he just bought it to let Judah know that there was hope in the future (Jer. 32:24-25; write for our free booklet *Jeremiah and the Greatest Vision in the Bible*). God may be using us to do the same thing. Perhaps the land is a symbol of hope. I don't believe that's *all* it is, but we always must try to have God's view.

When you see the way world events are unfolding, you know an explosion is about to happen. It is only a matter of *when*. We live in a time when the "transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:23). There has NEVER been evil as there is today! And the Bible prophesies that it will all culminate in a NUCLEAR WORLD WAR III.

Of course, God will use that Earth-shattering episode to bring the whole world to finally come to KNOW HIM.

I mentioned in the last chapter that Ezekiel received revelation for 20 years, and speculated that the PCG's work may last for that same duration. But GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO FOCUS ON A DATE, OR ON 160 ACRES. Not at all! Let me underscore that point in this chapter.

Do we have the URGENCY we need in these dangerous times? I want to help you get God's perspective and make sure you are as urgent as the times demand.

Utter a Parable

Ezekiel 24 contains one of the Bible's strongest, most astonishing messages addressed specifically to the sons of Zadok.

Before we see what that message is, let's note how the chapter ends: "In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD" (Ezek. 24:27). Keep this in mind. This is the point of this chapter, and, again, a dominant theme of the book of Ezekiel.

Now, the beginning of the chapter: "Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord come unto me, saying, Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same

day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day" (vv. 1-2). The day God gave this revelation to Ezekiel commemorated the day of the siege of Jerusalem. Some Jews *still* fast on this day annually. It was a terrible time in Judah when Jerusalem was besieged. In many ways, that time parallels the time we live in today. Just look at the tumult happening over in the Middle East!

"And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it: Gather the pieces thereof into it, even *every good piece*, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with *the choice bones*. Take the choice of the flock, and BURN ALSO THE BONES under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose SCUM is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! *bring it out piece by piece*; let no lot fall upon it" (vv. 3-6). Here is the parable: God says, take the fleshiest part of the meat and the strongest bones, and burn them all!

God is talking about all of Israel becoming bloody. Jerusalem was only a type. EVEN THE BONES WILL BE BURNED IN THIS NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE—if they don't listen to the sons of Zadok as they utter God's parable, or warning message! The very framework of our society will be burned like a pile of dead wood. That is a SOBER MESSAGE.

But that is not all. In verse 6 God says to empty the pot—because He is going to empty Israel out of their own country!

The word *scum* is sometimes translated *rust*. It really means *green corrosion*. If you want to know how God feels about the sin of Israel, listen to what He says in this parable! He says our sin is like rust or green corrosion—it clings to our people, and it seems you can't get it off unless you BURN it off! That is

The sins are extreme, and so our message is going to sound extreme. Unparalleled filth requires unparalleled punishment!

indeed what God will do if they don't heed this message.

Burn the Pot

"For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust" (v. 7). God is still talking about the sins of Israel. They just put those sins out on the top of a rock—on the Internet, on television—where the WHOLE WORLD can see how vile and depraved they are!

People can call their pollution *freedom*, but it is poisoning our nations as never before! God is going

to show the people of Israel just how vile their deeds are! These are the only nations that have had a history with the God of Ezekiel 1, and He will not be silent over their wickedness! He is getting ready to deal with it, and BURN OUT THE SCUM! Of course, He does not relish the thought of such severe punishment. But the problems are SO SERIOUS, God knows this is the only way He can get rid of them! That's how bad this *green corrosion* is.

Here is what God will do. Because Israel wanted to expose its sins to all the world, GOD WILL EXPOSE ITS BLOOD TO ALL THE WORLD! "That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her BLOOD upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered. Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city! I WILL EVEN MAKE THE PILE FOR FIRE GREAT!" (vv. 8-9). Israel takes the greatest imaginable evils and spews them into the mind and psyche of the world! God will PUNISH them in the same way. God prophesies, *You like to publicize your evil? Then I'll publicize your bloody punishment! I'll put it out where the WHOLE WORLD can see it!*

GOD NEVER SAYS SOMETHING LIKE THIS WITHOUT MEANING IT! It will certainly happen! And if we yawn our way through this work, we will be right in the midst of it! We simply cannot allow ourselves to become Laodicean.

But God's wrath won't stop there. "Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. Then set it [the pot] empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed" (vv. 10-11). After the people have been burned, God says, I want you to set the POT upon the fire and BURN THE POT!

IF YOU THINK GOD DOESN'T HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ISRAEL, LISTEN TO THESE WORDS!

I don't know how anyone who claims to follow God can DARE read these words and not be afraid! He is talking about a DESPICABLE people and explaining WHY THE TRIBULATION and DAY OF THE LORD! God cannot lie. He prophesied this, and He will fulfill it. No one will stop Him. All Israel will crumble before Him when these prophecies are fulfilled.

No Stronger Message!

This world has so little to offer, and it will only get worse. What is the value of human life, if you don't give your life to God? You're not even *safe* unless you have God watching over you. Without God, there is no future for your children, your family; it will get to the point

where there will be so much slaughter, human life will be worth no more than animal life!

There is so much more to life than that, and the nations of Israel should know it! But they don't want to hear about it. They are so lost in sports and pleasures, you can't even reach their minds with God's message—or any message of value!

"She hath wearied herself with lies, and her GREAT SCUM went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire" (v. 12). This is not ordinary scum, but GREAT SCUM! Lawlessness is intertwined into the very fabric and constitution of our being! IT WILL TAKE THE CRUCIBLE OF A HOLOCAUST TO BURN IT FROM OUR SYSTEM!

BUT GOD *MUST* GET IT OUT BEFORE WE CAN KNOW HIM!

There has never on this Earth been a stronger message to be delivered than this one! And we are the only people with the courage to stand up for the God of Ezekiel 1. When God says, "Thus says the Lord God," we must tell people what God has on His mind. We must not be afraid to tell the peoples of Israel that theirs is the worst filth on this planet! This is the job God says we must complete. This is what being 100 percent behind this work is about!

