

**UNVEILED AT LAST:
The ROYAL Book of
REVELATION**



GERALD FLURRY

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REVELATION**

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Revelation is the most misunderstood book in the Bible! People of the world see it as the blackest kind of disaster—which they foolishly bring upon themselves. But the focus of this book is on the royal rule of God's Family. And that includes you. Every person on this Earth is given this opportunity. What makes this book so electrifying is that most of it is being fulfilled right now!

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1

God's Royalty

THE WORLD USUALLY VIEWS THE BOOK OF REVELATION somewhat like a horror movie. The Greek word for Revelation is *apocalypse*. It conjures up pictures of terrifying calamity to most people. But the word actually means an uncovering or disclosure—to enlighten or give LIGHT!

Revelation should reveal light to men. Instead it is the most misunderstood book in the Bible. God reveals it only to “babes”—saints with a childlike, teachable attitude.

What should give this world *light* instead pictures the darkest kind of horror. Because they have rejected God's light, people of this world cause their own dark and punishing tribulation!

PEOPLE REDEFINE APOCALYPSE to their own shame.

The catastrophe comes upon those people who rebel against God's law, which is almost everybody. But in spite of their blindness, the book is still FILLED WITH HOPE.

There are 22 chapters in this book, and 17 of them discuss a throne. Twice the throne mentioned belongs to Satan. The other 15 refer to God's family throne.

Adam and Eve had a chance to replace Satan on his throne. But they rebelled. Then Christ, the second Adam, came in human form and did qualify to replace Satan. Soon He will return to claim His throne as ruler over the Earth.

Now Christ is calling out a very elect. When He returns they will share His throne. This very elect will rule with Him for 1,000 years. After that, they will help Christ rule the universe forever (Hebrews 2:7-8; Isaiah 9:6-7).

What a royal message!

Satan is the ruler of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). That means he won't give up his throne without a war. It is through this war, by conquering Satan, that the very elect qualify to replace him, just as Jesus Christ did. Those saints will then become the sons of God and the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7). This salvation and reward are so great that men often label this teaching blasphemy!

Let's take a close look and see why this is the ROYAL book of Revelation.

THE FATHER

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Revelation 1:1). This book was not revealed by John, or an angel, or even Jesus Christ! It was revealed by God the Father, who gave it to His Son. Christ then gave it to an angel, who gave it to John.

The book of Revelation CAME FROM A SOURCE HIGHER THAN JESUS CHRIST. IT CAME FROM THE SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSE—GOD THE FATHER!

This means the book of Revelation has to be more important than many other books in the Bible! Perhaps it is more important than ANY other book in the Bible!

No other book is introduced in the same manner as the book of Revelation. This book provides a time frame or time sequence for all prophecy. Without that understanding, we wouldn't know WHEN prophecies of the Bible are to be fulfilled. It has the big overview. That is why this book is so crucial to understand.

ONLY the Father knows the “day and hour” when these prophecies are to be fulfilled. “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. ... But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels

of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:33, 36). These are Christ’s own words. He teaches us to understand that the Father is His superior. The Father has greater understanding, and that includes His knowledge of prophecy.

WHAT KIND OF MIND UNDERSTANDS THE DAY AND THE HOUR THAT THESE PROPHECIES ARE TO BE FULFILLED? Only the Father has that depth of understanding and foresight. This means we can trust Him implicitly. He is the ultimate royalty!

The first verse of Revelation demonstrates God’s royal family government. The Father is the Head of His Family. Christ is the Husband of the wife, or God’s Church. Those called after Christ returns are likened to the children. Altogether it is God’s Family.

The whole world is deceived about the very first verse. CHRIST IS MADE THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS WORLD’S VERSION OF CHRISTIANITY. BUT THAT IS THE FATHER’S ROLE. Christ said, “My Father is GREATER than I” (John 14:28). He also said He came to do the will of *His Father*—not His own. He was submissive to His Father.

Even those in God’s own Laodicean Church fail to honor their Father (Malachi 1:6). They have rejected God’s family government.

This world—and most of God’s own people—REFUSE to accept our Father as the Head of His Family. THIS IS SATANIC DECEPTION THAT DESTROYS THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD! It destroys the gospel, which is the good news of the coming Kingdom, or Family, of God.

Without this understanding, there *is* no gospel or good news! THIS IS THE WORST POSSIBLE DECEPTION! Light is turned into the blackest darkness.

Can we comprehend what Satan is doing? Please strive hard to understand this.

Only the very elect are not deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9). We haven’t even gotten past verse 1, when we see that God’s Laodicean Church and the world are deceived! A mountain of deceit revolves around verse 1. This demonstrates Satan’s power to deceive. HOW WE UNDERESTIMATE HIS POWER!

Christ did precisely what His Father commanded. So did John. But most men stumble because they rebel against God’s family government.

The greatest truth in the Bible is about God's royal Family. Animals were made after the animal kind. Yet man was made in the likeness of God! (Genesis 1:26).

Lucifer was never offered the honor of being in God's Family. And now, as Satan, he hates men even more because of their incredible potential.

God only reveals this precious truth to *His servants*. Who are these *servants*? The very elect who deliver God's message to the world. This book is revealed only to people who serve the God Family. Even God's own Laodicean Church doesn't receive new revelation from this book and other biblical books. That is because the Laodiceans no longer serve God. Their work is pathetic compared to God's work.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

“Who bare record of the word of God, and of the *testimony of Jesus Christ*, and of all things that he saw” (Revelation 1:2). What is the testimony of Jesus Christ? Religious people are greatly confused regarding this question. That is because they try to interpret this book themselves. But the Bible interprets itself. This testimony reveals what is to happen in the U.S., Britain, Europe, the Middle East and the whole world. It also reveals your personal future!

The book of Revelation depicts a world crisis—and how you can escape it.

John was imprisoned for teaching God's Word and this testimony! He was a prisoner when he wrote these words. “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for *the testimony of Jesus Christ*” (verse 9). What is there about the testimony of Jesus Christ that could get you imprisoned or killed?

God's Word makes that very clear. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. . . . And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for **THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**” (Revelation 19:7, 10). The

testimony of Jesus Christ is THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY. If you have the spirit of prophecy, that means you are given new revelation by God—to build on the old revelation. You must keep what God has already revealed, or you will be given no new revelation.

If we don't understand prophecy, we don't have THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS, WHICH IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY!

You can find where Jesus Christ is by finding the only group of people on this Earth who understand Bible prophecy! YOU CAN'T SEPARATE THE TWO! Where you find one, you find the other.

How very profound these verses are. We must think long and hard on this teaching.

WHO UNDERSTANDS BIBLE PROPHECY TODAY? EVEN A CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO TELL. FIND THE PEOPLE WHO TRULY UNDERSTAND PROPHECY AND YOU WILL FIND JESUS CHRIST!

This is where God's Laodicean Church has failed in this end time. The Philadelphia Church of God, on the other hand, has been given an abundance of new revelation in the minor and major prophets and other books.

Many Laodiceans now scorn God's prophecy. That is because they lack *the spirit of prophecy*. And that means Christ is not the head of their church!

Prophecy is a major proof that God lives and works out His plan! Through the spirit of prophecy, we can prove where Christ is.

THE NUMBER-ONE REASON FOR PROPHECY IS TO SHOW THAT GOD RULES! Understanding prophecy proves that God is in Zion—His very elect Church!

If anybody scorns or ignores prophecy, then they don't understand the testimony of Jesus Christ! They don't follow Jesus Christ!

If people don't understand the book of Revelation, they don't understand Christ. This is true of any prophetic book. Without this understanding, we cannot even do God's work!

It is the "SPIRIT of prophecy." It must be a prophecy of God's Spirit or it is bizarre prophecy—from the mind of man.

Christ's wife is making herself ready (Revelation 19:7). We cannot properly prepare for our royal marriage to our Husband if we don't understand and deliver a message of prophecy.

Christ's royal wife is preparing now to marry her royal Husband at their royal wedding! The very elect are Christ's wife now. Her royal majesty deeply understands the spirit of prophecy.

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY REVEALS THE COURSE OF FUTURE WORLD HISTORY! That means you understand world news in advance! You grasp exactly what is happening on the world scene. You can fit it all into a time frame with the book of Revelation.

The lukewarm Laodiceans will be plunged into the Great Tribulation. Only 50 percent of them will repent (Matthew 25:1-10). And they will repent IMMEDIATELY. Here is why. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). MOST OF THE LAODICEANS KNOW IN THEIR HEART THAT THEY ARE WRONG! But most of them will keep rebelling until the Tribulation comes. They "caused many to stumble at the law" (Malachi 2:8), or the commandments of God. They rejected God's government taught to them by God's end-time Elijah (Matthew 17:10-11). If you want to prove who he was, write for our free book *Malachi's Message*.

The same was true of the Apostle John. He was in charge of God's Church when he wrote the book of Revelation. God's family-type government is administered through one man. He gave directions to the Church from prison on the isle of Patmos. Those who followed him had to be very submissive.

"Blessed is HE that readeth, and THEY that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3). Notice it is "HE that reads" and "THEY that hear." God uses one-man leadership. He reveals to only one man. Then "they" who follow this man *keep* the truth that God reveals.

This is the way God has always led His Church. And He prophesies here that He will always continue to do so!

Without God's government, men always stumble at the law. That is because the law demands a government to enforce it.

Also, the Laodiceans are "blind" today (Revelation 3:17). They don't have the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is through the spirit of prophecy that we SEE into the future—SEE God's plan—where we and this world are going.

When the Laodiceans are in the nuclear holocaust, they can no longer play games of self-deceit! Then half of them will quickly accept God's royal government and His "*royal law*" (James 2:8), along with His new revelation, which comes through the spirit of prophecy.

Satan makes war against them, because THEN they expose him as the very elect are doing today.

ANYBODY WHO HAS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY MUST BE PREPARED TO WAR WITH THE DEVIL!

So Revelation 12:17 reveals the Laodiceans' two major faults today: 1) they reject God's government; and as a result, they cause many to stumble at the law; God's very elect always obey the "*royal law*"; 2) the Laodiceans are blind because they don't have the testimony of Jesus Christ—or the spirit of prophecy. That is why they reject God's new revelation today.

ROYAL MARTYR

The book of Revelation is addressed only to God's Church. Many of His own people rebelled against this message. But God always has at least a small remnant which keeps His lamp burning.

ANYBODY WHO WANTS TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE AND WORLD EVENTS MUST COME TO GOD'S FAITHFUL REMNANT! There is understanding no place else on this planet! It is the only way you can really comprehend the fate of your own nation, or even your own life.

This is a difficult truth to accept, but God works through His very elect and nobody else. Everybody else is blind. It is that way now, it has been in the past, and shall be in the future!

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from *him which is, and which was, and which is to come*; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne" (Revelation 1:4). We must come to deeply know the Being who WAS and who then came to this Earth, was crucified and was then resurrected from the dead. We must also know the God who "is to come." The book of Revelation is about His Second Coming. Our lives must revolve around that great cause—to the extent that we would die for it if necessary.

We also must know that the glorified, royal God "is"—He is alive today! (verses 12-16).

Christ IS at this very moment the High Priest of God's Church! We must know what He is doing right now.

If we fully grasp His love and power, then we have nothing to fear. We must conquer our fears. We win in the end—regardless of what happens to us today!

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (verse 5). Christ was “the faithful witness.” The word *witness* is from the Greek word *martus*—from which we get our word *martyr*.

A martyr is one who dies for a cause. Christ “washed us from our sins in his own blood.” He died for our sins.

The very elect follow His example. It is conceivable that you could also become a martyr, though God promises protection to His Church overall in this end time. All of God's lukewarm saints are to be martyred in this end time. God told us it could happen (Luke 14:26-27).

Christ is the “Prince of kings,” or “King of kings.” He is higher than any human royalty ever could be. But He is “THE faithful witness” to the most supreme royalty—His Father. He is “the Son of the Highest.” “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the THRONE of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:30-33). Christ has a royal throne. His Father has a more exalted royal throne.

Imagine what it was like when the royal Father allowed His beloved Son to become a martyr for sinning men. And consider how the royal Son gave His life for you.

That is the kind of sacrificial love our royal God Family has for their creation!

All of the first-century apostles except John were martyred for following Christ's example. And John was imprisoned. What is more amazing, these martyrs were usually killed by deceived religious people!

So when you decide to be a “witness” for Jesus Christ, you

need to know what that means.

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the *testimony* which they held” (Revelation 6:9). The word *testimony* is from the Greek word *marturia*, which comes from *martus*. (The same is true for the word *testimony* in Revelation 1:9.) These servants of God were loyal unto death.

Thayer's Lexicon defines *marturia*, “to hold the testimony, to persevere steadfastly in bearing it.” It says those who held this *testimony* “after [Christ's] example have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death.”

These saints were not to be denied their reward. But that happened in the past. It will happen again in the future to God's lukewarm Church. “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Revelation 6:10-11). They must die to qualify for God's Kingdom.

All of these martyrs were “under the altar.” That refers to the altar of burnt offering where the animals were sacrificed in the temple. Today the temple is God's Church, and those sacrificing their lives are *God's lukewarm saints*—not animals!

It isn't easy qualifying for entry into God's Kingdom. But God repeatedly shows us the eternal glory we shall receive for doing so.

Christ was the “first *begotten* of the dead” (Revelation 1:5). The word *begotten* is incorrectly translated. It should be BORN. Christ was the *first* BORN, and later there will be a second and third born from the dead. If we should die serving God in a natural death, or as a martyr, we will be born into the royal God Family!

Satan wants to confuse people with the word *begotten*. Who would die just to be *begotten*? But if you know you are going to become a member of God's Family, looking like the glorified, majestic God in Revelation 1:12-16—a person can die for that cause!

We must not compromise one iota. That is how we become perfect in character—as God is.

KINGS AND PRIESTS

The whole world is deceived about what I am about to write. And even many of God’s own people won’t get this supremely inspiring truth. “And *hath made* us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (verse 6). God HAS MADE His very elect kings and priests—past tense. Those called before Christ’s Second Coming have *already been made* kings and priests. That means they are kings and priests right now—in embryo.

