

Herbert W Armstrong

The Role that he Fulfilled

The 20th century marked a golden era in the history of the Church of God. A man by the name of Herbert W. Armstrong restored a tremendous amount truth to the Church during his lifetime. The Church grew beyond 150,000 in attendance. And during that time, all believed that God had restored truth to the Church through him.

But after his death, things changed. The truths that were restored were discarded by the leaders who seized control of the Church. Pagan doctrines that aligned with traditional christianity were introduced in its place causing the majority of the membership to leave the truth altogether. A small minority splintered off into a large number of groups, each holding fast to varying degrees of the teachings that many once believed were restored to the Church by God through Mr. Armstrong. It has been estimated that over 400 of these groups now exist.

One of the teachings that the Churches of God now disagree on is whether Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the end-time role of Elijah. Many groups and their members believe that he did not. Yet others believe that someone else will fulfill this role in the near future. And thus, a number of new teachings on this subject have arisen since his death.

Several questions on this subject have arisen in the 21st century. The following are some of these questions; Did Mr. Armstrong fulfill the role of end-time Elijah? And if so, is there any proof that he did? Or, will someone else arise in the “spirit and power” of Elijah and fulfill this role?

The subject of the end-time Elijah is a fascinating one. It is also a significant one to God’s people at the end of the age. One reason it is so important is because the teachings of the truth, the true doctrines that the Church of God believes, hinges on the fulfillment of this role. This article contains numerous quotes from Mr. Armstrong as well as excerpts from material that was written during the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) prior to 1986 on this vital topic. For those who attended services in WCG, it will bring back memories of an incredible time in the history of the Church. And for those who were not in WCG, the information contained here will prove to be an eye opening endeavor.

The Elijah Question and Commission

The role of the end-time Elijah is described in Matthew 17:11, Mark 9:12, Luke 1:17 and Malachi 4:5-6. To examine this subject properly, one must first begin by answering what the commission or commissions of this man entails. After this is established, the historical record from the Worldwide Church of God on this subject will be examined. And then, all who read this document can make their own decision as to whether he fulfilled this role or whether it is possible that someone else will fulfill it in the future.

The restoration of “all things” is the most well known and is considered by many the first commission. It is found in Matthew 17:11 and Mark 9:12. A second commission and perhaps the most important one to the Church is found in Luke 1:17. In this verse, Elijah is supposed to “make ready a people prepared for the Lord”. Since the world will not be converted until after the return of Christ, this verse indicates that Elijah has a hand in preparing the Church for the second coming of Christ.

The third and final commission is found in Malachi 4:5-6. At the close of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi prophesied that Elijah would appear before the “Dreadful Day of the Lord” and that he, Elijah, would “turn the heart of the fathers to their children and the heart of the children to their father”. This is also reiterated in Luke 1:17.

And finally, these verses describe a characteristic that will prove to be helpful in identifying the man who will fulfill the end-time role of Elijah. This descriptive trait is found in Luke 1:17. It states that the end-time Elijah is going to appear in the “spirit and power” of the original Elijah. These are the 3 commissions and the identifying characteristic that that will help us recognize this great end-time servant of God.

Restore All Things

We will begin with the first and most commonly known commission. It is found in Matthew 17:11 and Mark 9:12. So what did Christ mean when he said “Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things”? Two questions emanate from this statement. The first one is, what is Elijah supposed to restore? The second one is, to what extent is the restoration supposed to occur? Both of these questions will soon be answered. We will now hear what Mr. Armstrong believed and learn what all in the Worldwide Church of God once understood:

“Jesus also said the Elijah to come would “restore all things” (Matt. 17:11). Restitution is restoring to a former state or condition – restoring something that had been taken away. What former state or condition needs restoring? What was taken away and when?

“In the process of restoring the government of God in the Church through the modern Elijah, God used him to restore many related truths. Of primary importance was the restoration of Christ’s true gospel of the Kingdom of God! That gospel was restored when the Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God first went on air with ‘The World Tomorrow’ radio program the first week in January, 1934, and then to the world when he went on Radio Luxembourg and radio Ceylon in 1953 – one century of 19-year time cycles after the gospel of the Kingdom had been suppressed!”

The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, “Proclaiming the Gospel”, Lesson 18, Pages 11 & 14

“There was an Elijah to come and to restore things in the Church. That has happened. And what has been restored is THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD and many of the truths. At least 17 or 18 principle, vital,

doctrines of truth have been added to about the three that had survived in the Sardis era of the Church that they still had.”

Sermon, “Feast of Trumpets 1985”, Herbert W Armstrong, September 16, 1985

“I did not seek these basic foundations of TRUTH of my own volition! Jesus Christ revealed them, while I was trying to prove the very opposite of these precious TRUTHS!

“He was preparing one called and chosen by God, even against that one’s will, for an important service in **RESTORING THE LAW AND GOVERNMENT of God to earth – even in the comparatively small Worldwide Church of God.** He was preparing one whom He conquered and brought to repentance and faith, for this great END-TIME commission.”

