

## And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia

One of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible pertaining to the Church of God is found in the Book of Revelation in chapters 2 and 3. These chapters contain special messages to all of God's people. And these messages come directly from God the Father through Jesus Christ. It is the way that God chose to communicate with all those whom he has called and those whom he loves since the beginning of the New Testament Church in 31 A.D.

These two chapters in Revelation not only contain messages, but they have critical information for the people of the one true God that each and everyone must understand and heed. They are meant to have a direct impact in the life of a Christian and yield a constructive and favorable action. Life after all, is one in which an individual will be judged by the actions that he or she takes, with the knowledge of the truth that one has learned, in the amount of time that a person have been given to live their life.

It was Jesus Christ who revealed, directly to the leader of the Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that the messages to the 7 Churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are in fact messages to the 7 Church eras that would exist beginning in 31 A.D. until the time of the second coming of Christ. And this understanding was revealed to the Philadelphia era of the Church through Mr. Armstrong, when the Worldwide Church of God was on track.

And so, the message that Jesus Christ has for the remnant of the Philadelphia era of the Church at the time of the end who want to remain faithful to the truth and thus to God, will once again be made available. But we are now well into the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and there is very little time remaining. The time when all of God's people will vet themselves is quickly approaching.

The archival treasure chest of truth revealed to the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong in the 20<sup>th</sup> century about the Philadelphia era will once again be opened. You will hear Christ talk directly to you, one final time before the night is upon this world. He will deliver one final all important message that you do not want to miss. May God help everyone to understand the history of this amazing era and the vital message that God our Father gave Jesus Christ to pass on to His Church at the end of the age:

"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 that 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, 31, until the Second Coming of Christ. A.D.**

**“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.”**

*Mystery of the Ages, Herbert W Armstrong, Page 283*

### **From Sardis to Philadelphia**

The story of the Philadelphia era began in 1926 when God began to call a man by the name of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong and his wife Loma Armstrong. Unbeknownst to this man and his wife at this point in time, a great prophecy was on the verge of being fulfilled. The birth of the Philadelphia era of the Church of God was about to begin. And the sun was now beginning to set on the Sardis era of the Church:

“This Philadelphia era is described in verses 7 to 13 of Revelation 3. **The Sardis era (Rev. 3:1-6) was by this time spiritually dying and had become impotent in spreading the true gospel of Christ.** Indeed they had by this time lost knowledge of the true meaning of that gospel. They knew they were approaching the Second Coming of Christ, but they had no knowledge of what would happen during the thousand years millennium, further than the fact Christ would rule.”

*Mystery of the Ages, Herbert W Armstrong, Page 289*

**“I came among the brethren of the Sardis era upon conversion from 1927. I never did become a member of that era of the Church. In 1930 a division occurred among the Oregon brethren, resulting in the formation of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God. The Sardis era of the Church had become, virtually spiritually dead. That was the beginning of a gradual transition to the Philadelphia era.**

“I was ordained in June of 1931 — precisely a century of time cycles after the original apostles were ordained — in this transition era by the Oregon Conference of the Church of God. I continued to work with and fellowship with the West Coast members of the Sardis era until 1942, when the rapidly growing work of the fledgling Philadelphia era required my full time. **The present era was officially begun in October, 1933.**”

*Worldwide News, “Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 24, 1985*

## Humble Beginning

But the Philadelphia era of the Church would have a humble beginning. The work of the 6<sup>th</sup> era would begin in a small single room office with only 2 people, Mr. Armstrong and his wife. And the Church itself would start with 19 members. But the work and the Church would not only start small, it would be founded during one of the most difficult times in American history, the Great Depression. The work and membership of the Philadelphia era of the Church of God had its humble debut in the 1930's and it did so during a time of national adversity:

**"This Philadelphia era of God's Church began in October, 1933, with only 19 baptized members.** It started the smallest, but like the grain of mustard seed it grew, and GREW, until today it is fulfilling God's Great Commission in a power not equaled even by the largest professing churches of this world."  
Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, March 21, 1984

**"When God uses human instruments to do his Work, things start small.** To begin with, there was just Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong and a group of humble co-workers, but God was beginning to lay the foundation for a powerful last witness to the nations of the world.

"Using the experience he gained in business, Mr. Armstrong organized the work into a 3 point plan, a weekly radio program, a monthly magazine and a continuing series of personal lectures and campaigns.

Presentation, "Behind the Work 1981", Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1981

**"In the first months after my conversion, spring of 1927, I had conceived the determination to publish a new magazine.** I had been in magazine and newspaper advertising since age 18. **But the new magazine would be different.** It would not be secular. It would carry no commercial advertising. It could not be sold — there would be no subscription price. But **it would make the TRUTH PLAIN — a magazine of UNDERSTANDING. God's Word, the Holy Bible, is TRUTH.** There would be no magazine like it on earth.

"I had planned a 'Three-Point Campaign' — spearheaded by the radio broadcast, followed by The Plain Truth and reinforced by personal evangelism holding six-nights-a-week meetings...

"From the beginning of January, 1934, I began planning to issue the magazine conceived in my mind seven years before — in 1927. God caused me to wait seven years before starting it. And even then it started smaller, surely, than any magazine ever did! There was no money. I had wondered, back in 1927, how would I gain subscribers? For, even though I envisioned a no-subscription-price magazine, still, being experienced in magazine publishing, I knew its circulation must come from subscribers who requested it, even for free!

“But now that problem was solved. I would announce it over the air. I would try to sell the listening audience on it — cause them to want to subscribe — even at no subscription price!

**“The Plain Truth ‘magazine’ made its most humble bow on Feb. 1, 1934.** By that time I had obtained a subscription list of around 350, including our own and the Oregon ‘Sardis’ members. Volume I, Number 1, of *The Plain Truth* was a pretty amateurish, homemade sort of thing. Probably no one but myself would have dignified it with the name ‘magazine.’ **But it was a START! And its contents were not amateurish but professional — publishing God’s TRUTH!”**

*Good News Magazine*, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God – Chapter 5”, Herbert W Armstrong, September 1980

**“From the very beginning, the 3 point program for spreading the gospel brought in a response. The first week of programs brought about 14 letters.** The response continued to increase, and in 1935 a small office was rented in this building in Eugene. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong read and answered all the mail.”

Presentation, “Behind the Work 1981”, Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1981

**“The end-time phase of the work of God began in 1934.** The first congregation of what became the Worldwide Church of God held its services in The Jeans Schoolhouse in Eugene Oregon. In his autobiography, Mr. Armstrong tells how he organized a **3 point plan to reach the world with the gospel of the kingdom of God.**

**“A half hour radio program would begin immediately on the local radio station K.O.R.E. Eugene.** A magazine to be called **The Plain Truth would be published and sent free of charge** to all who requested it. Also, **Mr. Armstrong would continue his personal campaign in the towns and villages of the Willamette Valley.** It was an ambitious program for a Church with few members and virtually no financial resources.”

Presentation, “Behind the Work 1981”, Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1981

**“It began over 50 years ago when God called Herbert W Armstrong and his wife Loma. The work that became the Worldwide Church of God started small. A handful of co-workers supported Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong while the world was in the grips of the Great Depression. The first office was one tiny room in the Hampton building in Eugene Oregon.**

“In his autobiography, Mr. Armstrong tells how he set up that first office of the work. It was an inner room without windows for ventilation. There were 2 or 3 old tables in this room. These were used as office desks, and tables for printing, folding and mailing the mimeographed *Plain Truth*. For filing

cabinets, we went to a grocery store and asked for some cardboard cartons. The ones they gave me apparently contained bottles of whiskey since they had whiskey labels printed on the sides. I pasted plain wrapping paper on the outside to conceal these labels.”

Presentation, “Behind the Work 1982”, Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1982

### **Philadelphia Comes to Life**

But this era of the Church was not meant to stay small in either its size or scope of the work it would accomplish. This small beginning, this mustard seed would take on new life and expand from a local work in a small office in the Hampton building in Eugene Oregon into a nationwide work and then it would escalate into a worldwide work. The growth of the Church would follow suite and congregations would begin to pop up in the United States and then throughout the world:

“Fuller accounts of the history of the true Church during these times are available. But now we pick up the story in the present century.

“We come to the latter part of the era of the ‘Sardis Church’ (Rev. 3:1-6) and the beginning of the Philadelphia era (Rev. 3:7-13).

“The Sardis era of the Church had greatly deteriorated by 1927, when I was converted and first came on the scene, searching for the one true Church of God.