What are these kings and priests going to look like? Genesis 1:26 says that we are made in the likeness and image of God. Here is what that means to you. “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks [lamps]; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [lamps] one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle” (Revelation 1:11-13). Christ is in the midst of the seven Churches—observing, guiding and protecting His wife. Everything revolves around the Father and Christ, if the Church is loyal.

Christ is “clothed with a garment down to the foot.” He wears the clothing of a priest, because He is our High Priest today (Hebrews 7:21).

The firstfruits, like Christ, are also priests! They are priests for God the Father and Jesus Christ.

But that’s not all.

He wore a “golden girdle,” which symbolizes that He is a King. Most people know that, but do they know that *God’s saints are also kings in embryo*?

Christ calls Himself the “Son of man” here in Revelation 1. In fact, He is the SON OF GOD. But He is delivering the message of Revelation to MAN. He wants MAN to understand that

THIS IS HIS FUTURE. This is MAN'S incredible human potential! God is bringing man into the Family of God! The firstfruits are only the *beginning* of God's work. God is offering them a share of His throne forever—as the bride of Christ!

All of humanity was created to look like God, and to one day be born into God's Family and to look like the *glorified* God. Let's continue. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14). God's eyes are like a flame of fire. But that is also how YOUR EYES will be in the future if you surrender to God! That is what the "Son of man" came to this Earth to accomplish! He died so that sinful men could be forgiven and offered that awesome future.

"And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (verses 15-16). Christ's eyes are as a flame of fire, and His face shines like the sun in its full strength! That is how you and I will look when we are born into God's Family!

Does that sound like blasphemy?

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). When Christ returns in glory, "WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM"! Can you and I BELIEVE God?

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:21). Our vile bodies will be "FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY"—the glorious body described in Revelation 1:13-16! This is very clear. So why don't most religious people understand it? Because they don't BELIEVE God!

The problem is not a lack of knowing what these scriptures state—it is a faith crisis!

Again, we are going to look like the God described in Revelation 1:13-16! What a royal book Revelation is.

Even King David understood this truth. He wrote in one of his psalms, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteous-

ness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, WITH THY LIKENESS” (Psalms 17:15). David knew he would be resurrected with God’s likeness—a body “FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY”!

This is why the “Son of MAN” came to this Earth and died for man.

THE FATHER WANTS A ROYAL FAMILY. CHRIST WANTS A ROYAL WIFE.

Some men can see that the glorified Christ is described in this book. But most men can’t fathom that this is their very own potential! That is why they killed the Son of man—or Son of God.

Do we see why God’s apostles, prophets and faithful saints could die for God? Can you live or die for such an incredibly awesome future?

We will never have equal rank with the Father or Christ our Husband. But we shall be members of the God Family.

The fact that this message has been so totally destroyed in this world should help us understand that Satan the devil is the god of this world. And that he hates man and his potential to be God. This potential was never offered to him—only man. Mankind is superspecial to God.

We need this MAJESTIC MESSAGE to lead a godly, royal life. This is an ugly, vile world because man lives like Satan instead of God.

Until men capture this vision, their future will be disastrous—just like Satan’s dark destiny.

Mankind desperately needs to comprehend the royal book of Revelation. God is inviting His firstfruits to respond now. If they do, they will receive a future as the royal bride of Christ. It will be a unique and exalted majesty that lasts forever. THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER POSITION SO EXALTED THROUGHOUT ETERNITY! THERE IS ONLY ONE ROYAL BRIDE!

We urgently need to grasp this message. But more importantly, we need to LIVE LIKE GOD’S ROYALTY NOW!

2

New Testament Church Begins

SOME PEOPLE SUFFER FROM AN IDENTITY CRISIS. THEY question who they are and what their purpose is. They don't have any roots or tradition.

God's Church often suffers from the same affliction. Members often ask: Who are we? What is our purpose? There is a way to avoid this identity crisis. God's people should never suffer from this problem.

CHRIST BUILT HIS CHURCH

Many people suffered from an identity crisis when Christ was on the Earth. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-15). People were confused about who Christ was. But not His true disciples. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (verses 16-17). This is a profound understanding. Peter knew that Christ was the

SON of the living God. Then Christ reminded Peter that His FATHER had REVEALED that magnificent truth to him. Flesh and blood, or men, do not understand this deep truth. God's truth is REVEALED knowledge.

So we have the Father, Son and then the Church—God's spiritual Family. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (verse 18). The Greek word for Peter is *petros*, and means a *pebble* or *little stone*. *Rock* should be capitalized because it refers to Christ. The Church is built on the Rock of Jesus Christ. CHRIST SAID HE WOULD BUILD HIS CHURCH AND THAT IT WOULD NEVER DIE! SO IT HAS TO BE ON THIS EARTH SOMEWHERE, OR CHRIST IS A LIAR!

But you will be very confused and never find this Church, unless the Father *reveals* it to you. However, God only reveals it to one with a humble, childlike attitude (Matthew 11:25; 18:1-3). The Church would never be rich, affluent or overpowering in politics. It would be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32), and often persecuted.

SEVEN ERAS

The book of Revelation is the ONLY book of the Bible that gives us the TIME SEQUENCE of when a prophecy is to occur. Revelation 2 and 3 tell us the true Church history from the time of Christ's first coming to His Second Coming. The critics sometimes challenge this belief. But even common sense tells US THIS ACCOUNT IS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION BECAUSE IT IS PROPHECY FOR THAT 2,000 YEAR PERIOD. There were to be seven Church eras in that 2,000 years. Most eras would turn away from God. Each time that happened, He would raise up another era, or Church.

The "Rock," or Foundation, of all those eras is Jesus Christ. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Revelation 1:10-11). Here we see the name of each era.

Christ started the New Testament Church—the Ephesus era. “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks” (verse 12). The seven eras were symbolized by golden *candlesticks*, or *lamps*—lamps is a more accurate translation. **THE LAMP WOULD BE THE ONLY LIGHT IN A VERY DARK WORLD.** God’s people clearly see this glorious light. The world is often oblivious to it.

“And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (verses 16-20).

God placed an angel over each Church era. The angels are called stars. Jesus Christ is in the “midst” of each era (verse 13). That means each era would be doing the dynamic work of God, **IN PROPORTION TO HOW MUCH IT RELIED ON THIS POWERFUL CHRIST!** Christ laid the foundation for the Ephesus era. It had a strong beginning but a deplorable ending.

EPHESUS ERA

This era began very small. Acts 1:15 shows that right after Christ died there were only about 120 converts.

Christ led them for 3½ years. Still, they numbered only 120. Then the world killed Jesus Christ. **MOST OF THE PERSECUTION CAME FROM FALSE RELIGION.**

If Christ physically headed a little group today, people would kill Him again! The chief culprit would again be false religion.

The Ephesus era began to grow. There were 3,000 added during the Pentecost season (Acts 2:1, 41).

The Church grew to 5,000 by the time of Acts 4:4. This growth brought some serious persecution. Stephen’s message



of truth enraged the Jews. “Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul [whose name was later changed to Paul]. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:57-60). **THEY STONED STEPHEN TO DEATH. HIS ONLY “CRIME” WAS PREACHING GOD’S TRUTH!** Let’s remember, these were religions that talked much about LOVE! May God protect us from such “loving” religions!

Paul had been persecuting true Christians to death. He was present at Stephen’s stoning. It must have had a deep impact on Paul. Shortly afterward, Paul was converted. Sometimes it takes a dramatic event for God to get our attention. It’s not easy to convert a killer of Christians into a zealot for God! So we see Stephen’s stoning served a purpose in several ways.

Stephen’s death only launched more persecution. True Christians were driven from their homes and towns all over Judah and Samaria. They fled for their lives!

This caused a strange phenomenon. As the Church was scattered, the message spread. “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:19-21). God used these scattered Christians to convert “a great number.” The disciples became more fervent. They knew *why* they were being persecuted—for obeying our God of love! This made them realize more deeply how evil this world is! Then they plunged more urgently into helping God’s work.

The disciples were driven out of the Jewish community. As a result, **THEY BEGAN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE**

THE STONING OF STEPHEN was only the beginning of persecution against the Church of God.

WORLD! Peter was over Israel and was the chief apostle. Paul was over the Gentiles. James, the Lord's brother, stayed in the Jerusalem area. Andrew went to northern Asia Minor—the Black Sea and the Crimea. Phillip was assigned to Scythia. Bartholomew travelled to Armenia and the Caspian Sea area. Thomas preached in the Iranian plateau, even into India. Matthew preached in Scythia and Ethiopia. Thadeaus was sent to upper Mesopotamia and Assyria. Matthias entered Macedonia and Central Europe. James Alphaeus covered Spain, Britain and Ireland. Simon the Canaanite spread the word in Africa and also in Britain.

The New Testament Church was founded on these men, with Christ being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). THEY PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO THE KNOWN WORLD! God's GREAT WORK was effectively growing around the world. But then, that era committed a fatal blunder!

LOST FIRST LOVE

The New Testament Church officially began June 17, A.D. 31, on the day of Pentecost. That is when the Ephesus Church, or the first era, began. In the early '60s, the Church began to decline. Persecution intensified. Rome was burned and the Christians were blamed. They accused God's people of trying to overthrow the government.

In the early '60s, a Laodicean condition developed in one of Paul's churches. (For more information write for our free booklet on *Colossians*.)

“And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16). Paul was correcting them for letting down spiritually. The Laodicean condition then was only a type of a much bigger Laodicean problem to come in the end time—or the last era (Revelation 3:14-19). “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it” (Colossians 4:17). There is strong indication that Archippus was a Laodicean or lukewarm minister.

In the spring of A.D. 66, Paul wrote a warning and encouraging message to Timothy. “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned

faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:5-6). This was a strong warning for Timothy to stir up God’s Holy Spirit! The persecution was intensifying again.

2 Timothy was the 14th book Paul wrote. It was during his final imprisonment. Probably one of the charges against him was trying to burn Rome.

According to the historian Eusebius, this was the 14th year of Nero. The vile, corrupt Nero was ruling when Paul got his head cut off. That’s the way it often is in this evil world!

Even the evangelist Timothy had obviously been shaken by these trials. The only way he could survive was to “stir up” God’s Holy Spirit.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (verse 7). Was Timothy becoming AFRAID? Apparently so. Paul reminded him there was a solution to such problems. “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (verse 8). Many were becoming ASHAMED of their prisoner-leader, Paul! This undoubtedly affected Timothy.

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia” (2 Timothy 4:10). DEMAS DECIDED HE DIDN’T LIKE BEING IN A CHURCH WHERE THE APOSTLE WAS IN JAIL, AND HIS LIFE WAS IN DANGER! He loved this present evil world more!

“Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry” (verse 11). It appears that in the one area, everybody but Luke HAD LEFT PAUL!

“The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments” (verse 13). Paul was concerned about some of his books. These were probably the books of the Bible which God later had canonized. Paul was concerned more about God’s work THAN HIS OWN LIFE!

“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge” (verse 16). In one particular area, “ALL men” forsook Paul!

Here is the most remarkable event of all. Most of the Church members were leaving Paul. They had lost their first love (Revelation 2:4). Paul SAT IN JAIL, and was SOON TO DIE. Yet this was when he wrote 2 Timothy—which I believe to be THE MOST INSPIRING BOOK IN THE BIBLE!

How did he do it? That is the big question. “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (verse 17). God was with Jeremiah in the dungeon. And God was with Paul in jail!

God will never forsake us!

A MONUMENTAL CHANGE

In A.D. 66 Judea revolted against Rome. Vespasian was the Roman ruler in Jerusalem. In A.D. 69 he was called home to rule Rome. Titus, his son, replaced him.

In A.D. 68 or 69 Peter was killed. God’s men of renown were being slaughtered! The historian Josephus wrote about a supernatural voice saying to God’s Church, *Get out of Jerusalem*. So the Church fled in A.D. 69, just before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

God’s work was carried on from Pella. At this point THERE WAS A GREAT CHANGE IN GOD’S WORK. THE EPHEBUS CHURCH STOPPED PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD! The gospel would not be preached again to the world until the end time—almost 1,900 years later! “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). It is a SIGN of when the end discussed in Matthew 24 arrives (verse 3).

Most so-called Christians think the gospel has been preached around the world throughout the ages. Christ’s prophecy says just the opposite. If the gospel had been preached around the world after the first century and before this century, then that would have been the sign of the end of the world!

The history that occurred around A.D. 70 in Jerusalem was a TYPE of what is to happen in the end time. The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of what happens to all Israel in the end time. Prophecy is dual.

I also believe that what happened to God's Church in the first century is a TYPE of what is happening to God's Church in the last century. The first-century Church preached the gospel around the world and then went to sleep. The end-time Church of God preached the gospel around the world and also went to sleep!

There was a "son of perdition" traitor to God's Church in the first century, and there is one in the last century (2 Thessalonians 2). Write for a free copy of *Malachi's Message* for more information. This book also explains the seventh and last era of God's Church.

In A.D. 69 God's Ephesus era Church collectively stopped preaching the gospel to the world. But the decline began before that time. Still, there were some strong members in God's true Church.

APOSTLE JOHN IMPRISONED

Around A.D. 90 Domitian was the Roman ruler. He enacted a great persecution. The Apostle John was taken prisoner. He was exiled to the island of Patmos. There he had the time to write the book of Revelation. That completed the New Testament.

When John was in prison, trouble grew in the Ephesus era Church. "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 9-10). Evil Diotrephes took over much of God's Church. The followers of John were kicked out! This is how the Smyrna era began!

GOD TESTED HIS PEOPLE TO SEE IF THEY WOULD FOLLOW CHRIST WHEN JOHN WAS IN EXILE! There were many high-powered leaders who seemed so righteous—until they had a chance to take over the rule of God's Church! Then they suddenly forgot how to submit to God's government.

The same tragedy has occurred in God's end-time Church. Those who continued in the God-revealed instructions

of Herbert W. Armstrong were disfellowshipped. God is always testing His people to see if they can follow their true Leader—Jesus Christ.