God prophesied about our delivering this message: "In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused MY FURY to rest upon thee" (v. 13). I have purged thee, God says. The people heard God's message and weren't corrected by it. God sent an end-time Elijah to preach the gospel around the world. Now He's sending another prophet to warn people one last time. What kind of response are we getting? Comparatively, very little. (Of course, when you realize just what this little group will become, what we'll be doing in the future, that makes us a pretty good-sized group of qualified headquarters personnel!)

In truth, Israel is not interested in being purged! But God says, *You're still going to be purged. I WILL purge you—this time through my FURY! Even though you wouldn't hear my end-time Elijah, before it is over, you're going to wish you had.*

"I THE LORD HAVE SPOKEN IT: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God" (v. 14). How has God "spoken it"? In person? No—through His physical leader and the sons of Zadok! God speaks through a man, and that man speaks with the support of a body of people who follow and support him.

Nothing has ever been more serious than what we are talking about here. There have never been more heinous sins than what God sees today in Israel. THE SINS ARE EXTREME, AND SO OUR MESSAGE IS GOING TO SOUND EXTREME. UNPARALLELED FILTH REQUIRES UNPARALLELED PUNISHMENT!

You can see anti-America and anti-Israel sentiment quickly building in the world today. Satan is stirring up tremendous hatred as never before! People the world over have a deep, deep hatred for YOU. Only God can protect you.

I say this with all the love of God, because it's the truth of God, and it will happen.

Why is it important for us to know about these prophecies? Yes, we must get this message out, but there is something deeper that God is getting at here.

Neither Mourn Nor Weep

God had to implant within Ezekiel a special sense of URGENCY. How did He do it? As we look at this, we may see His method as heartless, but again—we must get God's view. Let's realize what this is *really* about.

"Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee *the desire of thine eyes* with a stroke: yet NEITHER SHALT THOU MOURN NOR WEEP, neither shall thy tears run down" (vv. 15-16). "The desire of thine eyes" is Ezekiel's wife. God took her away. Ezekiel's wife died. Then God instructed Ezekiel not to mourn or weep or cry. He wasn't saying Ezekiel should have no emotion over his wife's death. But He wanted him to keep his emotions in check for a very important reason.

God is trying to teach us a DEEP lesson here, deeper than we have understood before.

God continued, "Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee [in other words, do the work], and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men" (v. 17). Don't act like normal men in those circumstances. Go right on and do the work. Yes, you have lost a loved one, but put your shoes on those beautiful feet (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15), get busy and continue the work.

God is saying this to all His sons of Zadok. If one of us loses a loved one, and he or she was converted, we don't really need to mourn a lot about that. God says the death of a saint is *precious* in His sight (Ps. 116:15). When someone dies in the faith, that adds one more member to the God family. How can you calculate that blessing? In a very short time, that person will be brought right back up from the grave, and we'll all be together again—*this time, for eternity!*

This command to Ezekiel does give us a view of God's love. We must expand our love if we're to understand this.

We know that 50 percent of the Laodiceans will lose their ETERNAL LIFE. And that number would probably be much higher if you and I didn't deliver this message to God's family! We have family members in Laodicean churches and in the world who are in danger of losing their eternal life!

THAT is what God is concerned about. We must think the way He does, and keep our perspective. From time to time someone in the Church will die. Sometimes it shocks us severely, because we love them so deeply and dearly, and they were so dedicated to God. But God tells us not to lose our balance and our focus. We're involved in something much bigger than that.

Zadok was loyal to David's throne from beginning to end, and David was a man after God's own heart. Today we too look to the throne of David, and we must be people after God's own heart. We must think like God, and love like God. God loves THE WHOLE WORLD. Jesus Christ died for THE WHOLE WORLD! He didn't just die for the sons of Zadok. That's what we need to keep in mind when some personal crisis occurs.

This episode with Ezekiel's wife was really a chance for Ezekiel to set an example for us today. And that is just what Ezekiel did. "So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded" (Ezek. 24:18). What an example!

Losing a loved one isn't really a great crisis when you consider the scale of suffering that is about to occur. We're

talking about one life verses many millions, plus all the Laodiceans who will lose their ETERNAL LIFE.

I must admit, looking through these scriptures makes me realize that I don't love the people in God's family as God does. I don't love the world as God does. I know I need to GROW and think more like God. How easy it would be to get overwhelmed at the personal loss of a loved one. I'm not trying to say that it is wrong to mourn. Perhaps there is nothing more painful, in a family context—there is no getting away from that. Please understand: We should not be hard-hearted. We should simply believe Ezekiel. We need to keep our godly perspective in this end time. We cannot have "normal" emotions. We must keep in mind the scope of the disaster that awaits if we fail to do our job.

"And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?" (v. 19). The people were puzzled. *What's wrong with you?* they asked. *You're going on with the work and acting like your wife didn't even die!* So Ezekiel had to explain it to them.

Christ's Bride

In responding, Ezekiel put the focus right where God's focus is. "Then I answered them, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will *profane my sanctuary* [the Laodicean Church], the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and *your sons and your daughters* [your own spiritual family] whom ye have left shall fall by the sword" (vv. 20-21). ALL OF THE LAODICEANS ARE GOING TO FALL BY THE SWORD! THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE FOR THEM!

Many Laodiceans scoff at us. They don't believe God would send a prophet in our day. Their criticisms are worse than anyone's from the world. The reason is that if you want to fight against the people who have God's truth, just about the only way you can do that is to demonize their leader.

God says He will PROFANE HIS SANCTUARY. He is going to profane HIS VERY OWN BRIDE! Can we see why God says, *Don't get too caught up in mourning if you lose your bride?* WHAT ABOUT GOD'S BRIDE? Half of them will die forever! What about Christ's bride—our family? We must not lose sight of the big picture.

This is a huge job. I can't do it myself. But when I see people responding the way God's people do, I know we can do it. I know God will see our labors—our work of faith—and there will be nothing to stop us! If the effectual, fervent prayer of one righteous man avails much, what about the prayers of a WHOLE CHURCH of those people? If we are people who walk by faith, we can get the job done! I am weak; I know it will take the power of God to do what I need to do, and what you need to do. But as we pray for each other and ask God for that power, we will confound this world. With the power of God, we can do it.

