



God's Family Government
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Chapter 1

God's Family Government

In man's entire history, we have not found one government that will truly serve the people. This whole world is in a crisis, and the major problem is government.

Soon we are going to see a government rule this Earth that *will work*. It's a government that men have always rejected. Let's take a closer look at God's government and see how foolish mankind has been these past 6,000 years for rejecting God's way of ruling.

"And there was also a strife among them [the disciples], which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he [Jesus] said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:24-27). God's government serves those who obey God (and the world, through God's work). God's family government doesn't go around looking for people's faults and sins. God's leaders search for ways to serve the people! That is God's law of love. If the leaders put themselves first, they are selfishly breaking God's law of love (Matt. 22:36-40).

God's leaders serve God's family like a dad and mom should serve their family—with love. Dad and mom also serve by example. So do God's leaders. That doesn't mean there isn't discipline.

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30). God's leaders and people are going to sit with Christ at the Father's table. The Father and His family eat together spiritually—they are, in that respect, like a physical family.

God is a family. He is inviting us to be a part of it. If we accept, we must obey God's loving family government.

The door to my office is always open if someone thinks our ministers are implementing harsh and dictatorial government. That is not God's kind of government. God's leaders are here to serve God's people—not be served.

Some of our critics talk as though the Philadelphia Church of God (pcg) is a small and ineffective work. If they look closely, they will see that we have emerged as a powerful work! In only a little more than a decade we have grown phenomenally! That is because we submit to God's family government. That is why God's abundant blessings are with us.

Government Structure

God gets specific in telling the ministers how to apply God's government. When correction is necessary, we are told how to do it. "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren" (i Tim. 5:1).

The minister is to correct an elderly man as he would his own father—not rebuking, but entreating him. The approach is more gentle because of his position in the physical family. The physical family is a God-plane relationship. The father has an important role that must be respected.

When the young men must be corrected, they are to be treated as if they were physical brothers of the minister. It is always family government.

"The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity" (v. 2). Elderly women must be lovingly corrected as the minister would correct his own mother. The ministers are to treat the young girls as sisters—and always to keep their thoughts pure toward them. This is the way men normally think about their sisters.

"Honour widows that are widows indeed" (v. 3). The widows have no physical family. This is all the more reason why the minister must honor her—as he would his own mother.

It's easy to overlook a widow. God commands that we never neglect them—but honor them as royal members of God's own family!

The fatherless and the widows—those without a physical family—get special attention as a part of God's spiritual family. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Remember Who You Are

The Prophet Amos gives us some insight into God's family. Amos talks about ministers whom God raised up (Amos 2:11-12). That means it is God's true Church. One church prophesies (Amos 3:7-8) and one church refuses to prophesy (Amos 2:11-12). That means there is division between these two churches and they can't walk together (Amos 3:3).

The word *family* (Amos 3:1) is referring mainly to God's spiritual family—the true Church of God.

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (v. 2). The root word of the word *known* is used in marital relations. The English equivalent is *to make love*. Christ is the spiritual Husband of His Church. They are spiritual "lovers." This is a unique, loving relationship that exists only between God and His Church.

So we see that Amos 3:1 is primarily discussing God's spiritual family. Today, that family is divided. God's family *should* be deeply united. The book of Amos is mainly focusing on God's Church! And its prophecies are being fulfilled this very moment. These prophecies are only for the world *secondarily*. God's people must awaken and fear God more acutely. We can't hide from our God-given responsibility!

God's family has had a spiritually loving relationship with God. They received a special calling from God the Father (John 6:44). It is the highest possible honor. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth..." (Amos 3:2). "You only"! It is a rare and glorious honor to know the great God spiritually. But many of God's people now have a ho-hum attitude and have grown lukewarm.

So what is God's response? Because God has known only you, He says, "...therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (v. 2). With this great honor of knowing God—as no one else does on this planet—comes a weighty responsibility. If God's people fail in their responsibility to God and the world, then God is going to punish them!

"You only"—only God's true Church is God's family. What a precious calling it is to now be a part of God's own family. However, many are turning away from God in this end time. It causes a family split. That is what Amos 2 and 3 are about.

A Father Figure

God sent a man in the end time to teach us family government. He prophesied that He would do so (see Matt. 17:10-11; Mal. 4:5-6). Here is a specific prophecy: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy

robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah" (Isa. 22:20-21). "In that day" means this end time we are living in right now. This man would be a "father" to us and he would administer God's "government." It would obviously be a family government.

Herbert W. Armstrong always said he was a "father" to all of us either directly or indirectly. (He fulfilled the same role Paul fulfilled in i Corinthians 4:15.) Isaiah 22:20-25, an Old Testament counterpart to Revelation 3:7-8, shows how *God used that man—and that man only—to teach us about the true family government of God in the end time!*

Today we see God's own Laodicean Church rebelling against this family government. Of course, that too was prophesied (Rev. 3:14-20). The Prophet Malachi spoke of it in detail (write for a free copy of *Malachi's Message*). "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal. 2:7-10). This is discussing a church split in this end time. God says we all have "one father." The deceived Laodiceans have rejected both God the Father and His family government.

These deceitful ministers must be refined. It is family correction for these "sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:3).

However, God protects His loyal people. God treats them as a man would his own son. God the Father would never want His loyal sons to experience the Great Tribulation if that can be avoided. Those sons who hold fast to God's family government shall be protected (Mal. 3:17).

The Laodicean sons must experience the Tribulation to repent (Rev. 3:19-20). The main reason is that they have rejected God's family government.

The Wife Is Made Ready

God's family government structure is now being built. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). God's true Church is God's wife. She submits to her Husband, Jesus Christ.

The main way Christ gets His wife ready is to teach her family government. She understands her role as a wife and submits to her Husband, Jesus Christ! That means God's loyal people understand family government. There is a Father, Husband, wife and children—a family. That government was taught to many of us by Mr. Armstrong—and only Mr. Armstrong!

Bringing Sons to Glory

The Father and Son theme is mentioned repeatedly in the Bible (see Heb. 1:1-2, 5). God is going to reward His sons by letting them rule the universe. "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou *crownedst him with glory and honour*, and didst *set him over the works of thy hands*: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:6-8). What an incredible future. However, it is only for God's family. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (vv. 9-10). God is bringing many sons to glory. God and Christ are doing that—Father and Son. Creating that kind of perfection in carnal people can't be done without suffering—or government.

God will put the whole universe under our governmental control. This is promised only to God's people. Only God's true Church understands this now. How blessed God's people are! "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them *brethren* [brothers]" (v. 11). We are Christ's own brothers—incredible! Most religions don't understand this! How unique God's chosen people are.

If God is going to give us such awesomely exalted offices, surely we should expect some correction. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). God chastens and scourges every son. The word *scourges* can mean very hard correction—if that is what it takes to bring a son back to his Father.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (vv.

7-8). God is always dealing with us as sons. If we refuse correction, then we are spiritual bastards! That means God doesn't correct us any more.

Our greatest curse is when our Father no longer corrects us. Then we are no longer a part of His family! God ceases to be our Father.

Our greatest blessing is being corrected by our Father! *That means we're not spiritual bastards.*

God's correction is always just and produces fabulous fruits (vv. 9-11). His correction heals and encourages us (vv. 12-13).

The big difference between the Philadelphians and Laodiceans is God's family government! The Philadelphians love it. The Laodiceans rebel against it. Fifty percent of them will repent of that rebellion in the Tribulation.

Christ was always totally subject to His Father's government. We must follow His example (i Pet. 2:21).

Lucifer, who became Satan, led one third of the angels to rebel against God's government. He is continually and persistently trying to deceive you, as he already has the Laodiceans. It's a vicious battle. Let's make sure we don't underestimate Satan's power to deceive!

How deeply do we want God to rule us? Only those who learn that lesson will be prepared to rule with Jesus Christ!

Chapter 2

Holding the Head

The book of Colossians is addressed to the Colossians and the Laodiceans. Colossians and Revelation 3 are the only places in the Bible where the Laodiceans are directly addressed. And let's not forget, these are God's own people.

Colossians was written about 59-61 A.D. The book of Revelation was written around 90 A.D., only 30 years after Paul warned the Colossians and the Laodiceans. John revealed what happened to the Laodiceans! The Colossians heeded the warning—the Laodiceans did not.

Revelation 3:14-19 tells us the Laodiceans became lukewarm. The book of Colossians tells us *how* the Laodiceans turned away from God. We can see specifically how they rebelled. This book can help us see how to remain faithfully Philadelphian. Since the book of Colossians is tied directly to Revelation 3, that means Colossians is a prophetic book! It tells us in detail how the Laodiceans erred in the past—and how they are sinning today!

The book of Colossians reveals their problems, and the book of Revelation reveals the outcome! The Laodicean problem today is the same as it was 2,000 years ago! All of the Laodiceans have had one overriding problem that led to their downfall. Let's examine that problem.