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:1-5). The Ephesus era began with a blaze of glory! It ended in a cesspool of shame! The people of that era lost their first love. Then God had to move His lamp to the Smyrna era.

The Apostle John was released from prison during the A.D. 90s. He returned to Ephesus and died. Perhaps his death symbolized the death of the Ephesian era, around A.D. 100.

3

Successive Church Eras

MOST OF GOD'S LAODICEAN CHURCHES NOW SAY THAT the seven Church eras are only history. Smyrna and Ephesus were 50 miles apart. One is in tribulation (Revelation 2:10)—one is not. Why, if this is only history? The Sardis Church is dead (Revelation 3:1). A few miles down the road is Philadelphia—one of the best churches (Revelation 3:7-12). It doesn't make sense if this is only history.

One of the Laodicean groups says "the seven churches *could* also represent the *progressive* state of God's Church through the centuries." "Could." But they don't know. They should know, because Herbert Armstrong taught and proved this subject forcefully.

Here is a quote from *Mystery of the Ages*: "The book of Revelation records seven messages to seven churches that existed in Asia Minor toward the end of the first century A.D.

"These churches—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea—were located along one of the mail routes of the old Roman Empire.

"Riders would follow the route—carrying messages from town to town.

"The messages to the seven churches have words of both encouragement and correction, and they clearly show the dominant characteristics of each of the congregations at the time.

“But these messages were intended for a wider audience than the Christians in these small towns.

“They are a series of remarkable prophecies, by which the future of the true Church was foretold in outline form, from the day it began on Pentecost, A.D. 31, until the Second Coming of Christ.

“The history of the Church would fall into seven distinct eras—each with its own strengths and weaknesses and its own special trials and problems.

“Just as a message could pass along the mail route from Ephesus to Laodicea, so would the truth of God be passed from era to era.

“It was like a relay race—in which the baton is passed from runner to runner, each one doing his part, until the finish line is reached.

“Some time during the early decades of the second century, the baton was passed from the Ephesian era to the people that God had called to the Smyrna era of His Church” (pages 282-283).

This progression continued down to the present.

CHURCH ERAS ARE PROPHETIC

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Revelation 1:1). THIS WAS REVEALED TO “SHOW UNTO HIS SERVANTS THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS.” THAT IS, *PROPHECY* OF THE FUTURE.

Christ says Church eras are to show us the future. It is not just for history, as the Laodiceans say it “could” mean. CHURCH ERAS ARE TO REVEAL THE FUTURE TO US, FROM THE TIME OF CHRIST TO HIS SECOND COMING. OTHERWISE, WHY IS THIS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION?

The purpose of this book is to put prophecy into a *time frame*. The *seven seals* unfold from Christ’s first coming to the Second Coming. We see the seven successive resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire. Seven different times a political beast

A MAP OF ASIA MINOR shows the location of the seven cities depicting each era of God’s Church throughout history..



Black Sea

A S I A

- Pergamos
- Thyatira
- Smyrna
- Sardis
- Ephesus
- Philadelphia
- Laodicea

Mediterranean Sea

E G Y P T

and the great false church emerge to bring savage destruction on the world. The final beast is forming right now! We can see that because of the *time frame* in the book of Revelation.

The history and prophecy of the great false church is included. Then doesn't it seem logical that God would also reveal the far more important history and prophecy of His true Church in this book?

The book of Revelation is prophetic. Church eras are discussed because they are prophetic. God puts the eras of His true Church into a time frame too.

We can only understand the book of Daniel, Matthew 24 and many other Bible prophecies because of the time sequence in the book of Revelation.

The subject of the seven churches would not be in this book of Revelation if it weren't prophetic! This is a book of prophecy! That's what the 22 chapters are all about.

Revelation is a book of *revealing*. Those who fail to understand don't have God revealing truth to them. They are in the dark.

They talk about *could be* because they lack faith.

SEVEN EQUALS COMPLETION

“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20).

The magnificent and powerful God is in the *midst* of the churches (verse 13). So we ought to have faith and should not deal in *could be's*. We ought to know whether or not the Church eras are successive if this great and powerful God is in our midst! If we don't, isn't that an indication God is *not* in our *midst*? God reveals our own history and prophecy! God intends that we know! Not wallow around in the darkness of *could be!*

This vision also shows that Christ is *only* in the midst of *seven churches*. There were many more when John wrote this history. Why only seven? Because these seven represent the *entire* Church of God from the time of Christ's first coming to His Second Coming. These churches were located in successive order on a long mail route. Each church had its own particular characteristics. It is true that all seven churches were

typical of general conditions among God’s people everywhere, and at any time. However, in each era *one characteristic dominates*—even though all seven characteristics are extant.

The number seven means *completion*. So the seven churches are the seven eras from the time of Christ to the end. That is the *complete* picture.

This truth has been revealed to the Laodiceans. It isn’t that they couldn’t know—God revealed it to them through Mr. Armstrong. But since they have become the last Laodicean era, they try to wish away this ugly condition. As if that could be done.

Satan wants to destroy the truth about the Church eras so that he may destroy the meaning of Revelation chapters 1 through 3. Then we are blinded and can’t see the complete picture.

MODERN HISTORY

Herbert Armstrong gave the information contained within *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* to the Sardis, or fifth, era. This revealed truth was prophesied (Revelation 3:7). The key of David reveals who modern Israel is; it discusses David, king of Israel, and shows that Christ is to rule over the world from David’s throne in the World Tomorrow.

The Sardis Church rejected this truth. That is one big reason they are “dead.” Now the Laodicean era is rejecting the same truth. If you don’t understand fully who Israel is, then you can’t understand the one third of the Bible which is prophecy. God says the Laodiceans are *blind* (verse 18). Rejecting *The U.S. and Britain in Prophecy* is one big reason why.

Both Sardis and Laodicea said *The U.S. and Britain in Prophecy* was in error. Both reject it. Soon everybody shall know that the God of Revelation 1:13-18 is the author of this inspiring truth!

Have we seen the “open door” of Revelation 3:8? Yes—it was the gospel preached around the world by Herbert W. Armstrong and the Philadelphia era (Matthew 24:14). The “fruits” tell us that.

Now, read for yourself what Mr. Armstrong did when confronted with an “off the track” Sardis ministry in the 1930s: “As long as I was EMPLOYED by men who were over me,

and who had proved to be susceptible of being influenced and swayed by false ministers, into acting *contrary* to God's Word, I was not yet free to RELY ON GOD ALONE, and to be completely FAITHFUL to His Word! . . .

"I was now FREE! This final crucial test had proved that I would be FAITHFUL to God and His Word, even at the cost of giving up *everything!*

"I know of evangelists who probably are sincere in supposing they are serving God—and who would *like* to be free to proclaim many truths they now hold back. They reason something like this: 'If I go farther, and preach those things, I'll lose all my support. I'd be cut off from the ministry altogether. Then I could preach NOTHING. Better serve God by preaching *as much* of the biblical truth as possible, than to be prevented from preaching anything.'

"They are relying on the financial support of MEN, or of organizations of men. Anyone in that predicament is the SERVANT OF MEN, and NOT OF GOD, whether he realizes it or not" (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Volume 1, pages 527-528).

The Laodiceans say the seven churches *could be* successive. Unless they repent of that sin (Romans 14:23), they are going into the Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:20). Their faith in this area is going to grow enormously in the Tribulation. Then they shall know that the eras are successive and that they are definitely Laodicean. Such a hard way to learn!

Fifty percent of them will never learn (Matthew 25:1-10).

Satan tried to destroy the precious truth about Church eras in the 1970s. This time he has succeeded in the Laodicean Church. We in the Philadelphia Church must *hold fast* to our revealed truth (Revelation 3:11).

4

The Mystery of God

IN 2003, WE WON A COURT BATTLE OVER *MYSTERY OF THE Ages*. While in the midst of that legal battle, I *prophesied* that one way or the other, God would provide a way to mail that book again. Read this chapter, and you'll understand why I made that prophecy!

You can't separate God's work today from what Herbert W. Armstrong did. God's work is called the *continual* in the Hebrew. That means God continues His work, even if one of His leaders dies. Every work of God is tied to the previous work. That is especially true in this end time. There is an Elijah work in both the Philadelphian and Laodicean eras. That means they are bound tightly together. If you understand deeply what God did through Mr. Armstrong, you can clearly see what God is doing through His very elect today.

Let's begin in Revelation 8. "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (verses 1-2). In verse 6, those seven angels with the seven trumpets prepare to sound.

Look through chapters 8 and 9, and you'll see each of these angels sound, right down the line, one through six. But then notice Revelation 10:1: "And I saw ANOTHER mighty angel come down from heaven"—this is *another* angel, apart from

the seven trumpet angels, who came down from heaven. Then we can see in Revelation 11:15 where the seventh trumpet angel sounds. But this angel of chapter 10 is *another* angel. It is not the seventh *trumpet* angel. It is the angel over the Laodicean era. Revelation 1:20 shows that each Church era had a different angel. This angel of chapter 10 has a different job from the trumpet angels: He is not out destroying the world. His job is to deliver a message to God's Church in the end time.

Look at the description of this angel's splendor: His face is like the sun and his feet are as pillars of fire! Hebrews 1:14 says these glorious angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation—they are to minister TO US. But in verse 5 it says, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son ... ?" Not one. Look at how brilliant these beings are and what kind of greatness they have, and yet God clearly says we have a potential status superior to them!

What a royal future we have! Our station in life is going to be ROYAL beyond description. This is a vision that changes lives, when people truly get it into their minds.

THE LITTLE BOOK

"And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices" (Revelation 10:2-3). *Malachi's Message* contains those seven thunders. We cannot take that thunderous message of revelation lightly—God's Church is falling away, and 50 percent of God's people are going to die FOREVER (Matthew 25:1-10), and 50 percent will suffer as no people have ever suffered before they repent!

This great angel delivered this little book to God's very elect. But something strange happened in verse 4: "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." In Revelation 1:19, when John began seeing and hearing things, God told him to write it all down. But when he came to the little book, God stopped him from writing it down. WHY?

There was an end-time Elijah who restored all things. But this is referring to something that would happen AFTER he finished that job and died. God *didn't want Herbert Armstrong to understand about the little book and the Laodicean era when he was alive*. It's like there was a great curtain hanging over the Laodicean era until he died. God revealed it to John a long time ago, but He didn't have it written until this end time. It revealed that there was *another* work to come after Mr. Armstrong. I believe it probably clarified things in John's mind, so he could see the whole vision. But for the rest of us, God didn't want it revealed until the end-time Elijah passed from the scene.

Remember the example of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham had the knife drawn back, ready to obediently stab his son, and God said, *No, stop. Now I KNOW you'll obey me*. God has chosen *not to know* what we're going to do in our spiritual lives.

So you could see God allowing something to happen in the end-time Church that would be hard to understand—something that would reveal things to God He would not otherwise know. And He is learning a lot! God is evaluating His Church today. Judgment is upon the house of God right now.

“And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be *time no longer* [or NO MORE DELAY]” (Revelation 10:6). At this point in the passage we are entering a time of no more delay, going from the Philadelphian era to the Laodicean era.

The book of Revelation puts all prophecy into a time frame, or a time sequence. We must remember that as we discuss chapter 10. The expression “time no longer” should read “no more delay.” That means God delayed His work *before* the little book came on the scene.

Events in this world have been racing along as never before since the little book, *Malachi's Message*, was first mailed in January 1990.

God was restraining Satan and the “mystery of iniquity” within God's Church by Mr. Armstrong's presence (2 Thessalonians 2). After Mr. Armstrong died, Satan was cast down. He persecuted God's Church severely because he

was full of wrath. This persecution is to continue into the Tribulation, when the repentant Laodiceans shed their blood defending God's truth (Revelation 12:9-17).

After Satan was cast down, we entered into a time of "no more delay." World conditions are going to intensify and get so bad that Christ will have to intervene, or all mankind would be destroyed.

For information on this subject, write for our booklet titled *The Little Book*.

MYSTERY OF GOD

Notice that Revelation 10:6 ends with a colon. The thought continues in the next verse. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he *shall begin to sound*, the MYSTERY OF GOD SHOULD BE FINISHED, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (verse 7).

The seventh angel discussed here is the *trumpet* angel, not the angel of the Laodicean era. Before that seventh trumpet sounds, something has to happen on Earth. According to the Companion Bible and the Greek interlinear, "shall begin to sound" would be better translated "is about to sound." This happens as that seventh trumpet *is about* to sound. Just *before* the trumpet sounds, there is an accelerated work going on in a short span of time, and it's about the *mystery of God*.

Notice verse 11: "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Think about this: We have to PROPHECY AGAIN. Delivering the little book is prophesying again in one sense, but the little book is a *new* message. Here, the angel is talking about prophesying again, and in the specific context of a MYSTERY.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (Revelation 11:1-3). The two witnesses are still part of the Elijah work, and look

how it all culminates: “The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And *the seventh angel sounded*; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (verses 14-15). Here is the Elijah work, preparing for the Kingdom of God, continuing right on down to the return of Jesus Christ.

God is concerned about the mystery being taught and the message being delivered as this seventh trumpet angel is *about to* sound—before He brings the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord upon the world. Something happens in the midst of that period of *no more delay*. God’s very elect deliver a message about the mystery of God.

Read Revelation 10:7 again: “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he [is about to sound], the mystery of God SHOULD BE FINISHED, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” In the past, I wondered how verse 7 even belonged in chapter 10—now we see that the entire emphasis in chapter 10 is on that verse! Here is a MYSTERY in the context of a little book, of prophesying again, of no more delay, of rising up and measuring, of the two witnesses—all just before it’s over and the seventh trumpet sounds.

There is ONLY ONE book on this Earth that truly explains the *mystery*, and that is Herbert W. Armstrong’s book *Mystery of the Ages*. That is why we fought for it in court.

When Mr. Armstrong said he wanted to get *Mystery of the Ages* to the *largest audience possible*, THAT REALLY WAS A COMMISSION FOR GOD’S PHILADELPHIA CHURCH TODAY! Mr. Armstrong died only a few months after he finished writing this book. Then the church he founded quickly decided to stop publishing it. So Mr. Armstrong’s expression “the largest audience possible,” which was inspired by God, was showing the very elect a big part of their work that had to be done.