**“The Philadelphia era was to take on new life, vigor and vitality, restoring truths that had been lost.”**

*Good News Magazine*, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God - Chapter 1”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 1980

**“THE BEGINNING AND growth of the Worldwide CHURCH OF GOD is an exciting story of faith under hardship, opposition, persecution. It is a history bringing Jesus' parable of the mustard seed into real life in the turbulent 20th century.** This mustard seed was born in the midst of the Great Depression.”

*Good News Magazine*, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God - Chapter 1”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 1980

**“The World Tomorrow grew from 1 program at a 100 watt station to a radio and television program that is now heard and seen on hundreds of stations around the world.**

**“From an even humbler beginning *The Plain Truth* has steadily increased in quality and circulation until today it reaches unto nearly every country on earth in many languages with a readership of millions.**

**“The third part of the 3 point plan also began small. Mr. Armstrong held meetings in rented halls in the towns and villages of the Willamette Valley. As the work grew, he planned campaigns in other parts of the United States, and eventually overseas. But God had even bigger plans for this part of the 3 point plan. The turning point came in 1968. As the world grew closer to its destiny, God thrust his servant into the international arena.”**

Presentation, “Behind the Work 1981”, Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1981

**“The radio broadcasts, started January, 1934, continued to bring an ever-increasing number of candidates for baptism and conversion. The end time had come. God was preparing a Church, well organized on His own pattern, to be prepared as kings and priests to reign with Christ at His coming. Beside the growth of the Plain Truth magazine, I was continuing to write many booklets on various important doctrines and truths.** Television did not go on the air until after World War II ended in 1945. We did not go on TV until July of 1955, but discontinued it after six months. Radio broadcasting had increased greatly, and in the latter 1950's the World Tomorrow program was using more wattage of radio power than any program on earth. The Church was broadcasting daily, seven nights a week.”

*Worldwide News*, “Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 24, 1985

### Truths Restored

When Mr. Armstrong came across a dying Sardis era, he realized that it had just about lost all of the truths that the apostles taught the Church during the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Revelation 3:1-2. It was an era that was ready to die and ready to pass the baton to another era. With so little truth remaining in Sardis, the time was now ripe for a massive restoration of truth to occur in the Church.

In 1926, Mr. Armstrong began to understand some of the basic truths that are found in the word of God, truths such as the Sabbath, the holy days, and the existence of God. But it was not a private interpretation of the Bible that he was acquiring, Jesus Christ was working with this man and revealing His truths to him. This is confirmed by Christ in Revelation 3:8 and 10 where he states that the Philadelphia era of the Church “kept His word”. The word of God is synonymous with the truth, John 17:17.

And throughout the rest of his life, Christ would reveal one truth after another until a complete picture of both doctrine and prophecy became apparent. Never before in the history of God’s Church would so much truth be restored and so much prophecy be revealed to the Church through one man:

**“Well now, today we are celebrating not only the 50th anniversary of the local Eugene Church as it was, which was the first Church of the Philadelphia era. I was still working with and preaching in the Sardis Churches up in the Willamette Valley, up near Jefferson, over in a little country schoolhouse at Beaver, up in that direction. But God began to reveal NEW TRUTH that the others didn't know ...”**

"In the autumn of 1926, when I was 34, my wife brought to me what at the moment was a terrifying CHALLENGE! I have told of this experience and published it so many times. I will skim through it here. She had begun to keep the seventh-day Sabbath! To me, then, that was 'religious fanaticism.' Also a sister-in-law challenged me on the theory of evolution. I have published the story repeatedly of the night-and-day research in-depth, trying to prove both of them wrong.

**"The important thing is that in this study Jesus Christ, through His written Word, opened my mind to the PRIME BASIC TRUTHS He wanted me to have in starting me out as His servant."**

*Good News Magazine*, "The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God - Chapter 1", Herbert W Armstrong, April 1980

**"But God was revealing His truth to me. At first I had to learn a doctrine at a time.** In other words, if the whole truth were a jigsaw puzzle of 100 pieces, I found the Church of God of the Sardis era, even though God's Church, had lost about 75 of the pieces, though some were among the important pieces. But it was impossible to fit them together so as to produce the WHOLE and FULL PICTURE, plain and clear.

"God was inspiring me to fill in the gaps...

**"Little by little, God revealed to me more and more TRUTHS** — additional pieces of God's revealed KNOWLEDGE that filled in the gaps — answered all the questions."

*Plain Truth Magazine*, "What Every Reader Needs to Know About the FOUNDATION, HISTORY, AUTHORITY AND DOCTRINE OF THE WOLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD", Herbert W Armstrong, February 1978

"The Bible is constructed like a jigsaw puzzle. One must pick out a piece here and a piece there, each within the meaning of its context, and then put them together in order to see the WHOLE picture. **But, in and during my conversion, Christ revealed to me the basic truths, and it was thereafter easier to accept and build the others around them.**"

*Good News Magazine*, "The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God - Chapter 1", Herbert W Armstrong, April 1980

**"The True Church continued all right but they lost a great deal of the truth. Now I came among the Sardis era, they were the church, they were trying to obey God, they had the right name, they had the law, they didn't have the gospel.** There was a lot they didn't know; they didn't know that we could even become God. They just knew we'd be saved and they knew we didn't go to heaven. And they knew there was going to be a reign with Christ on earth that they had no idea at all what would happen, what it would be like. They didn't know anything about the Kingdom of God.

**“So they'd lost so much of the important knowledge and essential knowledge.** So that happened through the years. **Now God has been restoring that knowledge to this Church.** Brethren I tell you we must realize how important it is, and what God is doing through us and through this Church in this day and age. It is so vital, and it's just so overwhelming. It's awesome actually when you stop to think about it.”

Sermon, “What is Christ Doing?”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 24, 1982

**“All doctrines in the Church as it began, A.D. 31, were put in by the apostles. All doctrines in the present Philadelphia era were put into the Church by Jesus Christ through His chosen apostle.”**

*The Worldwide News*, “And Now Christ Sets Church Back On Track Doctrinally!”, Herbert W Armstrong, February 19, 1979

### **The Mission**

Mr. Armstrong often stated that Jesus Christ taught him the truth through the written word of God, which is the Bible. As many of these truths were beginning to be restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church by Jesus Christ through the leader of this era, a grand mission would come to light. A mission like no other one of its kind was about to gain speed and go to the world in power and force.

And this great undertaking had been prophesied to occur almost 1,900 years ago. The preaching of the one true gospel which began with a humble beginning would be preached throughout the globe as foretold in Matthew 24:14. No other work of God since the beginning of time until now has come close to the work that was accomplished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Worldwide Church of God and its leader, Mr. Herbert W Armstrong:

**“Well, brethren, ALL THOSE THINGS have been restored and there is a mission for this Church that never applied and has never been done by any other Church, ‘This gospel of the kingdom’ has been restored and ‘shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations’ [Matthew 24:14]. Has that been done? Has that been restored? Is that gospel going out to the world? You listen on television tomorrow.”**

Sermon, “Mission of the Philadelphia Church”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 17, 1983

**“These prophecies have now definitely been fulfilled. The true gospel has been restored and has now gone in power into every nation on the face of the earth.”**

*Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W Armstrong, Page 289

**“And that is the mission that has devolved down on us. Today's mission of the Church you will find in Matthew 24 and in verse 14, ‘And this gospel of the kingdom [that is the same gospel that Jesus preached] shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come’.”**

Sermon, “Mission of the Philadelphia Church”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 17, 1983



## The Open Door

And so, once the groundwork of truth was established, and the mission of the Church was understood, the time had arrived for a great end-time prophecy found in the Book of Revelation to be fulfilled. A door would swing wide open for an incredible work to take place. A door that no man could shut once this door was opened and no man could open once this door was closed, Revelation 3:8. This was the open door that Christ stated he would set before the Worldwide Church of God and the faithful leader of this era.

It was an open door to preach the one true gospel of the kingdom of God. The knowledge of this true gospel, which had been suppressed for 1900 years, had now been restored to the Church and was about to go out in full force. It would first start in the United States and then it would span the entire world. The work of God in the 6<sup>th</sup> era began in 1934 and ended shortly after the death of Mr. Armstrong in 1986. Few could have imagined the scope and size of the open door that God would be placed before the Church and the apostle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mr. Herbert W Armstrong:

“And God did use me in the raising up of this Church. So now we come to verse 7. ‘And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia’, now this is the Philadelphia era now, following the Sardis era ‘of Philadelphia write, these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, and that openeth and no man shutteth, and that shutteth and no man openeth. I know thy works, behold I have set before thee an open door.’