Good News Magazine, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God”, April 1980, Page 26

“This morning, here in Pasadena, the sermon had a great deal to say about Elijah and about the book of Malachi the 3rd and 4th chapters. Elijah, Jesus said, was going to come and restore all things, and Jesus said that after John the Baptist had already finished preparing the way before the First Coming of Christ. After John the Baptist was in prison and his work completed, Jesus said, ‘Elijah shall yet come and restore all things’ ...

“God raised me up to restore THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, but it is only restored so far in the Church. I have no authority from God, no ability, to restore the government of God any further than just over you brethren in the Church, but that has been done. That has been done brethren. You go back and read Malachi 3:1-5 and Malachi 4, and where Jesus said, ‘Elijah truly shall come.’ Even after John the Baptist was put in prison, he was yet to come. But he was to restore. John the Baptist didn’t restore.”

Sermon, “Another Civilization”, Herbert W Armstrong, October 2, 1982

COMMENT: Mr. Armstrong understood that he was fulfilling the role of end-time Elijah who was to restore the truth to the Church of God in the 20th century. The scope of this restoration encompassed the Church. At least 18 principal doctrines were restored, but the restoration also consisted of many additional truths. As you have just read, only 3 truths remained in the Church when Mr. Armstrong came across the remnant of Sardis era. Therefore, it was the perfect time for a massive restoration of truth to occur in the Church of God. The next and final quote on this subject makes this fact clear:

“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.

“Again God raised up one man through whom the living Christ would work. Since God called me and used me in an unusual manner ...”

Good News Magazine, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God – Chapter 1”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 1980, Page 25

All Things

Some have become confused on which teachings, that were restored to the Church through Mr. Armstrong, are to be considered “doctrinal truth”. They believe that he only restored 18 foundational truths and that all of the other doctrines that were restored to the Church through him do not fall within the scope of “truth”. This is not what Mr. Armstrong believed nor is it what he taught the Church.

The commission of restoring “all things” by the end-time Elijah involved the full truth. The Hebrew word for “all things” in Matthew 17:11 is “paz” and it means “all, every, the whole, or thoroughly”. While it is true that Mr. Armstrong often stated that the government of God and the knowledge of the true gospel had been restored to the Church through him, and while it is also true that he mentioned in a sermon that 18 vital doctrinal truths had also been restored in the same manner, he also said that many additional truths had been restored to the Church.

The word of God is clear on what doctrinal truth entails and it lines up perfectly with what Mr. Armstrong said and understood. The article [“What is Truth”](#) thoroughly covers this subject and explains which teachings are considered truth and it also includes numerous quotes from Mr. Armstrong about this key topic.

Others have become confused on the scope of the restoration involves. They believe that it involves the entire globe. This group forgets that it is Jesus Christ who qualified to replace Satan as the ruler of this world (Isaiah 9:6-7 and John 18:37). And that it is Jesus Christ who will restore the government of God (Acts 3:20-22) on this earth. He is the one who will give all flesh a new heart and His spirit (Ezekiel 36:26) so that they can obey the truth and become converted.

The article [“How the Teachings of RCG Now Differ from those of Mr. Armstrong”](#) contains more information on the restoration of “all things” to the world. It includes details of this vital truth. A truth that was restored by Jesus Christ to the Church through Mr. Armstrong.

A People Prepared

The second commission and perhaps the most significant one for the people of God is found in Luke 1:17. This task involves “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”. Two natural questions spring from this statement. They are, who are the people that are made ready for the Lord and what are they prepared for? The following statements express the teaching in the Worldwide Church of God on this subject and they will answer to both of these questions:

“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

“Before the day of the Lord, a human messenger would be commissioned by God to prepare a spiritual people for God, and turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and vice versa before the second coming of Christ – much the same as John did before Jesus began His ministry.”

The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, “Proclaiming the Gospel”, Lesson 18, Pages 11 & 14

“Few understand just what IS the Church. There are so many churches in the world. People just take churches for granted. But more than 1,953 years ago, Jesus Christ said, ‘I will build my Church.’ Few know WHY He built it—for what PURPOSE. The purpose, primarily, was dual:

“1) to proclaim to the world the Gospel Message God sent to mankind by Jesus as God's Messenger (Mal. 3:1) of the coming Kingdom of God,

“2) to call and prepare a chosen people to be born as IMmortal Spirit Persons in the GOD FAMILY, to RULE, with and under Christ, all nations of the earth—and to JUDGE all who ever lived in the JUDGMENT DAY when they shall be resurrected—after the coming thousand- year reign of God's Kingdom over all nations on earth. Those people now being called and prepared will constitute the spiritual TEMPLE to which Christ shall come the second time in POWER and GREAT GLORY!”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, March 19, 1981

“In the soon-coming government of God, every official placed in authority shall have been tried and tested, trained, experienced and qualified, by God's qualifications. The fact illustrates the purpose and necessity of the Church. The function of the Church is not merely to convert the ‘firstfruits’ not merely to bring about salvation to those specially called out of the world and into the Church, but to prepare and train them for these positions of leadership in the kingdom when salvation will be opened to all the living.”

