

# Satan Attacks God's Truth

*The apostle John lived through the very painful early fulfillment of the words God inspired him to record. What he wrote in his epistles has some amazing parallels for what is happening in God's Church today.*

By Colin Sutcliffe

Ever since it was founded under Jesus Christ in A.D. 31 (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:1-4, 16-18), God's New Testament Church has been under repeated attacks and persecution. All of these attacks had but one aim—total destruction of God's one true Church! Down through the centuries, many human beings, hostile to God's truth, have been involved; but all attempts at destruction have been orchestrated by Satan the Devil (Eph. 6:12).

Christ Himself warned of this. He also used New Testament writers and many of the Old Testament prophets to expound on these dire warnings.

Prior to establishing the Philadelphia era under Herbert W. Armstrong, four of the five previous eras of the true Church had disappeared into history. This left just the all but "DEAD" Sardis Church. That's when Herbert Armstrong (HWA) came on the scene.

From then, until his death in 1986, God used this man as a type of Zerubbabel to build His end-time spiritual temple (Zech. 4:6, 9). As the prophesied end-time Elijah, he became the restorer of basic truth to God's Church, (Matt. 17:11). He fulfilled the prime commission of taking the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to the world.

In carrying out these responsibilities, he has prepared the way

for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Mal. 3:1).

Over a period spanning more than fifty years, God gave Herbert W. Armstrong greater understanding of the Bible and Bible prophecy than any other man since the days of John the apostle. That is quite a statement, but there is nothing to indicate that any other person in the past 1800 years has had that degree of scriptural understanding.

In his lifetime, Mr. Armstrong expounded the 7000 year plan of God. He clearly explained the purpose of man's existence on this planet. Through his writing, broadcasting and preaching, God unlocked the mysteries of Bible prophecy! HWA often stated that approximately one third of the Bible is prophecy, and that some 90 percent of that prophecy is for our day, today. For years, he emphasized the duality of Bible prophecy.

## Laodicea to Arise

Mr. Armstrong understood and taught from the Bible that a seventh and final era of God's Church would arise at the end of this age. Notice how he wrote about this to the ministry fourteen years ago: "There are those who want to dispute the idea that the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 are successive eras of the Church. I have said for fifty-one years that they are not only seven eras, but

also seven characteristics that will be in the Church at all times, with the Laodicean condition dominating in the last Church" (*Pastor General's Report*, Nov. 22, 1978).

Four months earlier, he had been threatened with destruction and was told he was in a WAR he could not win! Here is part of a statement he made in response to that hostile declaration: "What happened here is like a cancer. I got the core of the cancer out, but it has other parts. It will start reaching with its tentacles to the whole body if we don't get it out. Believe me, Jesus Christ through me is going to start getting all the other branches out until we get it out of the little twigs all over...in all parts of the world. That cancer has got to be removed. This has got to be, once again, the real Church of God, and not the church of Satan" (ibid).

From that report, anyone could see the apostle's very deep concern over the sick spiritual condition of the WCG. In his frequent absences over a period of years, the Pasadena administration had been orchestrating a steady decline into Protestant-style liberalism. For years, that administration had been undermining the apostle's teaching behind his back!

At the very time HWA wrote those words (1978), Satan was within seven weeks of launching a Hitler-style blitzkrieg attack to



destroy Herbert Armstrong's position and the Philadelphia era of God's Church! Here's part of a member and co-worker letter HWA wrote some ten weeks later (Jan. 18, 1979, three weeks after the attack):

This may be the most important letter I have ever written. The very life of God's Church and His Work hangs in the balance.... I want you to know all the facts about this master blow of Satan to DESTROY the CHURCH OF GOD through the civil power of the State, in flagrant violation of the Constitution of the United States.

...Satan MASTERMINDED it—but Satan used members and former members (not more than five or six who precipitated it, although a few others were in on the conspiracy, but kept their names out of it).

### **Receivership Instigated**

The intention of the conspirators was to use the Receivership of the State of California to remove all opposition to the establishment of a Laodicean Church government! But that was January 1979, and God was not yet ready for this to happen. He therefore did not allow it to succeed. He kept Herbert Armstrong alive and in charge for exactly seven more years. Then, God removed HWA. The "baton" was passed. Mr. Tkach's administration took over. To test that new administration, God placed no obstacles in its way. Suddenly, they were ministers no longer under the faithful leadership of Herbert Armstrong and the constraints he placed on them through the Philadelphia Standard!

What would they do? For fourteen months they appeared to do nothing, except shake hands and tell us we were FAMILY. That's when Satan returned to the attack. It was not the "roaring lion" approach of 1978 and 1979. It was his other classic tactic—the

deceitful, slippery serpent approach of the 1976 STP era.

Herbert Armstrong's booklet explaining the doctrine of healing was quietly removed. The new administration issued its own replacement. Its convoluted language succeeded admirably in sowing confusion throughout the membership. That was then intensified by patently dishonest assurances that all would be well if we didn't begin "judging" one another.

That was the first of what became an endless series of "changes." The next was not long in coming. It was accompanied by the same dishonest assurances about "judging." Soon this "slippery serpent" was having "fun with prophecy." At the sound of the first rumbles against these changes, those responsible were LAUGHED TO SCORN, with the derisive comment—"changes, what changes?" By that time, all closet liberals saw it was safe to come out and join the bandwagon attack on HWA and all of his "errors," as well as the ministerial sheriffs who had mauled them so badly in the past!

Others were disturbed by this new situation, but totally confused over how to handle it. Most decided they should batten down the hatches, sit it out and wait on God to overturn yet another bunch of liberal conspirators. What they have yet to learn is that God is WAITING on THEM to stand up and state plainly that they will not support this treacherous attack on God's truth. Then, be prepared to face the consequence of disfellowshipment.

### **Liberalism an Invasive Cancer**

Since the death of God's 20th-century apostle in 1986, the invasive cancer of satanic liberalism has finally taken complete control of the Worldwide Church of God. This is the end result of many past attempts by Satan to use human beings to destroy the Church of the living God. The pre-

sent administration and most WCG ministers refuse to admit it, but that Church emerged as the Laodicean era, after Herbert Armstrong's death.

He knew it was coming. We all knew it was coming, but we didn't know how, or when. He was used of God to give us the strongest possible warning, without fragmenting the Church just before his death: "I want you, brethren, to think about and understand what happened to God's Church in the 1970s lest history repeat itself! I want you to see the 'fruits' of rebelling against God's way and God's government" (WWN, June 24, 1985).

That's where Satan has used false ministers to confuse members' thinking. They have led the people to believe that Church government and God's government are the same. That can be true, but under an administration that has ridiculed and rejected the teachings of Herbert Armstrong, it is a lie; a dangerous lie from the father of lies, Satan.

HWA did appoint Joseph Tkach, but we are all free moral agents and HWA cannot be held responsible for what any of us will do after he died. Predictably, this has not been explained to the WCG membership.

A deceit that has been peddled to God's people is that the Philadelphia Church of God can't claim to follow HWA unless it follows his appointed successor. That is just one more lie and it is inspired by the same source: Satan!

This is a brief survey of the background to the terrible treachery of this new administration that has come to power as the Laodicean era. That is what began to happen, just fourteen months after the death of the 20th-century apostle, and founder of the Philadelphia era.

### **First Century Parallels**

John, the last of the original apostles, wrote three epistles dealing with a similar attack mounted



against God's true Church during the first century. They contain amazing parallels, as well as specific prophetic references to what has already been outlined.

John lived through the painful early fulfillment of the words God inspired him to record. We need to realize we are living through their prophetic latter fulfillment!

Time is running out on this present evil world. It is also rapidly running out on the seventh and final era of God's true Church. There is now NO APOSTLE to remove this false administration, as happened in the 1970s. God is proving who will walk in TRUTH.

There will be no further opportunity for crafty liberals to hide under a cloak of respectability. Contrary to what many in the WCG hope, it is not going to be put "back on the track." The previous effort to do that simply provided most of the 1970 liberals with the chance to pretend they accepted God's correction through His end-time apostle. In fact, they just laid low and waited for the death and departure of HWA. He knew there were vultures waiting. He told us they were waiting to come back and take over! That was just six months before he died (WWN, June 24, 1985).