**“You’ll find that Paul explains how a door was open before him to preach the gospel, to go to another place and preach the gospel. It’s a door that is an opening to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. ‘And no man can shut it.’**

Sermon, “Church History” (DUB), Herbert W Armstrong, 1981

“From the year 1931, exactly 1,900 years (a century of time cycles) from the foundation of the Church, this small remnant of **the original true Church of God began to take on new life as the Philadelphia era.** It had come to the ‘time of the end.’ A new spiritual vitality was infused into it. **The time had come for Jesus' prophecy of Matthew 24:14 to be fulfilled-‘this gospel of the kingdom shall be [proclaimed] in all the world** for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.’ **Such vital truth that had been lost was gradually revealed and proclaimed ...**

“This era of the Church was to produce fruit. **To this era-or to its human leader-God had set before it an open door. It is recorded in II Corinthians 2:12 and also Acts 14:27 how Christ opened the door for Paul to go into other countries to preach the gospel.** This Church and/or its leader had but little strength. Neither were of great and powerful stature in Satan's world but **those of this era were faithful to the Word of God.** Though much of **the original gospel truth,** imparted to the original apostles by Jesus in person, had been lost, it **was restored through the Bible to this era of God's Church who were faithful in keeping it ...**

**"The human leader to be raised up somewhat shortly prior to Christ's Second Coming was to prepare the way-prepare the Church-for Christ's coming, and restore the truth that had been lost through the preceding eras of the Church. Also a door was to be opened for this leader and/or the Philadelphia era of the Church to fulfill Matthew 24:14: 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.'"**

*Mystery of the Ages, Herbert W Armstrong, Page 290-291*

**"Church at Philadelphia: ...These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth ,and no man openeth. I know your works: behold, I have set before thee an open door.**

**"NOW, if you'll trace that 'open door' in Paul's writings, you will see that God set an open door before him. An 'open door' merely means (it's a figure of speech) that God opens the way to get the gospel message out.** Now He's opened to us a door to go to the Gentiles and the nations of the earth and the kings of those nations. He didn't open that door for the Sardis Church. And no man in the Sardis Church, Thyatira or those before ever announced the gospel of the Kingdom to kings, heads of government and other top men in the governments of the Gentile nations around the world. They just never did.

**"I have been doing it and I am the one Apostle that God has chosen and with whom and through whom He built this church. The Gospel did not go to the world until this church came and started taking it to the world.** It absolutely was not preached at all."

Pastor General's Report, "Excerpts of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong's Sabbath Sermon", Herbert W Armstrong, June 26, 1978

### **The Key of David**

As soon as the mission became known and the open door was made available for the preaching of the gospel, a fascinating truth regarding prophecy would be revealed to the Church by Jesus Christ through his chosen apostle, Mr. Armstrong. And this pivotal truth was the "key of David" that is mentioned in Revelation 3:7. It revealed the identity and the location of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel", Jeremiah 50:6 and Matthew 10:6.

This single point of truth is the key that unlocks the Bible's greatest end-time prophecies. It is the "key of David" that was given to Mr. Armstrong during the Philadelphia era of the Church and it was this crucial truth that opened the door to the understanding of a staggering amount of prophetic truth. Mr. Armstrong used to say that approximately 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy and about 90% of it pertains for our time, the time of the end.

And so, an incredible picture of end-time events would come to life, events pertaining to the Church, the nations of Israel, and the world. The Philadelphia era of the Church now understood what no other era, prior

to or after, would learn regarding the end-time events that had been foretold thousands of years ago. And it is only the Philadelphia era that holds this special key that unlocks the understanding of the Bible's greatest end-time prophecies.

There is no other significant restoration of Biblical prophecy that has been foretold in the Bible in the time of the end. There is not the slightest indication that new prophetic understanding would occur in Laodicean era. On the contrary, the Laodicean era is pictured as blind. No doubt blind to the many truths that were restored to the Church in the Philadelphia era, but also blind and confused to much of the prophetic understanding from God's word that was revealed in the 6<sup>th</sup> era:

*"This booklet, *The United States And Britain In Prophecy*, millions of people have read it. It's the most circulated booklet we have ever put out. And I want to announce it once again, **and that will give you some startling information about our ancestry, about your own roots, where you came from. And not only that, it is the key to understanding biblical prophecy. And it shows you what Bible prophecy says is going to happen to the United States in the next few years...***

*"The booklet is *The United States And Britain In Prophecy*. Now there is no charge, all you have to do is request it. It's an illustrated book. **It's a good many pages, and it will not only identify you and give you the key to understanding all prophecies, but it specifically pinpoints the United States and where we are mentioned as nations, the British and the American people in biblical prophecy.***

World Tomorrow Telecast, "The United States and Britain in Prophecy", Herbert W Armstrong

**"AND CONSIDER THIS! About one third of all the Bible is devoted to prophecies-about 90 percent of them foretelling world events of our time now-last half of the 20th century. Yet even theologians have not understood these prophecies-which tell us what now lies immediately ahead in world events that will involve YOU and all the rest of us. **The KEY that unlocks these earth-shaking prophecies involving the United States and Britain-had been lost! The definite identity of the United States and Britain in the prophecies is that KEY. That KEY has been found. It is revealed in this book-possibly the most astounding truth in the Holy Scriptures!****

Book, *The United States And Britain In Prophecy*, Herbert W Armstrong, 1980

**"Many are now beginning to preach Bible prophecies, BUT THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THESE PROPHECIES! The very KEY that unlocks this whole third of the Bible to our understanding has been HIDDEN from them.**

*"Without this key NO ONE CAN UNDERSTAND the prophecies. They only MISLEAD YOU! Just as Jesus, in Matthew 24, said they would at this time!*

**"That KEY is the true identity of the USA and the British people in prophecy. WHERE are WE mentioned in God's prophecies? We are actually mentioned more often than any other peoples! **Yet this truth has remained hidden.** It is EXCITING! It is now TIMELY! It reveals to you WHAT IS NOW NEXT GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE USA AND THE BRITISH PEOPLES!"**

### **The Magnitude of the Work**

With the amazing truths of the Bible now restored to the Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the understanding of the Bible's greatest end-time prophecies, the incredible work of taking the gospel to the world took place in power and force through the open door that Christ gave the Church. **One sign that the Church is doctrinally on track is the growth of the work, Matthew 7:20. God blesses His work when the Church is teaching the truth.**

The growth of the work that was recorded during the 6<sup>th</sup> era when the Church was on track was truly staggering. No splinter group in the Laodicean era has come close to accomplishing the same phenomenal work that was recorded in the Philadelphia era. And the amazing work that took place in the last century is also proof that an open door to take the gospel to the world was placed before this era and its leader:

**"How we have grown through the years. You know, since this original Church here at Eugene 50 years ago, this Church grew at the rate of 30% every year for 35 years. Now we couldn't keep up that percentage of growth after that, that brought us up to about 1968.**

Sermon, "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eugene Church", Herbert W Armstrong, September 24, 1983

**"The circulation of the *Plain Truth* topped 5 million for the first time in 1982. The circulation of the September 1982 issues was 5,205,906. The *Plain Truth* is the world's fastest growing magazine. It is now circulated in 199 countries. In the last year, the work has mailed out 69 million pieces of literature worldwide. The *World Tomorrow* program is aired on 244 TV stations and 245 radio stations around the world."**

Presentation, "Behind the Work 1982", Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1982

**"In 1953, the most powerful radio on earth, radio Luxemburg began to broadcast the World Tomorrow to the British Isles and the continent of Europe. And so growth continued around the world, first on radio and then on television. Today the program is heard around the world ...**

**"The circulation of *the Plain Truth* has kept pace with the growth of the TV and radio program. The first issue was hand produced by Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong using an old neo-style machine. About 250 copies were duplicated. Now as the Plain Truth approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> year, over 6 million copies are printed each month. It is published in 6 languages, English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, and plans are now being completed for a Norwegian edition to begin in 1984...**

**"In response to the first broadcast, 14 letters were received. On August of 1983, the mail receiving department in Pasadena received the 50 millionth letter asking for literature."**

Presentation, "Behind the Work 1983", Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1983

**"More than 20 million people representing 196 countries and territories now read The Plain Truth each month. Most major news magazines publish their various editions, worldwide, in one language. Only The Plain Truth publishes simultaneous editions in seven languages worldwide."**

*Plain Truth Magazine, "The Plain Truth", February 1984*

**"Thundering out over more than one million watts of radio power and on more than 340 television stations worldwide, Herbert W. Armstrong has authoritatively explained the meaning behind world events for more than a half century on the World Tomorrow program. The program is considered by U.S. media officials to be the longest continuously running radio broadcast in the United States"**

*Plain Truth Magazine, "The World Tomorrow", February 1984*

**"Since 1976, over 50 million Plain Truths have been distributed from newsstands. In 1982 alone, over 60 million were made available to the public. Since it began, the newsstand program has been responsible for adding more than 900,000 subscribers to the Plain Truth subscription list."**

**"When you think about it, the scripture in Psalms 68:11 states, 'great was the company of those that published it.'"**

*Presentation, "Behind the Work 1982", Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1982*

### Size of the Church

With the magnitude of the great work that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century came phenomenal growth in membership as well. **When the truth is being taught, the Church is rooted on fertile ground and this allows God to call large numbers of people.** This is because the fertile ground of truth provides the proper nutrients and it allows God's people to be properly fed and nurtured in their Christian calling, I Corinthians 3:6.