Mystery of the Ages, Herbert W Armstrong, Page 332

“But for us now, it is imperative that we understand that those CALLED and inducted by God into His Church NOW have been called for MORE THAN JUST SPIRITUAL SALVATION AND THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. We are called, every one of us, for a PART in preparing for the Kingdom of God!”

“But my efforts as Christ's apostle have also been heavily devoted to preparing God's Church - the spiritual Temple to which Christ will come.

"The living Christ as HEAD of this Church has been using His chosen apostle to set HIS CHURCH on GOD'S track!

Good News Magazine, "What Does Pentecost Mean to You?", May 1985, Page 6

"God called and anointed Mr. Armstrong as our human leader to raise up this era of God's Church, to start Ambassador College, to preach and publish the Gospel, to appear before kings and world rulers with God's message and **to prepare a people God can use to change the world in the world tomorrow.**"

Good News Magazine, "What Does 'The Work' Mean to You?", June-July 1982, Page 5

Comment: The people who are mentioned in Luke 1:17 that are "made ready and prepared for the Lord" are the Church. Mr. Armstrong understood this key point. He knew that he was playing a vital role in preparing the Church to function in the capacity of kings, priests and teachers in the Kingdom of God.

To Turn the Hearts

The third and final commission associated with the end-time Elijah is found in Malachi 4:5-6 and in Luke 1:17. Malachi 4:6 states that Elijah "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". The fulfillment of this mission is so important in the eyes of God that He goes on to further state that He will "smite the earth with a curse" if this task is not completed.

Two years before Mr. Armstrong's death, a World Tomorrow Telecast was produced devoted entirely to this subject. It was titled "The Hearts of the Children". It thoroughly explains this Biblical prophecy. The following quote from this video summarizes what everyone believed and understood regarding how Mr. Armstrong was fulfilling this scripture. It is recommended viewing for everyone who wants to examine the facts on this matter in greater detail:

"To help families meet the challenge, and to help bridge the gap that has opened up between parents and children, the Worldwide Church of God is developing a comprehensive youth educational program. This program, directed by Pastor General Herbert W Armstrong, is designed to support the parents in teaching their children and to provide positive education and recreational opportunities.

"Youth 1984 is written to help teenagers deal with the problems and pressures unique to their generation. Its lively colorful pages show its readers how to live carefully in this world while preparing for the future that God has waiting for them.

"Through the Youth Educational Services, the Church has developed a multilevel correspondence course for children between the ages of 5-13 years. The YES course gives parents a helpful tool to teach

children the basic principles of God's plan so that they can start their lives on the right foundation. The individual lessons of the YES course are written by senior ministers and experience teachers.

"YOU (Youth Opportunities United) is the Worldwide Church of God international program for teenagers. Through many varied activities, YOU gives older children educational, social and recreational opportunities within the framework of the Church.

"Every summer, hundreds of teenagers have the opportunity to attend one of the summer educational programs that are held in many locations around the world ... Young people of all backgrounds come together for 3 weeks for challenging activities and fun, but it is fun with a purpose."

World Tomorrow Television Telecast, "The Hearts of the Children", December 3, 1984

Comment: Much more can be said about all of the programs that were instituted in the Worldwide Church of God to accomplish the commission in Malachi 4:6. But video of the "The Hearts of the Children" is representative of what was implemented in the Church at the direction of Mr. Armstrong. It demonstrates how the Worldwide Church of God clearly understood that Mr. Armstrong was fulfilling the task of "turning the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of children to their fathers".

The Little Ambassadors of Shanghai

In addition to the World Tomorrow telecast just mentioned, there is another event involving children that took place in 1984 that is worth noting. Mr. Armstrong established a relationship with the "Little Ambassadors of Shanghai" from the Peoples Republic of China. A World Tomorrow Television Telecast was created in 1985 title "Children – The Key to the Future". The following is a quote from this video:

"In May 1984, the Ambassador Foundation sponsored the first-ever American tour by children from the People's Republic of China. The Little Ambassadors of Shanghai began their tour in California. They started on the Ambassador College Campus in Pasadena where they met the foundation's president, Herbert W Armstrong. They immediately adopted him as their grandpa. Their formal debut came later on the stage of the Ambassador Auditorium.

"This historic first tour by these Little Ambassadors from Shanghai was a milestone in the development of renewed friendship between two great nations. At the conclusion of each performance, the Chinese children were joined on the stage by children from Imperial School in Pasadena. It underscored the importance of teaching children to work in harmony and cooperation, if the world is ever to live in peace."