Give Yourself Wholly to God!

Never forget: Things could end suddenly. I don't

Can we see why God says, *Don't get too caught up in mourning if you lose your bride?* What about God's bride? Half of them will die forever!

know exactly what God's time schedule is. I don't know how much time we have left. I just want to make sure we keep God's perspective, and never let some date or some land deter us from giving our all to God. We can never afford to let up in this work.

This job is a test of how much we love the people in the world. Are we willing to put our lives on the line for them? Do you love them enough to give yourself as a sacrifice to the great God of Ezekiel 1? To give Him your all, with no restrictions—nothing holding you back from Him, not even the death of a loved one? We must examine ourselves for areas where we may be holding back God's work.

Some of God's people, for example, still drink too much alcohol. Yes, God sanctions and encourages the right use of alcohol. But I know that some people would be better off without it. I haven't had a drink of alcohol in six years. Why? Because I felt I could be more effective in the work without it. Am I against alcohol? Of course not; I love to see people enjoy alcohol, as God instructs us. But if something is getting in your way, it is better to eliminate it. "And if thy right eye offend thee, *pluck it out*, and cast it from thee.... And if thy right hand offend thee, *cut it off*, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:29-30). For some, that offense may be alcohol.

Look seriously at yourself and see those problems YOU need to overcome. IF SOMETHING IS GETTING IN THE WAY OF GOD'S WORK, IT IS SERIOUS—even if you're not aware of it.

Ezekiel told those people, "And *ye shall do* AS I HAVE DONE: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men" (Ezek. 24:22). That is his message to us today. Don't act like other men. Follow *Ezekiel's* example. Nothing must get in the way of God's work—not even mourning the loss of a loved one. We must put in check any emotion or anything else that holds up God's work.

Remember the contract we made with God at baptism: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). We must be willing to give it ALL UP if necessary. That's in the contract. We must pray to God that He will prepare us for whatever is coming, that we'll be able to handle any trial or decision we may face.

This is not a small exercise God has called us to do. This is the most important work on Earth—perhaps even the most important work in history, because we get to introduce Christ to this world! We cannot push God into a corner of our lives.

God wants our BEST SACRIFICE. He wouldn't let the Israelites bring their old, diseased animals to the sacrifice. He wanted the BEST they had (see Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6). He wants your BEST time in prayer, when you are most alert and can really get through to God.

We don't *have* to be part of this. This is a difficult calling, and we don't have to do it. The Laodiceans aren't doing it. But how much do we know about God's love? Do we see the whole picture of what the work is supposed to achieve, as God sees it?

"And your tires shall be upon your heads [in other words, go on and let's work], and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another"

(Ezek. 24:23). *Be mourning about your sins. Try to help one another*, He said. And all that Ezekiel did, we're to do. The sons of Zadok are to follow this priest of Zadok. That is a *command* to us! He is an example of what we must do to get this work done.

This is an opportunity we will never, ever have again! I believe if you asked all God's saints throughout history to choose a single time to have been called by God, they all would choose the time just before the return of Christ! We have the GREATEST OPPORTUNITY EVER!

Mr. Armstrong said that we grow spiritually in proportion to how much our hearts are in the work. The PCG must demonstrate a real commitment to God's work!

As we continue to put our hearts into this work, we'll begin to know God much better, and we'll begin to love the world and the Laodiceans as He does. THEN WE WILL MOURN LIKE GOD. We will become so giving that we'll be wrapped up in the WHOLE WORLD. We will have a vision so great that nothing can slow us down. That is when we will be people who can help God accomplish His goal by educating the whole world to "know the Eternal God." What a wonderful calling we have.

Place of Safety

"Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters..." (v. 25). This verse is very interesting: It is talking about the Laodiceans. God will "take from them their strength"—or, as the *Soncino* commentary reads, their *stronghold*. The *International Critical Commentary* states *stronghold* is also defined as, "to flee for safety." We flee to God for safety all the time, even now. And one day, we will flee to God to take us to a *place of safety* from the Great Tribulation.

The Laodiceans have lost that stronghold. God is not protecting them, though they may think He is.

These are our family members. God wants us to love them and to express that love through this work. YOUR DEDICATION TO THIS WORK SHOWS YOUR DEGREE OF LOVE FOR THEM.

"That he that escapeth in that day *shall come unto THEE*, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?" (v. 26). If someone is going to escape, it will be because they came to the sons of Zadok. *Are we not important?* God has put us in the inner court. He says the Laodiceans will have to *come to the sons of Zadok, or they will have no future!* The same is true of every person on Earth. They must come to God's royal sons and hear that message, or they will have no protection.

One day, God will CAUSE all of them to do just that, if they choose not to do it before. "In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the Lord" (v. 27).

Day of Reckoning

There is a day of reckoning coming for the Laodiceans and this world. All those who speak so arrogantly against God today will have to give account for every word.

One Laodicean evangelist said that it was a mistake to think God directly guides His Church. Here is what Ezekiel wrote about that: "So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS STRONG UPON ME"

LITTLE CHILDREN

HOW WELL DO WE KNOW GOD?

At the Feast of Tabernacles each year we have the blessing of the little children ceremony. That is very important to God. When Jesus Christ came to Earth, people brought little children to Him to be blessed. The disciples said, *No, get away. He can't be bothered with that.* But Jesus said, *Let them come to me.* He took those little children and infants into His arms and blessed them (Matt. 19:13-15).

This was the God of Ezekiel 1! He didn't say, *This is stopping the work.* He said, *This IS the work!*

As Christians, we are to follow Christ. That is why we have the blessing of the children ceremony each year. What do those infants, only a few months old, know? Very little. But they have parents who love them and who know God, and know that He blesses our little children. Those parents see the super-awesome potential God has implanted within each of those children.

David once looked up at the stars and wondered, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:4). We could just as easily ask, what are these babies, that He should be concerned about them? We have discussed some hard truth in the book of Ezekiel. But do we really KNOW GOD? God wants those infants being trained by the sons of Zadok to be blessed from the very beginning. Thank God that our children can be obedient to God and don't have to experience the filth and depravity of this world. God wants to protect them and nurture them because He sees their POTENTIAL!