Now let's see how this all lines up with Bible prophecy. During the past five and a half years, God's people have had a grandstand view of this sickening process. It still goes on, and yet tens of thousands don't seem to understand what it is they are watching. With some, Satan has cleverly played on the appeal to carnal nature of his easier way. He calls it *love*. With others, Satan even more cleverly plays on the minds of converted members. As stated earlier, he clouds their ability to discern between God's government and wrong Church government!

### Starving Fed by PCG

In their frustration, the Laodicean ministry oscillates between

"shepherd" and angry sheriff-style damage controller. But almost every family and individual who separate and come to the Philadelphia Church of God make the same comment: "We feel as if we have been spiritually starved. How wonderful to again be fed a nourishing spiritual diet! For a long time, I thought it was ME. Thank God for a few faithful ministers!"

Unfaithful ministers are the crux of the problem which both John and Jude address in their epistles. In I John 1:1-6, the last of the original apostles directs our thoughts to two themes—the *beginning* of the New Testament Church and its relationship to God's *truth*, as taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles.

John first establishes his authority to record these words. He says, in effect: "I know what I'm writing about, because I was there when Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the Son of God. I saw Him. I heard Him and was taught God's truth by Him."

Nine times in three chapters, he uses the word *beginning*. Twenty six times in three short epistles, he uses the word *truth*, or *true*. What is he saying? He is telling us that before the end of the first century, unmitigated liars and deceivers had twisted and perverted God's truth. It was changed out of all recognition, compared with what was taught at the "beginning"!

That took less than 60 years! If you find that incredible, consider what has happened to the teachings of Herbert Armstrong. The truth he taught from the "beginning" of the Philadelphia era to his death in 1986 has become equally unrecognizable in less than seven years, yet thousands remain oblivious to this fact! He fought to maintain and enlarge that truth throughout his entire leadership of the Philadelphia era. God used him to repel the repeated attacks of Satan and false ministers for over 50 years.

## End-Time Antichrists

Herbert Armstrong, like the apostle John, repeatedly pointed us back to the "beginning," back to fundamental "truth." In both cases, their purpose was always the same—to counter the liberal watering down and perversion of God's truth. Sometimes it was from those within. Sometimes it was from without. Usually it was from both within and without.

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (I John 2:18).

How many times did HWA thunder that we are the ones living in "the last time"?! How can any fail to see the connection with those who are changing and liberalizing basic doctrines of Jesus Christ today? John warns us (as did HWA): "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you" (I John 2:26). "Little children, let no man deceive you..." (I John 3:7). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10-11).

Just what is God inspiring His apostle John to do here? He is giving faithful ministers the opportunity to stand up for God's truth in an attempt to salvage unity from disunity, fact from fiction, truth from error. John states plainly: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5).

### Prove it for Yourself

In other words God is TRUTH! God warns us, "Cursed be the



man that trusteth in man" (Jer. 17:5). Do you remember how Herbert Armstrong was forever warning us not to trust in him, but to "blow the dust off your own Bible and prove these things for yourself." The apostle Paul wrote: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).

How many WCG ministers have you heard say those things in the last six years? Satan's ministers just don't say those things and you know why! They want us to believe them and their "scholarship" *before* the Bible. Of the internal problems, John says: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I John 2:19).

Some would falsely apply that to ministers and members of the Philadelphia Church of God, but who is it that has not "continued"—continued with what? "Continued" with the teachings God taught through Herbert W. Armstrong! If they have not "continued," what then have THEY done? As Paul says of other individuals, they have "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25).

The "baton" has been passed. They have rejected the Philadelphia Standard and have become the final Laodicea era, which in turn goes into the coming Great Tribulation (Rev. 3:18; 12:13, 17; Mic. 4:9-10).

What is the Philadelphia Standard? It is the "truth" of God! What is the "truth of God"? It is the word of God: "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Jesus Christ was the "Word," because what He spoke was the truth which was given to Him by the Father. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Jesus Christ said: "I have given them thy word..." (John 17:14). He also said, "...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

### **"Quench not the Spirit"**

It therefore follows that if we reject the word of God, as baptized members of His true Church, we are quenching His Holy Spirit, when He says: "Quench not the Spirit.... Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:19, 21).

Can you see that this becomes the test of a true minister: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.... To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them...and they shall be driven to darkness" (Isa. 8:16, 20, 22).

This is precisely what God was inspiring the apostle John to do, when he wrote these three epistles. That's why he said, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:5-6). Plunging the Laodicean Church of God into the Great Tribulation is God's reaction to their deceitful handling of His "truth" and their refusal to receive correction (Rev. 3:15; Jer. 4:31; Isa. 4:4).

The epistles of I, II, and III John and Jude are warnings for God's Church at the time of the end. They are a FRIGHTENING prophecy of EXACTLY WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THIS PRESENT TIME WITHIN THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD!

John says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10). As the WCG continues to abolish the teaching given through Herbert Armstrong for over 50 years, they "MAKE GOD

A LIAR," or HWA was not His apostle and the WCG is not and never was the Church of God! That's just what Satan wants this world to believe. John says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not..." (I John 2:1).

### **Seducers—Then and Now**

Either there is sin in God's Church, or these epistles are absolutely unnecessary. John shows that there is sin: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:4-5).

To be "liars" in God's Church and lacking in "truth," some must be teaching and practicing error. That's why John says "try the spirits" (I John 4:1). That's why he says God's people are being spiritually "seduced" (I John 2:26).

Here is the test of a true Philadelphian: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.... He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning" (I John 2:5-7).

There again is that word "beginning." He wouldn't keep referring to that if God's people were not departing from the truth. Instead of admitting their error, the so-called "scholars" in the WCG just love to point to what they regard as Herbert Armstrong's errors. It seems there is no limit to the arrogance of these people and their obsession to tear down what God built through His faithful 20th-century apostle.

John says he writes "no new commandment," but the Pasadena anti-Armstrong administration (see Attack on page 37, column 3)



your broadcast on KPNW on Sunday evening. I found what you had to say very interesting and would like to request the offered literature.

For more than 40 years, my wife and I have attended the Worldwide Church of God. Recently, we requested that our names be removed from the membership listing. We are no longer attending. As you well know, that decision is a gut wrenching and painful one to make. For the first time, we were alone.

We are not radicals or activists. But we just could no longer attend. For what is being taught today is in many respects, far different from what the Church taught 10 or 12 years ago. Our concerns are perhaps a little different than the ones you are addressing. But the results are the same. And when we wrote Pasadena, we were informed our concerns were not worth answering. Of course you must realize that they didn't come out and say that directly, but in essence, that was what they said.

I don't know what you stand for or represent. And I will never know unless I ask. So I look forward to your broadcast next Sunday and I hope your book will begin to shed some light on the matter of what has happened.

OREGON

**The following letter is from a PCG member to his former WCG minister:**

Dear [minister]:

This is to inform you of my decision to sever my ties with the WCG. I am going where God is leading me—to where I believe the truth is being taught. Jesus Christ led Mr. Armstrong for 50 years and revealed through him many truths to the Church. With the death of Mr. Armstrong, the Church entered into the Laodicean era. Even Dr. Herman Hoeh stated this at the Regional Directors' Conference in the Spring of 1988.

Church history shows that at the end of the Ephesian era, some of Jesus Christ's true servants were being cast out of the Church (III John 9-10). Those cast out were made to look rebellious, but in reality, they were the ones who were really following Christ. The same holds true today. Some of us who want to follow what Mr. Armstrong restored to the Church are being made to look very bad and are being disfellowshipped. The Bible prophesies this split within God's Church just prior to the Tribulation.

I just can't sit by and watch basic doctrines being changed—or watch while Mr. Armstrong's books and writings are taken out of print ostensibly to be "reviewed," and then they're never seen again.

Then there are the weekly Sabbath sermons. For the past 3 or 4 weeks, I feel like I've been starved to death—gradually getting weaker and weaker for lack of spiritual food. Is the WCG correct when they preach "prophecy not"? Mr. Armstrong taught prophecy as a vital tool to our understanding of end-time events. One of God's main requirements for His Church is to prophecy.

Since uniting with the brethren of the

PCG, I feel like I'm alive once again! We're picking up where Mr. Armstrong left off. New truths are being revealed by God through the books of Malachi, Amos, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. We see events in Europe falling into place (events that occur just prior to the Tribulation). We are told through the Bible to sound the alarm and warn God's people—to let them know what is prophesied to happen. We are to help Christ "knock" on the door (Rev. 3:20).