Christ Is the Head

The Church is the body. Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18). "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17). The word *consist* means *hold together*. Five of the seven Church eras in Revelation 2 and 3 lost their Head! The end-time Laodicean era is one of those. Most of these eras didn't hold together because they lost their Head—Jesus Christ! Many of these members may have remained in the same church, but they still didn't "hold together" spiritually. They, like the end-time

Laodiceans, had many serious divisions. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (v. 18). Christ is the Head of the body.

Let’s look for a moment at the head of our physical body. If we lose that head, then we have no guidance system and we die.

That applies spiritually as well. If you replace your Head (Christ) with a man—you have lost your spiritual Head. That is precisely what has happened to the Laodiceans today. They were warned to let no man take their crown (Rev. 3:11). They are in the process of letting that happen because they have become blind (Rev. 3:17). They would not be blind if they had held on to their Head!

A Laodicean man sits in God’s Laodicean temple or Church and acts like God (ii Thes. 2:4). How serious is the problem? “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (v. 10). The word *perish* should read “are perishing.” These are God’s people, or they could not be perishing spiritually. They are dying spiritually and don’t know it! Why? Because they follow a man—and have stopped following the Head of the body—Jesus Christ!

The *most important doctrine* in God’s Church is God’s government—or holding the Head of the spiritual body, Jesus Christ. If you lose a doctrine equal to the hand or foot, you can continue living. But if you lose the doctrine of government—the Head—the body dies unless God can somehow awaken you before it is too late! As Herbert Armstrong often said, “Government is everything!” You can compare it to no other doctrine. No doctrine is even close to being as important!

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). Again, we are warned to beware of a man taking us away from the Head with philosophy—or worldly education. The expression “rudiments of the world” reads “ruling spirits of the universe” in the Today’s English version. The Laodiceans are very well educated by this world’s standard. The subject is demons turning Laodiceans away from God through philosophy and wrong education!

It is a demon attack on God’s government—or the Head of the body! The demons know if they can destroy God’s government, they can destroy God’s people!

Paul warned Laodiceans in the first century *and* today about that very problem. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (vv. 9-10). Christ is the Head of everything under God the Father! Destroy this great power in our lives and we die spiritually!

Again, Paul warns about men beguiling the saints. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (v. 18). How does it happen? They are very religious. But they are beguiled into a phony religion of worshipping fallen angels! Again, demons are attacking God's government. Only then can a false leader get God's people to follow a man! Multiple thousands of God's own people are being deceived that way this very moment. They had God's government, but then let Satan destroy it!

I sometimes get attacked for writing such words. But that only encourages me to write them more. I know the source of the attack! Satan uses a deceived man to "beguile" God's people. Anytime you follow a man spiritually, you are worshipping demons! Satan is the god of this world (ii Cor. 4:4). That means people worship him.

Notice the very first area Satan attacks. "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2:19). The *first* and *greatest* deceit is to get God's people away from God's government—the Head! Today, none of the Laodiceans are "holding the Head"!

Holding the Head is how God's people are "knit together." It can be achieved no other way. Without God's government, any church lives with an enormous amount of division—though most of them would deny it.

If we are "knit together," we have a very deep unity. Only God's government can achieve that oneness. That is the only way you can avoid following a man! Even if you follow *yourself*, you are still following a man.

The Worldwide Church of God (wcg) has been disintegrating spiritually since Mr. Armstrong died. They are deeply divided. And other groups that have left also are divided and will become more divided. Why? Because none of them, except the pcg, has the government God taught to Mr. Armstrong! That is the only way to be knit together. God's government is based on God's law. Our Head leads us based on God's law of love (i John 5:3).

The whole process of leadership can be gigantic and complicated. But *leadership* is simplified by looking to our Head—Jesus Christ. He directs

the body through His government based on God's law. Then God feeds us spiritual manna, or revelation. And then the place where Christ is becomes obvious to any discerning person. That is how we all become one. We all have the lawful mind of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5).

Colossians 2:19 is a prophecy showing that all Laodiceans today would lose their Head (Christ)—just as they did in the first century! Satan knows that if he can destroy God's government, he can also destroy God's work!

Mr. Armstrong proved to us that he fulfilled the end-time Elijah role. "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:10-11). He gave us at least 18 restored truths. When Mr. Armstrong was alive, members of the wcg believed he restored all things. God's government was the first point mentioned in the 18 truths.

Now in your *wildest imagination*, do you think it is possible to restore all those truths and do a powerful worldwide work without God's government? Saying Mr. Armstrong didn't teach God's government is like saying Christ restored a body without a head!

The Laodiceans reject Mr. Armstrong as having fulfilled the end-time Elijah role. They all acted like they believed it while he was alive. After his death they changed their minds. Rejecting Mr. Armstrong as fulfilling the Elijah role is tantamount to saying his whole work was a fraud! The Laodiceans have no basis for saying they are God's true Church.

But there is still a deeper motive behind it all. All of the Laodiceans who reject Mr. Armstrong's Elijah role also reject God's government! It's just a carnal way of saying, "I won't submit to God's government!" That is a rebellious attitude which God will soon expose—in the Great Tribulation, if not sooner!

What Is the Gospel?

Mr. Armstrong was commissioned by God to preach the gospel around the world. "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" (Matt. 24:14). That was the first time the true gospel had been preached around the world since the first century! No one can logically deny that Mr. Armstrong did that. He used this verse to show the commission God gave to him—the very reason for his being called in this end time.

But what is the gospel? It is the good news of God's family administering God's government in the wonderful world to come. If Mr.

Armstrong didn't teach God's true government, as the Laodiceans say, then he didn't understand God's gospel! And Mr. Armstrong couldn't have preached it around the world! Then all the followers of Mr. Armstrong were spiritually defrauded—if that ugly scenario were true, which of course, it is not.

Why are so many of God's people easily led away from their Head? They are going to pay with their physical lives and 50 percent shall even lose their spiritual lives! And yet they take it so lightly. How horrifying! If we don't understand and submit to God's government, we will never, ever be in God's Kingdom!

Satan has a basic pattern he follows in leading God's people into a false gospel. "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)" (Gal. 1:1). Paul was an apostle, "not of men." Some of the Galatians were rebellious against God's government taught by the Apostle Paul.

The Laodiceans today are rebelling against God's end-time Elijah, Herbert W. Armstrong. They reject the government God taught through him.

And now what is the result? The same as it was in the Galatian church. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto *another* gospel" (v. 6). Satan destroyed God's government taught by Paul, and then he led the Galatians away from the gospel! You can't separate God's government from the true gospel!

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (vv. 11-12). The gospel and the government taught by Mr. Armstrong and Paul was revealed to them by God! The Laodiceans today are blind. They can't discern the difference between what is and what is *not* revealed concerning many doctrines.

God Reveals to Those He Governs

We see examples in the world of weird prophecies being taught and believed. There is a reason. They are not prophecies based on God's law, which is the basis of God's government.

"Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets" (Dan. 9:10). God's prophets set His laws before the people. Ministers were custodians of God's law. But God only revealed His law to the prophets or apostles (Eph. 3:5).

All prophecy is based on God's law. Without God's government and His law, prophecy becomes human folly. God's government, based on

His law, is what keeps prophecy stable. "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth" (v. 13). All this evil is coming upon modern Israel because of our sins against God's law. It was prophesied in the law of Moses. Those books of the law also contain prophecy.

God only reveals His prophecy to those who obey His government which is based on His law! Prophecy apart from God's law is dangerous. God is revealing His prophecy only to His very elect today because they keep His law. "Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord" (Lam. 2:9). First, God's law, or government, is no more. Then her prophets find no vision, revelation or prophecy from God! The word *vision* is defined as "divine revelation" in the *Gesenius Lexicon*. God stopped revealing to the prophets when they stopped obeying the law! That's what happens when we fail to hold on to our Head. There can be no revealed prophecies without the Head! The law and revelation both come in one package.

This is the *colossal difference* between the Philadelphians and the Laodiceans.

Before God taught Mr. Armstrong prophecy, He taught him the law. The first challenge Mr. Armstrong received was about God's true Sabbath day. That is one of God's Ten Commandments—a part of His law and government. The ministers are to be guardians of the law—not its revealing agents. God revealed His law and government to Mr. Armstrong in this end time. Through Mr. Armstrong, God restored His law and government (Matt. 17:10-11). Our job is to hold on to what God revealed and restored.

When God reveals *Malachi's Message* and more truth about all of the major, minor and former prophets, as well as much prophecy in the New Testament, it is the minister's job to hold on to that revelation!

"And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not" (Amos 2:11-12). God's people were given a strong prophecy message through Mr. Armstrong. This is a prophecy that the Laodiceans would reject the prophecy message they were taught. The Philadelphians prophesy. This causes a Church split. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

But God continues to reveal to His very elect. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). God always reveals truth to His true Church. God revealed all of the basic truths to Mr. Armstrong. But there is a different work now that Mr. Armstrong has died. God revealed the gospel to Mr. Armstrong and he preached it to the world (Matt. 24:14). God also revealed many prophecies to His end-time Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6). When he passed from the scene, there arose another work with a different commission. Our work deals more specifically with a warning. "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8). The lion has roared. He is about to pounce on his prey. God is about to punish Israel as no nation ever has been punished. The pcg was given God's "secret." We must warn the Laodiceans, the nations of Israel, and to some degree the whole world (Rev. 10:11).