God not only blessed the great work which is the preaching of the one true gospel, but He also gave the increase in membership during the Philadelphia era. And this was because the full uncompromised truth was taught and kept by the membership at large. This is why Christ was able to state that this era of the Church of God had "kept my word", Revelation 3:8 and 10.

The era that began with 19 members grew into an attendance of over 140,000 in the mid to late 1980's. **A large growth in membership is proof that the Church is on track, that God is blessing the work, it is also evidence of an apostleship, I Corinthians 9:1-2:**

**"When you realize that we were doubling in size every 2 and 2/3rd years. We were multiplying our size by 8 in 8 years** and by 64 in 16 years. And so by multiplication it finally begins to skyrocket up, and

that's what has happened to the Work of God and it is still growing.

**"I'm glad to say that we've had growth. It is not as big a percent, but somewhere around 6 or 8% in the last year. But 6 or 8% on around 100,000 is a pretty big growth. That is several thousand a year."**

Sermon, "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eugene Church", Herbert W Armstrong, September 24, 1983

"Brethren, we have been getting back on God's track! And now His Church is beginning to SHOW REAL GROWTH ONCE AGAIN!

"Just today I have had a meeting with our Festival directors. **Last fall, in this 1980 Feast of Tabernacles, we had about a 10 percent increase in member attendance. Baptism of new members is coming in at a rate, they tell me, there will be at least a 19 percent increase in attendance this next Feast—1981!**

Reports are for increases all over the United States. **A report from England is for a 31 percent increase there. More than a 30 percent increase now in New Zealand!** ALREADY GOD IS ADDING TO HIS CHURCH AND CAUSING THE WORK TO GROW AS DURING THE 35 YEARS PRIOR TO 1968!"

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, December 19, 1980

"In September 1982 there were **71,482 church members in 119 countries. Worldwide there are 720 congregations** served by **542 elders and 517 local elders.** "

Presentation, "Behind the Work 1982", Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1982

"Now I'm sure God would not seal and protect ONLY adult, baptized members, and leave their children below age of baptism to suffer God's plagues. If those protected include such children, **the Church already numbers OVER 100,000. Brethren, membership in the Church is now increasing rapidly. New baptisms are ESCALATING!**"

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, August 22, 1983

### **By My Spirit**

But behind the scenes, the incredible power and force of the work of God that was accomplished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was performed by the spirit of the living God. It was the living God who "sent forth" an apostle who was to be backed by the membership of the Worldwide Church of God to accomplish the visible work that would begin small but would grow large in size.

But it was God's spirit that was the true power behind the greatest work of God that has ever taken place since the New Testament Church began. And Mr. Armstrong understood this and mentioned it quite often:

"Came the crucial Monday morning. I was well prepared. One minute before that zero hour I was nervous. I had never spoken through a microphone before.

“‘If I need any instruction, you'd better give it to me quickly,’ I said to the announcer. ‘I've never been on the air before.’

“‘Just stand before that mic and begin talking when I give you the signal,’ he said indifferently. That reassured me. I said to myself, Why, I'm not a bit nervous now.

“The announcer announced me and gave the signal. Suddenly nerves gripped my whole body and mind! But somehow I began talking, and after 30 seconds or a minute the ‘mic-fright’ was gone. My mind was absorbed with the subject. **The GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom of God was ON THE AIR for the first time!**

“I began with God's promises to Abraham. The whole true Gospel is based on those PROMISES to Abraham. Soon I was revealing to listeners that the promises were NOT heaven, but this EARTH as an everlasting possession, coupling other scriptures with God's promises beginning in Genesis 12.

**“Through the week I carried on the theme of the WORLD TOMORROW — the KINGDOM OF GOD! That message had not gone out to the world publicly since about A. D. 53! But my heart was in it, and it began coming in POWER!”**

*Good News Magazine*, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God – Chapter 4”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 1980

**“You know what God said to Zerubbabel. Not by your own might nor by your own strength but by my spirit says God. Some people say ‘where do you get your strength’. And I just refer them to Isaiah the 40<sup>th</sup> chapter, it’s talking about God and how great He is and then in verse 29, he giveth power to the faint and to him that hath no might. He increases strength. That’s where I get it.”**

Presentation, “Behind the Work 1982”, Herbert W Armstrong, First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles 1982

“It is true that ‘where there is no vision the people perish.’ But few people realize that the source of true vision is God. There has been vision behind the planning and phenomenal growth of this great Work. **But this is the Work of God, not of man, and the vision and planning has been that of Jesus Christ, the active living HEAD of this Work, not of man.**”

*Good News Magazine*, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God – Chapter 5”, Herbert W Armstrong, September 1980

“By 1946 I planned definitely, as Christ led, to raise up Ambassador College in Pasadena. Headquarters was moved there. The college started Oct. 8, 1947. Beginning 1951 and 1952 a few graduates became ministers. **New churches sprang up. It was a story of GROWTH!** As you and I, as individuals, must GROW in spite of adversity, so the Church and Work has GROWN. **JESUS CHRIST DID IT ALL!**”

"Revelation 3:7-8 'write these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth' that's speaking of Christ. (8) 'I know thy works' He says to this Church. And that's speaking of you, you brethren. There are something like, I am speaking to more than 5,000 of you right now. 'I know thy works, behold I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it, for thou has a LITTLE strength'

"A better translation is 'you have ONLY a little strength.' We are very weak physically. **Now speaking over in Zechariah about Zerubbabel in the Old Testament, it's 'not by power' [Zechariah 4:6] He wasn't such a strong man either, but he says, 'by My Spirit, says the Eternal'. It is by the power of the Spirit of God that this Work must move forward, not on human power.**"

Sermon, "Microwave from Tucson", Herbert W Armstrong, March 2, 1981

### **The Liberal 70's**

For the first 35 years of the Philadelphia era, the Church was doctrinally on track and growing rapidly. And the magnitude of the great work kept increasing. In 1968, Mr. Armstrong was thrust into the international scene and began meeting the leaders of the nations of this world. During these years, he was away from the Headquarters of the Church for extended periods of time.

It was during this time that error infiltrated the Church and it derailed in what became known as the liberal years of the 70's. Certain men at Headquarters began to alter and water down some of the doctrines that Jesus Christ restored to the Church through Mr. Armstrong. This happened behind his back and mostly while he was away serving as an "unofficial ambassador for world peace" and while he was taking the gospel of the kingdom of God to the various leaders of the nations of this world.

These changes happened after the institution of a doctrinal committee. This doctrinal committee was given the responsibility to strengthen the truths that had been restored to the Church by Christ. Instead, this group began forming their own statements of beliefs which culminated in a document called the Systematic Theology Project (STP). Some doctrines were watered down and others were altered. And this document was stealthfully kept from Mr. Armstrong's knowledge:

"And, much later on — **during the decade of the '70s, conspiracies arose within God's Church to DO AWAY WITH these basic truths.** During the years 1968 and 1969, and the '70s up to 1977, I was overseas much of the time. During 1975 and 1976 I was overseas 300 out of the 365 days of those years — and the two or three years before about 200 to 250 days.



**“Those ‘intellectuals’ surrounding my son, who was left to administer the Work from Pasadena headquarters, were conspiring to liberalize Church doctrines,** to destroy and remove from circulation the articles, booklets, etc., I had written on BASIC TRUTHS. **The Church of God was being molded more and more like a liberal Protestant denomination.**

“Satan never lets up! **Church leaders had become DECEIVED!** Finally, by 1977, a voluminous project, called the Systematic Theological Project (STP), was prepared in scholarly and systematic ‘university’ style. It was prepared principally by those educated in this world's universities. It was prepared SECRETLY — those involved were warned not to let a word of it leak to me. It was given out to the entire field ministry at the ministers' conference in January, 1977, after I had been given solemn assurances nothing doctrinal would be brought up in the conference.

“Later, in 1977, on learning of this conspiracy, I killed the project.”