I believe God is withdrawing His blessings from the WCG as evidenced by the cutbacks that have been made with the *Plain Truth* circulation, the TV broadcast, and other massive cuts.

Mr. Armstrong used to always say "prove all things." I believe I have done so. Taking all things into consideration, I've come to the conclusion that I must respectfully submit my resignation to the WCG.

COLORADO

**Second Thoughts**

Recently I received literature from the Philadelphia Church of God. On advice from our minister in the WCG, I promptly discarded it. Even though I have been experiencing doubts and discouragement about certain changes being made in the WCG, I felt reluctant in learning the truth.

Now, upon learning the truth, I am sorry I didn't read the literature you have sent to me. Would it be possible to receive this information again?

NEW JERSEY

**The Joy God has Given Us**

Thank you so much for your loyal dedication to our Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is still amazing how the Bible is still continually opening up to us under your leadership. I just cry when I think of our WCG friends, mired down in so many problems and never knowing the joy God has given us.

Thank you again and all those working with you both near and far. You are all in my prayers each and every day.

TEXAS

**Wants to Make a Comparison**

I am a member of the Worldwide Church of God and I have been for the past 13 years. However, lately I have become gravely concerned about the direction that the WCG has been taking. It seems that they are changing some things that were preached to us by Mr. Herbert Armstrong. A friend of mine in the WCG gave me three of your *Trumpet* magazines to read and study. What a contrast to the current *Plain Truth*. Please send me all of your current books and booklets, and if possible, your previous *Trumpet* magazines as I want to make a comparison between what you teach, what the WCG now teaches, and what Mr. Armstrong taught. I also understand that you may have some literature as to how the world is viewing this, such as the cult watchers.

GEORGIA

## Attack

(continued from page 26)

has issued an endless stream of "new commandments" (changes)! Over 35 major changes: healing, makeup, birthdays, sunset, Pass-over, Sabbath-keeping, salvation, trinity, born again, interracial marriage, accreditation, etc., etc., etc. What next?

### Returning to Satan's World

Is this not leading 100,000 brothers and sisters into spiritual darkness and blinding their eyes? God says this is hating your brother and calls it a scandal (most margins for I John 2:10). The result is taking them back into Satan's world and snuggling up to Protestantism. Earlier in the first century, Peter, the chief apostle, described this despicable process in the strongest and most lurid terms: "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Pet. 2:22).

At the end of the first century, and also today, God urges His people to WAKE UP AND STOP THIS SPIRITUAL DEGENERATION: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16).

In verse 21 John said: "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth."

No one, other than those called of God can "know" the "truth" (John 6:44; I Cor. 2:14). It is therefore addressing the Church of God and particularly those who are rejecting "truth" and allowing themselves to be seduced into embracing error. ♦

(To be continued)



## Part Two

# Satan Attacks God's Truth

*We began last month by showing some of the amazing parallels between what occurred in the first century and what is occurring today in God's Church. John compared two contrasting ways of life—the way of love, or God's way—and the way of get, or Satan's way.*

By Colin Sutcliffe

In I John 2:15, God's true Church (*ekklesia*, or called-out ones) are admonished in the strongest terms: "LOVE NOT THE WORLD." First of all, let's be reminded that the whole concept of being called-out can be understood only in terms of not loving that from which we have been "called"—Satan's system!

The apostle John was inspired by God to give us many exhortations in these three epistles. All revolve around our understanding and application of what really constitutes love. We need to appreciate that God was using him to contrast for us two ways of life. One is the way of get, Satan's way, or the way of this world. The other is the way of love, or God's way.

Genuine love is expressed first toward God and then toward man. We do this through our attitude toward His law and secondly, toward those made in His image (Gen. 1:26). Satan's way is love toward self. To go God's way means we want to be guided by God's law. Satan's way means we want to lean on our own understanding, to do our own thing. God says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:5-7).

### Seek God's Holy Spirit

The first Adam (and his wife) epitomize the way of Satan and

leaning to one's own understanding. That resulted in expulsion from the garden of Eden, in death, and being cut off from access to God's Holy Spirit (Gen. 3).

The second Adam (Jesus Christ, I Cor. 15:45) came not to do His own thing, but the will of His Father (John 6:38). He acknowledged the need for guidance from God the Father. "I can of mine own self do nothing.... I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

Can any of us say our need is less than that of the very Son of the living God? As part of the called-out ones, we are to be the future wife of the Son of God. Do any of us imagine He would accept a wife who insists on doing things her own way? We can be part of that body (the true Church) only as long as we are willing to try to obey God. That means to forsake the way of Adam and Eve, the way of this world, of Satan, of leaning to our own understanding, of doing what feels good, when and how it pleases us.

To disregard the way our actions affect other people is not expressing love towards anyone except self. Ultimately, it is not even expressing love towards self, because eventually, we also suffer. Every drinker knows the cause of alcoholism. Homosexuals know the cause of AIDS, but human beings still insist on doing their own thing. That's what the first man and woman did, regardless of the cost to

themselves and future generations! That's human carnality (Rom. 8:7).

It was the late Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) who pinpointed two ways of life—the way of give and the way of get.

After the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) liberalism in the 1970s, HWA said he believed many in God's Church wanted to see "how close they [could] get to the ways of this world and still make it into the Kingdom of God"! What we must never forget is that God's Kingdom and Satan's world are mutually exclusive. The apostle Paul expressed it this way: "...what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?... And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God.... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Cor. 6:14-17).

### Satan Deceives the Elect

John says those who are called at this time have a special function, or anointing, and as a result, we know the truth (I John 2:21). Have many forgotten that all "we know" spiritually came to us directly, or indirectly, through Herbert Armstrong? That didn't stop some 10,000 from walking away from it in the 1970s, and right now some 100,000 are being driven away in the same disastrous direction!



Within the WCG during the last several years, God's truth has been subtly criticized and rejected. At times it has also been blatantly changed, banned, dumped, shredded and burned. This process has been carried forward by those who now stand plainly revealed to God and the world as false ministers and unfaithful to the truth they pretended to uphold while Herbert Armstrong was still alive.

Let no one say the Philadelphia Church of God is attacking the WCG. What's going on in the WCG is a scandal which God Himself exposes through Bible prophecy, and that prophecy has to be explained. You can be sure Satan and his pawns don't want it uncovered and explained, but God does! Christ Himself warned, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).

Most of the *elect* have now been deceived. The apostasy prophesied through the apostle Paul (I Thes. 2:3) has happened! It is now a fact of history! 100,000 have been driven away from God's truth and He is very angry. "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel [first and foremost, end-time spiritual Israel], prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?... Neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.... Neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them" (Ezek. 34:2, 4, 10).

Read all of Ezekiel 34. At least 14 times God refers to His flock in this same context. To whom and to what problem do you think He is referring in the end time?

It is to be expected that these treacherous, false ministers will have a strong negative reaction to the PCG, whom God is using to deliver His flock. The jobs of these false ministers will eventually be "on the line," some perhaps even before the Great Tribulation! Above all people, they should read Ezekiel 34 and apply it to

## How can God's truth remain in a Church that has introduced more than 35 major doctrinal changes in the last five and a half years?

themselves. They would then understand what is happening between the PCG and WCG today. They would also be wise to stop fighting against God and get on His side while there is yet time to avoid far worse punishment than just losing their job.

### Are You Anti-Christ?

Those responsible for this scandalous desecration of God's truth, and also those aiding and abetting by just going along with the process, must answer some serious questions. Notice what God inspired the last of the original apostles to write to us today: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.... Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (I John 2:22, 24).

How do people, called of God, become liars and antichrist, denying the Father and the Son? That's a key question which everyone in the Laodicean Church of God should answer, members and ministers, but especially ministers! God gives the answer in verse 24. It should be plain for all to see. Read it again. God says we must have that abiding in us "which you had from the *beginning*" if we are to "continue in the Son and in the Father." What was it we had from the *beginning*? It was God's truth, as given by Him to the WCG through His apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong.

God is saying that those who have

trashed that truth are liars and antichrist. If you allow yourself to be "driven away," you will not "continue in the Son and in the Father"! Notice what Christ said: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30).

The entire WCG is now in the process of being "driven away" and "scattered abroad" (Ezek. 34). How can God's truth remain in a Church that has introduced more than 35 major doctrinal changes in the last five and a half years?