World Tomorrow Television Telecast, "Children – The Key to the Future", Herbert W Armstrong

The "Spirit and Power" of Elijah

There is a key characteristic that the original Elijah possessed that end-time Elijah will also come to have. Luke 1:17 describes it as one who “shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias”. This is the notable attribute that both men have in common. In order to gain a greater understanding of this trait, the life of the original Elijah will be examined to determine what his “spirit” and the “power” that he possessed was like.

The original Elijah was a man who, above all things, did not and would not compromise with God’s commandment. He was resolute and faithful to the teachings of the true God even after King Ahab led the nation of Israel into the observance of pagan practices. This is illustrated in the high noon showdown with the 450 prophets of Baal in II Kings 18:21-40. Elijah stood up for the commandments of the Eternal, in front of Israel, even though he was vastly outnumbered by these false prophets. And he did this no matter the consequences:

“Elijah, above all others, is represented in Scripture as the prophet who restored the worship of the true God-and obedience to his commandments. When Elijah ordered King Ahab to gather on Mount Carmel ‘all Israel’ (I Kings 18:19-21) and the prophets of Baal and of Asherah (Easter), he said: ‘How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him....’ (verse 21). And when, at Elijah’s 18-second prayer (verses 36-37), the fire fell miraculously from heaven consuming Elijah’s sacrifice, the people fell on their faces, and said, ‘The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God’ (verse 39).”

Mystery of the Ages, Herbert W Armstrong, Page 337

Will Not Compromise

But did Mr. Armstrong possess the attribute that was just mentioned? Did he stand for the truth, no matter the consequences or was he a man who would compromise? During the course of his life, Mr. Armstrong understood that he was chosen by Jesus Christ for one main reason. He knew that **God had picked him because he would not compromise on the truth.**

He held fast to the truths that Jesus Christ had revealed to him even in the wake opposition during the liberal years of the 1970’s. It is this trait that the original Elijah was known for. An attribute of one who would not compromise with the truth:

“But there has been an effort to water down the truth. That’s another thing that has happened in the last 9 years. We’re trying to water down the truth of God with false doctrines that have been creeping in and ministers are teaching them, around the world even ministers of this Church! Now, believe you me, I am going to get after those things, and fast!

“Jesus Christ is in power. Jesus Christ is the power back of it and He is going to set these things in order. And if any of you want to fight Christ, you start fighting Him and see where you get off. Or if you want to go with the devil, maybe you’ll suffer the devil’s fate. I am speaking very plainly today. I’m a little wrought up about it.

"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

"God revealed truth to me and if there is any reason why He has chose me, there's 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 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 a hundred and twenty still believed Him after Christ had talked for three and a half years to multiple thousands of people.**

"But I did believe Him, and I have not compromised with that belief one iota and I've been working hard the last two and a half years to get this Church back on the track after others were getting it off the track. I don't think we are a hundred percent 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.

Sermon, "Revelation 12", Herbert W Armstrong, April 18, 1981

"For some few years now, there had been a certain group at Headquarters, whom my son surrounded himself with, who have wanted to 'water down' God's truths and doctrines. They seem to have wanted to get as close to the ways of Satan as possible, still keeping 'one foot' in God's Church, hoping thereby to get into the Kingdom of God.

"I want to get as CLOSE to GOD's true doctrines as possible, and as far away from Satan's ways as possible.

"If there is any reason why the living Christ chose me as His Apostle, it is that I will not compromise a thousandth of an inch on God's true doctrines."

"The group of 'liberals' which my son surrounded himself with, who wanted to alter and modify or change GOD'S LAW AND DOCTRINES, are being put out. **FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TEN YEARS, GOD'S CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS AT HEADQUARTERS ARE IN HARMONY, IN GOD'S TRUTH, IN PEACE, AND IN HIS LOVE!**"

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, June 25, 1985

Comment: Mr. Armstrong had a conviction to serve God without compromise. It is reflective by his actions and the many statements he made throughout his life but especially when he set the Church back on track. To

this end, he was faithful, he did not fail and he completed his mission when he set the Church back on the track.

The Magnitude of the 20th Century Work

The original Elijah performed some mighty miracles during his time. One of those was when he resurrected a widow's son from death. This account is laid out in I Kings 17:17-24. After the boy had died, Elijah cried out to God and the Eternal heard his prayer and the child lived again. This was a miracle that could only be accomplished by the power of God.

A second mighty miracle that is recorded in the Bible occurred during the high noon showdown with the 450 prophets of Baal. In this account, fire came down from the sky and consumed the sacrifice and the wood on an altar that was prepared by Elijah. And this miracle was accomplished by the power of the one true God.

In the 20th century, a great servant of God by the name of Herbert W Armstrong appeared on the world scene. Through him, the greatest single work that has ever been accomplished in the history of mankind took place. It was the preaching of the one true gospel. This message was published and preached throughout the globe by way of print, radio, television and personal visits with the leaders of this world. The following is a taste of what occurred during his lifetime:

"Then we got on all the major United States stations every day—all the big 50,000-watt stations. The Work was then growing 30% a year for 35 years, up until 1968. And it finally became WORLD WIDE,
as it is now."