It won't be long before the whole world will be coming to Jerusalem to say, *Would you please bless my child?* Imagine when everyone in this world gets to KNOW GOD, and wants their children, their little princes and princesses, blessed by Him and given everything in life that is good! What a world it will be! I WANT THAT DAY!

How hard human nature is that it won't listen to this loving, fatherly God! It will take terrible suffering to even bring them to the point where they will want God to intervene and to bless their children and their own lives.

(Ezek. 3:14). God's hand was STRONG upon Ezekiel; it was STRONG upon Mr. Armstrong. Anyone who *restored all things* had to have God's hand strong upon him! It is pure vanity and arrogance for someone to push all that work aside and DENY THAT GOD DIRECTLY GUIDES HIS CHURCH!

God's hand is directly guiding me today as well. It must be, for us to fulfill this job. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (v. 17).

All Israel needs to hear God's judgment against them. "And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them" (Ezek. 5:6). The nations of modern Israel, the only nations that

have had a history with God, are more wicked than anyone else in the world! Many Gentile countries have BANNED American entertainment from their soil, and REBUKED America for producing it! What a shame to America.

Israel needs to hear this warning. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, EVEN I, AM AGAINST THEE, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations" (v. 8). What does it mean to have GOD AGAINST YOU? This couldn't possibly be more serious.

"Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds" (v. 10). Clearly these are people without God's protection—children without God's blessing. What a terrible thought! But it is the Word of God, and it will happen.

THIS TERRIBLE MESSAGE MUST BE DELIVERED! And yet there are people by the thousands *failing* to deliver it, arrogantly speaking against God's revelation—the mighty God of Ezekiel 1 who will surely bring it to pass. THERE WILL BE A DAY OF RECKONING!

Here is God's message to those Laodicean evangelists who failed at their super-important commission: "Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore WILL I ALSO DIMINISH THEE; NEITHER SHALL MINE EYE SPARE, NEITHER WILL I HAVE ANY PITY" (v. 11).

"Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations...and YE SHALL KNOW that I am the Lord that smiteth" (Ezek. 7:8-9). THOSE LAODICEANS WILL HEAR THIS MESSAGE! The arrogance will stop! "All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water" (v. 17). They will be so scared, they will have urine running down their legs.

Is God justified in these judgments? "And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I AM BROKEN with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations" (Ezek. 6:9). They have committed adultery, and God says He is BROKEN! Look at how much damage adultery does just on a human level. Imagine how much it hurts God, who has GIVEN EVERYTHING for His people!

The great God of Ezekiel 1 has every right to rebuke them for what they have done!

Set It in Majesty

Ezekiel 7:20 shows us just how specially God really treats His people. "As for the beauty of his ornament, HE SET IT IN MAJESTY...." We are part of God's royal majesty. We are kings and priests. God isn't just *saying* that. He HAS ADORNED HIS BRIDE—MADE US AN ORNAMENT.

Verse 22 talks about taking us into His "secret place"—His holy of holies. Imagine the most majestic people on this Earth and multiply it by thousands, and that's where we are in the mind of God. We are His special possession.

Realize who you are! Do your utmost to understand what it means to be a son of Zadok—to have that kind of majesty and royalty!

EZEKIEL & THE SONS OF ZADOK: PART 4

THE GARDEN OF GOD

BY GERALD FLURRY

LUCIFER WAS ONE OF ONLY THREE archangels mentioned in the Bible. He was one of the highest-ranking angels that God created, if not *the* highest. His prestigious position was that of a covering cherub, and he directly served at God's throne.

As we know, after God set him on the throne of this Earth, he rebelled. Today he still retains a lot of that power as the evil god of this world (II Cor. 4:4). How does he operate? Specifically, how has he destroyed God's Church? As you examine the Scriptures, you will see that he follows a pattern of deception. The only difference is, he is much more wrathful today than ever before.

Remember that vision of intense brightness in Ezekiel 1. As we will see, God almost repeats that same vision later in Ezekiel.

But there is another god discussed in Ezekiel. It is important that we keep bringing that vision of the TRUE God back into our lives, because there is this other god, a great deceiver, who knows God, and knows His plan, and is trying very hard to foist upon us a counterfeit of the true God.

This other god is deeply involved with God's Church as it turns away from the true God. Let's get some background on *this* god.

The Garden of God

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in EDEN THE GARDEN OF GOD; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold..." (Ezek. 28:12-13). Lucifer was right there in Eden, the garden of God. But he turned against God and tried to overthrow Him, in what had to be the greatest crisis ever in the universe.

God is always trying to get angels and men to create EDEN, A GARDEN OF

GOD. That is what we are here to create, and what we will be creating in the World Tomorrow.

Satan tried to destroy that garden of God, but wasn't able to. He WAS able to conquer Adam and Eve, because they hadn't KEPT the Garden of Eden a garden of God. He worked on Eve, got her on his side, and then Adam just weakly went along.

Mr. Armstrong was given several "gardens of Eden," and he turned them into gardens of God. He transformed the three campuses of Ambassador College into examples of godly beauty—physically and spiritually. Today, God is giving *us* some land to create a garden of God. He wants to see us create that garden and conquer Satan in the process—something at which the first Adam failed, and the second Adam, Christ, succeeded.

What vision there is in the Garden of Eden! God wants to make the whole Earth and universe blossom like a rose. But that won't happen until angels and men fulfill their God-given potential.

Covering Cherub

"Thou art the anointed cherub that COVERETH; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (v. 14). Lucifer had a very responsible position. What did he cover? The very throne of God—"in the midst of the stones of fire."

Let's look for a moment at the instructions God gave on building a type of that throne here on Earth—the mercy seat on top of the ark of the covenant. "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof" (Exod. 25:17). Remember, inside the ark were the Ten Commandments, the rod of Aaron, and some manna (Heb. 9:4). It all revolves around the government (symbolized by Aaron's rod) and the law. And once a year, on Atonement, the high priest would enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle, and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat. This was a type of Christ's blood, which is what it takes to truly cover the sins of the people who break the Ten Commandments that were located inside that ark.