### Hold Fast to God's Truth

God's precious truth, which each of us had from our own beginning in His true Church, is our passport to eternal life. If we lose that, we lose everything! "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?... Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:36, 38).

To be ashamed of Christ and the Father is to allow ourselves to be "driven away"—away from God's truth. This is exactly what is happening in the WCG today! By contrast, the truth is something in which we are to delight. Paul said, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22). David said, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97). It is something to which we must **HOLD FAST**. Notice II Timothy 1:13-14: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy [Spirit] which dwelleth in us."

Holding fast to sound words is not the kind of love that liberals are always talking about. Their love is based on watering down God's law, in order to excuse sin. That is simply the way of Satan and this world.

As for the matter of faith, it was no coincidence that Satan launched his first attack after HWA's death against the healing doctrine (March 18, 1987). That has proven to be the greatest single act of faith destruction ever perpetrated against the Philadelphia era of God's Church. What better



reason to question: "...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

God says we have the promise of eternal life (I John 2:25), but Satan is determined to do all he can to undermine that potential. He can use individuals to divert us away from the truth. That is an abomination in God's sight, but it has always happened in God's Church, and it is still going on today. John tells us that is the very reason for his epistle: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you" (I John 2:26).

To "seduce" means to lead astray. So who are these people? Today they are any who would discard, reject, and ridicule the truth restored to the Philadelphia era of God's Church by His 20th-century apostle. As the end-time "Elijah," Herbert Armstrong fulfilled Matthew 17:11 by restoring at least 18 points of truth to the era he was used to raise up.

Sardis was the era of the true Church with which Herbert Armstrong first came in contact. That era had been prophesied to be all but dead. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Rev. 3:1-2).

Contrast that situation with what God prophesied regarding Philadelphia, which HWA was used to raise up during more than 50 years. "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev. 3:8).

What a contrast! One is a Church that did not hold fast to God's truth. Then, Philadelphia follows as a Church that DID keep His word and did NOT deny His name. Therefore someone must have been used to restore that which was lost, or dead!

### **Satan Hates God's Word**

Now we have this warning from John that unfaithful ministers are leading God's people away from His truth. God says don't let these deceivers "seduce you." He says we don't need any man to teach us (I John 2:27). That refers to any man who is a seducer, or a false teacher. It is the anointing we have from God the

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Father through Jesus Christ, and the teaching we have received from Herbert Armstrong, that has given us the truth. Yet if we would let them, Satan and these false teachers would quickly take it away from us.

Of Satan, God says "resist steadfast in the faith" (I Pet. 5:9). That is the only way we can have "confidence" (I John 2:28) when Christ shall appear. God says we are "begotten of him" (v. 29) if we are practicing righteousness.

Are Laodiceans practicing righteousness by ridiculing and abolishing the teaching God has given through HWA in the end time? As one disturbed WCG member in New Zealand said: "It appears they're turning the picture of Herbert Armstrong to the wall." That was said in 1990. Since then they have taken "the picture" down and thrown it away and God is demolishing their wall!

John addresses the Church ("little children," I John 3:7) and says, "let no man deceive you." He is mainly referring to liberals inside the Church who have tampered with the word of God and He says they are of the Devil. They talk endlessly about love, but is it loving one's brother to push him, or her over a spiritual precipice into the Tribulation, and even cause some to lose their eternal life? Where is the love in that?

Philadelphians can expect to be hated by this world. Jesus Christ Himself stated: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

But is this what we are to expect from the Laodicean Church of God? Apparently this is so in many cases, especially with their most liberal ministers. Could it be that they have more interest in defending their jobs than God's truth? As for the WCG Pasadena administration, they have eagerly dumped that truth as taught by Herbert Armstrong, rather than face worldly hostility and opposition. The misguided criticism of self-appointed Protestant "cult watchers" seems to have been an important factor now motivating the WCG administration.

The more they cave in to these satanic pressures, the more they distance the WCG from Bible truth. Weak, liberal ministers and members like it that way. How long they waited! How many impatient false starts they made in trying to impose their anti-Christ theology on faithful brethren! These are the "vultures" identified by HWA just before he died (*Worldwide News*, June 24, 1985).

Way back in 1977, one of their raging-liberal ministers was challenged as to why he didn't get out of the ministry and the Church, as he was in such disagreement with the teachings of God's 20th-century apostle. His reply went something like this: "You don't understand. We have no intention of leaving the WCG. Our aim is to change it from what HWA teaches to what we think it ought to be"! He was one "vulture" who didn't survive. That was all because he made his views known at the wrong time. He was blown away within twelve months, but many of his kind survived in the WCG to this day! For them, the death of Herbert Armstrong was the "green light" for which WCG liberals had waited for years.

Since then, Satan has successfully used them to intimidate faithful ministers and members into staying with a Church that many know has long since departed from basic biblical truth.

The very purpose of John's three epistles is to warn against these "seducers" (I John 2:26) at the end of the first century and in every Church era down to the monstrous deception going on in the WCG today!

### **Truth from the Beginning**

Tens of thousands appear to have forgotten that it was God Himself who



inspired HWA to give His end-time magazine a title of *The Plain Truth* under which was the slogan, “a magazine of understanding.” How sad that we can no longer link that magazine with God’s theme of “truth” given back at “the beginning”—at the beginning of the New Testament Church and given to each of us at our beginning, in that same Church. HWA said that the very purpose of the magazine was to “make the truth plain.” That should be as basic as kindergarten and the ABCs. Our “beginning” was whenever God brought us into contact with THE PLAIN TRUTH and miraculously opened our minds to understand it!

Today, it is no longer the kind of magazine that Herbert Armstrong produced. It lacks all three—plainness, truth, and understanding. Perhaps it was God, not Satan, who forced its circulation down from over eight million to approximately one million!

At the same time, the WCG “seducers” and “deceivers” have discontinued another God-inspired title: *The Good News* magazine. Remember, that was the one to give God’s people the doctrinal TRUTH revealed through His 20th-century apostle. Should we be surprised that it didn’t continue when so many WCG basic doctrines are no longer biblical TRUTH?

Now over 100,000 people in the WCG are being re-deceived by the type of people HWA referred to after the 1970s as “so-called scholars.” It was people with similar antagonisms toward God’s TRUTH, who took the Church off-the-track, behind HWA’s back in the 1970s.

Consider what he said at that time, in relation to today’s even worse situation: “I came on the scene myself in the Sardis era. Now we have a lot of people who want to take anything that Christ put into the Church through me, and...knock it in the head and say ‘that is wrong; that is a false doctrine.’ We’ve had a lot of so-called intellectuals around here on this campus, trying to do that very thing.... What happened here to us is like a cancer. I got the core of the cancer out, but it has other parts. It will start reaching with its tentacles to the whole body if we don’t get it out.... That cancer has got to be removed. This has got to be, once again, the real Church of God, and not

**Sad to say, it seems that many others are conveniently forgetting there is a price to pay for obeying God’s truth in Satan’s world.**

the church of Satan” (*Pastor General’s Report*, Nov. 22, 1978, pp. 14-15).

If God’s true Church in the 1970s had become “THE CHURCH OF SATAN,” could HWA say less about an even worse WCG today?

Mr. Herbert Armstrong worked long and hard to combat those “tentacles,” but before he died, he knew and we now know that he did not succeed in stopping the spread of the “cancer” of the 1970s liberalism. It has now overwhelmed most parts of the spiritual body, all the way to the highest physical level in Pasadena. Only God can know how many will escape from the grip of these evil tentacles before the Great Tribulation. We hope and pray it will be many and soon, but give God grateful thanks for those who have publicly committed themselves to resisting the seducers and deceivers. Also, pray for added spiritual strength for others, whom we know are likewise in the process of committing themselves to God’s truth.

### **False Prophets in Sheep’s Clothing**

Sad to say, it seems that many others are conveniently forgetting there is a price to pay for obeying God’s truth in Satan’s world. They also forget that there is an even bigger penalty for NOT doing so! Accepting doctrinal changes to avoid persecution is not the way to the Kingdom of God. Rather it is the broad way that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13). Let’s remember the rest of this warning from Christ: “Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto

life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.... A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matt. 7:14-16, 18).

Through the apostle John, God points us at this time to the evil example of Cain (I John 3:10-12). Cain had a similar problem to today’s WCG administration. He insisted on introducing satanic doctrinal changes (Gen. 4:1-5) which God would never approve! He was also typical of today’s WCG liberals, in that he became angry because his changes were unacceptable (v. 5).