*Good News Magazine*, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God - Chapter 1”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 1980

**“But God has withdrawn His blessings on this church. The work has not been growing. The church has been even going down and losing ground.** There are not as many members today as there were a year ago. There were not as many members then as there were the year before that. Now the time has come for us to have a revival within our own hearts. It ought to strike home to us and condemn us. It's our fault. And I'm not just talking to you that I see here today, I'm also talking to the other churches that will hear this on tape all over the world.”

Pastor General's Report, “Excerpts of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong's Sabbath Sermon”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 26, 1978

**“But the most terrible thing that ever happened to me was during the recent years when I was away from Pasadena up to 300 of the 365 days in the year,** and my son assumed a full and complete authority never given to him, and encouraged **WATERING DOWN God's TRUTH and God's COMMANDS!**”

*Worldwide News*, “Watering Down – Or Building Solidly Up?”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 11, 1979

**“And what happened to sermons on birthdays being wrong, New Year's celebrations being wrong, Valentine's Day being wrong?** We need someone to solidly and loudly and firmly, not saying... 'you do whatever you want.' But saying: 'God condemns those who follow their own ways and Satan's ways. He refuses to bless them and He curses them' — and then giving them scriptures.”

*Worldwide News*, “Watering Down – Or Building Solidly Up?”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 11, 1979

"I quote now from a memorandum by Leroy Neff, the current treasurer, who was on the first Doctrinal Research Committee and wrote concerning others on the committee. **I am quoting this to give an example of the direction some of the liberals on the doctrinal committee were taking.**

"1. Any marriage where the people are unconverted, or did not fully know what they were getting into, was not a valid marriage.

"2. Polygamy was tacitly approved by God in Old Testament times, so multiple marriages or divorces in modern times might just be a form of polygamy by having wives sequentially rather than concurrently.

"3. God divorced ancient Israel and then both parties were free to remarry.

"4. The ministry should be able to loose marriages that God had joined.

**"These liberals wanted complete freedom in the Church for divorce and remarriage at will. Other questions raised by the liberals were complete freedom for any type of marriage, some more and some less freedom from tithing, doing away with or modifying Church teachings on healing by direct prayer as in James 5:14 complete freedom for women in facial makeup, and even the approval of celebrating birthdays (never approved in the Bible) and even of voting in elections as part of the world.**

"On the Pasadena campus more and more friction developed between the liberals and those loyal ministers and members who held to **the biblical truths God had placed in His Church**. It was a sort of cold war of nerves."

*The Worldwide News*, "Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God",  
Herbert W Armstrong, June 24, 1985

### **Watered Down Doctrine**

The following is a list of some of the doctrines that were changed in the 1970's. These are some of the truths that were watered down or altered while Mr. Armstrong was away meeting with the leaders of the nations of this world. They were watered down and modified behind his back, all except for the teaching on the use of makeup.

Although Mr. Armstrong gave his verbal consent to allow the use of makeup, he later admitted that when this occurred, his mind was on other things and that he had made a mistake when he allowed the use of makeup to infiltrate the Church. He openly repented of this error in a sermon titled "What God Expects of Us" that was given in November 7, 1981.

Please note that the following list is not an all inclusive list of all of the doctrinal changes that occurred in the 1970's. These are just some of the errors and liberal teachings that caused the Church to go off track doctrinally during these liberal years:

1. **Makeup:** The use of makeup is not wrong as long as it is done in good taste and modesty.
2. **Interracial Marriage:** Interracial marriages may be unwise but the Church cannot forbid people of different racial backgrounds to marry.
3. **Birthday Celebrations:** The Church has no specific doctrine concerning the custom of celebrating or observing ones birthday and thus it is up to an individual to choose whether he will observe or celebrate this day.
4. **Tithing:** The implementation of how to calculate a tithe is left up to the understanding of an individual.
5. **Voting in Elections:** The Bible does not prohibit voting in regional or national elections.
6. **Healing:** The science of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is far more advanced than any other age and healing does not conflict with the use of modern medical science. It is obvious that God is not healing in this century as in earlier documented times.
7. **Divorce and Remarriage:** The Church strongly recommends that a marriage remain intact but divorces are allowed.

### **Back on the Track**

When the plot to liberalize the Church was uncovered by Mr. Armstrong, he moved quickly to set the Church back on track. This began in the fall of 1978 when Mr. Armstrong removed his son and several other liberal ministers from the Church. And at the end of 1981, after the truth regarding the use of makeup had been corrected in the Church, which was the last altered truth that was fixed, the process of setting the Church back on track finally came to an end.

During the time when Mr. Armstrong was correcting the errors that had infiltrated the Church, he would often lift up his voice like a trumpet, and would tell the people of God how they had deviated from the truth. And he did this because it was his goal and it was his hope to see every single one of God's people qualify for the kingdom of God.

But he also knew that the Church had been greatly affected by what had happened during the liberal years of the 70's. Even after he had set the Church back on track, he would continue to thunder and warn the Church against getting off of the track. What he did not fully grasp though, was that the damage had been done and an even greater liberal element would rise from inside the Church after the apostasy of the 1990's.

It is time to hear the voice of Mr. Armstrong when he moved quickly to set the Church back on track. He was in his late 80's when he thundered and corrected the liberal teachings in the Church:

**“And I’ve been working hard the last 2 ½ years to get this Church back on the track after others were getting it off the track.** I don’t think we’re 100% back yet. I don’t think we have gotten all of the leaven out yet. But it’s going out, believe me. And we’re going to get it out.

**“Let’s not be part of those virgins who don’t have any oil in their lamps.** If you have any doubt in your mind, begin fasting and praying, asking God to give you his spirit. **But his spirit will only open your mind to understand his word.** And you will have to follow it. **The holy spirit is not going to pull you, it’s not going to push you, it’s not going to compel you. It’ll show you the way. You’ll have to begin to want to walk on it on your own power and you’ll have to ask God for extra power and help.**  
**Brethren, we’re in the very last days. And we need to be sure that we are ready.”**

Sermon, “Church History” (DUB), Herbert W Armstrong, 1981

“Brethren the salvation that God offers us is so great that our minds can't begin to conceive it and yet some are neglecting it. Some are forgetting about it, some are getting their minds on other things. **Let's not let down. Now for the last three, three and a half years or so God has been getting us back on the track. Well, being on a track means you have to, have to keep on the move. A track, a railroad track is something to run the train on and trains standing still just on the track isn't going anywhere. If we're back on the track we got to start going and growing.**

Sermon, “What is Christ Doing?”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 24, 1982

**“As I said earlier, God has called me back to live longer for two reasons.** One is **to try to set this Church back in order and to wake you people up.** That is why I'm here. Yet I feel like the Apostle Paul. He said that he would rather go and depart and be with Christ — in other words, go to the sleep of death and wake up in the resurrection and be in the Kingdom of God — but he said it was more necessary for the church that he stay on. And that's why I'm here, brethren.”

Pastor General’s Report, “Excerpts of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong’s Sabbath Sermon”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 26, 1978

**“Let’s get back on the track brethren and decide what God’s kind of life is because all of us have been asleep and we have been off the track.** It’s about time we got back on or you won’t ever get into the kingdom of God. I am trying to get this Church cleaned up to meet Christ in the air.

**“We’ve had ministers that say, ‘Well, you know, we want to keep peace in the Church. And a lot of people don't want to go God's way’. They want to go the way of the world. ‘We've got to compromise, Mr. Armstrong.** We've got to listen to the people. We've got to get the women's viewpoint. We've got to get the men's viewpoint. We've got to say the way that seems right to a man. We want to have peace, you see’. That sounds real good, doesn't it?”

Sermon, “Back on the Track”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 12, 1981

**“They say, ‘Well, but can't we compromise a little bit?’ We've had a lot of Liberalism, and we've got to weed that out of the Church! Some of the ministers have gone out of the Church because they were liberal, and they were leading their congregations in that direction and we cannot have that.** Jesus Christ will not have it. I am going to have to answer for these things, believe me.

“Now back here in I Kings chapter 11. I Kings, and verse 6, about Solomon. ‘And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father’. You say, ‘Well I don't want to go fully after the Lord. Can't I fudge a little? And wouldn't it be okay if it wasn't some specific thing about it that I said specifically can't do it?’ Poppycock! That isn't the way. **God looks on the heart.** You've got to have the love of God in your heart, brethren.