The pcg will be here when Israel, if it fails to repent, dies; Mr. Armstrong will not. That is why our message is much more focused on a warning. God has revealed a deeper understanding to us of the prophecies Mr. Armstrong taught. Also, God has given us some prophetic understanding Mr. Armstrong did not have. Ours is an extremely urgent prophetic message. "Who can but prophesy?" It is so vital, God says His true Church feels a desperate need to prophesy! The lion roars just before he lunges and devours his prey!

Guarding God's Law

The pcg ministers have a heavy responsibility to guard what God revealed to Mr. Armstrong and to the pcg. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by" (Zech. 3:7). The expression "keep my charge" means the act of guarding. It means a place where guards or guardians are set. The end-time Joshua's great sin was failing to guard God's truth! (see Zech. 3 and 4).

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 2:7). The word *keep* is better translated *guard*. Here God says the Laodiceans failed to guard what God had revealed about His law. This is why God is *not* revealing truth to them today. The prophets and apostles receive God's revealed truth and give it to the ministers to guard.

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. 6:23). The commandment is a lamp. The law is light. If you reject God's government based on His law, you

lose God's lamp and light! You enter into a world of darkness—without prophecy and vision.

God removed the lamp from the Ephesus era. He also removed His lamp from the Laodiceans. We will be greatly condemned by God if we can't see His lamp in this dark, dark world! God reveals His secrets to people with childlike attitudes (Matt. 11:25; 18:1-3).

Only through strong government, based on God's law, can we see God's lamp! The more intensely we keep God's law, the brighter God's lamp will be!

The book of Malachi is prophecy mainly for the end time. But there is a great deal in this book about the law. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 2:7-8). The Laodicean ministers are *causing* people to stumble at the law. That is the major theme of this *prophetic* book! God makes the ministers contemptible and base because of their contempt for His law!

Our most important work is warning the Laodiceans—because they won't get a second chance! "As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them. And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it. My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute *my secret place*: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it" (Ezek. 7:20-22). This book was written primarily for the end time. The expression "my secret place" is "holy of holies" in the *Langes* and *Soncino* commentaries. The holy of holies is being defiled in this end time. (For more detailed information, write for a free copy of our booklet *The Ezekiel Watchman*.)

The temple is a *type* of God's Church in this end time. So God's own Church is being polluted. But so are the nations of Israel. "Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence" (v. 23). The modern nations of Israel are full of bloody crimes. God warns them to repent. If they fail to respond, God will take it to the next level. "Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled" (v. 24). Then God will bring Germany to enslave Israel, if our people don't repent.

What is the real problem? “Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients” (v. 26). The prophet has no vision. Why? Because the law has perished from the priest—meaning God’s own ministers. They had the law and then let it slip away! Ezekiel’s statement that the law “*shall* perish” is a prophecy for today. Because the ministers of God have defiled the law, God reveals no vision or prophecy to them!

So we can see how closely prophecy and the law are intertwined. When the law perishes, it means mainly the Laodiceans rejected God’s government! They are guilty of not guarding the law. Events are growing much worse in Israel at a rapid pace. Soon people will remember how the wcg once preached a strong prophecy message. People will go to them in the future, asking for an understanding of terrifying events in their land. But the wcg can give them little or no prophetic understanding.

Then these people will go to other Laodiceans seeking the answer to their nation’s problems. Still, they will receive very little prophetic understanding. There have been several dissenting groups from the wcg, but only the pcg will give them a “vision,” or new revelation. That is because only we have held on to God’s government based on God’s law—which was taught by Mr. Armstrong! And only we are doing God’s prophesied work!

Why did God raise up our work? “Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets” (ii Kings 17:13). God raised up prophets to warn His people to mend their evil ways and keep His law—the Ten Commandments. That is what we tell the Laodiceans and physical Israel. The pcg was raised up for that very purpose!

God sent prophets to rebuke some of Israel’s greatest kings. Nathan was sent to rebuke David about his sin against God by committing adultery and murder! Our job is not to hide out in Israel. We are to take God’s message to the highest levels! (Rev. 10:11). After all, we do have a warning message from the supreme Ruler of the universe!

People will perish both physically and spiritually if they don’t wake up! “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov. 29:18). The word *vision* is rendered “prophetic vision” in the Anchor Bible. If the Laodiceans fail to have God’s

“prophetic vision,” it is because they don’t keep God’s law. And that means they are not “happy”—they lack God’s joy!

Most of God’s own people are perishing spiritually, because their ministers are not guarding the law (ii Thes. 2:1-3, 10). And the Laodicean people like it that way—at least for the time being. What a terrifying penalty God’s people must pay, all because the Laodicean ministers fail to guard God’s law.

Lucifer’s Rebellion

Thousands of years ago, something was taken from this Earth. God must restore it. What was taken away? “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). God’s prophets have known from the beginning that something was dangerously and fundamentally wrong on this Earth. Throughout most of recorded history, these prophets have warned this world it was going in the wrong direction. But if we go back far enough, we see that the Earth was full of joy, peace and abundance. Then disaster struck!

We must receive “the restitution of all things” to solve mankind’s problems. The Basic English version reads: “when all things are put right.” The Moffatt translation calls it “the great Restoration.” That means this world is upside down and must be put right side up.

What does this involve? A fundamental change in government! “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you” (v. 20). Jesus Christ is coming to establish God’s government. He has qualified to replace Satan on the throne of this Earth.

Back to the Beginning

Satan rebelled against the government that God and the Word had submitted to for all eternity. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4). God and the Word had lived in joy and abundance forever. God was the Head, and the Word submitted to Him. They both submitted to God’s law. It is the only government that has ever worked! And it has worked beautifully for all eternity!

The Word later became Christ the Son. God became the Father. “Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). The Father is greater. He is the Head of the family. God is building a family through family government.

Then God created angels and taught this government to them. He says this: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the *sons of God* [angels] shouted for joy?" (Job 38:1-7). When the Earth was created, the angels shouted for joy. They were happy and joyful because they obeyed God's government based on His law. This joyful relationship could have lasted for billions of years. But there was a colossal disaster!

God put Lucifer in charge of the Earth and over one third of the angels. But Lucifer led these angels to rebel. They lost their joy and happiness when God's government was rejected! True joy and peace can only be produced by submitting to God's government.

Lucifer ("light bringer") rebelled and became Satan ("adversary"). "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:12-14). Satan said, *I will exalt my throne*. He has a throne. He is the ruler of a government—but not God's government. Satan still rules this Earth with the angels who became demons (ii Cor. 4:4).

Satan said, "I will be like the most High." The Moffatt translation reads, "I will rival the Most High!" Lucifer wanted a collegial type government. He wanted to be equal to God in power. *Reader's Digest*, in its "Word Power" section, once defined collegial this way: "Relating to a group of colleagues, each of whom has equal authority; as, Collegial deliberations can be lengthy, inconclusive and frustrating." Even the world sees that this type of government can be "lengthy, inconclusive and frustrating"! Already, several of God's Laodicean churches have experimented with this type of government.

Desiring such a government is just another way of rebelling against God's government! God does not have a two-headed or multi-headed government.

Satan has led men to establish many varieties of government. But they all follow Satan! (see Rev. 12:9). Does Satan's government work? Look around and see the *fruits*. This world is filled with deceit, violence and corruption! This is what happens when God's government is removed!

Of course, some men rebel more against God than others. But *only* God's government has always worked. And it always will. Man's government, inspired by Satan, has never worked and never will work!

God's government is so simple. He uses a man to lead His Church. Then God commands us to follow that man, as he follows Christ. If that man goes astray, don't follow him. God will shortly replace him with a loyal leader or raise up another Church.

You don't have to fear following God's man. What you should fear most is when God's man becomes Satan's man! That means we must know our Bibles. If God's government is destroyed, then the end result is always disaster!

This is the fundamental lesson and doctrine men must learn! God's government is producing "the restitution of all things"—inside His Church. Mr. Armstrong was used by God to "restore all things" (Matt. 17:10-11). That was a great beginning in establishing God's government and truth to this Earth. God's own Laodicean churches have destroyed that government *so quickly*. We also see many other doctrines being destroyed which were established by God through Mr. Armstrong.

How did Satan deceive all those angels? The same way he deceives men today. He gets them to desire a collegial government, or some other perverted government of man; then Satan has them following him. Of course, people follow him in varying degrees.

Lucifer was a covering cherub at the very throne of God. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezek. 28:14). He was trained at the headquarters of the universe. He sat at God's feet.