He couldn’t lash out against God, so he took the life of his own brother (Gen. 4:6-8). Is that all that different from the angry antics of many WCG ministers toward those holding fast to God’s doctrinal truth today? They talk of love, while threatening members’ eternal life through enforced doctrinal changes. Then those who openly resist are cast out and called rebels. All the time it is the WCG liberals who are the rebels! They accuse the faithful of the very things of which they themselves are guilty—rebellion, and of causing division among the brethren. As John states, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil...” (I John 3:10).

Do we now clearly understand that this is what God is exposing in these epistles, recorded primarily because of the prophesied great end-time apostasy? (II Thes. 2:3; Jude 3-5, 8; I John 4:1, 5-6).

These are difficult days for the faithful among God’s people, but as Herbert Armstrong said at an earlier difficult time: “God will give us the VICTORY in the end.... God has allowed Satan to bring this upon us. First, to wake us up spiritually and bring us back closer to Him, and second, to draw us closer together and third, to sift out from our midst some of the chaff from the wheat.

“Brethren, this terrible ordeal is accomplishing those three things! It is a sifting time. Some ‘liberals’ who wanted to water down God’s truth are being sifted out” (co-worker letter, Jan. 18, 1979.) ♦

(To Be Continued)



# Satan Attacks God's Truth

*As we approach the end of this age, Satan has increased the intensity of his attacks against God's people. While most of God's people expect attacks to come from outside the Church, few realize how often Satan attacks God's people from within the Church.*

By Colin Sutcliffe

**I**n the first century A.D., when Jesus Christ walked this earth, He said, "UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; AND THE GATES OF HELL [the grave] SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT" (Matt. 16:18).

Christ established the New Testament Church in A.D. 31. It has continued through more than 1900 years, but under repeated attacks inspired by Satan the Devil. From the time Christ began to preach the Kingdom of God and reveal Himself through miracles, He came under increasing attacks from those used by Satan in various religious sects, especially among His own people. Likewise, the first century apostles were repeatedly under persecution for teaching God's truth, again, especially from *their* own people.

Old Testament prophets and Jesus Christ sounded prophetic warnings of man's hostile reception to the truth. When recording Scripture for future generations, the original apostles also gave similar warnings. They focused on events that occurred in and around their own lifetimes, but many of their warnings were to have later prophetic fulfillments.

John (the last of the original apostles) wrote his three epistles (I, II and III John) near the end of the first century. These epistles are three separate warnings! All three point directly to satanic opposition and perversion of God's truth by people wanting to pass themselves off as true ministers of God (I John 1:6; 2:4, 18-19, 26; 3:7; 4:1, 5; 5:10; II John 10; III John 10).

In 60 years there have been many 20th century parallels. But since the

death of Herbert Armstrong, we have seen an astonishing increase in the intensity of this satanic deception, opposition, and hostility. Sometimes the problems are external, sometimes internal. But Satan is always involved and uses both tactics. However, his most damaging effects have often been achieved by using people *INSIDE* God's true Church.

The purpose of these studies on the epistles of John is to emphasize Satan's destructive influence on the Church of God and point to the parallels between the first and 20th centuries. The apostle Paul gives us an inspired explanation of man's typical reaction to God's truth: "...the carnal mind is enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

### Satan Generates Opposition

That's the natural mind of MAN! Satan works upon this mind in every human being in every generation. An even greater challenge for him is to subvert the minds of those in God's "little flock" who now have His Holy Spirit. God warns that in the ultimate sense, we're really dealing with Satan's opposition. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits] in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

The apostle John was well aware of this long before the end of the first century A.D. He therefore knew why God's truth was under such heavy attack. Like so much of the Bible, all three of his epistles were warnings of

the utmost importance to God's people, then and now. If we don't understand that these warnings are also directed at God's Church today, THEN WE SIMPLY MISS THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF DUAL FULFILLMENT IN BIBLE PROPHECY.

God wants us to be always on guard against Satan and acutely aware of the way he uses individuals to attack the truth God has revealed through His faithful servants. That's why John was inspired to write, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (I John 3:13). He is saying we must learn to expect this reaction. Jesus Christ explains it a little more fully in the gospel of John. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.... I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:17, 14).

He's referring to this same carnal-minded hostility to inspired truth. God's truth was under severe attack in the first century by some within and some outside the Church of God. It was also under similar internal and external attack in the days of Herbert Armstrong, God's 20th century apostle. This was especially so during the 1970s. But since his death the intensity of these attacks has greatly increased, although with enough clever subtlety to deceive the vast majority *within* the Worldwide Church of God (WCG).

Since his death in 1986, God's warnings in the Bible have a far more ominous ring to them! God has now allowed Satan's attack on His *truth* to be greatly stepped up in order to prove those He has called in this end time. It



also indicates the shortness of time.

Again, John was inspired to warn of this in the book of Revelation. "...Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he has but a short time" (Rev. 12:12).

### 35 Major Attacks

As a dramatic parallel to the first century A.D., we have witnessed over thirty-five major attacks on basic doctrine in the last six years. This is Satan's MOST SEVERE frontal assault on God's truth IN HUNDREDS OF YEARS! Those who flatly refuse to accept his satanic perversion of the truth are either forced to leave, or are cast out of the WCG by its liberal administration.

Separation between Laodicea and Philadelphia continues as more and more WCG members come to realize that God's truth really is under heavy satanic attack. John and other apostles pointed to the same thing in the first century. What we're now seeing is simply an end-time fulfillment of that same hostility. John cites a classic first century example which is a warning to God's Philadelphia and Laodicea eras today. "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receives us not...neither does he himself receive the brethren, and forbids them that would, and casts them out of the church" (III John 9-10).

Did you get that? Here is a first century church pastor so far "off-the-track" that he rejected the faithful leadership of the chief apostle. This example should not be lost on any of us today! It foreshadowed and pictures exactly what has happened within the WCG in the last six years! Do you recall that Herbert Armstrong reminded us many times of the duality of Bible prophecy? God's servants should not be surprised by end-time parallels with earlier events. Remember, Mr. Armstrong warned of "vultures" waiting to return (WWN, June 24, 1985).

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

God wants us to know, so we will "be sober, be vigilant" (I Pet. 5:8). He wants us to understand and be motivated to act on this vital knowledge. God threw down a challenge to the skeptics and scoffers on this matter of

prophecy and duality, even hundreds of years before Christ's First Coming. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them SHOW THE FORMER THINGS, what they be, that we may consider them, AND KNOW THE LATTER END OF THEM; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods..." (Isa. 41:21-23).

God reveals these things to His Church. Anciently, Isaiah knew he was dealing with prophecy and duality, the former fulfillment and the latter. Notice what he was inspired to record regarding unfaithful ministers twisting and perverting the word of God: "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion" (Isa. 8:17-18).

He understood the significance of Bible history for God's Church today.

### Carnal Man Never Learns

Who is "Zion" today? It is God's true Church, the collective body of spiritual Israel. That's where "the Lord of hosts" dwells—in His faithful Philadelphians.

By contrast, the WCG has now become Laodicean because it is rapidly quenching God's Holy Spirit (I Thes. 5:19). That means they're losing it. It is being withdrawn from them as they succumb to the pressure from Satan for doctrinal change. Notice what John states: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.... Hereby we know he abides in us, by the Spirit he has given us" (I John 3:22, 24).

God's people lose His Holy Spirit as they water down doctrine. Today, history is just repeating itself! God inspired Solomon to tell us that history *does* repeat itself because man never learns. "The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun...it has already been of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall

there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after" (Eccl. 1:9-11).

God wants mankind to learn from the mistakes of those who have preceded us, but then goes on to say that He knows most will NOT learn and will therefore REPEAT those same mistakes generation after generation.

Today we have the modern example of six years of false doctrinal changes being accepted by the Worldwide Church of God membership! This Laodicean attitude was prophesied to happen and now it has. We knew it was coming (Rev. 3:14-20), but it still caught us unawares, especially because it didn't happen just as we expected. God now requires each one of us to deal with it. But many are not doing so. To *not* do so is the way to the Tribulation, NOT THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Bible prophecy points to the fact many will not learn. "Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (I John 2:18). Notice also II Peter 2:2: "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

### The PCG Must Warn

All these doctrinal changes in the last six years mean that the truth is being "evil spoken of." Sad to say, but "many" are following "their pernicious ways"! Those who don't want to hear this vital warning sometimes accuse the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) of attacking the WCG. Far from attacking, we are shouting a LIFE-SAVING WARNING. No one else is doing it and God says this warning must be given, or their blood will be on our head (see Ezek. 33; also write for our free booklet, the *Ezekiel Watchman*).