The Philadelphians had to continue the Elijah work. Many prophecies tell us that. The end-time Elijah, who restored all things, said WE MUST REACH “THE LARGEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE”—WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK SINCE THE BIBLE!

THE WORDS OF SUCH AN IMPORTANT LEADER OF GOD MUST CARRY GREAT WEIGHT WITH GOD’S VERY ELECT.

Clearly, we had to *continue* delivering *Mystery of the Ages*, a job which Mr. Armstrong only started. The expression “should be finished” should read *shall have been finished* (see the Companion Bible). This is a work that *shall have been finished* by all of God’s people. The Laodiceans refused to finish the commission that God and Mr. Armstrong gave to the whole Church. *Malachi’s Message* explains their failure.

Revelation 10 reveals the *continual* flowing through these two books. They are both tightly bound to the same Elijah work. THIS CHAPTER SHOWS THAT THE LITTLE BOOK IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO *MYSTERY OF THE AGES* AND GOD’S WORK THROUGH MR. ARMSTRONG.

The work must be finished when the seventh trumpet begins to sound. That means that the work of God which proclaims *Mystery of the Ages* to the world, *again*, “*shall have been finished*.” In other words, the Philadelphia Church of God will not finish God’s work unless they fulfill this commission!

That puts a lot of pressure on God’s very elect to deliver *Mystery of the Ages* to the world before Christ returns!

God’s command was to “prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” (verse 11). So we can see that God inspired Mr. Armstrong’s goal of getting *Mystery of the Ages* to “THE LARGEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE”! God and Mr. Armstrong had the exact same goal.

The Laodicean problem revolves around a failure to understand how profound and important *Mystery of the Ages* is!

Now consider this vital, superimportant truth! The little book is only for God’s Church. But *Mystery of the Ages* is for the whole world—“many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

We are to “prophesy again” to the whole world. So this commission applies *specifically* to proclaiming *Mystery of the Ages*—reaching the *largest audience* possible. This refers to the world—not the Church.

The world can understand *Malachi’s Message* only if they allow God to lead them to repentance. They must study *Mystery of the Ages* first.

So when God commands us to *prophesy again* to the world about the mystery, that is a direct command to deliver *Mystery of the Ages*! NO OTHER BOOK ON EARTH TODAY CLEARLY

AND FULLY EXPLAINS WHAT THE MYSTERY OF THE BIBLE IS! So Revelation 10:7 could only be referring specifically to Mr. Armstrong's final and most important book.

AND REMEMBER, THIS CRITICAL REVELATION WASN'T EVEN GIVEN TO US UNTIL *AFTER* WE STEPPED OUT IN FAITH AND PUBLISHED *MYSTERY OF THE AGES*. THEN GOD SHOWED US CLEARLY WHERE IT IS PROPHESED THAT WE MUST DO THIS VERY WORK!

What glorious revelations come to us if we are willing to walk by faith. May God help us to understand this deeply!

Think about how important this book is! Mr. Armstrong said he believed this was the most important book ever written, next to the Bible. Would God permit people right at the end time to just throw it away? *NO!* We're preparing to teach the *WORLD*, and this is going to be the primary textbook! If we didn't get *Mystery of the Ages* out there, this world would be in almost total darkness when Christ returns. Until people remove the mystery from the Bible, their lives are meaningless. And the world will *never* understand the little book, *Malachi's Message*, until they understand the "big book," *Mystery of the Ages*.

Should we deliver *Mystery of the Ages*? I tell you we *MUST* DELIVER IT! When the Bible talks about prophesying again, that primarily means the *same* prophecy—again. God is talking about a message that has been prophesied before. WE MUST PROPHESEY AGAIN, BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T YET REACHED THE LARGEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE WITH *MYSTERY OF THE AGES*. THE JOB IS STILL INCOMPLETE.

God won't allow anybody to stop this message until that work is done.

THE WHOLE VISION OF CHAPTERS 10 AND 11 REVOLVES AROUND *MYSTERY OF THE AGES*, NOT THE LITTLE BOOK. The little book just tells you what happened to God's Church and *Mystery of the Ages*. It's not about the little book; it's about the great mystery of God which this world must be taught.

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Mr. Armstrong didn't understand the meaning of the holy days until he stepped out on faith and kept them as God commanded. After a few years, God revealed the deep meaning

behind each festival. I didn't get the understanding of the little book until I decided to fight against the Laodicean rebellion. Then the revelation came.

We printed *Mystery of the Ages* almost a year before God revealed this understanding of Revelation 10:7. Now that we understand, what an *encouragement* this revelation is!

Remember, the book of Revelation puts events in their proper time sequence. Even *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* says, "Revelation is to teach us to understand the times."

We're living right in the THICK of this vision of Revelation 10 and 11. The little book is here. *Mystery of the Ages* is going out again. Understanding this really puts things into a greatly reduced time frame.

We have been commissioned to get this book out to the world, and it's probably going to be published and proclaimed right up until the return of Jesus Christ! THE LITTLE BOOK AND MYSTERY OF THE AGES HAVE A DIRECT TIE TO THE SEVENTH TRUMPET ANGEL—WHEN JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN TO THIS EARTH!

When Christ comes, what is He going to do? He will need kings and priests, and He'll need a few textbooks to put into colleges and into people's homes so they can understand how to live. When Christ gets here, we're going to begin to EDUCATE THE WORLD. This world is going to be GOD'S world *very shortly!*

Would you say that getting *Mystery of the Ages* out to billions is worth dying for? I BELIEVE IF I DIDN'T GET THIS BOOK OUT I WOULD LOSE MY SALVATION! Understand this: We are being MEASURED, carefully and precisely, by how effectively we publish and proclaim *Mystery of the Ages*. We *have* to prophesy again. We have to give the people of this world one final warning, and give them the greatest gift we can possibly give.

Do you love the world—as God does? (John 3:16). Do you love those people in the world? Are you willing to *show* God you really love them? Are you willing to put your life on the line for them? WE MUST LOVE THOSE PEOPLE. The single best way to do that is to offer them *Mystery of the Ages*. THIS IS GOD'S FUTURE FAMILY!

What a message of joy this is. Revelation 10:7 says that God has declared this mystery to His servants the prophets. The word *declared* is from the Greek *euaggelizo*. It means to declare a message of joy. God wants us to CELEBRATE getting the joy

and the good tidings of *Mystery of the Ages* to the world.

IT IS PRIMARILY THROUGH DELIVERING *MYSTERY OF THE AGES* THAT WE KEEP THE LAMP OF THE LAODICEAN ERA BURNING—FOR THE WORLD, NOT THE LAODICEANS! That is our job. If the lamp goes out, this world would be in total darkness. Only the Philadelphia Church gives light to this world. And *Mystery of the Ages* is the major oil supply for the lamp.

God has opened the door to proclaim *Mystery of the Ages*. It is our supreme responsibility to walk through that door.

We know most people are not going to respond until they're in the Great Tribulation. But if we do our job, I know what the buzz word will be in the Tribulation—people will be talking about *Mystery of the Ages*. That book is the hope of this world. There isn't any other hope. *Mystery of the Ages* has the answers to this world's problems!

Revelation 10 has one main subject—getting God's message to the Laodicean Church and to the world. WE HAVE A MESSAGE OF REBUKE TO THE LAODICEANS BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO DELIVER GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD! (Revelation 3:19-20).

This chapter is about doing God's work. It is not hard to find God's Church if you keep your focus on the work of delivering God's message.

This is the vision that the Laodiceans have lost. This is why they can't find God's very elect. If we know where God's work is, we know where God is. That is where the lamp will be glowing.

MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

2 Thessalonians 2 is tied directly into the royal book of Revelation. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the return of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the *son of perdition*; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God [or Church of God], shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). This son of perdition is a man who destroys. He is empowered by Satan, who is out there seeking whom he may devour, trying with all his being to destroy the truth of God.

Why did we have to battle the Worldwide Church of God in court? It had nothing to gain financially by keeping *Mystery of the Ages* from us.

God says it is headed by a “son of perdition,” or destruction. The WCG’s only motive in the court case was to destroy God’s truth! Those fighting against us were stirred by Satan’s hatred of the truth.

We fight against them because we share God’s love of His truth. This is very simply what the battle is all about.

“Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be *revealed* in his time” (verses 5-6). This mystery will also be revealed. God commands His very elect to reveal it! “For the MYSTERY of iniquity doth already work: only he who now *letteth* [restrains] will *let* [restrain], until he be *taken out of the way*” (verse 7). As *Malachi’s Message* reveals, this is talking about an end-time Elijah being removed.

Why did God inspire the word *mystery* here? It’s the same Greek word that is used in Revelation 10:7, denoting something hidden or unknown. Here, right in this verse about an end-time Elijah being taken out of the way, suddenly we have another MYSTERY. We know that Satan is a great counterfeiter, but this is not Satan calling it the “mystery of iniquity”—God calls it that.

This verse contains a coded message from God. He’s showing us what a deceptive counterfeiter Satan really is. Satan has a false gospel, another spirit, a false church, false coworkers; he’s a false father—a father of liars and murderers. He has a counterfeit family and a law of sin. He is a false christ. And he comes on the scene with a false *mystery*—a mystery of LAWLESSNESS. After Mr. Armstrong’s death, the Laodicean leaders said, *Stop printing that book—don’t even copy from that book! WE have the mystery!* But it wasn’t the mystery of God, it was the “mystery of iniquity.” Satan quickly filled the vacuum created when the mystery of God was taken out of circulation.

What a thunderous conclusion to Mr. Armstrong’s life Revelation 10:7 contains. *Mystery of the Ages* summarized his life more than any other book. It was a summary of all that God taught him.

Now, if you want to know about the mystery of *iniquity*, all you have to do is read the little book—*Malachi's Message*. The Elijah was taken away. Then the mystery of iniquity was revealed by *Malachi's Message*. Again, we see the close tie between *Malachi's Message* and *Mystery of the Ages* and its author.

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that [are perishing]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (verse 10). The problem with the Laodiceans is they don't love the truth. Do we love God's truth enough to fight for it—enough to go to court for it? We've already proven we do. And just look what God has done through this little group.

Verse 11 says, “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” That should read *THE LIE*. Specifically, the big lie is teaching that *the mystery of iniquity* is the *mystery of the ages!* That is strong delusion. Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, and in less than three years, a book that summarized his life's work was stopped, and a new counterfeit mystery became available to people.

“Therefore, brethren, *stand fast*, and *HOLD* the traditions [or past instructions] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (verse 15). Those who prophesy again have held on to the traditions and instructions we received in the past, like *Mystery of the Ages*.

OUR ROYAL FUTURE

Mr. Armstrong said the greatest gift he could give you is *Mystery of the Ages*. The greatest gift the PCG can give to the world is *Mystery of the Ages*.

I received a special gift at the Feast of Tabernacles in 1997: a leather-bound copy of *Mystery of the Ages*, with gilt edges and a handsome leather-bound container. Mr. Armstrong had a few of these special copies published to give as gifts to world leaders. As with so much of what Mr. Armstrong did, this is a book of great quality and value. The physical quality shows the value Mr. Armstrong placed on that message.

What a message it is! It explains *THE WHOLE BIBLE!* People can read one book and know God. They can have all the mystery

taken out of the Bible. Everyone in the world must be taught from this book, so they can understand this royal vision.

Let's get *excited* about this revelation! God is speaking to His people. That's the way it always is in the inner court. He's telling us that what we're doing is fantastic. **BECAUSE WE STEPPED OUT ON FAITH AND DELIVERED *MYSTERY OF THE AGES*, GOD REVEALED REVELATION 10:7—A PROPHECY ABOUT THIS BOOK!**

We may ask, *Why didn't God reveal this BEFORE we printed that book?* Well, this is just another case of God waiting and testing, wanting to learn more about His people. If we would have understood this before, there would have been no doubts about publishing and freely giving *Mystery of the Ages*. But God wants to know if we are going to step out on faith. And now look what He does if we do! How encouraging!

God will work the same kinds of blessings in your individual life if you step out on faith. Everything will open up to you. This is what God promises. Nobody can stop God.

Now that we have *Malachi's Message* and *Mystery of the Ages*, does that mean there's no longer a warning? No, it means that with *Mystery of the Ages*, people can deeply UNDERSTAND our warning! To this world, *Malachi's Message* is almost worthless without understanding *Mystery of the Ages*.

5

War Over the Mystery

REVELATION 10:7 IS NOT THE ONLY PLACE THAT DISCUSSES the *mystery of God*. Look at Colossians 1:26-27: “Even the *mystery* which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Paul said the mystery was being made known! It is God’s will that man know about this mystery.

What is the Bible all about? What is your life all about? What is this civilization all about? What are those good angels and evil angels all about? What is civilization? What is the Kingdom of God? It’s all explained in *Mystery of the Ages*.

Paul wrote the book of Colossians to the Colossians and the Laodiceans. It ties in directly with Revelation 3. It is a message for us today. Here is Paul speaking to the first-century Laodiceans, explaining a great mystery that was hidden from the world. The Laodiceans today have the same problems as those in the first century. Paul didn’t have the complete picture like Mr. Armstrong did. So God wanted Mr. Armstrong to write the book *Mystery of the Ages*.

But still, Paul was very committed to that mystery. This message got Paul put in jail! That’s where he was writing from. (It is interesting that we were in court over the same mystery.

But as I've said before, our greatest sin would be not to get that mystery delivered now God has opened the door.) Being in jail is far worse than what most of us have had to endure. But even in the midst of such a trial, was Paul discouraged? No—he was inspired! And he was inspiring God's people about the mystery of God! "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" (Colossians 1:29). Paul's whole life was geared around *Mystery of the Ages*—even in jail. Is it any wonder that we have also published it and gotten into a court battle for doing so?

LAODICEANS AND THE MYSTERY

Notice verse 28, where Paul gives a warning. "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." If the Laodiceans had a problem with the mystery in the first century, of course they'll have problems with it in the last century. *All* Laodiceans have this attitude toward that book.