Sermon, "From Sardis to Laodicea", Herbert W Armstrong, June 24, 1983

"Matthew 24:14 ... and then coming down to verse 14, he said, and this gospel of the kingdom of God shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come. You may not realize it but that gospel has not been preached for 19 centuries until it was preached on this program. And now it is going worldwide and into every nation on the face of this earth, either published or spoken. Spoken by television or by radio. Published by the Plain Truth Magazine, one of the world's great circulation magazines that now has a circulation approaching 8 million in copies. One of the largest circulated magazines on the face of this earth."

World Tomorrow Telecast, "The Sign of the Times", Herbert W Armstrong, October 28, 1984

"Yet today it (The Worldwide Church of God) carries on a great worldwide Work. As a public service, it is reaching, by radio, television, and large-space advertising in many mass-circulation magazines and newspapers, 150,000,000 people with the inspired message of the WAY OF LIFE that is the CAUSE of all GOOD-of peace, happiness, prosperity, abundant well-being-the truly successful life."

Plain Truth Magazine, "This Is The Worldwide Church of God", December 1976, Page 44

"Following are current worldwide figures you should know for the year 1985.

Seventy-four million PLAIN TRUTH magazines were either mailed to subscribers or distributed through newsstands.

- **Seven million GOOD NEWS issues** were sent out.
- **Two million YOUTH 85 magazines** went to young and old alike.
- **Six million booklets, books and reprint articles** were mailed upon request.
- **More than one million Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course lessons** were sent to students.
- Our Mail Processing Center received more than one million phone calls, mostly in response to the WORLD TOMORROW program on television.
- Our offices around the world received more than 10 million letters from subscribers responding to the work of the Church.”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, January 1986

“This end-time Work, of which you as a member or co-worker are part, functions in the ‘power of Elijah’ (Mal. 4:5 -6, Matt. 17:11). We today have the greatest commission in man's history. Yes, much greater than the original Elijah's commission!

“The world is being warned! Lives are being changed! God has provided the open doors of the media to this Philadelphia era of God's true Church to get the job done (Rev. 3:7-8). **God has raised up this era through Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong, and uses him as head spokesman. We are called to support him and this end-time Work of a third and final Elijah!**”

Good News Magazine, “Fervent Prayer Avails Much”, March 1983, Page 25

“It is revealed in Malachi 3:1-5 and 4:5-6 that God would raise up one in the power and spirit of Elijah, shortly prior to the Second Coming of Christ. In Matthew 17:11 Jesus said, even after John the Baptist had completed his mission, that this prophesied Elijah ‘Truly shall first come, and restore all things.’ Although it is plainly revealed that John the Baptist had come in the power and spirit of Elijah, he did not restore anything. 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

“In Zechariah 4:6 and 9, God says of this former type: ‘This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power (humanly), but by MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts.**’ In Revelation 3:8, Christ says of the leader of today's Church, ‘I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength (only a little strength humanly), and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name.’ **This Work in our day has not been done by human strength or power, but by FAITH and the POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT.**”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, March 19, 1981

“Brethren, this world is being destroyed for lack of knowledge of and from GOD, as we read in Hosea 4:6. Through my personal visits, and the PLAIN TRUTH magazine, on TV and radio and through other literature, we are proclaiming that knowledge in POWER and AUTHORITY.”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, November 18, 1984

Comment: What you have just read is a description of a powerful work that took place in the 20th century. No other person in the history of mankind has been used by God to perform such a mighty work. And the scope of the work spanned the globe. God used Pastor General Herbert W Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God as His instrument to accomplish this great end-time work. And it was carried out by the power of God’s spirit, Zechariah 4:6.

Known Around the World

There is another interesting fact that is connected to the “spirit and power” of the original Elijah. The original Elijah was known throughout Israel. King Ahab as well as Obadiah, the governor of his house were well acquainted with who he was (I Kings 18:17-19). Even the kings of the nations around Israel knew who this man was (Kings 18:10). His fame grew when he imposed a drought throughout the land. Not to mention the mighty miracles described earlier in this article. But it was the spirit and power of God that was behind these events.

It has been estimated that Mr. Armstrong met with approximately a third of all the leaders of the nations of this world. The magnitude of the work that was carried out by the spirit of God propelled him global stage. He used this tool as an opportunity to “preach the gospel” to the leaders of this world. And because of this, he became internationally known as an “Unofficial Ambassador for World Peace”. And it was “not by might, nor by power, but by the spirit of God” that made this possible:

“Elijah Went to Kings”

“God had hid Elijah from King Ahab of Israel – first by the brook Cherith, fed by the ravens, then in the house of the widow in Zarephath. Finally, God told Elijah in the third year to go to King Ahab. On the way Elijah met Obadiah, the governor of the king’s palace, who greatly feared God. Elijah told Obadiah to go tell King Ahab Elijah had come.