Herbert Armstrong served God for 57 years—a long time. He ordained many evangelists who *seemed* loyal at the Church headquarters in Pasadena, California. All of those top men have rebelled against that government. Not one of them submits to the government of God taught through Mr. Armstrong! Not one! Some of them will repent in the Tribulation—but others will never repent, and perhaps have already blasphemed against God's Holy Spirit!

God intended Lucifer to go to other planets after His work was established on Earth. But Lucifer would not wait. The *only* place astronomers can find little or nothing is in the northern heavens. That is in the direction of God's throne, and almost everything in that direction was destroyed when Satan fought with God over government! There was a

violent, destructive war. And Satan is still fighting against God's government today!

God allowed Satan and the rebellious angels to leave God's government and establish their own. Satan inspires God's own people to do this today! God will allow you the same option—at least for a short while.

The major lesson God has tried to teach men for *thousands of years* is submission to His government! If we can't submit to the Head of the body, then we can't be in God's Kingdom. We must learn from Satan's example. God's end-time Laodiceans have made the same mistake Lucifer did! Government is the most difficult lesson of all for men to learn. We must become deeply converted to grasp it.

God kept reminding Lucifer of his headquarters training. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire" (vv. 15-16). In verse 14, Lucifer is called the cherub that covers. In verse 16, he is called "O covering cherub." God was reminding him that he would be judged on the basis of his exalted training at the very headquarters throne of the universe!

Today, God is warning those top men who were trained under Mr. Armstrong about the seriousness of their rebellion. They were trained by God's end-time Elijah. That was the highest level of God's government on Earth! Now they are being judged accordingly. What a grotesque tragedy! They are repeating Lucifer's shameful scenario. "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee" (v. 17). Lucifer's vain heart was lifted up.

The Laodicean leaders today are not humble and childlike, or they would be in God's Philadelphia Church. Lucifer wanted local autonomy—he wanted to rule Earth his way. He didn't want to rule the way he had been trained! God gave him that option. But look at the horrifying fruits. God allows the Laodicean leaders to make the same mistake. Soon they will see their own rotten fruits. Like Lucifer, the Laodicean leaders want to rule their own way—not the way God trained them at His headquarters on this Earth!

How Satan has deceived them! We must not underestimate his subtlety. He broadcasts to the spirit in man and that influences our attitude.

The thrust of all Satan's broadcasting is against *what?* government—government—government! He broadcasts against our Head—Jesus Christ. He hates God's government and inspires men to have the same attitude. Oh, what a hard lesson this is for men to learn!

Learning From History

Look at all the problems in this world today. Why can't we solve our problems? There is a definite reason. "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:22-24).

God gave Adam and Eve the institution of marriage. He also gave them His family government to rule the marriage and family. The family became a disaster when they rejected that government. One son, Cain, killed his own brother, Abel. But the parents continued rebelling against God's rule. Adam and Eve turned away from their spiritual Head—and the whole world followed them! Mankind doesn't want God to rule them. Now mankind has its *own* religions, governments and systems of education—not God's.

The first Adam led the world away from the tree of life. The second Adam—Christ—is going to lead mankind back to that tree. God's Philadelphians are called now to help Christ rule the world. But first we must learn to be ruled by God. Then we can help teach the whole world how to submit!

Here is what Mr. Armstrong said at a wcg ministerial conference, May 17, 1976: "[The] government of God is the whole thing—and it had better be in our lives!" We must let Christ put His submission—His faith—into us! This is vital for godly character. We must let Christ rule us. He won't force us to submit. Only childlike submission makes it possible. We must deeply desire to let Christ rule us—nothing must stand in the way.

Christ came to Earth for *two reasons*: to restore God's government and to save men. First, God's government must be established. That is why we are called now. We are being prepared to govern the world with Christ. Then God can build godly character in men and save them.

At the 1972 Feast of Tabernacles in Spokane, Washington, Mr. Armstrong said, "Government is the most important [issue] to God and in His mind. And it should be in ours!" Yet every evangelist and pastor-

rank minister alive today that Mr. Armstrong trained has rejected that government! Almost all the ministry and the Church he founded has rejected the government of God! After all those years, they still didn't learn the lesson of government! That is always the big issue.

Satan caused Adam to be cut off from the tree of life. And he is cutting God's Laodicean Church off from the tree of life. That is why only the pcg receives revelation from God today! For example, *Malachi's Message* and all of my booklets contain revelation from God! There is new truth and deeper understanding in all of them.

There is a reason Christ is not revealing truth to the Laodiceans. He is on the outside, knocking to get back into their lives. The Laodiceans have rejected their Head. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). Christ won't reveal truth to them until they open the door. Those who respond to Christ's knock are to share Christ's throne, or rule (v. 21). What a fabulous reward! Even those Laodiceans who repent in the Tribulation will not receive that reward. The Philadelphians—not the Laodiceans—are to be in God's headquarters temple forever!

Look at the magnificent power and blessings that come into your life if you just open the door and let Christ rule you!

All of the firstfruits are very precious to God. "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also" (Jer. 3:8). God had to divorce ancient Israel. But God has a new wife in this end time—His Church. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (v. 14). But notice He is not married to a physical *nation* today. He is taking "one of a city, two of a family" for His very elect today. God discusses divorcing a *nation* and then marrying His Church or Zion. This book is specifically referring to the end time. God's end-time wife is "backsliding" just like ancient Israel did! Only this time they are perishing spiritually (ii Thes. 2:10).

God is bringing His Philadelphians out of the "backsliding" Laodicean Church! That is the only way these verses could apply today. God doesn't bring 75, 100 or 200 out of the Laodicean Church at one time. He takes "one of a city, and two of a family." God works with individuals—salvation is not a group affair. He says "if any man" or any individual member of the Laodicean Church will hear His knock, He will

come inside his or her life (Rev. 3:20). The Philadelphians have a deep, personal relationship with their God—their Head.

There is an awesome reason why God is giving us this individual responsibility and attention. We are being trained for the highest positions in God's family! "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15). Very soon, God will give this world pastors that will teach only His revealed knowledge and understanding.

The Laodiceans today are rejecting God's revealed truth given to Mr. Armstrong. They are rejecting the very government that God used to build His great end-time work. The Laodiceans have rejected their Head—Jesus Christ. They feel secure following a man who belongs to a large group of people.

The *quality* of character God wants today can't be mass produced! God works carefully with "one from a city, and two from a family." If these Philadelphians can follow their Head, God will use them at His headquarters of the universe—forever! (Rev. 3:11-12). I think we can begin to see why God requires such refined, tried and tested character today! God says He is choosing "pastors according to my heart." They will teach exactly what God teaches.

Head and Body

Satan has confused this world and the Laodiceans—especially about God's government. God simplifies Church government. "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Cor. 12:1). God gives the body different gifts (vv. 4-10). "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (vv. 11-12). A physical body has a head—so does God's spiritual body. Christ is the Head of His spiritual body, or His Church. Please read and study all of 1 Corinthians 12. God sets His saints in this body as it pleases Him (v. 18).

Christ chooses apostles and physical leaders over His Church. God always places one leader at the top. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (vv. 27-28). Just because Christ is the Head doesn't mean He doesn't choose a physical head over His Church. Christ used Mr. Armstrong to build what was probably His biggest work ever on this Earth in numbers of members! Mr. Armstrong was used by God to preach the gospel around the world

(Matt. 24:14). He restored all things (Matt. 17:10-11). He built God's family (Mal. 4:5-6). Mr. Armstrong did all that by "holding the Head."

Now we have Satan-inspired Laodicean leaders who would dare reject the very government God used to do all of that mind-boggling work!

Even though God uses a man to lead His Church, we still follow Jesus Christ. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7). God gives men the rule over His people. But He tells us to *follow their faith*—not their carnal ideas! God expects us to submit to His human government in faith. But we still cling to Christ—not men.

If we lack faith, or have lost our faith, then we can't faithfully follow God's leaders. Satan will use men to deceive us. That is exactly what has happened to thousands of God's own Laodicean people! So let's understand. God doesn't want us to follow human government. If the leaders are not walking by faith, then don't follow them. We are only deceived when we follow government that is not walking by faith. You'll never be deceived, if you follow the leader as he follows Christ! That means you don't follow a man.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (v. 8). Christ uses the same government today that He used under Mr. Armstrong! In terms of numbers of members, God probably built His greatest work in 2,000 years through Mr. Armstrong. To say that it was done without God's government is casting aside all logical reasoning! It is *also* a rebellious attitude. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (v. 9). We are warned not to be carried away by "strange doctrines." We were taught God's government under Mr. Armstrong. One evangelist, who was considered the third man in charge of the wcg for years, started his own church and formed a "collegial government." That is the strangest and most abominable doctrine of all! Because God's government is the head of Christ's body. If someone wants to cut off the Head of the body, he is terribly rebellious and deceived!

If you lose God's government doctrine, then many other doctrines will also become strange! How could it be any other way when you lose your Head?

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (v. 17).