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh" (Colossians 2:1). Paul was going through great suffering for Laodicea, as Mr. Armstrong did, and as I hope we do. "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full ASSURANCE of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the *mystery of God*, and of the Father, and of Christ" (verse 2). Paul essentially said, *I wish you understood this message the way I do*. Full assurance means clear and exact knowledge—knowledge which powerfully influences your religious life. So what Paul was saying is, "MOST OF YOU DON'T GET IT!" That is what Mr. Armstrong told his flock shortly before he died.

Mr. Armstrong said that on Pentecost of 1985, the day picturing the marriage of Christ's bride to her Husband. It was a WARNING to the bride of Jesus Christ: *You'd better GET THIS MYSTERY!* It's the same warning Paul was giving the Colossians and Laodiceans. The Colossians heeded it; the Laodiceans didn't. The same is happening today.

"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in

the spirit, joying and beholding your *order*, and the *stedfastness* of your faith in Christ” (verses 4-5). *Order*. *Stedfastness*. These are military words. Paul was writing from jail. He understood that we are in a WAR, and it’s over a mystery. There is no book, after the Bible, that Satan would rather destroy than *Mystery of the Ages*. As Mr. Armstrong said, it’s the second most important book on Earth. It’s worth dying for.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (verses 6-7). We must be rooted and built up in this mystery. Then no man can beguile us.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after *the rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ” (verse 8). “Rudiments of the world” actually means “ruling spirits of the universe.” Do you know any book, aside from *Mystery of the Ages*, which explains what these ruling spirits of the universe really are? When Satan is exposed, he’s much more wrathful, and he’ll come after anybody who isn’t rooted and built up in the mystery. This is what the war is all about. *Mystery of the Ages* is a major theater of that spiritual war. Satan is hopeless, and he wants to lead this world into hopelessness.

This is all in the *context* of the mystery of God.

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a *voluntary humility and worshipping of [demons]*, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And NOT HOLDING THE HEAD, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (verses 18-19). Paul says the Laodiceans have gotten into some monstrous sins. “Hath not seen” should read “HAS SEEN”—they’ve seen it, they know it, and now they deny it.

How does Paul address their government problem? By saying that the Laodiceans didn’t HOLD ON TO THE HEAD! They had the Head but didn’t HOLD it. Where is that happening on this Earth today?

Look at Colossians 4:2-3: “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, TO SPEAK

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, FOR WHICH I AM ALSO IN BONDS.” Paul continues discussing the mystery of God. This beautiful message, this *mystery* of Christ, actually got Paul thrown in jail. How could that happen? Well, Satan is the god of this world. He is exposed in *Mystery of the Ages*. And the little book exposes what he’s doing in God’s Church, and HE HATES IT!

You can see it when individuals leave this Church: They are with us and then gradually or suddenly they have a mind change. One minister vigorously supported *Mystery of the Ages* and then left, and now his crusade is against *Mystery of the Ages*. How do you explain that? It’s easy to explain—lose the Head and it will happen to you too!

In verses 13-17, Paul names some ministers. To Archippus, a Laodicean minister, he says, “Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.” He warned this minister because he was getting away from the mystery.

Paul must have written something like *Mystery of the Ages*, because he mentioned it over and over. But after he was in jail, people began to turn away. And after Mr. Armstrong DIED, people began to turn away.

Laodiceans are Laodicean in any age! THE LAODICEANS IN THE FIRST CENTURY WERE A PROPHECY OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN THIS END TIME—INSIDE GOD’S CHURCH. It revolves around *Mystery of the Ages*—a book tied directly to the book of Revelation.

So we have done battle over *Mystery of the Ages*. Did the appellate court loss discourage you? Such losses discouraged the Laodiceans in the first century; it discouraged them in the last. But it doesn’t discourage the very elect. They just hold on to the Head, and don’t allow evil angels to depress them.

ALL THE WORLD

The Apostle Paul talks about many prophecies the way Mr. Armstrong did: 2 Thessalonians 2; Colossians 1, 2 and 4; Romans 11; Romans 16. Paul’s age was a type of our time. Notice Ephesians 1:9, also written by Paul: “Having made known unto us the *mystery* of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.”

Paul is talking about this *mystery* again. Now look at chapter 3:

“For this cause I Paul, the *prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles*, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that BY REVELATION *he made known unto me the mystery*; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, *ye may understand my knowledge* in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (verses 1-5). Paul is in jail again for those Gentiles. Why? Because he was taking them this message about the mystery.

Notice, the mystery came by revelation. How did Mr. Armstrong understand *Mystery of the Ages*? By revelation. Revelation was given to be delivered, and that’s what Paul was faithfully doing. That’s what we must do. Paul wanted these people to understand “MY KNOWLEDGE.” Mr. Armstrong was pleading with the Church in that 1985 Pentecost message. He said, *You don’t get what I get*. He wanted us to study *Mystery of the Ages* to understand what he understood. That’s exactly what Paul was saying. *Understand this the way I understand it, and you won’t leave God. You’ll stay with the Head*. There’s a lot of depth in that statement.

Verse 9 reveals why we are part of this work today. “And to make ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” This vision, this fellowship, will be with ALL THE WORLD! The whole world is going to be taught *Mystery of the Ages*. That carries over to a time when we are spirit-born kings and priests. Mr. Armstrong used to always talk about the Church being a teachers’ college. You are learning to teach those people how to fellowship in this *Mystery of the Ages* and bring joy and peace and faith and strength into their lives.

Paul mentioned this over and over. “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the *mystery*, which was *kept secret* since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, *made known to ALL NATIONS for the obedience of faith*” (Romans 16:25-26). Our goal is not just to *make it known* to all nations. Paul says

we'll *teach* those people how to keep it in faith. It's not just a matter of merely saying, "Here's *Mystery of the Ages*." The hard part is OBEYING IT IN FAITH. That's what king-priests do today. We believe God. We know we're going to marry Jesus Christ. What we're doing today is just a small beginning, and we're about to deliver it to billions.

END-TIME ELIJAH

Notice Romans 11:1-2: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.*" God will not cast away the Laodiceans forever. With as much love as God has for His people, He'll do anything to bring them back. You're His son, His daughter; you're His family. He's not about to let you go if He can prevent it.

"[Don't you know] what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged [torn] down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (verses 3-4). Elijah felt alone, but he wasn't. God had preserved 7,000 faithful people—an interesting figure!

Remember this example, taken from 1 Kings 19. Sometimes we forget that this is *prophecy*: It is talking about a work of Elijah. "And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for *the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant*, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (verse 10). There is also an Elijah work in this end time. It is the same type of work done by the original Elijah. Mr. Armstrong, the modern-day Elijah, talked about people around him being like vultures waiting for him to die. The original Elijah thought the same way. He even repeated it in verse 14.

"Most of you don't get it!" said Mr. Armstrong. I was told by one minister that, at one time, Mr. Armstrong wondered if even 5 percent of the people got it. Is 1 Kings 19:10 a *prophecy* of an end-time Elijah, surrounded by all these Laodiceans, perhaps for a moment, thinking, *Am I the only one who gets it?*

“So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him” (verse 19). Understand that Elijah never worked with the 7,000. The man who worked with the 7,000 *followed* the Elijah work and *continued* the Elijah work. This is a message from God. Paul used this example; Matthew used it; John used it in the book of Revelation. This is about the transition from the Philadelphia era to the Laodicean era, and God says, *Elijah, I know how it looks because you’re surrounded by all these Laodiceans, but you’re not alone.* Just as Zadok the priest stayed loyal to the throne of David all the way through, the 7,000 remained loyal to the Elijah work ALL THE WAY THROUGH. Even the two witnesses will perform the miracles of Elijah right up until the seventh trump sounds and Jesus Christ returns. Additional information is available in our free booklet *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

God is willing to give us EVERYTHING for displaying that kind of loyalty. That is what we must keep our minds focused on.

TO HIM THAT OVERCOMES ...

Let’s go back to the seven churches of Revelation. “Unto the angel of the church of *Ephesus* write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden [lamps]” (Revelation 2:1). The great God of Revelation walks right in the middle of those lamps. Wherever you find the lamp, He is right in the middle. Do you believe that? Jesus Christ is walking in the middle of this little Church. Not on the periphery—He’s at the center. God makes everything revolve around this Church. The whole course of the world is determined by what this Church is proclaiming!

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;”—now there is a semi-colon; the thought is not finished. WHO HEARS WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS UNTO THE CHURCH? “To *him that overcometh* [CONQUERS] will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (verse 7). You have to CONQUER to be in the midst of this paradise of God. You have to CONQUER to really hear what the Spirit says to the churches. More military terminology.

“And unto the angel of the church in *Smyrna* write; These things saith the first and the last, *which was dead, and is alive*; I know thy works” (verse 8). The God of Revelation 1 was DEAD, and now He is alive. He died for you. Nobody has ever suffered trials like Christ! His visage was marred more than any man; and He died and shed His blood for *you*. And now that supreme royal Majesty is walking right in the midst of His very elect. Our Husband took a chance in losing it all, as did the Father. That’s *deep* love we don’t see today except when we read about it here.

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*” (verse 26). Yes, we are going to rule the Earth. “And I will give him the *morning star*” (verse 28). What’s that? Revelation 22:16 says JESUS CHRIST IS THE MORNING STAR! That’s OUR HUSBAND! God says I will GIVE HIM TO YOU. HE’S GOING TO MARRY YOU! That’s what the *mystery* is about!

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Revelation 3:5). Christ is not ashamed of us. Here He told the Sardis people, *If you conquer, I won’t blot your name out of the book of life*. But God DOES blot our names out if we don’t conquer! That’s the way it has to be. As Mr. Armstrong said so often, this is dangerous knowledge. You can get your name blotted out, and it would be as if you never lived. Is that discouraging? Not at all.

Instead, sacrificing your physical life is a small price to pay for such a towering reward. Of course, it is *harder* to be a *living sacrifice*, day after day—but it is worth it. We CAN CONQUER! God says even those dead Sardis people could have conquered if they just had been willing. He gave them the formula in verse 3: *Remember, and repent*.

Beginning in verse 7, God speaks to the Philadelphians. Notice verse 9: “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” You could say, “People from the synagogue of Satan right in the midst of Philadelphia? How discouraging!” But God doesn’t look at it that way. *This is*

the way God FASHIONS and MOLDS king-priests! He says you will be at the top of the heap if you can conquer, and REMAIN LOYAL TO THE ELIJAH WORK from beginning to end.

What kind of confidence and trust will God have in you in the World Tomorrow if you are loyal all the way through? God says the Philadelphians will be PILLARS, for all eternity, in that headquarters temple. Beautiful pillars make a temple look majestic. Though 50 percent of the Laodiceans will still become a part of the bride of Christ, they won't qualify to rule at headquarters.

Your race, your station in life, how poor you may be—these things make no difference if you are a spiritual Jew. God is not even talking about race. People can get hung up on race. God is trying to teach us about SPIRITUAL RACE. We have different races in this Church, but we're all spiritual Jews committed to this work! Jesus Christ says, *I don't care who you are, I am going to sit you right beside me on that throne because you're my wife!* Everyone will be a spiritual Jew or they will be NOTHING.

Christ does His work through the Philadelphians: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Why are we knocking on the Laodiceans' door with *Mystery of the Ages* and the little book? The following verses explain why.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, EVEN AS I ALSO OVERCAME, AND AM SET DOWN WITH MY FATHER IN HIS THRONE" (verse 21). We're talking about kings and priests, on a throne, right at the center of world history—and UNIVERSE HISTORY, eventually!

God promises us a throne. But what will it look like? It won't just look like David's throne on this Earth. There should be no break before chapter 4. Let's get a better insight into the throne God is going to give you. Here is where we will rule with this God of Revelation 1.

THE THRONE OF GOD

Revelation 4:1: "After this"—after this knocking on the door and after Christ told us about the throne—"I looked, and,

behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats [or thrones]: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads *crowns of gold*” (verses 2-4). We really are in a ROYAL environment! This is the expanded, glorious throne God offered us in Revelation 3 if we CONQUER. Revelation 3:22 says, *He that has ears, let him hear what I am saying.*

Let me give you an expanded vision of that throne—the real, majestic picture of the way God says it will be in His Kingdom and even beyond that 1,000-year period, out into eternity. WHEN I TALK ABOUT DAVID’S THRONE, I’M NOT TALKING ABOUT A LITTLE WOODEN CHAIR WITH A ROCK UNDER IT. I’M TALKING ABOUT THE ESTATE AND THE MEANING BEHIND THAT THRONE—the dignity and the character of the God who rules it. Our estate will be the whole world in the Millennium, and the whole universe after the Last Great Day. That is the real estate over which we will rule. It takes a special being to zip out into the universe and back when you have something like 400 billion stars in our galaxy alone.

What does that throne mean to you? Would you give your life for it? That’s what Luke 14:26 is about, isn’t it? You may have to give up your family, your husband, wife, children—and, it says, even your own life. It usually doesn’t happen, but it’s certainly conceivable. Some of these people in the Bible did. But when you really look at what God is giving you, what kind of a sacrifice is that? It’s hardly worth mentioning.

To His very elect, God says, *I will open doors for you, my kings and priests.* It’s an open door leading all the way out into the universe. We’re talking about the ultimate royalty of God and what He will give us.

“And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Revelation 4:5).

There are seven lamps before God's throne. They were there before the Church eras were here. **THE PHILADELPHIA LAMP IN THE LAODICEAN ERA TODAY IS A TYPE OF ONE OF THOSE SEVEN LAMPS BEFORE GOD'S THRONE!**

We give light to the world because we, like the moon, reflect the sun's, or God's, glory. That's what we do as the lamp of God. We must keep it burning with *Mystery of the Ages* and the little book. *Prophesy again. Rise up and measure.* God says, *Let me lead you. I'll open doors for you. I'll astound the world. I'll astound you.* And He does, week by week by week. God accomplishes the work using very limited means—as in Judges 7, where a little group of 300 out of 32,000 just grabbed a handful of water and off they went, ready to do battle. **THEY KNEW GOD WOULD WIN THE WAR! THEY WERE EAGER WARRIORS!** God had said, *Get rid of the fearful—give me 300 loyal men who look to me, and I'll astound you and the world and everybody else!* These 300 didn't look around and say, "Well, let's see, am I in the right place?" They knew God was there. They said, "What an honor!" We must have the same type of loyalty.