“But Obadiah feared for his life! He said, ‘As the Eternal thy God liveth, there is NO NATION OR KINGDOM whither my lord [King Ahab] hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there: he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not’. (I Kings 18:10)

“Ahab’s servants did not inquire or take an oath of the sheep-herders, farmers, or common people. Obviously, **Ahab’s men went directly to the KING of each nation, indicating that Elijah was known to the kings of the earth in his day.**

“Today, after 40 years, the DOORS TO THESE NATIONS ARE OPENING one after another, faster than I can get to them! THIS IS DEFINITELY OF GOD!

“And now, PUBLIC APPEARANCE CAMPAIGNS are planned already in THREE nations, sponsored by officials high in the governments of these nations. **Already I have gotten the MESSAGE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD to audiences of 55 to 100 of each nation’s LEADERS** in banquets or dinners in India, Thailand, South Vietnam, Ethiopia, and the Philippines.”

Coworker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, February 22, 1974

“During 1979 I started overseas trips in Christ's Work again, though now I must remain at my office here in Tucson most of the time to administer the day-to-day executive administration of the Church, Ambassador College and the Foundation. **A year ago I made a visit to China, and again to Japan. I was the first leader from Christianity to be invited as a guest of the People's Republic of China, and to speak before their leaders. I recently returned from the Middle East.**

“Now I am starting another trip to Tokyo and the Philippines beginning January 2. I have plans to stop over and preach Sabbath, the third, at the church in Honolulu, then on to Japan. A meeting is planned in Tokyo before PLAIN TRUTH subscribers on the next Sabbath. **Also a very large banquet is to be held in my honor, with about 300 high-ranking Japanese of the government and university—including ambassadors from many countries.** Also a small dinner with perhaps 15 or so of my "Japanese sons," as they call themselves—all members of the Japanese Diet (their law-making congress).

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

“During the decade of the 70s, Christ has opened the door for me to be invited for private meetings with perhaps more kings, emperors, presidents and prime ministers all over the world—on all continents—than any other man on earth. The TRUE Gospel has gone to the heads of governments!

And now, the latest, has come an invitation to Moscow! It is planned for me to appear there in early May.”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, January 3, 1980

Comment: Mr. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formally known as the Radio Church of God) for 53 years. He began visiting heads of state and leaders from around the world in the late 1960s and it continued into the early 1980’s. During this time, it is estimated he personally met with one third of all the heads of the nations of this world. This was one of the avenues that was used to preach the gospel to the world and it also fulfilled Revelation 10:11.

The next quote is from the introduction of the World Tomorrow Television Telecast titled “Sign of the Times”. Many of the telecasts contain this same prologue. As previously mentioned, by the early 1980’s, Mr. Armstrong had become internationally known as an “Unofficial Ambassador for World Peace”. In addition, a brochure was produced in 1975 devoted entirely to this subject and it was titled “Herbert W. Armstrong – Ambassador For World Peace”:

“The Worldwide Church of God presents Herbert W Armstrong. Internationally recognized ambassador for world peace. Visiting prominent leaders around the globe. Discussing the cause of world problems. And proclaiming the good news of the world tomorrow ...”

World Tomorrow Radio Broadcast, “Sign of the Times”, Herbert W Armstrong

“I travel around the world as a sort of unofficial ambassador for world peace. I talk with heads of governments regarding their problems. I talk with kings. I talk with presidents, with prime ministers, and other heads in governments and men high in governments over the world’ ...

“Since 1967, Mr. Armstrong has been received by Crown Prince Mikasa of Japan, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, President Thieu of South Vietnam, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India, President Suharto of Indonesia, Prime Minister Golda Meir of Israel, President Suleiman Frangieh of Lebanon, Prime Minister Sanya of Thailand, Prime Minister Tanaka of Japan, President Marcos of the Philippines, and King Hussein of Jordan.

“The inscription ‘to my good friend Herbert Armstrong’ signed by King Hussein is a testimony to the warm friendships Mr. Armstrong has developed with world leaders. Emperor Hirohito awarded him the Order of the Sacred Treasure. The Order of the Sacred Treasure is the most prestigious award that can be presented to a non-Japanese private citizen. Another great honor was presented to him by King Leopold III of Belgium ...”

World Tomorrow Telecast, “Ambassador for World Peace”, Herbert W Armstrong, January 18, 1979

With Power and Authority

The original Elijah had a conviction to serve God and faithfully keep the commandments of God without compromise. To this end he did not falter or fail. He was bold and spoke with authority, the authority of the living God. This is made obvious in his interaction with King Ahab (I Kings 18:17-18) and in the account of the “Captains of 50” (II Kings 1:9-17) where he called fire from the sky on these men.