God says we must submit to those men who are accountable for our eternal lives, or the leaders can't serve you with joy. This is another way of saying follow those who point you to Christ and His government.

If Satan could only destroy one doctrine, which one would it be? Government—*every time!* That way Satan can destroy God's work! And the rest of the doctrines will become tarnished at best.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). Why did Christ give us human leaders? To perfect the saints—and bring them to the stature of Christ. Without God's government, the saints cannot be perfected! That's how important God's government is!

How desperately Satan wants to destroy that government! Then we become unstable and easily deceived. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (v. 14). This is how Satan has gotten to the Laodiceans. First, he destroyed God's government. Then he tossed them to and fro. Unbiblical change became a way of life! Their lives are no longer solidly based on God's law. But in their deceived minds, they call their lawlessness righteousness.

Today the Laodiceans are splitting up into different groups. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be *perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Cor. 1:10). The end-time Laodiceans *don't* "all speak the same thing." They refuse to obey their Head—Jesus Christ—when He says there must be "no divisions." They disagree with Christ when He says that we must "be perfectly joined together." They disagree with Christ about having the "same mind" and "same judgment."

How could anyone ever reach such a wonderful unity without God's government?

The Laodiceans say that Christ can do His work through different branches of His Church—even when they know those branches are far from being "perfectly joined together." That is another way of saying, "We reject Christ as our Head!" They simply cannot reconcile their teachings with what Christ says! So they reject Christ as their Head.

“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (vv. 11-13). Is Christ—our Head—divided? No, but men like to follow other men. That is the problem Paul had with the Corinthians. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). We must all have the mind of Christ to be “perfectly joined together.”

God always uses only *ONE* Church to do His work. *There is never an exception to that statement!* There is only one lamp. Sometimes, God has to remove it from one Church organization to another (Rev. 2:5).

Christ's Wife

Let's take a look at the kind of wife Christ rejects. “But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Luke 19:27). If Christ can't rule or “reign over” us, we will be destroyed forever. This person undoubtedly disagreed with several of God's doctrines. But Christ was only concerned about one doctrine—government. He couldn't rule this person.

As Mr. Armstrong said, “Government is everything” and it's “more important than anything.” Every Laodicean group has one ingredient in common—they reject God's government taught by Mr. Armstrong!

Christ already has a wife on this Earth. Even before the marriage is consummated, we are married in God's eyes. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7). Now is the time to get ready to rule with Christ. Again, only the firstfruits are married to Christ. Those converted after Christ returns will be the children in God's family. There is God the Father, Christ and His wife, and those on the children level (called after Christ returns). That comprises God's family.

Christ demands that His wife be submissive to her Husband. Then He can trust her to help take care of the children in the future. We help Christ bring sons and daughters to the Father. They must come through the Husband and wife. That is the inspiring responsibility for which Christ is preparing us! Christ discusses our physical marriages and how they must be structured if they are to work effectively (Eph. 5:21-23). But the real subject Christ is concerned about is His marriage to the Church (Eph. 5:32).

The main way the wife makes herself ready is by letting her Husband rule her! The whole world will see that happy, submissive example in

the World Tomorrow and follow along. That is a big part of how the world will look to Christ.

Satan fought against God's government and was rejected forever. We are being tried and tested for a supreme purpose. God is building character in us until He knows we will never again fight against His government! That is how God prepares us to be members of His glorious family forever!

Sidebar: Who Is Doing the Attacking?

The Global Church of God held a ministerial conference in July 1993. Mr. Rod Meredith, their leader, made the following statement then: "We don't plan to change any big thing; perhaps some small things as we grow in understanding." Then he went on to discuss a change they had made. It was the single, biggest, most monumental change they could possibly make!

Mr. Meredith continued, "In 1961 to 1972, when I was superintendent of ministers, I didn't then understand management. Now I've learned we must have the right approach in servant leadership."

He said he didn't understand "management" in those years. He knows that his real subject is Church government. Jesus Christ is the Head of the body—His Church. He rules it through Church government. When you reject God's government, you reject the Head—Jesus Christ. No doctrinal change could possibly compare with changing God's government! And the *fruits* alone prove that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong established God's government.

So let's not be deceived just because he used the word "management."

He said, "I've learned the right approach in servant leadership." That implies that Mr. Armstrong had the *wrong* approach, failing to teach "servant leadership." God's ministry has made governmental mistakes in the past. And I suppose Mr. Meredith made his share. But here is the dangerous deception. He is implying that Mr. Armstrong and God's government were the *cause* of those mistakes. Mr. Armstrong didn't approve of, or teach the wrong approach to government. These leaders like Mr. Meredith "didn't get it" the way they were taught!

If you make mistakes administering God's government, then correct them. Don't reject the Head—Jesus Christ. That is like cutting off your physical head because you have dandruff!

Mr. Meredith continued, "Let's try to do it right this time, as shepherds with a loving approach...." It doesn't take a genius to see that he is *attacking* Mr. Armstrong. He is saying that Mr. Armstrong didn't do it right—his government lacked a "loving approach," it was not "servant

leadership"! I don't know how his attack against Mr. Armstrong could be more heinous! Saying that the government Mr. Armstrong taught didn't have a "loving approach" is a vicious attack! Of course, he is really attacking Jesus Christ and His government!

God's people must be warned. This evangelist said we are "attacking" his church. We are not. God has commissioned us to warn them, and all of the other Laodicean groups. This is done out of love (Rev. 3:19).

The *only* reason we correct the Laodiceans is because of their attack on Mr. Armstrong and what he taught. We wouldn't criticize them at all if they would stop destroying what God restored through him! They are the *cause* of our warning. Only their repentance will ever correct the disunity.

Mr. Meredith preceded the above statements with affectionate-sounding words about Mr. Armstrong. Then the subtle attack began. But when I correct them as they criticize Mr. Armstrong and his teachings frequently, they call it attacking. If they insist on calling it an attack, then it is sin that we are attacking. The greatest sin of the Laodicean churches has been their attack against God's Church government. God's true Church knows the difference between true and false government. That is what separates the Laodiceans from the Philadelphians.

Chapter 3

How Satan Attacks God's Government

There are many warnings in the Bible about rejecting God's government. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30). The false ministers' goal is "to draw away disciples after them." That means they have to destroy God's government to get His own saints to follow them! They get people's minds off Christ and onto themselves. Then the very people Christ "purchased with His own blood" are deceived.

Notice carefully, these grievous wolves "enter in among you," or they come into God's own Church and devour the flock! But even worse, "of your own selves shall men arise" and lead the flock astray. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus for three years, "night and day with tears," but they were still deceived (v. 31).

How could God's own people be so easily deceived? "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship" (v. 38). These people were more emotional about Paul's *departure* than Christ's warning about grievous wolves! This verse reveals flawed spiritual lives. Instead of crying over Paul's leaving, they should have been scared to tears by his tragic prophecy of what would happen to them spiritually!

So we can clearly see the flawed character that allowed Satan to use false ministers to deceive the flock! God's truth is dangerous knowledge. Nothing could be more serious! Our eternal lives are at stake!

Satan Uses a Man

God used a man, Herbert W. Armstrong, to establish His government in this end time. "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said

unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things” (Matt. 17:10-11). Mr. Armstrong was used by God to restore all things just before Christ’s return. He listed 18 major truths that God used him to restore. The first truth listed was government. That is the way it should be, since government is the most important doctrine of all. Without government, you can’t properly establish all of the other truths of God! Satan causes confusion and chaos if God’s government is not administered.

That is why Satan attacks government first. It was prophesied that Satan would do just that in this end time. God said the end-time Laodicean era would rebel against Him (Rev. 3:14-20). But how? As I pointed out earlier, besides the book of Revelation, Colossians is the only book in the Bible that discusses the Laodiceans.

The book of Colossians discusses the first-century Laodiceans and tells us specifically what a Laodicean attitude is really like. This means Colossians becomes a *prophetic* book for those of us in the Laodicean era. There is a direct connection between the book of Colossians and the book of Revelation. A Laodicean attitude in the first or last century is basically the same!

“Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:15-16). The Apostle Paul had to deal with Laodiceans, just as we do today.

These people knew that Christ used a man to lead. They forgot, it seems, that Satan uses the same method. It is only through our Head—or Christ—that we can be “knit together.” That means a very deep unity! It also means a very strong government from the top.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (i Cor. 1:10). None of the Laodicean groups will have this unity. They will have “divisions” and won’t “speak the same thing.” They won’t have the “same mind” and the “same judgment.” Therefore they won’t be “perfectly joined together.” This kind of unity can *only* be achieved by Christ using one man to lead for Him—as He did with Mr. Armstrong!

Christ is not divided (vv. 11-13). But all of the Laodiceans lack the unity of verse 10! A man leads them into division and away from Christ. Let’s look at an example of how that happens.