Notice what was on top of that seat: "And thou shalt make *two cherubims* of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, *covering the mercy seat* with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be" (Exod. 25:18-20). Here is a representation of the exalted position Lucifer held at one time.

"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony [the Ten Commandments] that I shall give thee. And there I will

meet with thee, and *I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, FROM BETWEEN THE TWO CHERUBIMS* which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (vv. 21-22). God was making a covenant. What a history Lucifer had with God! It is hard to even fathom.

The terrible tragedy of Lucifer's failure forced God to change His whole plan. He went from Plan A to Plan B, because He could see the angelic plan simply wouldn't work. They didn't have a high enough level of character.

Men have been repeating this terrifying history throughout the ages! Even recently, we can remember Mr. Armstrong warning the Church that if they didn't learn from the history in the '70s, they were doomed to repeat it. Most all of God's people have done just that! They failed to learn from this history of Lucifer's failure.

We must also be aware of how a great cherub can deceive one third of all the angels—apparently *all* of those that were assigned to Earth with Lucifer. And again, how can Satan deceive almost all of God's people in this end time? He uses a similar pattern in both instances.

Destroying History

One day, everything will be set right again. Here is the prophecy spoken by the Apostle Peter: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21). This is talking about the restoration of everything that the fallen Lucifer took from this Earth—most importantly, God's government.

Before the restitution of all things to this Earth, all things must be restored to God's Church. That way we can help Christ in restoring all things worldwide. God has brought us here to do something Lucifer was not able to do!

Winston Churchill once said that the farther backward you look, the farther forward you see. He understood the importance of history.

Satan is very hostile to history, and works extremely hard to destroy it. He wants Israel to forget their history. He wants the Church to forget its history. Most of all, he is working to destroy *his* history. He has been quite successful in these endeavors. When you forget your history, you lose your perspective, and you don't know what is happening. If you are lost in the present, you can NEVER COPE WITH SATAN'S DECEPTIONS! Either we learn from history, or we WILL REPEAT IT—AND THAT INCLUDES THE HISTORY OF THIS FALLEN CHERUB. Without context, you're just like Eve—making your decisions based on whatever *looks good*.

Let us not underestimate the power of this great fallen cherub. He knows how God works with His people. And Satan works to destroy their history with God. He knows that if God can't get His people to learn from their history, they are easy targets for deception.

Elohim

Ezekiel 28:14 says, "thou wast upon the holy mountain of God," and the word for God is *Elohim*. Why would God mention *Elohim* in the context of Lucifer? God and the

Word wanted to create a type of family with the angels. If you look at that Ezekiel 1 transportation system, the living creatures—in addition to having the faces of the lion and ox and eagle—had the face of a man. God was trying His best to unify Himself with the angels. If you know *Elohim*, you know that was His fervent desire. To God's people, *Elohim* means family. God wanted family unity as much as possible. That didn't work out, and He had to resort to the much more difficult and trying Plan B.

The angels lacked the character to do God's work.

The only real difference between when it was God and the Word and when they became Father and Son is that God had opened up His family to all mankind—those beings who were made in His "likeness" and "image" (which means God's character). God had to recreate Himself—His own character in man!

Satan hates *Elohim*. He hates the God family idea. He has tried to obliterate it through the false trinity doctrine, which excludes everyone else from the God family.

God risked a great deal for the chance to have mortal men enter the God family. He risked losing the Word! That would have left the Father alone in the God family!

It only makes sense that He is very concerned about our character development. So He gives His people charge over certain things—college campuses, acreage, a global work. He wants to see how we will handle these things, because He never wants to risk having another *tohu* and *bohu*, as is described in Genesis 1:2.

Look at what Mr. Armstrong was able to do with those blessings. What a vision God has for us in those beautiful campuses. Then look at what happened to God's Church after he died! What a difference! Their legacy has been one horrific DISASTER! We must learn from these past successes and failures.

Learn From History!

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15). God found *lawlessness* in Lucifer. That exalted cherub broke the covenant God had made with him. God's people have made a covenant with God and are obliged to KEEP IT.

"By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned..." (v. 16). Look at the world today! Why do we see all this violence around us? Why are our major cities plagued with crippling violence? Because Lucifer was filled with violence after he rebelled. It is a way of life that will NEVER WORK.

Verse 16 concludes, "Therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire." God is simply reminding Satan of his history. *Covering cherub, look what you had, and look where you are now!* "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity

Winston Churchill once said, "The farther backward you look, the farther forward you see." He understood the importance of history.

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Ezekiel 28!

of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more" (vv. 17-19). It is all over for Satan. He has no future, no hope. God promises that he will never rise again.

We must look closely at what happened to Lucifer and to the Laodiceans, because Satan is still in power on this Earth! He despises having his failures exposed. He detests the thought of being cast into outer darkness. He knows his time is short. He is discouraged, depressed and passionately hateful! He has terribly deceptive power, and his primary target is the very elect of God—THAT MEANS YOU, if you are in that category!

Sometime you ought to read what the commentaries say about Ezekiel 28. That will surely make you go to your knees and THANK GOD FOR THE REVELATION GIVEN TO MR. ARMSTRONG ABOUT EZEKIEL 28 AND SATAN THE DEVIL! How wonderful that we can understand this! The world has no concept of the God of Ezekiel 1, and they are hopelessly deceived about the god of Ezekiel 28!

Those angels who were loyal to God are developing a level of character, but it isn't the God family character. Still, of course, God will use them; we will love them; and we will all work together to make the universe blossom into an Eden, a garden of God.

With this background on who our real enemy is, let's now look at another rebellion that Ezekiel speaks of—the rebellion within God's Church.

The Image of Jealousy

Chapters 8 through 11 in Ezekiel are all one vision. I believe it is one of the most important visions in the Bible for us in this end time. It talks about the failure of God's Church in some striking detail. It also tells us how we can conquer the god of Ezekiel 28.

"And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me" (Ezek. 8:1). Here are some very religious people. In fact, this is a vision of God's Church in the end time. This prophet was transported right into our times, in vision. He saw and explained it all, so we don't have to be in the dark about what happened.

"Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber" (v. 2). Ezekiel immediately brings the God of chapter 1 into the picture. That is what this is all about—ALWAYS KEEPING THE GOD OF EZEKIEL 1 IN THE PICTURE. When we do that, everything becomes very clear. As powerful as the devil is, we have far more power on our side.

As this vision proceeds, it isn't long before we see that things are terribly wrong. "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the

heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy" (v. 3).

This verse shows what Satan has done in God's Church and how God responds. Satan is coming across looking like God—"the image of jealousy"—to many people. And God is very angry about that! *Soncino Commentary* says of that last phrase in verse 3, "the image of outraged, [evil] authority [Satan], which provokes Him [God] to vindicate His exclusive rights." God has RIGHTS. Those rights are being VIOLATED by a devil doing all he can to destroy God's people. And the sons of Zadok stand up and CLAIM those rights for God!

II Corinthians 11:14 shows that Satan can come as an angel of light. MOST OF GOD'S PEOPLE in this end time have bought that deception! Image is from the Hebrew *cemel*, which can be translated *idol* (II Chron. 33:7, 15) or *figure* (Deut. 4:16). It is a COUNTERFEIT of God! That's why God hates it so much! This is the kind of being we're up against and the battle we face.

"And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry" (Ezek. 8:4-5). If you want to look at this spiritually, here is this evil image of jealousy BLOCKING THE WAY OF THE SONS OF ZADOK INTO GOD'S OWN CHURCH!

"He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, THAT I SHOULD GO FAR OFF FROM MY SANCTUARY?... " (v. 6). There was SO MUCH EVIL going on in the sanctuary, that it simply DROVE GOD OUT from being able to dwell there. If we don't fight for God's rights, then He just allows that fallen archangel to conquer God's own Church.

GOD WENT FAR AWAY FROM HIS TEMPLE BECAUSE OF THE EVIL. IF GOD GOES FAR AWAY, HIS PEOPLE OUGHT TO FOLLOW! People may think they alone can take on Satan, but they are terribly wrong. If Church members want to be casual in their religion, they will not last long. These verses show a TAKEOVER by a very evil being! "They drove me far from my sanctuary," says the Revised Standard Version, and God is allowing that to happen.

Could there be anything worse than that? Verse 6 concludes, "but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations." They just keep getting greater and greater. I want to show you why, and how we must deal with it.

Abominations in the Temple

"And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door" (vv. 7-8). God wants us to fight for Him and vindicate His rights, but it is going to involve some digging. We must do our part. The more we dig, the more God will reveal to us individually and collectively.

"And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed

upon the wall round about" (vv. 9-10). Let's not be naïve. One third of the angels became demons. Where are they today? If you take a close look, you will see all kinds of creeping demons and abominable beasts RIGHT INSIDE GOD'S CHURCH! You can't see that if you fail to look at it spiritually. God must reveal this to you.

"And there stood before them *seventy men* of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up" (v. 11). Who are these 70 men? Apparently they are very "religious"—here offering incense. In Exodus 24, God made a covenant with Israel and had 70 elders at the head of the nation, under Moses. The people said they would obey God, and they didn't. In spiritual Israel, the same thing happened. God made a covenant and the people broke it. These 70 top ministers led the people away from God.

Verse 11 of Ezekiel 8 also introduces an evil end-time man named Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, a righteous man. One man was standing in the midst of these elders. Do we know of any such man in recent history? (Write for a free copy of *Malachi's Message* for more details.) This is talking about God's sanctuary—His end-time Church. Satan struck at the very top of God's Church. Now an end-time Ezekiel group is exposing his evil and doing battle to vindicate God's rights. There is an intensive spiritual WAR!

See how God condemns these "religious" men. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth" (v. 12). By their actions, these men are saying that God has forsaken the Earth—and that they are not accountable for a single thing they do!

The first doctrinal change that came after Mr. Armstrong's death was with the healing doctrine. *God has forsaken the Earth*, they said. *We can't rely on Him to heal us*. Those men couldn't see the God of Ezekiel 1! They had a monumental faith problem, and then afflicted the whole Church with it! Remember how it all started with *weakened faith*. Allow your faith to weaken, and that's when Satan can really begin to work on you.

"It is not appropriate to assign various scriptures to Mr. Armstrong or me, personally, as though our leadership were specifically prophesied in the Bible," wrote Joseph Tkach. What is that saying? *That God has forsaken the Earth!*

"In the past we, and I include myself in this, have mistakenly assumed that Christ directly guides His Church." THOSE WORDS ARE ESSENTIALLY SAYING *GOD HAS FORSAKEN THE EARTH!* The evangelist who said that claimed he had made a mistake in the past. No—in fact he is *PUSHING ASIDE GOD'S GOVERNMENT THE SAME WAY LUCIFER DID!* As the Laodiceans rebel, God has removed His presence, His blessings and protection from them. The problem is, rather than taking His absence as correction, they simply say, *Well, God doesn't directly guide us anyway*. What a terrible mistake!

Can we see what Satan is doing?

The sons of Zadok know that God has not forsaken the Earth! They are constantly led by Him, taught, instructed and guided by Him. They are **STRONG** and continually growing stronger in faith. They are childlike enough to **LOVE** God's government, and they know it is the only government that will ever work.

If you think the abominations in the temple thus far have been bad, notice what happens next. "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz" (v. 14). What is this talking about?

For clues, look at verse 16: "And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with *their backs toward the temple of the Lord*, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." Here are 25 of the top ministers who have willfully turned their backs on God. Let's see the connection between these two verses.

Who is Tammuz? Nearly every commentary says it is a different god: Osiris, or Adonis, or the pagan Babylonian messiah, or Assyrian divinity. *Lange's Commentary* says it is a hidden or obscure religion.