Mr. Armstrong cried aloud and spared not when he put the Church back on the track after it had deviated from the true teachings Christ had set in the Church through him. He spoke with authority when he accomplished this task. He spoke in a similar way as the original Elijah. And these two men spoke this way because they understood they were given the authority to do this from God:

“Am I too old? Am I ‘senile’? Who else do you know at near 87 years of age who in one year turns God's Worldwide Church around, rooting out the dissidents, the false doctrines, being used of GOD to set His Church BACK ON HIS TRACK? IT IS NOT I WHO DOES IT—IT IS GOD using me as His instrument. God brought me back to life from complete heart failure and death, in August 1977 FOR A PURPOSE. That PURPOSE is to FINISH proclaiming His Message around the world—to be used in setting His Church back on His track—and in leading you brethren of His Church into a condition where

you are finally PREPARED, and MADE READY, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but HOLY—the Bride of Christ who shall have made herself READY! I will have MUCH MORE ABOUT THAT to write you or say to you later.”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, April 16, 1979

“I wanted to see us get OURSELVES back on the track, pleasing GOD, before we started this enlarged campaign. Also I wanted to be sure I could keep up the pace myself—to keep writing the advertising space messages and do the broadcasts.

“But my personal health and strength has been IMPROVING regularly. God is giving me strength and POWER (Isaiah 40:28-31)!”

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

“God is working out a purpose here below and the world does not understand that purpose. The religions of this world do not understand the purpose of God! **I speak by the authority of Jesus Christ, it’s highest authority in the universe and all power in heaven and in earth** has been given to Him. And **He has called me and given me authority to represent Him and to speak in His name, by His authority, and I do speak with authority, and by that authority.**”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “We Must Choose to Obey God”, Herbert W Armstrong

Comment: Mr. Armstrong thundered when he set the Church back on the track and thus restored the correct teachings in the body of Christ. God extended his life so that he could accomplish this task. And he spoke with authority, the authority vested in him by the almighty God. He spoke this way when he proclaimed the true gospel around the world and when he was used to set the Church back on the track.

A Strong Hand and His Arm Shall Rule

But there is one more item worth noting regarding the strength Mr. Armstrong’s character. He and the Church would often marvel at the close resemblance between his name and the reference found in Isaiah 40:10. It states “the Lord will come with a **strong** hand, and his **arm** shall rule before him”. He believed this was a reference to him. The following two quotes illustrate that he and the membership in the Church recognized this connection:

“Now turn on down to Verse 9: ‘O Zion that bringeth good tidings...’ Zion is used in the Bible two ways. Sometimes it represents the City of David, a portion of Jerusalem to the east of the Temple of Solomon. Sometimes it refers to the Church. Now WHICH does it refer to here? It refers to a Zion that proclaims ‘Good tidings.’ The word Gospel means ‘Good New’ or ‘Good Tidings.’ So this is now speaking of the true Church of God, proclaiming the GOSPEL. Read further.

“‘O Jerusalem that bringeth good tidings.’ Here ‘Jerusalem’ stands for the Church of God. Continue: ‘Lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up.’ (Verse 9). **This says, AMPLIFY your voice —by modern means of loud speakers, radio, television.** The prophecy referring to John the Baptist did not mention this lifting up the sound with strength.

“Continue: ‘...be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with **strong** hand, and his **arm** shall RULE for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his Work before Him.’ **That is the Message WE are sending out today. Christ is coming this time to RULE! With a STRONG ARM! Could there be any significance in turning those two words around?** And today I think there is no non-Jew as much loved and honored in Israel at Jerusalem, from President, Prime Minister, and on down, as Christ's chosen Apostle;”

Coworker letter, Herbert W Armstrong, February 7, 1979

“The cooperation that we've had in Israel, and the dozens and dozens of times that I've gone to Israel and Jerusalem, never once have we sought a single convert, nor, as far as I know have we made one. And they know that. This is not the time God is trying to save the world spiritually, but to get out the message. Now the way is open to carry the message in the 40th chapter of Isaiah, to tell them of the cities of Judah, that the Lord is coming with a **Strong Arm — Armstrong! Is it a coincidence in the fact that God chose a man with that name to carry that message,** to rule them in the Kingdom of God and to bring them peace?”

Sermon, “Creation and the Gospel”, Herbert W Armstrong, May 13, 1978

Comment: You have just seen the character trait that the two men, the original Elijah and the end-time Elijah, had in common. This is the character trait that is referenced as the “spirit and power” of Elijah in Luke 1:17. And even though this “spirit and power” ultimately comes from God, Zechariah 4:6, few men are used in this way and few are given this power and authority by the living God.

One of the Two Witnesses Theory

This document would not be complete without addressing a prevalent new teaching that is common in this age. Some now believe that Mr. Armstrong did not fulfill the role of the end-time Elijah. Instead, they believe that one of the two witnesses will carry out this task. This is an obvious shift away from what Mr. Armstrong and the membership of the Worldwide Church of God understood and it is a contradiction to what Mr. Armstrong taught.