Sermon, “Back on the Track”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 12, 1981

**“I'm going to tell you God's truth.** I'm going to have to give account to God. I want to do God's will. I want to see you do God's will, brethren. **To me God says, as quoted back here in Isaiah 58 in verse 1, ‘Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice’ I lift it up! I got a microphone here. ‘Lift up thy voice, like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins’.**

“Well brethren, that's what, I'm sorry, I have to do. I wish I could say something that maybe you'd like better, but that's what God has commissioned me to do. **I want to see this Church cleaned up!”**

Sermon, “Back on Track”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 12, 1981

### **Will Not Compromise**

Perhaps one of the greatest tests of all that can befall God's people is whether they will keep the truth without compromise. Keeping the full truth and not compromising is the hallmark of the Philadelphia era. They are known for holding fast to the full truth, Revelation 3:9. They are known for keeping the uncompromised, unwatered down “word of Christ” which is the truth, Revelation 3:10 and John 17:17.

Those who possess the characteristic of this era stand steady like pillars and are not blown around by the winds of false doctrines or watered down truth that has affected God's people at the end of the age, Revelation 3:12 and Ephesians 4:14. They are faithful to Christ and loyal to the teachings that he restored to the Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the 6<sup>th</sup> era.

It was the specific reason that a man by the name of Herbert W Armstrong was called by God to lead this era of the Church and it was his hallmark as well. He was truly a man that would not compromise the truth, no matter the consequences. And it is the reason that the almighty God called you!

“We should remember how this Church is just not another Church. It is something special that God has raised up. **God revealed truth to me, and if there is any reason why he chose me, there is only one.** It's not because of any righteousness of mine. It's not because of any abilities or powers of mine. I've

known scores upon scores of men with better minds than I have, better personality, better appearance, more leadership. I'd say about more of everything that you can think of humanly.

"But God has not called them or used them. Why? Why did he pick on one as inferior as I am? **Because I was willing to believe him.** Adam and Eve didn't believe him. Jesus Christ talked to thousands who didn't believe him. Only 120 still believed him after Christ had talked for 3 ½ years to multiple thousands of people. **But I did believe him. And I have not compromised with that belief one iota!**

Sermon, "Church History" (DUB), Herbert W Armstrong, 1981

Christ knows our works. There are works, good works, and not rituals. 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, ... for thou hast but a little strength, **and hast kept my word.**' **I was going to say further, if there's any one reason why God called me, it's because I was willing to believe what He said. And because I've kept His word. I have not compromised.**

Pastor General's Report, "Excerpts of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong's Sabbath Sermon", Herbert W Armstrong, June 26, 1978

"Revelation 3:8 'Thou hast but a little strength, and hast kept my word'. Brethren, often I have said this, that I have known scores of men with better minds than I have, not only more scholarly, because they have gone on with that, but more aptitude to be scholarly, with better personality, with more of everything that could be used. And God did not call one of them. **Now why did He call me?**

"... Revelation 3:8 'I know' He knows our works. So there are works and they're good works, and not rituals. 'Behold' He set this open door. 'You have but a little strength, **and hast kept my word.**' **I was going to say, if there is any one reason why God called me, it is because I was willing to believe what He said, and because I had kept His Word, and I have not compromised.**

Sermon, "Warning to the Church", Herbert W Armstrong, July 1, 1978

"Now I'd like to give you one little prophecy in the New Testament (in Revelation 3 and verses 7 and 8). **This is the Philadelphia Church, and it is speaking of our Church today, Verses 7 and 8.** Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write ...

"Revelation 3:8 'I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, no man can shut it you have but little strength and hast kept my word'. **Has believed what He says and kept His Word, and has not watered it down and has not compromised.** And when I found it watered down, brethren, we got back onto the track. We're almost back there, if not entirely and we must get all the way back."

Sermon, "Microwave From Tucson", Herbert W Armstrong, March 2, 1981

## From Philadelphia to Laodicea

So how did an era that was doctrinally on track move off the track and transition to the Laodicea era? How did such a wonderful era derail? It began when leaders of the groups that splintered off from the Worldwide Church of God rejected Mr. Armstrong as the end-time Elijah. In addition to losing this pivotal point of truth, these groups also discard the understanding Mr. Armstrong spoke quite often about, which is, that truth only enters the Church through the office of apostle.

Once these two pivotal points of truths were discarded, it gave way to the wind of doctrinal change and it swept through the splinters like a hurricane force storm. These groups have now gone way beyond the changes and the doctrines that were watered down in the liberal years. The changes that have now occurred in these groups pale what took place in the 1970's during the liberal years.

Mr. Armstrong understood that watering down doctrine came from a Laodicean mindset. And this is how the Laodicean era was born. Not only was doctrine watered down but many of the established truths were altered as well. Mr. Armstrong also knew that once this attitude gripped the Church, they would continue to loose more and more truth.

Another wind of doctrinal change that has swept through a number of splinters are false ideas regarding prophecy. These false prophesies usually come in the form of strange and odd prophetic revelations. Some of these ideas have a tendency to change quite often and the predictions that these men foretell have are also prone to fail.

The apostle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century knew that when heresy enters into the Church, if it is not swiftly removed, it will take root, grow and spread. Once this type of error is rooted and has grown in a person or a group, it is virtually impossible to correct. This is because a strong delusion is created in the mind of a person so that he cannot recover or return back to the faith once delivered, II Thessalonians 2:9-10.

Understand that no leader who engages in watering down doctrine, altering the truth, or who entertains strange prophetic ideas will ever declare or admit that he has done so. Some who engage in such practices may not even be aware of what they are doing. They may be the victims of their own deception, II Timothy 3:13. One thing is certain, the individuals who engage in these actions will always find a way to justify the changes that they have made, whether it involves doctrine or prophecy. They will find a way to validate that their ideas somehow line up with the teachings of Mr. Armstrong:

**"As long as this Church believed and spoke THE SAME THING Christ put in it through His apostle, HE BLESSED IT, and it GREW 30 percent a year for 35 years. But when my son Garner Ted came to take over more authority than had been delegated to him, surrounding himself with a group of liberals, who LED him , and misled him into watering down God's doctrines - under their false influence a Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference, losing the LOVE of God's TRUTH, found root in the Church. Christ BUILT this Church through His chosen apostle!"**

**"You'll find the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3 and again in Matthew 25.** The Laodicean Church, they're lukewarm, they're only half filled with the holy spirit, but now I'd like to have you notice in Matthew 25 for just a moment. Here's something you'll might devote a lot of time in studying...

**Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto 10 virgins, that's the Church in this whole Church age, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bride groom.** They were told of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ over 1900 years ago. Now there lamps is symbolic, as I say revelation is symbolic, thy word is a lamp under thy feet, the Bible says. **The lamps then are the Bible. These were a Bible loving people ...**

"I want you to notice something right here. Five of them were wise and five of them were foolish. And they that were foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them, but the wise took oil, not in the lamps, took oil in the vessels with their lamps. Now the lamp is the Bible. The lamp is the word of God. But the vessel that they took the oil in is the person, and in your mind. **And you can't understand the Bible without the holy spirit. The oil is the holy spirit, and those that were foolish did not have the holy spirit, they had the Bible, but they couldn't understand it correctly, because they didn't have the holy spirit.** And at midnight, now that's the way it's been for 1900 years but now we get down to our time."

Sermon, "Church History", Herbert W Armstrong, (DUB) 1981

**"The disastrous effect of believing lies, even through carelessness, is that it turns one from the truth (Titus 1:14).** Do you grasp that even a little error, a little false doctrine, is like a cornerstone of a building?

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**"... Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' II Thes. 2:10-11"**

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**By believing error you reject the truth of God on that particular point. That little bit of falsehood is like leaven. It begins to grow (Matt. 16:6).**

"Soon a little more knowledge is built upon this foundation. **Since truth does not fit with error, the additional building blocks of knowledge, built upon this initial cornerstone of falsehood, must be altered to fit the foundational error. So error grows until the person has built himself a fortress of falsehood — a bastion of error.**



“And the pathetic truth is that he is deceived, and may actually believe he has built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, the apostles and the Bible (Eph. 2:20). In actual fact, he has built it upon sand (Matt. 7:26, 27).”

*Good News Magazine, “Don’t Believe A Lie About the Truth”, July 1974*

### **To Leave is To Stay and To Stay is to Leave**

When heresy grips the Church, the individual who is the author of the heresy must be put out of the Church. And if this is not possible, the members seeking to keep the truth must flee the organization that becomes engulfed with false doctrines. This holds true whether the author of the false teachings is a lay member, a minister, or the leader of the Church.

God’s people are most vulnerable to being deceived when error is mixed with truth. The people of God are sanctified, which means set apart, by the truth. And the truth is the word of God, John 17:17. This is what makes us different and what sets us apart from a deceived world.

**God’s people are not sanctified by a mixture of truth and error** and those whom God has called must never accept a blend of truth and error, even if the error involves prophecy. Biblical prophecy is as much the word of God as the rest of the Bible. It encompasses approximately 1/3 of the Bible.