Cosmetics was a big issue in the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Armstrong had ruled against the use of them, and then in the 1970s some people convinced him to allow them. In the November 16, 1981, *Worldwide News* he wrote the article, "How Subtly Satan Used Makeup to Start the Church off the Track." In it he said, "Some of us have weakened. Some of us have been caught off guard. I am human like all of you, and I was caught off guard and without at the time realizing it, ALLOWED this liberalism to creep stealthily into God's flock! I now repent of that and the living Christ leads me to do what He inspires me to do to correct it and get this holy body of Christ BACK COMPLETELY ON THE TRACK."

The issue was makeup! Remember, Mr. Armstrong said this was the issue that *started* the Church off track!

At that time, Mr. Tkach was very supportive of this decision. Even a year and a half after Mr. Armstrong's death, he wrote this: "Mr. Armstrong restored the rule on makeup with **EVEN GREATER CLARITY**. So it behooves all of us to **FAITHFULLY SUPPORT AND BACK THIS RULING AS HE [GOD] HAS LED IT TO BE MADE**" (*Worldwide News*, June 22, 1987).

Less than a year and a half after writing that, Mr. Tkach expressed drastically different views on the subject, and changed the ruling. Something radical must have been going on in the Church at the time for him to have had such a drastic, Habakkuk 1:11-like mind change. Again, in the 1970s, that was the issue that started everything on the wrong track.

You may think this is not a big issue. But look at the fruits! In retrospect, we can see that Satan was working on the women, just as he worked on Eve in the Garden of Eden. This is not unprecedented. Now, it is one thing to be weak in faith, and it is **QUITE ANOTHER TO TURN AWAY FROM GOD!** We have witnessed an Adam-and-Eve scenario all over again. Just as in the 1970s, it derailed the whole Church.

The god of this world has great power, and he can apply pressure and make you feel like nobody, when you're actually sons of the living God! This is what happened in God's Church—this is our pitiful history! Ezekiel is very specific here, when you look at it spiritually and look at the history of the Church. Verse 16



This is really not about cosmetics—it's about women weeping and wailing for another god!

shows that it was all happening in the inner court. FAMILIES WITHIN THE CHURCH WERE UPSIDE-DOWN.

The families within God's Church should be quite different from the families in this world! Where do the sons of Zadok stand on this doctrine? I can tell you that very early on in the PCG, the cosmetics issue created some division. A decision had to be made. I studied to make sure I really understood what God said about it, and then took a stand. That

is what the sons of Zadok must do, regardless of the pressures they may face for it. When Mr. Armstrong put the Church back on track, the women said, "You need to see OUR view." Mr. Armstrong responded, "I'm not looking for your view, I'M LOOKING FOR GOD'S VIEW!"

This is really not about cosmetics—IT'S ABOUT WOMEN WEeping AND WAILING FOR ANOTHER GOD! What does this say about God's Church? Isaiah 3 talks about the families in Israel (physical and spiritual) being upside-down; it even talks about the wanton eyes of the women (v. 16), and about how fashion created serious problems in Israel and even within the Church of God. Ezekiel 23:40 also addresses this issue.

I KNOW those women turned to another god! In verse 16 of Ezekiel 8, it talks about 25 men. I would have to believe that today there were around 25 ministers, right at the top—Joshua and his fellows, we could say—who went along. Then, adding abomination on top of abomination, they TURNED THEIR BACKS ON GOD. We can well imagine, at that point, that core group intimidated and threatened the other 35 or so into saying, *I guess we ought to go along—this seems to be the direction the Church is going*. Altogether there were 70 Adams at the top who just LET IT ALL HAPPEN.

Ezekiel 13:22 says, "with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad." *Soncino* renders that, "YOU HAVE COWED THE HEART OF THE RIGHTEOUS." That's what this is about. People are easily cowed and led around like sheep. LOOK WHAT HAPPENED IN THE CHURCH: SOME 100,000-PLUS PEOPLE WERE LED ASTRAY BY 25 OF THE TOP MEN WHO TURNED THEIR BACKS ON GOD!

THOSE AREN'T THE TYPE OF PEOPLE GOD WILL PUT AT HIS HEADQUARTERS FOR ETERNITY! The sons of Zadok will not allow themselves to be so led astray. Can you and I be intimidated away from the God of Ezekiel 1? We should be unflappable. Satan repeatedly follows this pattern.

They Have Returned

This vision gets even worse. "Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these" (Ezek. 8:15). Think about this. These are prophecies that God recorded millennia ago. He knew exactly what would happen in the Church and had it all written down. He knew just how Satan would conquer His people. And He knew that sons of Zadok would rise up and fight against that. Remember, this is talking about the inner court. God says rise up and measure the inner court—the others won't allow themselves to be measured.

"Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for

they have filled the land with violence, and have RETURNED to *provoke me to anger*: and, lo, they put the branch to *their nose*" (v. 17). "Provoke me to anger" really should read "provoked to be bitter or rebel against." And the older texts correct that last phrase to read "God's nose." That's how it should read. These Laodiceans are taking a branch and sticking it up into God's nostrils—the area that gives the Church its breath of life. They are trying to cut off the life of God's Church!

The leading rebels are trying to destroy all of God's revelation given to Mr. Armstrong!

But notice, they have RETURNED to do this. People have rebelled and turned away, and have now returned to try to cut off the very breath of life in God's Church! Where is that happening? Might it have something to do with the court case? They don't just want all the riches and goods from that formerly great work of God. They've RETURNED and gotten right in God's face and tried to cut off the LIFE of the Church!

What a bitter battle we are in the midst of! But God will always let us know what is going on, and He will always give us whatever power we need. We don't have to worry about judges or armies. We DO have to throw down the gauntlet and let them know we won't take their intimidation!

Verse 18 talks about the only power that will make this possible. There are details in these scriptures that we must understand, or we won't know how to handle these events. I prophesy that things will get EVEN WORSE. As the work gets more exciting, our adversary gets more wrathful. We must know how to combat our enemy.

The Throne of God

By chapter 10, Ezekiel begins to better understand things. In chapter 1, he called the beings used as God's vehicle, *living creatures*. In chapter 10, he realizes that they are cherubim (Ezek. 10:20). As he puts things together, he sees that these beings are just like Lucifer was before he rebelled—powerful beings who are helping us in many ways. In Genesis 3, we see cherubim keeping the way to the tree of life. They inhabit the mountain of God (Ezek. 28:13, 14). They serve as God's chariot. And they cover the throne of God.