Based on the Biblical fact that truth **only** enters the Church through the office of an apostle, and since this false doctrine did not enter the Church through the correct avenue, this new teaching is an error in doctrine. In addition, it has no Biblical basis and most of the reasoning behind this theory is unsound and faulty.

None-the-less, because this teaching is so prevalent, it will be examined as thoroughly as possible. The following are some important points to consider regarding this false doctrine:

1. Does it make sense that God would restore a vast amount of truth to the Church through Mr. Armstrong in the Philadelphia era of the Church, an era in which Christ states twice “You have kept my word”, Revelation 3:8 & 10 and then erroneously reveal the fulfillment of Mr. Armstrong’s role as the end-time Elijah?

2. Those who believe that one of the two witnesses will fulfill the end-time role of Elijah believe that this witness will restore the truth to the modern nations of Israel during their captivity in the Great Tribulation. Does it make sense that only one of the two witnesses will restore the truth to the modern nations of Israel during the Great Tribulation leaving the other witness out of this commission? If this is the case, then one must ask, what will the other witness be doing or what role will the other witness play during this time?
3. Does it make sense that if one of the two witnesses will fulfill the end-time role of Elijah, that God would leave this important fact out of his Word and not clearly state it or make this connection anywhere in the Bible?
4. Does it make sense that one of the two witnesses will fulfill the commission of “preparing a people prepared for the Lord” out of those who survive the Great Tribulation from the modern nations of Israel? Although it was understood by Mr. Armstrong that the two witnesses would have a hand in helping a great multitude of Israelites understand that they have been disobedient to God and that the two witnesses will help them come out of the Tribulation, these people will not be a people that have been prepared for the Lord. The people that are prepared for the Lord are the firstfruits, the Church. The people that God has called during this time and that have been obedient to Him and have kept His truth.

The following is the reason the great multitude of Israelites that come out of the Tribulation will not be a people that have been prepared to reign with Christ. They will not be prepared to teach all nations the truth and the way of God in the millennium since they just learned it in the Tribulation. The modern nations of Israel will have suffered through the Great Tribulation because of their disobedience to God’s commandments. They themselves will have to be taught about God, His ways, His commandments, and His truths, and worked with so that they can build the holy righteous character they need to qualify for salvation.

5. Does it make sense that only one of the two witnesses is going to fulfill the commission of “preparing a people for the Lord” and the other witness will be standing idle not assisting with this role? One has to ask, what will the other witness be doing during this time? It only stands to reason that God mention and use both witnesses for this commission instead of just one.
6. Does it make sense that one of the two witnesses, the one fulfilling the end-time role of Elijah will “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” during the Great Tribulation when the nations of Israel are in captivity struggling to stay alive? Many of them will have lost their fathers and many fathers will have lost their children during this time.

7. Does it make sense that one of the two witnesses, the one who will fulfill the end-time role of Elijah and restore all things, the truth, to the modern nations of Israel will come from an organization with liberal teachings, a group that has compromised with the truths that were revealed to the Church during the Philadelphia era, an era that kept Christ's word, Rev 3:8 & 10?
8. One of the arguments against Mr. Armstrong fulfilling the end-time role of Elijah is that he has been dead too long and thus was not sent before the "Day of the Lord" as stated in Malachi 4:5. Mr. Armstrong died in 1986. He has now been dead for 34 years. In the span of 6,000 years, Mr. Armstrong died right before the "Day of the Lord".
9. Another argument that is made against Mr. Armstrong fulfilling the end-time role of Elijah is that he did not perform mighty miracles like the first Elijah. While this is true, this is not a commission nor is it an attribute that the end-time Elijah is described by God as having. Proof of this comes from the fact that John the Baptist, who was also a type of Elijah, performed no miracles. Yet, Christ confirmed that John the Baptist was also a type of the original Elijah in Matthew 17:12. All once understood this fact in the Worldwide Church of God.

Conclusion

There are numerous erroneous teachings regarding the end-time Elijah. You have just read one of them. There are others in the Churches of God who now believe that their leader will fulfill this role. And yet, there are other groups that no longer believe that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled this role. So, did Mr. Armstrong serve in the office of an apostle? Did he fulfill the role of the end-time Elijah? Did he "restore all things"? Did he "turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers"? Did he appear in the "spirit and power" of Elijah? And did he "prepare a people for the Lord"?

I choose to believe what Mr. Armstrong said. I choose to believe that he served in the office of an apostle during the Philadelphia era of the Church. I choose to believe that the Bible reveals that he was the end-time Elijah who God used to restore the truth to the Church. I choose to believe Mr. Armstrong over any individual in the 7th and final era of the Church who alters the truth, who alters the doctrines that God restored through this great servant, including the truth of the identity of end-time Elijah. And I will follow him, as he followed Christ, I Corinthians 11:1.

There is one final quote that summarizes what you have just read, one final quote that says it all. May God help everyone to understand that Mr. Armstrong served in the office of an apostle and that he fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah!

"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

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Luis A Garcia".

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