Destroying God’s Government

Rod Meredith, after being disfellowshipped from the wcg, also started his own church. In a booklet explaining his new church's doctrines, he wrote, "We are faithfully preaching the truths proclaimed by Herbert W. Armstrong" (*Church Government and Church Unity*, p. 33). Later in that booklet he wrote this: "If we look into the New Testament with an open mind, we find a totally different approach to government than what has developed in the Church" (p. 10; emphasis mine). He is referring to God's government taught by Mr. Armstrong! In one simple paragraph Rod Meredith has swept away the government of the living God! The very government that God established, which did the greatest work ever on this Earth since Jesus Christ—in terms of numbers! The *fruits* prove that! And that work could never have been done without God's government.

And yet, Mr. Meredith boasts that he sat at Mr. Armstrong's feet, which I didn't have the opportunity to do. If you closely examine what he and I teach, you'll clearly see who sat at Mr. Armstrong's feet—spiritually! The above statement is from a man who would dare to say he is "faithfully preaching the truths proclaimed by Herbert W. Armstrong"! No, he is not! If you lose God's government, all the other doctrines will be tainted! He says he is "*faithfully* preaching the truths proclaimed by Herbert W. Armstrong," yet his first booklet destroyed the most important truth Mr. Armstrong ever restored—government! And that was only the beginning!

In a January 20, 1993, letter to his church, Mr. Meredith wrote, "We must now come to understand what God really says about Church government...."

According to Mr. Meredith, the powerful work God did through Mr. Armstrong was done without God's government! He wrote that we are only now "really" understanding Church government. Surely anyone who saw and accepted the fruits of God's end-time Elijah must be concerned about such an outrageous statement!

We cannot enter into God's family if we don't understand Church government. Yet Mr. Meredith implied that none of us did under Mr. Armstrong!

Since government is the most important truth (it concerns the First Commandment), let's examine what he said on page 5 of his booklet, speaking about the Sardis era. He said there was "a lot of 'politicking' and divisions," but "no one felt that those people were rebelling against God." Yet, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 says Christ is not divided and there

must be no divisions in His Church! The Sardis Church he discussed was “dead” (Rev. 3:1). God’s government had been destroyed.

Mr. Meredith also indicated that shifting from one Sabbath group to another was all right, and that “Mr. Armstrong felt that way also.” Rod Meredith is either ignorant of what Mr. Armstrong taught or he is telling a dangerous lie!

Let’s read what Mr. Armstrong said May 2, 1974, in a letter to the Church: “God has only one Church on Earth, which He directs in the doing of His work—not two churches—not many denominations and sects, and ‘groups.’ ‘But now are they many members, yet but one body’ (i Cor. 12:20—see also vv. 12-13). ‘For by one Spirit are we all (not part of us) baptized into one body.’”

As he said, God only directs one Church to do His work. The very reason God raised up Mr. Armstrong was because the Sardis era rebelled and refused to do God’s work!

Through Mr. Armstrong, Jesus Christ restored the government of God—not, of course, yet over the world, but over the Church.

Now, if you don’t have God’s government, the members generally will be either “spiritually dead” or Laodicean and will not grow. The very purpose for God’s government is to help God’s people grow and do His work (Eph. 4:11-14).

Here is what Mr. Armstrong said in his booklet *Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?* (p. 81): “Perhaps only one lone voice is warning you! But God used one lone voice to warn the world in Noah’s day—one lone voice in Elijah’s day—one lone voice in the day of John the Baptist, and after he was put in prison, in the Person of Christ Himself!”

Mr. Meredith must destroy God’s government to get people to follow him.

Mr. Meredith was suspended from the wcg by Mr. Armstrong for about six months in 1979-80. Since Mr. Armstrong had to *personally* suspend him, it should cause anybody to be somewhat concerned. The *fruits* of his life now strongly indicate what his problem was. He was rebelling against God’s government even then! Now his government problem is out in the open, where the whole Church can see it!

Is that part of the reason he rejects Mr. Armstrong as God’s end-time Elijah? Denying that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled that role is tantamount to saying his work was a fraud!

I mention his suspension for only one reason. He is deceiving some of God’s own people by destroying fundamental biblical truths that Mr.

Armstrong taught. Nothing is more serious! Eternal lives are at stake! God is testing all of us to see if we know how to follow Him—not a man!

There were a “few names” in the Sardis group that qualified, in spite of their leaders (Rev. 3:1-5). But Mr. Armstrong believed even those *few* Sardis members, who were alive and obedient in the Philadelphia era, came and joined the wcg. Even those “few names” qualified by not looking to their deceived ministers! And just before Christ raised up the Philadelphia era of the Church through Mr. Armstrong, those people had no real work they could support. That is not so today. The pcg is doing a powerful work. God’s true Church will always follow Christ and support His work.

Mr. Meredith says Mr. Armstrong just “exhorted” them to stay together so they could do a greater work. Older members in the wcg know that is not even close to the truth. Mr. Armstrong repeatedly told us that the wcg was the only true Church of God on Earth doing God’s work! One of the main reasons the wcg was God’s only work on Earth was that only the wcg had God’s government. You can’t do God’s work without God’s government. Mr. Meredith will have that proved to him by God—since he shamefully failed to learn that most important lesson of all while he “sat at the feet” of Mr. Armstrong!

By Their Fruits

Here is another statement from Mr. Meredith’s booklet on Church government (p. 8): “Mr. Armstrong knew and many of us who have studied church history know, that in fact very seldom in its 2,000 year history has God’s Church ever had one administration, with one man in charge.” Now he is leading you to believe that he and Mr. Armstrong reasoned in a similar fashion. Actually he knows better.

It is true that God’s churches seldom were governed by one man and one administration during 2,000 years of history. But they were asleep spiritually! (See Matt. 25:1-5; Luke 19:12-27). Christ knew this would happen. That’s why He said, when the gospel is preached around the world, it’s very close to His return (Matt. 24:14). That statement couldn’t be made unless most of the other eras failed to preach God’s message around the world.

Of course Mr. Meredith is talking about those churches of God that he is aware of—like the Sardis era—and they were “dead” and divided even before Mr. Armstrong came on the scene. Now the Laodiceans are becoming scattered, because they too have rejected God’s government. All you need to do is look at the fruits of these churches! Christ knew His

churches would fail to get the gospel to the world. Mainly, it was because they slumbered and slept for 2,000 years!

The only Church to preach the gospel around the world, since the first century, was the wcg under Mr. Armstrong! Why? Because the Philadelphia era and the Smyrna era were the only Churches that kept God's government. And even the Smyrna era was apparently too weak to preach the gospel to the world. Most of the other eras floundered around in division.

Mr. Armstrong clearly had charge of the wcg and preached God's government. Now Mr. Meredith is teaching a government of man that can never do God's work, because God won't support it!

Here is another statement Mr. Meredith made in his booklet: "There was never one man in charge of all these scattered groups, never any central government—though some of those groups were contemporaneous" (p. 8). But look at the lack of *fruits* in those groups. They virtually had no real work. There is no way the great and powerful Christ was leading them. Then look at the *fruits* of Christ's work through Mr. Armstrong! Fruits clarify so much! "By their fruits you shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-16). Mr. Armstrong preached the gospel around the world with power! That could never have been done by divided groups, who rebelled or are rebelling against God, like those Mr. Meredith is talking about!

Mr. Meredith's booklet also said this: "Each must be judged individually. Some that left were actually ahead of the main body in understanding (not breaking up certain marriages, Pentecost on Monday, etc.)" (p. 9).

Please read that statement again. He said ministers who *left*—or rebelled against the Church headed by Mr. Armstrong—were actually ahead of it in understanding! All right—where are those groups today that had that "advanced" understanding and left the wcg? Where are their fruits? In most cases they have almost disappeared! They were just rebels who never produced any real fruits! Compare their "advanced" work with what God did through Mr. Armstrong. Look at the fruits!

Anybody who says those men were "ahead of the main body" *in understanding* is just in abysmal ignorance! Those who left the wcg under Mr. Armstrong may have had some technical points right, but God could never have worked through their rotten, rebellious attitudes! Their fruits prove that!

Does God Directly Guide His Church?

Here is another statement from Mr. Meredith's booklet: "In the past, we (and I include myself in this!) have mistakenly assumed that Christ directly guides His Church so that no serious errors will ever be made and no serious doctrinal deviations will ever occur" (p. 21).

That statement strikes at the very heart of God's government. Of course we make mistakes. But God never allowed a fatal mistake to be made when Mr. Armstrong led the wcg. Christ directly guides His Church when the leaders submit themselves to Him! God has not in the past, and never will, force His people to follow Him. History shows that even most of God's own people turned away from Him.

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev. 3:8). Christ opens doors for His work. Mr. Armstrong preached the gospel around the world (Matt. 24:14). He did that because Christ prophesied he would do so. That work proved that God "directly guides His Church"!

Christ prophesied that Mr. Armstrong would restore all things (Matt. 17:10-11). And he did. But only because Christ was *directly* involved. The most important truth God used Mr. Armstrong to restore was government. Now Mr. Meredith has destroyed what God restored!