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [or creatures] full of eyes before and behind" (verse 6). There's a lot of activity and excitement going on there, and those lamps are shining brightly before God's throne. Today, we have that lamp in the form of revelation. Elisha received two portions of God's Holy Spirit. We certainly have two portions of revelation today: The revelation given to Mr. Armstrong and the revelation God has given us since that time. Our job is not to try to accumulate buildings or land or things; we are not striving to become "rich and increased with goods"—we are to **KEEP THE LAMP BURNING!** What spiritual thunder and lightning comes out of that throne!

"And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and

were created” (verses 9-11). Those living creatures have seen so much, and learned from it. They watched Christ come down here and die; they watched God the Father and Jesus Christ build this Family. They’re really impressed, and they just cast their crowns before God, so thankful to be a part of this ROYAL RULE of God.

And yet we will be over them. That galls Satan. When did God ever say to Lucifer, “You are my son”? He never did—but He says it to you!

The creatures say to God, “You have created all things.” We are created. Lucifer must have forgotten that. You are created. Keep yourself humble. Remember, you are dirt. And remember what God is!

Here’s the conclusion of the matter: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). This wife actually KNEW that Jesus Christ led this Church. WHAT WIFE WOULD EVER GET READY IF SHE WASN’T SURE THAT THE HUSBAND WOULD BE AT THE WEDDING ALTAR? You don’t see women go out and prepare for great weddings when they don’t even know if the man is going to show up. THIS WIFE GOT READY BECAUSE SHE KNEW HER HUSBAND WOULD BE THERE. HE’S GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR HER! THIS HUSBAND IS GOING TO SHOW! These two know each other.

This royal book of Revelation has it all. Sure, there are tough times to come, but it won’t be long before we are through those, once we get the rebellious, evil spirit out of man—the spirit that won’t let God the Father and Jesus Christ be his Head. After that, all you have is full, full, full JOY everywhere you look!

6

Thunder and Lightning

THE BIBLE REFERS TO NEW REVELATION AS *THUNDER and lightning*. There's a good reason for that: Thunder and lightning get our attention. We've probably all been jolted by a blast of thunder from a storm or startled and mesmerized by a streak of lightning. **SPIRITUAL** thunder and lightning from God should have a similar effect.

We are in the midst of a great spiritual storm inside God's own Church. Also, the greatest physical storm ever is about to strike the Earth. Because of the massive confusion in God's Church, God makes His presence known through intense thunder and lightning (spiritually speaking). There will be more thunder and lightning in a short span of time. But spiritual thunder and lightning mean nothing if you are spiritually blind and deaf. However, it is still thunder and lightning! How abundantly God has blessed us with new revelation.

God uses His thunderous revelation to get our attention. When He has something important to say, we need to be tuned in to Him. If we're not, we have some serious problems. As we get more focused on God's thunder, all of the messages will be more important to us.

GOD'S THRONE

Look again at the mighty source of this thunder. “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven [God’s throne], and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats [or thrones] I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded LIGHTNINGS AND THUNDERINGS AND VOICES: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Revelation 4:1-5).

Here we have lightnings and thunderings—a symbol of spiritual lightning and thunder, or revelation—coming from the throne. God’s very elect see the lighting and hear the thunder! Revelation doesn’t come from man—it comes from GOD’S THRONE.

And there are seven lamps before God’s throne, which are typed by seven Church eras—each one had God’s lamp. God THUNDERS His revelation through His very elect which have the lamp on this Earth! Meditate on *that* inspiring truth: Having a part in this work makes you very important to God. There is only *one* lamp on the Earth today.

MALACHI’S MESSAGE

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, SEVEN THUNDERS uttered their voices” (Revelation 10:1-3).

Think about the seven thunders of *Malachi’s Message*, or the *little book*. That book describes a tragedy within God’s

Church of proportions hard to fathom. It is thunder of eternal judgment—so many people are going to lose their eternal lives. That is a THUNDEROUS MESSAGE!

So this thunder represents new revelation—new revelation that could save God’s people, His own Church, from the Great Tribulation and eternal death. *Only* God’s Church is being judged today (1 Peter 4:17). The stakes for them are eternal life or death. That’s important thunder! It will enable so many of them to repent in the Great Tribulation. How else would they know what to repent of? I believe almost all of the Laodiceans would have lost everything forever, if not for what the PCG is doing to get this message out.

What an important message it is—to your family, your loved ones, the Laodicean members in the other churches. What an honor for us to have the message that thunders to them!

The biggest danger we face is being ho-hum about this thunder and lightning, because we receive so much of it and *have* received so much in the past under Herbert Armstrong.

THUNDER AT HOREB

In Exodus 19, Israel was receiving some revelation. Not all of it was *new*, but some was. God states, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me *a kingdom of priests*, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel” (Exodus 19:4-6). Israel was to be a kingdom of priests. This is what they rebelled against. Today, the Church of God is a kingdom of priests—spiritually.

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were *thunders and lightnings*, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp *trembled*” (verse 16). God wants us to TREMBLE before His Word. Spiritual thunder and lightning should have such an impact on us. “And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai

was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (verses 17-18).

God was giving Israel the Ten Commandments in codified form. Now what was He trying to achieve with the accompanying thunder and the lightning? He was trying to get those people to realize that this was not from a man, but from the great Creator of mankind! SPIRITUALLY, NEW REVELATION TODAY SHOULD HAVE A MUCH GREATER IMPACT ON OUR LIVES THAN PHYSICAL THUNDER AND LIGHTNING. Why? Because *it has eternal consequences!*

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:18-19). God was getting their attention.

FEAST OF INGATHERING

Exodus 23 includes the statutes, which were part of the covenant that God was giving them. It discusses the Feast of Ingathering (verse 16), depicting when the Israelites would have gathered in all the world, if they had listened to God. But they rebelled.

God brings us to the Feast of Tabernacles with spiritual thunder and lightning to prepare to do what Israel failed to do—gather in ALL THE WORLD! That’s why we attend the Feast, as kings and priests in embryo—a kingdom of priests. I hope we *never* get tired of hearing that.

Statistics reveal that 25,000 people die of malnutrition and starvation daily. At the Feast of Tabernacles we eat the best foods—things we can’t necessarily afford at other times. Why? As kings and priests, very soon we will permanently remove starvation from this Earth. And not just physical starvation, but *spiritual* as well.

Almost all who come to this Church from the Laodicean Church have said they were starving spiritually. And so they

GETTING THEIR ATTENTION Amid thunder and lightning, God delivered the law to Moses on Mount Sinai.



were. But we in this Church are certainly not starving spiritually. That's because we are attuned to God's thunder, and we allow God to get our attention with His inspiring messages.

REMEMBER THE LAW

Think of what has happened in the past. Moses led Israel, then Joshua followed him—two great leaders. But within one generation after Joshua died, Israel had *lost the Feast of Tabernacles*. Not once in the book of Judges did Israel keep the Feast. That could leave us rather incredulous, except that we have seen with our own eyes what the Laodiceans have done today—and they have God's Holy Spirit! Some of them already have lost the Feast of Tabernacles, to their great shame.

God instructs us to remember. "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb [Sinai] for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:4-6).

God is hearkening us back to Mount Sinai and the thunder and lightning. He is pointing us to the LAW and government He gave in the presence of Moses. He's saying, *Remember the law*. That's what the end-time Elijah revealed to us through God's inspiration. What thunder and lightning Mr. Armstrong delivered from God!

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong kept the Feast of Tabernacles alone for seven years. The Sardis Church had already lost the truth about God's holy days. When Mr. Armstrong presented it to the Sardis leaders, they laughed contemptuously at him. Then he and his wife kept it for seven more years without even understanding why. Not until 1945 did he learn that it was a type of the Millennium. You and I understand that because God revealed it to him.

THERE IS A GREAT LESSON IN THAT. GOD REVEALED THE PURPOSE OF THE FEAST ONLY AFTER MR. ARMSTRONG STEPPED OUT ON FAITH. HE WOULD NOT HAVE REVEALED *WHY*, HAD NOT MR. AND MRS. ARMSTRONG STEPPED OUT ON FAITH AND OBEYED GOD'S COMMAND.

That is how God leads us to grow in faith! When we see that God commands something, we just do it, regardless of how little we understand.

You can understand why so many people are not in the Philadelphia Church of God when you understand that principle. Mr. Armstrong began the Philadelphia era in 1933 with 19 members. That's a small number. In 1989 the PCG began with 12 members. But regardless of the numbers, Mr. Armstrong began, and we began, with *a lot of thunder and lightning*. We had REVELATION FROM GOD. That is everything. If you don't have revelation, God is not with you. Don't despise the day of small beginnings—whether it's 12, 19, 900, 10,000 or whatever. If Jesus Christ is there and you have thunder and lightning, stay with Christ. Numbers are irrelevant. Men of stature are irrelevant.

The Philadelphians can see Christ in a *small* Feast of Tabernacles. They can see Christ in a *small* work. They can see Christ in a *little* book that's accompanied by thunder—seven thunderbolts from God. That's what's important. That's what sets them apart.

Don't follow men. Those who haven't quite learned that lesson soon depart if they don't learn it. We don't follow men. We follow the God who reveals His truths to us; the God who gives us that thunder and lightning.

END-TIME ELIJAH

“And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? [That is, just before the return of Christ.] And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore ALL THINGS” (Matthew 17:10-11). That's a lot of thunder and lightning! This man restored ALL things. A great abundance of revelation. There was more spiritual thunder and lightning then than any time EVER on this Earth. That is because God gives a fuller understanding just before Christ returns. This is talking about SPIRITUAL understanding of God's law and God's government—His master plan.

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG RESTORED ALL THINGS FOR GOD. THAT WAS OUR SPIRITUAL MOUNT SINAI! God's very elect tremble before that message. When we hear the thunder, we

tremble. We're all under government. I've never changed ONE JUDGMENT that Mr. Armstrong made about the law and the statutes. I'm under government. We all are.

All that lightning and thunder was there, and yet look at this prophecy in verses 12 and 13: "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." The disciples knew, but there were a lot of others who didn't know. They didn't even know that John the Baptist was a type of Elijah. They didn't know he was that first-century Elijah. All that *thunder* and *lightning*—and they STILL DIDN'T GET IT!

ALL of the lukewarm, rebellious Laodiceans will tell you they don't believe Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the Elijah office and restored ALL THINGS. They don't get it because they *refuse* to understand. What an indescribable shame!

One evangelist said that he would wait and let Christ show him who the end-time Elijah is. So Christ is going to show him the HARD WAY, if that is what it takes.

COME AND SEE

The Jews were taken captive in 585 B.C. When they were later sent back to their land, they rebuilt the temple and they had a Feast of Tabernacles unlike any they had celebrated in 900 years. Ezra was there with them, and he told them to prepare their hearts to SEEK THE LAW, or the commandments of Exodus 20. They continued keeping the statutes—the holy days of God—after they had established *the law*. To have great Feasts of Tabernacles, we have to individually establish God's law and government in our lives as Ezra did.

If you look in Nehemiah, these Jews actually *wept* when God revealed the law to them. But look what it took to bring them to that state. They had to go into captivity. Then, once they came back and God revealed His law again and gave them all that thunder and lightning, this time they all cried like little children.

Here is the point we need to learn deeply. Let's learn the law God has given us *in good times*. The only way we'll get into God's Kingdom is to learn to seek God's law and government.

We can either find it the easy way or the hard way. If you think this is a hard way, look at the Great Tribulation: There will never be a time of suffering like it. But it's the only way God can get the rebellious Laodiceans—and only 50 percent of them at that—to seek and love the law of God. Also, it is the only way God can get the attention of the nations of Israel.

If we keep the law the way we should, we will have great Feasts of Tabernacles. But if we begin to resist it and fight against it, we won't. We may even have terrible Feasts of Tabernacles. That's the way it works.

How difficult it is for some people to get this message. I hope and pray to God we don't have to return from CAPTIVITY before we learn this thunderous message! There is really no reason why we should.

This law was revealed to Mr. Armstrong with much lightning and thunder. It has already been revealed, and all we have to do is seek it, love it and be thankful to God for it.

God makes an appeal to us in Revelation 6: "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were *the noise of THUNDER*, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see" (Revelation 6:1). This physical thunder is a symbol of spiritual thunder. So here one of the seals was opened and that was accompanied by thunder. This new revelation was accompanied by thunder just like *Malachi's Message* was. Spiritual thunder accompanies revelation, and it really represents new revelation.

But in this appeal, notice God says, *I want you to COME and SEE*. When God opens a seal or opens up understanding to our minds and gives us revelation, He's saying to us, *Come and see!* He's appealing to His people, saying, *If there is revelation, WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?* Not from a man. *Come and see*—the excitement is in the heavens.

True revelation comes from God and no place else. That's why He tells us to look at the spiritual thunder and lightning. This is something beyond the realm of men.

God is preparing His king-priests now. Look how much thunder and lightning of revelation we've had in the Philadelphia era under Mr. Armstrong and now in the PCG. We're receiving so much revelation! It's possible we could be lulled to sleep by getting so much.

THERE HAS BEEN NO MORE EXCITING TIME EVER IN MAN'S HISTORY THAN THIS TIME WE LIVE IN TODAY. We are honored to be the final group before Jesus Christ returns to this Earth and begins to use us as His king-priests. That's what we are: God's royalty. That's reality.

God appeals to us, at the Feast of Tabernacles, to COME AND SEE. But there's 95 percent of God's people who don't *come and see* because of their own pride. They have been deceived. They simply won't come.

God only appeals. He says, *When I reveal something, or open a seal, or give revelation, come and SEE and you'll have all of the excitement of God there.* Nothing will ever change that. This is the truth of God. This is revelation from God. Most of God's people have gone to sleep spiritually, but we must not.

THE GREAT FALLING AWAY OF GOD'S PEOPLE IS, OF ITSELF, A TERRIFYING, THUNDEROUS WARNING TO EACH ONE OF US!