God would never expect an individual to remain in an organization that is teaching heresy, even if a similitude of truth remains, Romans 16:17. Those whom God has called must grow to have a love for the pure truth and not a love for the truth mixed with heresy, II Thessalonians 2:10.

The danger in remaining in a group where false teachings exist, even if it involves only prophecy, is that one might actually come to believe what is being taught. This is made clear in II Thessalonians 2:10-11 which states “because they received not the love for the truth, that they might be saved ... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie”. Biblical prophecy is part of the Word of God and is as much truth as any other doctrine. Remember, 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy.

Error in the truth in an organization, if not corrected swiftly, will always lead to additional error. It is like a cancer that spreads. It will eventually consume and kill its host. Therefore, to remain in an organization, even if it was once the true Church, but where heresy has taken root, is to leave the truth, and thus, God’s one true Church. And to leave a group that is entertaining heresy, even if it was once the pillar and ground of truth, is to stay in the truth. God’s people will remain in God’s hand until the one true Church is gathered in the truth, John 10:1-10 and John 10:27-29:

**Well, supposing that one even who has received the Holy Spirit changes his mind and wants to go off a different way** and he begins to cause friction and trouble. Some will say ‘Yeah, you are still going to have friction in the Church.’ Oh, no. We are not, brethren. No we’re not! And I want to show you why.

Next we have to turn back to Romans, the last chapter of Romans, the 16th chapter and verse 17 where Paul says; 'Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them which cause divisions** and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned**, and avoid them.'

**Different doctrines, they are causing division, they are causing trouble. That is what we had in the past.** And the REASON that we had it was we said, 'Well, we must be more loving and more kind and more good than God; and we must just leave them in among us.' **God says, MARK THEM AND AVOID THEM. Now there are two ways we can avoid them, and only two that I know. One is if we leave them in the Church and we all go out, we're no longer in the Church. The other is that we put them out, and we stay in.**

Sermon, "Unity", Herbert W Armstrong, February 4, 1984

**"By their false doctrine these false teachers were dividing the Church. And the true Christians were put out of the visible Church and the visible Church persecuted God's people.** Already in the days of the Apostle John, at the end of the first century, **an apparent elder by the name of Diotrephes cast out of the Church any of his people who would have fellowship with the disciples of John** (III John 9-10). This trend continued and eventually many were following the errorists (II Pet. 2:1-2).

*Good News Magazine*, "The Faith Once and for All Delivered", August 1974

**"Now some of our ministers have wanted to water down that doctrine. And they wanted to change that doctrine.** They didn't want to teach that doctrine of the Bible. **They didn't want to teach the doctrine of Christ and of God.** And so they were causing division and that's why they were put out. And so they come by speaking trying to draw you after them and I'm speaking unto you people that are going to hear this in the other Churches. And so you say, **well I just want to hear what they have to say and so you go. God says don't go! God says avoid them!**

"Christ taught His chosen apostle through the written word of God. The Worldwide Church of God, the same Church as founded in 31 AD, received its doctrine through God's chosen apostle. Every doctrine you have came through God's chosen apostle."

Bible Study, "Romans 15-16", Herbert W Armstrong, July 7, 1980

### **Contend for the Faith Once Delivered**

You have just read how Diotrephes, a high ranking minister in the Church of God was able to keep the apostle John out of the visible Church. There is no doubt that changes in doctrine were occurring in the Church late in the 1<sup>st</sup> century which was a reason the apostle John was not allowed to attend services with the Church. But the few that stayed faithful to the truth and that followed John were the ones who remained in the one true Church.

Remember, it is Jesus Christ who is the HEAD of the Church, and it is Christ that put the doctrines into the Philadelphia era of the Church, which was the Worldwide Church of God. He is the one that we are supposed

to follow. Therefore, by leaving the Church when the Church becomes compromised with false doctrines and continuing in the truth, we are following the true Shepherd who is Christ.

Brethren of the one true God, it is time to contend for the “faith once delivered”! God works through men but men have deviated from the truth in the past. There was an apostasy in the first century during the Ephesus era. Men such as Clement and Linus (Philippians 4:3 and II Timothy 4:21) who were trained by the apostle Paul later defected from the truth and went on to become the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> popes. The brethren in that era had to “contend for the faith that was once delivered” to them by the true apostles.

We have an assurance that the doctrines that were established during the Philadelphia era of the Church were correct, pure and the true teachings that came from Christ. You have just heard the apostle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century confirm this. Christ has also validated the authenticity of these pure and unaltered truths in Revelation 3:8 and again in Revelation 3:10. He confirmed their validity twice when he stated that this era “kept His word”. Remember, the word of God is the truth and it includes all prophetic understanding that was revealed to the Church during this remarkable 6<sup>th</sup> era of the Church.

The one true God admonishes those whom he loves and cares deeply to “contend for the faith once delivered”. Faith is another just another word that is used for the truth. The pure truth was delivered to the Church of God during the Philadelphia era by Jesus Christ through his chosen apostle Mr. Armstrong. And you are expected to “contend for this faith” before it is too late:

**“Jude had become aware of the great need to earnestly appeal to Christians to contend or fight for the faith which had been delivered to them. Apostasy was fast setting in; men were turning to error and leading away disciples after themselves.** The Church was being divided.

“What Is the Faith?

**“Let's note carefully the meaningful words Jude used. He was urging them to defend the original faith they had been given.** Many of these people had been converted by the preaching of Christ's apostles. Some may have even heard Christ Himself. They got the truth first-hand — directly from the apostles who had obtained it from Christ who had faithfully delivered it from God the Father. There was no question about what the faith was. It had been faithfully given to them!

**“This faith, meaning in this sense the body of beliefs and practices handed down by the apostles, forms the essence of the meaning of God's Church.** Together with the prophets, the apostolic teachings form the foundation of God's house — Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Any superstructure not built upon this foundation is false; it will not stand (I Cor. 3:10-15).”

*Good News Magazine, “The Faith Once and for All Delivered”, August 1974*

**“So, then the faith which must be earnestly held on to and defended is that original set of beliefs handed down by Christ's apostles.** Paul's writings are full of warnings of false teachers who sought to mislead the people of God.

**“Paul was often amazed at how easy it was for the false teachers to deceive the ones he had nourished in the faith. He told the Galatians that he marveled at how soon they were removed from Christ's gospel and had accepted another (Gal. 1:6).** The New Testament Church was constantly being harassed by false brethren who sought to mislead God's people.

**“So we see that in just a few years the New Testament Church was facing great internal problems. It is no wonder that by the time Jude wrote his epistle, perhaps in the 70s or 80s, he had to urgently remind them to stand up for the truth which they had received from the apostles.”**

*Good News Magazine, “The Faith Once and for All Delivered”, August 1974*

**“To get back to the faith, to know and come to understand that faith, one must study the writings of the apostles and the prophets. It is the purpose of Scripture to give us insight into that original set of beliefs.** God has not left us without a witness today.

**“If Jude were alive today, he would say the same thing to us as he did to those first-century Christians. Stick with the teachings of Scripture. Don't follow contrary ideas; don't follow a man (I Cor. 3:21). The scriptural principle is to prove all things and hold on to only that which is good (I Thess. 5:21).** It is in this vein that Jude urged: ‘... Build yourselves up on the foundation of your most holy faith and by praying through the Holy Spirit keep yourselves within the love of God’ (Jude 20, Phillips). We have a personal responsibility to attend to our own salvation (see also Phil. 2:12).”

*Good News Magazine, “The Faith Once and for All Delivered”, August 1974*

**“Now is the time to return to the faith which was truly once and for all delivered by Christ and the apostles. And the only true remedy is a sincere and willing heart coupled with a diligent searching of the scriptures to see whether these things be so.**

“In the final book of the Bible, Christ is pictured as standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks (Rev. 1:13). So we would be sure to understand, Jesus interprets the meaning of the candlesticks for us in verse 20. They represent the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3.

“It is to these seven churches that the message of Revelation is addressed. In the time of the Apostle John, these seven churches existed in the Roman province of Asia (now Asia Minor in western Turkey). And to these churches — and to future Christians — Christ addressed some dire warnings.

**“Taken as literally applying to the seven extant churches at the time of John, we can only draw the conclusion that many were already showing growing signs of corruption and apostasy. But taken in**

**the future sense, it bears a warning to Christians today to be alert and hear what Christ inspired John to write to the seven churches.**

“And in this connection, note the manner in which Christ appeared in the midst of the seven candlesticks: ‘His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength’ (Rev. 1:14-16).