Christ prophesied that Mr. Armstrong would restore the spiritual and physical families (Mal. 4:5-6). And he did. Again, only because Christ directly guided him.

Mr. Armstrong would correct people if they gave him credit for building Ambassador College. He knew Christ directly established that college. Mr. Armstrong always said that God directly established the *Plain Truth* and *Good News* magazines. He always gave God credit for directly opening doors in radio and TV and establishing local churches. That is how God directly guides His Church—if His leaders seek Him with all their heart. Mr. Meredith failed to learn the lesson of government. And because of that, his work is destined to fail.

Collegial Government?

Mr. Meredith says we need a different form of government than what Mr. Armstrong taught. On page 29 of his booklet he wrote, "The right church government should be 'collegial.' That is, it should include a broad representation of all the elders and ministers of the Church as the account we read from Acts 15 makes clear. And correct church government should always be based on a multitude of counsel (Prov. 15:22)."

Webster's Dictionary has only two definitions of collegial government: "1) Marked by power or authority vested equally in each of a number of

colleagues. 2) Characterized by equal sharing of authority." In our democratic Western societies, that may sound good, but it is not God's way of ruling! And it is destined to fail.

God could never have built the work He did through Mr. Armstrong with a collegial government! And does anybody believe Mr. Armstrong could have put the work back on track in the 1970s with such a government? At that time, most of the Church members and leaders disagreed with Mr. Armstrong! Still, God's government was implemented and God blessed the work abundantly! The fruits are there for everyone to see!

The government Mr. Armstrong used was far from "collegial." Yet Christ did the greatest work through Mr. Armstrong (in terms of impact on people) that had been done since the first century! And in many ways, Mr. Armstrong's work was even bigger—that is, in terms of people reached!

Of course, God's leader must get a multitude of counselors to aid him (Prov. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6). But God still holds the leader accountable for making the final decisions. It's all done through a system of *family love*.

Here is what Mr. Meredith said about the Sardis era: "Down through history, Christ has guided His Church so that often—in fact most of the time—there were different 'branches' of the true Church co-existing at the same time. Sometimes it was a geographical necessity. But often, as in the Sardis Era, Christ allowed His people a certain freedom of choice. Which Seventh Day Church of God would they worship with? The branch administered from Stanberry, Missouri? The one located in Caldwell, Idaho? Or the one headquartered at Salem, West Virginia? Or one of the others?" (p. 32).

God's word tells you all of those churches were dead! (Rev. 3:1). Where in the Bible do you find "a certain freedom of choice" to decide which church you want to attend? There is no such scripture! Such choices are made only by those who are lukewarm or dead spiritually!

Mr. Armstrong was persecuted intensely by the world for saying the wcg was God's only true Church! This happened throughout his ministry of over 50 years. Mr. Meredith, of all people, ought to know that!

Mr. Meredith continued, "And as Mr. Armstrong often said, among them were many sincere people who will be in the Kingdom of God."

Mr. Armstrong said no such thing! And I challenge Mr. Meredith to find a quote supporting that false statement! Here is another quote from Mr. Meredith: "Perhaps before plunging into scriptural examples, I should first set the stage. Frankly there was never—in the New Testament Church—any example of a 'Moses figure' or a 'Pope Peter' who

towered over the other apostles and elders, gave them orders, threatened to 'fire' them, etc. I cannot refer you to any scripture on this, because it is not there!"

There is some very subtle deception here. Mr. Meredith says you won't find a strong government "in the New Testament Church." He knows that God's government was already clearly established in the Old Testament. (It is continued in the New Testament and we'll prove that to you as we continue on this subject.) Like the Sabbath, for example, God's government was already established in the Old Testament. The practice was continued in the New Testament. He is actually leading people to reject what the Old Testament teaches about God's government. This is a Protestant approach to God's Bible!

He knows that Mr. Armstrong never made such a distinction! Yet he says that he is faithfully teaching what Mr. Armstrong proclaimed. At the same time he is destroying the very *foundation* of what Mr. Armstrong taught!

Mr. Meredith doesn't believe a leader should have the authority even to threaten or fire people. Let's analyze that and look at the fruits of Mr. Armstrong's godly work. Mr. Armstrong had to fire other leaders in the 1970s or God's work would have been destroyed! And Mr. Meredith should know that better than most other wcg leaders. He was right there at the Pasadena headquarters. There is no way Mr. Armstrong could ever have put God's work back on track without God's government. And look how God blessed Mr. Armstrong's effort.

What is Mr. Meredith really saying in his government booklet? He is saying that he would rather destroy God's government than submit to it! God's people can't deny the wonderful fruits of God's government in action!

Mr. Armstrong's Letters

I personally know that Mr. Armstrong would bend over backwards 100 times to avoid giving hard correction. Many people couldn't understand why he wasn't more authoritative at times. His mercy is a matter of record. But there were times that God's government had to be implemented. He also had an advisory council of elders and he did seek a multitude of counsel. Mr. Armstrong wrote a letter to the Church on March 19, 1981. Here is an excerpt from that letter (emphasis his):

"Zerubbabel built the second temple to which Jesus came the first time. John the Baptist prepared the way before the first coming. But who was to build the spiritual temple to which Christ shall soon come the second time? Who was to prepare the way before His Second Coming?"

“Remember God does things in dual stages. As Zerubbabel built the first temple of material stone, wood and other materials, he was a forerunner or type of one through whom Christ would raise up or build the spiritual temple—His Church of our time, prior to the Day of the Lord and Christ’s Second Coming. As John the Baptist prepared the way, in the physical wilderness of the Jordan River for the first coming of the human Jesus (both man and God), then coming to His material temple, and to His physical people Judah, announcing the Kingdom of God to be set up more than 1900 years later, so God would use a human messenger in the spiritual wilderness of 20th-century religious confusion, to be a voice crying out the gospel of the Kingdom of God, about the spiritual Christ, coming in supreme power and glory to His spiritual temple, to actually establish that spiritual Kingdom of God.

“Brethren, has that been done by this Church?

“Did God raise up a one-man leadership to be used by Him in building this spiritual temple and in proclaiming after 1900 years the true gospel of the Kingdom of God in all the world—to even go to kings and heads of nations (Rev. 10:11)—in bringing the Church back to the faith once delivered (Jude 3)?

“Has this happened, in your days, and has God brought you into this prophetic fulfillment as a part of it?

“Has anyone else done it?”

Did Mr. Armstrong think one man would and did fulfill this prophecy? Absolutely! He speaks of “one,” “a human messenger,” “a voice,” “a one-man leadership”—and then ends by asking, “Has anyone else done it?” Mr. Armstrong did an amazing work. One of the greatest in the New Testament. It is simply *not possible* to do such a work without God’s government! Yet, Mr. Meredith would like you to believe that’s how it actually happened.

Peter was in charge of the Israelites and Paul was over the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7-8). Mr. Armstrong discusses this subject too. Mr. Armstrong had to battle this same government heresy in the 1970s. Here is what he wrote to the Church May 2, 1974, in a member letter:

“In the Old Testament, God chose one (Moses, Samuel, Saul, David, etc.) at a time, under God, because Israel was one nation in one location or area. One at the top of the human level, under God, with others under him, was all that was required to administer the principle of government from the top down.

“But in the first century of the gospel work in the New Testament, God was sending the gospel into many countries, over wide areas. So He

organized His work into two principal divisions, or areas—Israel and Gentiles. They were widely separated geographically. Communication was virtually nil, except by personal contact. Transportation was by foot, horse or muleback, or by camel or elephant, or sailboat. If Peter were the sole human head under Christ, it might take him weeks to communicate with the man next under him in Rome, if he were in Jerusalem. So God worked directly with two in separated areas. Today, if I, for example, need to communicate with Mr. Hunting or Dr. Meredith at Bricket Wood, or with Mr. Luker at Sydney, Australia, I can usually reach them in a matter of three minutes to an hour or so by telephone. Or I could reach them in a matter of hours by airplane. With such communication and transportation facilities available today, Christ requires only one, once again, directly under him.

“In the first century, God Himself chose Paul and committed to him authority directly under Christ, the gospel work to the Gentiles. He was not chosen apart from, or contrary to or in opposition to Peter or to the headquarters at Jerusalem, as dissenters have chosen themselves, apart from, and in opposition to, God’s headquarters today. When Paul went to Jerusalem headquarters, it was by revelation from God. He communicated to the leaders there what he preached to the Gentiles, lest he might be preaching *contrary* to them as God led them, and thus might have been preaching in vain—as he would have been, if he preached a different gospel (Gal. 2:2 and 1:8-9).

“Paul was called separately and directly by Christ. He was not one of Peter’s sons in the Lord. He was not one under Peter who, on his own, broke away from Peter and God’s headquarters, and set himself up as head of a competing church seeking to destroy God’s Church. The dissenters today *cannot* claim they are following Paul’s example.”