Don't botch that magnificent moment that you have to be with Jesus Christ at His Feast of Tabernacles. Understand where revelation comes from. Certainly not from men. Jesus Christ will continue to give us new revelation. He is giving us *thunder and lightning*—and He wants us to be moved by it.

We need to be so thankful to God for receiving the old and new revelation like nobody has ever received it in the history of man. Be thankful! Rejoice! *Come and see* what God has given us in the form of NEW REVELATION! Thunder is going to keep coming and coming and coming until we're sitting on that throne with God.

7

The Message of the Lion of Judah

THERE IS ONE MAIN INSTRUCTION FOR GOD'S CHURCH in the book of Revelation: *Deliver the message*. That is God's primary concern, for a couple of reasons. He wants the *mystery* out there, the mystery of Revelation 10:7 that must be finished. But He's also shaping and molding the people who deliver that message, preparing them to rule at headquarters forever, where they'll know precisely who is in charge and how to respond to Him.

So, in Revelation 10:11, we have this instruction: "*Thou must prophesy again* before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." God says, "I want to see how many people I have out there who really love the truth and love me." We are being evaluated. God gives us this message, which includes *Malachi's Message*, and revelation about the major prophets, minor prophets and former prophets. It includes *Mystery of the Ages* and all the revelation that God gave to Herbert Armstrong. And He wants us to deliver it. As we step out on faith, God gives us more revelation and more blessings, and we develop more character in the process.

Now, God's objectives being what they are, you can expect that this is not going to be an easy job.

MEASURING THE DESTRUCTION

Israel was destroyed in 721-718 B.C. If you add the prophesied 2,520 years to 718, it brings you to 1803, when the United States made the Louisiana Purchase and began to prosper. (Request *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* for more details.) Britain was also becoming a world power. God said in Hosea, “For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold” (Hosea 2:8). God precisely measured all these blessings in building Israel. And now He’s going to measure their destruction.

Notice this passage in the book of Amos: “Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood [by] a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand” (Amos 7:7). This is about Israel’s rise to power and its fall in this end time, and God is standing *by* that wall “with a plumbline.”

“And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more” (verse 8). God is right there in the midst of Israel with a plumbline. This is the great God who created us, and He knows how to teach these people to finally turn it around. He has a plumbline—a measuring device—and He’s measuring the destruction of Israel like an architect. God says, *This is really the last time—the FINAL WARNING!* There won’t be another warning after we have finished delivering *Mystery of the Ages* again.

“And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword” (verse 9). The “high places of Isaac” refers to the Laodicean Church that began well but, to this point, has ended badly. God says it will be desolate. He begins at His sanctuary. This shows how angry He is with His people.

Notice God says, “I will rise against the house of Jeroboam [the nations of Israel] with the sword.” God *Himself* is bringing a sword against us! It’s time to wake up!

“PROPHECY NOT AGAIN”

“But *prophecy not again* any more at Bethel: for it is the king’s chapel [or sanctuary], and it is the king’s court” (verse 13). Here

we see a group of people saying they've had enough of God's teachings and prophecies. They are part of a work that began well and so far has ended badly, in this end time.

This whole passage is a prophecy describing the trouble we find ourselves in today. You could say these people Amos describes want no more of Herbert Armstrong, *Mystery of the Ages* and God's revelation.

But there is another group that holds on to the Head while everyone else is letting go. When one group says, "Prophecy not again," this other group responds, "We are going to prophesy!" And they deliver *Mystery of the Ages* and other literature to the world.

In 1990, I wrote in *Malachi's Message*, "The Philadelphian group is persecuted *before* they go to a place of safety (Revelation 12:13) and they are *separate* from the Laodicean group (verse 17). Here, and in Malachi 3:16, it reveals that these two groups separate and can't 'walk together' some time *before* the Tribulation. Do the Laodiceans inflict part of the pre-Tribulation persecution on the Philadelphians? Malachi 2:10, 14-16, is about the LAODICEANS BEING 'TREACHEROUS' TO THE PHILADELPHIANS. That treachery comes just before and after the two groups split" (page 140).

And in 1992, in *The Lion Has Roared*, on page 28, I wrote this statement: "Is there going to be a direct confrontation between the Laodicean and Philadelphian churches in the near future? Here is why that COULD EASILY HAPPEN. The leaders in the United States and Britain will know that the Philadelphia Church of God came out of the Worldwide Church of God. The leaders of the nation could enlist the WCG in an attempt to stop the PCG's message."

Page 30 states, concerning Amos 7:11, 13: "Again we see the 'prophecy not'-'prophesy' TENSION OF AMOS 2 AND 3. It could be that one of the biggest confrontations is between two of God's own churches—the PCG and the WCG. The PCG must tell Israel that THEY shall be 'led away captive out of their own land'! The WCG is trying, even now, to squelch such a message."

Amos 2:11-12 says "prophesy not." Amos 3:3 mentions a Church split. Then Amos 7:13 says "prophesy not again." This is nothing new in God's Church.

Remember, this is all prophecy. "Then Amaziah the priest

of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words” (verse 10). Amaziah was the priest of Bethel—the house of God. So here is a minister from God’s lukewarm, Laodicean Church, somehow getting a message to the leader of the land in an attempt to stop God’s message. This is a confrontation between God’s people, the leaders of the land and a priest of the house of Bethel. Our court case with the WCG was probably just the first stage of that mighty confrontation!

This minister tells the leader, “The land is not able to bear all his words.” He apparently knows a lot about the people preaching God’s message, because he knows about the message. He knows what to omit to make it look very evil: “For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land” (verse 11). Now that is true. But then, of course, he leaves out a big part of the message. Yes, the leader will die by the sword—if he doesn’t repent. But Amaziah fails to mention that if the leader and the people were to repent, they would not have to go into this terrible time of suffering! Even if they don’t repent before, God will still bring them out of it, if they repent while in captivity. Amaziah conveniently omits that in his discussion with the king.

“Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there” (verse 12). In other words, *You are in this for bread, or money. Go to Judah, go over into that part of the world.* So this man seems to know about the place of safety—probably because he grew up in the Church where it was taught!

“But prophesy not again ANY MORE at Bethel: for it is the king’s [sanctuary], and it is the king’s court” (verse 13). They say, “We don’t want any doomsday preachers around here. We’re all mainstream and we don’t want the heresy you teach. Don’t prophesy again. We got rid of *Mystery of the Ages* FOR A REASON.” But who is really behind all this?

DELIVER THE MESSAGE

“Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a

gatherer of sycomore fruit: And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel” (verses 14-15). Amos didn’t have any ancestry in the priesthood. He was a farmer, but he had God’s message and delivered it the way God said.

To God’s very elect, it doesn’t make any difference who comes with God’s message. They are intelligent people spiritually, and CANNOT BE DECEIVED. That’s why God will put them at His headquarters forever.

We must realize who we are. We have to be like Amos, Jeremiah, Gideon and all those men of God. It’s like we’re going to have to walk right off the pages of the Bible, right out of our shepherding job, and tell the LEADERS OF THE LAND that unless they repent, they are going to die by the sword. And they are going to be taken into captivity out of their own land. That’s not good news, but that’s the truth if they don’t heed this message.

Amos spoke out fearlessly: “Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac” (verse 16). “Drop not thy word” refers to water or dew falling down from heaven. It can also mean to speak by inspiration, or to *prophecy*. God revealed the book of Amos shortly after the PCG began. Mr. Armstrong admitted that he didn’t understand this book. It’s like spiritual rain—the Holy Spirit bringing a message from God. Realize this: It could be that Amaziah and the people who follow him have lost their salvation because they *know* it’s from the God of heaven, and they still say, *STOP IT! Drop not thy word!*

Amos’s answer: “Therefore thus saith the Lord; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line [measured with a plumbline]; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land” (verse 17). How did Amos know that Amaziah’s wife was going to die as a harlot? How did he know specifically that his children were going to die by the sword? He didn’t get it from the Bible. God must have revealed it to him. Amos is saying that if we don’t heed this message, women will die or become harlots, and men and children will die by the sword.

These are prophecies of God's wrath. We must think seriously about them. If you think delivering *Mystery of the Ages* is rough, take a look at what happens to God's people who REFUSE to deliver it! This is the God of judgment that they don't like to hear about (Malachi 2:17). They only like the God of mercy and love—never the God of judgment (which is also a part of God's love). That's why they are so deceived about our message. As they try to stop it, things will get worse. There will be a greater confrontation. And as Amos 8:11 says, soon there will be a famine of the word.

We represent the living God. When the state of California attacked the Worldwide Church of God and Herbert Armstrong in 1979, Mr. Armstrong put ads in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and other major newspapers saying, "Mr. Attorney General, you have ATTACKED THE LIVING GOD." Wow! That's the Lion of Judah. Mr. Armstrong wasn't going to surrender. We have power on our side. We have the Lion of Judah with us. Mr. Armstrong told the attorney general in those ads, "You are supposed to ENFORCE THE LAW, NOT BREAK IT." Sometimes we have to deliver strong words to this evil society.

THE LION OF JUDAH

Do we understand how *special* it is to receive revelation from God—from this Lion of Judah? Not receiving any new revelation shows that God's people are under a curse. Christ is not leading them.

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, *sealed* with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I WEPT MUCH, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (Revelation 5:1-4). God had promised John a revealing, and John had been flooded with revelation. Then suddenly it stopped—AND JOHN BEGAN TO WEEP. THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF CHURCHES OF GOD TODAY WITH NO REVELATION, AND THEY OUGHT TO BE *WEEPING!*



But notice this: “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (verse 5). This book stated that no being in heaven or on this Earth or under the earth could reveal this book. But here comes the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He’s going to open it. IF YOU HAVE NEW REVELATION, YOU KNOW THE LION OF JUDAH IS WITH YOU! Now that means there’s a lot of *power* behind you. He’s telling us that if we have the Lion of Judah with us, some amazing revelations are coming our way. We must know where they’re coming from. You can’t find any being in heaven or on Earth or under the earth or anyplace else that can give you revelation—but GOD! If you have revelation, you truly have something special. You are God’s very elect.

Realize who we are and who is leading us! *Not holding the Head is a serious problem.* The LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH leads this little group. And if we do our job, and people say, “Prophecy not again,” we’re going to answer with Christ’s prophecy. The miracles in this Church are astounding! Never forget where revelation comes from.

Some who have left this Church have gotten into a bizarre view of prophecy, thinking somehow God is using them. But if we’re discerning, we will stay in awe of God’s true revelation. Remember, THE FATHER revealed this to Christ. And Christ came down here and revealed it just as His Father said—government all the way.

Revelation ONLY comes from God’s GOVERNMENT! Christ gave us precisely what His Father—the supreme government—gave to Him. Revelation from God also means we have God’s government. In this end time, if you do NOT have God’s revelation, you are rebelling against His government!

Christ gave Herbert W. Armstrong God’s government and revelation. The PCG also has God’s revelation. That means we continue submitting to the exact same government of God that Mr. Armstrong taught us.

So it says in verse 5 that this Lion of the tribe of Judah has “prevailed”—or conquered—and was then given the authority to open the book. WE HAVE TO CONQUER SATAN, OURSELVES AND THE WORLD IF WE ARE GOING TO RECEIVE REVELATION. *We can*

conquer. We *can* make it into the Kingdom of God if we remain loyal to God—to the Lion of Judah—and tap into that power.

We may be a spectacle to the world. But the great spectacle is really those Laodicean churches. Someone once said there are something like 75 offshoots from the Worldwide Church of God. They don't even know who they are anymore. That's the way God said it would be. If we don't hold the Head, Satan will just splinter us into nothing. We really have to learn to hold the Head. We have to learn to love being ruled by Jesus Christ. Here's why.

Verse 5 calls the Lion of the tribe of Judah "*the Root of David.*" This Lion of Judah is the *Root* of David. Revelation 22:16 also says Christ is the root and *offspring* of David. Yes, He's in that physical genealogy. But saying Christ is the *Root* of David means He was Melchisedec in the Old Testament. He CREATED DAVID. HE CREATED THE UNIVERSE. This verse is talking about the *royal line* of David—trying to get us to understand what kind of spiritual genealogy we have! There is no royalty on Earth to compare with this!

But there's something we must learn if we are to be a part of it.

THE HORN

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (verse 6). Here this great Being appears as a lamb—not a lion. We need to understand both characteristics.

The seven horns and seven eyes refer to the seven eras. The horns are a symbol of *government*. The eyes are about being a watchman. But if you don't learn about the horns, you'll never be a watchman for God. You'll never see yourself the way you really are or the work of God the way it really is. *God* gives the sight that makes us a watchman.

First, you must submit to the horn—the government. Of course, the ministry, the government, should be the helpers of your joy (2 Corinthians 1:24). They shouldn't domineer over people, depressing them or discouraging them. They are here

to serve. It's not the other way around. They are to help you really build your joy. But there *is* government, and we have to hold on to the Head.

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (Revelation 11:1-2). These people who prophesy again, who have *Mystery of the Ages* and the little book, have been given the government to measure God's people, or the inner court. We don't go into the outer court where there are 75 splinter groups to measure them, because they refuse to be ruled by God. But we do give them a strong warning.

Government must come first, or you don't have the understanding from God and the authority to know how to measure. God measures the ministers first, and they help Him measure the Church.

We're talking about something given from *above*: Somebody has been given a rod, or authority. This is the greatest blessing God can give us. We must learn to see that and love it. Just trust God to take care of you and me and the ministry, and He'll work out any problem that arises. If the Head is not here, you ought to flee. But He is here!

We must look to God. “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man ...” (Jeremiah 17:5).

You can't do the work of God in Satan's world unless you have the government of God. Just look at the rebellious Laodiceans. They are doing virtually no work compared to ours.

LAODICEAN PRIDE

In the *Global Church of God News*, August/September 1997, Rod Meredith stated, “First, we do practice the correct form of church government. Not perfectly, of course, but we do not have politics or voting in selecting our ministers, determining our doctrine, deciding whether we are going to do a work ... even though some outside observers claim otherwise. We do follow the general pattern of church government.” What does he mean, “general pattern?” Let's get specific.