Think about it! Is this really an attack on the Laodicean ministry, or is it a WARNING to them and to all WCG brethren? Your answer to that question will show whether you support their changing the "truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:21), OR WHETHER YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAS BEEN AND STILL IS GOING ON.

Call it an *attack* and you support the false WCG teachers! Accept it as a *warning* and you spare yourself from the Tribulation!! We must all hold fast



to the truth HWA taught for so many years! This *warning* is sounded out of the same genuine concern as when Herbert Armstrong used to tell us, "Follow me only as I follow Christ."

You will even give God thanks (as many already have done) that this satanic take-over has been exposed! Upon further prayer and study, you will give God equal thanks for preserving a faithful remnant of the Philadelphia era so you can be taught and continue to "hold fast" to His precious truth.

It's a tough decision. Any PCG member will tell you that. But the need to make this decision should be very obvious, because God's truth is every bit as much under attack today as it was at the end of the first century A.D.! This is the 20th century significance of what God inspired John to record in his three epistles. Did we not have the truth from "the beginning," just as John emphasized near the end of his life? (I John 2:7, 13-14, 21, 24, 26; 3:7, 11). He said let no man take it from you, or "seduce you"!

God understands man's tendency to succumb to the pulls of Satan's world. That's why He has always used his faithful servants to warn His people. God knows He is in total control over Satan. What He wants to know is, whose side are *you on*? Notice Elijah's challenge to Israel and their false ministers, in the days of Ahab and Jezebel: "How long halt you between two opinions? if the Eternal be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings. 18:21).

What's new? Hundreds of years before that, Joshua issued a similar challenge to Israelites who were equally "off-the-track." "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Should Joshua have been surprised by the situation confronting him?

Moses had prophesied it years earlier. "Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt

yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you" (Deut. 31:28-29).

### Try the Spirits

Human beings' proclivity to "float downstream," and "ride with the current" hasn't really changed in 6,000 years. Long before the end of the first century A.D., the apostles were facing the same problem as Moses, Joshua and Elijah, even within God's New Testament Church.

God inspired His apostles Peter, Paul, Jude and others to warn His people from then until now of the dangers we would be in. John lived through those conditions, so it would have been no surprise to him to find himself in the same, or an even worse position at the end of the first century. He was confronted with Satan's same old tactic of using false ministers to turn God's people away from His truth. That was the reason for his strong exhortation. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

Today, it should be as obvious to us as it was to faithful brethren in the first century, that this verse is really a command from God. It is to help us rightly decide which Bible preacher to hear and which to reject. That is a life-and-death decision!! And there is only ONE way we can be sure to get it right. Discern which spirit is motivating the preacher. If he is motivated by "the spirit of truth," he will teach according to Scripture. That is, the inspired Word of God (II Tim. 3:16-17). It is the "word" by which Christ said we are to live (Matt. 4:4). Elsewhere it is called "the truth" (John 17:17). God had Isaiah spell it out as the test of a true minister. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light [truth] in them" (Isa. 8:20). That means they will twist the scriptures and teach lies to suit their own purpose, which is to secure a following for themselves.

Paul warned against this some 30 years before John wrote his three epistles. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to

draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31).

God also inspired the apostle Peter to warn us of what to expect from false ministers. "...There shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies.... And many shall follow their pernicious [destructive] ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.... While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (II Pet. 2:1-2, 19).

Today, just like physical Israel in the days of Moses, Joshua and Elijah, and the first century New Testament Church, we too are choosing whom we "will serve." God is represented by what Mr. Armstrong taught! Satan is represented by what "the son of perdition" teaches (II Thes. 2:3, 9-12).

### Only Two Ways to Go

Some now accuse the PCG of worshipping Mr. Armstrong because we continue to teach what he taught. That is a lie! NOBODY worshipped Mr. Armstrong, but didn't we all believe he taught God's truth? That raises a very serious question: As they have rejected much of God's basic Bible teaching, whom do *they* now worship?

God supplies the answer through His apostle John. There are only TWO ways to go. Apart from "the spirit in man," there are TWO "spirits"—God's Holy Spirit and Satan's evil spirit. God calls one "the spirit of truth" and the other, "the spirit of error"! That's why John states, "We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (I John 4:6).

In regard to "hearing" and "believing," God states through John in the plainest possible terms, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he [God] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

If Herbert W. Armstrong ("mistakes" and all) was "OF GOD" (and from the Bible itself, we all proved he *was* "of God") whom then is the WCG "hearing" today? Certainly NOT Herbert Armstrong. But he was the one God motivated by "the spirit of



truth” for over 50 years. Therefore Pasadena headquarters of the WCG is now motivated by “the spirit of error.” That explains why they have come up with some 35 major doctrinal “changes” since the death of Herbert Armstrong. These are the fruits of their new motivation!! That motivation is nothing less than “the spirit of error” working on the minds of those who have rejected God’s precious “spirit of truth.”

Christ Himself said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15-16).

The “fruits” of the WCG ministry during the last six years have been the same as those of other false prophets from the days of John—to tear down, and destroy basic Bible truth.

### Laodicea Rejects God

Joseph Tkach and his WCG administration seem to have forgotten that to have accepted and followed the teachings of Herbert Armstrong is the only premise upon which they could ever claim to be “of God” and motivated by “the spirit of truth.” Our first thought is they have rejected Mr. Armstrong, but that is not the full story. Remember Samuel’s reaction to ancient Israel? God was quick to tell him, “they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” (I Sam. 8:7).

That is a perfect illustration of what has happened to the Worldwide Church of God since the death of its 20th-century apostle! Just like ancient Israel, by their doctrinal changes they have rejected Christ and the Father, not Mr. Armstrong. They can and WILL say what they like, but SIX YEARS of doctrinal changes have announced to the world that Joseph Tkach and his administration are now motivated by “the spirit of error.”

In his first epistle, the apostle John goes on to write about “love.” “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is [begotten] of God, and knows God” (I John 4:7).

John, the writer of the three epistles, also wrote Revelation and there’s a point here that should not be lost today. In Revelation, God inspired the apostle John to describe the problems addressed in the epistles as

loss of “the first love” by the “Church of Ephesus” (Rev. 2:1-4).

Do you see the parallel in Laodicea today? Now ask the question: what happened to the love and unity we had in the WCG under Mr. Armstrong back in the 1960s? In principle, John answered that in I John 4:5 where he states that false ministers turned back into “the world.”

“Love” and “unity” died in the 1970s because the Church administration at that time deliberately allowed Satan to inject “the spirit of error” in the form of Western [Israelite] liberalism into the WCG. This happened behind Herbert Armstrong’s back while he was absent from Pasadena. Without his hands-on guidance and control, Satan quickly took those in charge “off-the-track.” They in turn took the membership “off-the-track.”

Mr. Armstrong resumed direct human control in 1978, but by then (as in Ephesus), the spiritual disease had been deeply implanted in the body (the Church) by Satan. Herbert Armstrong struggled for seven years to get the WCG “back-on-the-track,” but under Joseph Tkach, it took the liberals only 14 months to re-emerge stronger than ever.

Notice that Herbert Armstrong clearly understood the challenge ahead of him as early as 1979. “Once such division starts among ministers it is a difficult matter to correct. For most who have gone doctrinally afield will today, just as in Corinth in A.D. 56, not be willing to change back from error and watered down doctrines to God’s truth” (WWN, Feb. 19, 1979).

How right he was! Without the restraining human hand of Mr. Armstrong, even more ministers became Satan’s tools and systematically destroyed most of what Herbert Armstrong was used to build in over 50 years! Is this “the spirit of truth” in operation, or “the spirit of error”? The answer to that is inescapable!!

### What is “Love”?

Herbert Armstrong has now been dead for seven years. During all of that time the WCG has talked about “love,” but love is the keeping of the commandments (I John 5:3). That means *holding fast* to the truth. Where then is love in a planned campaign to deliberately destroy in six years, that which God took over 50 years to build

through His servant Mr. Armstrong?