“It is a God of power and might who stands in the midst of His churches. Risen from the dead, alive forever more, Ruler of the kings of the earth, from whose mouth issues a sharp two-edged sword! **Such a graphic description of Christ was surely meant to inspire faith in His leadership, and by implication is a warning against those who would follow false doctrine and apostasy.**”

*Good News Magazine, “The Faith Once and for All Delivered”, August 1974*

### **And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia**

You also now understand how the Book of Revelation contains seven messages to seven distinct Church eras, messages that God gave Christ to deliver unto His servants through each successive time frame in history. And you have just heard of the story of the Philadelphia Era of the Church of God.

The archives of truth have been uncovered and you have received a taste of the incredible history of the 6<sup>th</sup> era, an era that began with the restoration of the truths of the Bible. They were revealed to God’s people during the Philadelphia era after having been lost for centuries. These were the truths that were initially revealed to the New Testament Church by the apostles, who in turn received these same truths from Jesus Christ in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

The Philadelphia era started in the mist of the Great Depression with a humble beginning that progressed into a worldwide work and Church. Numerous congregations formed throughout the world and at its peak, there was an attendance of over 140,000. Mr. Armstrong planted the seed, the Church ministry watered, but it was God who blessed the Church and gave the increase. And He blessed the Church because it was doctrinally on track, which is proof that the true doctrines were revealed to this era, I Corinthians 3:6 and Matthew 7:16.

A massive open door was placed before the Worldwide Church of God and its leader. And the preaching of the kingdom of God went out in power and force like a magnitude 10 earthquake. And this commission reached the world with a 3 point plan. It went out by print through *The Plain Truth* magazine, by radio and television through the World Tomorrow Program, and by way of the personal meetings that Mr. Armstrong held with the leaders of nations of this world.

A key would be given to the leader of the Worldwide Church of God. The key that unlocked the greatest end-time prophecies found in the Bible. The identity and location of the modern nations of Israel at the end of the age was made known to Mr. Armstrong and a picture would emerge of what God had foretold would happen in the now very near future.

The winds of doctrinal change would blow like a category 5 hurricane shortly after Mr. Armstrong's death. An era would succeed the Philadelphia era of the Church, an era that would water down and alter a large number of the truths revealed to the Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and an era where some would also engage in and teach strange prophetic ideas. It would be an era that would become known for blindness. And that era is described in Revelation 3:14-20 as the Laodicean era.

The history of the Worldwide Church of God under the leadership of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong is all but set in stone. The message to the 6<sup>th</sup> era of the Church was delivered and is almost now history, all but one final detail in the message to this era remains that has not been fulfilled. And this final detail is a prophecy for our time, the time of the end. **"He that hath an ear, let him hear" the final words that Jesus Christ has for the angel of the Church in Philadelphia.**

### **The Hour of Temptation**

Revelation 3:10 contains a message for the Philadelphia era of the Church at the end of the age. It holds a message to Philadelphia in the Laodicean era. And it has an important end-time prophecy that has not been fulfilled. You will now here the words of Jesus Christ to His small and faithful flock at the end of the age, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation".

Mr. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God always understood there would be a small group, a small remnant who would hold fast to all of the doctrines that were restored to the Philadelphia era. And they would hold fast without compromising or mixing truth and error. And this includes all of the unaltered prophetic truths that were revealed to this era. These doctrines were restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through His apostle Mr. Herbert W Armstrong. It is this uncompromised truth that separates Philadelphia from Laodicea at the end.

A small remnant will unite in truth at the end of the age. They will hold fast to the truth that was once delivered to the Philadelphia era of the Church. This has not occurred yet but it soon will. It is a sure thing, just as the sun rises every morning. It will happen because the word God cannot be broken, John 10:35. And because the word of God has never come back to Him void, Isaiah 55:11.

Here now the promise to those who unite in the pure truth, the promise from Jesus Christ to the small remnant of the Philadelphia era of the Church of God at the end of the age;

**“Revelation 3:10-11 ‘Because thou hast kept the word of my patience’. Been faithful to the Word of God. ‘I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation,’ which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth’.** In other words, the Great Tribulation.

**“Now other translations say, ‘I will keep thee from the Great Tribulation’. Other translations have it that way, that we are not to have to go through the Great Tribulation,** and that's what I showed you in Revelation 12. We are to have the two wings of a great eagle to fly. Now, of course, that is symbolic language and I don't know whether that means literal airplanes or what.”

Sermon, “Warning to the Church”, Herbert W Armstrong, July 1, 1978

**“There is another promise of miraculous protection from this Great Tribulation. It is in the third chapter of Revelation. Beginning verse 7** is a description of how the living Christ would OPEN A DOOR by which his Gospel may go out to all the world as a witness and a warning. That is the very Work being carried on through the World Tomorrow broadcast, *The Plain Truth* and related literature.

**“In verse 10 is Christ's PROMISE that because we have been faithful WITH HIS WORD, he will also keep us from ‘the hour of temptation.’** But the marginal reading — the correct translation from the original Greek — is ‘trial’ or ‘Great Tribulation.’

“These events are REAL!

“This world is hurling itself rapidly to the grand-smash CLIMAX of world trouble. Crime, violence, lawlessness, disrespect for authority, are increasing at a RAPID RATE!

**“God help us not to treat this warning lightly.”**

*Plain Truth Magazine*, “There Is A Way of Escape”, Herbert W Armstrong, March 1984

“At the close of this present evil age, another ‘Elijah’ is to thunder a warning message to disobedient Israel and prepare a people for Christ's glorious return to reestablish God's government on earth. Yes, just before the end of this present evil world the Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached as a witness to all the world (Matt. 24:14). An ‘open door’ of the mass media has been provided (Rev. 3:8).

“Jesus said that only those who had ‘ears to hear’ - who were tuned in to God's truth - would recognize the second ‘Elijah,’ John the Baptist (Matt. 11: 14-15). Likewise, only those who are obedient to God and led by His Spirit will recognize the end-time ‘Elijah.’

**“Those who do, and who are heeding the message, will be protected by God when the world erupts in the flames of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 3:10).”**

*Good News Magazine*, “Q & A”, October-November 1981, Page 13

## Conclusion

Brethren of God, you have now received the final message to Philadelphia. Now is the time to stand for the truth! It is the time to hold fast to the doctrines that were restored to the Philadelphia era of God's Church. It is the time to unite in the truth. And so, a great and final test now stands before you.

The teachings revealed in the 6<sup>th</sup> era came from God the Father. God the Father gave them to Jesus Christ. Christ in turn revealed them to His chosen apostle, Mr. Herbert W Armstrong, and he was the one who restored them to the Church. The true doctrines were delivered to God's Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the time when its leader was alive.

Furthermore, a small Philadelphian remnant will remain faithful at the end of the age. This will be a group who will hold fast to the full truth that was revealed to the Worldwide Church of God when it was led by Mr. Herbert W Armstrong. It will be a group that will not compromise these truths.

In the first century, when certain leaders began to introduce false teachings to the Church, the apostle Jude exhorted the brethren to "contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints", Jude 3-4. It is time to "content for the faith that was delivered" to the Philadelphia era of God's Church.

A decision unlike any other is now before you. Will you accept doctrine that has been watered down or altered? Will we go along with strange doctrines and odd prophetic ideas that seem to be ever changing and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth? Or, will you now hear and heed the voice of Christ and the final message to the small Philadelphia remnant?

There will soon come a time when it will be apparent that the old prophetic teachings surrounding the return of Christ, the prophetic understanding that was revealed in the Philadelphia era of the Church, will become evident, even to the Laodicean era of the Church, Matthew 25:6-8. There will come a time when God's people will realize that an apostle who taught the full truth was among them in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When this time appears, everyone will have vetted themselves and it will be too late to change course.

Consider and weigh this final quote from Mr. Armstrong, the final words from Jesus Christ to the 6<sup>th</sup> era of the Church. In this final era and end of the age, may the spirit of God help everyone to believe the pure truth that was once delivered by Jesus Christ to the Philadelphia era of the Church of God!

**"Revelation 3:8 'Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word' ... How many people have believed, let alone kept God's Word? You can't keep it if you don't believe it.** Adam and Eve didn't believe what God said. God talked to them in person, just like I sit and talk to someone right here beside me. But Adam and Eve didn't believe God.



**“Jesus Christ came. He preached to multiple thousands of people.** Twice He preached to 5,000 men, not counting women and children. He preached to numerous audiences, small audiences and great audiences. **How many do you think believed what He said? ... Acts the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter and the 15<sup>th</sup> verse.** **Very few ever believed. 120 it was, who believed what He said!”**

Sermon, “The Church in Prophecy”, Herbert W Armstrong, March 28, 1981

*With sincerity and love  
And in Christ's service,*

*Luis A Garcia*

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