Mr. Meredith also said, “We must never forget that Christ was and is alive. Why has there not been more deep respect shown for Mr. Armstrong by the various groups that have split off? Why have so many tried to reinvent the wheel, rejecting the clear teaching on government that Christ revealed through this man?” Sounds pretty good, but read on. “Why? Is it because they think that Christ was asleep during the long years of Mr. Armstrong’s ministry? Do they fail to understand that it was the living Christ who was actually doing that powerful work and that He was the same yesterday, today and forever? (Hebrews 13:8).” That sounds good to me. But notice the concluding paragraph:

“So Christ was not in any way surprised that this great falling away took place. He knew this would happen and He intended to use it as a test to see if His people would hang on to the basic truths He had placed in His Church through Mr. Armstrong, AND the SENIOR EVANGELISTS who assisted him for decades in establishing and building a really powerful work.”

Matthew 17:10-11 does not say that God is going to send an end-time Elijah AND SENIOR EVANGELISTS to restore all things, as Mr. Meredith said. God says He reveals truth to holy apostles and prophets—*not to senior evangelists* (Ephesians 3:5). Mr. Meredith did say they were *assisting*, but still, he said that God put those great truths in the Church through Mr. Armstrong *and the senior evangelists*. They are putting themselves on the same level as God’s end-time Elijah, and they don’t belong there! *Neither do I*.

Christ said, “I will send my messenger”—singular (Malachi 3:1). Not “my messenger and senior evangelists.” God said He would send Elijah the prophet (Malachi 4:5-6). God didn’t say He would “send Elijah and senior evangelists”!

This is dangerously serious! In the *Obadiah* booklet, I wrote about how the Esau Laodiceans will lose their eternal lives—their birthright. Why? Because THEY ARE DECEIVED BY PRIDE. Mr. Meredith’s statement is not one of humility. The very elect know that is a statement of pride.

The Laodiceans are not getting any revelation, because they are not humble or childlike. They’re not holding the Head (Colossians 2:19). If you don’t have the Head, you have nothing. If you get enough pride into your head, you will be deceived.

The reasoning we see in the Laodiceans will only lead to the Great Tribulation. Can't we humble ourselves and say, "God, please help me to search out your truth and to search out where your work is—where the Lion of Judah is"? After all, you ought to be able to find the powerful Lion of Judah if you honestly search for Him. **BEWARE OF THE ATTITUDE THAT DOESN'T WANT TO FIND HIM.** The problem is that the Laodiceans don't want to find Him.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah is in the inner court, measuring. He tells those in there with Him, *Go ahead and measure.* So let's measure. Who has the government of God? Or, as Paul expressed it in Colossians, who has the Head?

Do you think that the Global and United churches want *Mystery of the Ages*? Many of their members think so. But there's a section in *Mystery of the Ages* titled "One Church with One Government." That's in the "Mystery of the Church" chapter. Both Global and United will tell you there are several branches of God's Church. They'll say that they are branches of God's true Church, even though they have different governments. They say *there's not one Church, and there's not one government.* They say you can go to all of those branches—except one—and it's okay. They advise members to stay away from the one group which has the Head. It's terrible that they deceive so many people!

Mystery of the Ages talks about an end-time Elijah. Mr. Armstrong reluctantly admitted to fulfilling that office. That wasn't vanity. That was the truth. And he said he preached the gospel around the world (Matthew 24:14). Now these churches say that is their goal. But Mr. Armstrong said he *finished* that specific work. He also discusses in his book the 18 restored truths, with the first truth on that list being government—the same government that they have rejected. Do they really want *Mystery of the Ages*? **THEY DO NOT.**

CAST THEM OUT

IF WE DON'T HAVE GOD'S GOVERNMENT, "WOLVES" ARE PROPHECIED TO COME IN AND TEAR THE INNER COURT APART AND MAKE IT THE OUTER COURT. God says if you have people like that, cast them out (Revelation 11:2). That means using force

or power and being decisive doing it. God wants to make sure we keep the inner court holy. If we have somebody acting like a wolf or causing serious problems, we cast them out. That's what Christ told us to do. *Either we cast out Satan or Satan casts out Christ!*

That phrase *leave out*, or cast out, is the same expression you'll find in Luke 4:29, where Christ was thrown out of the city. We are in a war, and *spiritual survival is at stake*. If you're in the outer court, you're going to be destroyed and trod underfoot by the Gentiles. We get a little insight into that by looking at World War II videos and the concentration camps. But the next war will be much worse.

We don't want to see anyone trod underfoot. And our leading ministers will cast somebody out if we see that person leading a member or prospective member in that direction. God is going to back us in that.

This casting out is an ongoing process. One minister who left the PCG was upset that we put some people out of the Church. But we use the government of God to keep people from destroying the inner court. The Laodiceans have not learned that. When the Philadelphia Church of God began, God *cast out* 95 percent of His people! Do you want to get angry with God for doing that? If they don't change their ways, He's going to cast them out of the Kingdom. They'll see people of Sodom and Gomorrah entering in, while they're being cast out! We must see the big picture.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (Revelation 11:3). Here are two witnesses clothed in sackcloth. I have no idea who they're going to be, but I know they will be two very humble men, and one of them will be in charge. If God sent two of these "senior evangelists," they would be fighting over who was to be in charge! What do you do with a government like that? It fails every time!

If we don't have God leading us, life doesn't work. Man *can't* lead himself! We are little children who need to be taught God's precious and wonderful truth—His royal law which makes us royal.

Regarding Revelation 11:1, the historian Josephus says that the veil before the inner court was made with the most marvelous skill, of embroidered fine linen of blue, scarlet and

purple. HE WRITES THAT, WHEN YOU LOOK BEHIND THE VEIL, IT TYPIFIES THE UNIVERSE. THE INNER COURT OPENS UP THE WHOLE UNIVERSE TO YOU. GOD WANTS *UNIVERSE* RULERS! And if you don't hold on to the Head, you will wreck it all. God has seen that scenario with Lucifer. He'll have no more of it. So He will let us die forever to put us out of our misery.

CLOTHED WITH THE UNIVERSE

Revelation 11:19 mentions the ark in heaven. Inside the ark is the law. And there always had to be somebody to administer the law. This introduces chapter 12.

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman *clothed with the sun*, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Revelation 12:1). Here's quite a woman! She is clothed with the sun, has the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars—all kinds of brilliant light! *And the time setting is right now.* If people can see spiritually, there is a woman who is clothed with the SUN—led by the Lion of Judah, a type of Jesus Christ—and they have all this light, all this revelation. Everybody should be able to see it, but the Laodiceans are blind. **THEY DON'T WANT TO SEE; THEY REFUSE TO SEE.** But the light is there. The glory is there, and it's out of this world. We're talking about THE SUN, MOON AND STARS—THE ROYALTY God is giving His Church. That is royalty like you have never seen before. She is crowned with the 12 stars, those 12 tribes which relate to the throne of David. *What royalty!* And He's offering these positions to mere *mud*—people made of clay. What a future we have.

When the moon is out, especially a full moon, it is so bright it's almost like daytime. But from where does the moon get its light? *From the sun.* Take away the sun and it's a dark, ugly, barren, cold piece of dirt. That's the way it is with us: Take away the light of God and see how spiritually dark and barren we get! We're here to *reflect* God's glory. When we cease to do that, we're in trouble. God's glory is all we have. We don't have any light of ourselves!

The Laodiceans have a lot of talented people. They feel they need nothing. They have *senior evangelists*. There's not a fig-picker like Amos among the leaders.

“And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered” (verse 2). *God’s Church is going through something like the pain of giving birth to a child* BECAUSE WE TRULY ARE STRUGGLING TO BE BORN! Sure there are difficult trials. But don’t think only about the pain—*think about the birth*. About being *born again*. Of course we are going through trials and difficulties. God is getting us ready to SAVE THE WORLD. We’re saviors. We must get our minds off ourselves. We must think about saving people by teaching them to follow their Head.

In the meantime, there is a lot of pain, because we are fighting the god of this world. “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” (verse 3). Here he comes again. He gets drunk once more on the blood of the saints. It all revolves around two women: God’s wife and this old harlot that tries to act like God’s wife—the Roman Empire. This is the seventh time this so-called Holy Roman Empire comes back, and every time, it’s at one with SATAN. This empire will have great power, given by Satan.

The scholars can’t figure this out. The religious people can’t figure it out. *Lange’s Commentary*, which is out of print, is one of the few commentaries that knows this refers to the Roman Empire, ruled over by the Catholic Church. Shouldn’t we be able to understand if we’re God’s Church? The only people who really understand are the people who have this light. We know what is happening in Europe. If the people of this world knew, they would be terrified! We’re going to have to tell them. There are signs that ought to give those in modern Israel direction, but they won’t listen, because Satan rules them too and is going to destroy them.

For 1,260 years this old harlot has been attacking and persecuting God’s Church. And for 1,260 days she is going to do it again, and we’re going to have to flee to a place of safety. Then Jesus Christ is going to come back, and He will smash that beast once and for all, and we’ll be right there with Him. Thank God!

John then goes on to talk about the destructive power of Satan the devil. Satan has a tail that took one third of the great, brilliant angels with him (verse 4). And now he has

deceived some 95 percent of God's Church. When a minister leaves this Church, we ask him, "Don't you realize that Satan is getting to you?" Generally the answer is, "No, not me. I understand Satan." But he doesn't. We won't understand Satan either, unless God gives us the eyes to see. As on the Day of Atonement, when the priest cast lots to determine which goat was the Azazel (Leviticus 16:7-8), *God* must show us where Satan is. He's called "that old serpent" (Revelation 12:9). He's old, ancient. A few translations call him *that ancient devil, demon* or *dragon*. But he's still deceiving and seducing the whole world. And he keeps fighting God and us.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and *strength*, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (verse 10). Satan is right here on Earth today. We in the Church will be accused. Satan will use *all* of his deceitful power to destroy us. But God tells us to look at the *strength* we have! That means *force*, or *miraculous power*. It is the power of Jesus Christ. WE'RE NOT PICTURED HERE AS WEAK PEOPLE, BUT STRONG, LIKE THE LION OF JUDAH! But only if we hold on to and act just like the Head. We must follow His example. We must fight the way He does.

Ultimately, many Laodiceans will get back to holding the Head. "And they [conquered] him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (verse 11). They will finally repent and die for God. Fifty percent of them will be saved spiritually. What a painful way to gain salvation!

Why do the Laodiceans have to die? Because they're just not qualified to sit as royalty with Jesus Christ to rule this Earth from headquarters. Christ wants to know that if anybody comes to headquarters with a question, they would get the answer JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF WOULD GIVE. The Laodiceans are not qualified to do that. They aren't a loyal and faithful witness to this word. They don't read or teach Matthew 17:10-11 the way Jesus Christ does.

We know this because we have new revelation—because we are like the Lion and the Lamb who gives us the *strength* and *humility* we need to do whatever is necessary.

THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM

“And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Revelation 5:7-8). Here you have these four living creatures and the 24 elders falling down before the Lamb. They are responsible for your prayers. **GOD HAS SPECIFIC ANGELS MONITORING ALL OF YOUR PRAYERS!**

Look at the royal environment in which your prayers are handled. *Look at the priority God gives your prayers! You must place the same supreme importance on your prayers!* You must remember where they are going. This has a lot to do with how God’s people are judged today. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Do your prayers avail much today?

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (verses 9-11). **WHAT A CHOIR**—what a magnificent sound that will be. What a future God has for His people! Kings and priests will be working with those millions of angels.

“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (verse 12). There are not enough adjectives to describe what is ahead for us.

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (verse 13). At this point, all will be holding the Head. **EVERY HUMAN, ANIMAL AND INSECT**

WILL BE IN HARMONY WITH GOD! We will all be singing a new song about looking to God the Father and our Husband. The whole world will be a part of God's Family—unity and harmony like never before.

Today, we have to qualify for that. We have to work to bring this harmony into the Church. And then we will be ready to teach it to the entire world and will, indeed, have them all singing a new song. It will be one song that *everybody* sings, not just a few. That is truly praising God.

“And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever” (verse 14). That means living for ever and ever—time that you can't even calculate. This is what God is giving to His royal people in the marriage that we will soon experience with Jesus Christ. We will be ruling the whole universe, bringing eternal peace and joy forever.

Do we see? Do we understand? It's all there for us. It's so wonderful that when John saw it, just in a vision, he fainted. This is our future—our transcendent, royal future. No wonder God gives us the job of delivering His message. No wonder we face such obstacles today. God is preparing us, doing everything He can to get His bride ready—because He really does need help dealing with all those billions and billions of people.

Let's all work together to build that harmony, continually holding to the Head—that powerful Lion of Judah.

ADDITIONAL READING

The Philadelphia Church of God produces many informative and interesting publications that you may want to request.

Here are a few you might consider:

Jeremiah and the Greatest Vision in the Bible

The book of Jeremiah was written to the people of Israel over 100 years after they had gone into captivity. Think about that! Why would God cause Jeremiah to do such a thing? Because the book of Jeremiah is primarily for Israel in the end time! And that includes spiritual Israel, or God's Church. Jeremiah's message for us today is more stirring, corrective, inspiring and far-reaching than you can imagine.

Daniel Unlocks Revelation

The book of Revelation is a mystery to most people. However, few understand that the Old Testament book of Daniel is the key to comprehending the mysterious book of Revelation. Daniel continually realized that God was his judge and therefore refused to compromise, regardless of the trial he found himself in. It is only to someone with that kind of an attitude that God can reveal spiritual understanding that unlocks His incredible revelation.

Prophecy Again

This commission may even be beyond what our human minds can fully comprehend at this time! The mystery has to be declared today. But this work is also to teach all humanity that the mystery must be dispensed, or declared, to every person ever created. They are not just taught the mystery, but are taught to teach it. Why? Is it possible God will keep expanding His Family throughout the universe forever?

You can write for your own *free* copies of any of the literature listed above. It's all provided free of charge as an educational service in the public interest. Locate the address of the office nearest you, listed on the next page, and write for your free copies today!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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or to request a visit from one of God's ministers:

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