Why can’t people agree on what God teaches about government? Because the carnal mind cannot be subject to God’s law and government (Rom. 8:7). So people, who are weak spiritually, carnally reason around the government of God and cling to their self-destructive ways. Let’s continue with Mr. Armstrong’s member letter:

“You, brethren, today, all were called, directly or indirectly, through me and the government of God doing the work of God—you are all my sons and daughters in Christ. Compare I Corinthians 4:14-16: ‘I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ (or who pose as being), yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.’

So far as following Paul's example is concerned, God in person directly called and guided Paul in a way He does not you, and the turning away of the dissenters cannot be justified by any comparison with Paul, and the government of God through Paul.

"Brethren, we in God's Church are being trained and prepared, now, to rule in the Kingdom of God during the Millennium. What kind (principle) of government are we being trained to administer?

"At that time, beginning with Christ's coming and the resurrection, Christ will be King of kings over all nations (Rev. 19:16). Directly under Christ, over Israel—that is, all the nations springing from the 12 tribes of Israel—will be the resurrected David. Notice: 'For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Eternal of hosts, that I will...burst thy (Israel's) bonds...but they (Israel) shall serve the Eternal their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them' (Jer. 30:8-9).

"Notice again: At the beginning of the millennial reign under Christ, God will unite Israel (ten tribes) and Judah once again into one nation, in the land of ancient Israel (Ezek. 37:22) with one king over them. 'And David my servant shall be king over them' (vv. 24-25). Again, 'And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David' (Ezek. 34:23).

"Of course, also under Christ will be others over the Gentile nations, but God has not revealed who specifically. But, under David, God does tell us who shall rule those of each of the 12 tribes.

"Peter had asked Jesus what positions the 12 apostles would have in the Kingdom during the Millennium. 'And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matt. 19:28)."

God's government of rule from the top down is so clear from the Bible. You would expect unconverted people not to understand. But what about those who have learned the truth about God's government and then rejected it? Their future is dangerously shaky! Mr. Armstrong continues in the letter:

"Will there be others under each king over one tribe?

"Turn to Luke 19, beginning with verse 11. Jesus gave a parable to His disciples, because they thought the Kingdom of God should immediately appear in their time. (Some dissenters, like the Baptists or other Protestants, are now coming to believe it did appear then, in their hearts.)

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman (Christ) went into a far country (God's throne in heaven) to receive for himself a kingdom, and to

return (to Earth). And he called his ten servants (so-called lost ten tribes of Israel), and delivered them ten pounds (British money, here representing symbolically God's Holy Spirit, or spiritual gifts for the operations in the work of God in the Church, now) and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens (Judah—the Jews—His own to whom He came and who received Him not—John 1:11) hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom (Second Coming of Christ to rule all nations), then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he (Christ) said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he (Christ the King) said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.' And the one who had accomplished nothing in God's Church, now, lost even that which had been given to him.

"This shows we are rewarded (not saved) according to our works—according to how much we have grown in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ—how much we have supported God's work, either actively in a specific position, or by our prayers, encouragement to those who do serve, tithes, etc.

"Later, from heaven Jesus said: 'He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron' (Rev. 2:26-27).

"Brethren, we are in training, now, for that rule in the Kingdom of God.

"And what principle of government? From the top down. From God—it is His government—the government of God the Father. Under Him is Christ. Under Christ, over Israel will be the resurrected David. Under David, each over one of 12 tribes, the 12 original apostles. Under each of them, rulers over cities!!"

Mr. Armstrong learned from experience that you either use God's government or Satan destroys God's Church! And still, most of the evangelists who "sat at his feet" never learned that lesson! Let's continue in Mr. Armstrong's letter:

"Years ago, seeing this, and not considering the many, many scriptures charging some in the Church with authority, rulership, saying to 'rebuke' the unruly, etc., I took the above scriptures to mean there is no

authority in the Church. I did not want to exercise authority. I was still new in God's truth (this was over 40 years ago). So, in the early days of the parent Church of the Philadelphia era, at Eugene, Oregon, I allowed 'wolves in sheep's clothing' to come in and sow the seeds of discord among brethren. It resulted in splitting the Church in two—possibly turning half my flock onto the way that leads into a lake of fire! God had His own way of rebuking me soundly, making me see this in its true light. Jesus here is talking about the manner in which the authority Christ delegates is used. He is not saying there is no authority....

"Now notice Titus 1:4-5 and 2:15—Paul wrote to Titus (under Paul), 'To Titus, mine own son after the common faith (even as those under me in the work today, are my own sons, directly or indirectly, in the Lord):...from God the Father (first in rank) and the Lord Jesus Christ (second in rank) our Savior. For this cause left I (next in rank—to Gentiles—under Christ) thee (under Paul's authority in the work) in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders (under Titus who is under Paul, who is under Christ) in every city as I had appointed thee.'

"Paul gave reason, in the following verses, for government and authority in the Church—'For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses (even as those fighting against order and government in God's Church are doing today), teaching things which they ought not (as right now), for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts (lazy gluttons—rsv). This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith' (Titus 1:10-13). And Paul adds, chapter 2:15, '...and rebuke, with all authority.'

"Yes, God's government is *necessary* in His Church, and He put it there!

"No authority in the Church? What did God mean when He says in His word, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account (as I know I shall), that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that (causing those over you grief) is unprofitable for you. Pray for us (those of us God has set in authority today): for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly' (Heb. 13:17-18).

"No government in God's Church? Then why did God inspire this to the Thessalonians? 'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And

to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves' (i Thes. 5:12-13).

"Next I said, some have become confused as to whether there is organization or government in it. I have abundantly shown text after text in the New Testament showing government and rule and authority in the Church—and I did not even quote such passages as i Corinthians 5, where Paul ordered the Church to 'put away from yourselves that wicked person,' or i Corinthians 4:21, where Paul said to that Church, 'What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?' Without organization, the Church could never fulfill its Great Commission—its very purpose for being, at the present time. Yes, there is organized government, and rule—but the rule is in love—in outgoing concern for the good of those ruled.

"God has only one Church on Earth, which He directs in the doing of His work—not two churches—not many denominations and sects, and 'groups.' 'But now are they many members, yet but one body' (i Cor. 12:20—see also vv. 12-13). 'For by one Spirit are we all (not part of us) baptized into one body.'"

Could Mr. Armstrong have been so terribly deceived about God's government for over 50 years, and still have served God as he did? Impossible!

Only the pcg today holds fast to God's government. The wcg and all of the other dissenting groups have one ingredient in common—all of them reject God's government! They are leading God's own people to perish spiritually! (ii Thes. 2:10). Nothing could be more diabolical!

At the wcg Feast of Tabernacles in 1972, Mr. Armstrong said, "God has always worked through one at a time.... It's not doctrine unless Garner Ted [his son] gets it from me [Mr. Armstrong].... God calls the Church to back up His apostle and get His message to the world.... Every doctrine has come through Mr. Armstrong from Christ." In this end time, no other government has ever worked! And no other government ever will.

How is God restoring His government on this Earth today? Through His loyal Philadelphians. But we must love and cling to that government or God won't use us to rule with Him in the World Tomorrow.

Satan broadcasts in feelings, moods, attitudes and emotions. Primarily these negative emotions are aimed at God's government. That is how Satan destroys God's government. God's government is the most important issue to God! And it must be in our minds too! We get nowhere fighting each other. That is what Satan often causes God's people to do.

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (Isa. 14:12-13). Satan has a throne. God put one angel over the Earth. But Lucifer wanted to kick God off His throne.

Lucifer was a covering cherub. He covered God’s throne. He sat at God’s own feet, perhaps for millions of years.

Mr. Meredith tells people repeatedly that he is of evangelist rank and sat at Mr. Armstrong’s feet for years. He implies that God would use someone with those credentials. Many other high-ranking Laodicean leaders use their stature to draw members to themselves. But Lucifer had more stature than most of God’s angels. He was probably the highest ranking angel. He also sat at God’s own feet—perhaps for millions of years. All of this experience and stature didn’t stop him from rejecting God’s government!

Lucifer means “light bringer.” He was sent to this Earth to administer God’s government and he failed.

God has given the Philadelphia Church of God some prophetic understanding that Mr. Armstrong didn’t have. But all of our prophecy is based upon the prophetic foundation Mr. Armstrong established. God didn’t reveal to him many of the Laodicean end-time prophecies. Those prophecies were to be revealed to the pcg after Mr. Armstrong’s death.

We have not changed, or even tampered with, a single one of Mr. Armstrong’s 18 restored truths. All of the Laodicean groups, no matter how much of Mr. Armstrong’s teaching they claim to retain, have attempted to destroy the most important truth of those 18 restored truths—government!

Still, many of them would like people to believe they are faithfully following in Mr. Armstrong’s footsteps. That is a very dangerous fraud.

Remember, God’s people are in training primarily to help God restore His government. Satan is fiercely trying to destroy that government. Let’s make certain that no man beguiles us into rejecting God’s government.



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