When the WCG was on-track under Herbert Armstrong, we knew that real love is keeping God’s law, and all being of “one mind.” “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Paul wrote, “Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind” (II Cor. 13:11). If we are of one mind with Christ and the Father, it will be because we have a deep love for God’s truth. Only then will we be motivated by “the spirit of truth” rather than “the spirit of error.”

God says, “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.... There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.... He that fears is not made perfect in love” (I John 4:17-18).

If we know we are holding fast to God’s truth, if we know we are earnestly contending “for the faith once delivered unto the saints,” we don’t have to fear being forced out, or being cast out (III John 10) by those whom John says would spiritually “seduce” us (I John 2:26).

In the last six years, Satan has cleverly put 150,000 WCG people “between a rock and a hard place.” Like our first century brethren in John’s epistles, we must decide which we fear most—being disfellowshipped by a false minister, or falling into the hands of the living God. “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30-31).

John’s three epistles, written at the end of the first century, clearly show one thing—his deep distress over “liberal” watering-down and rebellion by false ministers in the early New Testament Church of God, just as we see today in the WCG. In John’s lifetime, it had been going on in some areas for over 40 years (see Gal. 1:6-12; 4:8-10, 16-17; 5:1). That same liberal watering down and rebellion against God’s truth (which means the teachings of Herbert Armstrong) had been going on for 20 years before his death! So what we have today is an awesome end-time parallel with what John experienced and with what happened after he died. ♦

(Continued next month)



# Satan Attacks God's Truth

*From the founding of the New Testament Church of God in A.D. 31, Satan the Devil moved early and quickly in his many attempts to destroy God's true Church, just as he had tried to destroy Jesus Christ.*

By Colin Sutcliffe

It was very near the end of the first century when the apostle John wrote his three general epistles, I, II, and III John. This was some 60 years after Jesus Christ called on His first disciples to follow Him (Mark 1:16-20). Peter was the first leader under Jesus Christ. After his death, John became chief apostle of the Church of God, founded by Jesus Christ. It is believed he was the last survivor of the original 12 apostles and lived almost to the end of the first century.

From the very beginning of the New Testament Church, and during his subsequent 60 years, this veteran apostle witnessed the first-century growth and development of the Ephesian era of the Church of God, and played a significant role in it. But growth and positive development were not the only things he witnessed. Satan the devil moved early and quickly in his many attempts to destroy the Church, just as he had tried to destroy Christ Himself.

This satanic hostility was much in evidence from the very beginning. At first it was external, but it soon became both internal and external. Long before the end of that century, the Church of God was in serious disarray due to the influence of the satanic forces operating against it.

John wrote his three epistles and the book of Revelation about 25 to 30 years after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 69). Even before the destruction, Luke (in the book of Acts), Peter,

Paul, James, and Jude in their epistles, had all addressed serious problems, ranging from persecution to heretical doctrines.

By the time the last of the Scriptures were being recorded (A.D. 90s), the doctrines of the true Church had long been under severe attack. Satan used off-the-track ministers to undermine God's truth. Members ignored warning after warning and the strongest of exhortations by faithful ministers. Jude exhorted them to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (Jude 3-4).

Paul wrote in II Corinthians 11:3, 13, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted.... For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

Paul also lamented to Timothy that vast numbers had already gone back into Satan's world: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (II Tim. 1:15). In Revelation 2:4 we're subsequently told that they "left their first love."

An earlier article in this series, made reference to the number of times John points God's people back to the way things were "in the beginning." After TEN times, you have to ask yourself, WHY IS HE BEING SO

EMPHATIC? It was to counter satanic changes introduced by false ministers thus causing baptized members to fall away from the truth they had been taught by the original apostles!

It should also be noted that in just seven short chapters of John's epistles, he used the term "you know," or "we know" 28 TIMES! This indicates even more emphatically that he was making a concerted effort to re-establish the shattered confidence of members who had been destabilized by false preachers. John obviously believed those first-century Christians needed to be reminded of all they had been taught at the beginning.

John also used the words *truth*, *truth's*, or *true* 27 times in his three epistles. That leaves Church members in no doubt that they should know that the TRUTH is what they were taught at the beginning!

### 30 to 40 Years of Lies

That makes it painfully obvious that John was inspired of God to make one final effort at the end of the first century to combat the LIES being taught for 30 to 40 years by Satan's ministers.

Honest answers to these questions will reveal the disastrous parallel that now exists between doctrinal changes in the 1st and 20th centuries! In any century, all who love to liberalize just love to talk about love. This is why God has given John His true definition of *love*: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and



his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

It's also why God inspired him to state, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4).

"His commandments are not grievous," but it still takes faith for human beings to step out and keep them in Satan's hostile world. Take the observance of the weekly and annual Sabbaths for example. People think it's crazy, or Jewish, and something definitely odd.

This is part of overcoming the world but it can be done only through the begetting and exercising of God's Holy Spirit. It is what John is referring to when he says, "For whatsoever is born [begotten] of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

This faith is really that of Jesus Christ which God grants to us through the power of His Holy Spirit as we obey Him (Rom. 3:22; 12:3; Acts 5:32). And contrary to the pagan trinity doctrine, that "spirit" is NOT a third being in the God Family. It is the power by which God accomplishes His will (Zech. 4:6). It is a gift (Acts 2:17, 38). It must be stirred up (II Tim. 1:7). It can be quenched (I Thes. 5:19). It is the begetting power of God (Matt. 1:18; Rom. 8:9-11). It is a "measure" of power which God supplies (II Cor. 5:5; Phil. 1:19).

The faith of Jesus Christ grows in us through answered prayer when we have exercised this faith by stepping out in obedience to God (James 2:17-22). What then has happened to faith within the Worldwide Church of God? The first of their more than 35 changes was to throw out the healing doctrine as taught by God's 20th-century apostle. Their replacement booklet was confusion and possibly the greatest single act of faith destruction in hundreds of years. God says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14).

How can they now pray with confidence (faith) when they have smashed God's doctrines like a proverbial bull loose in a china shop? They pray for the financial state of their

work and the income goes down. They pray for the effectiveness of their literature, then the *Plain Truth* circulation is forced down from nearly eight million to less than two million. Simultaneously, its quality took a disastrous nose dive. The *Good News* magazine is consigned to oblivion as are many of Mr. Armstrong's most effective books and booklets.

Pasadena, the founding campus of Ambassador College, was closed down, then unsuccessfully put up for sale. Meanwhile, the College concentrates itself in the backwoods of East Texas, and is seeking approval of Satan's world in the form of accreditation. The contents of their replacement booklets look more and more

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like a re-hash of the old 1970s *slide towards Protestantism* (STP). And on and on they go, backsliding from God's truth and spiralling toward the Great Tribulation. Where can there be any room for confidence (faith) in all of this rebellious liberal carry-on? This is not just a repetition of the 1970s, but a replay of Church disintegration in the first and second centuries.

At that time, the early New Testament Church all but disappeared, being swallowed up by Satan's counterfeit Christianity. Today, we have the end-time parallel of the Philadelphia era all but completely swallowed up by the doctrines of Satan's Protestant counterfeit Christianity. Like the Protestants, they think they're "born again." Mr. Armstrong and anyone else who would suggest "the hat-pin test" are contemptuously categorized

as "ignorant." Yet John states, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (I John 5:18).

If WCG members are sinning, then they're NOT BORN OF GOD!! Only Christ "sins not." Therefore no one else is yet "born of God"!!

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true..." (I John 5:20).

### **"Children Tossed to and Fro"**

Throughout the first century, God used John and other faithful ministers to give His Church true understanding. In the 20th century, we all acknowledged that He used Herbert Armstrong in the same way. Then if we lose that understanding, we go back to the idolatrous pagan world from which we've been called. Is that not what John warned the entire first century Church of God against, before he died? "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (I John 5:21).

Do we recognize that idolatry includes worshipping our own intellect, our own ideas (Rom. 1:21-28); leaning to our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-7); doing that which is right in our own eyes (Judges 21:25; Deut. 12:1-3, 8)? Those are all forms of idolatry!

Did Paul not give some of the same people even more specific warnings at an earlier time? Notice his strong exhortations to the Ephesian and Galatian churches: "...be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14).

Notice verse 17: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."

Paul had a similar warning to tell the Galatians. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.... But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. 1:6; 4:9).