Ezekiel's vision included a view of God's throne. "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as *the appearance of the likeness of a throne*" (Ezek. 10:1).

Ezekiel is connecting the ark, the Ten Commandments and the government of God—God's throne. That is where everything went wrong in the first place.

Verse 2 talks about coals of fire that will come upon Jerusalem. It will be treated just as Sodom and Gomorrah, if Israel doesn't wake up.

"Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the INNER COURT. Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory" (vv. 3-4). This is the brightness of God, and the indescribable glory of the sons of Zadok, who reside in the inner court!

Remember, this is all one vision. Before we get to chapter 11, God, through Ezekiel, again gives us a chap-

ter-1-type vision. Verse 19 again talks about *Elohim*. If we are going to be successful, if we are to have power to face and overcome problems, we must continually keep that God of Ezekiel 1 in the picture! If we don't, we cannot combat the god of Ezekiel 28—and that is why the whole world is deceived. How much power can we have if we keep our focus on God? THERE IS UNLIMITED POWER AVAILABLE FOR THE SONS OF ZADOK! This is the SOLUTION to all these embarrassing, terrifying problems!

"This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims" (Ezek. 10:20). Chebar was where He first saw this God in chapter 1, zipping around like lightning. THIS IS MORE REAL THAN ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD! And this is the future for man made in the image and likeness of the God of Ezekiel 1! "Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward" (vv. 21-22). In the midst of all the problems and catastrophes, God brought Ezekiel right back to that wonderful vision of chapter 1. And Ezekiel is passing it right on to us. In the midst of this terrible apostasy, we must keep God in the picture.

Your Brethren

"Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate *five and twenty men*; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur [still an evil man, but different from the first Jaazaniah], and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people" (Ezek. 11:1). God repeats this for our benefit. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, TURNED AWAY BY JUST 25 MEN WHO TURNED THEIR BACKS ON GOD AND THEN INTIMIDATED THE REST INTO SUBMISSION! We have seen this happen. Now we know in more detail HOW it happened, and HOW TO KEEP IT FROM HAPPENING TO US. But God repeats this as a warning to His people.

"Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that *devise mischief*, and give wicked counsel in this city" (v. 2). *Devise* means to weave or plot. Did you know that the name of the man who succeeded Mr. Armstrong actually means *weaver*?

"Which say, It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh" (v. 3). Anciently, some of the Jews stayed in Jerusalem and decided to revolt. Some went to Egypt—contrary to the warnings of the prophets—and were all killed. Ezekiel is warning the Laodiceans, as they go into captivity, *You had better accept this as correction from God. If you don't, you'll lose it all, just like those Jews did anciently* (see also Jeremiah 29:7).

This should never happen to God's people. "Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man" (Ezek. 11:4). Can we see GOD'S LOVE behind this warning? Can we see God's love behind the correction that is coming? "Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and *ye shall know that I am the Lord*" (v. 10). That's the goal of it all! That they will return to God, and really KNOW Him. In verse 15, God calls them *your brethren*. That's who they are—we must never forget that.

When the Laodiceans go into captivity, God will not leave them alone. "Therefore say, Thus saith the

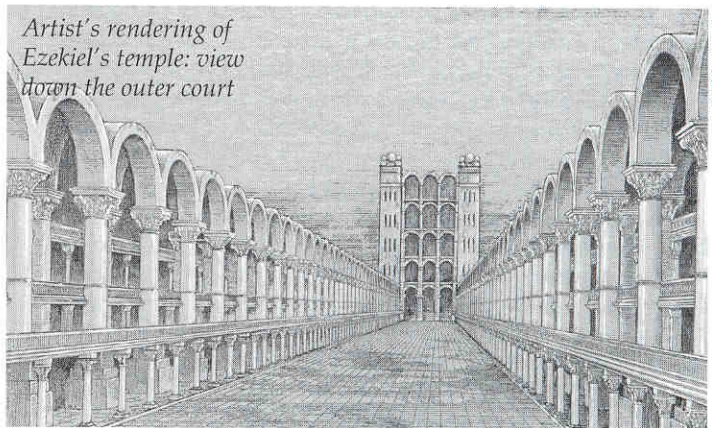
Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, *yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary* in the countries where they shall come" (v. 16). God will be a little sanctuary to them. They are His family, and He loves them and will be right there with them. He's saying, *Don't rebel just because of the terror. I'll get you through this if you look to me, repent and become as a child*. Fifty percent of them will believe Him and come through it, dying in the faith and securing a place as part of Christ's bride. "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (v. 19). At that point they will be child-like—submissive and teachable.

God's Temple and the Sons of Zadok

Ezekiel's final vision, in the 25th year of his captivity, is the stunning vision of God's headquarters temple in His Kingdom. Chapters 40 through 48 are all one fantastically inspiring vision.

Right in the midst of that, in Ezekiel 43 and 44, it talks about the sons of Zadok. They are standing loyal when ALL of Israel turns away. They will be right there with God in the temple of God, bringing the book of Ezekiel to a glorious conclusion. It all starts with that vision of God in chapter 1, and ends with the sons of Zadok sharing His temple. God is so happy with them, He allows them to come close to Him in the inner court of that temple. Our Father has deep emotion over His loyal sons! He loves to see our obedience, our strength in the face of intimidation. Yes, we are weak; we have fears. But this is what it is all about: GOD MAKING US INTO HIS IMAGE, OR CHARACTER.

"And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and SET THINE HEART UPON ALL THAT I SHALL SHOW THEE; for to the intent that I might show them unto thee art thou brought hither: *declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel*" (Ezek. 40:4). This is the hope of the world—glory and hope beyond words! And this is how God introduces this whole last vision: *You must declare it!* Who is declaring this today? We have a job to do, and we will grow in direct proportion to how much we set our heart on it. ❖



Artist's rendering of Ezekiel's temple: view down the outer court

HENRY SULLIVAN

Look what happened in the Church: Some 100,000-plus people were led astray by 25 of the top men who turned their backs on God!