Is that not an exact parallel description of what the Worldwide



Church of God has been doing in the seven years since Mr. Armstrong died? Write for a free copy of our updated *Doctrinal Changes* booklet. It will help you prove these things for yourself. Is it any wonder that WCG members are confused and need our *Doctrinal Changes* booklet to help them unscramble seven years of satanic confusion?

### **"The Elect Lady"**

In his second epistle, John compliments and strongly warns a very special lady. She and her children are commended for holding fast to what? —to God's truth! Who is this lady? We're not specifically told, but in the duality of Bible prophecy, *lady* and *woman* are terms applied to churches who may be either true or false.

From the context, and in dual application, this could be referring only to one particular church today. "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father" (II John 4).

Notice it says OF your children. That means only *some* of the Church of God are walking in truth and love. Remember also, this lady represents the elect—the VERY elect. The rest of the elect are deceived (Matt. 24:24). The *Amplified* version states, "*Some* are 'walking in truth.'" That means *many are not*.

Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are three separate eras of the Church of God; but just prior to Christ's Second Coming, all three Churches exist simultaneously! There is indisputable Bible evidence that only one of these three Churches is "walking in truth" and "love"! How can we say that? Because God says so.

Sardis is dead (Rev. 3:1-4). Laodicea is to be spued out of God's mouth for being lukewarm (3:14-16). But by contrast, God says of Philadelphia, "...thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.... Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:8, 10).

Doesn't that sound like a *lady* who is "walking in truth" and "love"? Well, truth! But what about love? Read the next verse in II John: "And

this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (II John 6).

Those who are spiritually dead and those who are fit only to be spued out into the Great Tribulation (Rev. 12:17) are certainly NOT "walking in truth" and "love"! We must presume there is a definite division implied here. We know that Church unity is possible only when we are of ONE mind (I Cor. 1:10).

Notice a very important statement made by Mr. Armstrong on this point some six years before he died: "Once such division starts among ministers, it is a difficult matter to correct. For

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most who have gone doctrinally afield, will today, just as in Corinth in A.D. 56, not be willing to change back from error and watered-down doctrines to God's truth" (*Worldwide News*, p. 1, Feb. 2, 1979).

### **Anti-Healing is Antichrist**

John goes on to warn the *elect lady* of these very same ministers: "For many deceivers are entered into the world..." (II John 7). These are ministers in the Church of God who have returned to this world's way of thinking in many aspects of doctrine. Could one have a more devastating example of erroneous ministry than the WCG's 35 doctrinal changes? Then John goes on to state that these *many deceivers*, "confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (v. 7).

What does this mean? The form in which He has now come (taking the progressive tense) is that of entering into converted Christians at baptism, through the power of God's Holy Spirit. That means we are to begin exercising the faith of Jesus Christ, and one of the most testing ways of doing that is in relation to Christ's doctrine of healing. Satan knows that and therefore targeted it as the first doctrine for attack, after the death of Herbert Armstrong.

Even deceived Roman Catholics and Protestants accept that Christ sacrificed His human life for all mankind. But they do not accept His doctrine of anointing and miraculous healing through faith (James 5:14).

It is no coincidence that since the death of Herbert Armstrong, "many deceivers" in the WCG have rejected Christ's doctrine of healing. Having come out of the world, they have now entered back into it, and are causing others to do so on an unprecedented scale amounting to tens of thousands. How diabolical!!

"His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14).

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

Those "stripes" produced incredible suffering and were laid on His body for our "infirmities" (Heb. 4:15)—our "HEALING" (I Pet. 2:24). Deceived "Christians" deny Christ's fleshly sacrifice (including the unbearable agony of the stripes laid on His body specifically for our healing) by not trusting in God for healing. The WCG is not just involved in *denial*, it deliberately selected the doctrine of healing as its very FIRST target for change!

Pasadena then tried to cover their back-sliding denial of Christ by accusing faithful Philadelphians of not "discerning the Lord's body" (I Cor. 11:29). The truth is that they are the "weak and sickly" (I Cor. 11:30), claiming that Christ's horrendous sacrifice for our healing is only spiritual!

Anyone who has trusted in God for healing in a real life and death situation knows it is one of the greatest tests of faith any true Christian can ever face. What a scandalous insult to



be told you could be regarded by God as irresponsible for not running to the medical profession! Not that Herbert Armstrong taught we should never make use of the medical profession and related services. (See *Plain Truth About Healing*, by Herbert W. Armstrong, published 1979, p. 58.)

In Romans 15:1 the apostle Paul uses the word *infirmities*, which one source explains as, “those scruples which arise through weakness of faith” (*Vines Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*). By obeying God’s command in James 5:14, we judge ourselves to have “sinned” in some way, on most occasions. We come in repentance, but “boldly” (courageously and confidently) (Heb. 4:16), before God’s throne through Jesus Christ, our High Priest, to seek God’s miraculous intervention for our “infirmities” (v. 15).

We are meant to discern the promise of both “physical” and “spiritual” healing. If we do that, we will then be “chastened” (I Cor. 11:32) in repentance and not “condemned with the world.” Otherwise we will be “chastened” in the coming Great Tribulation with the Laodicean era of the Church of God (Rev. 3:19).

Nowhere has Satan’s attack on God’s truth been more effective since Mr. Armstrong’s death, than Christ’s doctrine of healing! John is then inspired to link this problem to the effects it can have upon our ultimate reward: “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (II John 8-9).

God’s truth is the most precious thing we can lose. You just read that he who “abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God.” If we lose even some of His truth, we will receive, at best only a Laodicean reward (and that via the Tribulation) instead of a full Philadelphian reward (Rev. 3:11-12).

Healing is a basic doctrine of Christ and the one against which Satan launched his primary attack soon after Mr. Armstrong’s faithful and strong leadership was removed from the WCG. As stated elsewhere, that satanic attack represents the greatest single act of faith destruction in God’s Church in hundreds of years!

## Receive Him Not

In light of such devastating doctrinal changes, let’s be quite sure we don’t lose the significance of the conclusion to John’s second epistle. This is a command from Almighty God; and if we fail to take it seriously, it could plunge any of us into the Great Tribulation, or even the lake of fire. “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (II John 10-11).

The reason for this command should now be obvious. These people are deceivers. Go through the Bible

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with a concordance to see where this and related terms are used. Read the surrounding scriptures and see what untold damage they and Satan have done to the entire human race throughout man’s history. It is true God has been dealing primarily with Israelites for the past 3,700 years, but deceivers go back to Babylon, to Nimrod, and right into the garden of Eden, where Satan began his deception of the whole world.

Satan knows there is no price too great to put on God’s truth! That’s why it’s always under attack—always has been and always will be—until Christ’s return. It is no coincidence that the closer we get to the end of John’s three epistles, the harder he hits this subject of God’s truth. He uses the word *truth* six times in his final 14 verses. This is in the context of three ministers under John’s apostleship.

Two are faithful (III John 1, 12). One is not (III John 9).

As the ancient human head of the Church of God, at the end of the century, and at the end of his life, he commends two ministers for their faithful dedication to God’s truth. The third, the evil Diotrephes, is exposed as having turned maliciously against God and John (III John 10), who had been closer to Christ than any other man. This traitor, Diotrephes, is cited as a minister who allowed his perception of God’s truth to become totally perverted. So much so that he cast out the “honourable” and retained the “dishonourable” (verse 10).

This despicable tool of Satan traumatized and cast faithful members out of the Church that had been their life. But they showed great courage and determination to hold fast to what they learned from the beginning. They knew their teaching came from the original apostles, who (according to tradition) died to the last man, except Judas Iscariot, upholding the doctrines of Jesus Christ. It is in this context that God then has John give us, not a suggestion, but an all-time command: “FOLLOW NOT THAT WHICH IS EVIL, BUT THAT WHICH IS GOOD” (III John 11).

To do that, one must be prepared to separate or be ejected from any church, or congregation whose leader has clearly rejected the truth of Almighty God. Through John, God has already told us in the previous epistle to have absolutely NOTHING to do with any such leader (II John 10).

We don’t know how long this had gone on, or in how many congregations, but it is as much a 20th-century scenario as it is of the first century. There is only one substantial difference between III John and what the WCG has been working its way through for the past six years. One happened just after the 20th-century apostle died. The other happened just as the last of the original first-century apostles was about to die!

Meanwhile, as we approach the return of Jesus Christ: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5).

Let’s make sure that when Christ returns He can say that we, like Demetrius have a “good report of all, and of the truth itself”! ♦